

Culturally Responsive Teaching Awards Celebration

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Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

An Overview of Research on Student Outcomes

BY JACQUELINE JORDAN IRVINE & WILLIS D. HAWLEY

Descriptions of and related research about culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) have appeared for decades in the education literature. However, many educators erroneously believe that CRP is simply a motivator and self-esteem builder for students of color in high-need schools without a significant body of empirical research that shows its effects on student learning. This overview of research focuses on several important aspects of effective teaching and provides examples of research showing that essential characteristics of CRP are related to positive student learning outcomes.

Culturally responsive teachers understand that students bring their culturally influenced cognition, behavior, and dispositions with them to school. These teachers not only understand student differences related to race, ethnicity, culture and language, but they use this knowledge to enrich their teaching in ways that enhance learning opportunities. Achievement relevant student assets, according to Hurley, Allen, and Boykin (2009), include students' interests and preferences; motivational inclinations; passions and commitments; prior experiences and knowledge; existent and emergent understandings and skills; personal, family and cultural values; family traditions and practices; attitudes, beliefs, and opinions; self-perceptions; and personal or collective ideologies.

Research on the Effectiveness of CRP¹

Much of the empirical research on CRP focuses on African American and Latino students, although some path breaking studies look at the effects on Hawaiian and Native American students. The review highlights some relevant studies that deal with six important inter-related pedagogical influences on student learning:

- Developing caring relationships with students while maintaining high expectations
- Engaging and motivating students
- Assessing student performance
- Grouping students for instruction
- Selecting and effectively using learning resources
- Promoting and learning from family and community engagement

Developing Caring Relationships with Students while Maintaining High Standards

A common finding of recent research on student learning is the importance of positive teacher-student relationships that focus on teachers' building relationships that result in positive academic consequences for students. The research literature on culturally responsive African American teachers and care emphasizes that caring is related to high expectations and the structured discipline these teachers impose in their classrooms. However, holding high expectations without providing needed academic support can have negative consequences. The research shows that some students of color, especially African American and Latino students, tend to be more dependent on teachers than their other-race peers, and tend to perform poorly in school when they do not like their teachers or feel that their teachers do not care for them. For example, Ronald Ferguson's (2002) investigations in 95 ethnically diverse schools in 15 school districts concluded that teachers' affective behaviors are a source of motivation and influence the achievement of African American and Hispanic students. Similarly, Cammarota & Romero (2009) documented that an academically rigorous curriculum model aligned with state standards with a strong component of authentic caring and compassion increased the achievement and graduation rate of Chicano high school students.

Engaging and Motivating Students

Geoffrey Cohen and his colleagues (2009) looked at the effects of student engagement by using culturally centered instruction that included a series of structured writing assignments focusing on self-affirming values. The African American students wrote about their own values and experiences, such as relationships with friends, family, or musical interests. Over two years, the students' grade point average improved and the rates of remediation or grade repetition decreased. At the same time, white students' performance was not negatively affected. The researcher concluded that the self-affirming intervention interrupted a recursive cycle of poor performance and prevented the achievement gap from widening over time.

Hurley, Allen, and Boykin (2009) conducted several studies that support the idea that *communalism*, a form of African American group orientation, is an important cultural consideration in the instruction of African American students. One study investigated the interaction between student ethnicity and the reward structure on math estimation task. African-American and white elementary students were studied in one of three group learning contexts: intergroup competitive, interpersonally competitive, and communal-no reward. The researchers found that the African American and white students performed best in different learning contexts. Black participants scored significantly higher than whites in the communal context and whites scored higher at posttest in the interpersonal competitive context. The reward structure of the study sessions made a difference in the performance of both African-American and white students.

Student engagement has also been considered in the research on cooperative and group learning. Well-planned and carefully constructed cooperative/team learning strategies and flexible ability grouping are particularly effective in classes containing diverse learners (Cohen, 1994). Other studies that provide evidence about student intellectual engagement and use of culturally relevant resources include: Lee (2010) in science, Copenhaver (2001), and Hill (2009) in language arts.

