

Collaborating Toward Equitable Student Learning & Success

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Ambassador of Love & Kindness

Colorado Mountain College Summer Equity Institute
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“One conversation with Professor Arco was the difference between me not being a student anymore and me being a successful student achieving a 4.0”

Joshua Rodriguez



“

For our students to
be well, they
need us to be
well.

— Eugenia Knight

Cavanagh, S.R. (2023, May 2). [‘They Need Us to Be Well’: The surprising recipe for building students’ emotional well-being in the classroom? Rest and joy — for professors.](#) *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Strong, positive relationships are the most important factor for long-term happiness and health.

Cultivating relationships with and among students is a win-win-win!

The Good Life



LESSONS FROM THE WORLD'S LONGEST
SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF HAPPINESS

CREATE A MORE MEANINGFUL
AND SATISFYING LIFE

Robert Waldinger, MD
and Marc Schulz, PhD



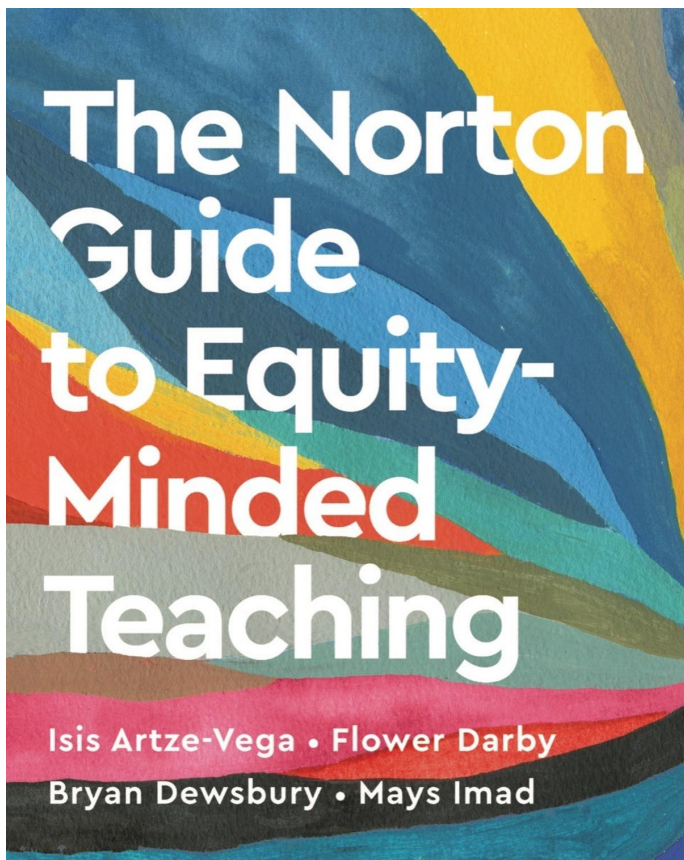
Let's start with YOU

- How are you feeling?
- What do you wonder or worry about regarding:
 - equity-minded practices?
 - Hispanic-Serving Institutions?

Ambitious goals for our time together

If all goes well, we'll:

- reflect on our individual “why” for equity and on CMC as a Hispanic-serving Institution
- ground ourselves in a definition & model of equity-minded teaching
- see how equity-minded practices can validate and empower students -- leading to their learning and success
- have more clarity on your “wonderings,” responses to some of your questions.



My brilliant
co-authors

How do we define “equity-minded teaching,” and how do we know it “works”?

Definition

Teaching that is informed by principles, practices, and historical understandings that aims to realize **equal outcomes among all students**, with particular attention to students of minoritized races and ethnicities.

Evidence of Effectiveness

- Research summary per Unit
- Dewsbury et al. (2022): EMT resulted in more equitable outcomes in the short term— gaps in attainment were considerably reduced —plus improved success in subsequent biology course.
- Supported by theory & lived experiences

Equity-minded teaching does not entail:

- Giving preferential treatment based on race
- Shaming or stigmatizing students for their identities
- Indoctrinating students
- Coddling students or lowering standards
 - In fact, it **requires intellectual rigor**.

