

# *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Foundations, Related Theories and Approaches, Precursors, and Applications*

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This is a curated bibliography on the topic of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), including its foundations, related theories and approaches, precursors, and applications to literacy and mathematics instruction. The bibliography consists of articles, books, book chapters, and conference papers, most of which have been peer reviewed. Associated with each citation is an abstract or summary. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of writings on this topic; rather, it is intended to provide broad foundational knowledge on CRP for interested readers as well as to support the design and execution of projects and investigations.

This bibliography is divided into sections that highlight some of the strands in education research that relate to CRP and give interested readers an introduction to these strands and their application to SAP's current work. The [first section on CRP](#) covers major readings on the topic and includes two subdivisions: [Culturally Responsive Teaching \(CRT\)](#) and [Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy \(CSP\)](#). While CRP is a theoretical model that addresses student achievement, cultural identity, and the inequities that schools and other institutions perpetuate, CRT is generally more focused on the actual teaching practices that center 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. Separate, though related, CSP can be seen as the most widely acknowledged evolution of CRP in recent years, where it builds on CRP's aim to affirm students of color and aims to foster linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the goals of a democratic society.

Following this first main section is a [section on the theoretical underpinnings and precursors](#) to CRP. Ladson-Billings did not develop CRP in isolation and, in fact, was heavily influenced by the work on multicultural education models that were popular in the 1980s following periods of de jure segregation in the United States. She also developed CRP in tandem with her theoretical work on Critical Race Theory and its application to education studies. These two influences are highlighted in the section. Finally, the third section highlights some other [recent pedagogical approaches](#) that follow the tradition of CRP and is followed by a section that focuses on the [application of CRP to mathematics and literacy instruction](#)—SAP's content foci.

This is version 1.0; presently, there are 42 citations in the bibliography, and we will add other relevant materials over time. Feel free to contact either of the authors if you have any questions or suggestions, to provide feedback, or would like additional information.

## **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)**

1. Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research, 86*, 163-206.

**Abstract:** Many teachers and educational researchers have claimed to adopt tenets of culturally relevant education (CRE). However, recent work describes how standardized curricula and testing have marginalized CRE in educational reform discourses. In this synthesis of research, we sought examples of research connecting CRE to positive student outcomes across content areas. It is our hope that this synthesis will be a reference useful to educational researchers, parents, teachers, and education leaders wanting to reframe public debates in education away from neoliberal individualism, whether in a specific content classroom or in a broader educational community.

2. Brown, B. A., Boda, P., Lemmi, C., & Monroe, X. (2019). Moving culturally relevant pedagogy from theory to practice: Exploring teachers' application of culturally relevant education in science and mathematics. *Urban Education, 54*, 775-803.

**Abstract:** This article reports on urban elementary teachers' understandings of cultural relevancy and the practices they enacted after a professional development on culturally relevant education (CRE) and cognitive apprenticeship. Focus group interviews support that participating teachers understood some principles of CRE but did not always match the theory to practice before our professional development. After training, video data of teaching support that this divide was mediated. These findings point to a need to engage in explicit theory-to-practice research about cultural relevancy in urban science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) teaching. Implications are provided relating to teachers planning lessons purposefully to infuse cultural relevancy into their STEM classrooms.

3. Byrd, C. M. (2016). Does culturally relevant teaching work? An examination from student perspectives. *SAGE Open, July-September 2016*, 1-10.

**Abstract:** Culturally relevant teaching is proposed as a powerful method for increasing student achievement and engagement and for reducing achievement gaps. Nevertheless, the research demonstrating its effectiveness consists primarily of case studies of exemplary classrooms. In addition, most of the research fails to take student perspectives into account. The current study asks whether culturally relevant teaching works by considering student perceptions of classrooms that vary in the amount of culturally relevant practices. The sample was 315 sixth- through 12th-grade students sampled from across the United States (62% female, 25% White, 25% Latino, 25% African American, and 25% Asian) who completed surveys of their experiences of culturally relevant teaching, cultural socialization, opportunities to learn about other cultures, and opportunities to learn about racism. Elements of culturally relevant teaching were significantly associated with academic outcomes and ethnic/racial

identity development. The findings provide support for the effectiveness of culturally relevant teaching in everyday classrooms.

4. Cammarota, J. (2007). A social justice approach to achievement: Guiding Latina/o students toward educational attainment with a challenging, socially relevant curriculum. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 40*(1), 87-96.

**Abstract:** This article discusses how an experimental social science curriculum has influenced Latina/o students' perspectives of their potential to graduate high school and attend college. The curriculum, which is called the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), requires students to adopt a serious academic subjectivity to analyze and address social conditions that may undermine their future opportunities. The curriculum reflects graduate-level seminars in critical theory and participatory action research. Many students in the first cohort to participate in the program were labeled "at risk" of dropping out. These students not only graduated but also excelled with the advanced-level course work. Their exposure to advanced-level work was the best measure for preventing their premature departure from high school as well as preparation for college. The article concludes with recommendations for how universities can work with local schools to foster the type of academic climate that is conducive to success.

