

A Framework for Culturally Responsive Practices: Implementing the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) In K-8 Classrooms

A Framework for Culturally Responsive Practices: Implementing the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) In K-8 Classrooms

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AUTHOR NOTE

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Shaylyn Marks, California State University, Bakersfield, CA 93311. Email: smarks2@csub.edu.

For decades, the educational community has studied the achievement gap, recognizing that many historically marginalized groups of students consistently trail their white peers in standardized achievement tests. As a result, education has seen waves of various efforts to reform classroom practices without avail. More often than not, the very reform policies and practices intended to support historically marginalized groups of students work against these students, creating a sense of inferiority, isolation, and exclusion. *A framework for culturally responsive practices: Implementing the culturally responsive instruction observation protocol (Criop) in K-8 classrooms*, edited by Rebecca Powell and Susan Chambers Cantrell offers educators a clear guide to implementing culturally responsive practices in classroom settings. Serving as a practical resource and guide for educators and administrators alike, the editors of this book introduce the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) as a means to help educators attend to every facet of students' needs within an educational context. Focusing on "how teachers might recognize the use of the power they have to meet the needs of their students through CLRI [culturally and linguistically relevant instruction]," the editors of the book address six major components, which include: classroom relationships, family collaboration, assessment practices, instructional practices, discourse, and critical consciousness (p. xv; p. xviii).

Recognizing the importance of relationship building, the first two layers of the observation protocol focus on classroom relationships and family collaboration. Consistent with one of the fundamental pillars of culturally responsive pedagogy, these chapters emphasize recognizing students' excellence, culture, and ways of being, while also valuing students' family

and community. As stated in the text, “Highly effective teachers build relationships with their students by recognizing the importance of students’ knowledge and experiences and creating opportunities for personal and social dialogue (Lysaker & Furness, 2012)” (p. 1). As such, “Culturally sensitive interactions and curricula are keys to promoting success for diverse students whose backgrounds differ from those of the predominantly White teaching force (Delpit, 1996; Hamilton, 2004)” (p. 1). Within the first two chapters of the text, the authors skillfully present research, vignettes, and practical guides for educators to self-reflect on their practices and reimagine their craft for more inclusive and responsive interactions with students. The strong foundation that educators build through the relationships they establish with students and their families, assists with the next two components of the observation protocol: assessment practices and culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices.

Recognizing that “Assessment is not just an instrument or event; it should be a fundamental driver of classroom instruction that cultivates quality teaching and learning,” the authors dedicate a chapter of this book to assessment practices to acknowledge that cultural responsiveness is not exclusive to instruction, but rather, is inclusive of assessment as well (p. 65). Acknowledging that “Culturally responsive assessment, “refers to assessment designs, processes and adaption to individual students and classrooms as well as to assessment outcomes that are sensitive to cultural variations in ways of participating, thinking and learning” (Norvedt et al., 2020, p. 11),” the authors dig into the research supporting inequitable assessment practices and provide guidance to educators for dismantling these traditional, harmful assessment measures and replacing them with equitable assessment practices that include student self-reflection, peer feedback, and quality teacher feedback (p. 67). Related to culturally responsive assessment, authors shift direction and address culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices in Chapter 4. Acknowledging the ways in which White supremacy has historically influenced educational practices, and the ways in which these harmful influences still linger in today’s education system, the authors address ways to continue to dismantle harmful pedagogical practices as a means to provide equitable experiences and opportunities for diverse students. “Traditionally, schools have not been concerned about building on and sustaining students’ languages and cultures but, rather, have been designed to eliminate them” (p. 107). To combat this, authors suggest educators “adhere to a set of asset-oriented principles in culturally responsive classrooms,” which include: contextualizing instruction in students’ lived experiences and abilities, engaging students in hands-on activities and meaningful tasks, developing students’ academic vocabulary and language usage, implementing scaffolding with instructional practices, and providing students with choices based on their experiences, interests, and strengths (p. 108).

