HOW EDUCATORS CAN UTILIZE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING TO ENHANCE PERSONALIZED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM.

by

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A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University

St. Paul, MN

May 2019

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Project Summary

The purpose behind the creation of this podcast, blog, and Instagram project was to answer the question: *How can educators utilize Culturally Responsive Teaching to enhance personalized learning opportunities in the secondary classroom?* As someone who looks for current, engaging, and easy to consume information, I know how easy and beneficial podcasts can be. With our current technology of tablets, smart phones, and smart home devices, it has never been simpler to listen to podcasts, even while multitasking at home. As an adult student, I understand the busyness of life and the balancing act of school, work, and family, so being able to, say, play cars with my kids and learn new information through podcasts at the same time is truly enjoyable.

It is because of these many reasons that I created a podcast entitled iCRT that presents information on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and personalized learning to benefit educators who want to learn more about these topics like I was at the beginning of this research. I present background information on these two pedagogical theories, provide lesson plan ideas, review current books on the topics, and summarize specific CRT and personalized learning classroom tools for educators to use immediately. I created a podcast website and Instagram account where people can come and find, for example, blog posts on the episodes, more in-depth lesson plan ideas, or the links to predominant CRT and personalized learning educators. I will also be able to better teach podcast consumption and creation with my future students.

Through this podcast creation, the continued research into CRT and personalized learning, conversations with experts in the education field, lesson plan creations, and synthesis of theoretical and practical work surrounding these topics, I am better able to answer the question:
How can educators utilize CRT to enhance personalized learning opportunities in the secondary classroom?

Podcast Rationale and Audience

According to a study done by Edison Research (2018), there are an estimated 124 million people who listened to podcasts in the last year in the United States. Further, 73 million people are monthly listeners with an estimated 48 million Americans listening each week (Edison Research, 2018). People listen to podcasts because of their ease of consumption and availability.

Podcasts can also be beneficial for educational purposes both for adult learners and secondary students. Adult pedagogy is necessarily built on the foundation of self-directed, intrinsically motivated, mature learners who should be involved in learner-centered activities (Hajar Halili, 2018). Students respond positively to the inclusion of podcasts to their learning workload because it helps them increase their understanding of the material, provides the opportunity to learn at their own time, and allows them the opportunity to listen to specific podcasts multiple times if needed to gain a better understanding of the material (Foon Hew, 2009). Adult learners in 2018, the proposed audience of this project, already listen to podcasts to gather information and learn new knowledge, as seen by the Edison Research statistics. So, my proposed audience would benefit from information being presented in a podcast form for several reasons: it is already a medium they are comfortable with; they are busy learners and multitask while they listen; and they like the flexibility that podcasts provide.

Secondary education students also benefit from podcast use and creation in the classroom. If podcasts are utilized in the classroom to provide information for students, one benefit is that they can access the learning material when not in the classroom either through
their mobile devices or a home computer or tablet (Gray, 2017; Nesi, 2017). Additionally, when creating a podcast, students learn how to properly change their tone and message to fit a specific listening audience (Nesi, 2017). Finally, podcasts can work for students to find not only interesting content, but also to connect students to other people their age discuss a wide variety of topics from around the world (Sprague & Pixley, 2008).

While high school students are not my intended audience, there are several reasons I include this information here. First, putting this podcast out onto the internet allows for an array of listeners that I do not intend and some may be high school students. Second, as an educator, I am hoping to gain valuable knowledge in the creation of the podcast in order to create them in the future more tailored for my classes. Finally, I hope that by creating a podcast I will be better equipped to teach my future students the process and encourage them to learn through sharing their voices for a broader audience.

With the information above in mind, the intended audience for my podcast will be educators who are interested in learning more about CRT and personalized learning and their implementation in the classroom. I also expect my audience to be future Hamline students who are researching CRT or personalized learning for their own academic work. I hope my podcast will reach many current educators who are looking for more information on how to make their classrooms more culturally relevant and personalized.

Podcast Project

The iCRT podcast, blog posts, and Instagram account are all linked together on my website and can be found at: https://estreywells.wixsite.com/icrtpodcast. My Instagram account
username is Ms.Strey and my podcast is housed on Soundcloud at https://soundcloud.com/christina-strey.

Each of these different platforms listed above, the website, soundcloud, and Instagram, provide an opportunity for people to become aware and access the iCRT podcast and blog posts.

**Website.** My website entitled *iCRT: Education Podcast and Blog*, is the hub for the podcast. The website holds the description of the podcast, the Soundcloud app to listen to the podcast without leaving the site or downloading it, the podcast episode blog, my iCRT Instagram feed, and a place to contact me for questions or additional information.

Upon arriving at the website, the title and description of the website and podcast appears (as seen in the screenshot below).