5. Dee, T. S., & Penner, E. K. (2017). The causal effects of cultural relevance: Evidence from an ethnic studies curriculum. *American Educational Research Journal, 54*(1), 127-166.

**Abstract:** An extensive theoretical and qualitative literature stresses the promise of instructional practices and content aligned with minority students' experiences. Ethnic studies courses provide an example of such "culturally relevant pedagogy" (CRP). Despite theoretical support, quantitative evidence on the effectiveness of these courses is limited. We estimate the causal effects of an ethnic studies curriculum, using a "fuzzy" regression discontinuity design based on the fact that several schools assigned students with eighth-grade GPAs below a threshold to take the course. Assignment to this course increased ninth-grade attendance by 21 percentage points, GPA by 1.4 grade points, and credits earned by 23. These surprisingly large effects suggest that CRP, when implemented in a high-fidelity context, can provide effective support to at-risk students.

6. Hanley, M. S., & Noblit, G. W. (2009). *Cultural responsiveness, racial identity and academic success: A review of literature*. Paper prepared for the Heinz Endowments.

**Summary:** The Heinz Endowments asked Drs. Hanley and Noblit, faculty and scholars in curriculum and instruction and educational foundations, to conduct a review of the literature on a set of concepts and the connections among them: culturally responsive pedagogy, positive ethnic socialization, resilience and academic success, with some emphasis on arts programming.

7. Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Culturally relevant teaching: The key to making multicultural education work. *Research and multicultural education: From the margins to the mainstream*, 106-121.

**Abstract:** If we focus upon the introduction of ethnic studies into the curriculum with only an afterthought to the teachers and teaching strategies used, the future is fairly predictable. My guess is that two decades from now ethnic studies will exist, but they will be a shell with all content sucked dry by pedantic instruction more concerned with form than substance. Perhaps ethnic studies will go the way of Latin and Greek, given time and dull educational leadership (Cuban, 1973).

8. Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 465-491.

**Abstract:** In the midst of discussions about improving education, teacher education, equity, and diversity, little has been done to make pedagogy a central area of investigation. This article attempts to challenge notions about the intersection of culture and teaching that rely solely on microanalytic or macroanalytic perspectives. Rather, the article attempts to build on the work done in both of these areas and proposes a culturally relevant theory of education. By raising questions about the location of the researcher in pedagogical research, the article attempts to explicate the theoretical framework of the author in the nexus of collaborative and reflexive research. The pedagogical practices of eight exemplary teachers of African-American students serve as the investigative "site." Their practices and reflections on those practices provide a way to define and recognize culturally relevant pedagogy.

9. Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34, 159-165.

**Summary:** In this article, the author discusses the strategies she recommends for teachers who are learning to be culturally relevant - an approach that she notes other teachers have called "just good teaching" - and offers specific examples of successful teachers who utilize this pedagogy and produce learning that goes beyond expectations. Ladson-Billings argues that teaching must embody three criteria to be considered culturally relevant: academic success, which eschews an approach that makes students feel good for one that honors high expectations; cultural competence, which requires teachers to utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning; and critical consciousness, or the act of learning how to challenge the status quo and passing these critical analysis skills on to students. The author offers a discussion of the characteristics she noted in the successful and culturally relevant teachers she studied, before closing with the argument that researchers must continue to build on this work and teachers must conduct research about their own practices.

10. Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). Yes, but how do we do it: Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In J. Landsman and C. Lewis (Eds.), *White teachers, diverse classrooms* (pp. 29-41). Stylus Publishers.

**Summary:** Ladson-Billings responds to the idea that while teachers are constantly told that they need to practice culturally relevant teaching, no one has told them how. The author argues that the ways of “doing” culturally relevant pedagogy are less important than ways of “being” culturally relevant, and that the “being” should inform the “doing.” In order to demystify the work necessary for becoming culturally relevant, she provides practical examples of this pedagogical approach. In alignment with her argument about the importance of “being,” she states that educators need to consider how they think about social contexts, students, curriculum and instruction, and understand the connections between these philosophies and teachers’ classroom practices. She discusses the elements of culturally relevant pedagogy - academic achievement, cultural competence and sociopolitical consciousness - and provides examples of teachers who have been successful in incorporating these elements into their teaching. She also includes a discussion of teacher education’s role in maintaining the status quo, highlighting the need for programs to make changes in order to better prepare teachers to effectively work with students from racially marginalized backgrounds.

11. Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American students* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Jossey-Bass.

**Summary:** *Dreamkeepers* is a seminal text for those who seek to study or practice culturally relevant teaching. In the book, originally published in 1994, Ladson-Billings discusses the practices of several exemplary teachers that have had success working with African American students. These examples come from her ethnographic study of eight highly effective teachers, who she continuously observed and interviewed over the course of three years. Ladson-Billings argues that while there are a number of existing teachers who have been able to practice cultural relevance in their classrooms, their practices are not recognized and used widely enough. Utilizing the data she collected through interviews and observations of teachers, she demonstrates that culturally relevant teachers have high self esteem and regard others highly; immerse themselves in the community; see teaching as an art; believe in the capability of all students; help students make connections between community, national and global identities; and see teaching as “mining” students’ knowledge. In order to guide future teachers in learning to practice this type of pedagogy, she recommends that teacher education make the following changes: recruit teacher candidates who are committed to working with African American students; offer experiences that help preservice teachers learn about the role of culture; provide opportunities for them to critique the system, choose to become agents of change; ensure they become immersed in African American culture for extended periods of time; provide opportunities to observe culturally relevant teachers; and extend the period of time required for student teaching. She closes the book by sharing her vision for culturally relevant schools, stating that they must be responsive to parents’ desires for their students’ education, honor and respect students’ culture, and help students understand and prepare to navigate the world.

12. Howard, T. C. (2001). Telling their side of the story: African-American students' perceptions of culturally relevant teaching. *The Urban Review*, 33(2), 131-149.

**Abstract:** An increasing amount of scholarship has documented the salience of culturally relevant teaching practices for ethnically and linguistically diverse students. However, research examining these students' perceptions and interpretations of these learning environments has been minimal at best. In this article, the author details the findings from a study that sought to assess African-American elementary students' interpretations of culturally relevant teachers within urban contexts. Student responses indicated that culturally relevant teaching strategies had a positive effect on student effort and engagement in class content and were consistent with the theoretical principles of culturally relevant pedagogy. The qualitative data revealed three key findings that students preferred in their learning environments (1) teachers who displayed caring bonds and attitudes toward them, (2) teachers who established community- and family-type classroom environments, and (3) teachers who made learning an entertaining and fun process.

13. Howard, T. C. (2003). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Ingredients for critical teacher reflection. *Theory into Practice*, 42(3), 195-202.

**Abstract:** Teacher reflection continues to be part of the teacher education literature. More recently, critical reflection has been recommended as a means of incorporating issues of equity and social justice into teaching thinking and practice. This article offers critical reflection as a prelude to creating culturally relevant teaching strategies. The author outlines theoretical and practical considerations for critical reflection and culturally relevant teaching for teacher education. The author argues that the development of culturally relevant teaching strategies is contingent upon critical reflection about race and culture of teachers and their students.

### ***Culturally Responsive Teaching***

1. Brown, M. R. (2007). Educating all students: Creating culturally responsive teachers, classrooms, and schools. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 43(1), 57-62.

**Summary:** This article builds on the work of scholars such as Geneva Gay (2002), Gloria Ladson-Billings (2001), Villegas and Lucas (2002), and Wlodowski and Ginsberg (1995) to highlight aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy and frameworks that are useful for preparing teachers, classrooms and schools for becoming culturally responsive. In order to make this shift, she states that teachers need to develop knowledge of ethnic and cultural groups, and demonstrate caring, consciousness, communication, and a sense of community. They need to practice teaching that aims to be inclusive and authentic, by utilizing cultural characteristics, experiences and perspectives in the classroom. For classrooms to be culturally responsive, teachers must believe students want to learn; intentionally engage students; and develop activities based on the goal of increasing students' chances of academic success, such as teacher self-evaluations and open ended projects. In order for schools to become culturally responsive, Brown

explains that they need to partner with and support their teachers in implementing CRP - school districts and teacher educators need to mentor and evaluate teachers, and administrators need to be willing to transform the curriculum.

2. Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, practice and research*. Teachers College Press.

**Summary:** Geneva Gay argues that it is possible to improve achievement for ethnically diverse students, if teachers acknowledge and utilize the students' inherent intellectual ability and intelligence. Throughout the book, she relies on knowledge gained from research, theory and practice to demonstrate that diversity and culture need to be a central focus of U. S. schools. The book utilizes storymaking or narrative as a tool for educational analysis, research and reform, as the author believes stories are lenses that help us make sense of our experiences, teach us about ourselves and help us to learn about each other. She also offers recommendations for improving student achievement, including six key assertions: 1) culture counts, as it influences each aspect of education; 2) conventional reform is inadequate for improving achievement for students of color; 3) intention without action is insufficient, and good intention needs to be paired with pedagogical knowledge and skills; 4) cultural diversity is a strength, and a useful resource for improving education; 5) competence and incompetence are not universal or all-inclusive, they are contextual and evolving; and 6) standardized test scores and grades do not explain why students do not perform - they are symptoms of the problem, not the cause, and teachers need to understand and remove obstacles to high performance. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of cultural responsiveness and provides an overview and analysis of the concept, as well as an explanation of its implications or relationship to culture. Many of the chapters also include what Gay refers to as "practice possibilities," to guide teachers toward a contextual understanding of cultural responsiveness without the inclusion of prescriptive strategies.

3. Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2), 106-116.

**Summary:** Geneva Gay expands on ideas presented in her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Practice and Research*, as well as the work of several interdisciplinary scholars, to argue that a focus on culturally responsive teaching is needed in order to improve education for students from marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds. The author offers five "essential elements" of culturally responsive teaching that she urges educators to center in their work. The first, developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, focuses on the need to gain an understanding of cultural values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions, and relational patterns. The second element is "including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum," which emphasizes a need for teachers to transform the curriculum and instruction by incorporating what they learn about students' cultures. "Demonstrating cultural caring and building learning communities," the third element, goes beyond "best practices" and "gentle nurturing," to insist that teachers hold high expectations and be in partnership with students. The fourth, "communicating with ethnically diverse

students” points to a need for educators to accept students’ different communication styles and methods of engaging in the classroom. And fifth, Gay urges educators to “respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction,” by modifying instructional strategies and integrating cultural diversity into all subjects and skill areas.

4. Hammond, Z. L. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin.

**Summary:** In this book for classroom teachers, instructional coaches, and instructional leaders, Hammond utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to demonstrate that looking at brain-based learning and culturally responsive teaching together can help us understand how cultural responsiveness impacts learning. She argues that culturally responsive teaching that is applied intentionally and builds brainpower works for closing the achievement gap, and this is backed by neuroscience research. In order to assist educators in grasping and applying this concept, the author offers her Ready for Rigor (RTR) framework, which incorporates strategies from culturally relevant pedagogy, brain-based learning and understandings of equity. She states that the book is not meant to be a prescriptive “how-to guide,” but more of a mindset or toolkit that organizes the principles of culturally relevant teaching so that teachers can then apply these approaches to their own contexts. The RTR framework includes four core areas of practice: awareness, or the need to acknowledge and understand teachers’ own lenses, sociopolitical context, and the role schools play in perpetuating inequality; learning partnerships, which requires building trust with students; information processing, or knowing how to engage students in complex learning and strengthen their capacity; and community building, which requires teachers to see how classrooms reflect dominant culture and creating safe environments for student learning. Each chapter offers a set of reflection questions and resources for deeper learning, as Hammond encourages readers to engage with intention, make connections, translate what they learn to their practice, and bring others along on the journey.

5. Hollie, S. (2011). *Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning: Classroom practices for student success*. Shell Educational Publishing.

**Summary:** This book is a practical guide for classroom teachers who are seeking to become culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR). The authors’ inclusion of linguistic responsiveness is an expansion of earlier conceptions of cultural responsiveness, as it emphasizes the need to consider how students’ knowledge and understanding of language is understood by teachers in classroom settings. Hollie states that his approach is also somewhat different from previous works because he is concerned with culture from an anthropological perspective rather than a conception based on race ideology; he focuses on pedagogy, not content; and he explores the work of teachers, at a grass-roots level, rather than institutions. The book offers a thorough explanation of the CLR framework and pedagogical approach through discussion of the theory, practice, and terminology, while also incorporating examples, anecdotes, and specific practices and strategies to support teachers in becoming culturally and linguistically responsive. The author incorporates the theme of the



journey to responsiveness throughout, to emphasize the need for teachers to shift their mindsets and focus on developing the skills necessary for effectively implementing CLR. Four areas of CLR are discussed: classroom management, academic vocabulary, academic literacy, and academic language. Each chapter includes an anticipation guide, which engages the reader by asking them to formulate an opinion in response to statements relevant to the chapter's content; a reflection guide, which encourages the reader to reflect on their thoughts from the anticipation guide activity; and a "pause to ponder" section, as an opportunity to explore how the content of the chapter relates to the readers' own classroom, school or district context.

6. Howard-Hamilton, M. F. (2000). Creating a culturally responsive learning environment for African American students. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 82, 45-53.

**Abstract:** This chapter explores the creation of a culturally responsive learning environment for students and faculty. How African American and white students as well as faculty develop a strong identity and healthy interpersonal relationships is translated into teaching practice.

7. López, F. A. (2016). Culturally Responsive Pedagogies in Arizona and Latino Students' Achievement. *Teachers College Record*, 118(5), n5.

