

Teaching Culture or Using Culture to Teach?

Rethinking Cultural Identity in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract:

This paper suggests the principles of 'Cultural Responsive Education' -a pedagogy that celebrates cultural diversity, provides dynamic practices that account for cultural differences and empowers learners academically, socially, and culturally-to improve the experience of learning literature in EFL classrooms. This pedagogy stresses the role of culture (both native and target) in the teaching-learning process. It seeks to help learners develop and understand their cultural identities as the first step toward a meaningful learning experience. The paper consists of an overview of this pedagogy, the philosophy behind it, and its main objectives, and finally, proposes ways for applying it in EFL literature classes in higher education to improve academic achievements.

Keywords: Identity; foreign literature; EFL; culture; responsive pedagogy

1. INTRODUCTION

EFL literature classes are often challenging to our students who are required to have more than linguistic competence; they need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge about the language, culture, and context (social, cultural, and historical) of a specific literary work or period. These classes represent complex contexts of intercultural communication between the native culture (NC) and the target culture (TC), where students bring their life experiences into the classroom and carry their beliefs, attitudes, perspectives, histories, and cultures into the learning process. Teaching literature, then, cannot be decontextualized from culture. Our learners find themselves striving to apprehend the various cultural orientations embedded in literary texts and struggling to identify the appropriate use of their cultural frames of reference. Advocates of Cultural responsiveness claim that teaching 'through culture' can solve

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these issues and make learning more meaningful, which improves learners' achievements. The article explains the premise of this approach arguing that our literature classrooms can make use of its instructional tools and procedures for better teaching and learning outcomes.

2. Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT): Definition and Objectives

Cultural responsiveness -also called cultural relevance, appropriateness, congruence, or compatibility- refers to a teaching pedagogy designed to help underachieving students of color in the USA by incorporating their racial and cultural identities into course design and practice. Inspired and influenced by principles of social justice and multiculturalism, CRT recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning. Ladson-Billings (1994, p.20) defines CRT as a pedagogy that “empowers students intellectually, socially and politically [because it uses] cultural referents to impart knowledge skills and attitudes.” It is “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2010, p.31). It stands on the idea that a student's achievements and failures are experiences or accomplishments, rather than the totality of his/her identity or the essence of his/her human worth (Gay, 2000).

CRT helps to build resilience and academic mindsets and provides the mechanisms to make students the leaders of their learning. Its main objectives are: interrupting reproductive practices that negatively impact struggling students and replacing them with positive proactive practices, cultivating the unique gifts and talents of every student, improving the learning capacity of diverse students, building students' brain powers, and ultimately reaching equity which is defined as reducing the predictability of who succeeds and who fails (Hammond, 2015; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Shade, Kelly & Oberg, 2008).

With the development of CRT, researchers have made relevance to the various fields of education including EFL, which represents a context of intercultural communication. Because of the interrelatedness between language, cognition, and culture, much has been said about the role of culture in EFL classrooms. Still, little has been done to make EFL pedagogy a central area of investigation. CRT suggests a culturally relevant theory of education that challenges our views about the role of culture in language classrooms. It accounts for the diverse identities of learners by incorporating their cultural references into teaching instruction, practices, and curriculum design.

2.1. Culture, Language, and Communication

Teaching is primarily a linguistic activity, and language is at the heart of it (Smith, 1971). This is notable in EFL classrooms in which language is both the means and the

goal of teaching. James Paul Gee (2015) argues that any teaching is essentially language teaching. To teach physics, we need to familiarize students with the language of physics; in a chemistry class, learners need to master its jargon and so forth. Similarly, in literature classrooms, students need to be accustomed to the literary language situated in cultural contexts. Researchers have stressed the correlation between language, communication, and culture in various disciplines, including sociolinguistics, ethnography, multiculturalism, and social psychology; each defines the terms and explains the dynamics of their connection.

