

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE?

CRT is not a set of “best practices” but a process that recognizes the mind-body connection involved in learning

2 The teacher recognizes student's use of cultural capital and tools (soft-wired)

Students use common cultural tools for processing content and problem solving

- Use the power of the group for thinking and figuring out (grappling)
- Use metaphor to relate new content to known processes, experiences, etc.
- Uses a story-style narrative to make sense of content
- Leverages word play in information processing
- Uses “verve” or a participatory communication style to get fired up

3 The teacher responds “positively” (non-verbally and verbally)

Teacher's reactions communicate that it's ok to use cultural tools and capital

- Notice and name these cultural tools when in use
- Acknowledges tools as useful and students as skillful in using them
- This is affirmation in CRT. It's not about raising self-esteem but to state as fact the natural gifts and talents of the student. The end result is increased trust and willingness to allow teacher to “push” student into ZPD

4 Teacher is then constructive (helpful) in facilitating learning by building on cultural tools

Teacher supports students to stretch their skill using cultural tools as scaffolds

- Makes time for accountable talk and encourages story-style narrative
- Incorporates use of common cultural tools in lesson planning (i.e., use of brain's memory systems via the 5 Rs – ritual, repetition, recitation, relationship, and rhythm)
- Teacher encourages code switching using cultural modeling/contrastive analysis
- Teacher is an ally who has permission from the student to push him harder toward higher standards while providing concrete skill development

1 The teacher keeps in mind the social-emotional impact of living in a racialized society

Foundational Stance

The teacher acknowledges systemic inequity in society at large and in schools that lead to achievement gaps, student mistrust, learned helplessness, and disengagement. This is what it means to **validate**. The culturally responsive teacher validates the existence of unearned advantage and unearned disadvantage not because of explicit racism but due to implicit bias that leads to racialized housing, health, and economics systems. Routinely checks her own assumptions and biases.

The teacher doesn't become reactionary to student mistrust, learned helplessness, and disengagement. Resists deficit thinking and blaming the victim (student). Instead, focuses on building learning partnerships (to reduce stress), rebuilding trust between teacher and student in the service of having permission to push students toward deeper learning.