**Background/Findings:** Despite numerous educational reform efforts aimed at aggressively addressing achievement disparities, Latinos continue to underperform in school. In sharp contrast to the belief that the inordinate achievement disparities among Latino students stem from deficiencies, some researchers assert that culturally responsive teaching (CRT) improves academic achievement because it views students' culture and language as strengths. The body of literature on CRT provides detailed depictions of classroom experiences for traditionally marginalized students, but is faulted as lacking an explicit link to student outcomes that prevents its consideration among policymakers. Consistent with the assertion in extant literature that CRT is related to students' outcomes, the study found that teachers' beliefs about the role of Spanish in instruction, funds of knowledge, and critical awareness were all positively related to students' reading outcomes.

8. Santamaría, L. J. (2009). Culturally responsive differentiated instruction: Narrowing gaps between best pedagogical practices benefiting all learners. *Teachers College Record*, 111, 214-247.

**Background/Context:** Because of its special education association, differentiated instruction (DI) is a topic of concern for many educators working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners, whereby bilingual, multicultural, and culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is considered more appropriate for responding to cultural and linguistic diversity. Furthermore, although the literature base on DI recognizes cultural and linguistic diversity, it offers little in terms of ways to address these differences.

## *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy*

1. Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84, 74-84.

**Abstract:** In this article, Ladson-Billings reflects on the history of her theory of culturally relevant pedagogy and the ways it has been used and misused since its inception. She argues for the importance of dynamic scholarship and suggests that it is time for a “remix” of her original theory: culturally sustaining pedagogy, as proposed by Paris (2012). Ladson-Billings discusses her work with the hip-hop and spoken word program First Wave as an example of how culturally sustaining pedagogy allows for a fluid understanding of culture, and a teaching practice that explicitly engages questions of equity and justice. Influenced by her experience with the First Wave program, Ladson-Billings welcomes the burgeoning literature on culturally sustaining pedagogy as a way to push forward her original goals of engaging critically in the cultural landscapes of classrooms and teacher education programs.

2. Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93-97.

**Abstract:** Seventeen years ago, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) published the landmark article “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” giving a coherent theoretical statement for resource pedagogies that had been building throughout the 1970s and 1980s. I, like countless teachers and university-based researchers, have been inspired by what it means to make teaching and learning relevant and responsive to the languages, literacies, and cultural practices of students across categories of difference and (in)equality. Recently, however, I have begun to question if the terms “relevant” and “responsive” are really descriptive of much of the teaching and research founded upon them and, more importantly, if they go far enough in their orientation to the languages and literacies and other cultural practices of communities marginalized by systemic inequalities to ensure the valuing and maintenance of our multiethnic and multilingual society. In this essay, I offer the term and stance of culturally sustaining pedagogy as an alternative that, I believe, embodies some of the best research and practice in the resource pedagogy tradition and as a term that supports the value of our multiethnic and multilingual present and future. Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling. In the face of current policies and practices that have the explicit goal of creating a monocultural and monolingual society, research and practice need equally explicit resistances that embrace cultural pluralism and cultural equality.

3. Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press.

**Summary:** In this edited volume of essays that examine culturally sustaining pedagogies, the editors and authors explore the need for culturally sustaining pedagogy, which goes beyond cultural relevance or responsiveness to focus on intentionally sustaining students' culture. They argue that this type of pedagogy has the potential to transform schooling. The authors believe that there is a lack of understanding in relation to culture, as many understand it in a reductive sense and do not realize that when it is understood and incorporated beyond celebrations of food or festivals, it can help lead to educational justice. The essays provide an overview of cases that demonstrate the theoretical grounding for culturally sustaining pedagogies; explain the role of culture in learning; explore youths' relationship with schooling and how it can be transformed; and show that teachers can guide students in critiquing their institutions and the education system and take ownership of their relationship to schooling. The book also offers critiques of culturally sustaining pedagogies, noting that it should not be only about celebrating youths' culture but also about teaching them to be critical and address any oppressive practices or beliefs that exist within those cultures.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings and Precursors to CRP**

1. Banks, J. A. (1995). Multicultural education and curriculum transformation. *Journal of Negro Education*, 390-400.

**Abstract:** In this, the text of the 1995 Charles H. Thompson Lecture, the author describes five dimensions of multicultural education, focusing on the knowledge construction process. This dimension is emphasized to show how the cultural assumptions, frames of reference, and perspectives of mainstream scholars and researchers influence the ways in which they construct academic knowledge to legitimize institutionalized inequality. The process by which transformative scholars create oppositional knowledge and liberatory curricula that challenge the status quo and sanction action and reform is also described. This process is endorsed as a means of helping students become effective citizens in a pluralistic, democratic society.