Culture is a complex, multifaceted, and dynamic set of knowledge, beliefs, morals, habits, customs, art, law, and other capabilities we acquire as members of a society (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963 as cited in Taylor & Sobel, 2011, p. xv). Porter and Samovar (1991, p.10) state that it is a rule governing system that shapes the forms, functions, and context of communication, which is responsible for the construction of our “individual repertoires of communicative behaviors and meanings.” They describe communication as:

“An intricate matrix of interacting social acts that occur in a complex social environment that reflects the way people live and how they come to interact with and get along in their world. This social environment is culture, and if we are truly to understand communication, we must also understand culture.” (p. 10)

Therefore, de-contextualizing teaching and learning from the socio-cultural backgrounds of the students and ignoring the effect of their identities on their performances will minimize their chances of fully realizing their potential in a multicultural context (Pai, 2001; Gay 2000; Bruner, 1997).

Porter and Samovar (1991, p.21) stress the role of culture in education saying that “what we talk, how we talk about it, what we see, attend to, or ignore, how we think, and what we think about it are influenced by culture ... and help to shape, define, and perpetuate our culture.” Bruner (1997) adds that learning and thinking are always situated in a cultural setting and dependent upon the utilization of cultural recourses. CRT, Gay (2000) explains, builds on these views and teaches “to and through” the personal and cultural strengths, the intellectual capacities, and the prior accomplishments of students. She notes that “language and communication styles are systems of cultural relations and the means through which thoughts and ideas are expressively embodied.” (p.81) Teachers and educators should be able to help students both acquire and use their culturally- grounded cognitive resources to make learning meaningful. EFL classrooms present a set of intercultural communication contexts between the target and the native cultures. The “degree of influence” culture has on this intercultural communication is “a function of the dissimilarity between the cultures.” (Porter and Samovar, 1991, p.12). Therefore, curriculum designers, teachers, and

students should manifest a deep understanding of both cultures.

2.2. Levels of Culture and CRT Classrooms

Zaretta Hammond (2015) identifies three levels of culture CRT teachers and curriculum designers should be aware of. Literary works often contain all three types, and as teachers, we need to help our students identify the various aspects of these levels, comment on them and analyze them always in comparison to their own frames of reference.

2.2.1. Surface Culture

This type encompasses the observable, concrete aspects of culture, such as food, dress, and music. Hammond explains that this level of culture has a “low emotional charge so that changes don't create great anxiety in a person or group.” (p.22) Exposure to the surface culture does not affect students' identities and achievements or provoke discomfort among them, hence can be adapted to classroom practices. In a literature class, teachers can use presentations, movie adaptations, documentaries, visual aids, music, etc. to aid students in examining these aspects of literary works. These cultural elements can boost students' imagination and aid in simulation, a process of significant importance in literary reading.

2.2.2. Shallow Culture

This type includes “unspoken rules around everyday social interactions and norms” (p.22), such as courtesy, politeness, the concept of time, personal space between people, and nonverbal communication. Unlike surface culture, this type has a strong emotional charge. Exposure to this type is essential to developing tolerance toward the other. In a literature class, teachers ought to raise learners' awareness about the various cultural ways of speaking and acting that vary from one society to another and from one speaking community to another. They also differ according to social class, age, gender, educational background, etc. This can be detected in conversations, through actions, and even through body language. Engaging learners in comparisons and discussions around this level of culture helps them contextualize language use and recognize the effect of society and culture on human conduct. In addition, we can argue that through this type of culture, we can teach the pragmatics of the target language through literary texts, which is often, neglected in our EFL classrooms.

2.2.3. Deep Culture

This is the most complex type. It consists of tacit knowledge and unconscious assumptions that govern our worldview (p.23). Deep culture constitutes the “bedrock” for self-concept as well as group identity. It is related to our background knowledge and

experiences that are culturally shaped, and are essential for any community or individual to function as well-being (Luis Moll 2005 in Hammond 2015, p.23). This is the most significant type for EFL literature classrooms; however, it is less feasible. For instance, it guides the learners' understanding of the material taught, but still, being salient and deeply rooted in the brain hinders its incorporation into classroom practices. Teachers can integrate this type through reflective, critical questions. Asking questions that enable students to reflect upon their personal or collective experiences is essential in the process of text interpretation since it ensures a higher level of interaction.

