

Framework for Becoming Culturally Responsive Educators

Preamble

This framework, developed by a committee of faculty and staff at Highline Community College, articulates our understanding of what makes a culturally responsive educator. By “educator,” we mean everyone who works at the college; we all participate in educating our students. We have intentionally used the word “becoming” because we are always in the process of learning to be more culturally responsive. We can never fully understand another culture; it’s challenging even to articulate what we know about our own. But we can become *more* responsive, *more* effective at navigating significant differences such as those of race and ethnicity, class, sexual identity, gender, language, nationality, disability, religion, and age.

Indeed, there is much to be learned from the bodies of scholarship on this topic generated by academics and social justice activists. These scholars and practitioners have produced theories and practices that can increase student success. We argue that any educator who wishes to successfully engage with a broad range of students must be familiar with this work and able to incorporate it into everyday work with students.

We have drawn from a number of sources for this framework, most significantly Gary R. Howard, whose definition of culturally responsive teaching is “our capacity as teachers to know and connect with the actual lived experience, personhood, and learning modalities of the students who are in our classroom” (*We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know*, 131). His three-part conception – know yourself, know your students, know your practice – is the basis for our framework.

Note that not all items in the framework will apply to all employees. The examples and resources are samples only and not meant to be comprehensive. A number of items overlap. Committee members include Darryl Brice, Allison Green, Yoshiko Harden, Alice Madsen, Amelia Phillips, Joy Smucker, Bevin Taylor, and Jodi White.

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Know Yourself	Examples of Knowledge, Skills, Applications	Sample Resources
1. Articulate your agent and target memberships and how they have privileged and/or marginalized you.	<p>--If you are a social class agent, consider how your privilege has impacted your ability to get an education.</p> <p>--If you are a social class target, consider how the knowledge you have gained about class can be of value to our students.</p>	<p><i>The Courage To Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life</i>, Palmer</p> <p><i>We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers in Multiracial Schools</i>, Howard</p> <p><i>Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment</i>, Nieto</p> <p><i>Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success</i>, Turner and Myers</p> <p><i>White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism</i>, Rothenberg</p> <p><i>Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice</i>, Kivel</p> <p><i>The Price of Silence, Raising Issues that Aren't Discussed Enough</i>, Lesser, Thompson and Nieto, http://www.fpg.unc.edu/news/handouts/CrosswalksInstThePriceofSilence_Handout.pdf</p>
2. Describe your learning preferences and how your own educational background impacts your work at Highline.	<p>--Recognize when you are teaching or working in a particular way because it helped you as a student, whether or not it works well for your students now.</p> <p>--Recognize that learning styles may be cultural.</p>	<p>Harvard's Center for Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom http://sites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/TFTTrace.html</p>
3. Articulate Highline's mission, history, and culture.	<p>--Know Highline's role in South King County as it has become increasingly diverse.</p>	<p>Highline's web site: http://www.highline.edu/allabout.php</p>
4. Analyze your attitudes and assumptions –	<p>--Take time to get to know students as individuals.</p>	<p>Harvard Implicit Association Test project, https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/ "The Creation and Consequences of the Model Minority</p>

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<p>about students, education, and the college – and how they impact your work.</p>	<p>--Know how the model minority myth may affect your teaching.</p>	<p>Myth,” http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/07/model_minority_myth_interview.html</p>
<p>Know your Students</p>	<p>Examples of Knowledge, Skills, Applications</p>	<p>Sample Resources Carnegie Mellon Learning Principles, http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/principles/learning.html</p>
<p>5. Investigate Highline’s demographics and as much as possible about where our students live and are from.</p>	<p>--Become familiar with our service area’s demographics. --Know which high schools feed into Highline. --Know the difference between international, immigrant, and refugee students. --Know what languages our students speak. --Know what is happening in students’ home countries and current communities. --Be familiar with the full range of student populations, including groups such as veterans and worker retraining students.</p>	<p>Highline’s Fast Facts about Students: http://communications.highline.edu/facts.php#students United Way King County Community Assessment: http://www2.uwkc.org/kcca/data/ Culture Grams: http://online.culturegrams.com/ <i>Understanding Your Refugee and Immigrant Students</i>, Flaitz <i>Understanding Your International Students</i>, Flaitz</p>
<p>6. Theorize how our students’ agent and target memberships have impacted and continue to impact their education.</p>	<p>--Know how to sensitively solicit this information from students when relevant.</p>	<p><i>Facing Race Disparities in Washington State</i>, http://washingtoncan.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/RacialReportCard-FINAL-VERSION.pdf</p>
<p>7. Describe what our students’</p>	<p>--Relate your course/program</p>	

