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Second Edition

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning

Classroom Practices for Student Success

Sharroky Hollie

Foreword by Becky Allen

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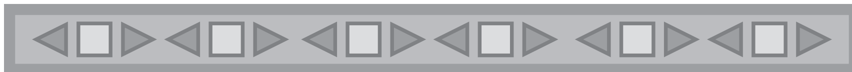
The Pedagogy of Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

Chapter 2



Anticipation Guide

What thoughts came to mind when you read the title of this chapter?

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the pedagogy of cultural and linguistic responsiveness?

_____ Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy is a curriculum.

_____ In using CLR, I should abandon what I have known to be successful with students.

_____ CLR strategies and activities can be infused into broad instructional areas.

_____ All the activities or strategies must *always* be culturally or linguistically responsive.

The Pool of Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

As mentioned previously, U.S. schooling is based on the sink-or-swim approach. You have some students who simply are good swimmers, meaning they "do" school well. On the other hand, you have some students who are not good swimmers or are not swimmers at all. These students don't do school "well." In order to reach those students who are not good swimmers or non-swimmers, you are going to have to jump in the pool with them and, not stand on the side of the pool. CLR is metaphorically diving into the pool and getting into the water with your students; you are meeting your students where they are, culturally and linguistically.

I use this pool analogy for the pedagogy of CLR. What separates this brand of cultural and linguistic responsiveness from other brands is a narrow focus on instructional practices, which include the why and the how of what you do instructionally. CLR bets all of its money on the fact that classroom instruction is the most impactful factor to student achievement (Dean et al. 2012). You, the classroom teacher, make the most significant difference. Therefore, in order to be culturally and linguistically responsive, you are going to have to change the way you teach for the better. Sometimes, when we hear the word change, we think "from bad to good." But this change is from better to best. Always remember that cultural responsiveness is about being "mo' betta."

This chapter is your invitation to dive into the CLR pool and start swimming so that you can be responsive to your students. Ultimately, CLR is a challenge to your existing pedagogy. Becoming culturally responsive means that your instruction changes for the better. I call this change in instruction *transformative instructional practices* or *TIPs*. CLR can renovate or overhaul your instruction, depending on where you are in your teaching and where you want to be at the end of the day. CLR is rooted in seeing and feeling the change for yourself, no different from losing weight, getting a new hairstyle, or buying a new outfit. In other words, you can see the

difference without any external endorsement or research because you know that it feels right. This, however, is not to say that there is not ample research support for the effectiveness of these practices. In fact, the number of researchers providing supportive evidence is overwhelming (Dolan et al. 1993; Goodwin 2011; Johnson and Johnson 1987; Slavin 2010; Tate 2010; Zeichner 2003). Regardless, the most important evidence is seen within your students as they become more engaged and invested in their learning. The question is, are you willing to be transformed? Are you willing to participate in the journey to responsiveness?

Pause to Ponder

- What does the term *pedagogical area* suggest to you?
- In what ways do you think pedagogical areas should be designed to meet the needs of underserved students?
- In what ways do you talk to, relate to, and teach your students that are validating and affirming?

Pedagogy is defined as the "how" and "why" of teaching. Many administrators can attest to the fact that they have teachers who are strong in the "how" of teaching but weak in the content, or they have teachers strong in content but weak in the methodology. Strong pedagogy speaks to finding a balance between the "how and why" and the "what" of teaching—that is, combining appropriate methodology with knowledge of the content. CLR relies upon this pedagogical balance. In order to be successful in CLR, the practitioner has to understand the balance of the "how and why" and the "what."

The "how" of methodology comes in two parts: strategy and activity. *Strategy* means that the instructional activities must be strategically and deliberately determined. Teachers must weigh several factors, including outcome, purpose, standards-based relations, time allocation, resources, students' background knowledge, environmental space, assessment methods, and a host of other variables. Considerations of these factors will in effect determine the strategy or the activity to be used. The *activity* selected puts the strategy to action, and a wide range of activities can be chosen. Many of the activities used in CLR are familiar to teachers, but the difference lies in the strategic use of the activities to further responsiveness to the cultural and linguistic needs of the students. Many participants in my professional development programs have commented on how they have previously used the activities. What is new to them is the application within the context of a strategy or within the context of CLR.