The first step toward effective use of culture in a CRT classroom is awareness of the three levels of culture and their relevance to the teaching-learning process. However, learning about one's own culture is far more challenging than learning about the culture of the other (Spinlder and Spindler, 1988). Therefore, CRT advocates advice that we should design curriculums that allow both teachers and learners to explore their cultural values, their cultural frames of reference, and their cultural key triggers before being exposed to the target culture. The juxtaposition of the TC and NC is crucial for a literature classroom, the purpose of which is to help learners grow as human beings to be more tolerant, more compassionate, and more forbearing of both the self and the other.

3. Identity and Language Learning: Links to Cultural Responsiveness

Identity is “about questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.” (Stuart Hall, 1996, p.4) Both identity construction and negotiation reside in the interaction between history (collective or personal experiences), language, and culture. Language, however, is considered the most observable aspect of identity and the most powerful force in its construction. Joseph (2016, p.19) stresses the role of language in the development of identity saying:

Identity, even in the here and now, is grounded in beliefs about the past: about heritage and ancestry, and about belonging to a people, a place, a set of beliefs, and a way of life. Of the many ways in which such belonging is signified, what language a person speaks, and how he or she speaks it, rank among the most powerful because it is through language that people and places are named, heritage and ancestry recorded and passed on, and beliefs developed and ritualised.

Nortan (2000, 2013) adds that through language, we build a sense of self within and across various contexts. By utilizing language, we gain or get denied access to “powerful social networks that allow the learners to speak.” (2013, p.45) Indeed, language promotes a sense of belonging to a particular community that sustains learners' sense of being. Losing one's sense of belonging perplexes the process of identity

construction (Bauman, 2008). Because language and communication are always located within a cultural framework, understanding the relationship between culture/identity/language is required for any successful teaching. Identity construction is the result of the interaction between the individual and his/ her society, where school and education are central. Culturally responsive teaching enhances this sort of interaction. It provides the learners with opportunities to develop their identities in a safe environment far from any cultural conflicts since it uses both the native and target culture.

Ladson Billings (2009 in Myres 2017, p.44) explains that culturally relevant teaching fosters the kinds of social intercommunications that we need to sustain the sense of belonging that young learners “crave.” One of CRT’s main principles is building a learning community in each classroom to ensure meaningful learning. Zaretta Hammond (2015) elaborates on the idea of community building in the Ready for Rigor Framework.

4. The “Ready for Rigor” Framework: CRT in Practice

CRT is a student-centered approach that identifies and nurtures the student’s unique cultural strengths to promote the student’s achievements and a sense of well-being about the student’s cultural place in the world. It seeks to strengthen students’ readiness to take on their own learning experiences and shift from dependent learning to "ready for rigor" and independent learning. The ready-for-rigor framework is an interdisciplinary approach proposed by Zaretta Hammond (2015) to help understand CRT principles and objectives. This framework focuses on four main areas that present the essence of CRT practices and reflect its basic concepts. The following definition of CRT reflects, thoroughly, these areas:

An educator’s ability to **recognize** students’ cultural displays of learning and meaning-making and **respond** positively and constructively with teaching moves that use cultural knowledge as a scaffold to connect what the student knows to new concepts and content to **promote effective information processing**. All the while, the educator understands the importance of being in a relationship and **having a social-emotional connection** of the students in order to **create a safe space of learning**. (Hammond, 2015, p.15)

The first area of the framework is awareness. Hammond emphasizes some aspects that any CRT teacher should be aware of, such as recognizing the types of culture mentioned earlier and understanding the relationship between culture and the brain. Also, knowing the difference between individualistic societies that focus on independent individual success and collectivist societies that promote interdependent, collective success. The second area is information processing. CRT teachers should strengthen students' brain powers and cognitive growth using activities that match more than one learning style. The third area is learning partnership, which requires a re-

imagination of the teacher-learner and learner-learner relationships. The fourth area is concerned with establishing an environment for meaningful learning, which results in building a community for learners. (See Appendix A)

5. Building the Cult of Learning

What we find appealing about the Ready for Rigor framework is the notion of creating a partnership and a community of learning. Indeed, a classroom needs a culture of learning. It requires clear instructions, well-defined practices, rituals, and routines that reinforce both collective and self-directed learning. CRT calls for building “intercultural communities” that secure learning environments which reflect meaningful learning (Grainger, 2012 in Myers, 2017). Building the learning communities promotes learners' sense of belonging, which is vital for identity negotiation and construction.

