

INTEGRATION OF CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PRACTICES IN READING

INTERVENTION

by

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## Project Overview

Accelerating reading achievement and sustaining culturally and linguistically diverse students are at the heart of this project. This project connected the diverse student population at my school site with culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP). CSP encourages teachers to build an understanding of students' cultural assets to inform instructional decisions which consequently reduces stress for students in the classroom allowing increased academic achievement (Hammond, 2015, p. 50). Partnering with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, teachers set goals with students to increase student efficacy. To support reading achievement, teachers make informed decisions by selecting effective reading strategies based on reading content knowledge and CSP. The work of this project is to reframe Pathways to Reading Excellence at School Sites (PRESS; Minnesota Center for Reading Research, 2017) reading interventions with CSP strategies. As Gay (2002) reminded teachers, "Teachers need to develop rich repertoires of multicultural instructional examples to use in teaching ethnically diverse students" (p. 13). Developing a variety of instructional options to support CLD students addresses the lack of CSP strategies missing from PRESS reading interventions.

To equitably share resources and information for culturally sustaining pedagogy in reading intervention, I created a website. The website answers the question: *How can culturally sustaining pedagogy integrate with a specific reading intervention framework to accelerate reading achievement for elementary students?* The components reflect a collection of original and sourced materials to supplement the provided materials from PRESS. Project components have been compiled on a website,

<http://sustainingteaching.org>, and organized into three components: “Know”, “Teach”, and “Learn”. A fourth section, “Virtual” was added to share ways to integrate teaching and culturally sustaining pedagogy during modified learning contexts of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, including distance or virtual learning. Culturally sustaining and responsive pedagogy fittingly responds and shifts based on student needs, including transitioning between distance learning, modified in-person learning, and shifting family needs.

### **Project Components**

The three primary pages (Know, Teach, Learn) for the project website reflect culturally sustaining pedagogy: knowing your students, families, and self; teaching content to students while sustaining cultural knowledge; learning continually about implicit biases, cultures and lived experiences of others through printed and media sources. While these three categories are connected, each page is meant to support teacher professional development along a spectrum of experiences.

“Know” includes questionnaires for students, teachers, and families. These questionnaires ask for self-reporting information that guides teachers in developing a robust understanding of cultural backgrounds. Additionally, I provided teacher self-reflection guides to support ongoing knowledge-building and observation throughout the school year. To assess student content knowledge, I included PRESS Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Word Meaning support documents. These supplement PRESS diagnostics to garner student word knowledge along with phonological skills. To supplement the lacking comprehension assessment, I included fiction and nonfiction

generic comprehension questions. Using these questionnaires and supporting documents provides teachers with baseline knowledge prior to teaching.

“Teach” provides resources to support reading intervention with CSP. This includes four modified intervention lesson frames provided by PRESS in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension, visual support for small group reading instruction, and student reflection. Reading intervention with CSP offers flexibility and variety. This section support teachers and students through multiple communication and instructional modalities. For each lesson, I suggested:

1) *Grouping strategies*. Reading tends to function as a solitary activity, especially in older students. To support collaborative problem-solving, students are provided with a visual chart to select grouping for practice and teaching. Hammond (2015) suggested considering preferences for students that have developed communal neural pathways to support learning. Offering independent, dyad, or whole group options sustains the efficiency of neural pathways.

2) *An alternative teaching script*. Modified PRESS teaching scripts provide moments to pause throughout instruction so students can “chunk and chew” (Hammond, 2015). The “chunk and chew” method provides language processing time and transfer from input to working memory. Alternative vocabulary within the teaching scripts reduces the cognitive demand for students allowing more effort to be placed in practicing skills.

3) *Supported practice strategies*. PRESS provides few for modeling targeted skills. Teachers read from suggested scripts and show, using some manipulatives.

Hammond (2015) recommended using songs, chants, repetition, and movement to support learning. I added opportunities throughout these lesson frames to suggest areas to add songs, etc. to increase the type of modeling options for students.

