



COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: BECOMING A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHER
PRESENTERS: GARY HOWARD
CREDITS: CEU Version

Course Overview

How do you reach students who are culturally and racially different from you? This course provides thought-provoking background and practical suggestions for teachers seeking the answer to this question. Participants explore their own assumptions about race, class, and culture; and learn strategies for creating classrooms that are culturally inviting to all. Classroom footage illustrates principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching, including affirming students' cultural connections, stressing collectivity as well as individuality, and managing the classroom with firm, consistent, caring control. Join presenter Gary Howard as he leads workshop participants in activities that explore historical and personal perspectives. What groups were empowered to take part in government when the Constitution was drafted? What voices have been added to the conversation since then, and how has a history of disenfranchisement affected the ways in which we view each other? Mr. Howard makes a compelling case for knowing who your students really are, advocating an approach that celebrates culture and history, rather than requiring students to give up parts of their identities in order to survive in school. Finally, we hear from teachers who are trying a new approach to cultural difference and visit their classrooms to see the results.

Presenters' Bios

Gary R. Howard has over 35 years of experience working with issues of civil rights, social justice, equity, education, and diversity, including 28 years as the Founder of the REACH Center for Multicultural Education. He is a keynote speaker, writer, and workshop leader who travels extensively throughout the United States and Australia. Mr. Howard completed his undergraduate work in Cultural Anthropology and Social Psychology at Yale University and did graduate work in ethics and social justice at Yale Divinity School. He has served as an Adjunct Professor at both Western Washington University and Seattle University. He holds a Masters' Degree in education. Mr. Howard has provided extensive training in cultural competence and culturally responsive practice to schools, universities, social service agencies, and businesses throughout the United States and Australia. He is the author of numerous articles on race, justice, and multicultural issues and has developed collections of curriculum materials that are being used internationally. His most recent book, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know* (Second Edition, 2006), was published by Columbia University and is considered a groundbreaking work examining issues of privilege, power, and the role of White leaders and educators in a multicultural society.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, educators will know:

- Culturally competent behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes
- The direct relationship between teachers' level of cultural competence and students' level of achievement
- How issues of privilege and social dominance impact student success and engagement
- Seven principles of culturally responsive teaching



- Eight foundational principles on which a culturally responsive classroom is based

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, educators will apply the following skills:

- Assess their own practices related to the seven principles of culturally responsive teaching
- Use the perspectives and lived experiences of their diverse students as springboards to greater engagement, motivation, and success
- Create a professional vision incorporating key concepts and personal reflections from this course

Unit 1: Introduction

In this unit, Gary Howard makes the case for the importance of this course: the data shows that “difference” can predict negative academic outcomes. As educators, we must consciously work at transforming both ourselves and our professional practices so that school is a place where all students feel welcomed, and authentic relationships across differences make academic success possible.

Unit Objectives

After completing this course, educators will know:

- A working definition of cultural competence
- The relationships between inclusion, equity, and excellence

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, educators will be able to:

- Identify culturally competent behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes
- Connect the course to own work and life

Text: Introduction and Chapter 1

Introduction and Chapter 1, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*, Gary R. Howard, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2006.



Unit 2: Personal Growth Toward Racial and Cultural Competence

This unit begins with a “Culture Toss” activity, in which participants identify six characteristics by which they define themselves (race/ethnicity, religion/spirituality, language, life value, vocation, and possession), then think about the cost of giving any of these parts of themselves up. Participants consider the big question: What happens to a student’s academic energy when the school environment pressures him to be someone other than who he is?

Howard identifies seven steps in personal growth toward cultural competence, and teachers and students share personal narratives. Finally, each workshop participant identifies a personal growth plan, a goal to enhance his or her cultural competence as an educator.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The relationship between teachers' cultural competence and students' achievement
- The steps in a developmental model used to track growth toward cultural competence

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will be able to:

- Learn from students' personal narratives
- Design a personal growth plan

Text: Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*, Gary R. Howard, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2006.

Unit 3: Understanding Privilege, Power, and Social Dominance

This unit begins with an activity (*We, the People*) in which participants consider American ideals of equity vs. our current reality. Teachers and school leaders gain an understanding of how issues of race, whiteness, and social dominance interact to create and sustain race-based educational disparities. They examine how the Dynamics of Dominance impact student outcomes in their own schools and classrooms, and how issues of privilege and power may get in the way of their own practice.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- A historical perspective on issues of privilege, power, and social dominance
- How issues of privilege and social dominance impact student success and engagement

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will be able to:

- Examine how teachers' race consciousness impacts students' feelings of inclusion and efficacy
- Apply the lessons of this unit to teaching practice
- How issues of privilege and social dominance impact student success and engagement

Text: Chapters 2 and 3

Chapters 2 and 3, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*, Gary R. Howard, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2006.



Unit 4: Practical Strategies for Culturally Responsive Teaching

In this unit, participants compare the characteristics of “good to great” students with those who are “missing or not engaged.” They share examples of the successes they have had with their most marginalized students, and identify the key teacher behaviors that produced these successes.