Assessment of Student Learning

Claude Steele (1997) and his associates have shown that stereotype threat, the internalization of social stereotypes when faced with apparently difficult tasks, can negatively influence school success and is a critical factor in the assessment of African American students' test performance. In an experimental study, they designed a stereotype-threat condition in which college students were told that a test of verbal ability diagnosed intellectual ability. In the no-stereotype-threat condition, the students were told the test was unrelated to ability. In the stereotyped condition, African American students performed significantly less well than their white peers even though they were statistically matched by ability level. In the no stereotype-threat condition, there was no difference in performance. Steele also found that when African American students simply indicated their race and were not told the test did not reflect their ability; they still performed worse than whites.

Carol Lee's Cultural Modeling Project (2007) was designed to improve the literacy skills underachieving urban high schools students by building on African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and popular culture to master complex problems in language and literacy. Cultural modeling includes the use of rap lyrics, videos, and film. Lee shows how the use of these "data sets" helped students transfer competencies developed in reasoning everyday text to reasoning required in analyzing canonical texts. In her work, Lee found increased student performance in metacognitive instructional discourse; that is, their comprehension as well as the ability to describe their own thinking and nuanced reasoning about symbolism increased as a result of this intervention.

Grouping Students for Instruction

As noted earlier in the paper, cooperative learning can be a particularly effective instructional strategy for students of color. However, Elizabeth Cohen (1994), has shown that instructional conditions like the nature of the interaction within the groups, the nature of the task, reward and task interdependence, status factors, and the role of the teacher are important considerations in designing learning groups. Cohen designed a cooperative learning instructional strategy, Complex Instruction (CI), in which teachers paid particular attention to issues of status and unequal participation. In a

series of experiments in diverse middle grades social studies classrooms, she found that students in CI classes performed significantly better, especially on higher-order thinking skills, than CI students on the control group.

Other researchers have explored student engagement and improved learning outcomes by focusing on flexible ability groupings with a high standards curriculum. In order to determine the effects of an accelerated middle school mathematics curriculum, researchers (Burris, Heubert & Levin, 2006) designed a longitudinal study in a diverse school district that evaluated students' subsequent completion of advanced high school math courses as well as their academic achievement. Their findings showed that all subgroups of students significantly improved their completion of advanced math courses, including students of color and low-SES students. The number of students of color who passed the New York Regents math test tripled, and higher percentages of African American, Latino, and low-SES students passed the exam in eighth-grade de-tracked classes than in tracked eighth- and ninth-grade classes.

Selecting and Effectively Using Learning Resources

Studies that provide evidence about student academic engagement and use of cultural resources include: Lee (2010) in science; Copenhaver (2001) and language arts and reading (Hill, 2009). In an extensive review of the research on the academic impact of ethnic studies curricula on student outcomes, Sleeter (2011) concluded that well-designed and well-taught ethnic studies curricula have positive academic and social outcomes for students. For example, she describes a middle and high school action research project designed to improve writing achievement of African American students by using literary works by African American authors and a process writing approach. The program evaluation results showed that participating students made greater gains in writing than non-participating students on the local writing assessment and the state writing test.

Promoting and Learning from Family and Community Engagement

The most often-cited research on the efficacy of culture-based learning comes from a number of studies on the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) project in Hawaii (Au & Mason, 1981). KEEP was a K-3 language arts program that incorporated the discourse skills, values, beliefs, and activities in Hawaiian homes and families into the school's instructional program. The researchers investigated the effectiveness of the KEEP culture-based education model compared to the forms of instruction typically used in public schools. KEEP students performed significantly better than the students not engaged in the program.

The Talent Quest Model (Boykin & Ellison, 2008), like KEEP, emphasizes building on students' cultural, family, and community assets. Low-achieving African American students enrolled in the program were compared to a matched sample of non-participating students. Talent Quest Model students' performance improved in reading and math. While many schools and classrooms in the United States are much more diverse than the homogeneous settings in KEEP and Talent Quest, these studies provide some evidence of the efficacy of using family and community resources in teaching.

Conclusion

Students who underachieve in school are disproportionately students of color who most need the opportunity to learn from highly effective teachers who understand the importance of the social and cultural contexts of teaching and learning. This brief overview of the research indicates that teachers who use CRP contribute to positive student learning outcomes for culturally diverse students.

