



SHELL
EDUCATION

Culturally and Linguistically

Responsive Teaching and Learning

**Classroom
Practices
for
Student
Success**

Sharroky Hollie

Foreword by Eugenia Mora-Flores

Publishing Credits

Dona Herweck Rice, *Editor-in-Chief*; Robin Erickson, *Production Director*;

Lee Aucoin, *Creative Director*; Timothy J. Bradley, *Illustration Manager*;

Sara Johnson, M.S.Ed., *Senior Editor*; Evelyn Garcia, *Associate Education Editor*;

Juan Chavolla, *Cover/Interior Layout Designer*; Corinne Burton, M.A.Ed., *Publisher*

Image credits

All photos courtesy of Baba Riley; p.146 Monkey Business images/Shutterstock

Shell Education

5301 Oceanus Drive
Huntington Beach, CA 92649-1030
<http://www.shelleducation.com>

ISBN 978-1-4258-0686-6

© 2012 Shell Educational Publishing, Inc.
Reprinted 2013

The classroom teacher may reproduce copies of materials in this book for classroom use only. The reproduction of any part for an entire school or school system is strictly prohibited. No part of this publication may be transmitted, stored, or recorded in any form without written permission from the publisher.

Table of Contents

Foreword

Introduction

My Goal in Writing This Book

Features of This Book

Chapter 1: Defining Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

Anticipation Guide

What's in a Name?

What Does Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching Mean?

Defining Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

Benefits of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

Who Are the Students Most Likely to Be Underserved?

Sociohistorical Context

Sociopolitical Context

Sociolinguistic Context

The Purpose of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

Eliminating the Deficit Perspective

Promoting Validation and Affirmation

Focus on Linguistic Behaviors

Situational Appropriateness

Summary

Reflection Guide

Chapter 2: The Pedagogy of Cultural and Linguistical Responsiveness

Anticipation Guide

Moving from Theory to Practice

The Story of the Culture and Language Academy of Success (CLAS)

What Is the CLR Formula?

Establish the General Pedagogical Area

Responsive Classroom Management

Responsive Academic Literacy

Responsive Academic Vocabulary

Responsive Academic Language

Responsive Learning Environment

Check for Strategy, Quantity, and Quality of the Pedagogy

Strategies and Activities to Infuse Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy Elements

The Art of Juxtaposition

Summary

Reflection Guide

Chapter 3: Responsive Classroom Management

Anticipation Guide

The Three Rs: Rapport, Relationship, Respect

Classroom Management Schools of Thought

The Three Ps Approach: Positive, Proactive, Preventative

Separating Cultural Behaviors from Wrong Behaviors Culturally Inappropriate Behavior

Validating and Affirming Cultural Behaviors through Instruction

Ways of Responding and Discussing

Effective Attention Signals

Movement Activities

Summary

Reflection Guide

Chapter 4: Responsive Academic Literacy Instruction

Anticipation Guide

Engaging Students with Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Texts

Using Read-Alouds in the Oral Tradition of Cultural Storytelling

Effective Read-Alouds

Using Effective Literacy Strategies Responsively

Summary

Reflection Guide

Chapter 5: Responsive Academic Vocabulary Instruction

Anticipation Guide

Establishing the Pedagogy

Students' Personal Vocabularies Are Based on Real-World Concepts

Vocabulary Instruction Focuses on Acquisition

Using Synonyms to Expand Vocabulary Knowledge

Unique Sources of Academic Vocabulary Expansion

Assessing the Quantity and Quality of Vocabulary Instruction

Five Steps to Responsive Academic Vocabulary Instruction

Step 1: Leveling Words

Step 2: Using Vocabulary Acquisition Strategies

Step 3: Using the Personal Thesaurus (PT) for Synonym and Antonym Development

Step 4: Using Common Vocabulary Strategies and Multiple Assessments

Step 5: Using the Personal Dictionary to Develop Tier Three, or Content-Area Words

Summary

Reflection Guide

Chapter 6: Responsive Academic Language Instruction

Anticipation Guide

Authenticity of Nonstandard Languages

The Nonstandard Languages of the Underserved

Ethnolinguistic Perspective

Dialectologist Perspective

Creolist and Deficit Perspectives

Linguistic Absolutes

Nonstandard Language Rules

Effective Instructional Practices

Contrastive Analysis

Using Effective Writing Strategies

Summary

Reflection Guide

Chapter 7: Creating a Responsive Learning Environment

Anticipation Guide

Evidence of a Responsive Learning Environment

Print-Rich Environment

Learning Centers

Culturally Colorful

Arranged Optimally

Multiple Libraries

Use of Technology

Relevant Bulletin Boards

Displayed Student Work and Images of Students

Examining the Learning Environment

Summary

Reflection Guide

Appendices: Resources for Teachers

Appendix A: Protocols for Increasing Student Engagement

Appendix B: Examples of Effective Attention Signals

Appendix C: Culturally Responsive Books

Appendix D: Culturally Responsive Read-Aloud Activities

Appendix E: Culturally Responsive Literacy Strategy Activities

Appendix F: Suggested Writing Activities

Appendix G: CLR Learning Environment Survey

References Cited

Chapter 1

Defining Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy



Anticipation Guide

What do you think of when you encounter the term *culturally responsive teaching*? Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the concept?