Our **motivations** for using equity-minded practices vary, and that's OK!

WHAT IS
YOUR
WHY?



WHAT IS
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Why does equity
matter to YOU?

Interest in Equitable Outcomes...

- ...is sometimes described as a way to promote student learning
 - “The changing demographics of higher education mean that undergraduates come to you with a wide variety of experiences, cultures, abilities, skills, and personalities. You have an opportunity to take that mix and produce a diverse set of thinkers and problem-solvers” (Sathy & Hogan, 2019)

Interest in Equitable Outcomes...

- ...is often prompted by institutional efforts to support student success, remedy inequitable student outcomes, and promote students' social and economic mobility



Interest in Equitable Outcomes...

- ...sometimes reflects a commitment to social justice
 - ...an acknowledgement that our institutions and individual courses are often the sites of considerable inequity-- and the role each of us has played in allowing educational inequity to persist.

WHAT IS YOUR WHY?



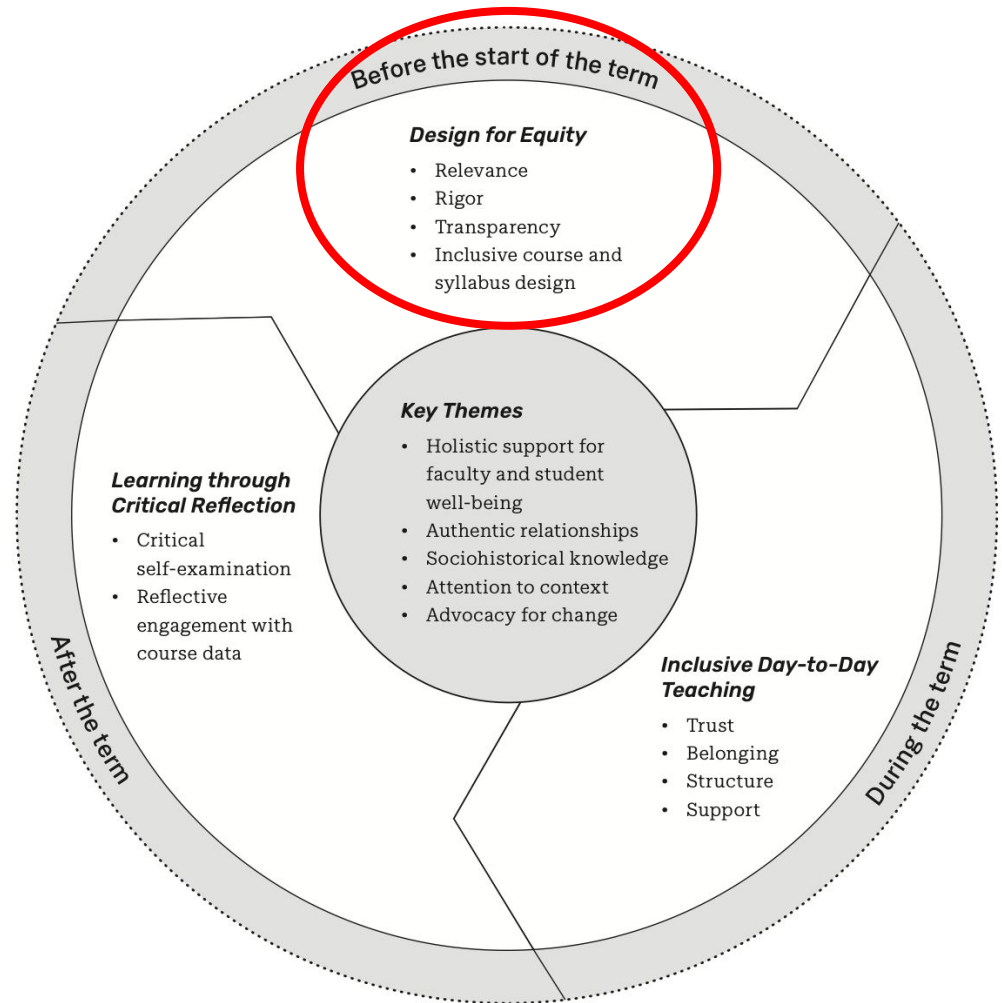
***Take a moment to reflect on your WHY.**

- ☐ To promote student learning
- ☐ To remedy inequitable student outcomes
- ☐ A commitment to social justice
- ☐ To continue refining your teaching
- ☐ As part of a research agenda
- ☐ Other?