This brief review of research focuses on studies that (1) meet relatively rigorous methodological standards and (2) include measured student outcomes that report performance on standardized state or national assessments, evidence of student learning on teacher-administered tests, student engagement (defined in behavioral terms), student attendance, student retention, and graduation. Quantitative works in the review used appropriate comparison or control groups and pretest and posttest measures as well as appropriate statistical analysis. Qualitative works in the review were selected if they adhered to the tenets outlined by research methodologists such as Miles and Huberman (1994), Rubin and Rubin (2005), and Corbin and Strauss (2007). Particular attention was given to issues of reliability and validity such as member checks, coding descriptions, pilot testing, multiple data sources, and triangulation of data.

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Diversity Responsive Schools

WILLIS D. HAWLEY & REBECCA JAMES WOLF // UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Overview

Given the gaps between the achievement of students of different races and ethnicities, it seems reasonable to assume that there are conditions in schools related to race and ethnicity that affect student motivation and opportunities to learn. When one does hear discussions of the need to address diversity, the usual strategy is to target the improvement of teaching. This strategy is understandable and important. But, even when the improvement of teaching is a high priority improvement strategy, the professional development that is needed for educators to meet the needs of racially and ethnically diverse students, often referred to as “Culturally Responsive Pedagogy”, is seldom integral to efforts to improve the teaching of core academic subjects.

Two other frequently heard remedies for racial and ethnic achievement gaps are “strong leadership” and an inclusive school culture. But neither of these provides much guidance for programmatic school improvement. Effective leadership is usually described in terms of heroic personal attributes—charismatic, committed, intolerant of failure, inspirational, and indefatigable. The complexity of school culture is often reduced to “high expectations” (and a requisite workshop).

Two frequently prescribed sets of strategies for narrowing the achievement gap that are *not* dealt with here are: (1) inequities among schools—such as allocation of teacher expertise and financial resources (cf. Sklar, et al., 2010; Sunderman et al., 2011)—and (2) characteristics of effective schools in which race and ethnicity are not usually implicated. To be sure, students of color benefit from clear goals, a tight fit between curriculum and assessment of learning, coherent programs, professional learning communities, extended learning time, staff stability, and other “essentials” of highly effective schools (cf. Bryk, et al., 2010; Scott, 2009; Murphy, 2010).

This chapter argues that in order to improve learning outcomes for students of color, it will be necessary to focus more than is often the case on improving within- school policies and practices that are particularly relevant to facilitating the learning of racially and ethnically diverse students. School conditions affect teaching effectiveness in powerful ways (Kennedy, 2010), not the least of which is their effects on student motivation. And, attending to these policies and practices are among the essential tasks of school leaders and these policies are the embodiment—the artifacts—of school cultures.

Of course, race and ethnicity are not the only dimensions of diversity; but they are correlated in many cases with other influences on learning, including socioeconomic status, community and family cultures, and English language facility. Moreover, everyone is diverse in some way that is relevant to their learning. Thus, by focusing on school conditions that are particularly important to the success of students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, we can learn lessons that help to identify and address school conditions that can improve the learning opportunities and outcomes of all students.

The Essentials of Diversity Responsive Schools

How would we know a Diversity Responsive School when we saw it? School policies and practices that maximize opportunities to learn for all students, but are particularly important to enhancing the learning outcomes of students of color include nuanced monitoring of both outcomes and influences on learning, relevant professional development, access to and support for success with rigorous content, fair and sensible disciplinary practices,

culturally and linguistically responsive family engagement, a multicultural curriculum, an inclusive school climate, efforts to recruit and retain a diverse staff, and open and productive discussions of issues related to race and ethnicity. These conditions can be thought of as a set of indicators of a school's responsiveness.

1. Multiple forms of data are continuously collected and used to monitor possible racial and ethnic differences in student achievement, disciplinary actions, access to learning opportunities and the composition of student learning groups.

