



Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Competency

The educator will understand how culturally relevant practices support a multilingual student's academic, social, and emotional learning.

Key Method

The educator will understand the components of culture and their impact on the educational experiences of multilingual students. Educators will plan to embed culturally relevant pedagogy in their practice.

Method Components

Defining Culture and Characteristics of Culture

Culture influences how students perceive, engage with, and understand the world around them. Embracing cultural diversity is vital for educators to promote holistic learning. Understanding culture enables educators to tailor content, pedagogy, and the classroom environment to accommodate the diverse backgrounds of students. Multilingual learners and culturally relevant pedagogy are intricately connected in education. Cultural relevance in pedagogy acknowledges and integrates the cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities of students into the teaching and learning process. Multilingual learners, often coming from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, benefit significantly from culturally relevant pedagogy.

Culture refers to the shared set of beliefs, values, practices, behaviors, symbols, and norms that characterize a particular group of people. It encompasses both tangible and intangible aspects of a society or community and shapes how individuals within that group perceive the world,

interact with each other, and make sense of their experiences.

Shared Beliefs and Values: Culture includes commonly held beliefs about what is right, wrong, important, or desirable. These beliefs and values often shape individuals' attitudes and behaviors within the group.

Norms and Practices: Culture establishes norms, which are accepted patterns of behavior and rules that guide social interactions. These norms define how people should behave in various situations and contexts.

Symbols and Language: Symbols, such as flags, religious icons, or specific gestures, hold cultural significance and communicate shared meanings within a group. Language is a fundamental aspect of culture, as it enables communication and the transmission of cultural knowledge.

Social Structure: Culture often defines social roles, hierarchies, and relationships within a society. It dictates family structures, gender roles, and other aspects of how individuals interact and relate to one another.

Traditions and Customs: Cultural traditions encompass rituals, ceremonies, and practices that have been passed down through generations. These rituals reinforce cultural identity and provide a sense of continuity.

Art and Aesthetics: Cultural expressions, such as art, music, literature, and dance, reflect the values, history, and emotions of a group. These artistic forms serve as a means of preserving and sharing cultural heritage.

Material Culture: This aspect includes the physical artifacts, tools, clothing, architecture, and objects that a culture creates and uses. Material culture reflects both practical needs and cultural values.

Worldview and Perception: Culture shapes the way individuals perceive and interpret the world around them. It influences how people define beauty, justice, morality, and other abstract concepts.

Adaptation and Change: Cultures are not static; they adapt and evolve over time in response to internal and external influences. Changes can result from factors like technology, globalization, migration, and interactions with other cultures.

Identity and Belonging: Culture plays a significant role in forming individuals' sense of identity and belonging. It provides a framework through which people understand themselves and their connection to others.

Developing Cultural Competence

“Cultural Competence is the ability to successfully teach students who come from a culture or cultures other than our own.” (*NEA Diversity Toolkit: Cultural Competence for Educators, 2015*)

- Requirement 1
 - Developing personal and interpersonal awareness

- Requirement 2
 - Understanding culture and characteristics of culture
- Requirement 3
 - Effectively employing skills in culturally responsive teaching

Reflecting on Your Personal Bias

This step is important in promoting cultural awareness and creating an inclusive learning environment. Ways to learn about your personal bias are:

Acknowledge Your Biases: Accepting this fact allows you to approach the process of reflection with an open mind.

Educate Yourself: Learn about different cultures, traditions, and histories. Engage with diverse perspectives through books, articles, documentaries, and conversations.

Question Your Assumptions: Consider whether your assumptions or stereotypes are based on accurate information or misconceptions.

Examine Your Experiences: Consider how your personal experiences may have shaped your biases and perceptions.

Seek Feedback: Ask for honest feedback from colleagues, friends, and students.

Identify Triggers: Be aware of situations or topics that trigger your biases. Understanding your triggers can help you address and manage your reactions.

Practice Empathy: Try to understand the challenges and experiences faced by individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Challenge Stereotypes: Challenge any stereotypes you hold. When you catch yourself making assumptions, pause and question whether they are based on accurate information or generalized beliefs.

Reflect on Classroom Practices: Consider how your biases might influence your teaching practices, classroom dynamics, and interactions with students.

Engage in Conversations: Initiate open and respectful conversations with colleagues and students about cultural diversity. Listen to their perspectives and experiences and be willing to learn from them.

Continuous Learning: Commit to continuously learning and growing in your understanding of cultural differences.

Set Goals for Change: Set specific goals to address biases. These goals could include modifying teaching approaches, diversifying curriculum content, and creating an inclusive classroom environment.