Equity-Mindedness in Practice

The most effective college educators:

- (1) design online & in-person courses attending to relevance, rigor, & transparency;
- (2) teach by fostering student belonging & trust and by facilitating learning in well-structured, highly relational physical & virtual environments;
- (3) reflect on students' & their own experiences & outcomes, using reflection & data to identify areas for further enhancement.

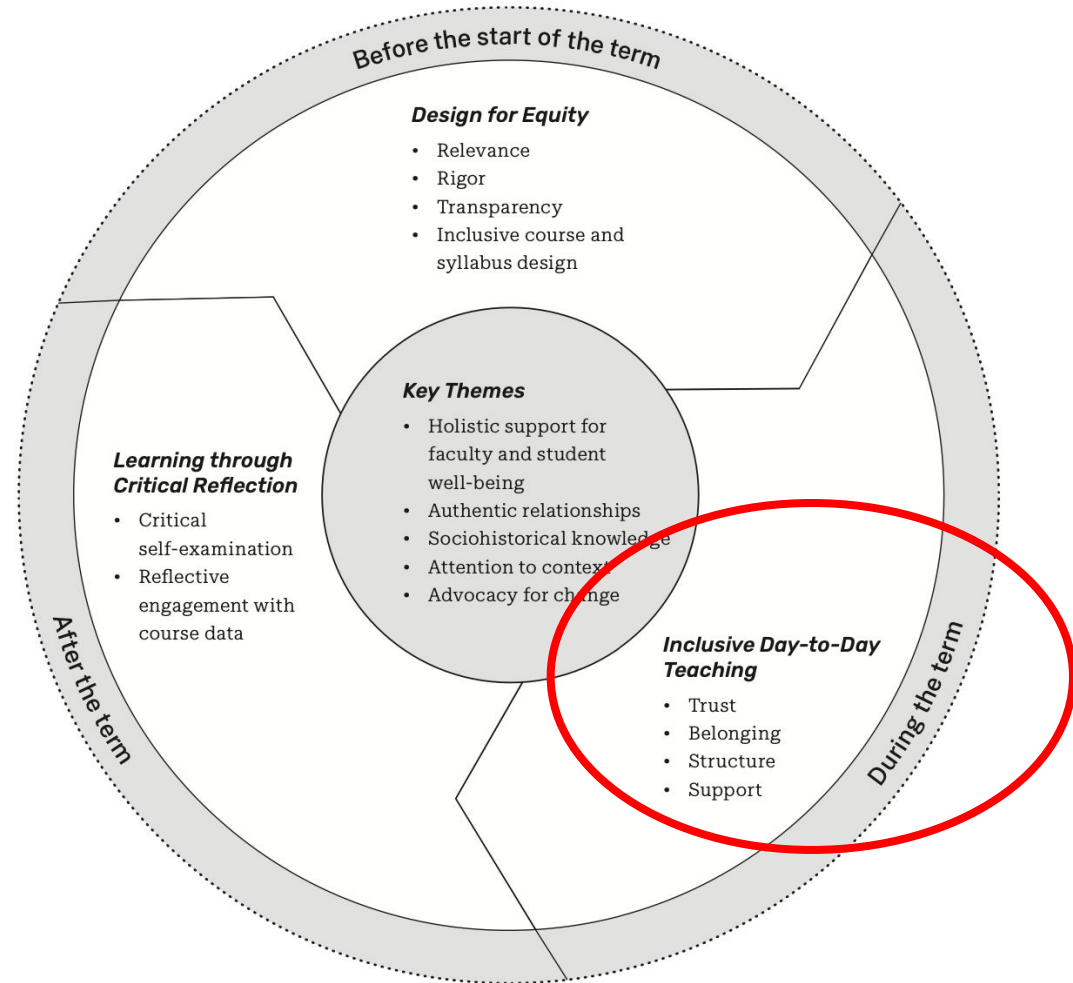


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