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# Culturally Relevant ESL Pedagogy for California Community College Teacher Educators

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University of San Francisco

**Culturally Relevant ESL Pedagogy for California Community  
College Teacher Educators**

A Field Project Presented to  
The Faculty of the School of Education  
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language

by  
Jeff Moran  
December 2014

# **Culturally Relevant ESL Pedagogy for California Community College Teacher Educators**

In Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

by

Jeff Moran

December 2014

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approved by all members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

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Instructor/Chairperson

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Date

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## ABSTRACT

Demographics in the US are changing rapidly. The current white majority will fall below 50% of the total population by 2060. This shift has already occurred in California, where Latino/as are the largest single ethnic group in the state. California community college student populations reflect this reality, as at least 65% are students of color and 25% are immigrants to the US. California community college ESL instructors are often involved in teaching immigrants and non-native English speakers of color. In contrast to the student body, California community college teacher demographics remain overwhelmingly homogenous, as over 82% of full and part-time community college instructors are Caucasian. These diverging trends present serious challenges to both the ESL teacher and learner. In spite of many teachers' best intentions, immigrant and non-native English speakers face challenges in a US school system where non-dominant cultural identities and values are glossed over or ignored. Community college ESL teachers must, therefore, adopt a culturally relevant ESL pedagogy where student learning outcomes are improved and cultural capital is validated. However, there are limited education, materials and professional development opportunities designed to provide ESL teachers with the skills required to design and sustain a culturally relevant ESL classroom.

This project was designed to provide a sample syllabus, lesson plans, and course book for ESL teacher educators. These materials were developed based on research of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical TESOL practices. In particular, the materials draw on the critical language teacher education heuristics of critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and critical pedagogical reflection. Although research has indicated the efficacy of these approaches, there remains a tremendous need to build culturally relevant and critical TESOL pedagogies into ESL teacher training at nearly every level. It is hoped that additional research aimed at validating the efficacy of culturally relevant pedagogy in the community college ESL classroom will provide the impetus for an increased focus on the need for culturally responsive ESL teacher training programs and materials.

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### **Statement of the Problem**

The United States of America is currently experiencing a tremendous cultural demographic shift. Recent data from the Census Bureau (2010) reveal that the US is now approximately 60% Caucasian, a significant shift from only 50 years ago when the figure stood at 85%. Taylor (2014), of the Pew Research Center, used this census data to project that by 2060 Caucasians will comprise just 43% of the US population. In some states, Caucasians already represent less than 50% of the population. In the state of California, for example, Latinos currently represent 39% of the population, more than any other ethnic group (Taylor, 2014). The data is clear, the US is becoming increasingly diverse and the trend will only continue.

This demographic shift is prevalent in every sector of American society, including the field of education. Data collected by the American Association of Community Colleges (2014) indicate in the state of California more than 62% of all community college students are of color and this number is projected to continue to increase. However, while California community college classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, community college teacher demographics are largely homogenous. The same AACC data reveal 83% of full and part-time community college faculty in the state are Caucasian.

Nowhere is this demographic divergence more prevalent, perhaps, than in the California ESL community college classroom where many students are not only non-

native English speakers, but they are immigrants to the US as well. There is only scant data on the immigrant population of the California community college system as little research has been conducted. However, recent estimates place the total immigrant population of all degree-seeking community college students nationwide at over 25% (Teranishi, Suarez-Orozco, & Suarez-Orozco, 2011).

California community college ESL teachers must confront the reality, in many cases, they will continue to serve a student body with cultural, linguistic, ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds different from their own (Howard, 2003). All too often, however, teacher education programs in the US leave teachers unprepared for the cultural diversity of their students. Teacher education remains largely rooted in a psychological framework at the exclusion of the other social sciences, including anthropology (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Teachers are often trained to present a fixed series of methods designed to meet the learner's biological and psychological development, regardless of the unique cultural capital students may bring into the classroom. ESL teachers in particular are increasingly being trained to be employees, not necessarily critical researchers or investigators (Crookes, 2010).

Teacher education programs must present teacher learners with the understanding, methods, and practices which enable the facilitation of student language acquisition as well as the empowerment of students' cultural identities. In order to meet this challenge, Ladson-Billings (1995a) suggests the development of a culturally relevant pedagogy, developed specifically to address the historical underachievement of students of color in the US school system. The teacher who frames their interactions in the classroom with



culturally relevant pedagogy enables students to achieve academic excellence, empowers their cultural competence, and builds critical consciousness aimed at social transformation (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). All of these precepts are essential for California community college ESL teachers, as language, culture, and identity are integrally related. Language teachers, therefore, are in the privileged position of being able to address educational inequality (Hawkins & Norton, 2009). The reality of educational inequality is pressing, as current evidence suggests that immigrant and non-native English speakers of color face significant obstacles in navigating Eurocentric school systems due to exclusionary practices which disempower their identities and devalue their cultural capital (Pashar & Sensoy, 2011).

There is a need to prepare California community college ESL teachers for the diversity of the classroom, and although there is a growing body of research regarding culturally relevant ESL practices, it remains difficult to find descriptions of critical language teacher education materials, practices, or courses (Hawkins & Norton, 2009). Indeed, many ESL teacher educators find it difficult to offer an entire semester-long course on the critical or culturally relevant pedagogy of language teaching. The practicality of culturally relevant ESL pedagogy would be enhanced by greater availability and diversity of fully worked out sample materials, including ones which demonstrate how theories of language play out in critical second language (L2) pedagogy classroom (Crookes, 2010). It is clear that there is a tremendous shortage of training and materials designed to help teachers create culturally relevant ESL classrooms.

Teacher educators often do not have the training, practices, or materials necessary to develop a culturally relevant teacher education program. They need practical sample materials which can be implemented in their classrooms immediately. A great need therefore exists to develop sample materials which can be used by teacher educators in order to help pre-service and in-service California community college ESL teachers to develop culturally relevant ESL pedagogies.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The project provides sample materials, including a syllabus, lesson plans, and resource compendium which may be used by teacher educators in order to design and execute a critical language teacher education course for pre-service and in-service California community college ESL instructors. The project meets three major objectives. First, teacher educators are able to develop an understanding of the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. Second, teacher educators can operationalize the central heuristics of critical ESL teacher education. Finally, teacher educators obtain sample materials and resources which can be used in the development of situated, contextualized teacher education as best fits the needs of their specific teacher learners.

The materials are presented in a specific sequence; however, teacher educators may use and adapt the materials as best fits the needs of their specific context. The project was designed to function both separately and as a whole. When used in sequence, the materials can be used to develop and execute a critical TESOL professional development (PD) course for current in-service community college teachers.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for the project consists of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical TESOL teacher education. Culturally relevant pedagogy (or teaching) is a term coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings. It is defined as a multifaceted process of challenging the status quo in education with multiple objectives of making teaching culturally applicable to students, honoring their cultural heritages, and catering to a variety of learning styles. Critical TESOL theory suggests language learning should be viewed as situated in a sociolinguistic context. A brief summary of each theory is provided in subsequent passages.

### **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

Ladson-Billings (1995a) initially suggested a culturally relevant pedagogy in order to address the challenges presented by largely African American K-12 classrooms being taught by white female teachers. All too often, students in this learning context were not achieving academic excellence and the students' poverty was identified by teachers and administrators as the impetus for the students' underperformance. Ladson-Billings (2004) states, in large part, the pedagogy of critically unaware teachers delegitimized the backgrounds, experiences, and cultures of students', alienating them and creating and sustaining a classroom culture of lowered expectations. Based on this conclusion a set of pedagogical objectives was established and a series of best-practices suggested.

The defining characteristic of culturally relevant pedagogy is a commitment to the success of the entire community wherein learning takes place. This is achieved

through three interdependent criteria: first, high expectations for all students helps them build confidence based on their own achievements; second, using students' interests and cultures as a bridge to learning new curriculum creates an engaging learning environment that helps students understand they do not have to reject their own culture in order to succeed at school; and third, students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Culturally relevant pedagogy is, therefore, an educational orientation which seeks to acknowledge the home-community culture of the learners and then react with sensitivity to these cultural nuances in order to integrate the knowledge, values, and perspectives of the learners into the teaching and learning environment (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). This integration of education and culture produces critical action and allows for meaningful transformation within the learners' communities.

### **Critical TESOL Theory**

TESOL professionals and sociolinguists worked for more than a decade to develop a theory of critical language teaching. The first major attempt to define critical TESOL came in the 1999 *TESOL Quarterly Special Issue*, devoted entirely to critical approaches in TESOL. In the issue, language teachers and language teacher educators explored how the English language classroom could facilitate language acquisition while exposing the connection between language and power, inequality, discrimination, resistance and struggle (Pennycook, 1999). Historically, this had been done within a cultural framework of class, race, and gender. More recently, however, critical examinations of sexuality, ethnicity, queer theory and otherness have rightly been added

to the scope of inquiry. The challenge remains how to examine these critical issues in the English language classroom while still empowering students to acquire the target language.

Recent researchers have identified the importance of language teacher education in developing an approach to TESOL which is both critical practical. For example, Pennycook (2004), one of the early proponents of critical applied linguistics, suggested critical teacher education need not put all of its focus on a critical syllabus. Rather, critical language teacher educators must seek ways of probing, discussing, and negotiating during critical moments in the language learning classroom. An awareness is growing that critical language teachers should work to expose the complex relationships between majority and minority language speakers and cultural groups and between diverse speakers of the majority language, having the potential to disrupt potentially harmful and oppressive relations of power (Hawkins & Norton, 2009).

