

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Toolkit

Enrollments are declining. Tuition costs are rising. COVID and online learning have changed our campus culture. The students we have in our classrooms are struggling due to myriad socioeconomic factors beyond our control as teachers.

It is because of this grim forecast, therefore, that we teachers need to be sure that our students, those determined people who have overcome so much just to be in our courses on the first day, receive a pedagogy that allows them to learn, a pedagogy with rigor that also acknowledges their unique backgrounds and skill sets rather than overlooking them.

Why is culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) important? There are, of course, pragmatic reasons centering on enrollment and retention. We need students to keep our jobs, after all. There are also personal reasons. After the years-long COVID winter and its aftermath, I think it's safe to assume we all could use some resources to rejuvenate our teaching and face what's next.

Most of all, though, CRP is the right thing to do. It's a way we can each do our part to help our students in this new future we face. If you have any questions, or just would like to talk, feel free to email me at <mike.mutschelknaus@rctc.edu> or call/text me at 608-385-5443.

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[Community College Equity Assessment Lab](#)

Based in California, this research group conducts quantitative and qualitative institutional equity research, for a price. Even so, under their resources tab is quite a bit of scholarly research that practitioners might find useful.

Implicit Bias, Blind Grading, and Rubrics

There is a groundswell of research out there, too much for me to choose any one particular representative source, that suggests we teachers can reduce our implicit grading bias through blind grading practices and evaluative rubrics. A simple search on Google or Google Scholar using any combination of these terms will provide you with many strong results.

[Kimberly Crenshaw on Intersectionality](#)

Kimberly Crenshaw, the originator of the intersectionality concept, discusses how it's not just one factor (race, class, gender, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, etc.) that affects people's interactions, but rather the complex intertwining of these factors.

[Carol Dweck TED Talk: The Power of Believing that You Can Improve](#)

You should do a search on Google, Google Scholar, and Youtube for “Carol Dweck Growth Mindset”. This TED Talk, though, is a good introduction to her core principles. Basically, if we teachers believe that our students can improve, then we will be motivated to develop curricula and strategies that help students improve. Similarly, students who know that intelligence is like a muscle, that can be strengthened with the right practice also experience faster rates of improvement.

[Empathic Joy in Positive Intergroup Relations](#)

This research study from Harvard focused specifically on teachers who used micro-affirmations in their classrooms to improve student outcomes. They did this as a deliberate strategy and had strong results. This builds on the wide body of research on micro-aggressions. It's not enough to stop micro-aggressing. It's also important to start micro-affirming.

EDX: Cornell University. Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom.

This self-paced course is based on the principle that we, as teachers, bring our complex sets of identities and privileges into the classroom with us. The course is designed to make us reflect on the ways that our consequent assumptions about student learning shape our classroom practices.

Bobbie Harro's “Cycle of Socialization”

This article, widely available online, has an excellent one-page figure that shows how our identities are shaped, reinforced, or—indeed—diminished by those around us. It provides a useful teaching exercise. Students identify their social identities and then track their history, their milestones, for each of those identities.

[Inclusive Teaching | Sheridan Center | Brown University](#)

Inclusive teaching, as a pedagogy, is defined as the explicit, deliberate inclusion of all students into our courses, assessment, and pedagogy. This web site provides broad scope of inclusive strategies that we teachers can apply in our classrooms.

[Racelighting](#)

This set of academic videos and research defines racelighting, the psychological manipulation of BIPOC people that causes them to second-guess themselves and provides tools to combat it.

[Responding to Racial Bias and Microaggressions in the online environment](#)

The best part of this hour-long Youtube video webinar is its specificity. I think our default mind-image about microaggressions is that they occur basically in face-to-face situations. For the specific teaching tips, I suggest fast forwarding to the framework part of the video.

[Stereotype Threat: A Conversation with Claude Steele](#)

You should do a Google, Google Scholar, and Youtube search on Steele and Aronson's definition of "stereotype threat", a situation in which a person can be worried that their performance will confirm a negative group stereotype. This brief Youtube conversation with Claude Steele, though, is a good place to start. Stereotype threat has significant implications for our pedagogy.

Beverly Daniel Tatum. The Complexity of Identity: "Who Am I?"

This reflective pedagogical essay, readily available on the web encourages teachers, and students, to reflect more deeply on the process of identity-building. She points out that privileged people often do not realize just how much their privileges shape them, but that people who are less privileged are very aware of how their statuses shape them.

[Universal Design for Learning in Postsecondary Education \(Rose et al.\)](#)

Back in the days before online learning really went mainstream, I used to have blind students, deaf students, and students with muscular dystrophy in my community college courses. We all did. That doesn't happen as much anymore. UDL, of course, is about providing access to all learners in our courses. It's not about tweaking one aspect or another of our courses to provide a quick fix. My former students would be quick to let you know that.

[University of Minnesota's Center for Educational Innovation](#)

As always, the CEI web site has very specific resources we can use in our courses. In addition to more materials on inclusive teaching, there are also resources on anti-racist teaching and trauma-informed teaching.

[University of Michigan Inclusive Teaching](#)

This well-curated web site provides a wealth of resources on inclusive teaching, anti-racist pedagogy, lesson-planning, and class activity ideas. It is organized so that if you are teaching a STEM course, an online course, or a large course, there are resources for you. All too often, inclusive teaching pedagogy erroneously assumes, it seems to me, that there is one teacher, in a physical classroom, with about 20 eager students. Those are not the realities we teach in, and this web site acknowledges this fact.