- _____ Culturally responsive teaching is meant to help with race relations among educators and students.
- _____ All students can achieve highly when given the opportunity to learn.
- _____ Racial identity and cultural identity are synonymous.
- _____ Nonstandard English is a simplified version of Standard English.
- _____ Socioeconomic status is the most critical factor in student success.



What's in a Name?

Unfortunately, the term *culturally responsive teaching* has become a cliché, buried in the grave of educational terms that are cast about like ghosts in books, state mandates, district initiatives, and conference themes. Two summers ago, I received an email from an educator in the Midwest who said that her superintendent had now branded the district “culturally responsive.” However, she was not sure what that meant and needed to know immediately—before the proverbial one-day mandated district professional development program. Throughout my home state of California, many districts want to be culturally responsive, or at least they think they do. In reality, what they are seeking is how to address racial issues under the cover of *culturally responsive teaching*. And why not? The term sounds appropriate and informative, seems to cover the sensitive issues of race in a nonthreatening way, and serves a purpose in situations where the achievement gap persists and where negative attitudes about race, culture, and language remain stubborn. But turning the meaning of culturally responsive teaching into a quick fix for race relations, diversity issues, and achievement gap woes is a fleeting solution. The authenticity and relevance of the term is actually steeped in transforming instructional practices to make the difference for improving relationships between students and educators and increasing student achievement.

Multiple names and definitions have been given to culturally responsive teaching over the past 40 years. These variations include, among others, culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally compatible teaching, culturally relevant teaching, culturally connected teaching, culturally responsive learning, culturally matched teaching, cultural proficiency, and culturally appropriate teaching (Gay 2000). The multiple definitions of *culturally responsive teaching* have contributed to its clichéd use that has diluted its meaning. Furthermore, these superficial interpretations have led to obscure attempts at implementation in districts (focused on professional development), schools (focused on curriculum initiatives), and classrooms (focused on instructional strategies).

Think of almost any innovation that has had staying power in education and may still be in use today. The term for that innovation will not have changed, although its interpretation may have evolved in a consistent way. An example that comes to mind is *cooperative learning*, a concept put forth in the late 1960s (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec 1994; Kagan and Kagan 2009). The term *cooperative learning* has remained intact for almost four decades and has furthermore evolved to include the concept *collaborative learning*. When most educators encounter the term *cooperative learning*, there is consensus on its meaning. My point is that cooperative learning has had staying power because it has not been subjected to multiple terms and interpretations, as is the case with culturally responsive teaching.

I believe that clarity can sometimes be more important than agreement. Being clear on what is meant by culturally and linguistically responsive teaching is certainly one of those cases. In training over 25,000 educators and speaking to hundreds of audiences across the country, I have found that most teachers and administrators appreciate the focus on clarity as opposed to forcing agreement.

What Does Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching Mean?

For the purposes of my work and this book in particular, I advocate a singular use of the concept and terminology of culturally responsive teaching. If an educator desires to be culturally and linguistically responsive or a school is looking to implement the approach, I recommend that all stakeholders agree upon one term and one meaning—preferably the one used in this book. As a result of the work in which I have been immersed for the past 12 years, I have adopted the term *culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy* (CLR). I settled on this term for the following three reasons:

1. I have found that many so-called followers of culturally responsive teaching are actually most interested in *racially* responsive teaching. There is a tendency to be more focused on racial identity rather than the myriad cultural identities in our collective diversity. My focus on culture, language, gender, class, and religion is anthropologically based, not race based. Conflating culture and race is a common misinterpretation among some individuals who work with diverse groups of students. CLR makes clear the distinction and fosters understanding of the need to avoid such identity confusion.
2. I use CLR in order to emphasize the language aspect of culture. I believe that there

is nothing more cultural about us as humans than the use of our home language. Linguistic identity is a crucial aspect of who we are. By itself, the term *culture* subsumes language; consequently, linguistic identity is obscured. By adding language to the overall term, the intentionality of the linguistic focus is demonstrated equally to what we stereotypically think about culture. In short, we are what we speak and, to a large extent, our language is a representation of our heritage, including family, community, and history.