### **Significance of the Project**

The project was developed in order to address the lack of culturally relevant ESL materials and resources available to language teacher educators. The project provides teacher educators with a sample syllabus, lesson plans, and course book which may be used to develop a four-week long professional development course aimed at increasing teacher learners' understanding of critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and critical pedagogical practices. When implemented, the project allows teacher educators to better prepare pre-service and in-service teacher learners to meet the needs of their immigrant students and students of color.

California community college ESL teachers who are able to develop and implement culturally relevant ESL pedagogies facilitate their learners' language acquisition as well as validate their cultural identity. These materials therefore enable teacher educators to train teacher learners who improve ESL student language acquisition, empower their cultural identities, and inspire social change within their community. The project provides teacher educators with a practical resource ready for immediate use. Pre-service and in-service California community college ESL teachers who are able to adopt a culturally relevant ESL pedagogy will be able to support change in institutional practices that will ultimately serve to offer full and equal participation in society for language learners.

## CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### **Introduction**

The project was created to provide sample materials and resources which may be used by language teacher educators in order to design and execute a critical language teacher education course for pre-service and in-service California community college ESL instructors. The project was developed within the theoretical frameworks of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical TESOL theory.

This literature review begins with an examination of the development of culturally relevant pedagogy as well as some of its key precepts. An analysis of the ways in which researchers and educators operationalized culturally relevant pedagogy is then presented. The review of culturally relevant pedagogy concludes with a discussion of research conducted into culturally relevant practices and materials used in both ESL classrooms and ESL teacher education programs.

The review then presents the development of critical TESOL theory. This includes brief overviews of critical applied linguistics and critical discourse analysis, as well as a synthesis of the ways in which these fields are interrelated. This expands into a review of the shift toward a sociocultural theory of language acquisition and how this shift has impacted the field of TESOL. The review of the literature then focuses on the recent development of critical language teacher education pedagogy and practice.

### **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

Educational anthropologists and sociolinguists have long described the dissimilarities between U.S. teaching methods and the home and community cultures of students of color. These examinations were intended to highlight one cause of many students of color' underachievement in the U.S. school system. Most of the research in this field has found when schools and educators work to adapt methods and materials to match student home and community culture, improved learning outcomes are achieved. Au and Jordan (1981) referred to “culturally appropriate” methods used to empower Hawaiian students through use of cultural talk-story. Mohatt and Erickson (1981) discuss “culturally congruent” practices used with Native American students in order to match teacher communication style to the students' home cultural style. Jordan (1985) suggested academic materials and practices which are “culturally compatible” with student home culture. This early research indicates if academic environments are culturally aligned with students' home and community cultures, students are more actively engaged with the target material. This increased engagement often results in the increased academic achievement of students who have traditionally underachieved academically in comparison to Caucasian students.

Ladson-Billings (1995a) suggests an increased focus on not only individual student achievement but on broader community development. Her research examines the classroom practice of teachers serving in homogenous African American communities in which students have historically underachieved. Her research confirms earlier work of educational anthropologists, in that student learning outcomes improved when educators



adopted practices and materials which are congruent and meaningful to the students' home and community culture. She also suggests, in addition to improved academic achievement, this pedagogy empowered and affirmed students' cultural identities. Finally, she notes a culturally uplifting pedagogy should seek to help students develop critical perspectives which challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Ladson-Billings (1995a) terms this layered approach, culturally relevant pedagogy.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is situated within three specific precepts which are intended to guide educators in the development and application of teaching methods and materials (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). First, teachers should expect academic excellence of all their students. Far too often, academic underachievement of students of color is explained away, or even justified, by pointing to community-centered factors of cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic or socioeconomic inequality. This sociocultural inequality, it has been argued, makes it difficult for students to achieve academic excellence. Practitioners of a culturally relevant pedagogy disavow this belief. Instead, they operate from the assumption that all students are capable of academic excellence.

Ladson-Billing's (1995b) second precept is cultural competence. Cultural competence requires teachers encourage and support students in maintaining their cultural identities while achieving academic success. This has historically been difficult for many students of color and immigrants. Immigrants and students of color often feel forced to delegitimize their cultural identity in order to assume the characteristics deemed 'successful' by the dominant culture. In the context of the U.S. school system, this is

almost always involves Eurocentric values and norms. In this context, students of color or immigrants find school an alien or hostile place. Rather than reject the cultural capital which their students bring into the classroom, culturally relevant educators utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning.

The final precept of culturally relevant pedagogy is that of critical consciousness. In the culturally relevant classroom, it is not enough for students to achieve individual academic and cultural success. This precept reflects the influence of Paulo Freire, an influential Brazilian educator and philosopher and a leading advocate of critical pedagogy. Specifically, culturally relevant pedagogy reflects Freire's conceptualization of praxis, the process of reflection and action with the goal of transformation. In the culturally relevant classroom, students develop the ability to engage with the world around them in order to enact change within their communities and beyond. Ladson-Billings (1995a) highlights critical consciousness as a defining characteristic of culturally relevant pedagogy, separating it from earlier models of cultural competence. The goals of culturally relevant pedagogy extend beyond individual student achievement and cultural competence. The intention is to enact change within the learners' communities in order to combat the historic inequalities which have long impacted students of color in the US. By bringing cultural biases to a conscious level, teachers are less likely to misinterpret the behaviors of their culturally different students and treat them inequitably.

### **From Pedagogy to Practice**

The development of Ladson-Billings' (1995a) culturally relevant pedagogy naturally led to an investigation of ways in which to operationalize the three guiding precepts within the classroom. Educators and researchers have developed a variety of practices and materials specific to each precept. Consequently, there is a still growing body of literature aimed at documenting these practices as well as demonstrating their efficacy. Morrison, Robinson, and Rose (2008) recently conducted a thorough synthesis of 45 research-based studies of culturally relevant teacher methods and practices. The goal of their synthesis was to detail descriptions of teachers' practices in the classroom in order to provide model examples of culturally relevant pedagogy. Their synthesis resulted in a precept-specific series of common practices shared by teachers whose students had achieved a level academic excellence, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. Some of their conclusions are presented below, along with the researchers whose work was involved in the synthesis.

**Expect academic excellence.** Culturally relevant teachers expect a high level of academic achievement from their students. However, this expectation alone is not enough to ensure the desired outcome. Successful culturally relevant teachers expect academic excellence from their students while also providing a high level of support (Morrison et al., 2008). One way in which culturally relevant teachers do so this is by consciously and actively modeling challenging assignments in the curriculum. Stuart and Volk (2002)'s research involves teachers who allowed students to work in pairs and model approaches for one another. Feger (2006) highlights a successful practice employed when teachers

assign an “invisible” or metacognitive task. Teachers often model the metacognitive process out loud for their students, thinking aloud in order to provide a framework for the students. This metacognitive modeling provides the support students needed in order to engage critically with their own thought processes and develop new strategies in order to approach complex assignments.

In order to ensure academic excellence, culturally relevant teacher create cooperative learning environments within the classroom. This cooperation exists between student-to-student as well as student-to-teacher. Jacob (1995) focuses on the power of collaboration in building a cooperative environment. His research encompasses teachers who created and sustained activities aimed at fostering a classroom-specific community wherein all students could feel a sense of belonging. These included sharing activities, peer-to-peer interviews, morning circle, and class field trips. Similarly, Parsons (2005) works with teachers who actively prevent classroom inequities from being established. For example, teachers take great care to prevent bullying and teasing in order to provide a safe environment for all students. Creating a shared community within the classroom provides students with the support needed in order to feel safe and comfortable at school, a significant extrinsic factor in how students are able to engage with the material and apply it academically.

**Cultural competence.** Culturally relevant teachers empower students’ cultural competence. Empowering student cultural identities allows students the opportunity to achieve academic excellence without the acquisition of majority-dominant cultural norms (Morrison et al., 2008). One practice of culturally relevant teachers in empowering

students' cultural identities is the reshaping of classroom curriculum to include non-traditional, non-Eurocentric materials. Singer and Singer (2004) describes teacher development and curation of a Family Artifact Museum in inner-city 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade classrooms. The Family Artifact Museum project is designed in order to teach social studies through an exploration of items which come directly from the students' home family and community. This practice has subsequently been replicated successfully in other culturally relevant classrooms. Feger (2006) presents a case study wherein she provides 9<sup>th</sup>- and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade immigrant, first-language Spanish students with culturally relevant literature in place of the traditional, Eurocentric texts. Her study suggests that students were more engaged with the culturally relevant material and that her reshaping of the curriculum was largely successful.

Culturally relevant teachers also build upon the students' funds of cultural capital by developing classroom content intended to empower and build upon prior knowledge and experiences. These funds of knowledge assume a broad range of tangible and intangible elements (Morrison et al, 2008). The tangible elements include lived family experiences, events, or artifacts. Equally important are the intangible elements of students' cultural values, feelings, language, and identity. In order to build upon students' fund of knowledge, teachers employ a variety of practices, including projects such as the Family Artifact Museum outlined above. The community-built museum not reshapes the curriculum, it builds upon students' cultural knowledge. The project allows students to provide the curriculum materials and then present what they already know about these items to the class (Singer & Singer, 2004). As the items are authentic to the students'

family and community, the intangible elements of cultural values, feelings, and identity are deeply imbued within the object. Guha (2006) presents an interesting example of student cultural capital in a mathematics course in India. She describes the efficacy of teachers who allow their students to use finger-counting within the mathematics classroom. While the practice of finger-counting is often discouraged in the US classrooms, Guha describes it as embedded into the culture of India. In encouraging finger-counting within the classroom, Indian mathematics teachers were building upon the prior knowledge of their students and validating their cultural practices.

