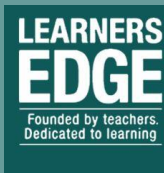


CULTURALLY RELEVANT TEACHING

Strategies to Motivate and Engage



Marcee Harris, Presenter

- Former Elementary Teacher
- Taught for 16 years in urban and suburban Minnesota schools
- Married with three young children
- Loves music and a good cold press
- Current Role: Curriculum & Instruction Specialist



Agenda

**LEARNERS
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- Stories from the front lines
- What do we mean by culturally relevant teaching?
- Changing demographics in U.S. schools
- Common misconceptions and action steps to counter them
- Resources
- Make a plan.

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In the beginning

What I thought was helping in my first years of teaching, was not enough.

- ❖ Changing the names of people in math word problems
- ❖ Reading books with diverse characters
- ❖ Becoming familiar with cultural holidays, events



Culturally Relevant Teaching

According to Gloria Ladson-Billings' research (1992):



“A pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”

- ❖ Creates a bridge between home and school
- ❖ Uses the background, knowledge and experiences of students to inform instruction

Culturally Relevant Teaching

Geneva Gay defines CRT as (2000):

“The cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant to and effective... It teaches to and through strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming.”

❖ Most important component is the power of caring.

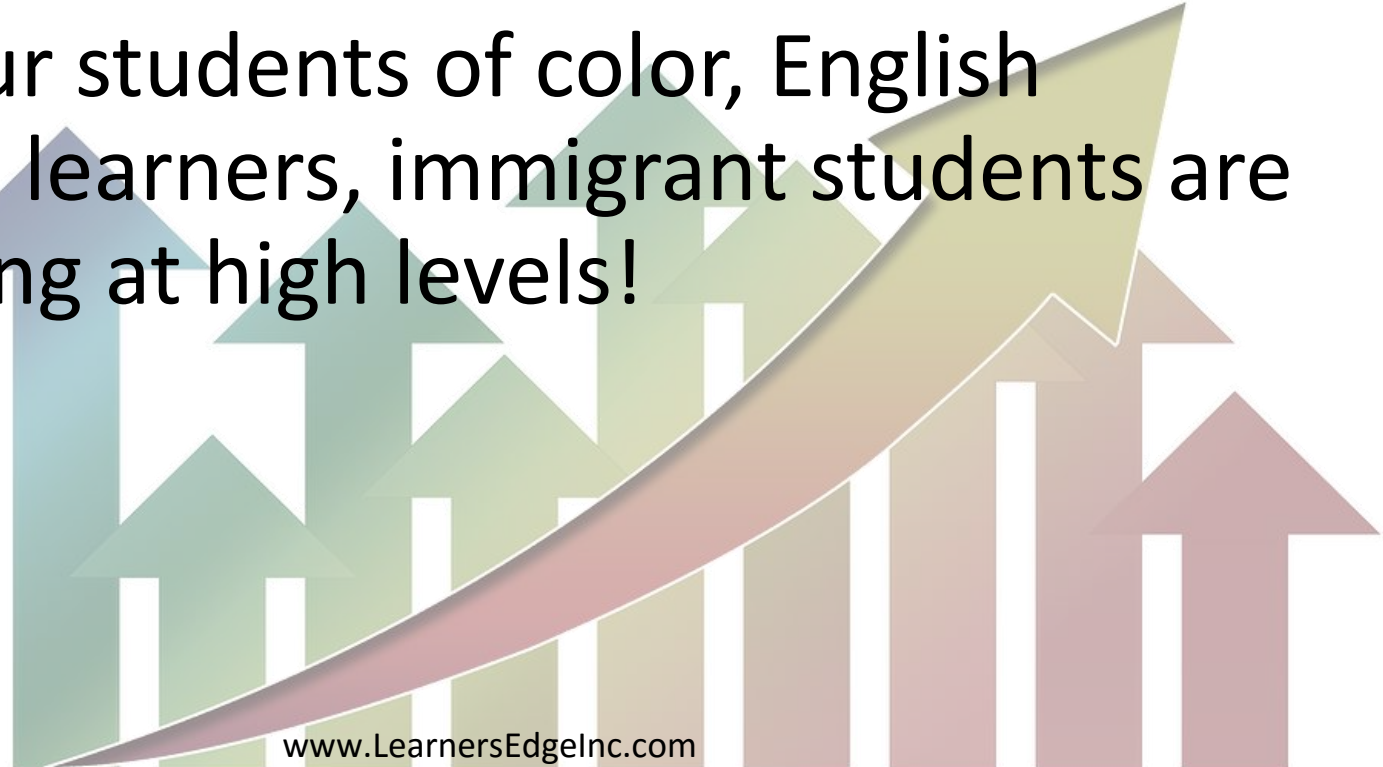


Did you know?