Collecting and analyzing data on student test scores and dropout rates is commonplace. However, disaggregating outcomes by race and ethnicity needs to be more detailed than is required by state and federal policy because there are often big differences in student performance within broad categories such as Hispanic (Latino) or Asian. Second, in addition to subgroup data on student achievement, data on differences in opportunities to learn—such as grouping for instruction, curricular differences, attendance, and discipline—are also needed to make problem-solving possible (cf. Archibald & Keleher, 2008). If such data are to lead to school-wide improvement, collaborative decision-making and the willingness to engage issues related to race and ethnicity are critical—though often difficult.

2. Teachers' professional development opportunities include diversity-rich content that is integral to the teaching of academic content.

The quality of teaching students experience is the single most important school-based influence on student learning (Lewis, 2009; Rice, 2003). Sometimes, diversity-related professional development assumes that a focus on teacher awareness and dispositions is adequate to improve instruction and student learning. More important, teachers need to master diversity-related pedagogical skills, including those that are content specific, if they are to enhance the learning of racially and ethnically diverse students. Moreover, teachers need to know how to build productive interpersonal relationships across student subgroups. The difficulty of developing such relationships, which are essential to student motivation, is often underestimated. And, the importance of these caring relationships to student success appears to be greater among many students of color than they are for White and Asian students (Ferguson, 2002).

Aspects of what might be called diversity-rich content of professional development include, but are not limited to, learning activities that help teachers:

- investigate and understand how students' race, ethnicity, social class and language might be related to their learning and behavior.
- understand how the overgeneralization of characteristics of students' cultures can result in stereotyping and other unproductive teaching behaviors.
- examine how their own beliefs and dispositions might affect their relationships with diverse students.
- understand how they react to students' dress, accents, nonverbal communication, dialects and discussion modes and how their reactions affect their interactions with students.
- Know how to mediate the effects of stereotype threat experienced by students
- develop the knowledge and skills to adapt instruction to the needs and experiences of students from different racial and ethnic groups.(1)

3. Students have access to rigorous academic content and the support they need to benefit from that access.

Students from low-income families are more likely to get a larger proportion of their learning opportunities from school than students from higher-income homes (Raudenbush, 2008). And, of course, English language learners are heavily dependent on schools for their academic learning opportunities. However, for a host of reasons—some the consequence of well-meaning instructional practices that effectively dumb-down the curriculum, some related to biases and misconceptions, and some because students are sometimes reluctant to seek rigorous curricula—students of color are often less likely than white students and many Asian-descent students to be engaged in more rigorous coursework.

Among the issues here is how students are selected for gifted and talented programs and honors courses, and whether students of color have access to and support to succeed in Advanced Placement courses (Barton & Coley, 2009, p.10). Policies and practices affecting access that get less attention include mis-assignment to special

education, retention strategies, and how students are grouped for instruction within classrooms.

Mis-assignment to Special Education

Historically, black and Latino have been over-identified and placed in special education classrooms (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2006). Reasons for this include: 1) inadequate classroom instruction prior to referral to special education; 2) inconsistent, vague or arbitrary assessment and placement policies and processes; and 3) the lack of effective schooling options (Harry & Klingner, 2006).

Disproportionality in Student Retention

Minority and low-income students are more likely to be retained than their white and more affluent peers (Texas Education Agency, 1996). Research has consistently shown that retention, as commonly implemented, has a negative impact on achievement and socio-emotional adjustment and that it does not help most students “catch up” (Jimerson, 2001). There is also a relationship between retention and dropping out: students who are retained in elementary grades have a higher probability of dropping out of high school (Ou & Reynolds, 2010).

“Ability” Grouping

One of the more common ways that students experience different levels of academic rigor is that they are tracked and grouped by “ability” (students are invariably grouped by prior achievement, not ability). Grouping is a common and often necessary practice. How it is done—whether it is targeted to specific goals with progress assessed continuously and whether students are held to high standards of performance—is the key to student success. Research is clear that tracking (formal or informal) and inflexible ability grouping disadvantages most students (Hawley, 2007). On the other hand, there is evidence that very high achieving students can benefit from learning in academically homogeneous groups. The resolution of this conundrum resides in flexibility and teacher expertise in managing the instruction of diverse students (2).