Building Strong Relationships

Building relationships with ML students and their families requires patience, respect, and a genuine interest in their well-being. By establishing strong connections, you create an educational community where every student feels valued, understood, and supported. Building strong relationships with multilingual (ML) students and their families is essential for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Relationships allow educators to see beyond the student's "single story." The Ted Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story" below, shows the importance of building relationships with students. Some ways to build these relationships are:

Opportunities to Listen: Zaretta Hammond (2015) explains that incorporating opportunities to thoroughly listen and respond to students will help strengthen your rapport with them. The process includes hearing what students have to say, as well as listening to the emotional quality of the conversation.

Active Listening: This requires hearing and being attentive to the message the person you are speaking with is trying to convey. This listening style requires you to push aside other thoughts, focusing on the speaker and clarifying that you understand what is being said.

Familiarity with Students: Zaretta Hammond also explains that familiarity builds trust with students. Participate in community events and follow up with information that students share with you.

Building Relationships with Families of Multilingual Learners

Building relationships with families of multilingual learners is a crucial endeavor that nurtures a collaborative and inclusive educational environment. By fostering open communication with learners and their families, actively seeking to understand their cultural backgrounds, and valuing their perspectives, educators can establish trust and create a sense of belonging.

When families are invited to engage in their children's learning, they gain insights into the school curriculum and can share their cultural traditions—opportunities that help to enrich the educational experience and demonstrate a commitment to their children's success. Through consistent outreach, showing respect for diverse languages and traditions, and fostering a shared dedication to learning, educators can build strong partnerships that empower families as vital contributors to their children's growth and achievement. Here are some tips for building relationships with families.

Cultural Sensitivity:

- Demonstrate curiosity and respect for different cultures and languages.
- Show an interest in learning about students' backgrounds and experiences.
- Be understanding of families' challenges and commitments.

- Recognize students' accomplishments, both academically and culturally.

Effective Communication:

- Use clear and concise language when communicating with families.
- Communicate regularly in their preferred language to bridge the language gap.
- Encourage families to share their insights and concerns.
- Listen attentively and take their feedback into consideration.

Involve Families in Learning:

- Share strategies for supporting learning at home, such as reading together or discussing topics.
- Celebrate cultural holidays and events important to multilingual learners and their families.
- Organize events that invite families to participate in classroom activities.

Assessing the Quality of Your Relationships

Educators can evaluate their relationships with students. They can also reflect on the way in which they interact with their students—ways that offer insight into the quality of the relationships.

Follow these steps:

- **Step 1:** Choose students with whom you want to have a better learning partnership.
- **Step 2:** Develop a system to help you keep track of your interactions with these students. You could use a checklist, an index card, sticky notes.
- **Step 3:** Track the number of positive, negative, and neutral interactions and analyze the findings. There should be at least a ratio of 2:1 positive to neutral or negative interactions.
- **Step 4:** Think about the context in which these interactions occurred. What made them positive or negative? Consider what small changes you can make to build trust with these students. These practices can extend to your interactions with other students.
- **Step 5:** Make a goal of finding something to affirm in each student that is specific to his or her race, ethnicity, culture, gender, or linguistic identity.

Culturally Relevant Practices

Culturally relevant practices are approaches to teaching and learning that recognize the diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences of students in the classroom and at school. In an increasingly interconnected world, embracing these practices is not only beneficial but imperative. Culturally relevant practices ensure that education resonates with the lived experiences of all students.

The term, “culturally relevant teaching” was introduced in 1994 to describe an approach that empowers students by unitizing cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. While not a specific set of strategies, culturally relevant teaching requires that educators engage

in self-reflection to consider how factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, and language shape thoughts and behaviors. It requires that teachers have high expectations of all students.

The Importance of Culturally Relevant Teaching Multilingual Classrooms

Culturally relevant pedagogy creates an educational environment where multilingual students can thrive academically, emotionally, and culturally. It honors their diverse backgrounds, recognizes their potential, and equips them to succeed not only in the classroom but also in their broader lives as they interact with a diverse and interconnected world. These are some of the benefits of culturally relevant teaching:

Cultural Identity Affirmation: Culturally relevant pedagogy acknowledges and celebrates identities, making students feel valued, understood, and validated.

Enhanced Engagement: Incorporating students' native languages, traditions, and cultural references into the curriculum increases their engagement and interest in learning.

Empowerment and Confidence: Culturally relevant pedagogy empowers multilingual students by recognizing their unique assets. They see their backgrounds as strengths rather than obstacles.

