

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in the Online Elementary Classroom

By

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Project Introduction

The aim of this project is to answer the research question, *how can online elementary school teachers incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy into best practices for digital learning?* The project consists of a 3-part professional development workshop. The first workshop focuses on the integration of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) using best practices from some of the founding and newer researchers in this field. The subsequent workshop focuses on best practices for online teaching and learning with a focus on best practices in an elementary setting. Finally, the last workshop asks participants to combine their knowledge of CRP and online teaching/learning best practices in an effort to effect change to a pedagogical practice, unit, or system in their classroom. The goal of the workshop is to support teachers to grow in knowledge of best practices in both CRP and elementary online teaching and learning. This is meant to serve as the catalyst for transformative equity work in the elementary online teaching space, and not as a one-and-done exercise.

The professional development is broken down into three sessions. Each session includes its own outline, accompanying Google Slides, and resources for its execution. There are speaker notes in each slide to be utilized by the facilitator. Furthermore, there is a link for a pre-workshop survey and post-workshop survey included at the beginning of workshop one and at the end of workshop three. The workshop was formed based on the theory of active participation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1981). Each workshop was designed to be directly relevant to the teaching contexts of the participants, acknowledge the great work teachers are already doing, and allow for immediate implementation through the integrated action plan in session three. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on collaboration, as grade-level teams are given space to discuss and create together. Equity is designed to be

centered as the backbone of the workshops. As Mezirow's (1981) transformative learning calls for, the job of facilitator will be to engage the audience in widening perspectives and promoting justice-oriented action.

Finally, the intended audience for this workshop includes elementary online teachers and those who support and administer their programming. Each workshop will be approximately sixty minutes, with a combination of in-person and online workshop delivery model. Each workshop could be modified to fit an in-person or online setting with few changes. As of late 2021, research into integrating culturally relevant pedagogy in the elementary online teaching and learning space is slim, and therefore it would be appropriate to add new learnings to the professional development sessions as more research is published.

Professional Development Session #1

Topic: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

Purpose: In order to address the research question, *How can online elementary school teachers incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy into best practices for digital learning?* this professional development session will present researched best practices in enacting CRP in a classroom. This is session one of a three-part professional development series.

[Professional development slideshow- Session #1](#)

*Prior to meeting for the first professional development session, ask participants to fill out [this Google Form](#) with a pre-workshop survey. This will help the facilitator gather important information on participants' background knowledge and areas of need prior to starting the workshop.

Note: This session is planned to take place in person.

Slide number(s)	Content	Estimation of Time
1 & 2	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Establish norms for courageous conversations:</p> <p><u>Invite participants to read each norm popcorn-style:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Experience discomfort ● Take risks ● Stay engaged ● Listen for understanding ● Expect and accept non-closure ● No fixing 	5 minutes
3 & 4	<p>Warm-up:</p> <p>Participant Identity Mapping <i>This activity will allow for participants to reflect and ground themselves within their own identities before we begin further conversation around diversity and meeting the needs of the diverse student identities and cultural backgrounds in their classrooms.</i></p> <p>-All participants will receive a double-sided identity mapping worksheet</p> <p>-Allow participants to take 4-5 minutes to complete their identity charts</p> <p>-Walk and talk for 3-4 minutes, taking time to find similarities and differences among participants</p>	15-20 minutes

	<p>Classroom Identity Mapping <i>Mapping activity of the different identities in our classroom - this would ideally come directly from the students at the beginning of the year, but if that was not possible before the first PD session, participants should take what they know about their class so far.</i></p> <p>-Have participants turn their identity mapping worksheet over to the back side -Participants will have another starburst identity mapping worksheet -This time, participants will take 4-5 minutes to map out the various identities of students in their classrooms -Take a few minutes to discuss the rich identities of the students in our classrooms -How might their needs be different? How might the effectiveness of different teaching approaches affect students individually?</p>	
5	Why today's work matters	1 minute
6	Define and ground understanding around CRP	1 minute
7	<p>Introduce learning objectives for today's professional development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To understand what Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) means and how it can be enacted safely in a class community ● To understand common themes that emerged from research into CRP and similar theories such as Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy ● To understand pitfalls and "teacher traps" that can occur when enacting CRP ● To identify what you are already successfully employing in your classroom and areas where you feel you can still grow ● To set a goal for future action and change 	2 minutes
8	<p>THEME 1- Neutrality in the classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Neutrality does not exist in schools (Lyiscott, 2019) ● Neutrality ideology can contribute to cultural and linguistic erasure for students (Lyiscott, 2019) 	7 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum, expectations, and communication styles each have cultural underpinnings and cannot be considered neutral. • Gay (2002) recommends selecting learning experiences, pedagogical approaches, and content that match the diverse set of learners in our classrooms • *More detailed notes can be found in the 'presenter notes' section of the Google Slides <p>After presenting information about <i>Neutrality in the Classroom</i>, participants will take a couple of minutes to write in their PD Session 1 notes what they are A) already doing and B) where they feel they can still grow in relation to the information presented.</p> <p>After brainstorming on their own, grade-level groups will discuss, find inspiration in each other's reflections, and add any new ideas to their notes.</p>	
9	<p>THEME 2- Caring and Understanding (teacher qualities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common themes of empathy, care, and a desire to break down barriers for historically marginalized students and the community (Ladson-Billings, 1995) • <i>Caring</i> is a fundamental component of teachers enacting CRP in their classrooms (Gay, 2002) • Gay (2002) goes on to further explain that the concept of caring is not simply to be a nurturing presence in students' lives, but to act in the best interest of students, hold high expectations, and stop at nothing to ensure opportunities and access to academic success. • Gaining a deeper understanding of students is another important step • Abacioglu et al. (2020) discuss the importance of learning about student values, beliefs, identities, and lived realities. • Gorski (2016) similarly contends that in order for teachers to effectively advocate for policies and generate solutions to inequitable systems, teachers must first develop a strong understanding of current social and systemic barriers. • Example: student pronouns • *More detailed notes can be found in the 'presenter notes' section of the Google Slides <p>After presenting information about <i>Caring and Understanding</i>, participants will take a couple of minutes to write in their PD Session 1 notes what they are A) already doing and B) where</p>	7 minutes