![Website Screenshot](image-url)

The description is followed by the Soundcloud app that embeds the podcast on the website itself so viewers and listeners do not have to venture to another site if they don’t want to.
Each podcast episode is between 15 and 20 minutes. I intentionally kept the episodes this length to make sure I was presenting information in easily digestible chunks.

Below the Soundcloud app, viewers can find the blog posts. I created a blog post for each episode to make sure I shared more background information, links to other resources related to the episode, and any documents created for teachers like unit or lesson plans.
The blog posts are intentionally shorter reads because the podcasts hold most of the information I would like to present. Again, if there is information I cannot share over podcasts, like PDFs or links to outside websites or videos, I provide them in the blog post for that episode.

First Episode of iCRT Podcast!

Welcome to the first episode of iCRT! I’m so pleased you’ve at least made it this far!

This first episode of the podcast is really just an introduction one! I talk about who I am, why I’m doing this podcast in the first place, and what this podcast will revolve around: Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and personalized learning. In the podcast, I mention some educators I’m reading who have inspired me and I’d like to take a minute to introduce them more fully here!

Gloria Ladson-Billings: I first stumbled across Gloria Ladson-Billings’s name while I was trying to narrow down my thesis question. I read her name and a brief description of CRT and something just clicked into place—I knew this was what I wanted to study to not only complete my thesis but to better my teaching. I immediately ordered her book, “The Dream-Keepers” from Amazon and dove in! In this book, she dives deeper into her work in the San Francisco Bay area with 8 teachers who were singled out as being excellent teachers to African-American students in particular. Through her work with these teachers (interviews, questionnaires, and observations), she pinpoints several characteristics found in teachers who are good for diverse student populations. Since her name popped up on my screen at the very beginning of this whole crazy thing called my thesis, she’s been my go-to CRT theorist. Read her book!

Zaretta Hammond: In a weird turn of events, I had actually bought Hammond’s book “Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain” before even beginning my Master’s classes but, as you may know, I had every intention of reading it and never got around to actually cracking the cover. After reading Ladson-Billings’s book, though, I knew I needed to

CRT and the Brain-iCRT Episode 2

Welcome to Episode 2 of iCRT! In this episode, I’m diving into Zaretta Hammond’s work surrounding Culturally Responsive Teaching and neuroscience. I take a look at her book Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students and unpack some really interesting research she presents about culture, the brain, and how we learn.

As promised, and downloaded from her website, here is Hammond’s Ready for Rigor framework to give you some more background information on her work and how it integrates into schools.

READY for RIGOR
A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Awareness
  - Know and own your cultural lens
  - Understand the three levels of culture
  - Recognize cultural worldviews of all learners

- Learning Partnerships
  - Reimagine the student and teacher relationship as a partnership
  - Take responsibility to reduce students’ social emotional stress from stereotypical
I linked my Instagram account to the website as a way to share more of the daily information I am posting surrounding CRT and personalized learning. I also wanted to include the Instagram feed on the website to make sure those who visited the site could find me, or recognize me, on my social media account. Each blog post also has a comments section to encourage dialogue regarding the information presented.
Finally, the iCRT website includes a Contact section for anyone wishing to contact me directly with questions or for more information beyond commenting on a blog or Instagram post.

**Soundcloud.** Soundcloud is the listening platform that houses my podcast and can be found at [https://soundcloud.com/christina-strey](https://soundcloud.com/christina-strey). I chose Soundcloud to house the podcast because it does not require listeners to download episodes, it was free, it was relatively easy to upload content, and my website host, Wix.com, provided an embedded Soundcloud app for my website.
**Instagram.** My Instagram username is Ms.Strey and is a public account to allow people to see the information I post whether or not they follow my account. It is also public to allow users to search for and follow me. I created a public account to gain greater access to the wider public as a way to promote the podcast. With each new post, I use hashtags and tags so that my posts will be grouped with other similar posts and will be shown to other users when those markers are searched for. As seen in the picture below, my Instagram account provides the link for my website in my user bio so that users can find their way to the website, listen to the podcast, and read the blogs. Instagram has been integral in connecting my work with other educators, authors, students, and users. The likes and comments on my posts show me that this medium is effective in providing information about my work.
Conclusion

This capstone project began the hard work of answering the question: *How can educators utilize Culturally Responsive Teaching to enhance personalized learning opportunities in the secondary classroom?* The iCRT podcast, blog posts, and Instagram account are all linked together on my website and can be found at: [https://estreywells.wixsite.com/icrtpodcast](https://estreywells.wixsite.com/icrtpodcast). My Instagram account username is [Ms.Strey](https://www.instagram.com/ChristinaStrey/) and my podcast is housed on Soundcloud at [https://soundcloud.com/christina-strey](https://soundcloud.com/christina-strey). The work compiled on the website is aimed towards busy adult students and educators who want to learn more about CRT and personalized learning and who are ready to take the next step toward implementing this necessary work in their classrooms.
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