



Reading summary

Diplock, A., Morrison, A., Rigney, L.-I., & Hattam, R. (forthcoming 2024). Culturally responsive pedagogy for social justice in Australian schools: Five key ideas. In R. Hattam, R. Garrett, & Wrench (Eds.), *Re-imagining just pedagogies*. DIO Press.

Australian schools are becoming increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, but the schooling system continues to be dominated by White Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. As a consequence, school communities are missing out on the richness that cultural diversity offers and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are often marginalised and disenfranchised. Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) offers a hopeful countermeasure to this marginalisation and accompanying deficit discourses.

This chapter is based on the results of a research project that aimed to develop a theoretically informed and empirically substantiated Australian version of CRP available to Australian educators working in schools, and to those preparing new teachers. The research brought together thirteen self-selected primary and secondary teachers from schools in metropolitan Adelaide to form a professional learning community. The teachers refined the ideas behind CRP using action research, and developed five key ideas that they found productive in their classrooms. The theme of relationships was found to be central to CRP, but it was not included as a distinct key idea because it is embedded in the other key ideas.

1. *Strongly connect to students' life worlds.* CRP recognises that students' life-world experiences form who they are, both socially and as learners, and are thus crucial to the educational process. Curricular and life-world knowledges can be brought into conversation to enliven both.

2. *View cultural difference as an asset for learning.* Viewing cultural difference as an asset foregrounds the diverse cultural knowledges, experiences, languages and practices students

bring to the classroom. Both teachers and students should view their own and other students' cultures as assets.

3. *Offer high challenge.* Teachers who hold deficit views of groups of students are less likely to offer learning tasks that are challenging or rigorous, which influences students' achievements.

4. *Foster a critically conscious/activist orientation.* While CRP aims to enable individual students' achievement, it also has a broader function of addressing power imbalances and promoting social justice and decolonisation, particularly in education systems. This means both raising the awareness of teachers and supporting students to develop a critical consciousness and become active citizens.

5. *Enable students to learn, and to express their learning, multimodally and beyond the classroom.* Communicating in the classroom should involve multiple literacies, including digital literacies. Also, finding audiences for students to share their learning makes learning more meaningful.

By drawing on these key ideas, teachers can contribute to creating citizens who are empowered to contribute to intellectual, political, social and economic emancipation.

Take-home messages

Value students' experiences and knowledge: Teachers should value students' life worlds and see their cultures and experiences as assets for learning.

Combine care with high expectations: Teachers should combine care and support for diverse students with high expectations for their learning.

Support critical consciousness: Teachers can support students to develop a critical consciousness and adopt an activist orientation.