In Chapter 1, you read about and responded to the idea of mindset shift and the concepts of VABBing and situational appropriateness. This chapter will cover the skillset of VABBing and situational appropriateness by giving you the what, why, and how. The CLR pedagogy has four components:

1. The Gatekeepers of Success
2. Methodology Continuum
3. CLR Categories and Activities: The Formula for Success
4. Re-imaging the Learning Environment

The difference between a *strategy* and an *activity* can be summed up metaphorically in a game of chess. A skilled player comes to a chess match with strategies in mind and a game plan of moves (or activities). The player then carries out the strategy through the activities. Similar to a chess game, CLR involves having a game plan (strategies) and a series of moves (activities) designed to implement that plan.

This chapter introduces and briefly describes these components. The gatekeepers of success include descriptions of classroom management, academic vocabulary, academic literacy, academic language, and

learning environment. Next, you will gain an understanding of methodological practices. This understanding will be necessary because in order to be CLR, you have to be willing to teach from the different types of methodologies, as I define them. The actual pool of CLR categories and activities will be uncovered. Lastly, I will talk about why the learning environment is important to your overall CLR success. The overarching goal is for you to talk to, relate to, and teach your students differently, and the most significant difference will be how culturally and linguistically responsive you are. Part II, Building Skillsets, devotes one full chapter to each of these components of CLR pedagogy: classroom management, vocabulary instruction, academic literacy, academic language, and the learning environment. Before turning you loose to those chapters, an understanding of the primary components of CLR is necessary to enable you to progress effectively in your journey to responsive teaching.

The Gatekeepers of Success

I have identified four broad pedagogical areas and the learning environment that can be infused with CLR strategies and activities. These activity categories are identified along with the associated pedagogical areas below:

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

- Use of attention signals
- Use of protocols for responding
- Use of protocols for discussing
- Use of movement
- Use of extended collaboration activities

Culturally Responsive Academic Vocabulary

- Use of leveled vocabulary words
- Use of Personal Thesaurus or Personal Dictionary tools
- Use of vocabulary acquisition strategies
- Use of reinforcement activities/assessments

Culturally Responsive Academic Literacy

- Use of CLR text
- Use of engaging read-alouds
- Use of effective literacy activities

Culturally Responsive Academic Language

- Use of Sentence Lifting
- Use of Role-Playing
- Use of Retellings
- Use of Revising

Culturally Responsive Learning Environment

- Use of De-Blumenbach
- Use of De-Commercialize
- Use of De-Superficialize

These pedagogical areas represent the general categories that I believe that all classrooms—regardless of grade level or content area—should have in place effectively and efficiently. In my discussion of CLR pedagogy, I include the term *responsive* in the label for each category to ensure that instruction centers on culturally and linguistically appropriate activities. These categories are the basis for instructional failure or success. CLR does not replace or shield ineffective instruction. At times, administrators will send so-called “bad” or ineffective teachers to our trainings, thinking that these teachers can be turned into “good” teachers

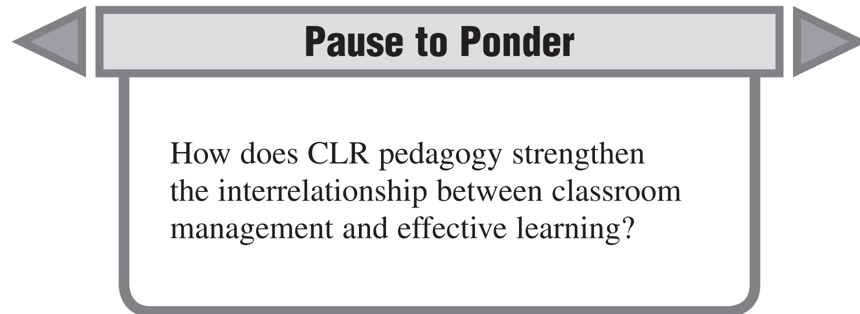
through CLR. This is asking too much of the approach. CLR can make a difference for many inadequacies in instruction, but when the fundamentals are not effectively in place, using CLR is like putting a new suit on a dirty body. To be most effective with CLR, we have to make sure the body is clean first, meaning that educators should make sure the fundamentals are effectively in place.