**Critical consciousness.** The capstone component of culturally relevant pedagogy is that students must be able to recognize, understand, and critique social inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Culturally relevant teachers provide students this opportunity in a variety of ways, including the sharing of power within the classroom and actively engaging students in community-based social justice work (Morrison et al., 2008).

Many culturally relevant teachers practice a redistribution of power within the classroom. Jacob (1995) describes the active engagement of his students in determining the behavioral policies of the classroom, as well the means of assessment for academic achievement. Feger's (2006) work with culturally relevant texts also provides an example of this practice, as she collaborated with the students in the selection of the culturally relevant texts. Here the teacher is not only expanding the scope of the curriculum beyond the dominant, mainstream culture, she is actively engaging the student in the selection of the relevant material. In this way, the curriculum is specifically designed for and through the students.

Many socially relevant teachers provide their students with the opportunity to extend their learning into the community through actively working toward social justice. Jacob (1995) again presents a model for culturally relevant teaching practices, as the students he worked with consistently left the classroom both during and after school in order to volunteer at community-centered convalescent homes, food banks, and soup kitchens. Parson (2005) also describes the development of interpersonal social justice qualities within the classroom through a process of engaged student affirmation. Here the teacher modeled the active recognition of each students' best qualities. The students were then asked to do the same for one another, sharing and exchanging their perceptions of one another's best qualities. This practice allows students to extend an active recognition of the good in others out into their community, increasing the possibility for compassion and equity.

Culturally relevant teachers have spent the better part of two decades working to enact educational practices which expect academic excellence, cultural competence, and critical consciousness of their students. Many effective practices have been developed, including but not limited to those outlined above. As these practices continue to grow, many have found their way into the language learning classroom.

### **Culturally Relevant ESL Pedagogy**

The development a of culturally relevant pedagogy in the language learning classroom is important, for as Howard (2003) points out, if students come from a home or social structure in which the cultural capital places a high value on their non-English, native language, they may be at an extreme disadvantage in many US schools where

educators frequently give considerable privilege to students whose primary language is English. Language teachers and teacher educators have worked to integrate the precepts of culturally relevant pedagogy into ESL classrooms throughout the US. Detailed below are some examples of the most effective practices which have been studied by teachers and researchers.

Solorzano and Solorzano (1999) are among the earliest to suggest possible practices intended to develop culturally relevant language learning classrooms. Their work in largely Chicano/a communities of Los Angeles leaves them convinced that teacher educators and support providers need to be able to identify areas where methods and materials can "...address language diversity through an integration of meaningful activities into the curriculum (p. 69). Their work also reveals an early recognition that in order for culturally relevant language learning classrooms to exist, language teacher education programs need to be reexamined. Although Solorzano and Solorzano's call for improved language teacher education has not yet been fully realized, many in-service language teachers have recognized the need to adopt culturally relevant practices and materials within their classrooms.

Herrero (2006) presents her experience working with low-achieving, language-minority students from the Dominican Republic. In her classroom, English language teachers built upon students' prior knowledge in their adaptation of the curriculum. She makes use of student knowledge of cultural literature and oral stories in order to develop authentic ESL materials. In her class, the students themselves research, find, and even generate new materials based on oral histories of their family and community members.



In addition to increasing student engagement, the student-generated materials present opportunities for meaningful dialogue between teacher and student, as the students' cultural competence grows as they teach their instructor about the history and culture of their families. This study suggests a model and way forward for future culturally relevant ESL classrooms where student learning outcomes are improved, cultural identities empowered, and communities actively involved.

Ebe (2010) suggests that texts selected to determine English language learners' reading proficiency are often not culturally relevant to the students. She therefore developed a "Cultural Relevance Rubric" while conducting research with low-intermediate grade school English learners. In this study, the students rated the relevance of their classroom texts and were then tested on their comprehension. Ebe's work reveals that reading comprehension was greater with texts which students had self-identified as more culturally relevant. In addition to the thought-provoking results of her research, Ebe left future teachers and teacher educators with a valuable resource in the "Cultural Relevance Rubric." This rubric is a useful model of research-proven materials ready for immediate use in facilitating culturally relevant teacher education as well as culturally relevant ESL classrooms.

Heinke (2014) explores ways in which culturally relevant literature empower teachers and teacher learners to explore the cultural lives of diverse student bodies. The research examines the efficacy of culturally relevant literature circles on teacher learners' ability to explore the lived realities of their diverse student body. In the study, pre-service teachers were asked to read a series of culturally relevant texts before entering the

classroom. Heinke's qualitative analysis reveals that teacher learners were able to step into their future students' unique realities and think through implications in professional practice as classroom teachers. This research provides a clear example of the potential efficacy in a socially aware, culturally relevant ESL teacher training pedagogy.

The result of recent culturally relevant ESL research is an increased focus on the need for improved ESL teacher education programs and materials. Studies such as those outlined above make clear that in order to positively impact student achievement, teachers and teacher learners need specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions for English language learning. This includes an exploration of the cultural dimension, assets, and skills that each student brings into the classroom. Second language teachers and teacher educators are now beginning to take up issues of the co-relationships between language, culture, context and identity (Hawkins, 2004).

### **Critical TESOL Theory**

Critical TESOL theory situates language acquisition within the framework of sociolinguistics while highlighting the interconnectedness of language and power. This relationship within language and power has been suggested by applied linguists such as Fairclough (1989), who posit that there is no external relationship 'between' language and society, but rather a co-dependent, internal relationship where linguistic phenomena *are* specific social phenomena and social phenomena are manifested *within* linguistic phenomena. He goes on to expand this idea into an examination of language in use, as it is often through socioculturally situated discourse that shared meaning is generated, ideologies are transmitted, and practices, meanings, values and identities are perpetuated.

Fairclough also advocates for a critical awareness of language in order to recognize the “...nontransparent aspects of the social functioning of language” and sees critical discourse analysis as a key tool in examining the relationships within language and power (p. 224). Critical discourse analysis examines language-in-use and seeks to expose the abuse of power and the injustice and inequality that result from it (van Dijk, 1989). It can be seen as a set of methods and tools which enable researchers to accurately detail the linguistic forms of social interaction and then critically analyze the relationship between these forms and their interaction within the world. This line of critical sociolinguistic inquiry gives rise to a belief that all language is inherently political (Gee, 1999), whether the discourse takes place on the streets, in the home, or in the classroom. As language teachers function within the dual realms of language and education, these theories present a need to reexamine models of second language acquisition as well as methods of language teaching.

ESL teachers work in both language and education, two of the most fundamentally sociopolitical aspects of life (Pennycook, 1999). Critical language teaching therefore explores the connection between language and power, inequality, discrimination, resistance and struggle. Historically, this has been done within a cultural framework of class, race and gender. More recently, however, critical examinations of sexuality, ethnicity, queer theory and otherness have rightly been added to the scope of inquiry. As with culturally relevant pedagogy, a key component of critical language teaching is to enact social change within the community wherein the classroom exists. Pennycook (2001) argues for the importance critical praxis, where the micro/linguistic

relations of power uncovered in critical discourse analysis are acted upon in the macro/society the learner's communities with the intention of increasing social justice. It is this key application which links notions of the "Critical" to language learning and teaching.

This final component is often sorely lacking in the TESOL classroom and deserves special attention. The critical language teacher must go beyond merely exposing language learners to examples of social injustice. Students must be empowered with Freire's (1976) vision of praxis, where a means for transforming the injustices they examine in the classroom are an essential part of the curriculum. Using Pennycook's (2001) framework, language learners in the critical TESOL classroom must be empowered to use their inherent capacities to examine and judge the world carefully and, if necessary, change it (Cots, 2006).

### **Sociocultural Language Acquisition**

Over the last twenty years, an argument has been made by theorists and researchers for a reconceptualization of second language acquisition which would significantly broaden the ontological parameters of the field (Firth & Wagner, 1997). This reconceptualization has been proposed in order to bring balance between a cognitive, psychological orientation to language learning and a more social, contextual approach. This argument is based, in part, on the belief that a purely cognitive theory of second language acquisition fails to account for the sociocultural inequities which necessitate Ladson-Billings' (1995a) culturally relevant pedagogy. Many theories of

language acquisition have been proposed, adapted, and re-presented in an attempt to integrate research in educational anthropology and sociolinguistic theories.

Krashen (1985) suggests that language acquisition is activated primarily by comprehensible input, hence his Input Hypothesis. Swain (1995) focuses on learner language production with his Output Hypothesis. It is Long (1996) who suggests that the interconnected social negotiation of language, both input and output, may be the catalyst for language acquisition. He notes that learners who are engaged in conversation are forced to connect "...input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways" (pp. 451-452). This theory has gained traction, and the last two decades have seen increased interest in research which seeks to understand the role of social interaction in language acquisition and how it may be exploited in the second language classroom.

Nielsen and Watson-Gegeo (2003) point out that rise of sociolinguistic and contextual approaches in L2 research over the past decade reflects a recognition that language acquisition is more complex than simply acquiring linguistic structures, and that language learning and use are very likely shaped by sociocultural processes. Gass (2003) goes on to suggest that in the sociocultural classroom, teacher-student and student-student conversations are not merely a medium of practice, but also an interactive means by which language learning occurs. This idea of a socially interactive language learning classroom has given rise to the Interaction Hypothesis.

