

Effective and Culturally Responsive! A Look Inside Classrooms of
Teachers who Closed Black-White Achievement Gaps

EFFECTIVE AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES
EQUITY AND EXPECTATIONS
Setting and Maintaining Clear Expectations for Content Mastery
Effective and culturally responsive teachers:
1A: Belief in Self-Efficacy
1. Believe in capacity to make a difference in student learning
2. Strengthen teacher skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy through professional learning
1B: Role and Mastery Expectations
1. Hold high academic and personal expectations for every child
2. Ensure that students understand individual role in content mastery and task completion (c)
1C: Fostering Student Self Efficacy and Responsibility
1. Believe in and promote student self-efficacy, individual ability to achieve and positive self-regard
2. Regularly remind students that learning will be challenging and rigorous
3. Provide instruction and extensive modeling on how to strategize in the face of difficulty
1D: Equitable Access to Resources and Opportunities
1. Provide equitable access to opportunities to learn regardless of academic gaps or needs (a)
2. Provide resources to meet needs of all children regardless of academic gaps or needs
CONTEXTUAL FEATURES AND CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
Student Teacher Social Interactions
2A. Caring
1. Are personally inviting and caring (a)
2. Develop positive, personal relationships with students (a)
3. Encourage a sense of family and community
4. Provide mentoring and emotional support
5. Extend relationship with and caring for students beyond the classroom
2B. Fairness and Respect
1. Base interactions on human dignity principles, respect for every person, and an attitude of hope and optimism (c)
2C. Low Favoritism
1. Treat all students equally well (c)
2. Provide each student with equitable access to learning resources and opportunities to learn (b)
2D. Low Friction
1. Ensure that students and teachers treat each other with civility, gentleness, and support (c)
2. Handle disagreements with discussion and respect for alternative positions
Classroom Climate
3A. Cohesiveness
1. Promote a group-centered collaborative approach toward learning (c)
2. Promote a positive, familial climate
3. Organize students in classroom groups around shared traits to stimulate liking and cohesiveness
4. Create positive relations and meaningful collaboration with parents and community in decision making and educational development of children
3B. Low Apathy
1. Promote student concern and interest in what goes on in class (b)
2. Arouse student curiosity about and explain the purpose and practical intent of what is learned

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Classroom Climate
Effective and culturally responsive teachers:
3C Productive Learning Environments
1. Maintain a safe and orderly classroom (a)
2. Use established routines and rituals balanced with excitement (b)
3. Establish a physically inviting classroom (b)
4. Classroom Management: Student Discipline Strategies
1. Use appropriate adult/teacher language
2. Temper order and established standards with equal parts respect; are caring yet firm
3. Provide explicit coaching on appropriate behavior (b)
4. Communicate explicitly the roles, expectations, etiquette, ways of doing things in school
5. Prevent situations where student lose peer respect (b)
6. Respond to misbehavior on an individual basis
INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING
5. Curriculum and Instructional Design
Effective and culturally responsive teachers:
5A. Align goals, standards, instruction, and assessment
1. Develop clear goals and standards
2. Design instruction aligned to curriculum and authentic assessment methods (b)
3. Align assessments to the content, format and complexity, or level of difficulty of teaching and learning activities
5B. Carefully plan instruction
1. Carefully plan and clearly structure lesson content/each day (b)
2. Clearly structure content and lessons with review of mastered material (b)
5C. Plan for Student Engagement
1. Carefully plan lesson/day for active student engagement (c)
2. Balance guiding and facilitating student learning with teacher-centered presentations to class as a total group (b)
3. Help arouse student curiosity by helping students understand purpose and practical intent of what is learned
5D. Personalize Instruction
1. Plan activities to meet individual developmental needs of diverse students
5E. Plan for Cooperative Group Instruction
1. Structure group tasks to ensure students in groups share important roles and develop expertise (a)
6.CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT
1. Align instruction and curriculum content to authentic assessment methods (b)
2. Align assessments to the content, format and complexity, or level of difficulty of teaching and learning activities
3. Use continuous, frequent assessments to determine skills and knowledge, provide feedback on goals, and to create interventions (c)
7A. Cultural Understanding and Awareness
1. Understand ethnic groups and how race, ethnicity, language, SES, gender, residence, history and cultural experience influence behavior, performance and climate
2. Understand cultural variations and nuances of communication including gestures, timing, and nonverbal cues such as walking, eye glances, dress, and presentation style
3. Understand aspects of own culture that facilitate/hinder communication with own/other cultural group(s) (a)
7B. Sensitivity to and Valuing of Cultural Differences
1. Communicate validation and acceptance of cultural and gender differences
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and gender groups in classroom (b)

