

College
Ready

Culturally
Relevant



"Drinking Culture"
(Simon Fairless)

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Expanded Success Initiative
Professional Development Course





"Spoken Word" (The Philly Mural Project)

Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

Overview and Goals

Activity 1: Creating a Culturally Relevant, School-Wide, College-Going Culture

Why do we need it? Whose Responsibility is it?

Activity 2: Understanding Ourselves

Why is it important to become culturally competent educators?

Activity 3: Knowing Our Students

Why are culturally relevant educational approaches necessary?

Activity 4: Transforming Our Practices

What does it look like?

Closing

Overview

WHY CULTURALLY RELEVANT EDUCATION (CRE) AND COLLEGE READINESS?

Culturally Responsive Education is a framework that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences in all aspects of learning. The delivery of highly effective and culturally responsive pedagogy is integral to the creation of meaningful educational experiences which support college and career readiness and increased success for Black and Latino young men. As such, it supports a school-wide systemic approach to support Black and Latino youth's college readiness and access to a range of post-secondary institutions.

CRE COLLEGE READINESS OBJECTIVES

We will explore what it means to be culturally relevant as it applies to educators and the creation of more equitable learning opportunities to prepare Black and Latina/o youth to be ready to go to and succeed in college. As a result of the activities and information shared in this session, educators will:

- Establish a shared understanding of the need for building a sustained college going culture, grades 9-12.
- Define the dimensions of traditional and culturally relevant education and college readiness.
- Understand how an educator's own culture can influence his or her practices and policies.
- Develop a shared vocabulary to define and understand three dimensions of culturally relevant education.
- Recognize what culturally relevant practices look like at the individual and school-wide levels.
- Integrate CRE college readiness indicators into one's own practices and policies.

INQUIRY STANCE

1. Whose responsibility is it to prepare Black and Latino youth for college readiness?
2. Why is culturally relevant education necessary?
3. How will you incorporate culturally relevant approaches into your policies and practices?
4. How can culturally relevant policies and practices positively impact student learning and achievement?

Reflection

Briefly jot down your responses to the educational journey questions at the bottom of the page.

Educational Journey

- What messages did you receive both negative and positive, about your ability and your potential to go to college?
- From whom?
- What high school preparation did you receive?
- Did you have a choice of preparation?
- What generation college are you or your child? 1st in your family or so many you can't keep track? Who paid?
- When you were in high school, did you easily see yourself as a college student?

(Patricia McDonough, UC Berkeley Tools)

Defining A College-Going Culture

1. A college-going culture refers to the environment, attitudes, and practices in schools and communities that encourage students and their families to obtain the information, tools, and perspective to enhance access to and success in post-secondary education. (UC Berkeley Tools)

2. Schools *create a COLLEGE CULTURE that all students and their families experience*. Where such a culture exists, all students are prepared for a full range of postsecondary options through structural, motivational, and experiential college preparatory opportunities. In these schools...
 - a. School leadership is committed to building a college culture;
 - b. All school personnel provide a consistent message to students that supports their quest for a college preparatory K-12 experience;
 - c. All counselors are college counselors; and
 - d. Counselors, teachers, and parents are partners in preparing students for college.(McClafferty & McDonough, 2000)

3. A culturally relevant, school-wide, college-going culture is one that: recognizes the importance of including students' cultural backgrounds and references in all aspects of learning, particularly as related to preparing for, applying to, and enrolling in college, or what we refer to throughout this text as engaging in college-going processes (Knight & Marciano, 2013, p. 3).

Assessing Your College-Going Culture

Role (e.g. Teacher, Counselor, Administrator, Other):_____

Students are aware of, prepared for, and pursue postsecondary education.

List the institutional structures within your school that support college-going for Black and Latino youth.

College-Going Culture Rubric

The 9 Elements to Support and Encourage a College-Going Culture

School: _____ Date: _____

1	2	3	4
Our school hasn't started work in this area.	Plans are in place to implement this at our school.	This is in place and we have evidence that it occurs.	This is our routine, it works, and we model it for others.

Please evaluate your school for each principle below. Add all scores and divide that sum by 9 to determine your College-Going Culture Baseline.