3. CLR speaks to the specific use of pedagogy versus teaching and learning. Pedagogy is a five-star word frequently thrown around in academic circles with the result that some people consider the term to be jargon. I consider pedagogy to be a powerful term in its meaning and its functionality in CLR. Meriam-Webster's (2011) online dictionary defines pedagogy as the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept. I define *pedagogy* as the how and why of teaching, the strategic use of methods, and the rationale behind why instructional decisions are made. Pedagogy is usually the most often-missed facet of culturally responsive teaching. Without the pedagogy, there is only theory on how to respond to students' cultural and linguistic needs, and theory alone does not adequately serve teachers and students.

To sum up, what a concept is called matters. In society, how we label something speaks to what it means to us symbolically. *Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy* is the concept that is developed in this book.

Defining Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

Pause to Ponder

- Are you familiar with the term *culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy*?
- Where have you encountered it?
- How do you define it?
- What sources have informed your definition?

Most proponents of culturally relevant teaching will point to *The Dreamkeepers*, Gloria Ladson-Billings's (1994) groundbreaking book, as the star in the culturally responsive universe. This work has defined what many have come to know about the approach, and her description of six culturally relevant teachers is a must-read for those interested in being culturally responsive. She provides a classic definition of *culturally responsive teaching*: "A pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural and historical referents to convey knowledge, to impart skills, and to change attitudes" (Ladson-Billings 1994, 13). Teachers practicing culturally relevant teaching know how to support student learning by consciously creating social interactions that help them meet the criteria of academic success, cultural competence, and

critical consciousness. In addition to the work of Ladson-Billings, advanced students of culturally responsive teaching will point to the contributions of Ramirez and Castaneda (1974). Many cite this reference as the earliest introduction of culturally responsive teaching, showing that the concept itself goes back many years. While Ramirez and Castaneda may have introduced culturally responsive teaching to the research, Ladson-Billings put it on the national map.

Geneva Gay's text, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2000), is by most accounts the second-most influential work on culturally responsive teaching. She added pedagogy to the concept and became the leader in the second wave of books and articles that would build upon Ladson-Billings' work. She defines culturally responsive pedagogy as "the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to, and effective for, them" (Gay 2000, 31). This pedagogy teaches *to and through* the strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming. In addition to the focus on pedagogy, Gay provides positive achievement data supporting the work from districts and schools across the nation. This addition of results data was important to establish the credibility of culturally responsive teaching, which had been an easy target for critics of the approach. Unfortunately, some criticism can still be found today. Goodwin (2008) cites that there is no research that supports culturally responsive teaching correlated to student achievement. But this statement is based on research from the 1970s and does not account for the evolution of the theory since that time, not to mention any recent research. Other researchers who have made important contributions to the literature of culturally responsive teaching include Lisa Delpit and J. K. E. Dowdy (2002), Etta Hollins (2008), Jacqueline Irvine (1991), and Villegas and Lucas (2007). These researchers agree on a key element of culturally responsive teaching: it responds to students' needs by taking into account cultural and linguistic factors in their worlds.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLR) is the validation and affirmation of the home (indigenous) culture and home language for the purposes of building and bridging the student to success in the culture of academia and mainstream society.

This definition of CLR is central to the content of this book as well as to the work I do with educators around the country. Specifically, CLR is going to where the students are culturally and linguistically, for the aim of bringing them where they need to be academically. Metaphorically, CLR is the opposite of the sink-or-swim approach to teaching and learning in traditional schools. CLR means that teachers jump into the pool with the learners, guide them with appropriate instruction, scaffold as necessary, and provide for independence when they are ready. *Validation* is the intentional and purposeful legitimization of the home culture and language of the student. Such validation has been traditionally delegitimized by historical institutional and structural racism, stereotypes, and generalizations primarily carried forth through mainstream media. *Affirmation* is the intentional and purposeful effort to reverse the negative stereotypes of nonmainstream cultures and languages portrayed in historical perspective.

This definition of CLR is meant to be broad, covering a range of cultural identities and languages. It centers on ethnic identity in the cultural context and on nonstandard languages in the linguistic context. But in no way is the definition exclusive to any one group. Later in the chapter, I distinguish the different identities that comprise who we are as humans and the cultures that come with those identities.

Benefits of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

The simple answer to the question of who benefits from culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy is *all students*. A more specific answer delves into who these students are most likely to be in the sense of culture, not race, in the classroom. A survey of any past or recent standardized data gives the answer of who is and who is not achieving in our schools. In the context of academic failure and behavior issues, CLR best benefits *any* student who is identified as *underserved* as opposed to the more commonly labeled *underachieving* or *underperforming* student.