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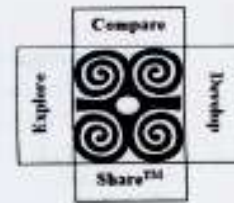
CULTURAL COMPETENCE
Effective and culturally responsive teachers:
7C Information in Curriculum on Cultural Differences
1. Use curriculum materials that describe historical, social, political events from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives (b)
2. Investigate topics related to ethnicity, gender and exceptionality from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives
3. Help student understand his or her personal perspective, or “self”, as one of many cultural perspectives
4. Help students understand, critique and change social issues, structures, and practices that produce inequities
5. Provide opportunities for students to critique concepts learned, their origins, and their authors’ economic, political, and social perspectives and motivations
7D. Cultural Critique and Activism
1. Help students understand, critique and change social issues, structures, and practices that produce inequities
2. Provide opportunities for students to critique concepts learned, their origins, and their authors’ economic, political, and social perspectives and motivations
8A. Meaningful, Complex Instruction
1. Use constructivist approach with student knowledge as basis for inquiry, representing ideas, developing meaning, elaborating, organizing, and interacting with content (a)
2. Engage all students using meaningful, relevant, and challenging curriculum, content, and instructional activities (a)
3. Provide large amounts of time reading in a great variety of texts
4. Engage students in real-life project-based contextual and vocational activities (a)
5. Engage in collaborative team teaching (b)
6. Teach concepts and skills using integrated, holistic, interdisciplinary lessons
1. Provide scaffolding to match or link curriculum, materials, lesson format and instruction to students’ home culture, interests, and experience
8B. Scaffolding Instruction to Home Culture and Language
1. Demonstrate knowledge of content (a)
2. Understand and use speech and expressions familiar to students (a)
3. Incorporate student preference for oral, verbal expressiveness (a)
4. Incorporate student preferences for active kinesthetic participation
8C: Responding to Student Traits and Needs
1. Demonstrate knowledge of content (a)
2. Understand and use speech and expressions familiar to students (a)
3. Select and use a variety of instructional methods and interactive strategies
4. Promote student use of multiple intelligences to gain, use, and respond to knowledge
5. Incorporate student preference for oral, verbal expressiveness (a)
6. Allow students to express visual, tactile, emotional, auditory preferences
7. Provide materials and learning centers for varied styles and modalities
8. Incorporate student preferences for active kinesthetic participation
9A. Structure Group Composition and Environment
1. Structure environments for cooperative learning and group activities
2. Create low-high mixed dyads to enhance cognitive and task achievement for both students
3. Regularly place students in groups mixed by race, gender, and ability (b)
4. Balance guiding and facilitating student learning with teacher-centered presentation to class as a total group (b)

