

Culturally responsive teaching is an educational approach that validates and affirms students' social, emotional, cultural, linguistic, and intellectual assets through an integration of the assets into curriculum resources.



# SPARKS

**Student-centered:** Teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in learning about issues **relevant to students' lives**. Inquiry about these issues is facilitated through **project-based and inquiry learning**. Teachers **cultivate student dialogue** as essential to the learning process that **enables students' negotiation and construction of knowledge**. Fostering **student voice, opinions, and ideas** will enrich the learning environment and **ensure the shift to a student-centered classroom**.

**Positive learning communities:** Teachers create positive learning communities by **fostering a safe space free** of gender, racial, and other **microaggressions**. Teachers display artwork, posters, signs and labels that **reflect and welcome the cultures representative of their students**. Teachers foster a **sense of belonging** through genuine **reciprocal and authentic caring relationships** critical to facilitate authentic learning opportunities.

**Academic and ethnic identity development through relevant content integration:** Teachers promote **cultural and linguistic relevance** through the **integration** of curriculum and resources that are relevant to students. The implementation of a **relevant curriculum** serves to **foster students' academic and cultural identity development**. Moreover, students' cultural identity is validated when learning about contributions members of their cultural group have made to society.

**Rigor through critical thinking integration:** Teachers **hold high academic and behavioral expectations** of all students. Students are challenged to **think deeply, critically, and divergently**. **Well-cultivated critical thinkers** raise vital questions and issues with clarity and precision; gather and assess relevant information; come to **well-reasoned conclusions** and solutions; consider **alternative points of view**, assess their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; collaborate with others to search for solutions.

**Knowledge co-creation:** Students and teachers interact as co-creators of knowledge, **learning with and from each other** through multimedia resources that **build on students' knowledge**. Teachers regularly communicate with students' parents to **establish a relationship** that facilitates **connections** between the **home experience** and academic knowledge. By inviting parents and community members to serve as storytellers, guest lecturers, and family historians, teachers can tap into a family's **"Funds of Knowledge"** and take inventory of students' assets.

**Social justice/Civic engagement:** Teachers foster opportunities to examine **real life issues** related to students' lives. Using a social justice perspective teachers guide students in the process of **becoming productive and contributing citizens** by engaging in investigations through project-based and inquiry learning. Through **civic engagement**, students develop **agency** and **engage in civic action** based on the meaningful application of the following skill set they have developed, historical analysis, academic, organizational, and the social skills. Civic engagement provides **purposeful and meaningful opportunities** for authentic and meaningful learning.

**SPARKS culturally responsive teaching practices foster reflective, inclusive, relevant, and engaging learning experiences for all students. Incorporation of these practices sets the conditions in the classroom for strong Tier I instruction and the effective implementation of TUSD's multicultural curriculum, sure to ignite authentic learning.**