

# **TEACHING THE "OTHER PEOPLE." CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE DILEMMAS**

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Workshop: Finlandssvenska integrationsdagarna

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# MY STORY

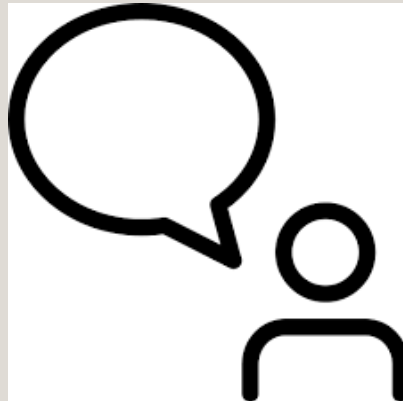


Education is not neutral. The curriculum is not neutral.  
They serve to privilege the dominant group

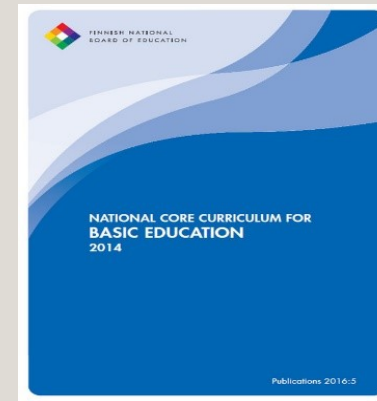
Culture



Language

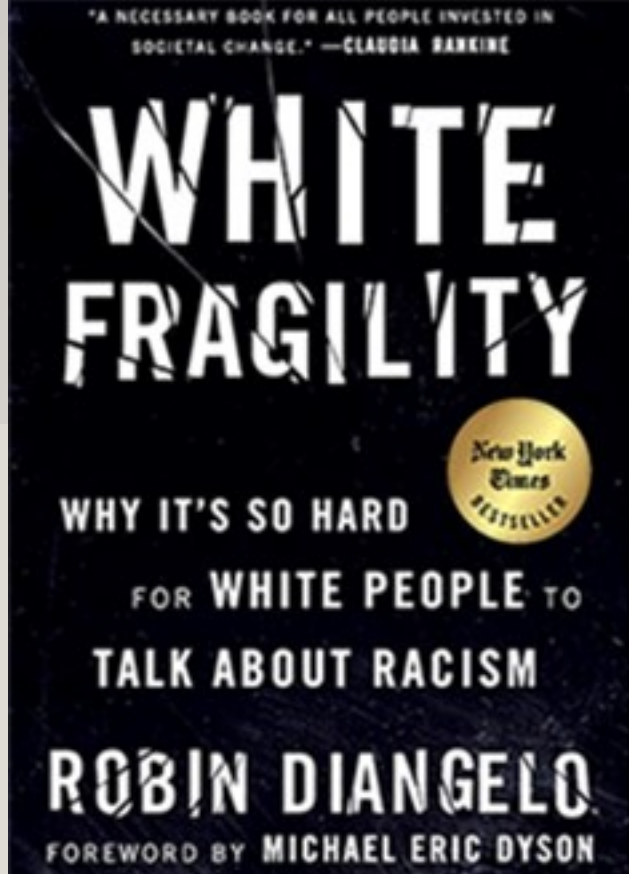


Curriculum



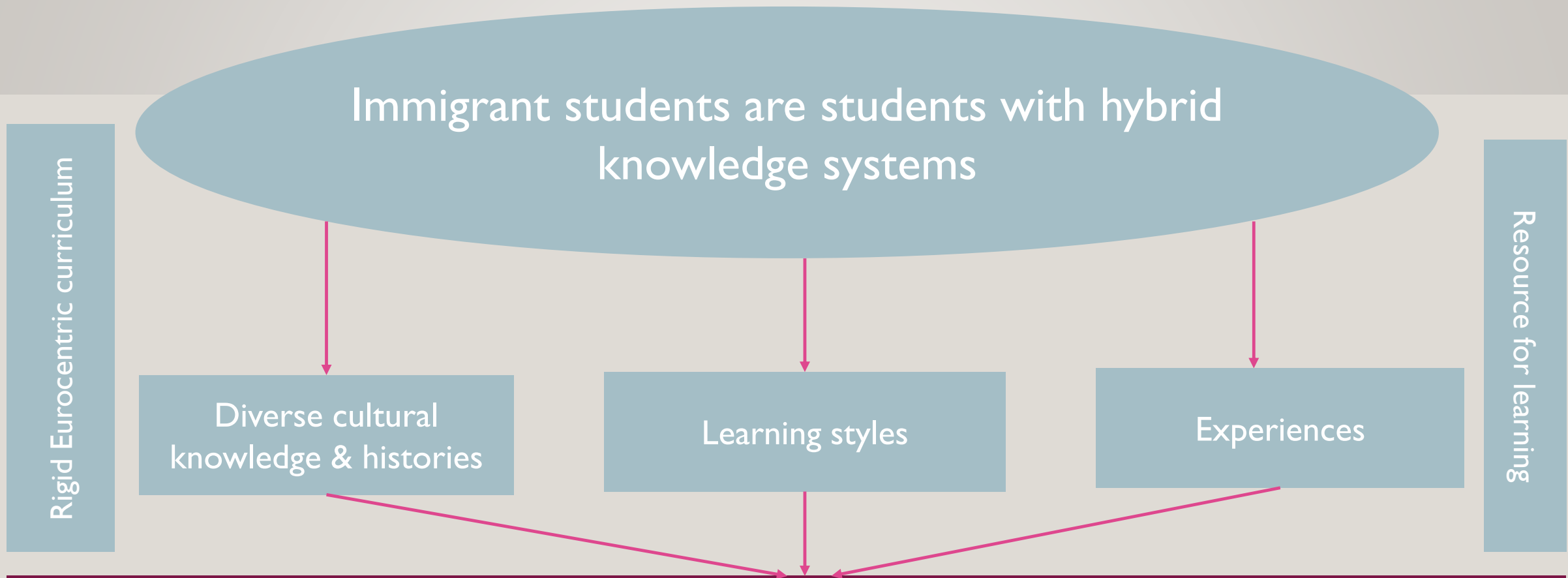
- Notions of monoculturalism, monolingualism and homogeneity are created, reproduced and maintained in order to define the “OTHER” – a child’s ask parents “WHY DON’T THEY LIKE US”
- Curriculum [what], [How] and “[For whom] is the curriculum designed?





Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint,' a place from which White people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, 'Whiteness' refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. (page.1)

# Square pegs in round holes?



Young people whose languages and culture differ from the dominant group often struggle to form a clear image of themselves – they struggle to have teachers understand who they really are (Nieto & Bode 2011)

# Culture influences learning

- The eye contact example
- Different learning and teaching styles – the Mathematics example

- The assumption that culture is the primary determinant of academic achievement can be oversimplistic, dangerous, and counterproductive
- Questions about what knowledge is and what learning is

**IMPORTANT:** School failure is NOT an attribute of an individual but school and education systems

The question we should be asking ourselves is why are immigrant students not doing well in our schools?



# The Influence of Culture in Learning – A true case (access case study at:

<https://nisnresourcehub.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/An-Indian-Fathers-Plea-1.pdf>

## An Indian Father's Plea

**Robert Lake (Medicine Grizzlybear)**

Wind-Wolf knows the names and migration patterns of more than 40 birds. He knows there are 13 tail feathers on a perfectly balanced eagle. What he needs is a teacher who knows his full measure.

Dear teacher, I would like to introduce you to my son, Wind-Wolf. He is probably what you would consider a typical Indian kid. He was born and raised on a reservation. He has black hair, dark brown eyes, olive complexion. And like so many Indian children his age, he is shy and quiet in the classroom. He is 5 years old, in kindergarten, and I can't understand why you have already labeled him a "slow learner."

At the age of 5, he has already been through quite an education compared with his peers in Western society. At his first introduction into this world, he was bonded to his mother and to the Mother Earth in a traditional native childbirth ceremony. And he has been continuously cared for by his mother, father, sisters, cousins, uncles, grandparents, and extended tribal family since this ceremony.