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<p>interests are and what skills they bring to our college.</p>	<p>content to students' interests. --Ask students for examples from their own experiences. --Assess prior knowledge and build on what students know.</p>	
<p>8. Implement educational methodology based on adult learning theory.</p>	<p>--Help students develop their own learning paths --Use inquiry-based learning</p>	<p><i>Women's Ways Of Knowing: The Development Of Self, Voice and Mind</i>-Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule <i>Towards the Essence of Adult Experiential Learning</i>, Malinen <i>Adult Learning Principles</i>, Goodlad</p>
<p>Know your Practice</p>	<p>Examples of Knowledge, Skills, Applications</p>	<p>Sample Resources <i>Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice</i>, Gay <i>Rethinking Multicultural Education</i>, Au <i>Multiethnic Education</i>, Banks <i>Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice</i>, Adams, Bell & Griffin, et al Bloom's Taxonomy, http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/BloomsTaxonomy/</p>
<p>9. Build community with students and demonstrate your care for their well-being.</p>	<p>--Learn students' names, model correct pronunciation, and help students learn each others' names. --Encourage collaborative learning.</p>	<p>Washington Center for Improving Quality Undergraduate Education, http://www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/home.asp</p>
<p>10. Design curriculum and instruction that is</p>	<p>Give students opportunities to apply course concepts to</p>	<p>Alternatives to the Cultural Deficit Model, http://www.education.com/reference/article/cultural-</p>

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relevant to our students, that values what they already know, and that allows them to have a voice in their education (asset vs. deficit model).	their own lives.	<u>deficit-model/</u>
11. Design curriculum, assessment, and other materials using Universal Design for Learning principles.	--Allow students to demonstrate knowledge in multiple ways. --Provide materials in multiple formats (visual, written, auditory, multiple languages, etc.).	--CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology) UDL website http://www.cast.org/udl/ National Center on UDL http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines
12. Investigate how multicultural scholarship has impacted pedagogy and curriculum in your discipline/area.	--Know what impact feminist pedagogy has had in your discipline. --Be familiar with key concepts in Disability Studies.	<i>Affirming Diversity: The Socialpolitical Context of Multicultural Education</i> , Nieto and Bode http://www.ghequityinstitute.com/writings/writings.html
13. Reflect on and take action to improve cross cultural communication.	--Explore students' native cultures --Be able to restate what you have said in different words. --Practice active listening.	<i>Addressing Cultural Complexities in Practice</i> , Pamela Hays, 2009 Culture Grams: http://online.culturegrams.com/
14. Explain to students how to navigate college operations, advocate for themselves, and	--Remind students about registration and financial aid deadlines. --Connect students with a faculty advisor	David Conley's "College Readiness" Framework - https://www.epiconline.org/files/pdf/RedefiningCollegeReadiness.pdf

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critically analyze the higher education system.	or other support services. --Incorporate advising into your curriculum.	
15. Integrate knowledge of language acquisition and literacy development (and the politics thereof) into your work.	--Consider the relationship between your outcomes assessments and language fluency. --Make discourse expectations in your discipline explicit. --Scaffold assignments that require writing and speaking. --Provide multiple ways of accessing information and demonstrating knowledge.	Teaching Non-Native English Speaking Students: http://jjc.jjay.cuny.edu/erc/faculty/understanding.php Teaching Non-Native Speakers: http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/facultyhandbook/teaching_nonnative_speakers.htm <i>Learner English</i> , Swan & Smith Vygotsky’s concept of scaffolding, http://www.educ.utas.edu.au/users/ilwebb/Research/scaffolding.htm

Glossary

Asset vs. Deficit Model: This approach to understanding our students, their families, and their communities focuses on their assets and capacities rather than on what they lack. We see students’ cultures, ethnicities, linguistic backgrounds, and disabilities as opportunities for scaffolding skills and knowledge that are necessary to be successful in the world rather than as drags on their accomplishments. We recognize the talents, skills, aptitudes, ethics, natures, and performance of all students.