Participants are introduced to the Seven Principles for Culturally Responsive Teaching (Shade, Oberg, and Kelly) and asked to identify specific ways they and their colleagues are creating both doorways and barriers related to these seven dimensions of effective practice.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The definition of culturally responsive teaching
- The Seven Principles for Culturally Responsive Teaching

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will be able to:

- Assess equity outcomes in school or classroom
- Identify teacher behaviors and beliefs that serve as keys to equity and inclusion

Text: Chapter 7

Chapter 7, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*, Gary R. Howard, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2006.

Unit 5: The Power of Relationships and Classroom Climate: Building the “Front Porch” for Academic Achievement

In this unit, Gary Howard explains the first three of the Seven Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching:

- Students are affirmed in their cultural connections
- Teacher is personally inviting
- Learning environments are physically and culturally inviting

Workshop participants describe how these principles are in evidence in their own classrooms, and what challenges they face in implementing them. We visit classrooms for a first-hand look.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The first three principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching, the "front porch" for academic achievement
- How exemplary educators implement these principles

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will be able to:

- Identify Principles 1, 2, and 3 as seen in classrooms
- Learn from students' perceptions of their teachers
- Assess own practice in terms of Principles 1, 2, and 3

Reading: Chapter 1

Chapter 1, *Bright Ribbons*, Lotus Howard

Unit 6: Powerful and Flexible Instruction: Building a Strong “Foundation” for Diverse Learners



In this unit, Gary Howard explains the fourth and fifth of the Seven Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching:

- Students are reinforced for academic development
- Instructional changes are made to accommodate differences in learners

Workshop participants describe how these principles are in evidence in their own classrooms, and barriers to their implementation. We visit classrooms to see these principles in action. In addition, four foundational beliefs that undergird Culturally Responsive Teaching are explored.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- How to reinforce students' unique strengths
- How to teach to students' diverse ways of learning
- How exemplary educators implement Principles 4 and 5
- Four (of eight) Foundational Beliefs that undergird the Seven Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will be able to:

- Identify Principles 4 and 5 as seen in classrooms
- Assess own practices related to Principles 4 and 5

Unit 7: Classroom Management: Respectful Discipline and Creative Grouping

In this unit, Gary Howard and workshop participants explore the final Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching:

- Classroom is managed with firm, consistent, caring control
- Learning environments stress collectivity as well as individuality

Classroom examples are provided. The remaining Foundational Beliefs are described.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- How to manage classrooms with firm, consistent, caring control
- How to stress collectivity as well as individuality
- How exemplary educators implement Principles 6 and 7
- Additional (5 - 8) Foundational Beliefs that undergird the Seven Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will be able to:

- Identify Principles 6 and 7 as seen in classrooms
- Assess own practices related to Principles 6 and 7

Text: Chapters 4 and 8

- Chapters 4 and 8, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*, Gary R. Howard, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2006.

Unit 8: Course Summary, CRT Action Research, and Why We Do This Work



Participants are guided in a process of designing their own action research projects for integrating the lessons of this course into their daily educational practice, with checkpoints and markers for assessing their ongoing progress. Participants are challenged to deepen their vision and commitment to equity and social justice, and to remember what it takes to teach and lead in diverse settings.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Create an integrated overview of the course purpose and content
- Understand the course in the context of school reform

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will be able to:

- Finalize assessment of teaching practice for each of the Seven Principles
- Design and implement an Action Research Project
- Revisit Professional Vision created earlier in the course

Methods of Instruction and Evaluation

- Pre and post surveys
- Videos (presentations consisting of interviews and classroom footage)
- Readings
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the course which ask participants to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and next steps for their practice)
- Checks for Understanding (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding)

Academic Honesty

PCG recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as one's own, and includes failing to cite sources for others' ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult plagiarism.org.

Grading Policy (using rubric 1-4 scale system)		Percentage of Course Credit	
Total grade for the course is a culmination of performance grades.		Course grade is determined by the following:	
A:	3.4 – 4.0	Reflections	40%
B:	2.7 – 3.3	Checks for Understanding	60%
C:	2.0 – 2.6		
F:	<2.0		



In order to complete the requirements of the course, you must complete all course work (e.g., reflections, checks for understanding), including watching all videos and participating in all discussion forums. We do not award partial credit.

Checks for Understanding and Reflection Rubric

Assessment	Underdeveloped (1)	Basic (2)	Proficient (3)	Distinguished (4)
Checks for Understanding	65% or below	66-79%	80-89%	90-100%
Reflection Question	<p>Participant has included little to no content indicating consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has not addressed questions posed.</p> <p>Participant has copied from the course transcript without synthesis or analysis.</p>	<p>Participant has included little that indicates consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has answered most questions directly but some too briefly.</p>	<p>Participant has included appropriate content from the course content and made connections to practice.</p> <p>Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts.</p>	<p>Participant has provided rich detail and supporting examples from the course content and made specific connections to his/her practice.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts and created next steps to support his/her learning.</p>

