

PRACTICES FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING IN THE GIFTED AND TALENTED CLASSROOM

Identification is just the first step in ensuring equity in gifted education. As schools begin to see more culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse (CLED) gifted and talented students as a result of expanded identification practices (Peters et al., 2019), leaders in gifted education must consider how to retain and engage every student. All students identified for advanced learning services should have the opportunity to develop their talents through content and interactions that are intrinsically meaningful. Pedagogy centered around multiculturalism and culturally responsive teaching (CRT) practices does just this; it allows students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences to connect to content, situates giftedness in a relevant and familiar context, and includes material that reflects students' diverse backgrounds and interests (Ford, 2015).

It is critical to employ CRT strategies so that all students are engaged and learning is relevant. Gay (2002) defined culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives from ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching [students] more effectively” (p. 106), and espoused the idea that when learning is situated in students' lived experiences, it is more meaningful and relevant. Culturally responsive teaching builds equity by showing students that gifted and talented services are inclusive, useful, and reflective of all backgrounds. Through regularly utilizing this practice, teachers are more likely to retain students and develop their gifts over the course of their academic careers (Ford et al., 2011). When educators are sensitive to the different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds that have shaped their students, they gain invaluable insight into how to foster growth and development in the whole student.

Honing culturally responsive teaching practices and creating a deep awareness of the “how” and “why” behind inclusive education is a process that takes time and will not happen overnight. Making this shift, for many teachers, will be transformational. Educators can begin this transformation by implementing key strategies and instructional practices in order to increase responsiveness to a multicultural student population. Advocates for gifted students must evaluate areas in which both overtly discriminatory practices and microaggressions may be harming students and hindering talent development, such as unrealistically high expectations for gifted students, differentiated expectations for students of color (Stambaugh & Ford, 2015), and omission of learning material that reflects student background and orientation, making students feel invisible (Graves, 2015). Advocates must also look for opportunities to shift mindsets, pedagogy, and content so that all students feel seen and valued. The insights, practices, and skills outlined here will help kick-start the development of culture-rich, inclusive classrooms that meet the needs of diverse gifted and talented students and reflect the goals and values of their communities.

Implementing CRT practices in your classroom can help create a multicultural and inclusive instructional environment. As you learn more about culturally relevant strategies, consider looking into the works of the scholars listed in Table 1. Although this is not an exhaustive list of strategies, the practices

and resources listed were selected because they emphasize multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy as pedagogical pathways for meeting the needs of gifted and talented CLED learners. The literature from which these strategies were selected comes from imminent scholars whose body of work centers around equity in gifted and talented education. The strategies also align with the National Association for Gifted Children's (2019) Gifted Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards (Standard 3: Curriculum Planning and Instruction). Use the practices and resources in Table 1 as a springboard to transform your instructional practice and ultimately increase the learning outcomes for diverse students.

Table 1

Examples of Culturally Relevant Practices and Lesson Plans for CLED Gifted Students

Scholar(s)	Content	Culturally Responsive Teachers of CLED Gifted Students . . .	Example Lesson Plan or Resource
Azano et al. (2014)	Math and history	Design learning activities in which students' communities are the focal point of the lesson so that the learning is tangible and relevant to students.	- Math Around Town (https://www.texaspsp.org/tasks/math-around-town#englishOriginal) - Local History Alive (https://www.texaspsp.org/tasks/local-history-alive#englishOriginal)
Burney and Cross (2006)	Interdisciplinary	Provide explicit instruction and practice with evaluative thinking skills and adopting multiple perspectives.	Multicultural Project for the Gifted: What's Your Perspective? (https://www.educationworld.com/blog/multicultural-project-gifted-whats-your-perspective)
Coleman (2006)	Interdisciplinary	Are aware that their students may have academic gaps that need to be filled. These gaps do not indicate a misfit in gifted education services, but that teachers will need to build in time to explicitly teach and reteach some concepts.	Curriculum Approaches That Overcome Learning Gaps and Language Barriers for Diverse Gifted Students (https://www.nagc.org/curriculum-approaches-overcome-learning-gaps-and-language-barriers-diverse-gifted-students)

Scholar(s)	Content	Culturally Responsive Teachers of CLED Gifted Students . . .	Example Lesson Plan or Resource
Ford (2011)	Interdisciplinary	Make regular use of resources such as the Bloom-Banks Matrix when developing learning activities. This resource, and others like it, guide teachers in facilitating deep, rigorous thinking and production around themes and ideas that reflect social and cultural insight and sensitivity.	Ford's Matrix Forms (https://www.drdonnayford.com/resources-galleryPage)
Ford et al. (2018)	Interdisciplinary	Implement a multicultural curriculum and integrate materials that reflect their cultural, racial, and linguistic background and heritage.	- Multicultural Education: Lesson Plans (https://libguides.uwf.edu/c.php?g=215172&p=1419835) - Culturally Responsive Lessons for Students, K-5 (https://sites.google.com/site/crmmprojectsite/Home/chapter-3--culturally-responsive-lessons-for-students) - Bringing a Culturally Responsive Lens to Math Class (https://www.edutopia.org/article/bringing-culturally-responsive-lens-math-class)

Scholar(s)	Content	Culturally Responsive Teachers of CLED Gifted Students . . .	Example Lesson Plan or Resource
Graves (2015)	Interdisciplinary	Create a climate of tolerance for LGBTQ students, so that they can explore multifaceted identities and experiences of themselves and others.	Lesson Plans to Support LGBTQ Inclusive Elementary Schools (https://www.welcomingschools.org/resources/lesson-plans/lgbtq-inclusive-schools/lgbtq-with-books)
Lilienthal et al. (2018)	English language arts	Include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer figures, texts, and topics as a regular part of the curriculum.	Rainbow Book List (https://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks)
Newell (2017)	English language arts	Incorporate the use of culturally relevant literature that is aligned to students' background experiences, perspectives, and culture.	Lesson Plan for Grade 5+, ELA and/or Gifted Education (https://docs.google.com/document/)
Scott (2014)	History	Provide students opportunities to learn about social justice-oriented topics connected to students' cultural background.	- A Living History (https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/a-living-history) - Happy Birthday!?: Activities for African American History Month (https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/happy-birthday) - White Anti-Racist Biographies: Early Grades (https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/white-antiracist-biographies-early-grades)

Scholar(s)	Content	Culturally Responsive Teachers of CLED Gifted Students . . .	Example Lesson Plan or Resource
Scott (2014)	Science and Math	Provide opportunities for students to explore and analyze the impact of historical figures, from their culture, in the areas of math, science, and STEM, and how their contributions have impacted society.	Culturally Responsive STEM Initiative (https://stemteachersnyc.org/culturally-responsive-stem)
Vega and Moore (2016)	Interdisciplinary	Affirm students' ethnic identity through instructional activities and assignments.	Lesson Plan: Exploring Identity (https://pov-tc.pbs.org/pov/downloads/2010/pov-offandrunning-lesson-plan.pdf)

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