4) *Personal practice options.* PRESS offers limited options for repeated practice. Through this project, I expanded the practice options to include multimodalities (Morrow & Gambrell, 2019) and grouping options. Additionally, encoding is not included as a component of the PRESS lesson framework. Writing and drawing have been demonstrated to increase comprehension (Morrow & Gambrell, 2019). Included alternative modalities provide options for students and increases reading skills and comprehension.

Self-reflection and progress toward established goals are included during the closure of the lesson. Hammond (2015) argued that partnering with students to develop and review goals increases student efficacy and supports efforts to accelerate achievement in targeted skills.

Published PRESS interventions include effective reading intervention strategies but do not include sufficient variety and modalities to support CLD students. To support student engagement and motivation, additional options need to be included within the PRESS lesson framework. These shifts offer instructional strategies to accelerate reading achievement and support the positive identities of CLD students.

5) *Culturally and linguistically diverse texts.* For this project, I provided suggested resources of texts to support student instructional levels, skill objective, and cultural and linguistic diversity of students within my school site and intervention groups.

Diversity of texts supports developing reading motivation, engagement, and positive self-identity (McIntyre & Hulan, 2012). Selecting decodable texts supports skill application and allows for more authentic assessment.

“Learn” includes resources to further support teacher understanding of implicit bias, culturally sustaining instruction in general education, and community cultural experience to deepen knowledge of other cultures or experiences. I collected and curated resources that offer a variety of perspectives: Implicit Bias from Edutopia (Finley, 2019), Teaching While White (<https://teachingwhilewhite.org/>, 2017), Classroom Library Texts (National Council for Teaching of English, 2020). Cultural and community experiences reflect the communities most represented at my school. These seek to personally engage teachers in building relationships and understanding with authentic voices. Similarly, “Distance Learning” provides supplemental support to CSP and reading intervention. With the uncertainty surrounding teaching and learning for the 2020-2021 school year, I felt compelled to support the ongoing teaching efforts of CSP and reading intervention through community building resources provided by Conscious Discipline and Zaretta Hammond (2015). Additionally, I have provided videos to support parents and teaching for reading intervention.

## **Summary**

Culturally sustaining pedagogy and reading intervention support accelerating student achievement and closing the achievement gap. Supporting teachers through a diverse collection of resources provides teachers the opportunity to customize professional learning and personal growth. Supporting PRESS with CSP tools

strengthens the effectiveness of reading intervention especially for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

<http://sustainingteaching.org>

Sustaining Teaching [Home](#) [Practices](#) [About](#) [References](#) [Contact](#)



## Why “Sustaining Teaching”?

Sustaining teaching refers to the ongoing need to support students and teachers in the the classroom. To overcome complex instructional and institutional challenges faced by most teachers, sustaining teaching offers resources to support effective instruction and decision-making, particularly in reading instruction. Sustaining teaching supports student learning by viewing culturally and linguistically diverse students as assets to the learning environment and equipped with cultural resources to support their education.

Using the strength of the decision-making framework and systematic progression of Pathways to Reading Success in Schools (PRESS, Minnesota Center for Reading Research), the resouces offered here support the question: *How can culturally sustaining pedagogy integrate with other teaching strategies in a specific reading intervention framework to accelerate reading achievement in elementary students?*

— Alison Pichel



## Know

### *Building Initial Understanding of Readers*

1. [Phonics Diagnostic Supplement](#)
2. [Phonemic Awareness Diagnostic Supplement](#)
3. [Fiction Comprehension Questions](#)