_____ **College Talk** is part of each student's experience. The entire school staff and community members share their own experiences about their college pathways and/or create new experiences that impart their confidence that this pathway is open to all students.

_____ **Clear Expectations** ensure that all students are prepared for a full range of post-secondary options. The goals of what it takes to be prepared are explicitly defined, communicated, and part of daily school culture such that students, families, teachers, administrators, and staff recognize the role that each plays in preparing students for college.

_____ **Information & Resources** are regularly updated and readily available in centralized places such as the media center, lunchroom, career/college center, main office, library, and/or college corners in classrooms. These areas are accessible to students, families, faculty, and community members.

_____ **Comprehensive Counseling** for the college pathway is available for every student, primarily from counselors, and supported by outreach staff, teachers and resource personnel. All advisors are informed and have access to college training. Decisions about coursework and career options are made with all post-secondary opportunities in mind.

_____ **Testing & Curriculum** development and practices are geared for every student to have college options. All students know about PSAT, SAT, ACT, and SAT II testing dates and have the opportunity to take the tests regardless of cost. Student access to college prep coursework is standard and the school pledges that all students can complete the basic requirements for a range of postsecondary institutions (e.g. CUNY, SUNY, and private liberal schools).

_____ **Faculty Involvement** is constant and maintains the college culture at the school. Faculty is up-to-date on important "college knowledge" and participate in ongoing professional development to allow them to be active in preparing students for college. This also includes integrating college information and the very idea of college into regular classroom activities.

_____ **Family Involvement** is active and regular. Families are informed partners in the process of supporting students through the college pathway. They have opportunities to gain knowledge about the college process and become aware that all students can be college bound. The school staff is available to answer questions and help make decisions about students' academic futures.

_____ **College Partnerships** are strong, facilitating college-related activities, such as field trips to college campuses and fairs, academic enrichment programs, and raising awareness of and aspirations toward college.

_____ **Articulation** between high schools and college is seamless. The college message is constant as students move through their educational journey. Work being done at each school coordinates with activities at other levels and sites.

_____ **College-Going Baseline**



Reflection

Who encouraged excellence within you? What did it look like? Give specific examples.

Understanding Ourselves, Knowing Our Students

1. Imagine three students that you teach/work with who bring different joys and challenges. Write down their names and the characteristics of each. Feel free to also draw an image of each student.

Student #1 (Name)

Student #2 (Name)

Student #3 (Name)

Creating Equitable Learning Opportunities for Black and Latino Youth

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005)

Student Learning and Achievement

- **Expectations, beliefs, values, norms of learning (e.g. Curriculum, Standards, and Extra-Curricular Activities)**

Cultural Competence

- **Building on the cultural knowledge and experiences that youth and their families bring to school learning and academic readiness (e.g. strengths and assets that support resiliency, identity development)**

Critical Consciousness

- **Equity and access in education and equity (e.g. well matched college for youth's cultural background, aspirations, and goals)**

Teacher Response

As you read, jot down where you think the teacher is addressing one of the three strands of culturally relevant teaching.

A few weeks into my first year as an English teacher in an urban school, Thomas, a 9th-grade student of Caribbean descent, looked up from his desk and raised his hand. I expected a question about the Ernest J. Gaines text we were reading. Instead, he said, “Miss Marciano, what are you?” The question caught me off guard. I assumed my students knew I was White just by looking at me. I also assumed that the images of White middle class teachers prevalent in the media had taught the Black and Latina/o students with whom I worked more than they needed to know about the experiences of people like me. Rather than spend time sharing insight into my identity, I sought to learn about my students by asking them to write journal responses about their experiences as urban youth, and by talking with them about their lives and families. In attempting to engage students in the culturally relevant pedagogy I had read about in graduate school, and perhaps only superficially understood at the time, I focused my practice on students’ cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identities and experiences rather than my own.