Within each pedagogical area are subcategories that depict specific foci for the instruction in that area. These subcategories specify aspects for the teacher to consider when strategically determining how to do various activities. But more importantly, these areas are gatekeepers to success for students, meaning that if your students are not at least proficient or in some cases have mastery in these areas, they will not have success in school. They must be able to manage themselves in the school and classroom contexts, they must increase their academic vocabulary as they matriculate, they must improve their literacy skills, and they must be able to write and speak in academic language. If they do not do these things, they will not make it, regardless of their race or socioeconomic status. This is why I use the four areas because they affect every teacher, regardless of your grade level or content area. Listed next are more specific rationales and objectives for each of the areas. Each area will be expanded upon in its own chapter in the forthcoming section, Building Skillsets.

Responsive Classroom Management

No one can argue against the need for an effectively managed classroom (Marzano 2009). Students need to learn in a safe, secure, and positive environment that is conducive to learning and enables them to function optimally. Under the pedagogical area of classroom management, there are four subcategories: ways for responding, ways for discussing, attention signals, and movement. On the whole, these subcategories represent what *all* classrooms should have in place. Every classroom should have effective and efficient ways of having students discuss topics and respond to questions and prompts. Every classroom should have effective

and efficient attention signals to indicate when the teacher needs to bring everyone back after conducting a discussion in groups. Furthermore, classroom activities should be designed to enable students to move around the room to provide opportunities for interactions with several classmates for a variety of purposes.



Responsive Academic Vocabulary

The focus of vocabulary development is building on words that represent concepts that students bring to the classroom. Many of these words come from their cultural backgrounds and from their lives at home and in their communities. Conceptually, these words are connected to academic vocabulary, but students may not have the academic terms within their vocabulary. To promote students' acquisition of academic vocabulary, CLR teachers focus on effective common vocabulary strategies: wide and abundant reading, contextualization and conceptualization of words, knowledge of word parts, and synonyms. Using the personal thesaurus—a tool first used in the Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP) but fully developed at CLAS, teachers use activities that build on the students' words. The words selected for the personal thesaurus focus on academic words, those that Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) believe teachers should target for instruction. The personal thesaurus is used to have students expand their academic vocabulary by building on words they *own* conceptually as a result of their experiences at home and in the community. Through a process of synonym development, students connect the conceptual words they have with the academic labels

they are exposed to, therefore expanding their vocabulary. For teaching vocabulary terms that are in many cases specific to certain content areas, we have further developed another tool called the *personal dictionary* based on the Frayer Model (Frayer, Frederick, and Klaumeier 1969). In this activity, students create their personal dictionaries using words learned commonly in mathematics, science, social studies, and other areas.

Responsive Academic Literacy

Responsive use of fiction and nonfiction text is necessary to enhance students' success within the content areas. Strong literacy skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—are central to success in most content areas. Students who are strong readers and writers also tend to be strong in mathematics, science, and social studies (Krashen 2004). Think about it. Have you ever seen a student who is in both a basic reading class and in an Algebra 2 class? The answer is generally no. The effective use of literacy is a very important area for infusing CLR pedagogy. Reading aloud as a form of storytelling provides a cultural base for students in a classroom where CLR is implemented. Supplemental resources can be used to augment the core texts within the subject areas. For example, a science teacher can include supplemental articles, stories, and facts relevant to the standards-based topics from the mandated text that students are required to study. The purpose of supplementing the required text is to add a perspective that might be more culturally and linguistically relevant to the lives of students (Harris 1999). Finally, CLR proponents encourage the use of engaging literacy strategies, many of which are connected to oral and written language development.