By around 2020, students of color will outnumber white students in the US, according to the Census Bureau.

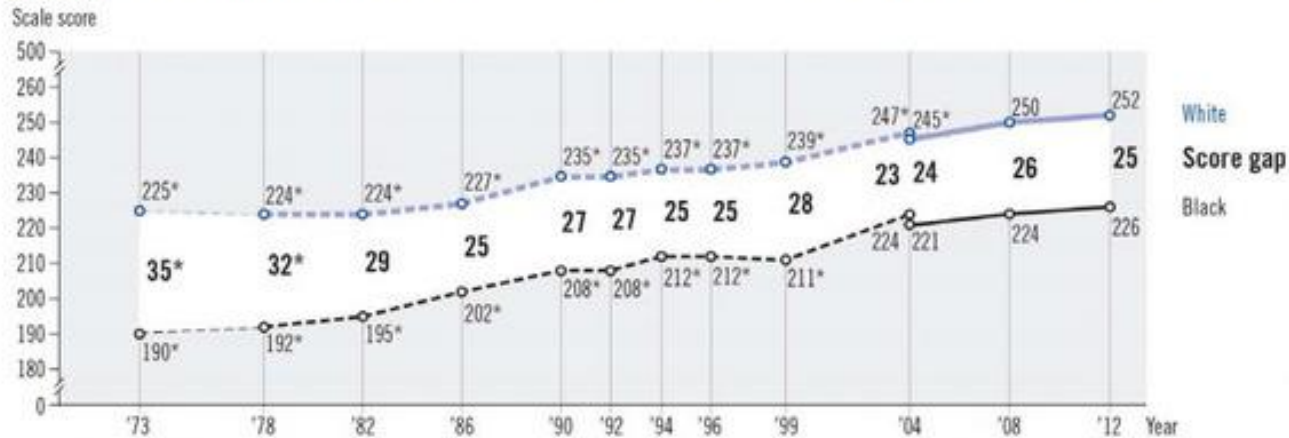
How will I know if my classroom is culturally relevant?

When your students of color, English language learners, immigrant students are succeeding at high levels!



For many schools, there continues to be a gap between the achievement of white students and students of color. This was first examined back in 1964, by the Department of Education and more than 50 years later the gap has barely narrowed.

Figure 23. Trend in NAEP mathematics average scores and score gaps for White and Black 9-year-old students



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2012.

¹ Extrapolated data adjusting for the limited number of questions from the 1973 mathematics assessment in common with the assessments that followed.

NOTE: Black includes African American. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores.

--- Extrapolated data¹
 - - - Original assessment format
 — Revised assessment format

Responses to Achievement Gap

- ❖ Enhanced Cultural Competence
- ❖ Comprehensive Support for Students
- ❖ Outreach to Students' Families
- ❖ Extended Learning Opportunities
- ❖ Classrooms that Support Learning
- ❖ Supportive School and District
- ❖ Access to Qualified Staff
- ❖ Adequate Resources and Funding



TEACHER MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CULTURALLY RELEVANT TEACHING

#1

INCORPORATE STUDENTS'
RACIAL OR ETHNIC

BACKGROUND INTO THE
CURRICULUM

Include gender, class, ability, family composition language and the values of a culture.

