

# Culturally Responsive Practices

Middle School

High school

Elementary Education



## Intervention Overview

Students of color are at an increased risk of psychological distress, suicide, problem behavior, and decreased academic success as compared to their peers (Aud et al., 2011; Blake et al., 2011; Cholewa et al., 2014). Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in education has developed as a way to improve the belonging, engagement, and academic achievement of students with diverse cultural backgrounds (Cholewa et al., 2014; Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011). According to Cholewa et al. (2014), CRP in the classroom involves using language that is respectful of diverse cultures, building on existing knowledge and familiar communication styles, and integrating music and dance.

Educators' use of CRP can help students feel more excitement towards the curriculum. One teacher, Mrs. Morris, drew from her students' unique backgrounds to enhance her curriculum and pedagogy in a predominantly African-American school (Cholewa et al., 2014). She incorporated African-American values, such as communalism, and music and dance styles popular among African-American students. She also used a call and response communication style to engage her students in answering questions. The energy and vitality she created through CRP promoted zest and engagement in her classroom (Cholewa et al., 2014).

Similarly, one social studies teacher incorporated his students' cultural backgrounds into his history lessons (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011). Students particularly enjoyed his lessons on the history of the origin and evolution of the usage of the "N word", his rap version of the Declaration of Independence, and field trips to the African American Research Library and a Tortilla Factory. Many students reported that these activities were engaging, fun, and helped them feel valued and understood (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011).

## Intervention Guide

Grade Level: All

Materials: Varies

Duration This practice is intended to be embedded into daily teaching.

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Implementation: As you evaluate your use of CRP, it is important to know your students and adapt your lessons accordingly. The Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley recommends considering the what, who, why and how of your teaching and asking yourself questions such as:

- “Are there stereotypes or prejudices that this lesson or practice may implicitly promote?”
  - “How is this lesson or practice relevant to all of my students?”
  - “How might my beliefs about this topic, lesson, and/or practice differ from my students’ and their families’ beliefs? Does this practice privilege my values over theirs in any way?”
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## References:

- Cholewa, B., Goodman, R.D., West-Olatunji, C., & Amatea, E. (2014). A qualitative examination of the impact of culturally responsive educational practices on the psychological well-being of students of color. *Urban Review*, 46, 574–596 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-014-0272-y>.
- Sampson, D., & Garrison-Wade, D. (2011). Cultural vibrancy: Exploring the preferences of African American children toward culturally relevant and non-culturally relevant lessons. *Urban Review*, 43, 279–309. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11256-010-0170-x>
- Greater Good Science Center. (n.d.). *Making practices culturally responsive*. [https://ggie.berkeley.edu/making-practices-culturally-responsive/#tab\\_\\_1](https://ggie.berkeley.edu/making-practices-culturally-responsive/#tab__1)



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