Gass and Mackey (2006) propose that the Interaction Hypothesis is related to the interplay of input and output which take place in the specific social context of

conversation. This new theory would suggest that the social interaction itself may activate language acquisition. In simple terms, Input Hypothesis:

considers exposure to language (input), production of language (output), and feedback on production (through interaction) as constructs that are important for understanding how second language learning takes place. (p. 4)

Interaction allows language learners the opportunity to perceive differences between their formulation of the target language and the input provided by their conversation partner. The learner also receives feedback from their conversation partner, which can modify their understanding of the input they receive and also provides them with an opportunity to adjust their output.

As learners mediate the mechanisms of social interaction, for example noticing, negotiating, clarifying, etc., their acquisition of linguistic structures is activated. Cots (2006) points out that a recognition of the sociocultural aspect of language and language learning is still largely absent in the ESL teacher training. Pessoa and Freitas (2012) also state that, all too often, ESL teacher educators adopt a purely functional understanding of English language forms with little examination of the complex sociocultural and political codes contained within the discourse of the language. This form-centric pedagogy is not only culturally un-responsive, but fails to account for the social aspect of second language acquisition.

### **Critical TESOL Teacher Education**

There is a growing body of work within the fields of TESOL, applied linguistics, and second language acquisition which address culturally situated language use and teaching, however accounts of sociocultural and critical language teacher education are

more rare (Hawkins & Norton, 2009). As these accounts are infrequent, they span the gamut of in-service and pre-service, undergraduate and graduate courses, and international locations. Diverse as these studies are, they effectively serve as a common base from which to explore pedagogy and practices of critical TESOL teacher education programs and materials.

Crookes and Lehner (1998) present an early investigation of practices used to apply explicitly critical pedagogies to language learning. They describe a language learning classroom based on twenty principle of critical pedagogy and how they attempted to create such an environment. Crooks and Lehner imagine their function in the classroom as one of problem posing rather than distributing pre-determined information. The class also included a large amount of student directed activity. For example, weeks before the class began, students were asked to preview the syllabus and course materials in order to suggest culturally relevant changes. Crooks and Lehner discuss the challenges they faced, including a lack of consistent teacher learner participation, but ultimately conclude that the class was a success due to the high amount of class-based decision making. This practice of redistributing the power structures of the classroom remains key in the development of critical ESL teacher education.

Pavlenko (2003) describes her role in the facilitation of a teacher education course in a United States graduate school setting. Her classroom was comprised of both native and non-native English speakers working to earn a master's degree in TESOL. During the course, she worked with the students to engage in critical self-reflection through linguistic autobiographies. In analyzing the teacher learner's responses, Pavlenko realized

that many of the non-native students had internalized negative language attitudes related to their ability to produce and teach English as non-native speakers. In reaction to this discovery, the curriculum was adjusted to include an examination of theories of language acquisition and multiple competencies. These practices proved effective, as Pavlenko reports that many non-native students reported feeling empowered by these new theories. One student reflected that they were able to self-identify as “a bilingual person” for the first time (p. 262).

Pennycook (2004) relates his experience of serving as a practicum supervisor for a teaching education program in Australia. He suggests a new term, “praxicum,” to propose how theory and practice may come together in TESOL teacher education practicum courses. In his account, he identifies a number of “critical moments” observed in the pre-service teacher classrooms. Pennycook notes critical TESOL teacher education practices are often “... about seeking and seizing small moments to open the door on a more critical perspective” (p. 341). He concludes critical ESL teacher educators should therefore seek practices and materials designed to build in teacher learners the ability to “seek and seize” these moment.

Norton and Hawkins (2009) examine the above accounts, amongst others, in order to develop a series of heuristics and principles which provide a framework for developing critical ESL teacher education courses, practices, and materials. They suggest that critical TESOL teacher education must situate itself within three key heuristics: critical awareness, critical self-awareness, and critical pedagogical awareness. These three heuristics are essential in order to operationalize critical TESOL teacher education and



must therefore be explored more closely. Critical teacher educators may promote critical awareness by encouraging their teacher learners to examine the construction of power relations within society and how these power dynamics may propagate structural educational inequity (p. 4). The critical exploration of inequitable power dynamics in society is then focused through the teacher learners' specific community, and the ways in which the inequity affects the language learners they will teach. Critical language teacher educators also encourage teacher learners to reflect critically on their own societal positionality and personal identity. This critical self-reflection is meant to give rise to a discovery of the ways in which teacher learners' interaction with their community reveals social inequality. Through a critical examination of their role in societal inequities, teacher learners are able to imagine possibilities for enacting social change (p. 5).

Finally, critical pedagogical relation is enacted between the critical teacher educator and teacher learners. Here the focus is on restructuring the power dynamics of the learning environment and creating equanimity between teacher educators and teacher learners. This heuristic reflects the influence of both Freire (1974) and Ladson-Billings (1995a) in the practice of critical teacher education. Restructuring classroom power dynamics and searching for ways to promote social justice provides teacher learners with action-oriented examples of how to empower the language learners which they will one day teach.

In addition to these heuristics, Norton and Hawkins (2009) suggest five key principles for discussion in the development of critical language teacher education practices and materials. The five principles include: community-situated programs and

practices, responsiveness to learners, dialogic engagement, reflexivity, and praxis (p. 7).

In combination with their three heuristics, these five principles provide the most comprehensive way forward in the development of culturally relevant ESL teacher education, offering critical teacher educators and materials developers a usable framework from which to operate.

### **Summary**

The literature reviewed presents the history and development of both culturally relevant pedagogy and critical TESOL theory. Ladson-Billings (1995) and Pennycook (1999) stand as the progenitors of these complimentary theories, though many educators and researches have successfully operationalized the principles into practice. Gay (2010) presents an evolved image of culturally “responsive” teaching as a practical way forward as the US student body grows increasingly diverse. In the development of critical TESOL teacher education, Hawkins and Norton (2009) provide essential heuristics and principles ready to be deployed in the development of teacher education practices and materials.

California community college ESL teachers work predominantly with immigrant students of color. California community college ESL teachers must therefore be aware of these challenges and adapt their classroom pedagogy in order to facilitate language acquisition and empower student cultural identity. However, ESL teacher education programs often do not prepare pre-service teachers with the ability to do so. Culturally relevant ESL teacher education practices and materials must therefore be developed in order provide pre-service and in-service teachers with these essential skills. Both

culturally relevant pedagogy and critical TESOL theory are essential frameworks in the future development of culturally relevant ESL teacher education practices and materials.

### CHAPTER III THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

#### **Brief Description of the Project**

The project provides ESL teacher educators with practices and materials which may be used to help teacher learners develop a culturally relevant ESL pedagogy. The sample syllabus reflects this structure. Each sample lesson plan entails one session split into two modules. The first module introduces a new theory of culturally relevant ESL pedagogy. The second module puts the theory into practice and expose teacher learners to critical ESL teacher education practices.

The materials are framed by Hawkins and Norton's (2009) "central heuristics" framework of critical language teacher education. These heuristics are critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and critical pedagogical reflections. Lesson plan one is built upon the heuristic of critical awareness. The first half of the lesson introduces the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. This involves the presentation of the history and theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. Special attention is paid to the first precept of culturally relevant pedagogy: academic success. The second half of the lesson provides exercises and materials wherein this theory is put into practice. The objective of the first sample lesson plan is to activate the teacher learner's prior knowledge, help teacher learner's understand culturally relevant pedagogy, and begin the process of critical self-reflection.

Lesson plan two is built upon the heuristic of critical self-reflection. The first module introduces the second precept of culturally relevant pedagogy: cultural competence. The second module provides teacher learners the opportunity to share their

cultural journey essays and experience the practice of cultural competence building. The objective of the second sample lesson plan is to deepen teacher learner's understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy, practice critical self-reflection, and experience classroom exercises rooted in a culturally relevant framework.

Lesson plan three is built upon the heuristic of critical pedagogical reflection. The first module presents the final criteria of culturally relevant pedagogy: critical consciousness. The second module allows teacher learners to put their new-found understanding into practice as they critically analyze an ESL text and make a plan for community engagement. The objective of the third sample lesson plan is to complete the introduction to culturally relevant pedagogy, help teacher learners identify and adapt culturally relevant ESL materials, and empower teacher learners to plan critical community engagement.

The final course is a community-based session designed to engage the learners in Freire's (1974) notion of praxis, Ladson-Billings' (1995) capstone commitment a community-based education, and Pennycook's (2004) call for active language teacher praxicum. This opportunity for both teacher and learner critical community engagement is intended to connect the unique culture created within the classroom to the larger outside community in order to enact meaningful social change.

The materials include a sample course syllabus, lesson plans, and course book. The project is presented in a specific sequence in order to facilitate the development of a four week professional development (PD) course. However teacher educators may must feel empowered to use and adapt the materials as best fits the needs of their specific

context. The materials were designed to function both separately and as part of an interconnected professional development course. The project contains a sample syllabus for the proposed course, sample lesson plans, and a sample course handbook.

Each sample lesson plan is split into two modules. The first module introduces a new theory of culturally relevant ESL pedagogy. The second module puts the theory into practice and asks teacher learners to engage in culturally relevant learning. The course handbook contains the materials and practices, as well as guide the teacher educator through successful best-practices which have proven effective in multicultural language learning environments.

### **Development of the Project**

The project was developed over the course of approximately 16 months, from August 2013 to December 2014. It was developed through a combination of academic research and practical experience in the field. I became interested in the topic of culturally relevant ESL materials while working as a teacher's assistant in a San Francisco Bay Area community college ESL classroom. The course took place in the Fall Semester of 2013 and was a "High Beginning Grammar" course taught by an experienced ESL teacher. As the teacher's assistant, I attended every class and offered assistance to the teacher and students as necessary. I also developed and executed four hour-long lesson plans as part of an ESL practicum course I was taking toward the completion of a Professional TESL Certificate. It was my experience in this community college English language classroom made clear to me the need for culturally relevant ESL materials and practices.