CRT researchers suggest that teachers use the first sessions to know more about the learners, test their abilities concerning the material taught, and explore the diversity of their learning styles. A CRT teacher engages the students in interactive activities to express themselves, talk about their social and academic experiences, and identify themselves within the group (learning community). The choice of activities depends on factors, like the material taught, the age of students, mastery of language, and teachers' preferences.

During these first sessions, teachers need to encourage both individual and collaborative learning. On the one hand, it will promote autonomy and independence. On the other hand, it enhances the role of any common social, historical, and cultural background of the learners. Teachers ought to integrate universal as well as specific cultural themes and initiate routines that reinforce intercultural communication. On the importance of collaboration in CRT classrooms, Shade, Kelly, and Oberg (2008) argue that developing a culturally responsive learning community requires teachers to encourage students to work collaboratively toward a clear goal. This goal is: “using, developing, and constructing knowledge.” (p.42) They add that a learning community must be inviting; every learner needs to feel at home as a contributing member of the learning process. An inviting classroom is also physically comfortable since the physical environment can become a learning tool, as well.

Teachers need to be warm, supportive, patient, and flexible. However, they need to stay on task and manage their classrooms in a firm, consistent, and loving control. Moreover, students are “affirmed in their cultural connection”; at the same time, they need to be aware that “changes to accommodate culture are essential to learning.” (p.57) Combining community-building principles with clear classroom objectives and instructions results in the formation of good learning habits that would facilitate EFL teaching.

6. The Need for Story: Cultural Identity and Literature

All human beings have a basic need for story, which is a process of “organizing our experiences into tales of important happenings.” These “ubiquitous discourse forms” are central in language and literacy education, especially in the light of students’ socio-cultural diversity (Dyson & Genishi, 1994, p.2). Stories constitute a basic part of human conduct; they are the representations of human experiences that are evermore located within specific socio-cultural contexts. Chambers (1970) explains that storytelling is a way to transfer a culture's beliefs, customs, religion, deeds, triumphs, and explanations from generation to generation. They embody both individual and collective experiences. Storylines are intertwined with beliefs, customs, attitudes, perceptions, and views of the world of a certain community, which represent the main attributes of identity construction.

Denman (1991 as cited in Gay, 2000, p.2) explains that stories are “lenses through which we view and review all the human experience... they have the power to reach deep inside us and command our ardent attentions... through stories we see ourselves ... our personal experiences ...” Bruner (1996) adds that narratives are the means through which people make sense of their encounter, their experiences, and their “human affaire.” (p.40) He notes that stories frame our account of our cultural origins and our beliefs; we represent our own lives, even the smallest happenings, in the form of narratives. If we are to understand human behavior and practice, we need to attend to the stories people tell. Hence, our choice of literature class is relevant to the discussion around culture, language, and identity.

Bakhtin (1986) argues that “literature is an inseparable part of the totality of culture and cannot be studied outside the total cultural context.” He adds, “it cannot be severed from the rest of culture and related directly (by-passing culture) to socio-economic or other factors... the literary process is a part of the cultural process and cannot be torn away from it.” (p.140) Literature represents the histories, viewpoints, values, and beliefs of particular cultures at a particular time. We form our self-concepts through comparisons and contrasts with others. “Identities are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unit.” (Hall, 1996, p.4) Hence, our identity construction requires the “other,” which does not necessarily endanger our being. We can argue that we understand identity better in dialogue and conversation, and literature classrooms are suitable platforms for intercultural dialogues between the self and the other.

Cultural identity relates to the sense of belonging to a certain culture, ancestry, or ethnic group maintained through shared norms, values, beliefs, etc. It gives a stable sense of individuality but also defines our relationships and involvement with others. As we expose our learners to EFL literature, and we examine their narratives in parallel, we help them both identify themselves and the other within a broader view of the world.

As a result, we contribute to the construction and negotiation of their identities in an intercultural context.

6.1. Reading Literature and Identity

In the process of reading, and affected by culture, learners form what is called reader identity. The latter is the reader's self-concept he/she develops during the interaction with the text. When readers make connections between the content of what they read and their lives, they begin constructing their reading identities. Accordingly, they become more engaged in comprehending the text (Deci, 1992; Hulleman, 2016). Bean and Moni (2003) note that readers become aware of how "they are being constructed as adolescents in the text and how those constructions compare with their attempts to form their identity." (p. 639) As students read a text, they can either resist or accommodate role models or identities within the texts or simultaneously choose both pathways (Guillard, 2011).