According to my definition below, the school as an institution is failing the student. Granted, the breadth of the definition speaks to the simplicity of who can be served by CLR. At face value, *underserved* includes many students. If teachers think about the underserved students in their particular context, they are probably thinking of students of different races, cultures, and languages, or special education and even gifted students. Underserved encompasses those students who are receiving bad customer service from the school, similar to you or me not receiving the best service in a restaurant or a department store. The difference is that we can request to see a manager or even walk out of the establishment. Students cannot! They are stuck in a situation where the institution is failing them, so instead of asking for the manager, they simply check out mentally and emotionally. Or even worse, far too many are pushed out of school and become what are commonly known as *dropouts*.

An **underserved student** is any student who is not successful academically, socially, and/or behaviorally in school because the school as an institution is not being responsive to that student's needs.

Who Are the Students Most Likely to Be Underserved?

Pause to Ponder

- Who are the underserved students in your district or your school?
- Why are they underserved?
- What are their needs?
- What is your district or school doing as an institution to address the needs of these students?

Looking more specifically at which group of students is likely to be underserved reveals why CLR is really important and shows the complexity involved in implementing the approach. Pretend that we asked all the underserved students you identified to come to the gymnasium. The research (Goodwin 2008) tells us who these students are most likely to be: African Americans, Mexican Americans (as opposed to the over-generalized term *Latino*), Native Americans, Samoan Americans and/or Eastern Asian immigrants and Asian Americans. Keep in mind that the overall intention is to better serve all students, but when we look at who is in the gymnasium now, we find these to be primarily students of color. The students are like those dissatisfied customers in a department store who need to be better served simply because of their place in the gymnasium and not endemically because of their race, nationality, ethnicity, or language. Bluntly put, we serve them because they are in the gymnasium of the underserved, not because of who they are racially, ethnically, or otherwise. In order to fully understand why students of color in particular are in the room, we need to examine the sociohistorical, sociopolitical, and sociolinguistic contexts.

Sociohistorical Context

The capstone research of John Ogbu (1978) indicates that many of these students can be described as involuntary immigrants to America. Ogbu posited that the experience in the American school was very different for an involuntary immigrant when compared to that of a voluntary immigrant or the Ellis Island immigrants. Involuntary immigrants, historically speaking, are more likely to be found in the so-called achievement gap and less likely to have post-secondary opportunities that then lead to economic success. Voluntary immigrants, on the other hand, tend to perform well academically and find post-secondary opportunities that lead to economic viability and stability. The significant difference is that the involuntary immigrant's move to America comes through colonization, enslavement, conquest, or less than legal means. Simply put, these immigrants did not come through Ellis Island.

Whereas the path to success in the American school for the voluntary immigrant has come through a process of successful assimilation, the path for the involuntary immigrant has been more a process of forced or unsuccessful assimilation. The relevance of assimilation cannot be emphasized enough. In order to attain the American dream, most immigrants will have to assimilate into mainstream culture. The formula for success in academia and mainstream culture is straightforward. When given the choice of assimilating from one's indigenous (home) culture and language into that of the mainstream culture, many ethnic groups had great success in pursuing and achieving the American dream. On the contrary, those ethnic groups that were forced into the mainstream culture did not have a choice. Consequently, they did not have access to the tools that would have enabled them to become part of mainstream society. For example, the long-lasting effects of slavery, legal segregation, and institutional racism on the education of Africans in America have been well documented, and these factors still resonate in the schools today (Anderson 1995; Smith 1998; Williams 1990). Over 30 years ago, Ogbu (1978, 91) said, "Before 1960 most societies did not provide their minorities with equal educational opportunities." Howard (1988) professes that of the innumerable rights African Americans were denied during slavery, none were more important than education. The same can be said for many of the

involuntary immigrant groups. According to Javier San Roman, former student advocate at our laboratory school and now a consultant with me in the national work for Mexican-American students, the introduction to compulsory public education began with the inferior segregated Mexican schools that operated throughout the Southwestern United States. Often the rationale given for segregation of non-Black students at this time was that Mexican children posed potential health risks or were not redeemable outside of providing a basic level of education that was designed to prepare them for low-wage manual labor. Notable school desegregation court cases such as *Roberto Alvarez v. Lemon Grove School District* in 1931 (the country's first successful school desegregation court victory) and *Mendez et al. v. Westminster* in 1947 dealt a significant blow to the rationale behind school segregation for all students.