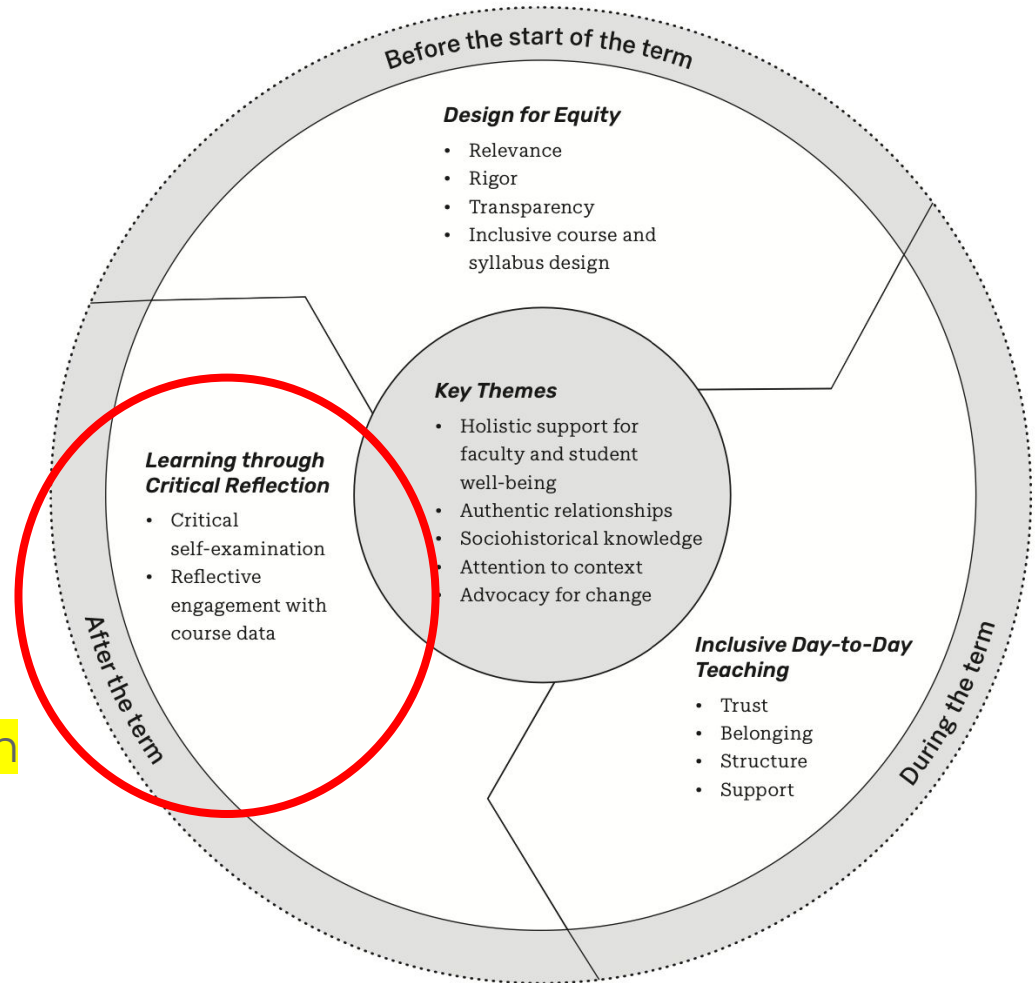
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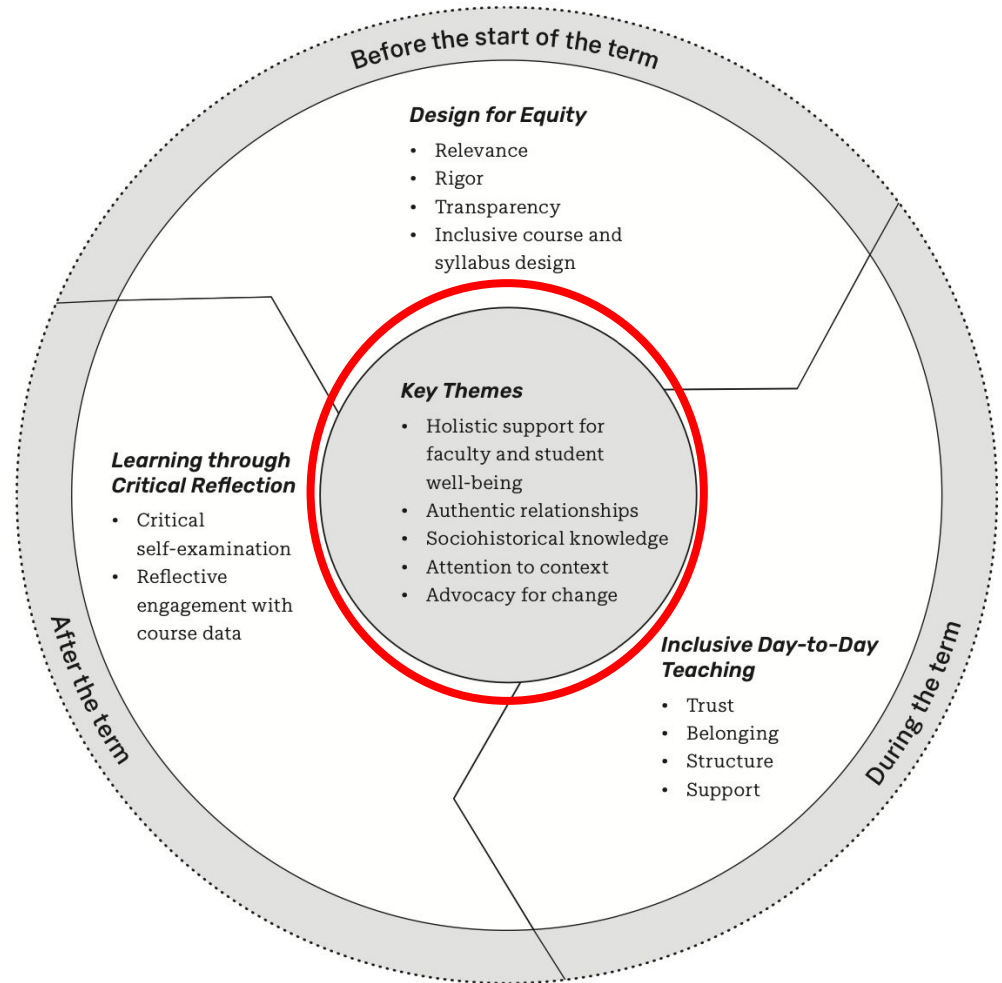
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Advancing Equity at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)