My son, Wind-Wolf, is not an empty glass coming into your class to be filled. He is a full basket coming into a different environment and society with something special to share. Please let him share his knowledge, heritage, and culture with you and his peers.



# Data from a study conducted by my research team about **Educators' Perspectives on Preparatory Education and Integration Training for Immigrants in Finland** (Taylor et al, 2023)

Immigrants possess study skills differing from those required by their current environment. According to an educator, many students face challenges because they are entering a completely different educational system with different forms of instruction and learning activities:

*“The biggest problems with the [students] I have is probably, like, study technique, study skills, since we are used to them... The largest problem for us is like to instruct them, to get them to understand how to do the exercises... That's probably the biggest problem, I feel.”*



## Teaching to **Transgress**

Education as the  
Practice of Freedom



**bell hooks**

Educators need to engage in honest discussions about the role of culture in education and examine their biases and privileges

There is a need to revisit our curriculum, our assessment and grading practices, and our discipline policies

And we need to hold ourselves, our colleagues and our school and district administrations accountable

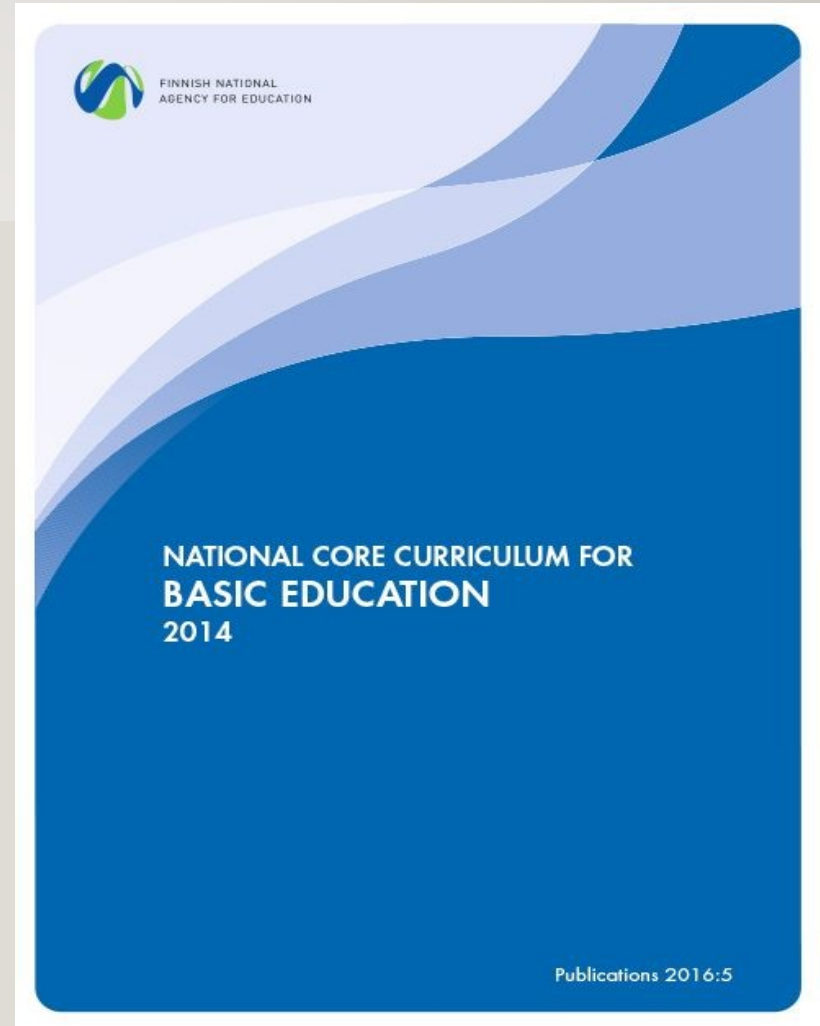


# Language Dilemmas

The Finnish core curriculum, implemented in 2016 for basic and upper secondary education advocate linguistically responsive teaching

