

Tomorrow's Super Teacher: Changing Teacher Preparation to Nurture Culturally Sustaining Educators

reviewed by Hyunjin Jinna Kim & Huseyin Uysal - April 19, 2022

Title: Tomorrow's Super Teacher: Changing Teacher Preparation to Nurture Culturally Sustaining Educators

Author(s): Chateé Omísadé Richardson

Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham

ISBN: 1475856180, **Pages:** 182, **Year:** 2021

Search for book at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Students in today's American classrooms are diverse in all aspects: race, culture, language, and sexual orientation. *Tomorrow's super teacher: Changing teacher preparation to nurture culturally sustaining educators*, by Chateé Omísadé Richardson, responds to such a diverse classroom with a timely call for diversifying the teaching workforce. In an effort to prepare teachers with asset-based pedagogy to meet culturally diverse students' learning needs, Richardson examines teacher preparation programs and teachers' preparedness to embrace diverse cultures in their classrooms.

The book is divided into ten chapters, which are portioned into four parts in this review: introduction, research context, results, and conclusion. One of the core conceptual frameworks in the book appears to be culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). This review defines it as an asset-based orientation reflected on pedagogy and teacher disposition in three domains: academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Reyes & Norman, 2022). In our review, we make distinctions between CRP and culturally responsive teaching (CRT). Although both stem from an asset-based approach, CRP was inspired by teachers' interaction with African American youths in urban classrooms, which then ignited culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) to embrace global identities in the arts, literature, music, athletics, and film (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Reyes & Norman, 2022). On the other hand, CRT was first proposed in response to *Lau v. Nichols*, a landmark case regarding a school system's failure to provide equal education to culturally and linguistically diverse students, and then developed into a theory focusing on teacher competence and practice in the classroom (Reyes & Norman, 2022).

Chapter 1 sets the scene of the book with an anecdote about Richardson's experience with two teachers who demonstrated contrasting levels of cultural responsiveness in order to emphasize the importance of including diverse students' cultures. In Chapters 2-4, more background information is provided including the history of the U.S. education system and the theoretical framework of CRP. The chapters address the inequity and discriminatory practice of not meeting diverse students' learning needs by providing a snapshot of the African American community and give an example of the author's daughter, who was disengaged and undervalued in the classroom. The author stresses teacher educators' roles in promoting multiculturalism and multilingualism, and incorporating CSP into teacher preparation. Chapters 1 through 4 engage readers with small anecdotes and narratives to reiterate the inequity in the U.S. education system and the urgency of preparing future teachers for CSP.

Chapter 5 briefly outlines the history of teacher preparation beginning at normal schools. It addresses the slow rate of diversification of the teaching force compared to the fast-paced rate of student diversity. Then, it introduces the study's purpose: to compare the experiences and teacher preparation programs between a historically Black college and university (HBCU) and a predominantly White institution (PWI). Chapter 6 introduces the research methodology including pragmatism as the philosophical paradigm and CRT and constructive learning theory as theoretical frameworks. Using mixed methods, the research examines one HBCU and one PWI in Georgia with a focus on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, student outcome expectations, and the programs' level of preparing teachers for CSP. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance is used to examine data from four faculty members and 26 alumni teachers. Chapters 5-6 make a drastic transition from the previous chapters, which are full of narratives, to the later technical chapters that introduce advanced academic concepts and jargon.

Chapters 7-9 present the quantitative results and qualitative findings by pointing out the significant differences between the PWI and HBCU. PWI-trained teachers showed lower self-efficacy beliefs in CRT compared to HBCU-trained teachers. The PWI teacher preparation program exhibited a limited program-wide infusion of culture and diversity as opposed to the HBCU program, which was infused at a deeper level with student engagement opportunities to advocate for diversity. The PWI faculty reported some student resistance to diversity issues and fears about alienating and labeling students. However, HBCU faculty exhibited willingness to integrate culture into every class without student resistance. Compared to PWI-trained teachers, HBCU-trained teachers had opportunities to participate in deeper-level discussions in a safe space without being shut down. While qualitative findings confirm the quantitative results, teachers who graduated from both institutions reported a lack of confidence as to integrating culture effectively in their teaching practices. This indicates the disconnect between theory and practice. These chapters invite the question of whether the primary audience is teacher educators or practitioners given their abundant use of quantitative research jargon.

Chapter 10 turns to the implications of the study and presents its limitations. The former ranges from broad advice such as educational transformation to specific suggestions like curating safe and brave spaces to promote CRP. The author underscores that teacher preparation programs need to make a true internalization of CRT as a requirement for certification instead of using culture and diversity as catchphrases. This final chapter merely serves as a summary and lacks concrete suggestions for infusing CRP into teacher education curricula or specific recommendations for teacher educator professional development. Also, as a mixed-method study, it does not go further than confirming that the HBCU prepares teachers better, which has long been emphasized (Williams et al., 2022). Thus, it does not make clear how the qualitative data adds to any of the previous research and theories.

The strength of the book is its logical flow and balanced organization, which allows it to serve as an easily accessible and handy resource for those who want to discover and expand their approach to CRP. It is apparent that the author's own experience acted as an inspiration to offer authentic and engaging stories. Another strength is the comparative insights from two institutions that extend the understanding of CRP. These insights make a unique contribution to the discussion on how CRP might be practiced differently across institutions. In this sense, the book accomplishes what it set out to accomplish. Its main drawback is the lack of actionable recommendations such as practical implications for teacher preparation programs. Moreover, the interchangeable use of some terms throughout the book (e.g., "teachers" and "students" to refer to the participants) causes confusion. In particular, CRP, CRT, and CSP are used interchangeably. Some distinctions or a statement of the author's intention to mesh these concepts and terms would have minimized the confusion.

Overall, this book is a helpful read for beginning and experienced teacher educators who want to understand the cultural climate of the U.S. teacher education programs. Although not meant to be used as a textbook, it is a promising and much-needed reminder for educators who are willing to implement CRP. We were inspired by this book, and look forward to designing our courses for teacher candidates and recommend it to teacher educators who seek to diversify the curriculum and instructional practices in their departments. As the central goal of this appealing resource is to invite the readers to be acutely aware of institutional dynamics and maintain a critical lens in approaching CRP, we conclude our review with the author's words: "Will you, as an educator, roll the die and just keep on playing the same broken game that is missing pieces or will you work to create a brand new game that works for everyone?" (p. 145).

References

Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74-84. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.p2rj131485484751>

Reyes, A. J., & Norman, T. A. (2022). Resource pedagogies and the evolution of culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining education. In W. H. Schubert & M. F. He (Eds.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies* (pp. 1592-1608). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1698>

Williams, K. L., Mobley, S. D., Jr., Campbell, E., & Jowers, R. (2022). Meeting at the margins: Culturally affirming practices at HBCUs for underserved populations. *Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00816-w>

Cite This Article as: *Teachers College Record*, Date Published: April 19, 2022
<https://www.tcrecord.org> ID Number: 24038, Date Accessed: 4/19/2022 2:01:57 PM

[Purchase Reprint Rights for this article or review](#)