

Applying the Culturally Relevant Planning Framework: An Example Using Lucy Calkins' *Units of Study*

I see you.
I believe in what you
can be someday!



You see me! I see what I
can become in your eyes.

Introduction

Teaching outside of one’s own culture is a tricky business. And yet, that is exactly what is called for in today’s schools and classrooms. In order to be effective with all students, teachers must be able to be intentional and explicit about providing content knowledge while simultaneously delivering that content with the interests, perspectives and cultures of the students in their classrooms in mind. Most of us work from our own cultural base—culture is part of what makes each of us who we are, and it isn’t easy to shift from our “center”. Culturally relevant teachers are fluent in both their own and their students’ cultures and are able to easily move in and out of multiple cultural perspectives. The term “culturally relevant” in this document refers to the pedagogy and materials that great teachers combine with content knowledge to be responsive to the needs of their students. The supportive relationship between the teacher and the student along with a caring classroom community makes culturally relevant instruction also culturally responsive.

Pages 3 - 6 of this document provide a culturally responsive planning framework and introduce culturally relevant values and principles. Application of the planning framework is illustrated on pages 7 - 12 using a writing lesson drawn from Calkins’ *Unit of Study*. Steps in the lesson are listed as they might be typically sequenced and delivered. The steps in the same lesson are then described with a culturally relevant overlay. Finally, suggestions for using this lesson example with teacher groups as a way of introducing the Culturally Relevant Planning Framework follow on page 13.

Acknowledgements

This document was created by a small work group that included Michelle Belnavis, Stephanie Bernard, Andreal Davis, Tonja Gallagher, Paddy Greeley, Sara Halberg, Ginny Hanson, Kathy Lyngaas, with funding from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as part of MMSD’s ongoing efforts to reduce disproportionality in special education. The Framework for Culturally Responsive Practices was used as the basis for the lesson example design which was developed by Andreal Davis.

Planning Framework for Culturally Relevant Standards-Based Lessons

	Identity Development	Relationships	Engagement	Learning: Meaning Making	Learning: Inquiry
Culturally Relevant Values and Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for self • Being self reliant • Fulfilling one’s proper role in society • Rights and freedoms of the individual • Self determination • Autonomy • Acceptance • Cultural customs and appropriate behavior • Being independent of non-members of the cultural group • Worship styles • Bravery • Humility • Competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for elders • Extended family • Connectedness of all living things • Rights and freedoms of the group • Harmony and peace • Balance • Respect for land and community • Ensuring your family’s welfare and reputation • Fulfilling obligations to clansmen and in-laws • Tolerating others • Avoiding conflict • Avoiding bringing shame to your group • Unity • Diversity • Personal goodness and getting along with others • Family solidarity • Collective work and responsibility • Equality • Respect • Love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment • Patience • Quietness • Dignity • Faith • Purpose • Working hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisdom • Truth • Cooperative Economics • Producing visible signs of hard work • Using one’s talents and abilities; being skillful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honor • Fortitude • Creativity