Reading as a form of literacy positions readers within their social roles, and connects them to their peers through the process of reading (Finders, 1977). As readers, we carry several shared expectations and experiences into the reading process because we share some cultural and social norms (Chambers, 1970., Finders, 1997, & Durham, 1999). However, we cannot have identical interpretations of the text because personal experience and social practice shape our comprehension of texts; at the same time, the latter form our view of the world and influences our social practice.

To link cultural identity, to reader identity, particularly in reading literature, researchers such as Foss (2002), and Schall (*Exploring Cultural Identity Through Literature*, n.d.) suggest the use of "identity intersection" which is a graphic representation of interrelated aspects of one's cultural identity (see appendix B). This intersection helps learners identify the cultural groups they belong to, indicate the ways these groups interact and communicate, and how these interactions affect their lives and understanding. By doing so, learners recognize the importance of their cultural references, at the same time, reflect on the cultural identities of writers, narrators, and characters and how they affect the happenings in the literary works.

Schall (*Exploring Cultural Identity Through Literature*, para.5) explains that students create identity intersections when they consider how different aspects of their cultural identities have shaped their lives, therefore, their learning experiences. This includes membership and belonging to cultural groups "based on race, ethnicity, religion, language, socioeconomic status, and gender." Other types of group membership, such as geographic region, education level, physical ability, and family, are also effective and need to be taken into consideration in CRT classrooms.

Reflecting on her teaching experience, Foss says that she became determined to create a classroom “founded on the philosophy that every student needs and deserves to be exposed to critical literacy- reading literature and their own lives with an awareness of systems of meaning and power.” (2002, p.395) We can achieve this by linking literature and identity, which starts with the students’ recognition of their identities through identity intersections. Identity intersection follows the format developed by Foss (2002); however, students are encouraged to add or remove any aspects that they perceive as significant or insignificant to their cultural identities. This activity relates to CRT philosophy since it facilitates the process of reading literature and helps conceive identity through literature and literature through identity. The intersection supports the construction of reader identity, which is essential in EFL literature classrooms.

6.2. Teaching Literature and Cultural Responsiveness

Literature is an efficient tool for teaching EFL. The effectiveness of this tool has been widely discussed and tested in EFL and SLA research. Indeed, literary texts are authentic materials that are representative of the target culture. Researchers propose several approaches to teaching literature. Transmission theories, for instance, frame learning in terms of acquiring facts and knowledge about literature. Beach, Appleman, Hynds, & Wilhem (2006) state that the primary focus of this approach is “how to best impart knowledge to students assumed to be empty vessels dutifully waiting to be filled up with the knowledge you provide them through lectures and presentations.” (p.4) This model's main objective is the coverage of literary concepts and periods, biographical information, genre features, etc.

Showalter (2016) describes this “obsession with coverage and content” as one of the main barriers to good teaching (p.13). Quoting Paul Ramsden (1992), she adds that, “resisting the temptation to add more and more content is extremely difficult if the lecturer sees undergraduate student learning as an obstacle course or as a process acquiring huge quantities of information.” (p.13) Most of our literature classrooms seem to adopt this approach, where the teacher is a lecturer providing learners with the elements above.

My experience of studying literature at the university has always been about knowing the literary periods, being able to name the most important authors that characterize those periods, identifying plot elements and characters, and finally, paraphrasing famous critiques. According to my experience as a learner, a teacher for nine years, and a researcher, our literature curriculum is less innovative, less challenging, more repetitive, and more demanding in terms of content.

Literature's main purpose, however, is to help learners grow as human beings as to be more tolerant, more compassionate, and more understanding of the other. It is supposed to boost their creativity and critical thinking to be able to locate their own experiences within a broader view of the world. The interaction between the learners’

cultural references, background knowledge, identities, and literary texts is inevitable. Mills (1997, p.25) explains that literature as a discourse and as an institution “ is a representation of institutionalized practices of a society, and cannot be taken as a piece of writing disassociated from the culture or the society and its ideologies and norms, but is very much representative of the deeply embedded social practices.” Hence, we cannot de-contextualize teaching literature from the social and cultural background of both the literary text and the learners.