The critical moment came during a reading lesson wherein the target language was the simple past tense. The course textbook featured a reading about Ancient Egyptian architecture. The reading went into specific detail about the architecture of Ancient Egyptian palaces, temples, and homes. This context certainly allowed students to examine the linguistic features of the simple past tense, however many students struggled to understand the reading itself, let alone inductively learn the structure of the “-ed” verb ending. I was very surprised to see the students struggle as they had already successfully learned more complex linguistic forms. When the students completed the reading, the teacher opened the class up to questions. Nearly all of the students had questions about the content of the reading rather than the grammar item on display. “What is a reflecting pool?” “Why did they build so many temples?” “What is an obelisk?” Certainly some of these questions could be addressed through additional vocabulary instruction, however, what became clear to me was that the learners were struggling with the subject of Ancient Egypt architecture itself. I then found myself struggling as well. I began to wonder why students from all over the world, including Mexico, Mongolia, Jordan, China, Eritrea and Cuba, would be interested in reading about Ancient Egyptian architecture in their ESL classroom. The material seemed irrelevant to me and I suspected it was getting in the way of their learning.

As I continued to study and teach ESL throughout the Bay Area, this example of Ancient Egyptian architecture stayed with me. All too often the materials assigned to the students were culturally irrelevant. I came to believe that the disconnect students felt between their own experiences and the materials hindered or prevented acquisition of the

target language. When the material matched their previous knowledge and validated their cultural capital, the language forms came much more quickly.

In June 2014, I was working in a small, private intensive English program. Many of the students were young Europeans in the US on student visas. When the World Cup began on June 12<sup>th</sup>, it was the only topic being discussed among the students. At the beginning of each class they would discuss the previous nights' soccer matches. The Italian students would debate with the lone Spanish student and the Japanese student would ask the French students about the history of the World Cup. It was immediately apparent that the World Cup was extremely relevant for the students and represented an opportunity for language learning. I began to adapt course materials and lessons to include examples from World Cup matches or soccer history. For example, a writing assignment was adapted from being a personal autobiography to a biography of a famous footballer, or any other sports figures that the student found more relevant. For the three weeks of the World Cup, I worked to tie the linguistic forms which had to be taught within a meaningful context for the students. The result were remarkable. The learners I worked with were more engaged, inquisitive, and motivated to use the target language. Their acquisition improved, unit exam scores went up, and class morale was high.

During the fall 2014 semester I began to research the theory and practice of culturally relevant pedagogy. It became immediately clear that not only could culturally relevant pedagogy improve student learning outcomes, but it provided space in the ESL classroom for critical engagement and social action. I began to see how culturally relevant pedagogy and critical ESL practices could be used to work with the diverse



immigrant population of California ESL community colleges. This left me inspired to develop a project aimed at providing community college ESL teachers with the awareness and skills necessary to build culturally relevant ESL classrooms. In this way English language learners will improve their acquisition of the language, empower their own cultural identities, and develop the skills necessary to improve and uplift their communities.

### **The Project**

The project in can be found in the Appendix.

## CHAPTER IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Conclusions**

California community college ESL teachers work with English language learners who are largely immigrant students of color. These students face challenges in navigating the majority-biased culture of the U.S. school system. California community college ESL teachers must be aware of these challenges and adapt their classroom pedagogy in order to facilitate language acquisition and empower student cultural identity. However, ESL teacher education programs often do not present practices or materials intended to prepare pre-service teachers with the ability to do so. Therefore, culturally relevant ESL teacher education resources and materials must be developed in order to enable teacher educators to prepare pre-service and in-service teacher learners with these essential skills.

This project was developed in order to address the lack of resources and materials available to language teacher educators. The project provides teacher educators with a sample syllabus, lesson plans, and course book which may be used to develop a four-week long professional development course aimed at increasing teacher learners' understanding of critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and critical pedagogical relations. When implemented, the project allows teacher educators to better prepare pre-service and in-service teacher learners to meet the needs of their immigrant students and students of color. California community college ESL teachers who are able to develop and implement culturally relevant ESL pedagogies facilitate their learners' language acquisition as well as validate their cultural identity. These materials enable teacher

educators to train teacher learners who are able to improve ESL student language acquisition, empower their cultural identities, and inspire social change within their community. The project presents a balanced approach to theory and practice. It is essential that teacher educators empower their teacher learners with an understanding of the theoretical foundations of culturally relevant pedagogy in order to implement culturally relevant ESL practices in the community college classroom.

### **Recommendations**

Teacher educators must understand that critical practice is always situated, responsive, and contextual. Therefore a one-size-fits-all model of critical language teacher education is not advisable or even possible (Norton & Hawkins, 2009). As a result, this project is meant to be adapted to the specific community wherein the teacher education is taking place. Teacher educators are encouraged to reflect on the possibilities and limitations of their unique context and creatively seek opportunities for teacher learners to engage with the community. This experience allows for personal and community transformation, as well as enable them to create community transformative college ESL classrooms for future language learners.

Teacher educators and current in-service teachers are encouraged to consider their particular learning environment in implementing this project. Each teacher and classroom is unique. This is why it is essential to engage with the community wherein the teaching takes places. Only through an authentic connection to the community are teachers able to determine their learners' needs and develop a responsive pedagogy.

Current in-service California community college teachers are encouraged to consider the significance of the Interaction Hypothesis. This sociocultural approach to language acquisition suggests a new way of looking at conversation in the ESL classroom. It also presents a reimagined social relationship between the teacher and the class. The interaction hypothesis moves away from what is commonly referred to as the ‘banking’ model of education, where students are reduced to empty vessels waiting to have knowledge ‘deposited’ by the instructor (Freire, 1974). The hypothesis also suggests that ESL students are able to acquire English language forms through interaction with their fellow classmates.

All too often ESL teachers believe that they must constantly be in conversation with their students in order to evaluate and potentially correct student speech. However, in light of current research California community college ESL instructors should feel compelled to increase student dialogue with their classmates as a means of language acquisition. It must be acknowledged that it would be impossible for one teacher to provide meaningful social interaction with each student in classes which may range up to fifty students. It stands to reason, then, that social interaction in the California community college ESL classroom requires that ESL students, by definition non-native speakers of English, interact with their classmates, also non-native speakers, in order to acquire English language forms. Rather than imagining student-to-student conversation as practice of presented language forms, teachers are encouraged to develop methods to ensure that these conversations activate language acquisition and increase student learning outcomes.

It must be noted that much of the research proving the efficacy of culturally relevant ESL pedagogy (Heinke, 2014; Porto, 2010; Herrero, 2006) has been conducted in K-12 classrooms. In fact, very little research has been done within community college level ESL classrooms. The development of a truly comprehensive culturally relevant ESL pedagogy would be served by both quantitative and qualitative research in this area.

It must also be noted that much of the research into culturally relevant practices has been conducted in homogenous classrooms of color, largely African-American, Latino/a, and Native American. Morrison et al. (2008) point out that teachers should avoid teaching "... all students the same based on perceptions of culture or ethnicity, and such a statement belies the complexity of heterogeneous classrooms" (p. 444). Research must be conducted into the efficacy of culturally relevant pedagogy in heterogeneous classrooms. Specific attention should be paid to ways in which culturally relevant practices and materials both align and divert from the homogenous classrooms which have already been studied.

In addition to the efficacy of culturally relevant ESL pedagogy, almost no research has been conducted to determine the success of critical ESL teacher training programs. Indeed, the lack of critical ESL teacher training programs and materials make this a difficult proposition. As critical TESOL courses, practices, and materials are developed it is essential to research their efficacy in the classroom.

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## APPENDIX

Culturally Relevant ESL Pedagogy: Sample Syllabus, Lesson Plans, and Resources for  
Community College ESL Teacher Educators

# **Culturally Relevant ESL Pedagogy**



**Sample Syllabus, Lesson Plans, and Resources for  
Community College ESL Teacher Educators**

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### **Introduction**

The following materials are intended to address a growing challenge in the California community college ESL classroom. There is a growing need to prepare teachers for the diverse student body of immigrants and students of color in their classrooms. All too often, immigrants and students of color feel that they must renounce their cultural identities in order to assume those of the dominant, white-majority culture. Language teachers must be able to help learners acquire English and at the same time empower each student's cultural identity. ESL professionals, however, are rarely provided with the training needed to empower both language acquisition and cultural competence. There exists a great need, therefore, to develop teacher education materials to facilitate this training.

The project provides sample materials, including a syllabus, lesson plans, and collection of resources which may be used by teacher educators in order to design and execute a critical language teacher education course for pre-service and in-service California community college ESL instructors. The project is designed with three major objectives. First, teacher educators develop an understanding of the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. Second, teacher educators operationalize the central heuristics of critical ESL teacher education. Finally, teacher educators obtain sample materials and resources which can be used in the development of situated, contextualized teacher education as best fits the needs of their specific teacher learners.

Hawkins and Norton (2009) have suggested the most complete integration of critical TESOL theory and practice in their three central heuristics of critical TESOL

teacher education: critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and critical pedagogical reflection. Although there are no neat boundaries between these three practices, they suggest a way forward for language teacher educators who hope to develop critically engaged language teachers. Consequently, they serve as the organizing heuristics of this project and their influence is felt throughout.