	Identity Development	Relationships	Engagement	Learning: Meaning-Making	Learning: Inquiry
<p>Information from MMSD’s Checklist for Culturally Responsive Practices, part 2, Response to Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has regular opportunities to share information regarding his/her life experiences with others in the classroom. This information is considered when planning instructional activities. • Student consistently sees self represented in the curriculum and classroom. • School and classroom is full of pictures, signs and artifacts celebrating the student’s culture. The teacher incorporated these cultural examples into instruction. • Staff is knowledgeable about the student’s home culture and made an effort to be informed about and/or present for important family or community cultural events in which the student was involved. • Teacher is knowledgeable about the student’s background, culture, and experiences, and had a strong relationship with the student. This information was consistently used in the design of curriculum and instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has numerous relationships with staff or peers that are trusting, reciprocal and supportive. • Varying opportunities for the family to participate in their child’s schooling are consistently available. • Teacher is knowledgeable about the student’s background, culture and experiences, and had a strong relationship with the student. This information was consistently used in the design of curriculum and instruction. • Information regarding the student’s racial and cultural background was obtained by talking with the student and family, record review, observation and consultation with other staff members. • Staff is knowledgeable about the student’s home culture and made an effort to be informed about and/or present for important family or community cultural events in which the student was involved. • Student consistently receives encouragement and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and classroom is full of pictures, signs, and artifacts celebrating the student’s cultural examples into instruction. • Student consistently participates in school activities designed to increase engagement and connection to school. • Face to face conferences, home visits, e-mail, and other information sharing approaches have been used on a consistent basis. Discussions addressed family values and information about the student’s culture and interests. This information was used by the teacher to plan instruction. • Real world connections are consistently made with curriculum and instruction. The student had a strong purpose for learning. • Student has frequent opportunities and receives frequent encouragement to participate in activities and events that will increase his/her connection to school, including personal contact to invite involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real world connections are consistently made with curriculum and instruction. The student had a strong purpose for learning. • Student’s classroom experiences are consistently connected to his/her culture via community based experiences and activities that use varied learning styles and interactions. • All rules and expectations are explicitly taught, visually displayed, and regularly reviewed to ensure the student’s learning and understanding. • Student consistently has access to texts and other curricular materials that are rich in visuals. Instructive feedback is consistently provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has regular opportunities to build on prior knowledge and experiences. • School staff consistently mediated cultural differences by explicitly teaching the expectations and processes were not present in the student’s culture of experience. • Student has regular opportunities to build on prior knowledge and experiences. Student’s classroom experiences are consistently connected to his/her culture via community based experiences and activities that use varied learning styles and interactions

	Identity Development	Relationships	Engagement	Learning: Meaning-Making	Learning: Inquiry
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations between the student’s family and staff consistently include mutual problem solving, information about family values, and the student’s interests and experiences. • Variety of information sharing approaches has been used on a consistent basis. • New student and family consistently experience support to adjust to school and build relationships with peers. • Family, school, and community work together to support the success of the student. • Student and family have regular, direct assistance to access community supports. • Consistent ongoing communication between the student, family and school about life stressors and/or socio-economic status impacts on the student’s performance, including a complete history. <p>Student has consistently received interventions to minimize the impact of the family’s socio-economic status and/or life stressors on his/her success in school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student’s language level and vocabulary development is consistently matched to the language used in classroom instruction. • Student experiences consistent and frequent interventions to support the understanding and use of oral and written language. • Student consistently participates in school activities designed to increase engagement and connection to school. <p>Student has consistent on-going opportunities to practice oral and written language skills in large and small group as well as individual instruction</p>		

	Identity Development	Relationships	Engagement	Learning: Meaning-Making	Learning: Inquiry
Language Arts Standards	Select LA standards aligned with focus of lesson and which support Identity Development	Select LA standards aligned with focus of lesson and which support Relationships	Select LA standards aligned with focus of lesson and which support Engagement	Select LA standards aligned with focus of lesson and which support Learning: Meaning- Making	Select LA standards aligned with focus of lesson and which support Learning-Inquiry
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop oracy and create opportunity for oral performance (ie: explanations, narratives, presentations, and other forms of public talk) • Represent culturally familiar experiences, roles and situations by identifying the principles and values of culturally relevant practices and selecting materials reflective of those and the student. • Make explicit the importance and purpose of learning- emphasizing to the student <i>who they are</i> and <i>who they can become</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and use family-like links (fictive kinship) to support relationships • Allow social activities and relationships to be organized by cultural heritages, for example, identify teachers, instructors and other knowledgeable elders from the community • Build a sense of community that encourages the use of collaborative activities and collective responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize learning activities so content is represented in ways that are <i>culturally</i> relevant and <i>socially</i> significant • Develop cultural props and tools such as incorporating oral traditions • Reframe traditional tools with a cultural lens (i.e.: refer to “paired passages” as “cousin passages”) • Employ a living curriculum such as addressing the historical struggle of cultural groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make explicit the similarities and differences in the experiences of various racial groups (i.e., Hmong and African Americans) • Select literature that speaks to making connections (text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world) and develops a critical regard of how and for what purpose the literature was produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about the past to create the future • Select fables, folktales, proverbs, etc. that are repositories of African American collective memory and wisdom • Make explicit cultural props, symbols and knowledge systems to incorporate into the discipline/lesson/activity • Be explicit about the purpose of the lesson including objectives, process and final product