4. There are well understood processes in place to fairly adjudicate school rules, identify perceived inequities and interpersonal conflict, and ensure that disciplinary policies and actions remove students from learning opportunities only as a last resort.

Maintaining safe and productive opportunities to learn is critically important for all students but many teachers struggle with classroom management and how to deal with what they view as disorderly and disruptive behavior. How teachers meet these challenges affect student motivation and opportunities to learn.

Students of color are much more likely than their white peers to be disciplined (Gay, 2006). Students of color may be more distrustful of authority and respond defensively to criticism and disciplinary action (Cohen, 2008; Noguera, 2008; Carter, 2008). Many disciplinary practices effectively reduce student learning time and this is especially true of suspension (Losen & Skiba, 2010). Thus, rules governing student behavior need to be clear and openly discussed and disciplinary action processes should be characterized by fairness and transparency. The best way to deal with the potential of disruptive behavior is to prevent it through strategies such as positive behavioral supports.

5. Family and community engagement strategies are well-developed and give particular attention to engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families.

An effective family engagement program reaches out to engage families in direct support of their children’s learning (Boufford, et al., 2009). It is not surprising that some family members who have limited education or who have experienced discrimination may be distrustful and even confrontational. This conflict can cause teachers to back away from their students’ families. Nonetheless, to develop the trust of family members and to deeply understand students, it is helpful for teachers to get to know and to engage their students’ families outside the school. This is a tall order for teachers, and it requires school level commitment and time for such engagement—more than parent-teacher conferences once a quarter—as well as collaboration with community groups and help with communicating with families with limited English.

6. The school’s curriculum embodies opportunities to learn about different cultures and interact with students of different

racess and ethnicities while being adaptive to student experiences and preferences for learning.

An effective multicultural curriculum not only provides students opportunities to learn about different cultures but uses learning resources that are “culturally familiar” to diverse students (cf. Goldenberg, Rueda & August, 2006, p.293).

A multicultural curriculum is important to being a well-educated person but, in itself, does not transform students’ preconceived beliefs about different races and ethnic groups. To have such an effect, a curriculum—and the related instructional practices—need to engage students in inter-group relationships and learning (Stephan, Renfro & Stephan, 2004).

One of the challenges facing educators who develop and use multicultural curricula is to avoid over-generalizing about the culture of students typically categorized by common racial and ethnic identities. How a multicultural curriculum is taught may be more important than the curriculum itself. (3)

7. School policies and practices reflect a commitment to inclusiveness as well as respect for the values and strengths of diverse racial and ethnic groups.

These commitments are manifest in many ways including student engagement in extra-curricular activities and leadership positions and the representation of students’ cultural diversity.

Student connectedness to school and a positive school climate have been identified as factors that support academic performance, attendance and behavior (Weiss, Cunningham, Lewis, & Clark, 2005; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health, 2009). Schools that provide opportunities for student leadership and recognize student contributions enhance that connectedness. School policies, practices, or traditions may inadvertently impose requirements that limit the number of students who can compete for elected positions or serve in leadership positions. This can result in decreased levels of student connectedness and negatively impact school climate (McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002).

In racially and ethnically diverse schools, extracurricular activities may be opportunities for interracial contact in positive settings of shared interest (Brawarsky, 1996; Denson, 2009; Slavin, 1995; Cohen, 2004). Such activities can also be opportunities for curricular enrichment and the development of leadership and social skills that ultimately contribute to student academic success. In diverse schools, extracurricular activities should be responsive to the interests of all student groups, and, at the same time, efforts should be made to encourage students of all races and ethnicities to participate in a broad range of activities.

In diversity-responsive schools, the historic experiences, values, and on-going contributions of diverse ethnic, racial, linguistic groups are evident throughout the school, including public displays, classroom environments and the library. For example, the diversity of the student body is represented in the trophy cases, student work, poster boards and other public places and classrooms. And, in depicting the heritage of different groups, stereotyping that uses “traditional” characterizations is avoided and contemporary experiences and achievements are encompassed.