	<p>they feel they can still grow in relation to the information presented.</p> <p>After brainstorming on their own, grade-level groups will discuss, find inspiration in each other’s reflections, and add any new ideas to their notes.</p>	
10	<p>THEME 3- Asset-based Ideology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students are valuable and intelligent members of the classroom community just as they are (Gay, 2002). ● It is important to believe in the academic ability of all students ● Work to understand your own biases, assumptions, and conscious or unconscious prejudices (Nieto, 2004, as cited in Abacioglu et al., 2020). ● Example re: communication styles ● Define excellence for your students and then consider <i>why</i> are these the standards for excellence? Can and should they be expanded, revised, or omitted? ● *More detailed notes can be found in the ‘presenter notes’ section of the Google Slides <p>After presenting information about <i>Asset-based Ideology</i>, participants will take a couple of minutes to write in their PD Session 1 notes what they are A) already doing and B) where they feel they can still grow in relation to the information presented.</p> <p>After brainstorming on their own, grade-level groups will discuss, find inspiration in each other’s reflections, and add any new ideas to their notes.</p>	7 minutes
11	<p>THEME 4- Common Pitfalls in CRP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Celebration of diversity ● Centering equity over culture ● White students need CRP practices too ● *More detailed notes can be found in the ‘presenter notes’ section of the Google Slides <p>After presenting information about <i>Common Pitfalls in CRP</i>, participants will take a couple of minutes to write in their PD Session 1 notes what they are A) already doing and B) where they feel they can still grow in relation to the information presented.</p> <p>After brainstorming on their own, grade-level groups will discuss, find inspiration in each other’s reflections, and add any new</p>	7 minutes

	ideas to their notes.	
12	Goal Setting Direct participants to the bottom of their note-taking sheet. There is space for participants to select a goal that they would like to enact in their classroom over the coming weeks.	3 minutes
13	Conclusions/questions	1+ minutes

Professional Development Session #2

Topic: Best Practices in Online Learning

Purpose: In order to address the research question, *How can online elementary school teachers incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy into best practices for digital learning?* this professional development session will present researched best practices in an online learning setting. This is session two of a three-part professional development series.

[Professional development slideshow- Session #2](#)

Note: This session is planned to take place online through a meeting software such as Zoom, Google Meets, or WebEx. All examples that are given will be based on the use of Zoom.

