



CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING & *THE BRAIN*

Handouts

June 18, 2019

READY for RIGOR

A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching



AWARENESS

- Know and own your cultural lens
- Understand the three levels of culture
- Recognize cultural archetypes of individualism and collectivism
- Understand how the brain learns
- Acknowledge the socio-political context around race and language
- Recognize your brain's triggers around race and culture
- Broaden your interpretation of culturally and linguistically diverse students' learning behaviors



LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

- Reimagine the student and teacher relationship as a partnership
- Take responsibility to reduce students' social-emotional stress from stereotype threat and microaggressions
- Balance giving students both care and push
- Help students cultivate a positive mindset and sense of self-efficacy
- Support each student to take greater ownership for his learning
- Give students language to talk about their learning moves



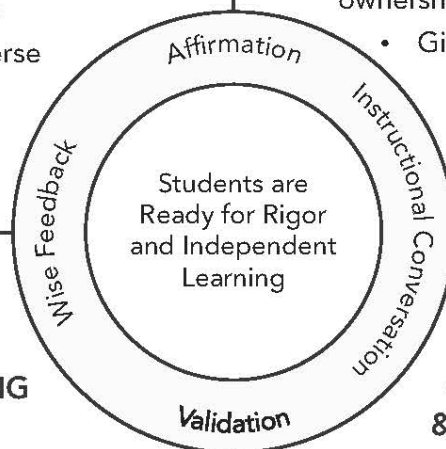
INFORMATION PROCESSING

- Provide appropriate challenge in order to stimulate brain growth to increase intellectual capacity
- Help students process new content using methods from oral traditions
- Connect new content to culturally relevant examples and metaphors from students' community and everyday lives
- Provide students authentic opportunities to process content
- Teach students cognitive routines using the brain's natural learning systems
- Use formative assessments and feedback to increase intellectual capacity



COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS & LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Create an environment that is intellectually and socially safe for learning
- Make space for student voice and agency
- Build classroom culture and learning around communal (sociocultural) talk and task structures
- Use classroom rituals and routines to support a culture of learning
- Use principles of restorative justice to manage conflicts and redirect negative behavior



HOW TO MAKE A SWITCH

For things to change, somebody somewhere has to start acting differently. Maybe it's you, maybe it's your team.

Picture that person (or people).

Each has an emotional Elephant side and a rational Rider side. You've got to reach both. And you've also got to clear the way for them to succeed. In short, you must do three things:

➔ **DIRECT** the Rider

FOLLOW THE BRIGHT SPOTS. Investigate what's working and clone it. [Jerry Sternin in Vietnam, solutions-focused therapy]

SCRIPT THE CRITICAL MOVES. Don't think big picture, think in terms of specific behaviors. [1% milk, four rules at the Brazilian railroad]

POINT TO THE DESTINATION. Change is easier when you know where you're going and why it's worth it. ["You'll be third graders soon," "No dry holes" at BP]

➔ **MOTIVATE** the Elephant

FIND THE FEELING. Knowing something isn't enough to cause change. Make people feel something. [Piling gloves on the table, the chemotherapy video game, Robyn Waters's demos at Target]

SHRINK THE CHANGE. Break down the change until it no longer spooks the Elephant. [The 5-Minute Room Rescue, procurement reform]

GROW YOUR PEOPLE. Cultivate a sense of identity and instill the growth mindset. [Brasilata's "inventors," junior-high math kids' turnaround]

