

## Book Review

### Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teaching like Our Students 'Lives Matter

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The book clarifies the key concepts and issues that language teachers, language learners, administrators, and language test experts are faced with. It was written to provide a connection between the theories of culturally responsive pedagogy with practicalities of this pedagogy. It covers our language teacher-students' questions about how to 'deal with' culturally responsive pedagogy. It provides not only a set of tools or methods for teaching language but also an amalgamation of theory, research, and a conceptual structure for dealing with cultural responsiveness to students.

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## 1. Book Review

*Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teaching like Our Students' Lives Matter* clarifies the key concepts and issues that language teachers, language learners, administrators, and language test experts are faced with. The book was written to provide a connection between the theories of culturally responsive pedagogy with practicalities of this pedagogy. It covers our language teacher-students' questions about how to 'deal with' culturally responsive pedagogy. It provides not only a set of tools or methods for teaching language but also an amalgamation of theory, research, and a conceptual structure for dealing with cultural responsiveness to students. The book is somehow suitable for pre-service and experienced language teachers who would like to

be effective when they teach culturally and linguistically diverse students and want to take all language learners into consideration.

The book consists of 11 chapters. In chapter one, *Current Challenges and Frameworks*, the authors discuss a changing world for education, the demographics of U.S. educational context, standards and structures for supporting teacher effectiveness with all students, including language students, conceptual framework of culturally responsive teaching, social justice in education, multicultural education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally responsive pedagogy. In chapter two, *Theoretical Frameworks and Research*, the authors provide a general picture of "the theoretical backgrounds of culturally responsive teaching". It deals with issues such as "sociocultural theory, underlying assumptions, etc. Chapter three, *Contextualizing Student Achievement and Teacher Education*, establishes a rationale for culturally responsive pedagogy using an examination of students' performance in schools and studies of teachers' preparation to effectively teach a diverse student population in multicultural, multilingual, inclusive school contexts. In chapter three, we face topics such as "contextualizing student's achievement and teacher education, English language learners' achievement, achievement gap, language teachers and teacher education, and the relation between teaching and student achievement, etc. " In chapter four, *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: The Stance from Professional Organizations*, the authors talk about issues such as "culturally responsive pedagogy: the stance from professional organizations, professional organizations, teacher-focused membership, professional development, supervision, and teacher education, professional centers for educators". Then in chapter five, *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: National and State-Levels*, the authors narrow the view to a U.S.-based context and address national directives and see topics such as state-level context: a focus on COLORADO. Chapter six, *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Effective Teaching*, discusses topics such as "culturally responsive pedagogy: effective teaching, taking steps towards a culturally responsive pedagogy, racial/ethnic and cultural identity, societal structures, meritocracy in U.S. culture and education, attitudes and beliefs about cultural diversity, planning for culturally responsive pedagogy: an organizational framework, etc. It suggests the questions, "will I know it if I see it?" and "can I do it?". In chapter seven, *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: District and School Levels*, the author provides an overview of "district and school levels."—two large-scale districts where there is an emphasis on narrowing the achievement gap and ensuring that all ELL students (English language learners) achieve high academic standards in an environment that values linguistic and cultural diversity. In chapter eight, *Grade 3 Literacy Lesson with a Culturally Responsive Focus*, the book talks about "grade 3 literacy lesson with a culturally responsive focus, teacher profile, sociocultural classroom context, research foundations in literacy instruction for ELL students, and being responsive to students' culture." Chapter nine is on *Grade 5 Mathematics Lesson with a Culturally Responsive Focus*. The authors talk about "teacher profile, sociocultural classroom context, research foundations in mathematics instruction for all students, and being responsive to students' culture." Chapter ten, *Grade 9 Science Lesson with a Culturally Responsive Focus*, discusses topics such as "sociocultural classroom context, and research foundations in science instruction for all students." Finally, the authors in chapter eleven, *Mentoring and Supporting Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices*, describe using the organizational framework to reflect on the classroom, especially language classroom, reflecting on the literacy scenario, reflecting on the math scenario, reflecting on the science scenario and supporting teachers in their journey towards culturally responsive pedagogy.

Indeed, teaching, culture and contexts are not separable from each other. The book is also good for those who want to teach literacy and language to English language learners. When culture and pedagogy are together, the result involves knowledge and skills for teachers to use and engage a culturally-diverse student population. Culturally responsive teaching feeds and cares for students' academic, social, emotional, cultural, psychological, and physiological well-being. For a culturally-responsive pedagogy, students' success is important—all students—including students who are from a variety of languages, cultures, racial/ethnic backgrounds, etc. Education is based on sociopolitical and sociocultural contexts. We should not decontextualize teaching and learning from culture. In this book, language and literature are inseparable from each other. The book contains learner information that can be used for the purposes of planning and instruction, language teachers can consider the inter-connection of curriculum, content, and the cultures of learners.

The book familiarizes teachers including language teachers with the communities of the students. Therefore language teachers can incorporate relevant experiences and resources into school practices. It illustrates teacher and student demographics and ethnic gap within the U.S. public schools. It calls for language teachers to create respectful, inclusive and supportive environments in which authentic learning communities can be strengthened. It recognizes the different cultures and experiences of the language learners and plans for this cultural incongruence. Language teachers using this book will come to a kind of understanding that the different cultures of the students can affect their thinking, beliefs and behaviors, so these different cultures can overshadow their own teaching and learning. The last but not the least word is that in this book, culture is at the center of all we do in education.

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