### **Intended Audience**

The materials were designed primarily to be used in ESL teacher education. The teacher educator using the materials ideally have some familiarity with the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical TESOL teacher education. Suggested readings have been provided if the facilitator would like additional information on the theory behind the practical materials provided.

Teacher educators must understand that critical practice is always situated, responsive, and contextual. Therefore a one-size-fits-all model of critical language teacher education is not advisable or even possible (Norton & Hawkins, 2009). As a result, this project is meant to be adapted to the specific community wherein the teacher education is taking place. Teacher educators are encouraged to reflect on the possibilities and limitations of their unique context and creatively seek opportunities for teacher learners to engage with the community. This experience allows for personal and community transformation, as well as enable them to create community transformative college ESL classrooms for future language learners.

The materials were also designed to be flexible. In this way, current in-service community college teachers may feel free to adapt the syllabus, lesson plans, or materials to fit the needs of their ESL classroom. The principles behind each lesson

Current in-service California community college teachers are encouraged to consider the significance of the Interaction Hypothesis. This sociocultural approach to language acquisition suggests a new way of looking at conversation in the ESL classroom. It also presents a reimagined social relationship between the teacher and the class. The interaction hypothesis moves away from what is commonly referred to as the 'banking' model of education, where students are reduced to empty vessels waiting to have knowledge 'deposited' by the instructor (Freire, 1974). The hypothesis also suggests that ESL students are able to acquire English language forms through interaction with their fellow classmates.

All too often ESL teachers believe that they must constantly be in conversation with their students in order to evaluate and potentially correct student speech. However, in light of current research California community college ESL instructors should feel compelled to increase student dialogue with their classmates as a means of language acquisition. It must be acknowledged that it would be impossible for one teacher to provide meaningful social interaction with each student in classes which may range up to fifty students. It stands to reason, then, that social interaction in the California community college ESL classroom requires that ESL students, by definition non-native speakers of English, interact with their classmates, also non-native speakers, in order to acquire English language forms. Rather than imagining student-to-student conversation as practice of presented language forms, teachers are encouraged to develop methods to ensure that these conversations activate language acquisition and increase student learning outcomes.



Teacher educators and current in-service teachers are encouraged to consider their particular learning environment in implementing this project. Each teacher and classroom are unique. This is why it is essential to engage with the community wherein the teaching takes places. Only through an authentic connection to the community are teachers able to determine their learners' needs and develop a responsive pedagogy.

### **Intended Use**

The materials have been sequenced to facilitate the planning and execution of a four session Professional Development course for in-service teachers. The course is aimed at educating pre-service and in-service teachers in the development of a culturally relevant ESL pedagogy.

### **Suggestions**

#### Get Learners Talking

Current research clearly indicates the linguistic and cultural value in developing a socioculturally relevant language learning classroom pedagogy. The diversity of the California ESL community college classroom, therefore, offers unique challenges to both students and instructors. The diversity of the classroom requires a fluid and adaptable culturally relevant pedagogy in an effort to account for the rich diversity of the classroom. This condition of cultural comfort is essential, as only under these circumstances do students feel comfortable enough to engage in meaningful, sustained social interaction where they can not only practice the forms of English, but activate their acquisition of the language.

Teachers are also made aware of the theoretical foundations contained within the materials, allowing them to adapt or create new material rooted in these theories. These materials allow them to create a more culturally relevant ESL classroom situated within a sociolinguistic language learning context. This is significant as current research indicates culturally relevant ESL classrooms create better learning outcomes as well as more culturally empowered students.

**CULTURALLY RELEVANT ESL PEDAGOGY  
TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE SYALLBUS**

**CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**  
Professional Development Program

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will serve as an introduction to several key concepts of critical language teacher training for ESL community college level instructors. The course was designed to address the reality of teachers serving largely multicultural, immigrant communities. The course will examine the theoretical foundations of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical ESL practices. There will also be a focus on practical materials which can be used to develop culturally relevant ESL classrooms.

**II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

At the end of the course, the teacher learners will:

- understand the three precepts of culturally relevant pedagogy
- operationalize the three precepts within the classroom
- develop the skills to engage in critical self-reflection before, during, and after instruction
- learn techniques used to critically adapt materials to meet the needs of culturally relevant pedagogy
- facilitate community engagement outside of the classroom
- become familiar with a variety of new classroom activities to promote culturally relevant second language acquisition

**III. MAJOR CONTENT DIVISION:**

- i) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
  - (1) Assume academic excellent
  - (2) Cultural identity
  - (3) Critical consciousness
- ii) Critical Language Teacher Training
  - (1) Critical Awareness
  - (2) Critical Self-Reflection
  - (3) Critical Pedagogical Reflection
- iii) Identifying/adapting culturally relevant materials

**IV. SUGGESTED MATERIALS:**

The following are suggested readings to be completed throughout the course. Each reading collocates to a corresponding lesson. Lesson plans have been

developed with these readings in mind and the ideas, therefore, will be present in the material. However, for teacher educators and teacher learners interested in exploring the materials more deeply, the following texts are highly recommended:

Hawkins, M., & Norton, B. (2009). Critical language teacher education. In A. Burns & J. Richards (Eds.), *Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 30-39). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into practice*, 34(3), 159-165.

Pennycook, A. (2004). Critical moments in a TESOL praxicum. In B. Norton & K. Toohey, (Eds.) *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 327-345). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## **VI: EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **1. Attendance and Participation:**

It is expected that you attend every class session and that you arrive on time and stay until the end. Most importantly, you are expected to participate fully in class discussions and group activities/break-out sessions. The nature of this course is highly collaborative and dialogic, it is therefore essential that you arrive to class ready and willing to participate.

### **2. Cultural journey essay (3-4 pages):**

You will complete this assignment after the first class. You are expected to submit a 3-4 page essay, double spaced, in 12 point font. In this assignment you will be asked to consider your own cultural background, experiences and identity. You may consider:

1. How would you describe your cultural background?
2. Do you feel that your personal beliefs and values are a result of your culture?
3. How do you feel that your culture is perceived by your students? Fellow teachers?

### **3. Critical self-reflection journal:**

During the course you will be expected to keep a journal of your thoughts, ideas, and questions. Time will be provided for journaling in class, but it is also expected that teacher learners should complete at least one outside entry per week. There is no minimum requirement in terms of total entries or page number, but the journal should reflect an authentic effort to connect with the material, situate yourself within it, and describe the result.

<b>Session</b>	<b>Content/Topic</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b><u>Heuristic: Critical Awareness</u></b>            Theory: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Expect Academic Success            Practice: Cultural Awareness Lesson</p>	<p>1. Syllabus            2. Course Handbook            3. Critical self-reflection journal</p> <p><i>(All provided)</i></p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b><u>Heuristic: Critical Self-Reflection</u></b>            Theory: Empower Cultural Competence            Practice: Self-reflection essay exercise</p> <p><b>Suggested Reading:</b>            Ladson-Billings            Howard</p> <p><b>Due: Critical Self-Reflection Essay</b></p>	<p>1. Course handbook            2. Critical self-reflection journal            3. Cultural self-reflection essay</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b><u>Heuristic: Critical Pedagogical Reflection</u></b>            Theory: Empower Critical Consciousness            Practice: Adapting culturally relevant ESL courses/materials</p> <p><b>Suggested Reading:</b>            Pennycook            Hawkins &amp; Norton</p>	<p>1. Course handbook            2. Critical self-reflection journal</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b><u>Community Engagement Project</u></b></p>	

**SAMPLE LESSON PLAN**  
**HEURISTIC ONE – CRITICAL AWARENESS**

**Objectives:**

**Provide teacher learners with introduction to culturally relevant pedagogy**

**Teacher learners will understand precept one: “Expecting Academic Excellence”**

**Teacher learners will operationalize precept one through participation in classroom-specific expectations and agreements**

<u><b>Aim</b></u>	<u><b>Procedure</b></u>	<u><b>Interaction</b></u>	<u><b>Time</b></u>
Warm-Up	An “Un-American” Introduction <i>(See PPT slides)</i>	TL TL-TL	15
Present	<p><u><b>Language &amp; Culture and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy</b></u> <i>(See PPT slides)</i></p> <p>Initial discussion</p> <p>Teacher presents overview of culturally relevant pedagogy as well as three main precepts</p> <p>TLs are able to ask questions in choral fashion</p>	T-TL TL-TL	10
Jigsaw <i>(See included Readings)</i>	<p>T creates 4 closed groups of TLs</p> <p>Each group is given a reading labeled 1-4, Group 1 with Reading 1, Group 2 with Reading 2, etc.</p> <p>Each group reads their assigned page and then has 10 minutes to discuss how the concepts apply to their ESL classrooms</p> <p>New groups are then assembled with a member from each group, 1-4, and each report out what was discussed with their</p>	TL-TL	20
Concept Check	<p>T will ask each group report out to the group. Feedback will be given from T if required or appropriate.</p> <p>T will ask one TL to scribe some of the ideas generated.</p> <p>T informs TLs that all of the ideas will be compiled and shared amongst the group in order to begin building a class-specific set of materials which can be used after the course has ended.</p>	T-TL	20
Break			10
Practice	<p><u><b>Co-Creating Class Expectations</b></u></p> <p>T will welcome TLs to the course. Syllabus will be distributed to the class and introductions will begin. Class should be arranged in a circle and given the following prompt:</p> <p><i>“Please introduce yourself and what level/courses you teach. Please also share with us one of your greatest successes in the ESL classroom as well as one of your biggest challenges/disappointments.”</i></p> <p>T then introduces them self to the class following the prompt.</p> <p>T will use whiteboard/large post-its to record teacher responses to biggest success and challenges.</p>	T-LL TL-TL	20