CRT principles discussed earlier establish a frame for a successful literature classroom, which can be associated with the socio-cultural theory of teaching literature. Based on the work of Vygotsky (1978), this theory argues that “we learn to acquire uses of certain practices and tools that serve certain purposes in social groups or communities.” (Beach, Appleman, Hinds & Wilhem, 2006, p.5)

This idea of communities is similar to that of CRT learning communities. It highlights the role of collectivity in the acquisition of practices and tools necessary for independent learning. The socio-cultural theory of teaching and learning literature emphasizes the importance of creating a social community that supports learning. Teachers socialize learners into “literature communities,” which represent intercultural communities. Like CRT, socio-cultural learning utilizes students' identities and their social and cultural attributes to model and scaffold teaching practices. CRT enhances the quality of learning instead of the quantity which we need in our EFL literature classrooms.

6.3. Guidelines for a Culturally Responsive Literature Classroom

CRT is designed to develop learners' critical thinking, enhance their creativity, empower their sense of being, and teach them resilience and flexibility. These skills reinforce learners' self-directed learning and academic achievements. Strategies, techniques, and activities of CRT vary across classrooms and contexts. Researchers note that there is no clear set of strategies to use; instead, there are some principles and guidelines that a CRT teacher needs to follow. This part explains some principles that we have tested in our different classes (writing and reading, linguistics, discourse analysis, and literature).

- **Define learning goals:** It is necessary to define, clearly, the learning goals in a culturally responsive curriculum. We need to break our teaching aims into smaller feasible goals which cohere with the classroom potential and dynamics.

- **Question traditional concepts and methods:** What we need in our context is not the definition, but a reconsideration of the learning goals. Our literature classrooms need to move from the traditional transmission model of teaching that focuses on coverage and content and tests nothing but short-term memory, into a more interactive approach where the main goal is to attend to learners' various understandings and

interpretations of the literary texts. We need to develop the notion of the teacher-researcher who takes on action research to research his classroom and try to identify and solves his/her problems.

- **Explore student diversity:** Teachers explore through quizzes, questionnaires, and activities the variety of abilities of their learners, their cultural references, and their social backgrounds. Spending the first few sessions researching our classrooms will maintain the building of the learning community discussed earlier.

- **Choose activities according to the range of abilities of learners:** Activities, books, stories, and the material taught in general should vary within the same classroom according to the range of abilities of the learners. When students receive equal opportunities to achieve their full potential, learning becomes more meaningful. Practices and activities should be in harmony with the learners' existing abilities; at the same time, challenge them to grow.

- **Reflect on your learning experiences:** Teachers need to be able to reflect on their personal learning experiences, identify their socio-cultural frame of reference, and widen their cultural aperture since they may shape their expectations in the classroom. Realizing the generation gap between the teacher and learners, for example, is essential for creating a learning partnership discussed in the Ready for Rigor framework. A literature teacher needs to understand that learners have different preferences than their own.

- **Always provide choices:** Providing learners with choice is a powerful strategy to engage them in the learning process; it gives them a sense of ownership or responsibility (Smith & Wilhem, 2002). In a literature classroom, learners can participate in lesson planning by choosing the activities they desire to be part of, the books they want to read, the plays they aspire to perform, etc.

- **Use narrative as a tool of interpretation and analysis:** Asking students to narrate the stories in groups retell the stories from their perspectives, or report similar experiences to those embodied in the literary texts can be useful. They can easily relate, accommodate, assimilate, criticize, and reflect on the themes of the literary texts through their experiences and background knowledge.

7. Conclusion

Algerian EFL literature classes lack the pedagogical framework; a novice teacher has nothing to depend on, but intuition. Moreover, the current approach to teaching literature is less engaging, uninventive, and demanding in terms of content coverage. Literature in nature is complex, where elements like language, culture, history, and identity converge. Therefore, we need to establish an adequate pedagogy that promotes creativity, critical thinking, and resilience. This paper proposes the principles of culturally responsive education-a pedagogy that recognizes and empowers students' unique cultural strengths to increase their academic outcomes- to improve the learning experience in literature classrooms. It provides the teacher with guidelines to use both

the native and target cultures effectively and encourages both independent and collective, community learning.