Effective Language Acquisition: Leveraging students' native languages and cultural contexts to accelerate language acquisition.

Cognitive Development: Learning within a familiar cultural context supports cognitive development by making connections between prior experiences and new knowledge.

Bridge to Academic Success: Culturally relevant pedagogy establishes a bridge between students' cultural experiences and academic content.

Inclusive Learning Environment: Implementing culturally relevant practices fosters an inclusive classroom environment where students from diverse linguistic backgrounds feel respected, accepted, and supported.

Parent and Community Engagement: Culturally relevant pedagogy involves engaging with parents and the wider community in a meaningful way.

Long-Term Motivation: When multilingual students see their cultural identities reflected in their education, it can spark a long-term interest in learning and personal growth. This intrinsic motivation drives them to explore further and excel academically.

Preparation for Global Citizenship: In a globalized world, multilingualism and cultural competence are essential skills. Culturally relevant pedagogy equips multilingual students with

the cross-cultural skills needed to navigate diverse environments and become informed global citizens.

Creating Culturally Relevant Lessons for Multilingual Students

Creating culturally relevant lessons for your multilingual students involve thoughtful planning, understanding their backgrounds, and integrating their cultural experiences into the curriculum. This is an ongoing process that requires continuous learning, flexibility, and open-mindedness. The key items in planning are:

Know Your Students: Get to know your multilingual learners' cultural backgrounds, languages spoken at home, and experiences. Recognize the diversity within the group and avoid making assumptions based on stereotypes.

Incorporate Diverse Perspectives: Choose learning materials that reflect a variety of cultures, languages, and voices. Include literature, stories, and resources that feature characters and experiences from different cultural backgrounds.

Relate to Real Life: Connect lessons to students' daily lives, experiences, and cultural contexts. Incorporate examples and scenarios that are relevant to their cultural identities.

Use Multilingual Approaches: Encourage the use of students' native languages as a bridge to learning the target language. Integrate bilingual resources, labels, and translations to support comprehension.

Celebrate Cultural Traditions: Incorporate cultural holidays, traditions, and celebrations into your lessons. Discuss the significance of these events and how they relate to the subject matter you are teaching.

Allow for Personal Expression: Provide opportunities for students to share their own cultural stories, experiences, and perspectives. Use creative projects, presentations, or group discussions to facilitate this sharing.

Diverse Learning Styles: Recognize that different cultures have varied learning styles and preferences. Offer a mix of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and collaborative activities to cater to diverse learning needs.

Address Cultural Stereotypes: Address and challenge cultural stereotypes or biases that may arise in discussions or materials.

Community and Family Involvement: Involve families and community members in the learning process. Invite guest speakers and conduct cultural workshops to enrich the learning experience.

Connect to Current Events: Explore how cultural topics relate to current events and global issues. Foster discussions that allow students to share their perspectives on world events.

Reflection and Feedback: Regularly reflect on the effectiveness of your culturally relevant lessons. Seek feedback from students to understand how the lessons impact their engagement and understanding.

Ongoing Learning: Continuously educate yourself about different cultures, languages, and teaching strategies. Attend workshops, read books, and engage with resources that promote culturally relevant education.

Scaffolding for Multilingual Learners

Scaffolding lessons for multilingual learners involves providing structured support to help them access and comprehend content while gradually building their language skills. Here are some strategies to effectively scaffold lessons:

- Modeling
- Sentence frames and starters
- Home language support
- Explicit Instruction of academic language
- Graphic organizers
- Activate prior knowledge
- Visual aids
- Scaffolded language
- Vocabulary support
- Interactive lessons

Supporting Multilingual Learners

Supporting multilingual learners in your classroom involves creating an inclusive and effective learning environment that considers their language proficiency, cultural backgrounds, and individual needs. Here are some strategies to provide effective support:

Value Home Language and Culture: Educators should consider student experiences as assets, including using cultural reference during instruction. Students should be supported as they navigate the differences between their home culture and school culture.

Offer Varied and Student-Centered Instructional Activities: Allow students to have different learning experiences, such as independent or group work.

Consider Multiple Perspectives: Educators should look for ways to incorporate materials that present and analyze issues from multiple perspectives and teach students the importance of understanding issues from multiple viewpoints.