- ❖ Provide safe spaces where students are seen, valued, cared for and respected
- ❖ Provide opportunities to learn from others experiences and perspectives
- ❖ Better appreciation of student contributions
- ❖ Direction in curriculum creation that is relevant to particular students



Action

Classroom-Reflective Texts

- ❖ Choose texts that reflect classroom demographics.
- ❖ Follow the readings with discussions or reflective writing assignments can provide teachers with powerful information about their students' hopes, concerns, strengths and life circumstances.
- ❖ Open channels of understanding among students.
- ❖ Successful conversations about issues of identity frequently lead to deeper dialogue about students' own backgrounds and the experiences of others.



#2

TEACH ABOUT DIVERSE CULTURES THROUGH --- SEASONAL OR HOLIDAY LESSONS

The seasonal holiday approach is called “tourist multiculturalism”

- ❖ **Dictated primarily by months or seasons of the year**
 - ❖ November focus on Native Americans and Thanksgiving
 - ❖ February focus on African-American leaders or civil rights issues
- ❖ **Tends to trivialize and stereotype cultures**
 - ❖ Emphasis on traditional costumes, foods and dances
- ❖ **Avoids the everyday life experiences of people from that culture**



Action

- ❖ Move from an additive approach to curriculum development (heroes, holidays, food, etc.) to a more transformative approach.

Example: A physics teacher wouldn't just add content about women physicists and Asian American physicists, but would change the way she teaches physics, so that girls and Asian Americans can learn it more effectively.

Levels of Integration Model

Social Action Approach

Transformative Approach

Additive Approach

Contribution Approach

Banks, J.A. (1999). *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon

#3

TEACHERS IN MAJORITY WHITE
SCHOOLS DON'T HAVE TO WORRY
ABOUT CULTURALLY RELEVANT
TEACHING

Anti-Bias Education

- ❖ Research has shown that educational environments fostering critical thinking, empathy development and positive self-esteem in students can engage students in their learning, open minds and counter prejudice.
- ❖ Aims to confront and eliminate barriers of prejudice, misinformation, and bias
- ❖ Includes tips for adults and children to respect each other, themselves, and all people

Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves
(Derman-Sparks and Edwards)



Action

Reading Against the Grain

A “reading” refers to what we believe a text means, yet a text can have entirely different meaning depending on the context in which it is read.

- ❖ Students analyze the prevailing interpretations of a text and produce alternative or “resistant” readings to draw attention to gaps, silences, contradictions, beliefs and attitudes that typically go unexamined by the dominant cultural reading.
- ❖ When students read against the grain, they push back against the default, privileged reading and bring the experiences of less-represented individuals and groups into the textual discourse.