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INSTRUCTION
COOPERATIVE GROUP INSTRUCTION
Effective and culturally responsive teachers:
9B. Promote Collaboration and Efficacy Development
1. Promote a group-centered collaborative approach toward learning (c)
2. Build lesson format on student preference for cohesive group participation (c)
3. Provide small group instruction in cooperative, problem solving groups (a)
4. Promote student interactions to allow students to assist others in most learning tasks
5. Use a variety of oral and written communication patterns, including responding in unison, in pairs, and in teams after group collaboration (a)
6. Ensure students understand individual roles in content mastery and task completion
7. Ensure that all students in groups share important roles and demonstrate their expertise during small group tasks (a)
8. Provide scaffolding through reciprocal teaching – a cognitive apprenticeship in which students gradually assume the role of teacher, helping their peers construct meaning from text
10A. Presenting Information and Ideas
1. Use a variety of modes of representing information and ideas
1.1. Use global (big picture) as well as analytical (step by step) organizers to describe tasks
1.2. Use graphic organizers and advance organizers (c)
10B. Scaffolding between Prior Knowledge and New Learning
1. Provide modeling and cognitive scaffolding between prior knowledge and new learning
10C. Processing New Content
1. Help students process and internalize information presented
2. Create tools to help students understand information from readings, multimedia resources, site visits and guests
3. Use culturally responsive strategies such as: call and response, KIVA (inside-outside discussion circle), visual imagery, storytelling
4. Use accelerated learning techniques with students at all ability and performance levels, including:
4.1 Music as a memory aid
4.2 Memory association maps
1. Engage students in multiple ways
2. Actively engage students in tasks a great deal of time
3. Frequently call for extended, substantive oral and written student responses (a)
4. Call on every student regularly (b)
5. Maintain active participation by randomly calling on students (c)
6. Maintain active learning using questions and recitation (b)
10E. Ensuring Rigor and Appropriate Task Difficulty
1. Continually and appropriately challenge students
2. Regularly remind student that learning will be challenging and rigorous
3. Use current learning materials and technology (b)

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Teachers and Students: Unique in their District

- Population: 2,175 elementary and middle school teachers
- A purposive sample of 33 teachers and 22 principals
- Teacher Sample: an outlier group unique in their effectiveness with African American students

Sampling Strategy:

- Quantitative analysis of archival district test data identified classrooms where:
- (1) the ratio of average African American students' Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) compared to White students' was 1.00 (or no achievement gap) on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in grades 3, 5 and 8 OR
- (2) the percent of African American and White students meeting standard (scoring 400) on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) at grades 4 and 7 was the same AND
- (3) five or more students of each ethnic group met criterion (1) or (2) above.

Isolating and describing culturally responsive teachers and classrooms

- **Integrated methods study; multiple case study design**
- **From the sample**
 - Descriptive information collected,
 - Surveys and interviews were completed about 20 principals and 31 teachers and
 - 28 teachers were videotaped in their classrooms
- **Survey items represented subscales rating the strategies'**
 - **Observed frequency** of use and **Effectiveness** with African American students
 - **Interviews** discovered teacher decision making in
 - Selecting strategies and contextual features
 - Accommodations to meet the needs of their students,
 - Strategies that contributed to the achievement of African American students, and
 - Attribution of strategies' success with African American students
- **Observation frequencies** analyzed using one-sample t tests to determine strategies whose observed frequencies varied significantly from and were greater than the mean for all strategies (test value = 6).

Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics, one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), discriminant, classification, and conceptual keyword analyses on survey and interview data, and one-sample t tests computed on observational data.
- Significant observation outcomes correlated to survey and interview analyses.

SEVEN LESSONS LEARNED FROM OBSERVING TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

1. **The Power of Positive Student Teacher Relationships**
The social context for learning appears to be a key determinant of teachers' success with students.
40 of 49 respondents attributed teacher success with African American students to their efficacy in building positive relationships with those students.
2. **Classroom Management and Climate**
Effective management relied on caring, respectful relationships and safe, communal climates.
 - Classification functions indicated teacher abilities to:
 - Create positive teacher and student social interaction through
 - Caring, fairness and respect, and low favoritism
 - Teacher knowledge of student background
 - Use classroom management strategies that emphasize
 - Student engagement, low apathy and positive student discipline strategies
 - Create communal and familial classroom climates characterized by
 - Cohesiveness, inviting classrooms and
 - Current materials and technology

