



Culturally Responsive Teaching *From the Education Alliance at Brown University*

Culture is central to student learning. Teaching methods that use references to a student's culture help the student understand mainstream culture through a lens of recognition and acknowledgement. The link between culture and classroom instruction derives from evidence that cultural practices shape thinking processes, (*Hollins, 1996*). Culturally responsive education recognizes, respects, and uses student identities and backgrounds as sources for creating optimal learning (*Nieto, 2000*). Teachers who use and respect their students' languages, cultures, and life experiences follow these principles:

Communication of high expectations - Consistent messages are delivered, from both the teacher and the school that students will succeed, based upon a genuine belief in student capability.

Active teaching methods - Instruction promotes student engagement by requiring students to play an active role in crafting curriculum and developing learning activities.

Teacher as facilitator - Within an active teaching environment, the teacher's role is one of guide, mediator, and knowledgeable consultant, as well as instructor.

Positive perspectives on families of culturally diverse students – School teachers and staff participate in an ongoing dialogue with students, families and community members on issues important to them. The people and discussions are included in classroom lessons and activities.

Cultural sensitivity - Teachers gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms and translate this knowledge into instructional practice.

Reshaping the curriculum - A reshaped curriculum is culturally responsive to the background of students.

Culturally mediated instruction - Instruction is characterized by providing students with culturally rich learning environments and culturally valued knowledge.

Student-controlled classroom discourse - Students are given the opportunity to control some portion of the lesson, which allows teachers to see how speech and negotiation are used in students' homes and communities.

Small-group instruction and academically related discourse - Instruction is organized around low-pressure, student-controlled learning groups that help develop academic goals.