For the Native American and Hawaiian students, the process of the introduction to public education was carried forth through the boarding schools and academies that were designed to save the "native" and kill the "savage." At the Indian boarding schools, students were deliberately alienated from their language and culture and taught to value the alleged superiority of European culture and language. The early experiences of Native Hawaiian students mirrored the devaluation of their cultural and linguistic heritage in favor of European models. The collective experience of all involuntary immigrants in public education has been one of institutional neglect and a pervasive and pernicious deficit oriented towards the cultural and linguistic differences that they bring to the classroom.

Sociopolitical Context

The systematic denial of indigenous culture and language for involuntary immigrants was utilized as a means to eliminate their culture and linguistic heritages. These populations were in effect institutionally denied their own culture and at the same time were not given the opportunity to become part of the mainstream culture. Joel Spring (1994) calls this process *deculturalization*. He defines deculturalization as the "educational process of destroying a people's culture and replacing it with a new culture. It is one of the most inhumane acts one can partake in. Culture shapes a person's beliefs, values, and morals. In the United States, historically the education system deculturalized the cultures of Native Americans; African Americans, Mexican Americans; Puerto Ricans; and immigrants from Ireland, Southern and Eastern Europe, and Asia" (1994, 7). Providing further evidence referring to Native Americans, Spring notes, "Missionaries wanted to develop written Native American Languages not as a means of preserving Native American history and religions, but so they could translate religious tracts to teach protestant Anglo-Saxon culture. In contrast, Sequoyah development of a written Cherokee language was for the purpose of preserving Cherokee culture" (1994, 28).

Angela Valenzuela (1999) terms this process of eliminating one's home culture as *subtractive schooling*. Subtractive schooling is the divestment of students of important social and cultural resources, leaving them progressively vulnerable to academic failure, and the discouragement of cultural identity by presenting such characteristics as undesirable. Valenzuela says of the Mexican American student, "I came to locate 'the problem' of achievement squarely in school-based relationships and organizational structures and policies designed to erase students' culture. Over the three years in which I

collected and analyzed my data, I became increasingly convinced that schooling is organized in ways that subtract resources from Mexican youth” (1999, 10). Part of being culturally and linguistically responsive requires the intentional effort to combat the long-lasting effects of deculturalization through validation and affirmation of the home language and culture. To effectively implement CLR, educators must recognize and understand the cultural and linguistic behaviors that need to be legitimized and made positive.

Sociolinguistic Context

Another commonality among students who are most likely to be underserved is their use of a nonstandard language as their home language. Historically, generations of these students’ forefathers and foremothers who were in this country were involuntarily denied quality formal second-language opportunities. In specific cases, as with the enslaved Africans, people were told that if they spoke their native language, their tongues would be cut out; if they congregated with more than two, they would be beaten; and if they were caught trying to learn the language of the land, they would be punished or even killed. Here is an example of an enslavement code, written essentially as law and more commonly known as the *Black Codes* or *Slave Codes*:

Punishment for teaching slaves or free persons of color to read:

If any slave, Negro, or free person of color, or any white person, shall teach any other slave, Negro, or free person of color, to read or write either written or printed characters, the said free person of color or slave shall be punished by fine and whipping, or fine or whipping, at the discretion of the court (<http://academic.udayton.edu/race/02rights/slavelaw.htm#11>.)

Similarly, a persistent cultural myth about Mexican American students is that they value labor over education and often drop out of school because they are not interested in education. In fact, it is structural economic pressure and depressed wages for Mexican American workers that often burden youth to attend to immediate short-term needs. Once again, this would be a consequence of overgeneralizing a socioeconomic behavior to an ethnocultural behavior.

Ethnolinguists have explained that under these constraints, a second language formed that was a combination of the deep structure of the first or indigenous language and the vocabulary of the dominating language. In America, the dominant language would be Standard English, or Mainstream English. Linguists, in general, have labeled these second languages *nonstandard*. These languages have remained intact across generations to present day. For African American students, the nonstandard language is known most commonly as African American Vernacular English, or AAVE. For Native Americans, there are numerous Native American dialects. Looking at the Mexican American, particularly second or third generation, the nonstandard language is called *Chicano English* (Fought 2003). Lastly, Hawaiian Americans speak what is known as Hawaiian Pidgin English, or HPE. The linguistic characteristics of these nonstandard languages are described in [Chapter 6](#).

In the context of CLR, the key is to understand that these populations share this sociolinguistic history. They share the history of nonstandard languages among racially

isolated descendants who were denied the use of their indigenous language and have traditionally performed poorly in schools (Baugh 2004). As with the cultural behaviors noted earlier, in many cases, the linguistic behaviors of these students are viewed as signs of a deficiency, laziness, or other aberration. In order to be linguistically responsive to the students in the classroom, such behaviors, therefore, have to be legitimized and made positive.