From Teaching Tolerance



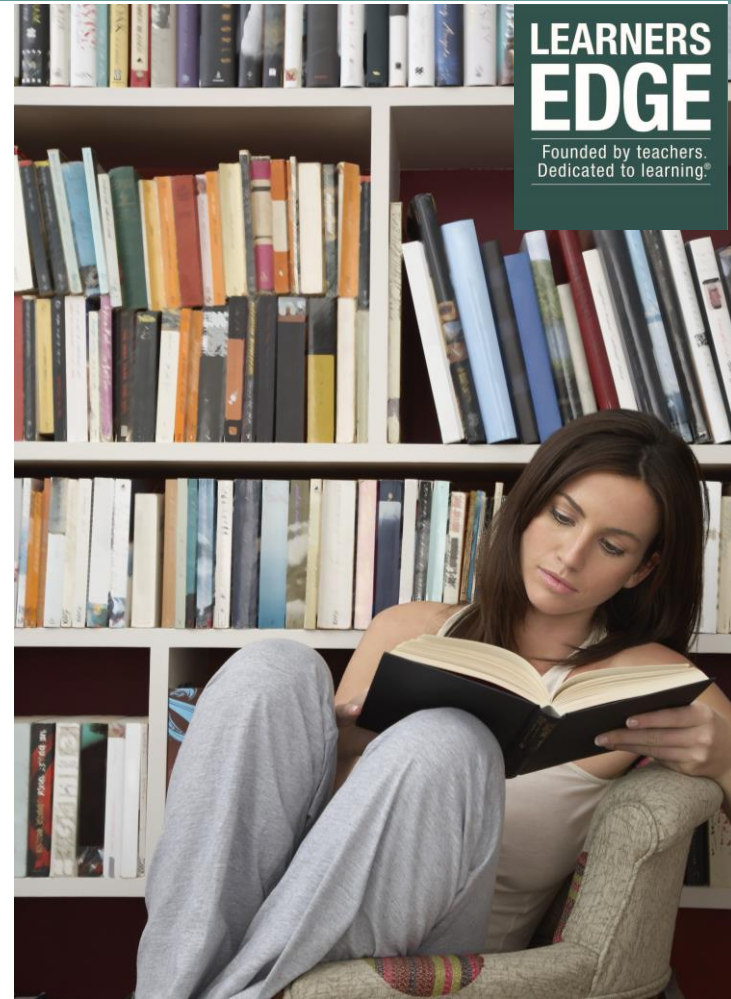
#4

CRT IS ALL ABOUT PLANNING
THE PERFECT LESSON OR
FINDING THE RIGHT STRATEGY

Teacher Mindset is Equally if Not More Important

We must look at our own thinking, how we approach our teaching and find ways to interrupt biases (both personal and structural).

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Action

We all have implicit or unconscious biases.
But how do we stop them?

“De-biasing” involves re-programming our brains
and creating new cognitive habits.

Three conditions:

1) Intention, 2) Attention, 3) Time

Habit-breaking strategies ****Practice weekly****

- ❖ Re-Association
- ❖ Refuting
- ❖ Perspective-taking
- ❖ Increasing Opportunity for Positive Contact



#5

CRT IS ALL ABOUT

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship Building

Relationship building is a good first step, but this doesn't actually increase students' ability to do more challenging work.

- ❖ When we feel cared for, our brain is flooded with oxytocin, also known as the “love” or “bonding” hormone.
- ❖ If we don't feel cared for, there's a rise in the hormone, cortisol, which causes a fight or flight reaction.
- ❖ CRT is more about building trust through a learning partnership and then using that trust to push students to higher levels of learning (building skills and the capacity to do rigorous work).

Zaretta Hammond



Action

CRT expert, Zaretta Hammond, urges teachers to show tough love in guiding students to their fullest potential.

- ❖ “Care and Push”
- ❖ Recognize the unique gifts and talents of each child
- ❖ Gain students’ trust
- ❖ Students will give you permission to push them



Now What?

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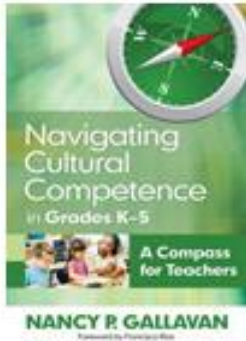
- ❖ How can you create safe spaces where students are seen, valued, cared for and respected in your classroom?
- ❖ Consider 1 change you could make to transform your curriculum from a “heroes and holidays” approach to one that incorporates non-dominant perspectives and voices.
- ❖ Commit to practicing “de-biasing” techniques weekly.

References and Resources

Slide Resources:

- ❖ Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice-- Geneva Gay (2000)
- ❖ Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students-- Zaretta Hammond (2014)
- ❖ [Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education publication](#)
- ❖ [Ready4Rigor.com](#) (Resources Page)
- ❖ [Tolerance.org](#)

Learners Edge Resources



- **Course 5702: The Culturally Competent Educator**
3 Graduate Credits

For “Culture is part of everything that is taught and caught.” Like its predecessors Diversity and Multicultural Education, “cultural competence” seeks to increase awareness of the variety of cultures represented in our classrooms today, to appreciate the backgrounds and contributions of all students, and encourages us to cultivate a depth of understanding which all educators must possess.

Because many teachers find themselves in classrooms that do not represent their personal experience, the course has been designed to encourage reflection on those experiences as well as how to use them to heighten understanding of diverse classrooms. Through examples and easy to remember tools, this course will demonstrate how to actively involve students to promote academic excellence and cultural understanding.

- **Online Blog Post: Increasing Student Engagement through Student Led Discussions**

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QUESTIONS?

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**THANK
YOU FOR
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