Principles of Culturally Responsive Education

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Objectives

- Define and understand what CRE is and what it looks like
- Understand how privilege and social power play a systemic role in how culture is practiced
- Be able to reflect on personal assumptions about students, parents, & communities in order to recognize the importance of how culturally responsive education impacts student outcomes
Contract

- Participate
- Listen with Respect
- Struggle together
- Push your growing edge

“As we struggle together, we will have hit the growing edge—push your growing edge!”

-The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond
Connect The Dots

- Connect all the dots in just 4 strokes without lifting your pen.
- Please do not share your strategy with anyone!
“This is a self-reflective workshop. Because there are no quick and simple solutions, no single program or packaged intervention to train teachers to teach culturally diverse students, the issue of reflection becomes critically important. Any attempt to generate “tricks of the trade” must be avoided because of the complexity of the issue and because of the individual needs, motivations, experiences, and abilities of children of color.”

Icebreaker: The Name Game

What’s inside your cultural knapsack?
Throughout most of American history, schools, churches and government have promoted the notion that anyone who works hard enough can achieve the American dream. Many students have lost faith in this belief and are often those at the heart of classroom conflict. This activity provides insight into who these students are, possible reasons why they’ve lost faith, and how teachers can develop strategies to motivate them.
Part I: Defining Culture, Equity, & Fairness

Think-Pair-Share
Culture

Culture refers to the ways of living; shared behaviors, beliefs, customs, values, and ways of knowing that guide groups of people in their daily life and are transmitted from one generation to the next.

Culture affects how people learn, remember, reason, solve problems, and communicate; thus, culture is part and parcel of students’ intellectual and social development. Understanding how aspects of culture can vary sheds light on variation in how students learn.

From: The Education Alliance and Brown University
The Iceberg
A Deeper Understanding of Culture
Surface Culture
These are aspects of culture that are explicit, visible, and taught:
- food
- dress
- music
- visual arts
- drama
- crafts
- dance
- literature
- language
- games
At and Just Below the Waterline

Unspoken Rules
This is the transition zone is where the cultural observer has to be more alert: the area where implicit understandings become talked about, and explained.

courtesy, contextual conversational patterns, concepts of time, personal space, rules of conduct, facial expressions, nonverbal communication, body language, touching, eye contact, pattern of emotions, notions of modesty, concepts of beauty, courtship practices, notions of leadership.
Unconscious Rules

"Hidden" culture: the habits, assumptions, understandings, values, judgments ... that we know but do not or cannot articulate

nature of friendships, tone of voice, attitude toward elders, concept of cleanliness, notions of adolescence, patterns of group decision-making, preference for competition or cooperation, tolerance of pain, conception of self, conception of past and future, definition of obscenity, attitude towards dependents, problem-solving roles
Equity

General Equity

- Fairness; Equal opportunities in terms of access to natural, social, and economic resources.

From: The International Development Research Centre

Educational Equity

- A threefold concept incorporating equal treatment, equal educational opportunity, educational adequacy

Fairness

- The chance of getting what we want in life.
- How our chance for success compares with others.

This is the knowledge base for understanding culture...

however the practice of culture also involves privilege and social power.
SOCIAL POWER AND PRIVILEGE
Forms of Social Power and Privilege

- Economic
- Governmental
- Physical
- Political
- Media
- Knowledge
- Personal
- Situational
- Cultural and Institutional
Activity: Invisibility of Privilege
An Illustration of Power
Students should have equal educational opportunities; however, how might a student’s culture (gender, SES, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) negatively or positively impact their opportunities to experience a fair chance in and outside of school?
What are the types of opportunities your district/school needs to provide for some students in order to maximize their chances of feeling they’ve experienced a fair starting point to the finish line?
Part II:
Defining Culturally Responsive Education
Five Myths of Cultural Responsiveness

- Myth 1: Culturally responsive pedagogy is a new and special type of pedagogy that is relevant only to low income, urban students of color.

- Myth #2: In schools with diverse student populations, only teachers of color are capable of demonstrating the essential elements of a culturally responsive pedagogy.

- Myth #3: Culturally responsive pedagogy is a “bag of tricks” that minimizes the difficulty of teaching some students of color.

- Myth #4: Culturally responsive pedagogy requires teachers to master the details of all the cultures of students represented in the classroom.

- Myth #5: Culturally responsive pedagogy reinforces stereotypes about children of color because this pedagogy categorizes and labels children based on their race and ethnicity.

Culturally Responsive Education

- Culturally responsive education is a framework that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning.

In her 1994 book, *The Dreamkeepers*, Dr. Gloria Ladson Billings defined culturally responsive [practitioners] as possessing these eight principles:

1. Communication of High Expectations
2. Active Teaching Methods
3. Practitioner as Facilitator
4. Inclusion of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students
5. Cultural Sensitivity
6. Reshaping the Curriculum or Delivery of Services
7. Student-Controlled Discourse
8. Small Group Instruction
These 8 principles should lead to... stronger connections between educators and students.
The Cultural Continuum

- **Surface**
  - Food and Festivals

- **Transitional**
  - A few multicultural units of study are in the curriculum

- **Integrated**
  - Multicultural units are integrated into the curriculum

- **Social Change**
  - Multicultural units are used as part of social justice curriculum
Part III: Why do we need to be culturally responsive?
Achievement GAP
2007 NAEP Grade 4 Reading by Race/Ethnicity, Nation

African American and Latino 17 Year-Olds Do Math at Same Levels As White 13 Year-Olds
African American and Latino 17 Year-Olds Read at Same Levels As White 13 Year-Olds
Disproportionality
Relative Risk of Children Ages 3 to 21 Served Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), by Race/Ethnicity: 2006

From: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs
What questions should we be asking?