Agent and Target Memberships: Our social group memberships (e.g., our race, gender, sexual identity, nationality) can be divided into those that are dominant and give us privilege, *agent* memberships, and those that are marginalized, *target* memberships. For example, a white woman is an agent in terms of race but a target in terms of gender. The purpose of naming these aspects of our social identity is to acknowledge the reality of power and privilege and work to dismantle it. This language is associated with activist and scholar Leticia Nieto.

Cultural Responsiveness: Geneva Gay defines “culturally responsive teaching” as “using the 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”

(*Culturally Responsive Teaching*, 31). We are expanding “culture” to include such aspects of identity as first language, gender, disability, and sexuality. “Cultural responsiveness” is closely related to the term “cultural competence” but incorporates the assumption that we can never be truly “competent” in another culture, only “responsive to” that culture. Both individuals and organizations can be culturally responsive. The National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University says that culturally competent organizations have the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (5) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve.” These capacities are incorporated into “all aspects of policy making, administration, practice, [and] service delivery.”

Discourse Expectations: All disciplines have expectations for how students should speak (e.g., using specialized vocabulary or following particular “scripts,” such as oral arguments in court) and how they should write (e.g., specific types of papers in college; specific texts in the workplace). Traditionally, instructors assumed students would “pick these up,” but this approach privileges those students with a particular skill set and background. Instructors can improve student success by explaining what is expected of students in terms of speaking and writing.

Inquiry-based Learning: This form of learning gives students opportunities to pose significant questions and develop answers to them. It involves active engagement and critical thinking. Malcolm Knowles theorized that adults who take an active role in their own learning are able to learn more and apply it better. Inquiry-based learning is deemed more authentic, more like problem solving in the real world, than traditional rote learning.

Language Acquisition and Literacy Development: Instructors have traditionally assumed an idealized student: U.S. born, English speaking, and exposed to a variety of U.S. literatures and genres while growing up. The increasing presence in college of students with different literacy backgrounds has challenged these assumptions. In order to honor language diversity in the classroom, instructors need to reconsider how they assess learning, to scaffold assignments involving speaking and writing, and to make discourse expectations explicit.

Learning Community: A learning community is a group of people engaged in an intensive study of a particular subject. Originally referring to groups of students – whether in one class or as a cohort in a program -- the idea counters the traditional conception of the classroom as an unrelated collection of individuals focused on their own learning. Recently there has been an emphasis in higher education on faculty learning communities (FLC), which come together to work on professional development.

Model Minority Myth: Asians and Asian Americans are often stereotyped as smart, nerdy, and successful. This stereotype masks the great diversity within the group, in particular class differences, and is detrimental to both Asian Americans, who may not get the educational support they need, and to Blacks and Latinos, who are seen as failures in comparison. “Model minority” refers to the idea that Asian Americans are the perfect minority group.

Multicultural Scholarship: All academic disciplines have a body of scholarship influenced by the civil rights movements of the mid-twentieth century and the increasing globalization of

knowledge. These changes have led to revisions both large and small – from challenges to the grand narratives of disciplines to new reading lists to new arrangements of chairs in the classroom. In addition, new bodies of scholarship have influenced pedagogy in general, such as women’s studies, ethnic studies, and disability studies.

Scaffolding: Based on the work of Lev Vygotsky, scaffolding is a metaphor for the ways that teachers help students move from what they know to what they need to learn next. In the same way a scaffold allows a building to be built, teachers can give students tools to achieve the next level of learning. An example of scaffolding is providing students with a graphic organizer to help them understand the information in a book chapter – as opposed to assuming they will be able to understand it on their own.

Universal Design for Learning Principles: UDL is a framework developed by The Center for Applied Special Technology, CAST, to help educators design curricula. Originally focused on students with disabilities, the principles have been found to be successful with many kinds of students, just as universal design in architecture (e.g., curb cuts for wheelchairs) has been found to be helpful for many people (e.g., people with strollers, walkers, and crutches).

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