

Increase Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies at All Levels (EDU 5900-13)

Molloy University 3 Graduate Credits

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Course Description:

Throughout this course, educators will deepen their understanding of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) by exploring the research and strategies outlined in Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. Educators will reflect on their own teaching practices, examine how culture and cognition intersect, and develop tools to create more equitable and engaging learning environments. Through self-reflection, case studies, and instructional planning, participants will refine their approach to curriculum, instruction, and student support, fostering independent learning and increasing student success.

Objectives:

- Examine the key concepts of culturally responsive teaching, including the role of culture in learning, the neuroscience of engagement, and the importance of instructional scaffolding to support student independence.
- Develop and implement instructional strategies that leverage students' cultural backgrounds as assets, promote cognitive rigor, and create more inclusive, student-centered learning environments.
- Engage in self-reflection and critical analysis of their teaching practices to identify biases, enhance relationships with students, and design learning experiences that foster equity and deeper student engagement.

Dates and Times:

In Person: 3:35 – 6:35pm: 10/1, 10/15, 10/29, 11/5, 11/12, 11/19, 12/3, 12/17, 1/7, and 1/14
Assignments due Thursdays: 10/16; 10/30; 11/6; 11/20; 12/4; 12/18, and 1/15

NYS Teaching Standards:

III. Instructional Practice

IV. Learning Environment

Danielson Rubric: Domain 1: Planning and Preparation Domain 2: Classroom Environment Domain 3: Instruction 4: Professional Responsibilities

Outline of Sessions:

Week 1: Foundations of Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Topics: Course introduction, defining CRT, overview of Hammond's framework
- Reading: *Introduction and Chapter 1: Climbing Out of the Gap*

Week 2: The Science Behind Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Topics: The brain and learning, how culture impacts cognition
- Reading: *Chapter 2: What's Culture Got to Do with It?*

Week 3: The Importance of Building Trust and Rapport

- Topics: Relationships as the foundation of learning, trust-building strategies
- Reading: *Chapter 3: This Is Your Brain on Culture*

Week 4 & 5: Instructional Shifts for Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Topics: Moving from deficit-based to asset-based teaching, cognitive routines
- Reading: *Chapter 4: Preparing to Be a Culturally Responsive Practitioner*

Week 6: Creating the Right Classroom Environment for CRT

- Topics: Safe spaces for learning, student voice, creating a learning partnership
- Reading: *Chapter 5: Building the Foundation of Learning Partnerships*

Week 7 & 8: Scaffolding for Deeper Learning

- Topics: Cognitive load, information processing, scaffolding strategies
- Reading: *Chapter 6: Information Processing to Build Intellectual Capacity*

Week 9: Applying Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies

- **Topics:** Practical instructional moves, designing lessons with CRT in mind
- **Reading:** *Chapter 7: Creating a Culturally Responsive Classroom Culture*

Week 10: Reflection, Action Planning, and Next Steps

- **Topics:** Assessing growth, developing an action plan, fostering a culturally responsive school culture
- **Reading:** *Chapter 8: Making Culturally Responsive Teaching a Reality and Chapter 9: Creating a Culturally Responsive Community for Learning*

Assignment Descriptions:

- **Cultural Self-Reflection & Teaching Analysis** – Educators will write a reflective essay analyzing their own cultural lens, biases, and how these influence their teaching practices. Using insights from *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*, they will identify areas for growth and strategies to strengthen culturally responsive instruction.
- **Lesson Redesign for Culturally Responsive Teaching** – Educators will select an existing lesson plan and modify it using culturally responsive teaching strategies, such as incorporating students' cultural backgrounds and cognitive scaffolding. They will submit both the original and revised lesson, along with a brief rationale explaining the instructional changes.
- **Action Plan for Culturally Responsive Teaching** – Educators will develop a structured action plan outlining key culturally responsive teaching strategies they plan to implement in their classrooms. This plan will include specific steps, anticipated challenges, and solutions to create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.

Required Texts:

Culturally Responsive Teaching In the Brain, Zaretta Hammond