At an HSI, Authentic Relationships Require Self Reflection



- Because YOU are a crucial factor in your teaching.
- Otherwise, our efforts lack authenticity (Torres et al., 2012).

Let's Practice :)

The HSI designation itself

- What comes to mind when you think of the HSI designation?/What does HSI mean to you?
- What HSI opportunities are you most excited about?
- What challenges do you foresee, or what worries you about the designation of HSI?

HSI Opportunities & Anxieties/Concerns

SAMPLE OPPORTUNITIES

- Access to federal funding or foundation grants
- Enrollment, as Latinos constitute the largest ethnic group in the U.S.
- The ability to contribute to the wellbeing of Latino communities and that of Colorado and the U.S.

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SAMPLE CONCERNS

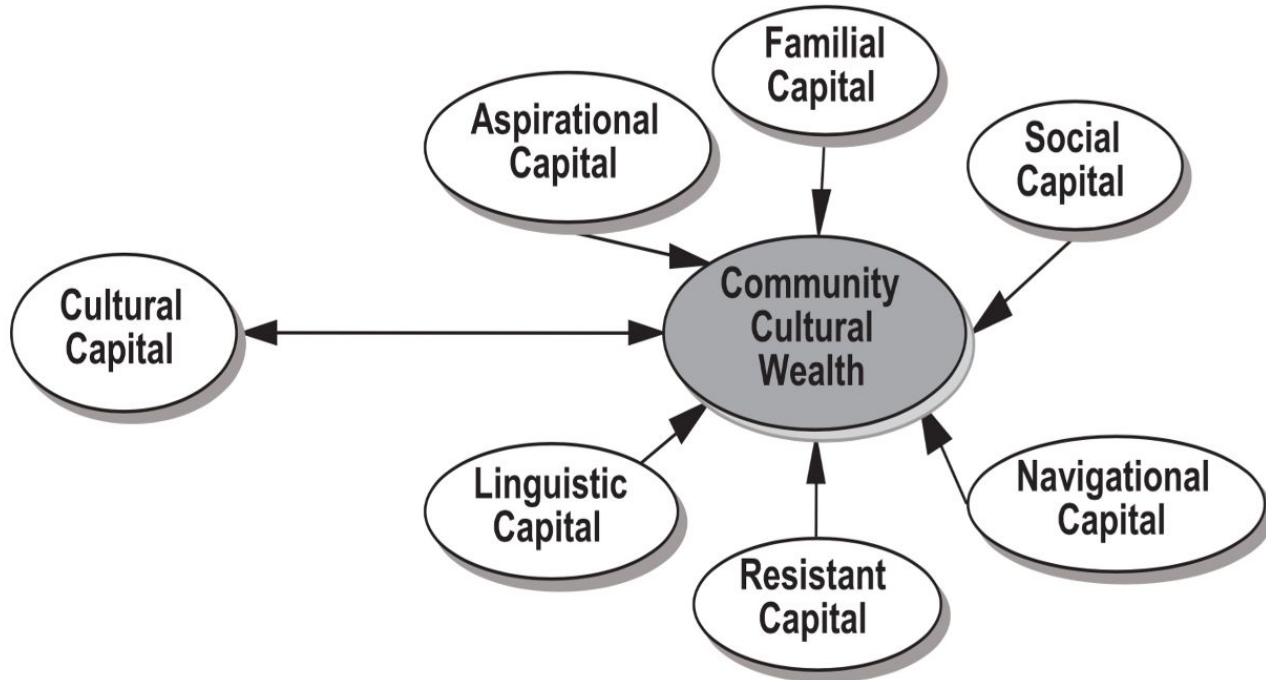
- Other groups may feel excluded
- Being labeled a “Hispanic” institution
- Students may need more services and support, which will require more funding

Reflection on Latinx/Hispanic individuals, in general

- What comes to mind when you think of Latinos, in general?
- What are some positive associations you (or others) have with Latinos?
- What are some negative associations you (or others) have with Latinos?

Positive Associations

Yosso, T. (2005). "Whose Culture Has Capital?" Race Ethnicity and Education 8(1)





Sadly, Negative Associations Persist

- Don't speak English/poor English, Are mostly undocumented
- Reinforced by the current administration
 - *Repeated Terms:* "Migrant criminals." "Illegal monster." "Killers." "Gang members." "Poisoning our country." "Taking your jobs." "The largest invasion in the history of our country."
 - "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best," ... "They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they're rapists, and some, I assume, are good people."

Marshall Project, 2024

Just this Morning...

IMMIGRATION POLICY

How President Trump's Immigration Crackdown Is Affecting Higher Ed

By Camila Gomez



Increased detentions, stripped tuition benefits, and other policy changes are imperiling college access for undocumented students — and instilling fear in the broader Hispanic community.

Proposed Next Steps

- Compare your reflections on HSIs and Latinos in general and the origins of your positive and negative associations.
- Consider: How might they influence your interactions with students?
 - ◆ In the case of negative associations, what might you do in response?