Yet, for Thomas and many of his classmates, who waited for my response that afternoon, “what I was” did matter. As students who had been instructed by teachers from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds, including those who were Black, African, Latina/o, Caribbean, and Asian, many of the teenagers present in the classroom that day understood that my cultural experiences and theirs would impact our work together. For example, just because we were reading a text by Gaines, a Black author, focusing on the experiences of Black characters, didn’t mean the Black students in my class would find the book compelling or relatable. In reflecting upon my own cultural identity, I realized that just because I was a White female teacher in an urban public school didn’t mean that I hoped to be the Michelle Pfeiffer character in the popular film *Dangerous Minds* (Simpson & Bruckheimer, 1995), throwing candy bars at my students to get their attention. Although I answered Thomas’ question with less agility than I’d care to admit, the conversation that ensued engaged more students than any previous class discussion we’d had in those first few weeks of school. And it began a dialogue about race and culture that continued throughout the school year as we tried to understand and overcome stereotypes about cultural groups, including those we identified with.

Now, more than a decade after Thomas raised his hand, I’m reminded of his question, particularly when thinking about the impact I and other teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators have on the college-going practices of Black and Latina/o urban youth and the development of their college-going identities. Often, for example, students want to know about my college experiences after they learn I attended a large university known for its basketball team. Early responses to such questions didn’t take into account “what I was.” I talked to students about the engaging classes I’d taken, the internships I completed, and what it was like to pledge a sorority, not recognizing the impact of my race and social class status on those experiences. Not only was I painting an unrealistic picture of what college was really like by focusing solely on the positive aspects of my experiences as a White woman at a predominantly White university, but I reinforced dominant culture stereotypes of what college is “supposed” to be as seen in popular media.

In current conversations about my college years, students and I discuss how our cultural backgrounds matter and consider how students’ experiences as Black or Latina/o youth at the same college might be different. We talk, before and after class, as part of the curriculum, and at lunch time, about the academic and social challenges I faced as an undergraduate, highlighting the idea that just as my experiences don’t necessarily fit into conventional perspectives of what it means to go college as shown in popular television programs such as *Gossip Girl* (McNally & Safran, 2008), neither will theirs.

As you read, jot down where you think the teacher is addressing one of the three strands of culturally relevant teaching.

Rather, the richly diverse perspectives and identities students bring to each of their lived experiences also will impact their future encounters in college.

It may be easy for teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators of all racial and cultural backgrounds to perpetuate colorblind (Thompson, 1998) expectations of college going that position their own experience as the “norm,” as I did during my initial conversations about college with students. In utilizing culturally relevant pedagogies, however, educators may cultivate interpersonal relationships that meet the college-going needs of youth (Siddle Walker & Tompkins, 2004). In doing so, expectations of the typical college experience as one toward which all youth should aspire may be overcome, supporting Black and Latina/o youth’s access to college in the process.

An example of such a culturally relevant practice took place in my classroom recently when two of my former students and I discussed how we engaged in the college application process. I invited the students, who were seniors in college, to talk with my 12th-grade students about their experiences pursuing a college degree. The women, both Latina, were able to provide valuable insight from a perspective that I couldn’t. For example, I experienced the normative college application process in which I applied to colleges in the fall and decided where to attend in the spring, informed by my parents’ experiences as college graduates themselves. This traditional, linear process often is implicitly and explicitly reinforced by adults who work in schools and who have attended college themselves: Students who midway through senior year haven’t yet applied to college often are viewed from a deficit perspective. The two young women who visited my classroom, however, described the more cyclical approach they took in applying to college, which resulted in their application and admission to a small private college a few weeks after their high school graduation, a process reflective of the needs of many Black and Latina/o youth who are often the first in their families to apply to college, or who are working in support of their families (Tierney, 2009). Many of the 12th-grade students in attendance that spring morning said they were encouraged by the former students’ visit and excited to learn it wasn’t too late for them to apply to colleges they hadn’t considered previously.

As the preceding anecdote indicates, students benefit when school personnel create opportunities for authentic exchanges that build upon students’ cultural experiences and challenge traditional structures of college-going processes that often are not reflective of the experiences of Black and Latina/o youth. When all who work with youth recognize that “what they are” matters in culturally relevant discussions of college-going, these exchanges have the potential to actively acknowledge the similarities and differences between the college-going experiences of adults and youth, creating further opportunities for students’ cultures and identities to be utilized as sources of official knowledge.