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3. **Attention to Curriculum and Instruction Design**

Teachers varied instruction to meet student needs:

- balanced students' abilities, learning preferences, and prior experiences with their personal philosophies and role perceptions to make instructional and contextual variations
- linked clear academic standards, curriculum and instruction aligned to standards, and strengthening literacy skills
- led students through repeated practice on tasks that they called "WASL-like," that is, mirroring the state assessment.
- carefully planned lessons and content

4. **Classroom-based Assessment**

■ **Analyses and observation suggest that teachers used frequent and continuous assessments:**

- appropriate to diverse learners, such as performances and observations
- using a range of materials
- interwoven with teaching and learning
- aligned to standards and authentic methods
- for which language abilities do not bar competence demonstration
- With special accommodations for special learners
- to provide feedback and inform instruction
- To encourage students to self-assess and make sense of their reasoning

5. **Cultural Competence and Congruence**

Classification analyses of interviews or surveys and significant observation frequencies indicated teachers used and teachers and principals agreed on the frequency and effectiveness of 16 of 59 strategies in the "cultural congruence in instruction" category.

Teachers

- Responded to diverse students' traits and needs and prior experiences
- Accelerated students' learning by using complex, content-rich, challenging lessons and tasks and current technology
- Participants, referred to their scaffolding to meet student needs

6. **Cultural Competence and Congruence**

Contrary to findings in the culturally responsive pedagogy literature (Irvine & Armento, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Zeichner, 1996), participants did not universally attribute teachers' success to altering pedagogy in response to race (Hollins & Spencer, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994a).

Participants, referring to altering teaching and learning practices and scaffolding to meet student needs, asserted

"I know same is not equal; all kids can't be treated the same regardless of race,"

"We know our kids have come with differences in their background. We have to level the playing field."

7. **Cooperative Group Instruction Strategies**

Teachers attended to the inextricable links between instruction, the social context, power relationships, student motivation, and knowledge creation.

- Built lesson format on student preference for cohesive group participation
- Provided small group instruction in cooperative, problem solving groups
- Ensured that all students in groups share important roles and demonstrate their expertise during small group tasks
- Shared teaching responsibilities with students through reciprocal teaching, during which students took ownership for their own and their peers' learning

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Frequency Distribution of Demographic Data

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
	Pilot 01		Pilot 02		Study Sample	
Role	N = 14		N = 15		N = 51*	
Administrator	2	14%	4	27%	20	39.2%
Teacher	12	86	11	73	31	60.8
Gender						
Female	11	79	11	73	34	66.7
Male	3	21	4	27	17	33.3
Total experience						
0-3 years	0	0	2	13	3	5.9
3-10 years	5	36	4	27	19	37.3
More than 10 years	9	64	7	47	26	51
Experience with diverse students						
0-3 years	1	7	1	7	1	1.96
3-10 years	5	36	4	27	13	25.5
More than 10 years	8	57	6	40	19	37.3
Experience with high performing students						
0-3 years	2	14	1	7	1	2
3-10 years	7	50	5	33	16	31.4
More than 10 years	5	36	5	33	16	31.4
Experience with low performing students						
0-3 years	1	7	1	7	9	17.6
3-10 years	6	43	4	27	10	19.6
More than 10 years	7	50	6	40	14	27.5
Experience – Total number of schools						
1-4	9	64	6	40	9	20
5-8	3	21	3	20	3	7
9-12	2	14	2	14	2	4
Experience – Total number of grades						
K-4	7	50	15	21	29	63
5-8	3	21	31	44	23	50
9-12	4	28	24	34	4	9

*Note: No information sheets were completed for two principals and two teachers.