In Practice...
Start with Relevance & Trust

What does the research say about relevance?

relevance:

the degree to which learners can identify themselves in a course

- Motivation is the “engine” of learning, and it is optimized when we create learning experiences that students value.
- Common sources of relevance for learning: cultural experiences, goals, and interests; career aspirations

How does relevance relate to culture & servingness?

- Race and ethnicity, as central features of our identities, are key sources of relevance.
- Ginsberg & Wlodkowski affirm that motivating diverse students requires enhancing our communication with and respect for them, seeking to understand and draw on their strengths.
 - Centering relevance helps students develop a positive attitude toward learning.
- Ladson-Billings isolated 3 criteria for culturally relevant pedagogy:
Students
 - 1) experiencing academic success,
 - 2) developing and/or maintaining cultural competence, and
 - 3) developing a critical consciousness.



Many college offerings (including courses) seem irrelevant to students.



Key Opportunities to Enhance Relevance

...and cultural relevance

- **Updating program/service/course goals** and/or describing to students how the offering will help with future courses and/or their professional goals
 - Infusing explicit connections to familialism or to students' culture
- **Designing assessments that offer students choices** based on their experiences, values, needs, and strengths.
 - Including cultural connections in the set of choices
- **Using examples, case studies, etc. that feature students' cultures.**

To Relevance, Add *Confianza* or Trust

Why Trust?

The need to be connected to others is wired into the human brain; it's a survival instinct.

When we are alone or fail to have positive relationships, our brains become preoccupied with scanning our environment for threats—which can hinder our ability to focus and learn.



Many students don't trust their institutions or professors.



Good news!

Trust can help us transcend our differences.

Zaretta Hammond calls trust the “secret weapon” of the culturally responsive educator.

“When students trust that we have their best interests at heart,” she explains, “they give us permission to push them to higher levels of achievement.”



Responding to Students' Unspoken Questions about Trust

Adapted from Demerath et al. (2022)

**Why are
they
here?**

**How
much do
they
respect
me?**

**How much do
they know
and care
about me?**



Responding to Students' Unspoken Questions about Trust

Adapted from Demerath et al. (2022)

Students' Unspoken Queries about Us	Behaviors That Earn Trust
<i>Why are they here?</i>	Let students know what motivates you to teach.
<i>How much do they know and care about me?</i>	Make the effort to get to know your students and their backgrounds.
<i>How much do they respect me?</i>	Avoid unnecessary criticism and trust students with knowledge of your nonfaculty life.
<i>How real are they? Do they know who they are in relation to me?</i>	Demonstrate self-awareness, particularly relating to your identity (e.g., acknowledging the parts of your identity that have resulted in privilege), and look for common ground (as in gender, socioeconomic background, learning experience).



Responding to Students' Unspoken Questions about Trust

Adapted from Demerath et al. (2022)

Zaretta Hammond's Trust Generators

<https://www.wisconsinrctcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Trust-generators-From-Zaretta-Hammond.pdf>

Trust Generator	Defined as
Selective Vulnerability	People respect and connect with people who share their own non-perfect, human, vulnerable moments.
Familiarity	People develop a sense of familiarity with someone they see regularly in a particular setting.
Similarity of Interests	People create a bond/point of connection with people who share similar likes, dislikes, hobbies beyond any obvious race, class, or linguistic differences.
Concern	People connect when concern is shown for issues/event important to one another.
Competence	People tend to trust people who demonstrate skill/knowledge and willingness to help/support them.

To fuel student learning & success at an HSI...

- If you do nothing else, remember the power of human relationships and cultivate a handful of deeper relationships with students.
- Take time to reflect, noticing your positive and negative associations and identifying opportunities and challenges in supporting your Latino students,
- Help to motivate students and deepen their learning via the power of relevance, including cultural relevance, and
- Actively strive to earn and maintain your students' trust, a prerequisite to their learning and success.

Q&A

Thank you for all you do!
It makes an enormous difference!

References & Resources

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