	<p>T will then explain that the course and the readings may bring up challenging topics. As a result, the class will work together to create a set of agreements from which they can operate throughout the course.</p> <p>"The 5 Agreements" will be written on the board/post it and then added to. "The 5 Agreements" are:</p> <p>Open to the new, all of it  Honor everyone's lived experience  Confront the tough stuff  Push personal boundaries  Always assume goodwill, even if we disagree</p> <p>T will note all of the agreements, keep it present in the room throughout the entire training.</p>		
Pair Work Brainstorm	How else can we expect academic excellence from our students while providing a high level of support?	T-TL TL-TL	20
Journal	<p>Prompt: "All language is political."</p> <p>T introduces the Self-Reflection journal.  T informs TLs of the self-reflection component of the course.  Students must complete 2 out-of-class entries each week.  T stresses that they will also be engaging in the self-reflection task and meet the same expectation.  T gives students 20 minutes to write. Students may journal, write fiction, draw, or anything that allows them to reflect on the content covered and how they may explore the issues more deeply.  As TLs write in their journals individually, T will also journal, writing critically on what they have observed while facilitating the course.</p>	T-TL TL	20
Wrap-Up	Assign Cultural Self-Reflection Essay for next class session	TL	5

## Jigsaw Activity

### Group 1

#### Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Overview

Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings suggests an increased focus on the success of not only individual student achievement, but on broader community development. Her research examines the classroom practice of teachers serving in homogenous African-American communities in which students have historically underachieved. Her research confirms the work of earlier educational anthropologists, in that student learning outcomes improve when educators adopt practices and materials which are congruent and meaningful to the students' home and community culture. She also suggests that in addition to improved academic achievement, this pedagogy empowers and affirms students' cultural identities. Finally, she believes that a culturally uplifting pedagogy should seek to help students develop critical perspectives which challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. Dr. Ladson-Billings terms this layered approach, "culturally relevant pedagogy."



## Jigsaw Activity

### Group 2

#### Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Expect Excellence

Culturally relevant pedagogy is situated within three specific precepts which are intended to guide educators in the development and application of teaching methods and materials. First, teachers should expect academic excellence of all their students. Far too often, academic underachievement of students of color is explained away, or even justified, by pointing to community-centered factors of cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic or socioeconomic inequality. This sociocultural inequality, it has been argued, makes it impossible for students to achieve academic excellence. Practitioners of a culturally relevant pedagogy disavow this belief, instead operating from the assumption that all students are capable of academic excellence.

## Jigsaw Activity

### Group 3

#### Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Cultural Competence

The second precept of culturally relevant pedagogy is cultural competence. Cultural competence requires that students maintain their own cultural identity while achieving academic success. This has proven historically difficult for students within a minority culture. Immigrants and students of color often feel forced to delegitimize their cultural identity in order to assume the characteristics deemed 'successful' by the dominant culture. In the context of the US school system, this is almost always the Euro-centric culture of white America. In this context, students of color or immigrants find school an alien or hostile place. Rather than reject the cultural capital which their students bring into the classroom, culturally relevant educators utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning.

## Jigsaw Activity

### Group 4

#### Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Critical Consciousness

The final precept of culturally relevant pedagogy is that of critical consciousness. In the culturally relevant classroom, it is not enough for students to achieve individual academic and cultural success. This precept reflects the influence of Freire, the Chilean advocate of a wholly critical pedagogy intended to result in praxis, that is, critical community action aimed at the transformation of a more socially just world. In the culturally relevant classroom, students must develop the ability to engage with the world around them critically in order to enact change within their community. Critical consciousness is a defining characteristic of culturally relevant pedagogy, separating it from earlier models of cultural competence. The goals of culturally relevant pedagogy extend beyond individual student achievement and cultural competence. The intention is to enact change within the learners' communities in order to combat the historic inequalities which have long disadvantaged students of color in the US.

## SAMPLE LESSON PLAN HEURISTIC TWO – CRITICAL SELF REFLECTION

### Objectives:

Teacher learners will build on their understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy

Teacher learners will understand precept two: “Build Cultural Competence”

Teacher learners will operationalize precept two through participation in “Assumption or Awareness” exercise

<u>Aim</u>	<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Interact ion</u>	<u>Time</u>
Warm-Up	T designed warm-up intended to follow-up on the ideas/discussions generated from course one	TL TL-TL	15
Present	<b><u>Critical Self-Reflection</u></b> (See PPT slides) Initial discussion Teacher presents overview of critical self-reflection TLs are able to ask questions in choral fashion	T-TL TL-TL	10
Practice: Cultural Journey Essay	T asks TLs to split into pairs Each TL will share their cultural self-reflection essay <i>(If TLs have not yet completed the essay, time will be provided in class to complete a brief outline/essay)</i> Partners will have time to ask questions of one another follow the instruction provided <i>(See PPT slides)</i>	TL-TL	20
Cultural Translation Activity	T will ask each TL to “translate” their partner’s cultural journey for the class List of common cultural values will be written out on the board Discussion of what it was like to “explain” your cultural values and identity to one another Discussion of the task in “translating” culture	T-TL	20
Break			10
Present	<b><u>Precept Two: Building Cultural Competence and Sociocultural Interaction (See PPT Slides)</u></b> Initial discussion Teacher presents overview of cultural competence and sociocultural interaction TLs are able to ask questions in choral fashion	T-LL TL-TL	15
Practice: Small Group Activity	Cultural Assumption vs Awareness Activity <i>(See PPT Slides)</i> TLs break into small groups, working with new partners TLs complete the Assumption vs. Awareness activity After the groups have completed the activity, the whole group debriefs in choral fashion	T-TL TL-TL	20

Journal	<p>Prompt: "You have to study the students."</p> <p>T reintroduces the Self-Reflection journal.</p> <p>T stresses that they will also be engaging in the self-reflection task and meet the same expectation.</p> <p>T gives students 20 minutes to write. Students may journal, write fiction, draw, or anything that allows them to reflect on the content covered and how they may explore the issues more deeply.</p> <p>As TLs write in their journals individually, T will also journal, writing critically on what they have observed while facilitating the course.</p>	T-TL TL	20
Wrap-Up	Assign Cultural Self-Reflection Essay for next class session	TL	5

**SAMPLE LESSON PLAN**  
**HEURISTIC THREE – CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONSHIP**

**Objectives:**

Teacher learners will build on their understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy

Teacher learners will role play the redistribution of power in the classroom

Teacher learners will understand precept three: “Critical Consciousness”

Teacher learners will operationalize precept three through the planning of session for, a community-service based action session selected by the teacher learners

<u><b>Aim</b></u>	<u><b>Procedure</b></u>	<u><b>Interaction</b></u>	<u><b>Time</b></u>
Warm-Up	T designed warm-up intended to follow-up on the ideas/discussions generated from course one	TL TL-TL	10
Present	<b><u>Critical Pedagogical Relationship &amp; Sharing Classroom Power</u></b> (See PPT slides) Initial discussion Teacher presents overview of critical self-reflection TLs are able to ask questions in choral fashion	T-TL TL-TL	20
Practice: Redistributing Power	T asks TLs to split into groups of 3 Groups will brainstorm ways to empower students in the classroom Different methods and practices will be introduced and debated by both T and TLs TLs will then gather as a group and group-source a list of ideas TLs will then vote on their top 3 ideas These Top 3 ideas will be used to develop role plays where in TLs act out both teacher and learner in the renegotiation of power in the classroom	TL-TL	15
Concept Check: Redistributing Power Role Plays	Top 3 practices for power sharing are developed into role plays Class split into 3 groups, each assigned a role play Groups have time to brainstorm how the negotiation may play out and then sketch out an outline Each group will then present their role play to the class	T-TL	20
Break			10
Present	<b><u>Precept Three: Develop Critical Consciousness</u></b> (See PPT Slides) Initial discussion Teacher presents overview of critical consciousness and social justice within the classroom TLs are able to ask questions in choral fashion	T-LL TL-TL	20

Practice: Plan Community Action	<p>TLs split into two large groups</p> <p>Each group will use their smart phones/internet access to research local community service opportunities</p> <p>Groups will brainstorm how/when they will make critical community engagement aimed at service</p> <p>Each group will then present their community action plan</p> <p>A consensus will be reach of which project do complete, or time permitting, if they are able to complete both projects</p>	T-TL TL-TL	30
Journal	<p>Prompt: "In order to change the world, change yourself."</p> <p>T reintroduces the Self-Reflection journal.</p> <p>T stresses that they will also be engaging in the self-reflection task and meet the same expectation.</p> <p>T gives students 20 minutes to write. Students may journal, write fiction, draw, or anything that allows them to reflect on the content covered and how they may explore the issues more deeply.</p> <p>As TLs write in their journals individually, T will also journal, writing critically on what they have observed while facilitating the course.</p>	T-TL TL	20
Wrap-Up	Plan logistics of class-designed community action session	TL	15

# **Teacher Education Resources:** Presentation Materials

## Culture, Communication and Language Learning: *Critical Awareness*

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TEACHER EDUCATION:  
DEVELOPING A CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY  
FOR THE INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL CLASSROOM





## An “Un-American” Introduction

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- Sit next to someone you don’t know
- Introduce yourself with only the following information...
  - Family surname and what you know of its history
  - City you were born
  - Spiritual upbringing
  - First language
  - Cultural traditions in your family



## Reflection on “un-American” Introduction

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1. What was this experience like for you?
2. Which descriptors did you most want to use to describe your identity? Which made you uncomfortable?
3. How was this an “un-American” introduction
4. How can you relate this experience to that of immigrant English language learners?