➔ **SHAPE** the Path

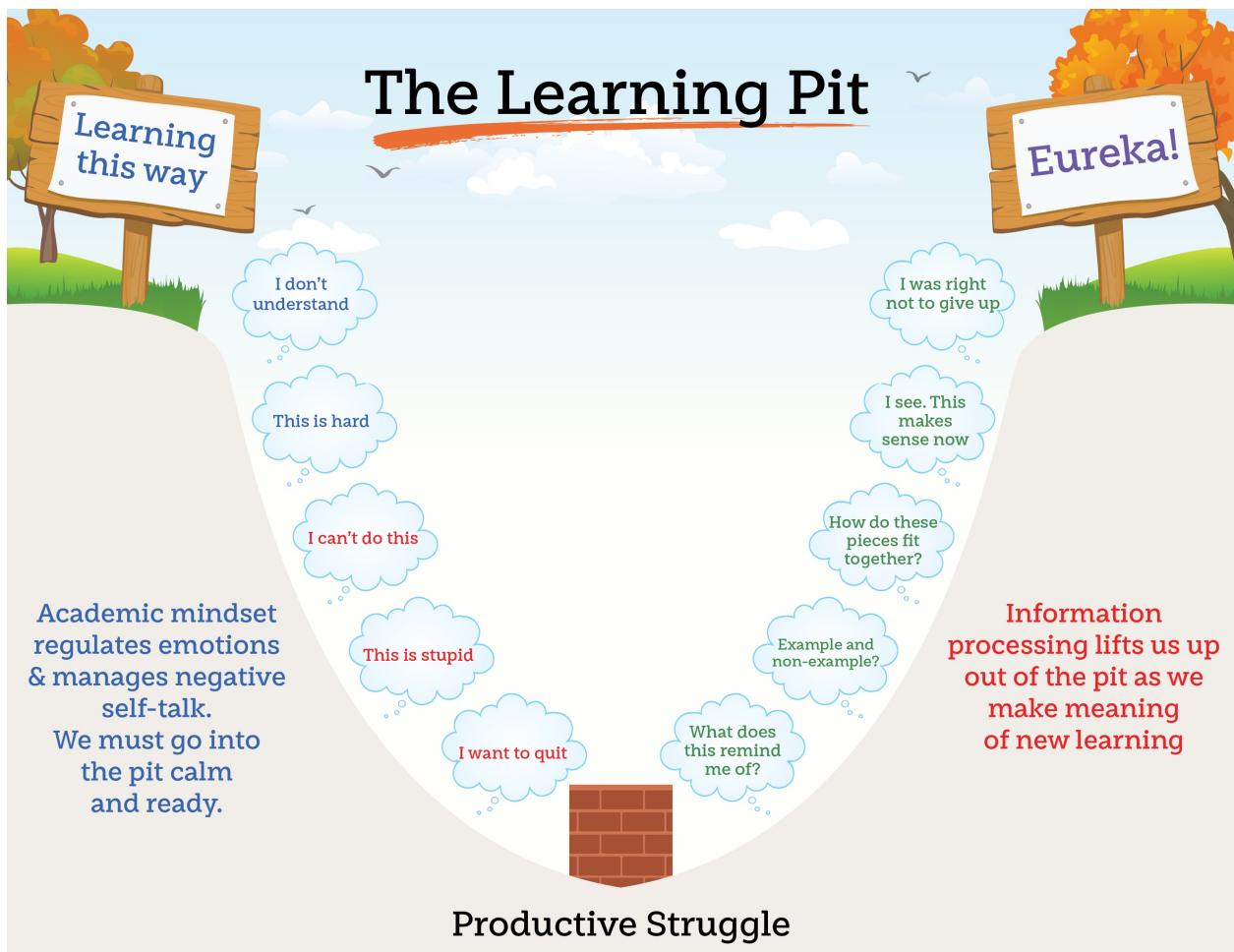
TWEAK THE ENVIRONMENT. When the situation changes, the behavior changes. So change the situation. [Throwing out the phone system at Rackspace, 1-Click ordering, simplifying the online time sheet]

BUILD HABITS. When behavior is habitual, it's "free"—it doesn't tax the Rider. Look for ways to encourage habits. [Setting "action triggers," eating two bowls of soup while dieting, using checklists]

RALLY THE HERD. Behavior is contagious. Help it spread. ["Fataki" in Tanzania, "free spaces" in hospitals, seeding the tip jar]

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT: COGNITIVE CHALLENGE REQUIRED

Notes:



Levels of Engagement

According to Phillip Schlechty, there are five ways that students respond or adapt to school-related tasks and activities.



ENGAGEMENT

HIGH ATTENTION - HIGH COMMITMENT

The student associates the task with a result or product that has meaning and value for the student. The student will persist in the face of difficulty and will learn at high and profound levels.



STRATEGIC COMPLIANCE

HIGH ATTENTION - LOW COMMITMENT

The task has little inherent or direct value to the student, but the student associates it with outcomes or results that do have value to the student. (such as grades) Student will abandon work if extrinsic goals are not realized and will not retain what is learned.



RITUAL COMPLIANCE

LOW ATTENTION - LOW COMMITMENT

The student is willing to expend whatever effort is needed to avoid negative consequences. The emphasis is on meeting the minimum requirements. The student will learn at low and superficial levels.



RETREATISM

NO ATTENTION - NO COMMITMENT

The student is disengaged from the task and does not attempt to comply with its demands, but does not try to disrupt the work or substitute other activities for it. The student does not participate and learns little or nothing from the task.



REBELLION

DIVERTED ATTENTION - NO COMMITMENT

The student refuses to do the work, acts in ways to disrupt others, or substitutes tasks and activities to which he or she is committed. Student develops poor work sometimes negative attitudes toward formal education and intellectual tasks.

based on P. Schlechty and vizualization by R. Rios

This is Your Brain on Trust

Sympathetic



Parasympathetic



Polyvagal



Neuroscience of Trust and Connection as a Walk Through Lens

AVOIDING (Cortisol inducing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the interaction of the teacher with the students seem “tense”?• Does the teacher seem overly technical in how the classroom is run?• Do students seem to be in strategic or ritual compliance?• Key word: Disengaged
APPROACHING (Dopamine activating)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do students seem energized?• Do students show curiosity about what is being presented?• Are students making a connection to the work?• Key words: Participating/Actively Engaged
ATTACHING (Oxytocin releasing & sustaining)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do students seem connected as a community of learners?• Are there routines and rituals to reinforce student interaction before and during instruction?

THE INDIVIDUALISM – COLLECTIVISM CONTINUUM

The Cultural Dimensions Index was created by cultural psychologist, Geert Hofstede. Countries are evaluated on a 100-point scale in seven dimensions. One dimension is the level of individualism within a society. At the high end of the scale are extremely individualist cultures (self oriented, individual effort favored in business and learning, competition over cooperation) while a lower number signals a more collectivist culture (group orientation, relationships essential to business and learning, and cooperation over competition).