2. Gay, G. (2004). Beyond Brown: Promoting equality through multicultural education. *Journal of Curriculum & Supervision*, 19(3).

**Abstract:** This article looks at the legacy of the Brown v. Board of Education decision, discusses the formative stages of multicultural education, along with some reasons for these developmental changes. It explores two specific domains of multicultural education – curriculum desegregation and equity pedagogy – in greater detail to demonstrate how the field has changed over time and to amplify why they are avenues for educational equality. A brief summary of the emergent body of multicultural research concludes the article. The intent throughout is to show how educational desegregation and equality are advanced by multicultural education and the changes occurring in the field.

3. Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). What we can learn from multicultural education research. *Educational Leadership*, 51(8), 22-26.

**Summary:** Ladson-Billings's central argument in this article is that according to knowledge from education research, there are five major areas that matter in multicultural education. The first area the author emphasizes is "teachers' beliefs about students," as she states that teachers expect less from Black and low-income students than from white and more affluent peers, and this lowers achievement. "Curriculum content and materials," the second area, focuses on the need to go beyond superficial appreciation of cultural differences, such as simply enjoying a culture's food or holding festivals, and follow a transformative model that incorporates different cultural perspectives into the curriculum. The third area is "instructional approaches." Ladson-Billings states that educators cannot simply "teach new material in old ways" - teachers and schools need to accept students' prior understandings as knowledge, and teachers need to spend time in students' communities and learn their languages. The author notes that the fourth major area that matters is "educational settings," as students of color experience inequities in school such as tracking, lack of access, older facilities. Lastly, Ladson-Billings identifies teacher education as the fifth area, as she argues that teachers who do not learn about multicultural education in their teacher education programs lack understanding of differences, and often perceive students of color as deficient when they are not successful academically.

4. Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). It's not the culture of poverty, it's the poverty of culture: The problem with teacher education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 37(2), 104-109.

**Abstract:** The preparation of novice teachers is dominated by psychological notions almost to the exclusion of other social science paradigms. The perspective that is least likely to be evident in teacher preparation is that of anthropology. However, prospective and novice teachers regularly and loosely use the word "culture" as an explanation for student patterns of behavior they cannot explain. This discussion focuses on the ways prospective and novice teachers construct culture simultaneously as both the problem and the answer to their struggles with students different from themselves.

5. Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68.

**Abstract:** This article asserts that despite the salience of race in U.S. society, as a topic of scholarly inquiry, it remains untheorized. The article argues for a critical race theoretical perspective in education analogous to that of critical race theory in legal scholarship by developing three propositions: (1) race continues to be significant in the United States; (2) U.S. society is based on property rights rather than human rights; and (3) the intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool for understanding inequity. The article concludes with a look at the limitations of the current multicultural paradigm.

6. Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. Longman.

**Summary:** *Affirming Diversity* links theory and practice to offer a comprehensive overview of multicultural education. Nieto first explores and critiques the idea of school failure to emphasize that the education system creates and perpetuates inequalities, and highlights several structural issues related to multicultural education, including racism, discrimination, achievement, culture, identity and linguistic diversity. She explains that multicultural education is not a simple fix for these issues, but should be seen as a transformative process that people should seek to understand as it is situated within its personal, historical, social and political context. Part I of the book explains how the author conceptualizes multicultural education, describes the research approach and specifically the use of case studies, and provides definitions for the terminology. Part II presents findings from case studies of 10 students, which incorporate students' perspectives and include the relevant context and history, to demonstrate the need for schools to acknowledge and incorporate cultural diversity. Part III explains the implications, and offers some guidance on how to reform schools and how to practice multicultural education. Nieto breaks down multicultural education into seven characteristics, stating that it is: antiracist education, basic education, important for all students, pervasive, education for social justice, is a process, and is critical pedagogy. The end of each chapter offers an opportunity for the reader to interact with, and reflect on, the content through the "To Think About" section. Some chapters offer specific activities and Chapter 11 includes "What Can You Do" sections that offer examples of specific strategies and practices for effective multicultural education.

7. Sleeter, C. E. (1989). Multicultural education as a form of resistance to oppression. *Journal of Education*, 171(3), 51-71.

**Summary:** Sleeter addresses several critiques of multicultural education in this article, and argues that many of the criticisms of the approach lack an understanding of the intent. For example, the author states that many people see multicultural education as homogenous and static, when it is in fact dynamic and growing. She then offers five tasks for the field of education research, which are designed to help address such critiques and strengthen the field. These include better articulating the relationship between structural changes and individual beliefs or attitudes; developing and utilizing strategies for promoting solidarity and a clear social action agenda; developing organizational structures in order to promote the goals of multicultural education and related social movements; studying the politics of social change as they relate to teaching; and systematizing insights such as those she offers throughout the article into curriculum and instruction.