Supporting Multilingual Learners' Emotional Well-Being

The emotional well-being of multilingual learners is a critical consideration within the realm of education. Multilingual learners often navigate the complexities of language acquisition, cultural adaptation, and dual identity. Their emotional journey can encompass both triumphs and challenges. Fostering a supportive environment that recognizes their linguistic diversity, values their cultural backgrounds, and provides outlets for self-expression is essential. Teachers and educators play a pivotal role in nurturing a sense of belonging, boosting self-esteem, and alleviating potential language-related anxieties. By embracing learners' linguistic journey, celebrating their successes, and addressing their concerns with empathy, educators can promote emotional well-being and create a space where they feel empowered, respected, and capable of thriving both academically and personally.

Key Factors Impacting Multilingual Learner Mental and Emotional Well-being

Many factors influence the emotional well-being of multilingual learners. Educators should recognize the unique strengths and needs and create experiences that contribute to overall well-being. These are key factors educators should know:

1. Students need to feel a sense of pride in their culture
2. Language proficiency increases self-confidence
3. Reducing feelings of isolation promotes well-being
4. Positive peer relationships promote a sense of belonging
5. Incorporating cultural and lived experiences into classroom lessons improves engagement
6. Students need a safe space to express feelings, concerns, and experiences in their native language to facilitate healing and processing of emotions
7. Teaching perseverance and coping skills with second language learning challenges builds resilience
8. Encouraging family involvement builds a holistic support system
9. Introducing mindfulness practices that align with students' culture enhances emotional regulation.
10. Multilingualism is an asset that should be recognized and encouraged
11. Providing differentiated support increases positive academic experiences
12. Addressing stereotypes and bias creates a safe space for all learners to feel valued and emotionally secure

These are ways that providing support can impact your students' emotional well-being:

Strategies	Impacts
Providing culturally relevant content	Validates cultural identities and experiences
Encouraging peer collaboration	Creates a supportive network for language practice and learning
Recognizing linguistic achievements	Promotes engagement and positive self-perception
Offering language support programs	Fosters a sense of belonging and pride in linguistic abilities

Supporting Rationale and Research

Byrd, Christy M. Does Culturally Relevant Teaching Work? An Examination From Student Perspectives. 2016. SAGE Open, July-September 2016.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244016660744>

D'Andrea Martínez P, Peoples LQ, Martin J. Becoming Culturally Responsive: Equitable and Inequitable Translations of CRE Theory into Teaching Practice. Urban Rev. 2023 May 3:1-29. doi: [10.1007/s11256-023-00658-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-023-00658-5)

Samuels, Amy J. Exploring Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms. Dissertation, University of Montevallo, 2018.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1166706.pdf>

Saucedo, Daniela and Jimenez, Cris. Valuing Student Experiences: An Introduction to Culturally Responsive Education (CRE). 2021.
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/appalachia/Blog/-89663>

The Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative (EJ-ROC). "Culturally Responsive Education Research Fact Sheet." New York University.2024.
<https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/ejroc/culturally-responsive-education-research-fact-sheet>

Resources

Defining Culture and Characteristics of Culture

[Introduction to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy](#)

[Unconscious Bias at Work — Making the Unconscious Conscious](#)

[Teenagers Discuss Microaggressions and Racism #HatchKids](#)

[How microaggressions are like mosquito bites · Same Difference](#)

[Spain vs Mexico 1 A MUST SEE Vocab Differences LightSpeed Spanish](#)

[Four Ways Teachers Can Reduce Implicit Bias](#)

[The insidiousness of unconscious bias in schools](#)

[What You Need to Know About ELLs: FAQs](#)

Building Strong Relationships

[Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story](#)

[Making Students and Families Feel Welcome](#)

[What I Know About My EL](#)

[In their words: English learners share their stories about school](#)

Culturally Relevant Practices

[English Language Learners: Culture, Equity and Language](#)

[Culturally Responsive Teaching in Early Childhood Education](#)

[Ep 92. Culturally Responsive Teaching for MLs](#)

[Culturally Responsive Teaching for Multilingual Learners: Tools for Equity](#)

[Zaretta Hammond: Using Neuroscience to Help Students](#)

[Hook Your Students on Dopamine Hits: The Neuroscience of Culturally Responsive Teaching](#)

[Introducing Burro's Tortillas](#)

[How do I become culturally competent?](#)

Supporting Multilingual Learners' Emotional Well-Being

[Social-Emotional Health and Development • Multilingual Learning Toolkit](#)

[Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Multilingual Learners* and Their Social and Emotional Well-Being](#)

[Social and Emotional Support for Immigrant Students](#)

[Fundamentals of SEL - CASEL](#)

Resources for Submission

[Template: Handout: Developing a Culturally Responsive Unit Plan](#) (Use either link below)

- [PDF](#) or [Force copy Google doc](#)

[Culturally Responsive School Checklist and Goal Setting](#)

Submission Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria

To earn this micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and receive a proficient score for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

400-600 words

Answer the following questions to inform the assessor's understanding of your educational setting and how culturally relevant pedagogy influences your instruction. Use this word count.