Country	Score	Country	Score
United States	91	United Arab Emirates	38
Australia	90	Turkey	37
United Kingdom	89	Uruguay	36
Netherlands	80	Greece	35
New Zealand	79	Philippines	32
Italy	76	Mexico	30
Belgium	75	Tanzania	27
Denmark	74	Ethiopia	27
France	71	Kenya	27
Sweden	71	Portugal	27
Ireland	70	Zambia	27
Norway	69	Malaysia	26
Switzerland	68	Hong Kong	25
Germany	67	Chile	23
South Africa	65	China	20
Finland	63	Ghana	20
Poland	60	Nigeria	20
Czech Republic	58	Sierra Leone	20
Austria	55	Singapore	20
Hungary	55	Thailand	20
Israel	54	El Salvador	19
Spain	51	South Korea	18
India	48	Taiwan	17
Argentina	41	Peru	16
Japan	41	Costa Rica	15
Iran	41	Indonesia	14
Jamaica	39	Pakistan	14
Brazil	38	Colombia	13
Egypt	38	Venezuela	12
Iraq	38	Panama	11
Kuwait	38	Ecuador	8
Lebanon	38	Guatemala	6
Saudi Arabia	38		

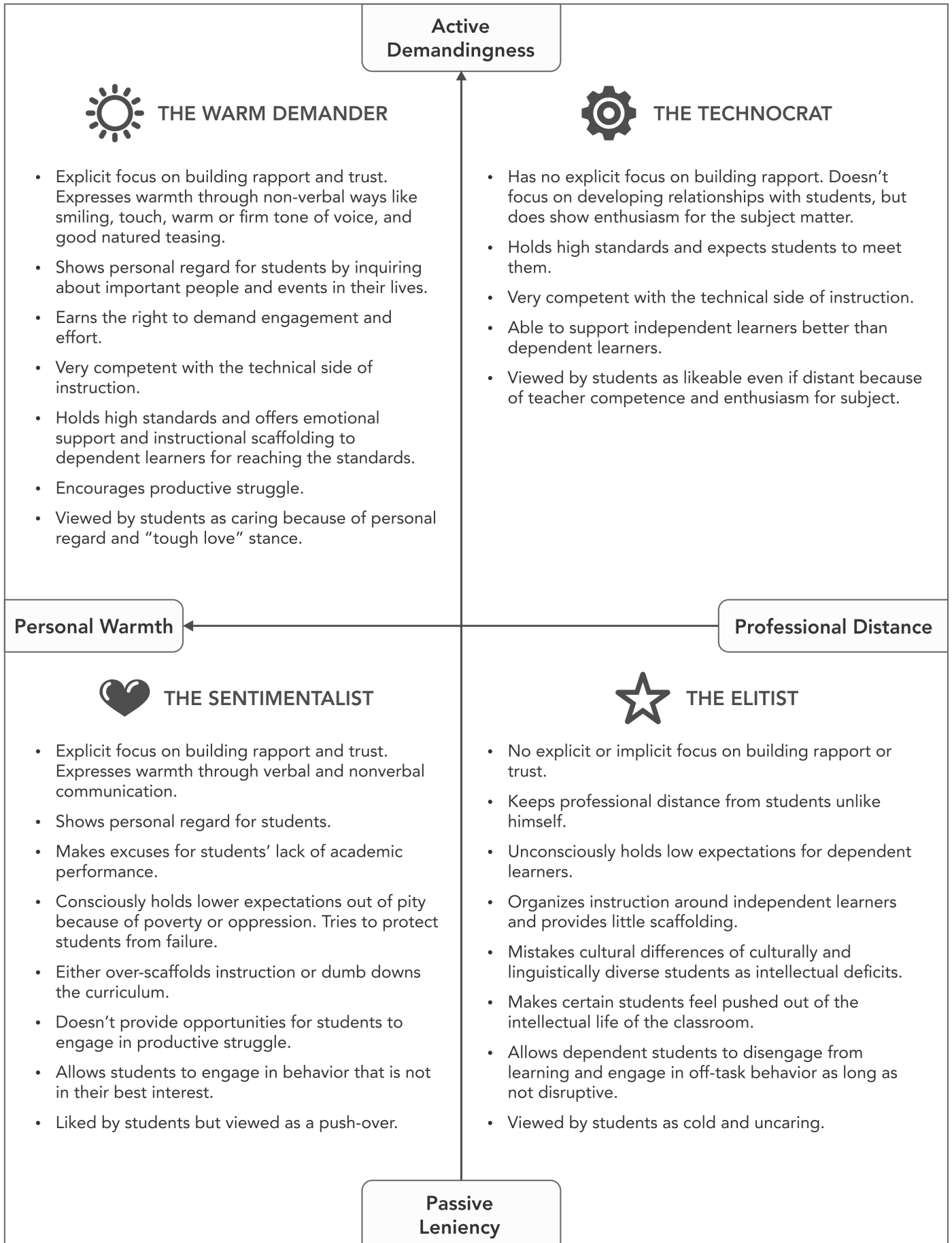
Collectivism in Action

Key points to remember as we work toward bringing more collectivist practices to our school culture:

- We are not trying to use collectivism to “reform” diverse parents so they will assimilate.
- We are not trying to “teach” collectivism. We are trying to embody practices so that the ethos of collectivism is felt when parents come to school.
- We recognize that social-emotional development plus academic achievement is the goal of collectivist cultures.

