

# Culturally Responsive Practices

A tip-sheet for connecting effectively with students of different cultural backgrounds.



## What are Culturally Responsive Practices?

These practices include the ability to learn from and relate respectfully with people of your own culture, as well as those from other cultures.

**Culturally Responsive Practices** support and facilitate the learning of students from all different cultures and backgrounds. They emphasize equity in education by elevating the learning capacity of students who are often marginalized based on their cultural background. When teachers/mentors hold a high level of cultural competence and transmit this knowledge and understanding to their students and their families, they promote culturally responsive environments.

## Why are they important?

- They help build strong relationships and a positive strong community.
- They create a positive atmosphere where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas and engaging in activities.
- Being aware of people's cultures and backgrounds helps overcome implicit biases that we all have.

### **Example of a non-culturally responsive practice:**

Responding negatively or negating a method of solving a math problem because a student chooses to use a process different from the methods taught in class.

### **Identifying our own implicit biases to respond with more cultural sensitivity:**

Implicit biases are attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious way. Although it is okay and normal to have these biases, being aware of them helps us be more culturally responsive.

### **How do I connect with my diverse students? How do I make sure that each student is reaching his or her full learning potential?**

Find tips on the next page!

# Tips for Culturally Responsive Practices

## Show interest in your students' lives.

Get to know your students beyond their names to build a connection with them.

Building a connection with your student is important for gaining their respect and understanding more about their background. This can be done by asking them about their lives. For example, ask them about their culture, their hobbies, favorite tv shows, and even their favorite food. Anything that you think will help you get to know them better as a person. Even asking them to teach you some words in their native language may help build a connection.



## Avoid making negative assumptions about your youth.

Take time to reflect on your own implicit biases.

While working with your students, you may experience difficult scenarios such as lack of engagement or a student struggling to solve a problem. In the first scenario, try to understand why your student is not engaged rather than assuming he or she is lazy or does not care about learning. If your student is struggling with a particular problem or activity, avoid assuming they have a learning problem. Instead, try to explain the problem in different ways.



## Set high standards while providing support.

Assume your youth is capable of behaving and learning at a high level.

Taking away negative assumptions and replacing them with high standard and expectations for your youth motivates them to perform better. These high standards should be placed equally on all students, regardless of their background to end our biases and aim for the success of each student. While implementing these high standards, you must also provide your youth with the support necessary to meet these expectations. This may vary based on the students' backgrounds.

# Additional Reading

---

- Berghoef, K. (2019, June 21). What Does Implicit Bias Really Mean? Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/understanding-implicit-bias-4165634>
- Finley, T. (2019, March 25). A Look at Implicit Bias and Microaggressions. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/look-implicit-bias-and-microaggressions>
- Flores, G. M. (2017). *Latina teachers: Creating careers and guarding culture*. NYU Press.
- Gunn, J. (2018, December 3). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory & Strategies* by Zaretta Hammond. Retrieved from <https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/leaders-link/culturally-responsive-teaching-strategies/>
- Hammond, Z. (2015, April 1). 3 Tips to Make Any Lesson More Culturally Responsive. Retrieved from <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/culturally-responsive-teaching-strategies/>
- Johnson, L. (2007). Rethinking successful school leadership in challenging US schools: Culturally responsive practices in school-community relationships. *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM))*, 35(3)
- Trach, E. (2017, November 20). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: 16 Ways to Integrate It Into Your Classroom*. Retrieved from <https://www.schoology.com/blog/culturally-responsive-teaching-16-ways-integrate-it-your-classroom>
- Wlodkowski, R. J., & Ginsberg, M. B. (1995, September). A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept95/vol53/num01/A-Framework-for-Culturally-Responsive-Teaching.aspx>