Through effective implementation of culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices and culturally responsive assessment practices, educators can tend to the last two pillars of the observation protocol – discourse and culturally responsive instruction and critical consciousness. Chapter 5 of the text is dedicated to discourse and culturally responsive instruction. This chapter is extremely important as it is often absent from conversations about culturally responsive pedagogy. Acknowledging that “teacher talk often takes precedence over

student speech and the predominant mode of questing practiced by teachers across the US during classroom instruction continues to follow forms of Initiate - Respond - Evaluate (IRE),” authors provide practical ways for educators to self-reflect on their practices as it pertains to discourse, and create space for students to have ownership and voice in classroom spaces. Additionally, the authors of this chapter, rightfully exploit harmful practices in regards to the ways in which education systems have deemed some languages and dialects as ‘acceptable’ forms of language and others as not. Giving attention to the deficit thinking and perceptions held within educational spaces, the authors work to dismantle the idea of Standardized English being *the language of schools* (Baker–Bell, 2020). The authors provide substantial research and resources for educators to transition deficit thinking habits into asset-driven ways of perceiving language, interacting with students, and creating safe, inclusive spaces for students.

The first five components of the observation protocol work to set the foundation for the final layer, critical consciousness. Critical consciousness is an essential for student success as it encourages students to critically examine and make sense of the world around them by exploring “issues that affect their local, state, and global communities” (p. 176). Recognizing that critical consciousness involves critical reflection, the authors define critical reflection as a practice that involves “questioning social structures that marginalize groups of people and the ways that those structures are perpetuated, critical motivation refers to the ability and commitment to address injustice, and critical action involves taking individual or collective action for positive change” (p. 176). Critical consciousness is the way in which educators help students to leverage skills gained, deepen their understandings, build upon their wonderings, and apply to their everyday lives. In this way, critical consciousness is a way for educators to promote the cultivation of intellect and criticality (Muhammad, 2020).

Recommendations

A Framework for Culturally Responsive Practices: Implementing the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) in K-8 Classrooms is a timely and necessary addition to the scholarship on supporting and empowering historically marginalized groups of students. In an effort to provide equitable opportunities for all students, the authors and editors of the text advocate for inclusionary practices in all facets of interactions and relationships with students. The text starts with a strong introduction, framing the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP), followed by a chapter devoted to each of the six elements of the observation protocol. Within each of the six chapters, authors dive deep into the research and eloquently bridge the gap between research and practice, making this text a great resource for practitioners. As such, this text is a strong resource for practicing educators, administrators, and teacher educators; serving as a start point for developing and implementing inclusive practices that recognize students’ excellence, culture, and ways of being.

As a standalone, the text is a necessary resource for educators as each chapter eloquently dives into essential components of working with K-8 students. *A Framework for Culturally*

Responsive Practices: Implementing the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) in K-8 Classrooms offers a solid foundation for educators looking for a starting point to begin dismantling inequitable and harmful classroom practices. For those looking for more direction in ways to support minoritized students in classroom spaces, I recommend pairing this book with *Cultivating Genius, These Kids are out of Control: Why We Must Reimagine “Classroom Management” for Equity*, and *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identify, and Pedagogy*. In *Cultivating Genius*, Gholdy Muhammad, skillfully argues the importance of reaching back into students’ histories and reflecting students’ culture and ways of being into curriculum, starting with centering curriculum and learning around student identity. Recognizing that educator-student connections start with classroom management practices and relationship building, *These Kids are Out of Control* makes compelling arguments and provides practical strategies for educators to reimagine their classrooms and build equitable structures to empower students. Building upon recognizing students’ culture and identity, April Baker-Bell dives into the inequities related to language practices in education spaces in her book, *Linguistic Justice*. Each of these recommended texts correlate with chapters from *A Framework for Culturally Responsive Practices: Implementing the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) in K-8 Classrooms*, and work to deepen educator’s understanding and implementation of various elements in working with K-8 students.

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