Element	In Action
<p>Builds connection through empathy and authentic social interaction (i.e., storytelling, “small talk”, personalization of services)</p>	<p>Faculty and staff engage in the art of “rapport-building” small talk when parents come on to campus. Teachers engage in “one-to-ones” with parents prior to parent-teacher conferences. Storytelling is a common feature of how school communicates with parents (i.e., share history of the school, reveal school values, etc.).</p>
<p>Recognizes an “age grade” system. Seeks out the wisdom of community elders to guide the social and academic life of students</p>	<p>During small interactions, there is a protocol for acknowledging elders and talking with them with reverence and respect. Use scripts and role plays to train staff.</p>
<p>Has established tools to solve conflict in ways that preserve respect and connection</p>	<p>Uses restorative circles and a variety of other restorative practices. Also have process to help adults and parents make an amends when necessary without shaming.</p>
<p>Uses the concept of respect to ground all interactions. Respect = recognizing and accepting as valuable the needs of others with whom you interact.</p>	<p>All adults practice active listening and affirming, humanizing communication skills rather than just being “technical”. There is movement beyond the “culture of niceness” to authentic respect.</p>
<p>Group cohesion is maintained through ritual and ceremony</p>	<p>The leadership goes beyond assemblies and traditional recognition events to create non-verbal rituals. Begin meetings with rituals like the singing of a song or reading of a poem. There is use of ceremony marks important transitions, beyond the obvious ones.</p>
<p>Praise is balanced with actionable, corrective feedback given with love and respect.</p>	<p>Leaders and teachers ask parents to tell them what is working and what isn’t working using empowering protocols such as fishbowls or kivas. As a regular part of the school culture that is reflective practice around how to get better. Ask: “How do we go from a 7 to a 10?”</p>
<p>Uses group processing structures to include equity of voice.</p>	<p>At meetings with parents, rotate through protocols such as <i>Chalk Talk</i> or <i>World Café</i> or processes from <u>Liberating Structures</u> and <i>Design Thinking</i> as part of meetings with parents and community. Create a “playlist” of 6 or so to use. Ask parents to help facilitate some of the protocols.</p>

The Warm Demander



CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LESSON BUILDING BLOCKS

Here are the key components of a culturally responsive lesson plan. These components parallel the brain's information processing cycle. Here they are in relationship to a traditional lessoning planning template on the right.

Culturally Responsive Model	Traditional Model
<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have process and content goals• Connect to standards <p>Essential Question/Headline</p> <p>Ignite (Attention)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wake up the brain's RAS• Make the brain curious to find answers (priming)• Make it social (collectivist) <p>Input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural reference points• Contextualize content with cognitive hooks (i.e., metaphor/analogy) <p>Cognitive Routines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Point out which thinking routine to employ• Build "meta-strategic" awareness <p>Chew (Elaboration)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help students make sense of new content using cultural learning tools• Use thinking dispositions to make connections• Sharpen use of cognitive routines for independent learning <p>Review (Consolidation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on making learning stick• Light chewing within 12-24 hrs.	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• List learning target and standards <p>Anticipation Guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-assessment• Determine what the student knows <p>Input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modeling• Questioning <p>Checking for Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questioning• Listen for right answers <p>Guided Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group work <p>Independent Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do more of the same by yourself• Worksheet or chapter questions

Leadership Discussion

Use the prompts to inform your professional development planning. The questions highlight important areas of CRT implementation that need to be addressed in order to have impact and move the needle on student learning.

Reflect on the prompts through the following lenses: Teacher Practices, Leadership Practices, and Organizational Practices

Build Internal Capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over the semester, how will you build the capacity of your internal team to guide this work at the school level before introducing CRT to staff?• What background knowledge and deeper understandings about CRT does your team need to build?• What core CRT messages and practices does the ILT plan to communicate to teachers and other staff? (Remember that the four core elements work through synergy).• How will you build the capacity of instructional coaches to guide CRT work at the classroom level?• What data will you collect to inform your gap analysis (gap between current practices and ideal implementation of core CRT practices)?
Establish Shared Vision and Shared Definition
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you outline just how CRT can help students meet the content standards? Can each ILT member articulated this process in his own words?• How will you interrupt misconceptions and myths about CRT, and instead establish a more explicit, research-based definition?• How will you engage the faculty and staff in developing a shared vision of using CRT to achieve the Common Core Anchor standards?
Identify Core CRT Instructional Practices and Provide Professional Development Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does PD look like around the following aspects of CRT:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Establishing greater relational trust for “brain calm” (learning partnerships)◦ Incorporating more robust, extended elaboration (info processing)◦ Re-shaping content to emphasize counter-narratives/challenge dominant narratives, make curriculum more socio-politically relevant• When will teachers in "lighthouse" classrooms have the opportunity to design prototype information processing activities based on cultural learning tools?• How can your PLC structure support the beta testing of these newly designed activities?
Create Formative Assessments For Growth and Independence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you measure movement from dependent learning behaviors toward more independent learning?• How will you know when students are able to carry more of the cognitive load during learning?
Provide Coaching and Implementation Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will teachers implement CRT routines and processes?• How will coaches help teachers incorporate more collectivist instructional practices and structures into the classroom?• How will you build coaches' capacity to support CRT implementation?

