

## *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Some Key Features*

Sonia Nieto  
Professor Emerita, Language, Literacy, and Culture  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

What Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is *not*:

- A pre-determined curriculum
- A specific set of strategies
- A watering down of the curriculum
- A “feel-good” approach
- Only for students of particular backgrounds

What CRP *is*:

- A mindset that respects and honors students’ individuality as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories
- A way to include these in the curriculum and through teaching approaches
- A commitment to continuing to learn about one’s students’ individuality as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories
- A stance and a set of dispositions including:
  - Engaging in critical self-reflection about one’s values, biases, strengths, and limitations, and how these can affect one’s effectiveness with students of diverse backgrounds
  - Valuing language and culture in word and deed
  - Insisting on high quality and excellent work from all students
  - Affirming students’ identities while also expanding their world

- Honoring families
- Exemplifying a commitment to life-long learning

Some Practical Examples:

- Learn to say students' names correctly
- Label room with languages spoken by students
- Display the work of all students
- Learn as much as you can about your students
- Get to know your students' families by engaging in authentic family outreach
- Learn another language
- Learn about and become involved in the community

### **Recommended Brief Bibliography**

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.  
New York: Teachers College Press.

Irizarry, J. G. (2011). Culturally responsive pedagogy. In J. M. Cooper (Ed.), *Classroom teaching skills*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed (pp 188-214). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Irvine, J. J. (Ed.) (1997). *Critical knowledge for diverse teachers and learners*.  
Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education  
(AACTE).

Irvine, J. J. (2003). *Educating teachers for diversity: Seeing with a cultural eye*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Irvine, J. J. & Hawley, W. D. (2011). Culturally responsive pedagogy: An overview of research on student outcomes. In *Culturally responsive teaching awards celebration* (pp. 2-5). Pew Conference Center, Washington, DC.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of American American children*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 465-491.

Nieto, S. (2013). *Finding joy in teaching students of diverse backgrounds: Culturally responsive and socially just practices in U.S. classrooms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publishers.

Nieto, S. (2012). Honoring the lives of all children: Identity, culture, and language. In B. Falk (Ed), *Defending childhood: Keeping the promise of early education* (pp. 48-62). New York: Teachers College Press.

Rolón-Dow, R. (2005). Critical care: A color(full) analysis of care narratives in the schooling experiences of Puerto Rican girls. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42 (1), 77-111.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany: State University of New York Press.