8. Efforts are made to recruit and retain a racially and ethnically diverse school staff.

More than 75 percent of teachers and school administrators are white. This reality means that it is often not possible to have a racially and ethnically diverse school staff, especially one that represents the racial and ethnic diversity of a given school. Do students learn more from teachers of their own race? While research is thin, the research indicates that the racial and ethnic fit between students and teachers is correlated with student performance (Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2006). But other factors may matter more. There is evidence that teachers of color are less likely to overreact to student behaviors and thus are less likely to take disciplinary action that removes students from the classroom (Gay, 2006). Moreover, staff diversity may provide students of color with positive role models and allow students to witness positive interracial interactions.

9. The school has processes in place to surface, discuss, and address issues related to students' race and ethnicity that may represent discrimination, ineffective practice or interpersonal conflict.

We live in a society in which issues of race are pervasive for a host of economic, social and political reasons. Not surprisingly, there will be intergroup tensions in many schools. Concern about such tensions, and uncertainty about inter-cultural competence, can lead to educators' denial about the relevance of race or unwillingness to discuss perceptions that may be interpreted as racist. For these reasons, school communities need to discuss how racial attitudes and beliefs, even those that are well meaning, might be affecting student performance, professional collaboration and family engagement. Some issues that appear to be racial will turn out not to be, but a trusting and respectful learning community is critical in creating open discussions around race that lead to problem solving.

Conclusion

We have identified nine characteristics of schools that are likely to be particularly successful in facilitating the learning of racially and ethnically diverse students. These school-level policies and practices are also likely to enhance the learning of all students because, of course, all students are diverse in experiences, values and dispositions about learning.

The policies and practice discussed here are inter-related and reinforcing. But, they can be implemented individually. Research does not tell us what the relative effects of different improvements are and this will depend, in any case, on extant conditions in any given school.

Recognizing the need to be responsive to the complexity of racially and ethnically diverse students can sharpen one's focus on how policies and practices affect all students' opportunities to learn. However, adding responsiveness to students' racial and ethnic diversity to the school improvement agenda is not easy. There will be denial (e.g., we should be color blind), substantial professional development will be needed, curriculum enrichment will be required, and commitments and resources will be necessary to develop school communities of relational trust and cultural proficiency.

Notes

These are just some examples of "culturally responsive pedagogy". For overviews of such teaching see Gay (2010) and Irvine (2011).

One might expect diversity responsive schools to facilitate learning in diverse classrooms through strategies such as cooperative learning (Cooper & Slavin, 2004); peer-mediated instruction (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2009); and differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2003). See also, (Burris & Garrity, 2008)

For example see Hurley, Allen & Boykin (2009) on the importance of adapting reward structures; Lee (2010) on incorporating students' different cultural and linguistic practices in science lessons; and Cohen, et al. (2009) on differentiation in assigned writing content. However, research on the effects of multicultural curricula is generally modest and findings are inconsistent (see, Goldenberg, Rueda & August, 2006, and Stephan, Renfro & Stephan, 2004).

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The Teaching Evaluation Gap

Current Assessments of Teacher Effectiveness

Miss What's Needed to Eliminate the Achievement Gap

BY WILLIS D. HAWLEY & JACQUELINE JORDAN IRVINE

Overview

Teacher evaluation, until recently, has been a symbolic act, largely without meaning or consequence. No longer. Race to the Top requirements call for performance-based pay. The Gates Foundation's multi-million investment to define effective teaching will produce highly specified systems of teacher evaluation. Other reforms tie leadership roles to measures of teacher effectiveness.

The attention to serious teacher evaluation is long overdue. However, most of the protocols for measuring teacher performance pay inadequate attention to teaching practices that are particularly effective with students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. By ignoring these practices, generally called "culturally responsive pedagogy" (CRP), the implementation of high-stakes teaching evaluation is likely--unintentionally and ironically—to limit the learning opportunities of many students who most need highly effective teaching.