The Pedagogy of Poverty Versus Good Teaching

BY MARTIN HABERMAN

Recognizing the formidable difficulty of institutionalizing new forms of pedagogy for the children of poverty, Mr. Haberman nonetheless believes that it is worthwhile to define and describe such alternatives.

Why is a "minor" issue like improving the quality of urban teaching generally overlooked by the popular reform and restructuring strategies? There are several possibilities. First, we assume that we know what teaching is, that others know what it is, that we are discussing the same "thing" when we use the word, and that we would all know good teaching if we saw it. Second, we believe that, since most teachers cannot be changed anyway, there must be other, more potent, teacher-proof strategies for change. Third, why bother with teaching if research shows that achievement test scores of poor and minority youngsters are affected primarily by their socioeconomic class; affected somewhat by Head Start, school integration, and having a "strong" principal; and affected almost not at all by the quality of their teachers?

THE PEDAGOGY OF POVERTY

An observer of urban classrooms can find examples of almost every form of pedagogy: direct instruction, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, individualized instruction, computer-assisted learning, behavior modification, the use of student contracts, media-assisted instruction, scientific inquiry, lecture/discussion, tutoring by specialists or volunteers, and even the use of problem-solving units common in progressive education. In spite of this broad range of options, however, there is a typical form of teaching that has become accepted as basic. Indeed, this basic urban style, which encompasses a body of specific teacher acts, seems to have grown stronger each year since I first noted it in 1958. A teacher in an urban school of the 1990s who did not engage in these basic acts as the primary means of instruction would be regarded as deviant. In most urban schools, not performing these acts for most of each day would be considered prima facie evidence of not teaching.

The teaching acts that constitute the core functions of urban teaching are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| * giving information, | * reviewing tests, |
| * asking questions, | * assigning homework, |
| * giving directions, | * reviewing homework, |
| * making assignments, | * settling disputes, |
| * monitoring seatwork, | * punishing noncompliance, |
| * reviewing assignments, | * marking papers, and |
| * giving tests, | * giving grades. |

This basic menu of urban teacher functions characterizes all levels and subjects. A primary teacher might "give information" by reading a story to children, while a high school teacher might read to the class from a biology text. (Interestingly both offer similar reasons: "The students can't read for themselves," and "They enjoy being read to.") Taken separately, there may be nothing wrong with these activities. There are occasions when any one of the 14 acts might have a beneficial effect. Taken together and performed to the systematic exclusion of other acts they have become the pedagogical coin of the realm in urban schools. They constitute the pedagogy of poverty -- not merely what teachers do and what youngsters expect but, for different reasons, what parents, the community, and the general public assume teaching to be.

Ancillary to this system is a set of out-of-class teacher acts that include keeping records, conducting parent conferences, attending staff meetings, and carrying out assorted school duties. While these out-of-class functions are not directly instructional, they are performed in ways that support the pedagogy of poverty. Since this analysis deals with the direct interactions characteristic of urban teachers and their students, I will limit myself to a brief comment about how each of these out-of-class functions is typically conceptualized and performed in urban settings.

- *Record-keeping* is the systematic maintenance of a paper trail to protect the school against any future legal action by its clients. Special classes, referrals, test scores, disciplinary actions, and analyses by specialists must be carefully recorded. This slant is the reason that teachers are commonly prejudiced rather than informed by reading student records; yet the system regards their upkeep as vital. (In teacher preparation, neophytes are actually taught that student records will reveal such valuable information as students' interests!)
- *Parent conferences* give parents who are perceived as poorly educated or otherwise inadequate a chance to have things explained to them.
- *Staff meetings* give administrators opportunities to explain things to teachers.
- *Assorted school duties* are essentially police or monitoring activities that would be better performed by hired guards.

The pedagogy of poverty appeals to several constituencies:

1. It appeals to those who themselves did not do well in schools. People who have been brutalized are usually not rich sources of compassion. And those who have failed or done poorly in school do not typically take personal responsibility for that failure. They generally find it easier to believe that they would have succeeded if only somebody had forced them to learn.
2. It appeals to those who rely on common sense rather than on thoughtful analysis. It is easy to criticize humane and developmental teaching aimed at educating a free people as mere "permissiveness," and it is well known that "permissiveness" is the root cause of our nation's educational problems.
3. It appeals to those who fear minorities and the poor. Bigots typically become obsessed with the need for control.
4. It appeals to those who have low expectations for minorities and the poor. People with limited vision frequently see value in limited and limiting forms of pedagogy. They believe that at-risk students are served best by a directive, controlling pedagogy.
5. It appeals to those who do not know the full range of pedagogical options available. This group includes most school administrators, most business and political reformers, and many teachers.

There are essentially four syllogisms that undergird the pedagogy of poverty. Their "logic" runs something like this.