- Why are Black and Latino students especially males, failing before, during and after school?

- Are there defining and distinct characteristics of Blacks and Latinos especially males that contribute to these failures in schools? That is, what is their collective experience?

- Why are school systems failing in remedying these issues despite their various efforts?

- What should we be doing more/less of as educators in addressing these issues?
Response to Intervention Model

Tier IV:
Special Education

Tier III:
Referral to a Child Study Team or Instructional Support Team
More intense, longer interventions

Tier II:
Targeted assistance as part of a general education support system

Tier I:
Culturally responsive instruction in general education classrooms
Who is achieving and not achieving?

How does being culturally responsive help raise the achievement of marginalized students?
Thoughts on Assessment

WNYC Radio Lab, “The Obama Effect, Perhaps”
Part IV: 
Culturally Responsive Strategies

What are some successful strategies you are already doing, and what else needs to be done?
What Does it Mean to Provide A Culturally Responsive Education?

- All practice is culturally responsive—but to which culture(s) is it responsive to?
- Culture is involved in all learning.
- Culture is not a static set of characteristics located within individuals, but is fluid and complex.
5 Essential Elements

There are 5 essential elements that contribute to a system’s ability to become more culturally competent.
Cultural Competence

Value Diversity

Develop Adaptations of Service Delivery

Build the Capacity for Cultural Assessment

Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge

Become Conscious of the Dynamics Inherent when Cultures Interact

Develop Adaptations of Service Delivery
1. Value Diversity

What it looks like (examples from Ladson Billings, 1994):

- Recruit candidates who have expressed an interest and a desire to work with diverse students.
- Provide [practitioners] with opportunities to critique the system in ways that will help them choose a role as either agent of change or defender of the status quo.
- Systematically require practitioners prolonged immersion in the culture of their students.
- Provide opportunities for observation of culturally relevant teaching/practices.
- Provide educational experiences that help [practitioners] understand the central role of culture.
“Culture is what other people have: what we have is just truth.”

When asked why are Black and students failing before, during and after-school, a teacher replied, “They are not buying our product!”

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Activity: Think-Pair-Share

“Parents can also be roadblocks to their child’s education. They move a lot, they lack interest in the child’s education, they don’t help with homework or supplies, they don’t come to conferences. What can I do? I don’t have time to work on these issues with parents.”
2. Self-Assessment

What it looks like (examples):
- Perception Tests
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Classroom Self/Peer Observation
- Meritocracy Exercise
- NCCRESt Survey
Conceptions of Self and Others
(Adapted from Ladson-Billings, 1994)

Culturally Relevant
- [Practitioner] sees her/himself as an artist, [their practice as an art].
- [Practitioner] sees her/himself as part of a community [and part of their job] as giving something back to the community, encourages students to do the same.
- [Practitioner] believes all students can succeed.
- [Practitioner] helps students make connections between their community, national, and global identities.
- [Practitioner] sees teaching as “pulling knowledge out”—like “mining.”

Assimilationist
- [Practitioner] sees her/himself as a technician, teaching as a technical task.
- [Practitioner] sees herself as an individual who may or may not be a part of the community; she/he encourages achievement as a means to escape community.
- [Practitioner] believes failure is inevitable for some.
- [Practitioner] homogenizes students into one “American” identity.
- [Practitioner] sees teaching as “putting knowledge into”—like “banking.”
Activity:
CRE Checklist

- What are the strengths of your school according to the checklist?
- What areas need improvement?
3. Interacting Cultures

What it looks like (examples):

- An understanding of the implications of all of the cultural considerations, i.e., race, gender, immigration status, etc.
- An appreciation of other’s cultural perceptions and realities
- Effective home-school connections
Activity:
Insert a simulation activity here or cultural learning film
4. Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge

What it looks like (examples):

- District/school policies (both instructional and non-instructional) are rewritten to incorporate cultural knowledge.
  - recruiting policies
  - student behavior policies
  - curriculum examination
  - library and resource materials
  - home communication methods
Group A
Guidelines for Evaluating Culturally Relevant Teaching Materials

- As a group, evaluate the teaching materials of your grade level in order to determine to what extent they are culturally relevant.
- What steps, if any, need to be taken to make materials more relevant to students' lives?

Group B
Zero Tolerance: The Assumptions and Facts

- As a group, determine what is the most important quote from your section and explain why it is so important.
- What is it about zero tolerance policies that often cause them to target specific groups of students more than others?
5. Service Delivery

- Environment reflects diversity
- Lessons/group work reflect an acceptance of ethnic differences
- Day-to-day assessment procedures include ethnic differences
- Implementation of the 8 principles of cultural responsiveness
Kay Toliver has demonstrated again and again that all students can be expected to meet high standards of academic performance.

What does CRT look like in practice?
Part V: Next Steps

Creating an Action Plan
Next Steps

- Self-evaluate where you are at, as a school, along the cultural continuum. Then, begin to develop an action plan.
- Read up on the research
- Develop action research (data) teams
- Surveys
Hope has a human face. The most powerful fuel for sustaining the initiative to improve a school is not the desire to raise test scores but rather the moral imperative that comes with the desire to fulfill the hopes of those we serve and those with whom we work.

Richard Dufour, 2004: Whatever It Takes
Questions • Comments • Evaluations
References & Resources


National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems. See tools for states and districts to use as they work to implement a quality, culturally responsive education for all students at http://www.nccrest.org/publications/tools.html.


Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality
Metropolitan Center for Urban Education
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http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/