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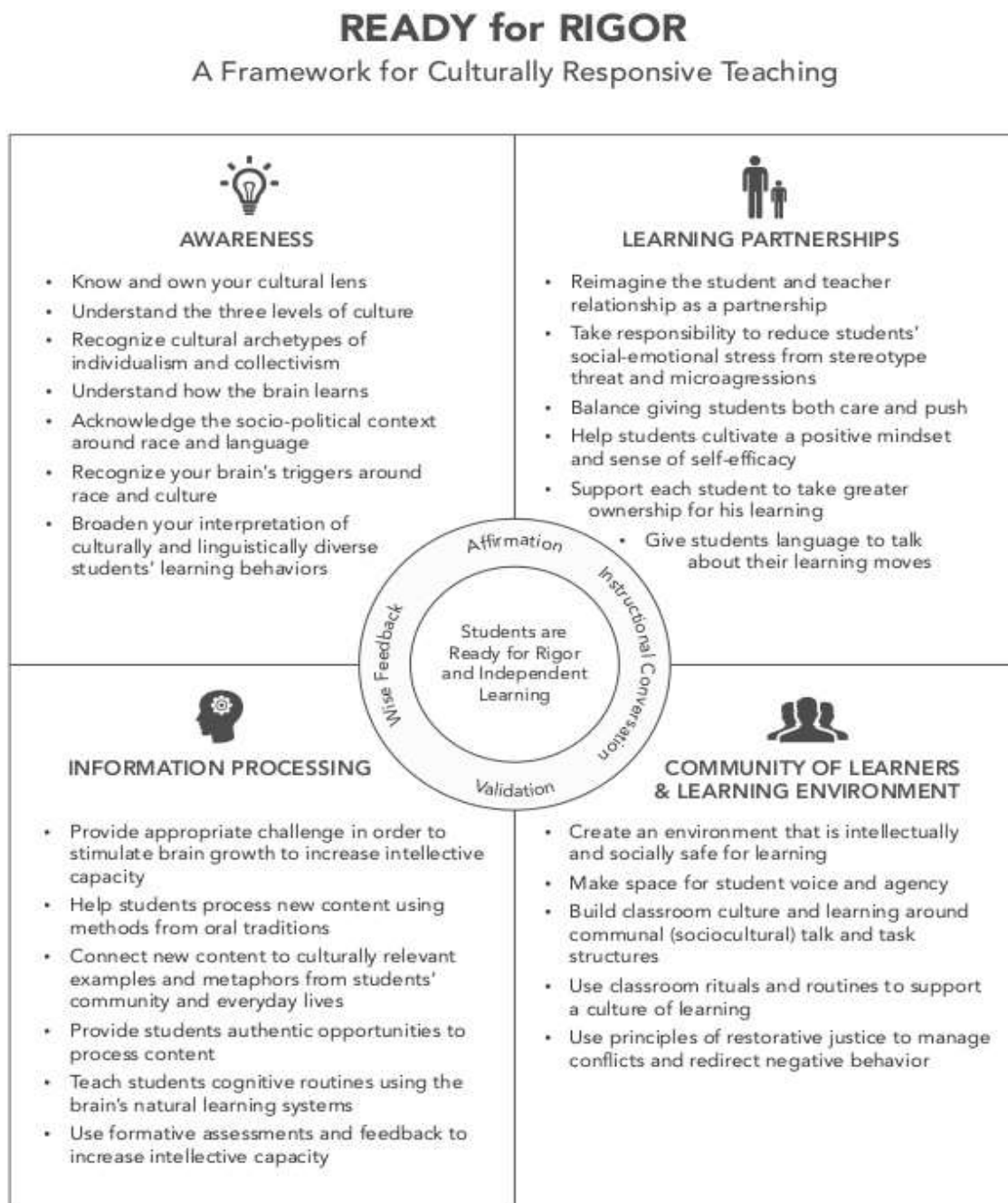
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Appendix A

Ready for Rigor Framework by Zaretta Hammond (2015, p.17)



Appendix B

Identity Intersection Frame by Foss (2002)