1. Teaching is what teachers do. Learning is what students do. Therefore, students and teachers are engaged in different activities.
2. Teachers are in charge and responsible. Students are those who still need to develop appropriate behavior. Therefore, when students follow teachers' directions, appropriate behavior is being taught and learned.

3. Students represent a wide range of individual differences. Many students have handicapping conditions and lead debilitating home lives. Therefore, ranking of some sort is inevitable; some students will end up at the bottom of the class while others will finish at the top.
4. Basic skills are a prerequisite for learning and living. Students are not necessarily interested in basic skills. Therefore, directive pedagogy must be used to ensure that youngsters are compelled to learn their basic skills.

REFORM AND THE PEDAGOGY OF POVERTY

Unfortunately, the pedagogy of poverty does not work. Youngsters achieve neither minimum levels of life skills nor what they are capable of learning. The classroom atmosphere created by constant teacher direction and student compliance seethes with passive resentment that sometimes bubbles up into overt resistance. Teachers burn out because of the emotional and physical energy that they must expend to maintain their authority every hour of every day. The pedagogy of poverty requires that teachers who begin their careers intending to be helpers, models, guides, stimulators, and caring sources of encouragement transform themselves into directive authoritarians in order to function in urban schools. But people who choose to become teachers do not do so because at some point they decided, "I want to be able to tell people what to do all day and then make them do it!" This gap between expectations and reality means that there is a pervasive, fundamental irreconcilable difference between the motivation of those who select themselves to become teachers and the demands of urban teaching.

For the reformers who seek higher scores on achievement tests, the pedagogy of poverty is a source of continual frustration. The clear-cut need to "make" students learn is so obviously vital to the common good and to the students themselves that surely (it is believed) there must be a way to force students to work hard enough to vindicate the methodology. Simply stated, we act as if it is not the pedagogy that must be fitted to the students but the students who must accept an untouchable method.

In reality, the pedagogy of poverty is not a professional methodology at all. It is not supported by research, by theory, or by the best practice of superior urban teachers. It is actually certain ritualistic acts that, much like the ceremonies performed by religious functionaries, have come to be conducted for their intrinsic value rather than to foster learning.

There are those who contend that the pedagogy of poverty would work if only the youngsters accepted it and worked at it. "Ay, there's the rub!" Students in urban schools overwhelmingly do accept the pedagogy of poverty, and they do work at it! Indeed, any teacher who believes that he or she can take on an urban teaching assignment and ignore the pedagogy of poverty will be quickly crushed by the students themselves. Examples abound of inexperienced teachers who seek to involve students in genuine learning activities and are met with apathy or bedlam, while older hands who announce, "Take out your dictionaries and start to copy the words that begin with *h*" are rewarded with compliance or silence.

Reformers of urban schools are now raising their expectations beyond an emphasis on basic skills to the teaching of critical thinking, problem solving, and even creativity. But if the pedagogy of poverty will not force the learning of low-level skills, how can it be used to compel genuine thinking? Heretofore, reformers have promulgated change strategies that deal with the level of funding, the role of the principal, parent involvement, decentralization, site-based management, choice, and other organizational and policy reforms. At some point, they must reconsider the issue of pedagogy. If the actual mode of instruction expected by school administrators and teachers and demanded by students

and their parents continues to be the present one, then reform will continue to deal with all but the central issue: How and what are students taught?

The pedagogy of poverty is sufficiently powerful to undermine the implementation of any reform effort because it determines the way pupils spend their time, the nature of the behaviors they practice, and the bases of their self-concepts as learners. Essentially, it is a pedagogy in which learners can "succeed" without becoming either involved or thoughtful.

THE NATURE OF URBAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

When he accepted the 1990 New York City Teacher of the Year Award, John Taylor Gatto stated that no school reform will work that does not provide children time to grow up or that simply forces them to deal with abstractions. Without blaming the victims, he described his students as lacking curiosity (having "evanescent attention"), being indifferent to the adult world, and having a poor sense of the future. He further characterized them as ahistorical, cruel and lacking in compassion, uneasy with intimacy and candor, materialistic, dependent, and passive -- although they frequently mask the last two traits with a surface bravado.

Anyone who would propose specific forms of teaching as alternatives to the pedagogy of poverty must recognize that Gatto's description of his students is only the starting point. These are the attributes that have been enhanced and elicited by an authoritarian pedagogy and do not represent students' true or ultimate natures. Young people can become more and different, but they must be taught how. This means to me that two conditions must pertain before there can be a serious alternative to the pedagogy of poverty: the whole school faculty and school community -- not the individual teacher -- must be the unit of change: and there must be patience and persistence of application, since students can be expected to resist changes to a system they can predict and know how to control. Having learned to navigate in urban schools based on the pedagogy of poverty, students will not readily abandon all their know-how to take on willy-nilly some new and uncertain system that they may not be able to control.

For any analysis of pedagogical reform to have meaning in urban schools, it is necessary to understand something of the dynamics of the teacher/student interactions in those schools. The authoritarian and directive nature of the pedagogy of poverty is somewhat deceptive about who is really in charge. Teachers seem to be in charge, in that they direct students to work on particular tasks, allot time, dispense materials, and choose the means of evaluation to be used. It is assumed by many that having control over such factors makes teachers "decision makers" who somehow shape the behavior of their students.