The Importance of How Teaching is Measured

Recent discussions of teacher evaluation focus on teacher performance as reflected by student test scores, or value-added measurement (VAM). But, taken in isolation, VAM will have little effect on improving teacher performance because it does not measure teaching practices. In contrast, research shows that well-executed teacher evaluation *based on observations of teacher behavior* increases teacher effectiveness. When incentives such as tenure, pay and recognition of expertise are linked to performance on these measures, teachers respond by seeking to improve the behaviors being assessed. Giving teachers the opportunity to learn how to perform the specific practices identified magnifies the effect. However, if teaching practices that have been shown to be important for students from diverse backgrounds—such as CRP-- are NOT included or adequately assessed, the achievement of students for whom these practices are important will not be fully realized.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive teachers understand that all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, bring their culturally influenced cognition, behavior, and dispositions to school. Teachers who respond to these cultural variables are particularly effective for most students of color. For example, ethnically diverse students' mastery of English, pronunciation, vocabulary, and phonology (rhythm, tempo, or pitch) often differ. What is spoken and left unspoken, whether one interrupts, defers to others, or asks direct or indirect questions can vary importantly from group to group.

Culturally responsive teachers understand how semantics, accents, dialect, and discussion modes affect teacher-student and student-student interactions. Similarly, nonverbal communications can raise questions about the cultural meanings of interpersonal space, eye contact, body language, touching, and gestures. Culturally responsive teachers not only understand differences related to race, ethnicity, culture and language, they treat them as assets upon which to build rather than as deficits to overcome.

Culturally responsive teachers know how to adapt and employ multiple representations of subject matter

knowledge using students' everyday lived experiences to find pertinent examples, comparing and contrasting, thus bridging the gap between students' personal cultural knowledge and the unknown materials and concepts to be mastered. Culturally responsive teachers learn with and from families and community organizations and use this knowledge to inform their teaching and involve families in supporting their children's education. Culturally responsive teachers also keep in mind that students of color are not mere products of their culture and avoid making generalizations about group behavior or identity. Culturally responsive teachers interact with students as individuals, caring and supporting them while holding high expectations

Unfortunately, many educators discount the effects of race and ethnicity on student learning. They may find it difficult to understand and respond to cultural differences. Many believe that race is no longer relevant or that paying attention to race is a form of discrimination. Teachers may see poverty and the social conditions as the main challenge, and not focus on their own dispositions and behaviors or inequitable school policies and practices. The socioeconomically related experiences of students are unquestionably important but students' race and ethnicity--in addition to their culture and language--are powerful influences on students' learning, independent of their family wealth.

Bringing CRP to Teacher Evaluation

Many dozens of different observation protocols exist for evaluating teacher performance. While they differ in emphasis and vocabulary, the best reflect a research-based consensus that learning is a social and cognitive endeavor influenced significantly by the readiness, beliefs and prior experiences that students bring to any particular opportunity to learn. CRP is similarly rooted in such research. But research indicates that excellent teachers can be even better when they artfully employ culturally responsive practices. Here are six examples of measures of effective teaching that embody research that demonstrates how CRP enhances student learning.

Promoting and Learning from Family and Community Engagement

Teacher interacts frequently with families with professional and cultural sensitivity to inform them about their student's progress, help them support their student's learning, and learn from families about the lived experiences of their student. The teacher uses this information in selecting learning resources and adapting instruction.

While all good teachers seek to keep families informed and encourage their involvement in school events, culturally responsive teachers seek to (a) help families to support their children's learning and (b) learn *with and from* families in several ways, including visits to homes and communities. In addition, culturally responsive teachers incorporate what they learn about students and families and differentiate their instruction accordingly, when appropriate.

Developing Caring Relationships with Students

Classroom interactions between the teacher and individual students are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring and sensitivity to students' cultures and levels of development. Teacher holds high expectations for all students and provides them with needed support. While recognizing the importance of students' racial, ethnic and cultural identities, teacher avoids related stereotypes.

Of course, all students should be treated in a caring way, but research indicates that this is especially important for the success of students of color. This may be because students of color are more likely than their white peers to have had negative experiences in school or to know family members or friends who are dissatisfied with their school years. Developing caring relationships does not involve lowering demands in order to boost student self-esteem; high expectations must be accompanied by support for high achievement and efforts to build students' confidence in their ability to succeed. Students of color often respond positively to teachers who show interest in and respect for their racial and ethnic identity.

Engaging and Motivating Students

Learning activities build on the lived experiences of diverse learners and support instructional outcomes. Teacher engages students in high-level cognitive activities that are differentiated, as appropriate, for individual learners.