## Recent Pedagogical Approaches that Follow the CRP Tradition

1. Emdin, C. (2011). Moving beyond the boat without a paddle: Reality pedagogy, Black youth, and urban science education. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 284-295.

**Abstract:** Much of the research that focuses on the academic success of Black youth in urban science education does not consider the provision of tools that educators can use in becoming more effective. This article discusses this issue, and introduces an approach to pedagogy - reality pedagogy - which includes five distinct types of practices (the 5 C 's) which teachers can implement in their classrooms to facilitate effective science instruction. I describe the 5 C 's of reality pedagogy; discuss ways they can be implemented; and show how they can both support the effectiveness of urban science teachers and the agency of Black youth in their classrooms.

2. Duncan-Andrade, J. M. R., & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of critical pedagogy: Possibilities for moving from theory to practice in urban schools*. Peter Lang.

**Summary:** In this book, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell address two questions: 1) What does critical pedagogy look like in work with urban youth, specifically in the context of urban schooling in the United States?, and 2) How can a systematic investigation of critical work enacted in urban contexts simultaneously draw upon and extend the core tenets of critical pedagogy? The authors respond to these questions through exploration of a critical action research project they conducted with youth. They argue that urban school “failure” can be addressed through the application of critical pedagogy. Their research provides evidence that while urban schools are often seen as failing, they are really functioning as designed, as our education system did not create these schools for success. The authors discuss a need for urban education reform, as well as the movement necessary to make this reform effective. They argue that urban classrooms need to be “critical counter-culture communities of practice,” or “4Cs” - spaces that recognize, understand and resist dominant institutional norms and practices. This book is useful for education researchers and practitioners alike, as it bridges theory and practice, and offers an approach for implementing critical practice.

3. Love, B. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.

**Description of the book (from Amazon):** Drawing on her life’s work of teaching and researching in urban schools, Bettina Love persuasively argues that educators must teach students about racial violence, oppression, and how to make sustainable change in their communities through radical civic initiatives and movements. She argues that the U. S. educational system is maintained by and profits from the suffering of children of color. Instead of trying to repair a flawed system, educational reformers offer survival tactics in the forms of test-taking skills, acronyms, grit labs, and character education, which Love calls the educational survival complex.

To dismantle the educational survival complex and to achieve educational freedom—not merely reform—teachers, parents, and community leaders must approach education with the imagination, determination, boldness, and urgency of an abolitionist. Following in the tradition of activists like Ella Baker, Bayard Rustin, and Fannie Lou Hamer, *We Want to Do More Than Survive* introduces an alternative to traditional modes of educational reform and expands our ideas of civic engagement and intersectional justice.

Also, link to a book review by Robert Alexander (University of San Francisco): <https://repository.usfca.edu/ijhre/vol5/iss1/15/>

4. Scorza, D., Mirra, N., & Morrell, E. (2013). It Should Just Be Education: Critical Pedagogy Normalized as Academic Excellence. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 4(2), 15-34.

**Abstract:** For a generation since the release of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970), the idea of a pedagogy for critical consciousness has fascinated North American educators. Their treatment of critical pedagogy, however, has been largely theoretical; very little of the work of North American scholars has addressed teaching and learning in schools or in out-of-school work with youth. While we now have some examples of critical pedagogy in practice in classrooms and non-school spaces (Darder, 1991; Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, 2008; Fisher, 2007; Stovall, 2006), we are in need of further research because many questions remain unanswered. For example, what are the goals of critical pedagogy when it is applied in work with youth? How is “success” measured? How can analysis of ongoing projects illuminate what we mean by critical pedagogy with urban American youth? In this article we seek to answer some of these questions through the analysis of two long-running intervention projects that attempt to frame critical pedagogy as academically empowering in critical learning communities. Specifically, this paper explores critical pedagogy in two Southern California programs that work with youth across school and non-school settings: the Council of Youth Research (1999-2011) and the Black Male Youth Academy (2006-2011). Through an analysis of multiple forms of data, including field notes, student work products, student reflections, and conversations with outside actors who have engaged these youth, we seek to understand the role of critical pedagogy across three domains: critical literacy development, empowered identity development, and the promotion of civic engagement for social change. Additionally, through an investigation of pedagogical moments —when youth themselves are in dual roles as students and public intellectuals—we hope to develop a grounded theory of pedagogical practice that can inform work with youth in classroom and out-of-school settings.

5. Stovall, D. (2006). We can relate: Hip-hop culture, critical pedagogy, and the secondary classroom. *Urban Education*, 41(6), 585-602.