But below this facade of control is another, more powerful level on which students actually control, manage, and shape the behavior of their teachers. Students reward teachers by complying. They punish by resisting. In this way students mislead teachers into believing that some things "work" while other things do not. By this dynamic, urban children and youth effectively negate the values promoted in their teachers' teacher education and undermine the nonauthoritarian predispositions that led their teachers to enter the field. And yet, most teachers are not particularly sensitive to being manipulated by students. They believe they are in control and are responding to "student needs," when, in fact, they are more like hostages responding to students' overt or tacit threats of noncompliance and, ultimately, disruption.

It cannot be emphasized enough that, in the real world, urban teachers are never defined as incompetent because their "deprived," "disadvantaged," "abused," "low-income" students are not learning. Instead, urban teachers are castigated because they cannot elicit compliance. Once schools

made teacher competence synonymous with student control, it was inevitable that students would sense who was really in charge.

The students' stake in maintaining the pedagogy of poverty is of the strongest possible kind: it absolves them of responsibility for learning and puts the burden on the teachers, who must be accountable for *making* them learn. In their own unknowing but crafty way, students do not want to trade a system in which they can make their teachers ineffective for one in which they would themselves become accountable and responsible for what they learn. It would be risky for students to swap a "try and make me" system for one that says, "Let's see how well and how much you really can do".

Recognizing the formidable difficulty of institutionalizing other forms of pedagogy, it is still worthwhile to define and describe such alternative forms. The few urban schools that serve as models of student learning have teachers who maintain control by establishing trust and involving their students in meaningful activities rather than by imposing some neat system of classroom discipline. For genuinely effective urban teachers, discipline and control are primarily a *consequence* of their teaching and not a *prerequisite* condition of learning. Control, internal or imposed, is a continuous fact of life in urban classrooms -- but, for these teachers, it is completely interrelated with the learning activity at hand.

GOOD TEACHING

Is it possible to describe a teaching approach that can serve as an alternative to the pedagogy of poverty? I believe that there is a core of teacher acts that define the pedagogy one finds in urban schools that have been recognized as exemplary.

Unlike the directive teacher acts that constitute the pedagogy of poverty, however, these tend to be indirect activities that frequently involve the creation of a learning environment. These teaching behaviors tend to be evident more in what the students are doing than in the observable actions of the teacher. Indeed, teachers may appear to be doing little and at times may, to the unsophisticated visitor, seem to be merely observers. Good teaching transcends the particular grade or subject and even the need for lessons with specific purposes.¹

Whenever students are involved with issues they regard as vital concerns, good teaching is going on. In effective schools, the endless "problems" -- the censoring of a school newspaper, an issue of school safety, a racial flare-up, the dress code -- are opportunities for important learning. In good schools, problems are not viewed as occasions to impose more rules and tighter management from above. Far from being viewed as obstacles to the "normal" school routine, difficult events and issues are transformed into the very stuff of the curriculum. Schooling is living, not preparation for living. And living is a constant messing with problems that seem to resist solution.

Whenever students are involved with explanations of human differences, good teaching is going on. As students proceed through school, they should be developing ever greater understanding of human differences. Why are there rich people and poor people, abled and disabled, urban and rural, multilingual and monolingual, highly educated and poorly educated? Differences in race, culture, religion, ethnicity, and gender are issues that children and youths reconsider constantly in an effort to make sense of the world, its relationships, and their place in it. This is not "social studies." All aspects of the curriculum should deepen students' basic understandings of these persistent facts of life.

Whenever students are being helped to see major concepts, big ideas, and general principles and are not merely engaged in the pursuit of isolated facts good teaching is going on. At all levels and in all subjects, key concepts can be made meaningful and relevant. Students cannot be successful graduates without having at some point been exposed to the various forms of knowledge. Historians deal with the nature of sources; artists, with texture, color, and design. A fundamental goal of education is to instill in students the ability to use various and competing ways of understanding the universe. Knowing how to spell is not enough.

Whenever students are involved in planning what they will be doing, it is likely that good teaching is going on. This planning involves real choices and not such simple preferences as what crayon to use or the order in which a set of topics will be discussed. Students may be asked to select a topic for study, to decide what resources they will need, or to plan how they will present their findings to others. People learn to make informed choices by actually making informed choices. Following directions -- even perfectly -- does not prepare people to make choices and to deal with the consequences of those choices.

Whenever students are involved with applying ideals such as fairness, equity, or justice to their world, it is likely that good teaching is going on. Students of any age can, at some level, try to apply great ideals to their everyday lives. The environment, war, human relationships, and health care are merely a few examples of issues that students can be thinking about. Determining what should be done about particular matters and defending their ideas publicly gives students experience in developing principles to live by. Character is built by students who have had practice at comparing ideals with reality in their own lives and in the lives of those around them.

Whenever students are actively involved, it is likely that good teaching is going on. Doing an experiment is infinitely better than watching one or reading about one. Participating as a reporter, a role player, or an actor can be educational. Constructing things can be a vital activity. We need graduates who have learned to take action in their own behalf and in behalf of others.