Applying the Culturally Relevant Planning Framework: An Example Using Lucy Calkins' *Units of Study*

Step	Lucy Calkins <i>Units of Study</i> Lesson	Lucy Calkins <i>Units of Study</i> Lesson with Culturally Relevant Overlay	Questions for Teacher Reflection "Learn with your Heart"
1	<p>Teacher Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson is based on overarching thematic curriculum map based on elements of story writing Review students' previous writing, anecdotal notes and observations to identify teaching points. Architecture of the Conference: Research, Validate, Decide, Teach, Link, Record <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select curriculum standard(s) Connected to students' social/emotional development Select mentor text 	<p>Teacher Planning (Using both Calkins and the Culturally Relevant Planning Framework)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson is based on overarching thematic curriculum map based on elements of story writing Focus on one or two students Use knowledge and understanding of the focus students, their interests and strengths- "I See You" Connect to the focus students' specific needs based on the Culturally Relevant Planning framework (identity, relationships, engagement, learning: meaning-making, and learning: inquiry) Select curriculum standards Connect to student's social/emotional development Purposefully select a mentor text that reflects the student's interests, the student's needs selected from the Culturally Relevant Planning Framework, and the standard or next teaching point for the lesson Select or write an affirmation that matches the students' needs selected from the Culturally Relevant Planning Framework Consider the lesson using a writing lens to establish freedom and flexibility with use of language and appropriate use of dialect (code switching) 	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%;"> <div style="border: 1px solid green; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; width: 30%;"> <p>Student: "Do you see me?"</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; width: 30%;"> <p>Teacher: "I see you. I see what you can be."</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid green; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; width: 30%;"> <p>Student: "I see what I can be in your eyes."</p> </div> </div> <div style="background-color: #FFC0CB; border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0; width: 80%; text-align: center;"> <p>Know your student by heart. Learn with your senses to know the whole child.</p> </div> <p>❖ How do I gain knowledge of my student?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can I use all of my senses to understand the whole child – listen, feel, speak? Have I observed and talked to the student about what he likes and gets excited about and what he doesn't like? Where does the student struggle and need to develop academically, behaviorally, and socially or emotionally? How does the student's family describe him? What do they see as his strengths and needs at home and in their community? </div>

			<p>❖ How does the student identify as an individual, in my classroom, in school, in his family, in his community?</p> <p>❖ What do I think about the student as a Writer? What does he bring to the lesson (vs. the writing product)?</p> <p>❖ What is my relationship with the student and how do we interact?</p> <p>❖ Do I set and communicate high expectations for the student?</p> <p>❖ What would be a relevant focus for my student(s) (identity development, relationships, engagement, learning: meaning-making, and/or learning: inquiry)?</p>
2		Affirmation	❖ How does the affirmation connect with my focus student(s) and the goal of the lesson?
3	<p>Mini-Lesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish connection (text-text, text-world, text-self) Explicitly teach the target skill using demonstration and modeling Read mentor text 	<p>Mini-Lesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Connection (text-text, text-world, text-self) Explicitly teach target skill using demonstration and modeling Read mentor text 	<p>❖ How could I stretch and try on an aspect of pedagogy that is more culturally relevant as I teach the target skill(s)?</p> <p>❖ What aspects of the <i>Classroom Practices For the Culturally Responsive Teacher</i> (attached) are potentially applicable?</p>
4	<p>Active Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students share thinking and plans with others Turn-and-talk, Acting out, Story Telling May occasionally purposely pair students 	<p>Active Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students share thinking and plans with others Turn-and-talk, Acting out, Story Telling May occasionally purposefully pair students Griot: Oral Language Tradition 	<p>❖ How will the active engagement strategies I use link to my student's strengths and likes?</p> <p>❖ What aspects of the <i>Classroom Practices For the Culturally Responsive Teacher</i></p>