The Purpose of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

Given the historical context for who benefits most from culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, it is easier to understand why we need CLR. Inject the topics of race, culture, and language into almost any conversation, and you are very likely to find an intense and provocative discussion. Enter those same topics in a discussion among educators, and you encounter a surly tension with a tempered vibe. When the topics of race, culture, and language are coupled with the pressure of increasing standardized test scores, educators are faced with simple but complex choices of how to address the real issues of diversity and improving student achievement.

The simplicity of the choices is often provided through state, federal, and district curricular mandates with quick fix-it programs that ultimately do not address the diversity issues with substantive and sustaining change. Such mandates invariably replicate the persistent stagnation and failure of the school as an institution to meet the needs of underserved students. The difficulty of making appropriate choices is either masked in the negative beliefs, attitudes, and expectations about certain students, or is clouded by the desire and the intention to make changes, but without the knowledge of how to do so instructionally. Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy deals with the complexity of both these negative mindsets and the well-intentioned desires to make changes that will matter.

Eliminating the Deficit Perspective

When it comes to consideration of the culture and language of the populations that have been identified here, many educators' beliefs, attitudes, and mindsets are deficit oriented. In essence, this means that the students are blamed for their failures and are seen as the problem. The view of an educator with a deficit mindset is reflected in such observations as these:

- If we had better students, then we would have better schools.
- Our scores were good until *they* started coming here.
- Everyone in our school seems to be doing well except for *those* kids.
- The students are myopically viewed as lacking *something*.

Culturally and linguistically, the underserved students are all too frequently seen as deficient, deviant, defiant, disruptive, and disrespectful. What they bring to the classroom culturally and linguistically is not seen as an asset, but as a liability.

The first purpose of CLR is to refute deficit thinking by having educators undergo a

change in heart and in mind about these students. I call this change a *mindset shift*, or as my colleague and former CLAS teacher Kiechelle Russell dubbed it, a “mindshift.” In order to be culturally and linguistically responsive, educators have to shift their beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge to a stance that sees what the student brings culturally and linguistically as an asset, a capability, and an element that can be built upon. In this mindshift, students are not the problem but rather the source of the solution.

A second purpose for CLR pedagogy is to clarify what is meant specifically by culture while simultaneously giving educators an awareness of some of the noted cultural and linguistic behaviors of underserved student populations. What lingers is a confusion between race and culture and the various identities that comprise who we are culturally. We are made up of at least seven separate identities, of which all but one have an unrelated cultural connection. The seven identities are race, gender, nationality, religion, ethnicity, class, and age.

These identities examined in isolation say something about who we are and why we enact certain behaviors, or make what I call *cultural determinations*. The exception is race. In other words, our behaviors are culturally determined by these identities only. But race determines nothing about our behavior. For example, there are some behaviors that we do simply based on how old we are or what decade we grew up in and nothing else. Some decisions and behaviors are based on our socioeconomic identity and nothing else. Before examining other examples, I want to clearly eliminate racial identity as the one factor that has nothing to do with cultural determination.

Our racial identity is very clear: it is the biological DNA representation that gives us our blood lineage and, for example what diseases we may be prone to (good information to know). Other than that, racial identity really tells us nothing about who we are as individuals. The salient point is that racial identity has nothing to do with our cultural identity. Racial identity does not necessitate or affect any of our other identities—age, religion, gender, or nationality. There is nothing that we do racially that is connected to who we are mentally or behaviorally. Although we are locked into our racial identity by birth and perhaps genomes, we remain free to be who we are ethnically or otherwise.

In the context of culturally and linguistically responsiveness, **culture** means a behavior learned from the home or the community that is passed down from generation to generation and represents our heritage.

On the other hand, by acknowledging our various cultural identities in explicit terms, we are acknowledging a cultural complexity that truly speaks to the kaleidoscope that has been guised under the narrowness of racial identity and the thickness of racism for too long. From an ethnocultural perspective, being African American does not mean that one is Black, if Black is seen as an ethnic identity no different from Irish, Armenian, or Jewish. Being Caucasian American does not mean that one is White Anglo-Saxon Protestant or Catholic ethnically. Villegas and Lucas (2007) define culture as the way life organized within an identifiable community or group. This includes the ways that a community uses language, interacts with one another, takes turns to talk, relates to time and space, and approaches learning. The group patterns that exist reflect the standards or norms used by community members to make sense of the world. Simply, cultural identity

is the way we see the world.