Whenever students are directly involved in a real-life experience, it is likely that good teaching is going on. Field trips, interactions with resource people, and work and life experiences are all potentially vital material for analysis. Firsthand experience is potentially more educational than vicarious activity, *provided* it is combined with reflection.

Whenever students are actively involved in heterogeneous groups, it is likely that good teaching is going on. Students benefit from exposure to cultural as well as intellectual heterogeneity, and they learn from one another. Divergent questioning strategies, multiple assignments in the same class, activities that allow for alternative responses and solutions all contribute to learning. Grouping in schools is frequently based on artificial criteria that are not used in life. Grouping can either limit or enhance students' self-concept and self-esteem and thus has a powerful effect on future learning.

Whenever students are asked to think about an idea in a way that questions common sense or a widely accepted assumption, that relates new ideas to ones learned previously, or that applies an idea to the problems of living, then there is a chance that good teaching is going on. Students are taught to compare, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, generalize, and specify in the process of developing thinking skills. The effort to educate thoughtful people should be guided by school activities that involve "thought. The acquisition of information -- or even of skills -- without the ability to think is an insufficient foundation for later life.

Whenever students are involved in redoing, polishing, or perfecting their work, it is likely that good teaching is going on. It is in the act of review, particularly review of one's own work, that important

learning occurs. This technique may involve an art project or a science experiment as well as a piece of writing. The successful completion of anything worthwhile rarely occurs in a single trial. Students can learn that doing things over is not punishment but an opportunity to excel.

Whenever teachers involve students with the technology of information access, good teaching is going on. Teachers, texts, and libraries as they now exist will not be sufficient in the future. Computer literacy -- beyond word processing -- is a vital need. As James Mecklenburger points out, "Electronic learning must play a more important part in the mix, even at the expense of customary practices. Today, students and educators alike can create, receive, collect, and share data, text, images, and sounds on myriad topics in ways more stimulating, richer and more timely than ever before."²

Whenever students are involved in reflecting on their own lives and how they have come to believe? and feel as they do, good teaching is going on. Autobiography can be the basis of an exceedingly powerful pedagogy -- one that is largely discarded after early childhood education. When critics dismiss my characterization of the pedagogy of poverty as an exaggeration, I am reminded of an immense sign hanging in an urban high school that has devoted itself totally to raising test scores: "We dispense knowledge. Bring your own container." This approach is the opposite of good teaching, which is the process of building environments, providing experiences, and then eliciting responses that can be reflected on. Autobiographical activities are "readily extended into studies of family, neighborhood, and community. What could be more fundamental to subsequent learning than self-definition? Urban schools, in the way they narrowly structure the role of the teacher and restrict the content to be taught, too frequently repudiate the students and their home lives. The vision of good teaching as a process of "drawing out" rather than "stuffing in" is supported by diverse philosophies, including, most recently, feminist theories of the teaching/learning process.³

THE REWARDS OF NOT CHANGING

Taken individually, any of these indicators of good teaching is not a sufficient basis for proposing reform. We all know teachers who have done some of these things -- as well as other, better things -- for years. Taken together and practiced schoolwide and persistently, however, these suggestions can begin to create an alternative to the pedagogy of poverty.

Unfortunately, we must recognize that it may no longer be possible to give up the present authoritarianism. The incentives for the various constituencies involved may well have conditioned them to derive strong benefits from the pedagogy of poverty and to see only unknown risk in the options.

In the present system, teachers are accountable only for engaging in the limited set of behaviors commonly regarded as acts of teaching in urban schools -- that is, the pedagogy of poverty. Students can be held accountable only for complying with precisely what they have specifically and carefully been directed to do. Administrators can be held accountable only for maintaining safe buildings; parents, only for knowing where their children are. Each constituency defines its own responsibilities as narrowly as possible to guarantee itself "success" and leave to others the broad and difficult responsibility for integrating students total educations.

Who is responsible for seeing that students derive meaning and apply what they have learned from this fragmented, highly specialized, overly directive schooling? It is not an accident that the present system encourages each constituency to blame another for the system's failure. My argument here is that reforms will take only if they are supported by a system of pedagogy that has never been tried in any widespread, systematic, long-term way. What prevents its implementation is the resistance of the

constituencies involved -- constituencies that have a stake in maintaining their present roles, since they are, in effect, unaccountable for educating skilled, thoughtful citizens.

Continuing to define nonthinking, underdeveloped, unemployable youngsters as "adults" or "citizens" simply because they are high school graduates or passers of the General Education Development (GED) examination is irresponsible. Education will be seriously reformed only after we move it from a matter of "importance" to a matter of "life and death," both for society and for the individuals themselves. Graduates who lack basic skills may be unemployable and represent a personal and societal tragedy. However, graduates who possess basic skills but are partially informed, unable to think, and incapable of making moral choices are downright dangerous. Before we can *make* workers, we must first *make* people. But people are not *made*-- they are conserved and grown.

1. James D. Raths, "Teaching Without Specific Objectives," *Educational Leadership*, April 1971, pp. 714-20.

2. James A. Mecklenburger, "Educational Technology is Not Enough," *Phi Delta Kappan*, October 1990. p 108.

3. Madeleine Grumet, *Women and Teaching* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), p.99.

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