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District and Individual School Demographic and Student Outcome Data

School	Total Enrollment	ITBS Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE), Mean Scores						WASL Percent Meeting State Standards Grades 4 and 7				Percent Free/R Lunch	Ethnicity					
		Reading		Language		Math		Math	Reading	Writing	Listening		Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian	African	Hispanic	White	
		N	NCE	N	NCE	N	NCE											
K81/G3&5	571	96	41	93	41	93	42	Gr 4	7.0	55.8	18.6	53.5	82.3	.9	.7	92.2	2	3.9
K81/G6&8	-	106	35	107	37	105	33	Gr 7	4.5	19.4	25.4	83.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
K82/G3&5	620	122	61	122	60	118	63	Gr 4	76.3	83.1	81.4	82.4	16.3	21.3	1.9	13.4	14.3	48.9
K82/G6&8	-	117	73	117	68	116	65	Gr 7	65.0	88.3	76.7	93.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
EL1	234	44	50	44	45	24	46	Gr 4	65	80	75	60	41.3	13.9	3	14.4	10.8	57.7
EL2	560	176	58	177	60	173	63	Gr 4	80.9	80.9	77.5	70.8	37	22.3	1.7	14.2	13.3	48.3
EL3	291	67	47	64	47	68	49	Gr 4	46.0	38.0	22.0	52.0	71.1	16.7	5.8	25.3	29.4	22.6
EL4	354	98	54	98	48	98	51	Gr 4	60.0	75.0	50.0	67.5	42.2	7.6	1.9	25.3	13.1	51.9
EL5	390	112	48	110	46	111	54	Gr 4	13.1	32.8	34.4	57.4	56.9	38.8	1.8	32.7	6.9	19.6
EL6	262	74	57	75	57	91	64	Gr 4	52.4	59.5	64.3	61.9	32.9	13.4	3.5	13.4	9.8	59.6
EL7	477	141	42	141	44	140	48	Gr 4	33.3	42.0	37.7	34.8	65.3	30.4	3.6	16.2	27.9	21.6
EL8	362	106	46	105	49	105	51	Gr 4	22.8	29.8	24.6	35.1	69.3	4	0.6	81.5	7.2	6.5

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School	Total Enrollment	WASL											Ethnicity					
		ITBS Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE), Mean Scores						Percent Meeting State Standards Grades 4 and 7				Percent Free/R Lunch	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian	African American	Hispanic	White	
		Reading		Language		Math		Math	Reading	Writing	Listening							
		N	NCE	N	NCE	N	NCE											
EL9	361	121	50	118	52	118	51	Gr 4	51.1	70.2	44.7	63.8	63.6	25.5	0.9	55.8	5.9	11.6
EL10	349	93	37	93	40	86	40	Gr 4	28.9	44.4	24.4	60.0	85.4	24.1	2.6	25.4	27.1	20.5
EL11	317	99	50	92	52	96	58	Gr 4	52.1	78.7	55.3	63.8	59.7	37.3	3.7	17.1	17.1	24.6
EL12	356	113	60	113	55	113	65	Gr 4	54.2	66.7	58.3	79.2	21.5	9.6	1.7	10.2	5.8	72.5
MS1	695	380	37	372	40	358	39	Gr 7	7.4	18.0	37.6	63.5	64.8	30.8	1.4	47.1	10.2	10.3
MS2	947	526	43	529	43	512	43	Gr 7	13.3	30.4	40.8	69.2	66.4	22.6	4.3	22.8	20	30
MS3		847	66	846	64	807	67	Gr 7	50.2	69.2	61.7	91.0	15.3	20.1	1.9	7.3	8.4	62.1
MS4		465	48	463	47	456	52	Gr 7	21.0	31.4	43.3	74.9	52.9	36.4	2.0	18.9	7.2	35.4
MS5	895	528	41	525	41	520	46	Gr 7	19.1	34.6	49.1	74.6	63.7	57.5	2.1	24.5	6.7	9.0
MS6	1,176	729	60	729	58	717	58	Gr 7	42.1	56.3	61.4	80.4	22.6	16.2	2.7	8	8.3	64.5
Total	47,449	-	-	-	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-	41.2	23.4	2.5	23	10.8	40.1