Responsive Academic Language

The fourth pedagogical area involves the CLR teacher using the process of contrastive analysis, or codeswitching, in the students' instructional experiences. Contrastive analysis, a long-implemented

second language methodology, entails having students look at linguistic forms in their home language and then translating those forms into their target language. Contrastive analysis can be used with written and oral language. In particular, when using the writing process, this type of analysis can be used during the revising and editing stages. The idea is that instead of having students "correct" their language, teachers have students "translate" to academic language. Students can practice codeswitching by participating in sentence-lifting exercises, doing situational role playing, or providing in-the-moment translations from their home language to the target language. For example, a student responds to a question in his or her home language. Let us assume the response was correct. The teacher would validate and affirm the response and then have the student translate the response from the home language into Standard English or Academic Language. Over time, having students engage in contrastive analysis on a regular basis can be empowering for them because their linguistic behaviors are validated and affirmed while they learn the benefits of speaking and writing in Standard English and Academic Language. The final subcategory in responsive academic language is situational role-playing. Having students practice situational appropriateness through role-playing is fun for them. This form of role-playing involves students in making language and behavioral choices based on the audience and the purpose of the communication.

Pause to Ponder

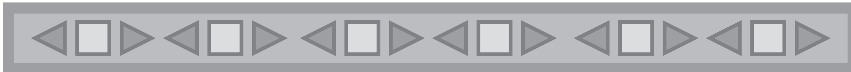
In what ways do you think instructional activities for vocabulary, academic literacy, and academic language overlap?

What opportunities do your students have to discuss what they are learning and be themselves, culturally and linguistically?

What is your most frequent way of having students respond to your questions in a whole-group setting?

Is My Academic Language Instruction Culturally Responsive?

Chapter 6



Anticipation Guide

What do you think of when you encounter the term *academic language*? Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about language forms students bring to school and the development of academic language? Write *A* for *agree* or *D* for *disagree* on each line.

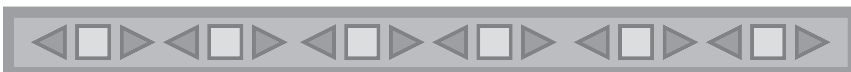
_____ The needs of students who use unaccepted languages have been ill served by educational policies that have contributed to institutionalized linguistic prejudice.

_____ Lack of linguistic knowledge among educators and the public is a major contributor to controversies surrounding the use of unaccepted languages in school.

_____ Teachers have an obligation to accommodate students' home languages in the classroom.

_____ CLR is singular in its recognition of the value of unaccepted languages in enabling students to achieve success in school.

_____ Characterizing an unaccepted language as "bad" negates the principles of structure and pattern that apply to all languages.



The Context of Unaccepted Languages

Of the myriad of topics I cover in my professional development programs, the validation and affirmation of nonstandard languages, or what I call *unaccepted languages*, remains the most controversial and provocative. It stands to reason that controversy occurs because language is arguably the most central and integral aspect of an individual's cultural base and heritage. With that centrality can come hypersensitivity that causes some people to become what I define as *offensitive*; that is, having a combination of emotions that causes one to become defensive, offended, and overly sensitive all at once.

Moreover, discussions about language seem to be coupled with ignorance, misinformation, and entrenched negative beliefs about unaccepted languages. Validating and affirming home language requires the developing CLR educator to have more extensive background knowledge about language. This knowledge is meant to undo the damage of institutional linguistic racism and institutional ignorance about unaccepted languages and language use in general. Notably, *language deficit* is a perspective commonly held about the home languages of students who have been identified as the most likely to be underserved. CLR is designed to overcome the barriers that this perspective presents not only for students but also for teachers, administrators, and policymakers. Specifically, CLR educators must accomplish three objectives in order to be responsive to the home languages of their students. These objectives are:

1. Recognize the linguistic rules of the unaccepted languages.
2. Give students ample opportunities to practice codeswitching.
3. Infuse writing activities into everyday teaching.

In achieving these objectives, educators must realize that deficit terminology is unacceptable in the CLR world. Such terms

as *fix it*, *correct it*, *make it better*, and *wrong* are frequently used in the context of language deficiency. In CLR, these terms are replaced with such validating and affirming words and phrases such as *translate*, *put another way*, *switch*, *give in school/academic language*.

In previous chapters, I have defined terms that are central to understanding the concepts of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching. Similarly, I want to clarify the terminology used in this chapter by recognizing that there are many labels for unaccepted languages. To reiterate, I think the disagreement about the terminology used and the ongoing debates about the legitimacy of these linguistic entities contribute to resistance toward and divisiveness about CLR as it applies to implementing the approach to make it part of the school culture. These arguments are futile and become barriers to actual CLR classroom implementation. In order to keep the discussion and progression moving forward, it is best to have clarity, if not agreement, on the terms used. I recommend these terms and definitions be used in CLR discussions. These terms and their definitions are delineated in Figure 6.1.