Slide number(s)	Content	Estimation of Time
1 & 2	<p>*Share screen</p> <p>Welcome</p> <p>Establish norms for courageous conversations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Experience discomfort● Take risks● Stay engaged● Listen for understanding● Expect and accept non-closure● No fixing	5 minutes
3 & 4	<p>Warm-up:</p> <p>Slide 3: Breakout Rooms- 2 truths and a lie in groups of 3 (randomized breakout rooms via Zoom) *Note: ensure that participants understand how this connects to the importance of building online community</p> <p>Slide 4: Padlet to ask participants to write down where they feel successful in online teaching and learning and what questions they have to better serve their students in an online learning environment. *Note: Jamboard is an effective alternative</p>	10 minutes
5	<p>Introduce learning objectives for today's professional development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● To understand best practices in an online learning setting	2 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify what you are already successfully employing in your classroom and areas where you feel you can still grow in best practices To set a goal for future action and change 	
6	<p>The Role of Traditional Teaching Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research suggests that much of the same “ingredients” that go into effective teaching remain the same in an online learning environment. *See additional notes in the ‘presenter notes’ portion 	2 minutes
	<p>THEME 1- Community Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When students are not able to be face to face, greater efforts must be made to foster a sense of togetherness. Social ties amongst the families of students are also important to student success (Domina et al., 2021). This open communication between teachers and parents also plays an important role in the success of online learning. *More detailed notes can be found in the ‘presenter notes’ section of the Google Slides <p>After presenting information about <i>Community Development</i>, participants will take a couple of minutes to write in their PD Session 2 notes what they are A) already doing and B) where they feel they can still grow in relation to the information presented.</p> <p>After brainstorming on their own, grade-level groups will discuss, find inspiration in each other’s reflections, and add any new ideas to their notes.</p>	7 minutes
	<p>THEME 2- Student-Centered Learning</p> <p>First prompt participants, “Write in the chat one way you can make classes student centered. That way you bring them into the theme and you show a digital tool at work.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss themes that emerge One way to achieve student-centered learning is to utilize differentiation and engagement practices in the classroom. Teachers’ roles shift to become the facilitator of learning vs. the sole source of information It is important to note that not all online learning experiences need to be- or should be- done with technology- sending home science kits, books, printed materials whenever possible *More detailed notes can be found in the ‘presenter notes’ section of the Google Slides 	7 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Importance of socialization during the school day <p>After presenting information about <i>Student-Centered Learning</i>, participants will take a couple of minutes to write in their PD Session 2 notes what they are A) already doing and B) where they feel they can still grow in relation to the information presented.</p> <p>After brainstorming on their own, grade-level groups will discuss, find inspiration in each other's reflections, and add any new ideas to their notes.</p>	
	<p>THEME 3- Accommodation and Differentiation</p> <p>First prompt participants, "What is one way you currently differentiate instruction or make accommodations?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When differentiating for academic levels, student interest, or to accommodate a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), teachers can discreetly direct personalized learning material to the child's assignment list. ● There are many options for student engagement and demonstration of understanding in an online classroom, such as using the chat feature to type answers vs. having to raise their hand and speak in front of the class. ● Perry and Pilati (2011) argue that accommodations online are even more effective than ones that can be used in the traditional classroom. They give an example of an 'alt tag,' which can describe an image to someone who is visually impaired. ● There are options for students to be accelerated in lessons if they are quickly grasping the material, as well as the option to slow down lessons for students who need more time (Perry & Pilati, 2011). ● Programs and apps such as Class Kick and Pear Deck, among many others, allow teachers to see student answers in real time. This can allow a teacher to intervene on student work with immediate feedback versus relying on the student to check feedback the following day or two. <p>After presenting information about <i>Accommodation and Differentiation</i>, participants will take a couple of minutes to write in their PD Session 2 notes what they are A) already doing and B) where they feel they can still grow in relation to the information presented.</p> <p>After brainstorming on their own, grade-level groups will discuss,</p>	7 minutes

	find inspiration in each other's reflections, and add any new ideas to their notes.	
	<p>THEME 4- Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online learning environments lend themselves to innovative learning strategies. In research by Palaigeorgiou & Palaigeorgiou (2019), students used a combination of tablets, self-paced interactive videos, and collaborative discussions with impressive learning outcomes. • Other teachers have found success using virtual field trips to capture student attention. Delacruz (2019) even studied ways that teachers and students were able to make their own virtual field trips. • Other creative ways to demonstrate student learning include the creation of virtual presentations, websites, videos, podcasts, and digital storytelling. <p>After presenting information about <i>Innovation</i>, participants will take a couple of minutes to write in their PD Session 2 notes what they are A) already doing and B) where they feel they can still grow in relation to the information presented.</p> <p>After brainstorming on their own, grade-level groups will discuss, find inspiration in each other's reflections, and add any new ideas to their notes.</p>	7 minutes
	<p>Goal Setting</p> <p>Direct participants to the bottom of their note-taking sheet. There is space for participants to select a goal that they would like to enact in their classroom over the coming weeks.</p>	3 minutes
	Conclusions/questions	1+ minutes

Professional Development Session #3

Bringing it Together- Enacting CRP in an Online Learning Environment

Purpose: In order to address the research question, *How can online elementary school teachers incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy into best practices for digital learning?* this professional development focuses on bringing together the themes of best practices in CRP and Online Learning. Participants will work in grade-level teams to analyze and improve an upcoming unit plan, lesson, or teaching approach based on the learning from Sessions 1 and 2.

[Professional Development Slideshow- Session #3](#)

Slide(s)	Content	Time
1	Bringing it together- welcome	
2	Why today's work matters	1 minute
3	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To identify an area to improve in a current unit, lesson, or classroom practice• To implement changes based upon our professional development takeaways in grade-level groups• To make moves toward ensuring a more equitable and culturally relevant classroom for all elementary online students	1 minute
4	Directions for the tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In grade-level groups, make a copy of the Making Changes document• Identify an area where you would like to institute change (lesson plan, unit, or classroom practice) for both CRP and Online Learning practices• Spend 30-40 minutes in grade-level groups outlining the:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Current content/practice○ Adjusted/modified content/practice○ Impact this will have for students in your classroom <p>We will spend 15 minutes sharing out at the end of our session today.</p>	2 minutes
5	Share Making Changes handout link:	40 minutes

	Making Changes handout	
6	Share-out time	15 minutes
7	Closing activity <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 4 Corners<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ See slide 7 for more details	4 minutes
8	Q & A slide/conclusion	1+ minutes

*After this final meeting, ask participants to fill out [this Google Form](#) with a post-workshop survey. This will help the facilitator gather important information on how to further support participants in their professional growth.

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