**Abstract:** This article seeks to locate hip-hop in the realm of popular culture in education. Through the use of song lyrics, the author suggests the use of rap music to

provide context for the humanities and social sciences in secondary curriculum. Using a theoretical and practical lens, the article argues for the use of hip-hop and other elements of popular culture to be utilized to develop relevant curriculum. Although the article highlights one aspect of hip-hop culture, it seeks to advocate for other creative techniques seeking to provide relevance for high school youth.

### **CRP for Literacy and Mathematics Instruction**

1. Arismendi-Pardi, E. J. (1999). What is ethnomathematics and why should we teach it? Crossing cultures: Communicating through the curriculum. Paper presented at the National Conference of the Center for the Study of Diversity in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, San Diego.

**Abstract:** This paper defines ethnomathematics and reviews the methods used to incorporate this philosophy into the current teaching of mathematics. Ethnomathematics rejects inequity, arrogance, and bigotry while challenging the Eurocentric bias that denies the mathematical contributions and rigor of other cultures. A review of the literature shows that the teaching of ethnomathematics will bring awareness to students that Europe is not now nor was it ever the center of civilization. Ultimately, this method will present an accurate history of mathematics, use a variety of examples to solve problems from a variety of cultures, and recognize that learning mathematics is a unique process for every individual.

2. Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3).

**Summary:** This article discusses the need to ensure that teachers and schools include books in their classrooms that represent students of all different backgrounds. To demonstrate the importance of this issue, Bishop explains that books can provide readers with windows, sliding glass doors and mirrors. Windows offer new and different views of the world, and can be “real or imagined, familiar or strange.” Sliding glass doors offer opportunities for the reader to become a part of the story. Books that are mirrors allow us to see our own lives and experiences reflected back to us, and affirm our existence as part of humanity. The author explains that many books do not offer mirrors to non-white readers, and this lack of representation teaches these children that they are not as valuable as their peers. The lack of mirrors for underrepresented groups can also affect white readers, as they miss out on the opportunity to learn about other groups and cultures - Bishop argues that this is necessary for the readers to learn about reality. She explains that including mirrors for all children could help us all to understand one other better and celebrate both our similarities and our differences.

3. D’Ambrosio, U. (2001). What is ethnomathematics, and how can it help children in schools? *Teaching Children Mathematics*, 7, 308-311.



**ERIC Summary:** Describes ethnomathematics and its place in the mathematics classroom. Features a discussion on the importance of culture in the mathematics classroom by one of the early proponents of the concept.

4. Lipka, J., Hogan, M., Webster, J., Yanez, E., Adams, B., Clark, S., et al. (2005). Math in a cultural context: Two case studies of a successful culturally-based math project. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 36(4), 367–385.

**Abstract:** Math in a Cultural Context (MCC) was developed from ethnographic work with Yup'ik elders and teachers. The need for culturally based curricula seems obvious to those in the field of educational anthropology, but not necessarily to policymakers. Two case studies of novice teachers, one cultural “insider” and one “outsider,” illustrate how each effectively taught MCC. The insider transformed her teaching by allowing student ownership through inquiry and cultural connections. The outsider deepened her mathematics content knowledge and found a perfect pedagogical fit through MCC.

5. Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy*. New York: Scholastic Teaching Resources.

**Summary:** In this book, Muhammad makes the case for historically responsive literacy, as she argues that educators need to ground learning standards for literacy education in history. She offers a framework she calls the Historically Responsive Literacy framework, designed by people of color for children of color, to be applied by K-12 educators, school leaders and writers of standards, curriculum and exams. The framework is meant to help teacher educators prepare preservice teachers to address racism and other oppressions, and to help teachers make changes to their learning goals, curriculum, pedagogy. Muhammad sees the historical perspective as imperative because she believes that students already have power and genius within them, and it is the educators job to cultivate it, rather than give it to them. She states that in order to do so, teachers need to first cultivate their own genius and learn students' histories and ancestries. She explains that Black communities practiced literacy much differently in the 19th century, as they challenged their students, argues that we use this as a model. The Historically Responsive Literacy framework is made up of four goals: identity development, or making sense of who you are; skill development, or becoming proficient in the relevant content areas; intellectual development, or gaining new knowledge and concepts; and criticality, which requires an understanding of the role of power, authority and oppression, and a commitment to working toward justice. The book is separated into three sections. Part 1 starts with the history and introduces the Historically Responsive Literacy framework, while Part 2 breaks down the four layers of the framework and Part 3 discusses its implementation. The book also offers clear definitions of the terminology as well as sample lessons and unit plans to guide teachers in implementing the framework.

6. Vasquez, V. M., Janks, H., & Comber, B. (2019). Critical literacy as a way of being and doing. *Language Arts*, 96, 300-311.

**Abstract:** This article focuses on critical literacy as a way of being and doing around the globe. Orientations to critical literacies, models for instruction, key aspects, and new directions are shared.