Fig. 6.1 Terms Central to Understanding Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching

Term	Definition
Language	A legitimate linguistic entity defined around the parameters of phonics, markers, grammar, vocabulary, nonverbal uses, and discourse styles.
Home Language	The language utilized by family members in the home and others in the community that is different enough from the parameters defined by language from Standard English.
School Language	The language utilized in the context of school; commonly associated with Standard English.

Term	Definition
Unaccepted (Nonstandard) Languages	Not the opposite of *standard language*; only used in the generic context of the term *language*; speaks to the non-acceptance of these languages, not to their lack of legitimacy, and linguistically speaking are seen as just as legitimate as the so-called standard languages.
Academic Language	The language used in textbooks, in classrooms, and on tests; different in structure (e.g., heavier on compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences) and vocabulary (e.g., technical terms and common words with specialized meanings) from Standard English.
African American Language, African American Vernacular, or Black English	The systematic, rule-governed language that represents an infusion of the grammatical substrata of West African languages and the vocabulary of English.
American Indian Language	The language of American Indians used at home, on the job, in the classroom, and in other areas of daily experience. It shows extensive influence from the speaker's native language tradition and differs accordingly from nonnative notions of standard grammar and appropriate speech (Leap 1993).
Chicano or Mexican American Language	The systematic, rule-governed language spoken by the Chicano and/or Mexican American community united by common ancestry in the Southwestern United States and/or Mexico.
Hawaiian American Language or Hawaiian Pidgin English	A native speech that evolved as a result of Hawaii's diverse background. It is also called *Da Kine* or, more commonly, *Pidgin,* when it really is not a pidgin anymore but actually a creole, or Hawaii Creole English, as termed by the Ethnologue Database. Unlike other English-based pidgin, Hawaiian Pidgin is founded within several different languages, with the Hawaiian language contributing the most words. Still, the term *Pidgin* remains.

Pause to Ponder

- What is the policy for unaccepted languages in your school or district?
- What mandates are provided to ensure that the policy is implemented?
- Are sufficient resources available to allow for effective implementation of the policy?
- How do you validate and affirm your students' home languages?

Authenticity of Unaccepted Languages

Surprised is the word that I hear most frequently from educators when discussing the veracity and authenticity of nonstandard languages. Like the general public, educators often exhibit great ignorance about the historical and present-day context of these linguistic entities that linguists have studied for decades.

Corson (1997) revealed that formal educational policies for the treatment of nonstandard languages in schools are conspicuous in their absence in most educational systems. This research aptly points out, however, that these varieties are one way or another brought into the work of the school. Educators have to recognize that students coming from these backgrounds often possess two or more languages that they use in the home. But because of the lack of a formal policy recommendation, often the result is that students are penalized for having a language variety that is different from the linguistic capital that has high status in the school (Corson 1997). William Labov (1972), the grandfather of research on Black English in the United States, argued that there is no real basis for attributing poor performance to the grammatical and phonological characteristics of any nonstandard language. So, why is educational

policy lacking in support for nonstandard languages? According to Corson (1997), this absence exists mainly because of simple ignorance about the range of varieties that can and do coexist in a single linguistic space. The point not to be missed here is that any language policy that excludes support for nonstandard languages creates a paradox for nonstandard language users and the teachers who teach them.

The Unaccepted Languages of the Underserved

Most people view nonstandard languages to be dialects or, even worse, just slang. The research on these languages, which has been a source of vigorous academic debate for decades, strongly refutes that limited perspective. While there is disagreement about the historical derivation of the noted unaccepted languages, there is clarity about the differing views. The views fall into the following four broad linguistic categories:

- Enthnolinguistic perspective
- Creolist perspective
- Dialect perspective
- Deficit perspective

These views represent a continuum of perspectives from most responsive to least responsive, as shown in Figure 6.2. This continuum has particular relevance for culturally and linguistically responsive instruction.

Fig. 6.2 Language Perspective Continuum