Culture or ethnic identity differs from race, nationality, and socioeconomic identity in that our ethnocultural identity is passed down from generation to generation. What is most confusing is that sometimes who we are ethnoculturally can be mistaken for our national cultural identity and/or our socioeconomic cultural identity. In these cases, there are behaviors that we exhibit based simply on our nationality or our economic status. Consider the two questions that follow:

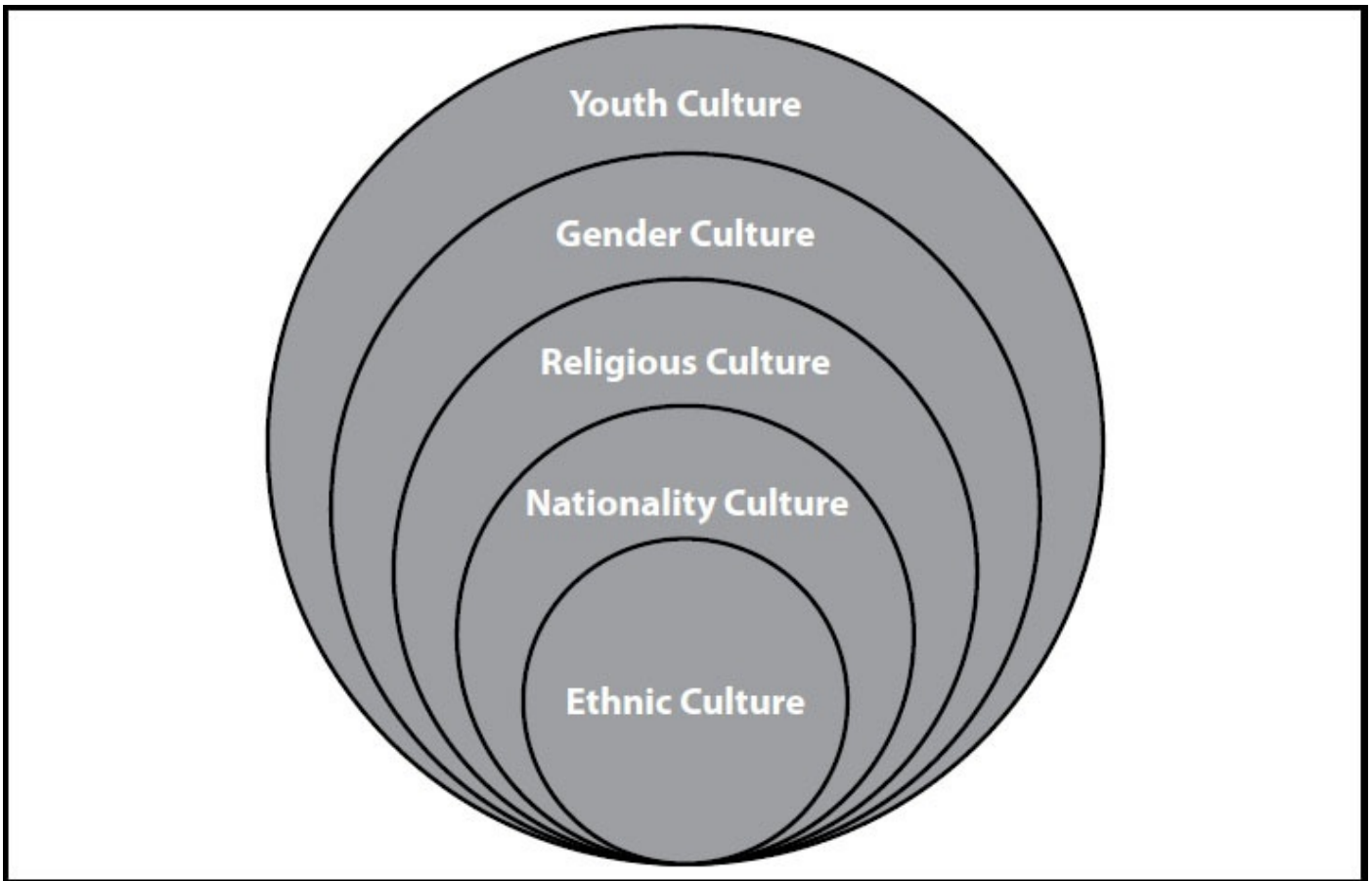
- Why do you celebrate the Fourth of July if you are a United States citizen?
- Where do you wash your clothes?