Teacher takes into account differences in semantics, accents, dialects and language facility as well as differences in student responsiveness to different types of rewards for high achievement.

Many students of color are more likely than white students to have been, or who have friends and family members who have been, relatively unsuccessful in school. Because of factors such as poor quality teachers, lack of resources, and social stereotypes, students of color may lack confidence in their ability to productively undertake challenging tasks. This uncertainty can be addressed by linking assignments to familiar personal experiences, by ensuring students of needed support, and providing examples of past success by them or by people with whom they identify. Motivating performance among diverse students can require diverse rewards, even in the context of the same task. Excellent teachers try to learn from families how students respond to different types of incentives.

Assessing Student Performance

Assessments of learning are based on a variety of measures of student learning that take into account differences in students' cultural experiences and language facility. Attention is paid to the possibility that students' performance will be based on their confidence about doing well rather than their actual knowledge of the content being assessed.

Culturally responsive teachers use a variety of measures to assess student performance. Differentiation of assessment should not lead to lower expectations or to the perception by students—or their peers—that they are being held to different standards. Good assessment requires readying students for the task ahead. For culturally responsive teachers, this does not mean conventional “test prep”, but anticipating and addressing the sources of student uncertainty about successful performance.

Grouping Students for Instruction

Various grouping strategies are flexibly used. Groups that are based on prior achievement are used sparingly and for specific purposes. Racially and ethnically homogeneous groups are minimized and student differences in readiness to contribute to group learning is taken into account.

Instructional grouping in diverse classrooms poses more challenges than in homogeneous classrooms. For example, some evaluation instruments encourage teachers to allow students to choose their learning partners but research shows that students tend to select partners from their own ethnic groups and struggling students may choose to learn in groups of students who are not high achievers. Further, students from some cultural backgrounds or with limited English may be reticent to participate in group activities and defer to more assertive and academically confident peers.

Selecting and Effectively Using Learning Resources

Learning resources engage all students in higher-order intellectual challenges. They incorporate a variety of materials that reflect the cultural diversity of the school, the community, the nation and the world.

Simply infusing representations of racially and ethnically diverse people or traditions in a lesson has little effect on student engagement or achievement. Using diverse learning resources to deeply explore content and using these resources to enhance racial and ethnic identity is effective in raising student engagement and achievement. Culturally responsive teachers want all students to learn about the lives and heritage of people of diverse backgrounds while providing students opportunities to learn from materials with which they can identify.

Conclusion

The measures identified above for assessing culturally responsive teaching describe the practice of all effective teachers, regardless of the characteristics of their students. All students bring their race, ethnicity, culture and language facility with them to schools. But race, ethnicity, subgroup culture and language are not equally relevant to the learning opportunities of all students or to educators' dispositions about, and understandings of, student behavior and readiness to learn. The experiences of most students of color are often different from those of most white students because of their family histories, the racially isolated character of their communities, and the likelihood that their skin

color and that of their families has resulted in subtle or overt discrimination and its consequences.

The evaluation instruments used today will most likely identify a teacher who is highly competent in culturally responsive pedagogy as an excellent teacher. But they will also likely judge as excellent teachers who do not implement culturally responsive practices.

It is essential to include explicit expectations related to CRP throughout teacher evaluation programs. The specific measures (i.e., rubrics) in teacher evaluation instruments will become the accepted definitions of effective teaching. If culturally responsive practices are not explicitly included, or CRP is referred to only vaguely —e.g., “take into account student diversity”—we should not expect to see improvements in teacher capacity to meet the particular needs of students from racially, ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Moreover, teachers judged as highly effective are likely to receive salary increases, to be seen by other teachers as role models and to be selected as mentors or otherwise recognized. If exceptional effectiveness can be achieved without expertise in CRP, teachers seeking to improve will not be motivated or get the support they need to develop culturally responsive expertise.

Students from diverse backgrounds need the opportunity to learn from highly effective teachers who have the capacity for CRP in their repertoire of professional expertise. It follows that teachers’ ability to engage in CRP must be recognized, rewarded and further developed to ensure that all students achieve at high levels.