Knight, M. & Marciano, J. (2013). *College Ready: Preparing Black and Latina/o Youth for Higher Education – A Culturally Relevant Approach*. New York: Teachers College Press



Reflection

Briefly discuss a stereotype about your race/ethnicity or gender that you do not like and how you negotiate (living with) this stereotype.

Web of Identities

Each person will make a web of circles.

- Write your name in the center.
- Write words/phrases in at least 3 circles that describe your identities (terms or descriptors that have most helped to shape who you are and how you interact in the world).
- Write words/phrases in at least 3 circles that others use to identify you.



Video Presentation: Identities and Expectations

In the space below, jot down phrases from the videos which represent deficit-based and strength–based expectations of Black and Latino young men.

Deficit-based Expectations	Strength-based Expectations
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4

CRE Indicators and College Readiness

How do your curricular and pedagogical practices and policies address the following indicators for CRE and College Readiness? You can refer back to the three images of youth that you described earlier as you reflect on each practice.

Key: 1 = Always, 2 = Usually, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Rarely, 5 = Never

Student Learning and Achievement – Academic, personal, and social experiences

- 1.a. _____ Sends consistent messages and clear expectations that all students can be prepared to be college ready and attend college.
- 1.b. _____ Discusses and supports students to take academically rigorous courses and tests which support student's options to attend a four year college as well as a range of postsecondary institutions (e.g. grades, PSAT/SAT/ACT).
- 1.c. _____ Targets and provides additional academic support based on individual progress (e.g., tutoring, organizational skills, study skills, create individual academic plans).
- 1.d. _____ Engages students in active learning.
- 1.e. _____ Utilizes multiple assessments for academic, personal, and/or social success.

Cultural Competence – Cultural identities and background experiences for student learning and achievement

- 2.a. _____ Builds on students' prior knowledge and interest in the learning process across the school (e.g., the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, student leadership, testing).
- 2.b. _____ Learns about students' culture and community and includes their cultural and academic identities as part of the learning process across the school (e.g., the curriculum, counseling office, parent/family involvement).
- 2.c. _____ Understands and addresses the personal and cultural biases toward Black and Latino young men and how they are viewed as college-bound or not (e.g. visual representations).
- 2.d. _____ Fosters meaningful relationships between student and school personnel by focusing and building on student's assets versus deficits .
- 2.e. _____ Fosters meaningful relationships between students and their peers as they influence student's academic success and college-going identities.

Critical Consciousness/Awareness - Knowledge of the college-going processes for student learning and achievement

- 3.a. _____ Demystifies the college-going process (e.g. course curriculum sequence, financial aid, campus visit) by disseminating information about college requirements, the application process, and important deadlines.
- 3.b. _____ Negotiates inconsistent messages between and among staff, and/or students regarding clear expectations for college readiness.
- 3.c. _____ Addresses non-academic concerns (e.g. personalized support for behaviors, peer pressure, violence).
- 3.d. _____ Discusses issues about race/ethnicity, gender, and achievement (e.g. Amir, Love letter to Albuquerque, questioning how many Black and Latino males enter a specific college and graduate?).
- 3.e. _____ Provides opportunities for student voice and advocacy for their own learning. (e.g. student leadership)

CRE Indicators and College Readiness

How do the curricular and pedagogical practices and policies in the video address the following indicators for CRE and College Readiness?

Student Learning and Achievement – Academic, personal, and social experiences

- 1.a. _____ Sends consistent messages and clear expectations that all students can be prepared to be college ready and attend college.
- 1.b. _____ Discusses and supports students to take academically rigorous courses and tests which support student's options to attend a four year college as well as a range of postsecondary institutions (e.g. grades, PSAT/SAT/ACT).
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- 3.e. _____ Provides opportunities for student voice and advocacy for their own learning. (e.g. student leadership)

Action Plan (Short Term Goals): College Talk and Clear Expectations

Action Plan (Short Term Goals): School Environment and Visual Knowledge

Action Plan (Short Term Goals): Examining Strengths and Stereotypes



Action Plan (Short Term Goals): Content Integration and Equity Pedagogy

Resources

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