1. Describe the group of students that you work with. What are the cultural aspects of this group of students that you would like your assessor to understand? Include age, grades, language levels and cultural aspects that influence your instruction. Do not include any information that will make your students identifiable.
2. Reflect on your own cultural background and experiences. How do you think your cultural identity shapes your perspective and biases? In what ways can gaining awareness of your

own cultural lens help you address bias and create a more inclusive and respectful environment?

Passing: The educator completely answers each of the questions using personal examples and supporting evidence. Writing is organized and easy to understand.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

Artifact 1: Culturally Responsive School [Checklist](#) and Reflection

Complete the Culturally Responsive School Checklist (In resources) for your school. Summarize your results to share what some areas of need are that you observe. After reflecting on the results of the checklist, answer these questions:

- Which guiding principle will you make a priority and focus?
- What are the three steps you will take to support this focus?

Artifact 2: Unit Plan

Using the [template](#) unit plan above, create a culturally responsive plan. Select a unit that you will be teaching in your role. Complete the sections on the document for your unit. Your unit plan should address the following:

- Standards
- Supports for students found in Table 1**
- Home culture connections
- One or more activity from Table 2** (select one for your unit plan)
- Strategy for multiple perspectives
- Critical thinking opportunity

****Tables 1 and 2 are both found in the template unit plan**

Artifact 3: Reflection on Unit Plan

After completing the unit plan, reflect on the process by answering the following questions which are found on the template.

- What challenges did you have completing this activity?
- What strategies will you take back with you to the classroom?

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Culturally Responsive School Checklist and Reflection	<p>Checklist is shared and summary shows the results or trends that you observe</p> <p>Summary clearly explains an area of focus and how it was selected</p>	<p>Checklist is shared but summary or trends are not clearly explained or not aligned with the focus</p> <p>Reflection questions are answered but may not align with the focus</p>	<p>Checklist or summary is not shared, or the focus does not clearly align with the focus selected</p> <p>Reflection questions are not thoroughly answered or do not align with the focus</p>

	<p>Reflection questions are thoroughly answered, and a focus is selected.</p> <p>Three steps are aligned with the focus.</p>	<p>Three steps are listed, but they may be broad or not related to focus.</p>	<p>selected</p> <p>Fewer than three steps are listed.</p>
Artifact 2: Unit Plan	<p>Unit plan includes all six of the required criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standards -Supports from Table 1 that are relevant -Ideas that draw on students' home cultures and languages are clearly explained -One or more activities from Table 2 are used to provide students opportunities to interact with the content -Present multiple perspectives -Critical thinking opportunities are present for students 	<p>Unit plan includes 4-5 of the required criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standards -Supports from Table 1 that are relevant -Ideas that draw on students' home cultures and languages are clearly explained -One or more activities from Table 2 are used to provide students opportunities to interact with the content -Present multiple perspectives -Critical thinking opportunities are present for students 	<p>Unit plan includes fewer than four of the required criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standards -Supports from Table 1 that are relevant -Ideas that draw on students' home cultures and languages are clearly explained -One or more activities from Table 2 are used to provide students opportunities to interact with the content -Present multiple perspectives -Critical thinking opportunities are present for students
Artifact 3: Reflection on Unit Plan	<p>Both reflection questions are thoroughly answered.</p> <p>The challenges faced show a deep understanding of the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy</p> <p>The educator explains the strategies they will take back to the classroom and provides specific examples of how they will be included in other lessons.</p>	<p>Both reflection questions are answered.</p> <p>The question about challenges faced shows an understanding of the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy but may not show personal connection to the content.</p> <p>The educator explains the strategies they will take back to the classroom and provides</p>	<p>Neither of the two reflection questions is answered.</p> <p>The question about challenges faced does not show an understanding of the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The educator does not explain the strategies they will take back to the classroom and does not provide specific</p>

		some examples of how they will be included in other lessons.	examples of how they will be included in other lessons.
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Part 3. Reflection

400-500 words

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For guidance on writing a good reflection, review this resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Upon completing this micro-credential, answer these questions:

- How has completing this micro-credential changed your perspective on creating lessons or experiences that are culturally relevant?
- How has the information changed how you will approach instruction moving forward?

Passing: The educator reflects on using research teaching strategies to support multilingual learners within a standards-based framework for future daily lesson planning and instructional delivery.