

# Culturally Responsive Teaching

## Definition

Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches *to and through* the strengths of these students. Culturally responsive teaching is the behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning. It is contingent on a set of racial and cultural competencies amply summarized by Teel and Obidah (2008). They include seeing cultural differences as assets; creating caring learning communities where culturally different individuals and heritages are valued; using cultural knowledge of ethnically diverse cultures, families, and communities to guide curriculum development, classroom climates, instructional strategies, and relationships with students; challenging racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of intolerance, injustice, and oppression; being change agents for social justice and academic equity; mediating power imbalances in classrooms based on race, culture, ethnicity, and class; and accepting cultural responsiveness as endemic to educational effectiveness in all areas of learning for students from all ethnic groups.

- From: Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice (2nd ed.)*, p.31

## Checklist

- Adapted from: Nation Center for Culturally Responsive Education Systems, *Equity in Special Education Placement: A School Self-Assessment Guide for Culturally Responsive Practice*, pp. 14-15

The curriculum reflects an integration of ethnic and cultural content throughout programming rather than assigning the study of diverse cultural groups to a single unit or one month.	✓
The curriculum provides opportunities for students to investigate and understand how cultural assumptions and biases influence subject areas.	✓
The curriculum fosters respect and understanding for diverse cultures by providing materials that help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, cultural, language, and ability groups.	✓
The curriculum supports and values the experiences and information students have learned within their cultural groups.	✓
The curriculum helps students make connections between what they are learning in schools and their personal choices.	✓
The curriculum situates specific cultural and local knowledge in a global context.	✓
The curriculum explicitly teaches cultural capital (the norms, behaviours, and attitudes) that provide access to achievement.	✓
The curriculum uses the local language and cultural knowledge (funds of knowledge) as a foundation for the rest of the curriculum.	✓
Teachers relate content and instructional strategies to the cultural backgrounds of their students.	✓
Teachers utilize instructional materials that reflect images and perspectives from diverse groups.	✓
Teachers helps students appreciate current and historical events from multiple perspectives.	✓
Teachers help to organize activities and projects that enable students form diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups to work together.	✓
Teachers inform students about stereotyping and other related biases that have negative effects on racial and ethnic relations.	✓