

Creating a Culturally Responsive Classroom: “What Culturally Competent Teachers Do”



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What do you know about culturally responsive pedagogy?



- **Common myths and misunderstandings**
 - It is only for African Americans and other minorities
 - It is a “feel good” teaching strategy that has no real academic value
 - Does not demand high academic standards
 - Focus is on “political correctness”
 - It is “multiculturalism”
 - It does not work in math and science.

What is culturally responsive pedagogy?



- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is an instructional **methodology** designed to ensure that **ALL** students meet high academic standards.
- Requires **cultural competency** on the part of both teacher and student
 - Considerate of the students' **lived experiences**
 - **Connects** the learner through their lived experience with the instructional goals, objectives and activities
 - Educators must be **reflective** and confront difficult questions about race, ethnicity, gender and power.
- It promotes **positive teacher-student relationships** through instructional activities that are relevant to the students' lived experiences.
- Emphasizes **social justice**
 - Engages the student in challenging social and **moral** issues
 - Students develop a worldview that is relevant to them and **inclusive of others**.

Why should teachers use a culturally responsive pedagogy?



- It ensures that ALL students' educational needs are addressed.
- It creates a positive learning environment in which all students are valued.
- Reduces discipline problems by promoting “authentic” student engagement.
- Students are exposed to rigorous instruction.
- All students are expected to meet/achieve high academic standards.
- It promotes the development of a fair and equitable society.

What do teachers that practice a culturally responsive pedagogy do?



- [Gloria Ladson-Billings on culturally competent teachers](#)

What do teachers that practice a culturally responsive pedagogy do?

Develop their knowledge and skill



- They ***constantly reflect*** on their instruction ***focusing on asset*** thinking as opposed to deficit thinking.
- ***Validate and affirm*** students and their culture.
- They routinely ***assess*** student progress based on the individual student's needs.
- They are constantly ***learning*** about their students.
- They ***do not make assumptions*** about their students. In the United States many of these assumptions are based on race and class therefore teachers **MUST** face their own prejudices. This is part of the reflective process.
- They ***teach ALL students*** to reach their highest potential which they view as limitless. They do not assume that a particular student will “never amount to much.”

What do teachers that practice a culturally responsive pedagogy do? **Develop their practice**



- They ***create icons*** (physical, verbal, kinetic, auditory, etc.) that validate student identity and promote excellence.
- They ***promote collaboration*** within the classroom which builds success and improves cultural literacy among the students.
- They create lessons that force their students to ***make value judgments***.
- They ***empower their students*** by allowing them to engage each other to justify their choices thereby promoting an awareness of social justice.

What are the characteristics of a culturally responsive classroom?



- Students exude a ***feeling of freedom*** to express their ideas without fear or apprehension.
- Classroom environment contains ***elements from the students' backgrounds*** and promotes an expectation of high academic achievement.
- There are a wide ***variety of written resources*** on various reading levels and different topics.
- There are a wide ***variety of content based visual representations*** that relate to the culture of the students.
- Students are authentically engaged in ***collaborative learning activities***.
- There are ***exemplars*** of various types of student work.

What does a lesson that is based on culturally responsive pedagogy look like?



- Students are authentically engaged in rigorous instruction.
- Relevant connections are being made to the students historical, cultural and/or lived experiences.
- Students are using resources that go beyond the written curriculum and in many cases expanded knowledge from the teacher.
- Students are working collaboratively.
- Students make, assess and justify value judgments related to issues of social justice.

How do you implement a culturally responsive pedagogy?



- Teaching [Latin American revolutions](#) in world history courses
- It is based on the written [curriculum](#).
- Adapt current curriculum to reflect [cultural competency](#).
- Extend curriculum to include African agency and center African American students in learning
 - Students' cultural competency is expanded
 - Teachers must understand the full range of African responses to being enslaved
 - Teachers must have additional resources
 - Assessments and learning activities that support the CCSS for reading and writing can be easily aligned

What are some of the difficult questions surrounding cultural competence?



- How do your views of whiteness and blackness influence your decisions as an educator?
- Is whiteness privileged?
- Are you a white supremacist?
- [Louis C.K.](#) on being white (explicit language)
- Do you like “ni**ers?”
- Chris Rock [“I love Black people, but I hate ni**ers.”](#)

Final Thoughts



- Our students have more assets than deficit – use them.
- We are practitioners – it takes constant practice to become a proficient CRP practitioner.
- Throughout history the development of racial ideologies have played a central role in the interactions between peoples, with unique implications in the United States.
- The most significant aspect of culturally responsive pedagogy is it demands that ALL students meet high academic standards through rigorous instruction.
- What do culturally responsive teachers do? –
 - **They teach children, not lessons.**

Resources



- Teaching Diverse Students Initiative
<http://www.tolerance.org/tdsi/>
- Infusing Culturally Responsive Instruction into Daily Teaching Webinar <http://vimeo.com/46099212>
- Culturally Responsive Teaching in Time
<http://www.intime.uni.edu/multiculture/curriculum/culture/teaching.htm>
- You can reach us at info@watkinseducation.org, watkinseducation.org, @watkinseducate, [facebook.com/williamwatkinseducationalinstitute](https://www.facebook.com/williamwatkinseducationalinstitute) or 410.946.6035