			(attached) are potentially applicable?
5	Independent Writing and 1:1 Conference with teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher uses conference to reinforce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Skill building -Meaning making -Relationships 	Independent Writing and 1:1 Conference with teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher uses conference to reinforce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Skill building -Meaning making -Relationships -Identity Development -Engagement 	❖ What aspects of the <i>Classroom Practices For the Culturally Responsive Teacher</i> (attached) are potentially applicable?
6	Share and Celebrate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce skills using features of students' writing Identify teaching points for the next day 	Share and Celebrate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce skills using features of students' writing Identify teaching points for the next day Incorporate and reinforce some of the elements of Culturally Responsive Practices identified during the planning phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Harambee: let's pull together; community ○ Zawadi: gifts, celebrating ○ Repeat affirmation 	Respecting Everyone as a Writer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What format would be most appropriate for my students and this lesson? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Individual, Small Group, Whole Group, Partner or Buddy Reading ❖ What's my purpose for sharing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Link to mini-lesson, value, or principle from Culturally Responsive Framework (i.e., self-determination can be connected to having a product worth sharing) ❖ How can I make sharing engaging for my student and honor their needs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Students read own or another's writing into a tape recorder for sharing ❖ How can I build in collective/cooperative learning, responsibility, and relationships? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Popcorn reading of written class responses or student's own writing
7	Teacher Follow-Up	Teacher Follow-Up	❖ Did my instruction reach my focus student(s)?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Was my lesson and teaching relevant and responsive to all of my students?❖ How will what I learned about teaching today affect my teaching tomorrow?❖ Have I given persistent and explicit permission and support to my student(s) to engage in the elements of culturally responsive pedagogy I am introducing to my class (i.e., call and response, oral performances)?
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Professional Development Strategies

Overview

1. The purpose of the Writing Curriculum Example is to provide an easy entry point to learning about culturally relevant practices and culturally responsive teaching, particularly as they apply to African American students.
2. Be sure to model culturally relevant pedagogy as you introduce the planning framework and sample lesson, by using affirmations and posing some of the self-reflection questions provided in the lesson.

Planning Framework

1. Introduce the elements of the framework using matching, bingo, or other game formats to provide practice and repeated exposure to the terminology and definitions.
2. Provide practice applying the framework by asking participants in the group to write a brief description of a student of color who poses an academic or social/emotional/behavioral challenge. Use these scenarios to think about the student's strengths and needs. Select one of element from the planning framework (identity, relationships, engagement, meaning-making, or inquiry) that is a good match to the written description and explain why it was selected.

Sample Writing Lesson

1. Assume that the Calkins writing lesson format in the left column is familiar to the participants. Review it briefly with the center and right columns covered. Ask for additions, changes to how the participants might typically go about planning and thinking about the writing lesson for their classroom.
2. Ask participants (individually or in pairs/triads) to identify a student of color in their classroom who will be their focus student for the next section.
3. Walk through and talk about how the original writing lesson might be modified using the description of the writing lesson with culturally relevant overlay steps in the center column using the focus student selected as the basis for the discussion.
4. As time permits, allow small groups to use the reflection questions in the column on the right as additional prompts.
5. Summarize and wrap up: Give each participant a sheet of paper folded into fourths. Ask them to number each of the squares, 1 – 4.
 - In square one, ask them to write one thing they learned about being a culturally responsive teacher.
 - In square 2, ask them to write one idea they are planning to try in their classroom.
 - In square 3, ask them to write one question that came up during the work period.
 - In square 4, ask them to indicate something they would like to learn more about next.

References
Lucy Calkins Unit of Study Planning Framework and Lesson Plan Exemplar

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