## Language and Culture

- Language and culture are interdependent
- Culture is expressed all four language skills
- ESL teachers must help learners acquire English within a cultural framework
- ESL teachers can help students develop language skills, understand US culture and empower their own cultural identity



## Building Critical Awareness

Assumption:

Consequence:

Process:

Language and power are inexorably linked

Teachers must adapt their pedagogy and practices

Teachers develop critical awareness of social inequity

Learners develop awareness of social inequity

Understand relationship of language and power



## Become Aware of the Learners: Expanding ESL Teacher Cultural Knowledge

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- ☐ **Teacher Community: Non-Native Teacher Panel**
  - ☐ Bring together non-native teachers and staff
    - ☐ Teachers & Departmental Staff: Taiwanese, German, Columbian, Hungarian, Algerian, Mexican, Egyptian, etc.
  - ☐ Hold a panel where they can share their experiences
  - ☐ Ask the teachers and learners to prepare questions
- ☐ **Teacher Community: Culturally Relevant Literature Circle**
  - ☐ Read children, young adult, and adult literature which is meaningful to learners
  - ☐ Use “Cultural Relevance Rubric” and ask for learner input

## Understand Student Lived Experiences: Expanding ESL Teacher Cultural Knowledge

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- ☐ **Individual: Professional Development Workshops at our Schools**
  - ☐ TESOL Annual
  - ☐ CATESOL Annual
  - ☐ Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication
  - ☐ Linguistics Society of America – Sociocultural Language Acquisition
- ☐ **Individual: Read Culturally Relevant Material and Immigrant Journeys**
  - ☐ Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario
  - ☐ Sea of Poppies by Amitave Ghosh
  - ☐ The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri

## Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

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### Three Precepts:

Expect Academic Excellence  
 Develop Cultural Competence  
 Build Critical Consciousness



## Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Jigsaw

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### Groups of 4

- 1) Group 1 read "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Overview"
- 2) Group 2 read "Expecting Excellence"
- 3) Group 3 read "Develop Cultural Competence"
- 4) Group 4 read "Build Critical Consciousness"
- 5) Groups read over their sections and discuss

## Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Jigsaw



- 1) New groups form, one member from each group
- 2) Report the content of your group's reading
- 3) Now "put it together" and make conclusions

## Jigsaw Debrief

### Big-Picture

Take-aways from  
Culturally Relevant  
Pedagogy?

Does your personal  
pedagogy overlap?



### In-Pratice

How can we  
operationalize the  
precepts?

Have you used the jigsaw  
with your learners?  
Results? Pros? Cons?

## Precept One: Expect Excellence

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- Model/scaffold/clarify curriculum
- Start with students' strengths and build on them
- Take responsibility for the learners
- Nurture a cooperative classroom environment
  - Learner-learner interviews
  - Student collaboration



## Create Cooperation: Making Classroom Agreements

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Model making classroom agreements  
Possible topics include...

Academic Evaluation  
Workload  
Personal Behavior  
Technology in Class  
Modeling Respect  
Discipline  
Active Participation  
Expectations

## Ideas for Community College ESL Classroom Agreements?

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Students eating lunch together (AFLO)

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## Culture, Communication and Language Learning: *Critical Self Reflection*

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TEACHER EDUCATION:  
DEVELOPING A CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY  
FOR THE INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL CLASSROOM

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## Practicing Critical Self-Reflection

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<u>Assumption:</u>	Language teachers can empower learners' cultural identities
<u>Consequence:</u>	Teachers must constantly reflect on methods/materials/practices
<u>Process:</u>	Examine personal cultural values, assumptions, identity Relate their cultural identity to social inequity Empower learners with opportunity to enact social change



## Personal Cultural Journey



- Write your own cultural journey
- How do your personal values relate to your culture?
- Has your relationship to your culture changed? How?
- Take your time and think deeply



## Personal Cultural Journey

- Talk to a partner and share your journey
- Partner “translate” their journey for the rest of the class
- What was lost in translation?
- Which cultural values are common? Different?
- How do our different cultural experiences inform our values?



## Precept Two: Build Cultural Competence



- 1) Reshape prescribed curriculum  
Less Euro-centric/majority culture dominant
- 2) Build on learners' prior knowledge
- 3) Build relationship through the school  
within the community

## Build Cultural Competence: Conversation

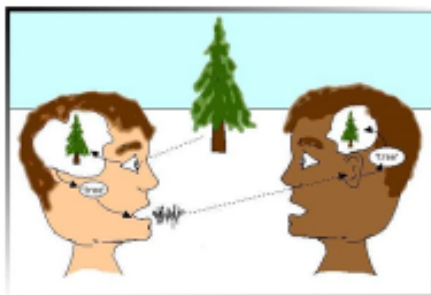
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- Learner-to-learner conversation is not merely “practice”
- Research indicates the social aspect of language activates acquisition
- Students also share and negotiate their cultural identities in conversation
- Students should be given more time for conversation in the classroom



## Multicultural Capital: Building Interactive Language Classrooms

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Students acquire language in conversation  
 Conversation allows for intercultural exchange  
 In sharing their prior knowledge of home/community culture, the learners “teach” their fellow students

Benefits two fold:  
 Increased language acquisition  
 Empowerment learner cultural identity

## Assumption or Awareness?

- Work with a partner and complete the statements below
- Think deeply about what you have observed vs. what you believe/feel
- Are your assumptions based on fact? Awareness? Stereotypes?
- What do you know about these cultures? Mother tongue? Deep cultural values?



I can't believe Korean learners...  
 Mexican learners don't understand...  
 Learners from Africa are always...  
 Chines learners just don't...  
 Learners from Asia seem to think...  
 Saudi learners can't seem to...

## Adapt Curriculum: Bring in Culturally Relevant Texts

- *American Ways* Textbook – Grounded in US Culture for ELLs
- Culturally Relevant Authors
  - Amy Tan
  - Sandra Cisneros
  - Malala Yousafzai
  - Brack Obama

## Adapt Curriculum: Develop Culturally Relevant Texts

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- Cultural Artifact Museum, curated by learners
- Adapt a movie/play/TV show which is Euro-centric
- Learners create their own texts
  - Research family/community history
  - Record family/community members oral stories
  - Transcribe oral stories

## Empower Prior Knowledge: Technology & Social Media

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- Use technology & social media in the classroom
  - Class Facebook page
  - Socratic – Student
  - Echo
- Facebook in other languages
  - Ask students how they use Facebook



## Empower Prior Knowledge: Culture Poster Project

- Learners work in homogenous culture groups to develop a poster and presentation
- Each culture group gets to present, regardless of size
- Presenters become “experts” and teach the other learners
- Learners increase their cultural capital and knowledge of other cultures



## Empower Prior Knowledge: Food as Funds of Knowledge



"Culture Kitchen" Cooking School  
Immigrants teaching authentic cuisine without cookbooks

## Sources of Cultural Knowledge

What other knowledge do learners bring into the classroom?  
How can we build upon this prior knowledge?



## Culture, Communication and Language Learning: *Critical Pedagogical Relationship*

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TEACHER EDUCATION:  
DEVELOPING A CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY  
FOR THE INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL CLASSROOM

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### Enacting a Critical Pedagogical Relationship

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**Assumption:**

School institutions reenforce social inequality

**Consequence:**

Teachers redistribute power dynamics in the classroom

**Process:**

Teachers as facilitator and problem poser

Learners help build and evaluate curriculum

Learners promote social justice inside & out classroom



## Precept Three: Develop Critical Consciousness

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- 1) Encourage critical literacy
- 2) Engage students in community-based social justice work
- 3) Make explicit inequality in social structures
- 4) Share classroom power



## Share Power in the Classroom: Teacher and Learner as Peers

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- Students make decisions regarding:
  - Curriculum
  - Evaluation
  - Classroom policies
  - Daily activities





## Engage in Social Justice Work:

### Explore Social Justice Themes

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- Explore social justice themes in Euro-centric material
  - "Discrimination"
  - "Injustice"
  - "Equality"
  - "Gender"
  - "Sexuality"



VS.



## Engage in Social Justice Work:

### Critical Community Service

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- Food banks
- Convalescent homes
- Social justice work
- Community clean up
- Educational equity programs
- Working with at-risk youth
- Volunteer
- Create a project

## Engage in Social Justice Work: Critical School Community

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- ☐ ESL Class
  - ☐ Service Learning
  - ☐ Volunteering
  - ☐ Workshops/Public speaking events
- ☐ Department/School Wide Events
  - ☐ Global Food Court – Students make and sell cultural foods
  - ☐ Cultural Film Festival – Learner families invited
  - ☐ Culture Fairs, include school Language Departments

## Engage in Social Justice Work: Critical Global Exchange

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- Skype in the classroom
  - Have “guest” teacher facilitate a class
  - Communicative with international “Pen Pals”
    - Partner with global English language classroom
    - Explore social justice themes inter-culturally
- International Outreach
  - Learners collaborate with seniors abroad



Example Source:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Rwa5Qs>

## Education as Change in the Community

How else can our learners engage in the world around them?  
What social inequities can we help them recognize & change?

Discrimination   Prejudice   Poverty   Unequal Access   Language Bias  
Hunger   Pressure to Assimilate   Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

## Engage in Social Justice Work: Community Action Plan

Class will now select a critical community action project

Organizations you already work with?  
Personal passion projects?  
Where is the greatest societal need now?

Let's be the change...

Resources:  
<https://www.volunteermatch.org/>  
<http://www.idealist.org/>  
<http://www.efo.org/>  
<https://donate.peaserecords.gov/>

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