<p>4. <u>Nonfiction Comprehension Questions</u></p> <p>5. <u>What Can I Work on as a Reader?</u>, Jennifer Serravallo</p> <p><i>Building Understanding of Self and Others</i></p> <p>6. <u>Parent Questionnaire</u></p> <p>7. <u>Student Questionnaire</u></p> <p>8. <u>Teacher Literacy Questionnaire</u></p> <p>9. <u>Teacher Self-inventory and Reflection Journal</u></p> <p>10. <u>Cult of Pedagogy Reflection Questions</u>, Cult of Pedagogy  <a href="https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/gut-level-reflection-questions/">https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/gut-level-reflection-questions/</a></p>
<p><i>Building Ongoing Knowledge of Students</i></p> <p>11. <u>Interview questions</u></p> <p>12. <u>Girls on the Run Energy Awards</u>, Girls on the Run Rockies</p> <p>13. <u>Conscious Discipline: Encouragement</u>, Conscious Discipline</p>
<p><i>Know Yourself</i></p> <p>14. <u>Implicit Bias</u>, Teaching Tolerance  <a href="https://www.edutopia.org/article/look-implicit-bias-and-microaggressions">https://www.edutopia.org/article/look-implicit-bias-and-microaggressions</a></p> <p>15. <u>Teacher Questionnaire</u>, Teaching Tolerance  <a href="https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/test-yourself-for-hidden-bias">https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/test-yourself-for-hidden-bias</a></p> <p>16. <u>Teachers are People Too Article</u>, Stark, Riddle, Sinclair &amp; Warikoo (2020)  <a href="https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0013189X20912758">https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0013189X20912758</a></p>

## Teach

<p><i>Teach with PRESS Lesson Frames</i></p> <p>1. <u>PRESS Phonemic Awareness</u></p> <p>2. <u>PRESS Phonics</u></p> <p>3. <u>PRESS Fluency</u></p> <p>4. <u>PRESS Comprehension</u></p>
<p><i>Teach with Student Support</i></p> <p>5. <u>Student Reflection</u></p> <p>6. <u>Visual Structures for Small Groups</u></p> <p>7. <u>Choice Tools for Complex Schedules</u>, Conscious Discipline</p> <p>8. <u>Multilingual Signs</u></p>
<p><i>Teacher with Teacher Support</i></p> <p>9. <u>PRESS Community Website</u>, Minnesota Center for Reading Research</p> <p>10. <u>CSP Classroom Climate</u>, National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE)  <a href="https://ncte.org/blog/2018/08/first-day-actions-for-a-culturally-sustaining-classroom-environment/">https://ncte.org/blog/2018/08/first-day-actions-for-a-culturally-sustaining-classroom-environment/</a></p> <p>11. <u>Culturally Responsive Literacy Instruction Presentation</u>, Minnesota Department of Education</p>

## Learn

### *Learn from Authentic Voices*

1. Authors and Texts, Teaching While White  
<https://teachingwhilewhite.org/foundational-texts>
2. Classroom Library Texts, National Council of Teachers of English
3. Schools Succeeding at Failure, Teaching While White  
<https://teachingwhilewhite.org/podcast>
4. Culturally Responsive Instruction in Your Classroom, BAM Radio Network  
<https://www.bamradionetwork.com/track/12-ways-to-make-culturally-responsive-instruction-work-in-your-classroom/>
5. Critical Practices for Anti-Racist Teachers, Teaching Tolerance  
<https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/critical-practices-for-anti-bias-education>
6. Culturally Responsive School, Edutopia  
<https://youtu.be/ztnwmVBMfd0>

### *Learn from Community and Cultural Experiences*

7. Native Nations of Minnesota, Minnesota Humanities Center  
<https://mnhum.org/native-nations-minnesota/>
8. Lessons from Black Churches, Miller, R., Edutopia, 6/4/20  
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/lessons-culturally-responsive-teaching-black-churches>
9. Voices from the Latino Community, Minnesota Humanities Center  
<https://mnhum.org/stories-and-culture/voices-latino-community/>
10. Hmong Cultural Center, Learn About Hmong  
<https://www.learnabouthmong.net/>
11. Afghan Women's English Language Learners, Arrive Ministries  
<https://arriveministries.org/awell/>
12. Somali Adult Literacy Training, Arrive Ministries  
<https://arriveministries.org/salt/>

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