



Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education

THE HOW, THE WHAT, AND THE WHY

New York state has established four principles of a culturally responsive-sustaining education framework. But what do those principles look like in a hybrid or remote learning environment?

To truly implement the CR-SE framework, we must work with intention and impact so that we understand not just what to do, but also how to do it and why we are engaged in this work.

Key Takeaways

- **SEE YOUR SPACE THROUGH YOUR LEARNERS' EYES:** The learning environment matters — whether it is physical or virtual. This includes the norms and protocols we introduce. Have you created a space that is welcoming to all learners and their families?
- **ENCOURAGE RISK-TAKING :** Allowing students to take risks is part of creating a welcoming and affirming environment. Establish structures and strategies that allow students to take learning risks without fear of failure, seeing failure as a step in the learning process.
- **SET THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS:** Set high expectations for students, and provide the support they need to meet those expectations. The language of the classroom and the feedback students receive are aspects of this. Do students of all learning styles, cultures, languages and cognitive levels have opportunities to succeed?
- **CHALLENGE BIAS:** How can we be intentional about elevating the voices that sometimes go unheard? This requires the examination of power and privilege in our nation and how we, as educators, can be agents of positive change and set up the structures in our learning environments for students to be the same. Project-based learning and service learning can connect students to the content and to their communities.
- **MODEL LIFELONG LEARNING:** Teaching and learning requires us to be reflective practitioners. Take time to be self-directed in sharpen your knowledge. How are you leveraging social media to grow your network? How does expanding your professional learning network support you in continuously educating yourself?

Four Principles of CR-SE

A Welcoming and Affirming Environment: A welcoming and affirming environment feels safe. It is a space where people can find themselves represented and reflected, and where they understand that all people are treated with respect and dignity. The environment ensures all cultural identities are affirmed, valued, and used as vehicles for teaching and learning.

High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction: High expectations and rigorous instruction prepare the community for rigor and independent learning. The environment is academically rigorous and intellectually challenging, while also considering the different ways students learn. Instruction includes opportunities to use critical reasoning, take academic risks, and leverage a growth mindset to learn from mistakes. Messages encourage positive self-image and empower others to succeed.

Inclusive Curriculum and Assessments: Inclusive curriculum and assessment elevate historically marginalized voices. It includes opportunities to learn about power and privilege in the context of various communities and empowers learners to be agents of positive social change. It provides the opportunity to learn about perspectives beyond one's own scope. It works toward dismantling systems of biases and inequities, and decentering dominant ideologies in education.

Ongoing Professional Learning: Ongoing professional learning is rooted in the idea that teaching and learning is an adaptive process needing constant reexamination. It allows learners to develop and sharpen a critically conscious lens toward instruction, curriculum, assessment, history, culture, and institutions. Learners must be self-directed and take on opportunities that directly impact learning outcomes.