Before answering the first question, though, ask yourself if you celebrate the Fourth of July because you are White Anglo-Saxon or Latino (ethnically and not racially speaking) or because you are a citizen of the United States. For the second question, by knowing where you wash your clothes, I can, most of the time, accurately guess your economic status. If you regularly wash your clothes in a laundromat, wash house, or building complex, my guess would be you are of a lower or working socioeconomic class. If you wash your clothes in your home, then my guess would be middle class. If someone washes your clothes for you, then you might be upper class. The point is that the Independence Day that you celebrate is determined not by your ethnocultural identity but by your national cultural identity. The way you wash your clothes is not determined by your Black or White ethnicity but by your economic identity.

The central feature of CLR is the ethnocultural identity of the students, but not to the exclusion of the other identities that come with culture. Additionally, educators have to be responsive to gender culture, national culture, socioeconomic culture, and youth culture—or what I call the *rings of culture*.

[Figure 1.1](#) illustrates the rings of culture. Each of these rings is a potential source of responsiveness for the educator. Notice that race does not appear in the figure.

Fig. 1.1 Rings of Culture



What educators must not do is to mistake one of these cultures for another, and they certainly should not confuse any of these with race, which often happens in the classroom. Such mistakes affect the dynamics of instruction. Sometimes, educators will make judgments about African American students' behaviors as being Black ethnically when in actuality the behaviors are more in alignment with lower socioeconomic behaviors. For example, consider the familiar stereotype about some African American or Black students being unlikely to do their homework. Educators who make these assumptions about Black students overgeneralize a socioeconomic behavior, in this case doing homework, to an ethnocultural behavior. Indeed, the fact that some educators would conclude that Black students are less likely to do the homework causes these educators to miss the opportunity to be responsive to the economic culture. Similarly, a persistent cultural myth about Mexican American students is that they value labor over education and often drop out of school because they are not interested in education. In fact, it is often structural economic pressure and depressed wages for Mexican American workers that often burden youth to attend to immediate short-term needs. Once again, this would be a consequence of overgeneralizing a socioeconomic behavior to an ethnocultural behavior.

Promoting Validation and Affirmation

Another important aspect of the CLR focus on ethnocultural identity is the validation and affirmation that is associated with responsiveness. Recall that part of the meaning of CLR is to make culturally and linguistically legitimate and positive that which has been made illegitimate and negative by the institution and mainstream media. It is the ethnocultural identity that needs to be most validated and affirmed. The issue for educators is to appropriately identify those ethnocultural behaviors.

Based on the definition, the ethnocultural behaviors of the most underserved students can be pinpointed, measured, and understood for the purposes of validation and affirmation. In general, these behaviors include preferences for variation and spontaneity, sociocentricity, high-movement contexts, approximation of time, collaboration, inductive reasoning, verbal overlap, and pragmatic, interpersonal, and affective language use. These cultural behaviors, which are typically seen as negative in the culture of school, are the ones that are to be validated and affirmed in comparison to the general behaviors of the school and mainstream culture. In contrast, the expected cultural behaviors of the school and mainstream culture include a focus on prompting, independence, low-movement contexts, competition, deductive reasoning, and verbal communication. Once educators have validated and affirmed the students' home cultural norms and mores, they can then begin practicing CLR notably by building awareness of and bridging toward the cultural norms and mores of the school and mainstream culture.

Ethnocultural behaviors are defined as characteristics of cognitive, affective, and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment.

Focus on Linguistic Behaviors

Similarly, the linguistic behaviors of the students have to be validated and affirmed in the context of their home language for the purposes of building and bridging to proficiency in Standard English and Academic Language. In order to be linguistically responsive, educators have to subscribe to the following three linguistic absolutes:

1. All language is good for the communicative purposes it serves. There is no such thing as proper English, bad English, street speech, or “gutter talk” in the context of interpersonal communication.
2. All linguistic forms are rule governed and systematic and are not randomly formed or put together haphazardly. They are regular in their phonological and syntactic patterns.
3. As infants and toddlers, beginning as early as prebirth, we learn the language that is spoken in the home by the primary caregivers.

Understanding these three linguistic principles allows for an open-minded discussion around nonstandard languages.

In general, the issue of the use of nonstandard linguistic forms extends beyond the United States. Corson (1997) reveals that formal educational policies for the treatment of nonstandard varieties are conspicuous by their absence in most educational systems. He points out that these varieties are nonetheless brought into the work of the school in one way or another. Educators have to recognize that children coming from these backgrounds often possess two or more linguistic varieties—one of which they use in their home and community and the other in the school. Still other forms may exist. The bottom line is that students speaking nonstandard language varieties are frequently penalized for using language that is different from the linguistic capital that has high status in the school.

You've Just Finished your Free Sample

Enjoyed the preview?

Buy: <http://www.ebooks2go.com>