The guidelines require every teacher to take into account the challenges language poses for learners

All students should be able to use their whole linguistic repertoire as a resource for learning (National Agency of Education, 2014; 2015)



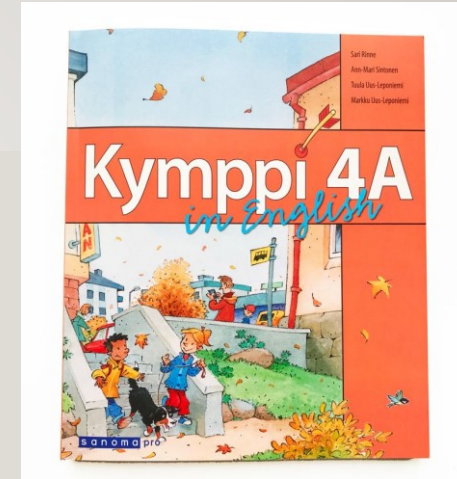
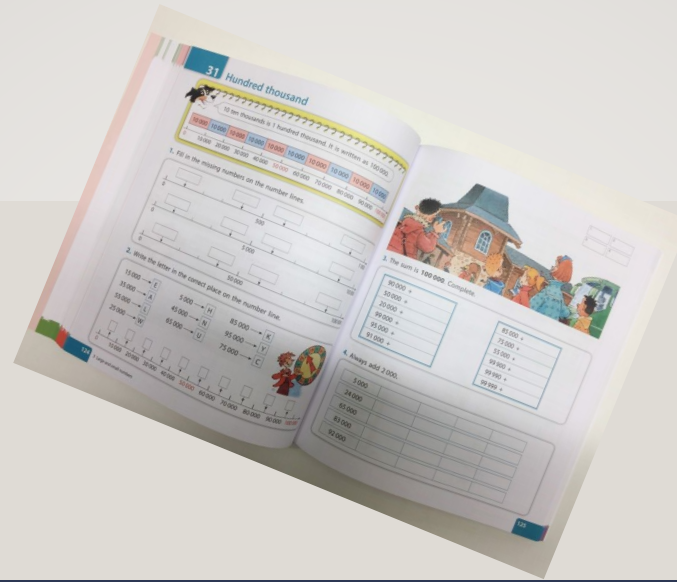
# Unpublished Data collected by my research team about **Educators' Perspectives on Preparatory Education for Immigrants in Finland**

*preparatory class teaching materials mainly consist of illustrated vocabularies and word lists that look like they had been designed in the 1990s. The Finnish National Agency for Education recommends a book called AAMU from 1997 (newer version from 2007), but this is basically just a dictionary with illustrations. They sometimes use the TREENI S2-book, but it is too difficult and moves forward too fast*

*Preparatory teaching does not have a book (with texts/stories and assignments) that would be made just for this purpose. Teacher A has brought up this problem with many publishers, but they say that it does not make financial sense to publish a book like that because the market is not big enough*



# Eurocentric curriculum




- Finland's curriculum continue to centre on Eurocentric knowledge and theories of teaching and learning, leaving out the diverse knowledge of Ethnic, Indigenous, and other marginalized communities
- It is characterized by superiority, progress, hegemony and monopoly over all other knowledge systems. Scholar [Marie Battiste](#) (2013) describes this as cognitive imperialism

RESEARCH ARTICLE



## The representation of minorities in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for history

Tanja Kohvakka 

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### ABSTRACT

Finland has long been culturally and linguistically varied and continues to grow even more diverse every year. However, this heterogeneity has not been reflected in the country's history curriculum, which has traditionally been built on the idea of a homogenous Finnish nation. This study examines the representation of both old and new minorities in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for history. It argues that inclusive and multiperspective history education is needed to increase the quality of history education for all students. The results of this study demonstrate that while the general objectives and values of the curriculum promote diversity and multicultural education, the curriculum for history lacks an adequate representation of minorities and relies on Eurocentric and Finnish historical narratives. However, the curriculum nonetheless emphasizes teaching methods that could potentially create more inclusive history education and broaden historical perspectives for all pupils.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

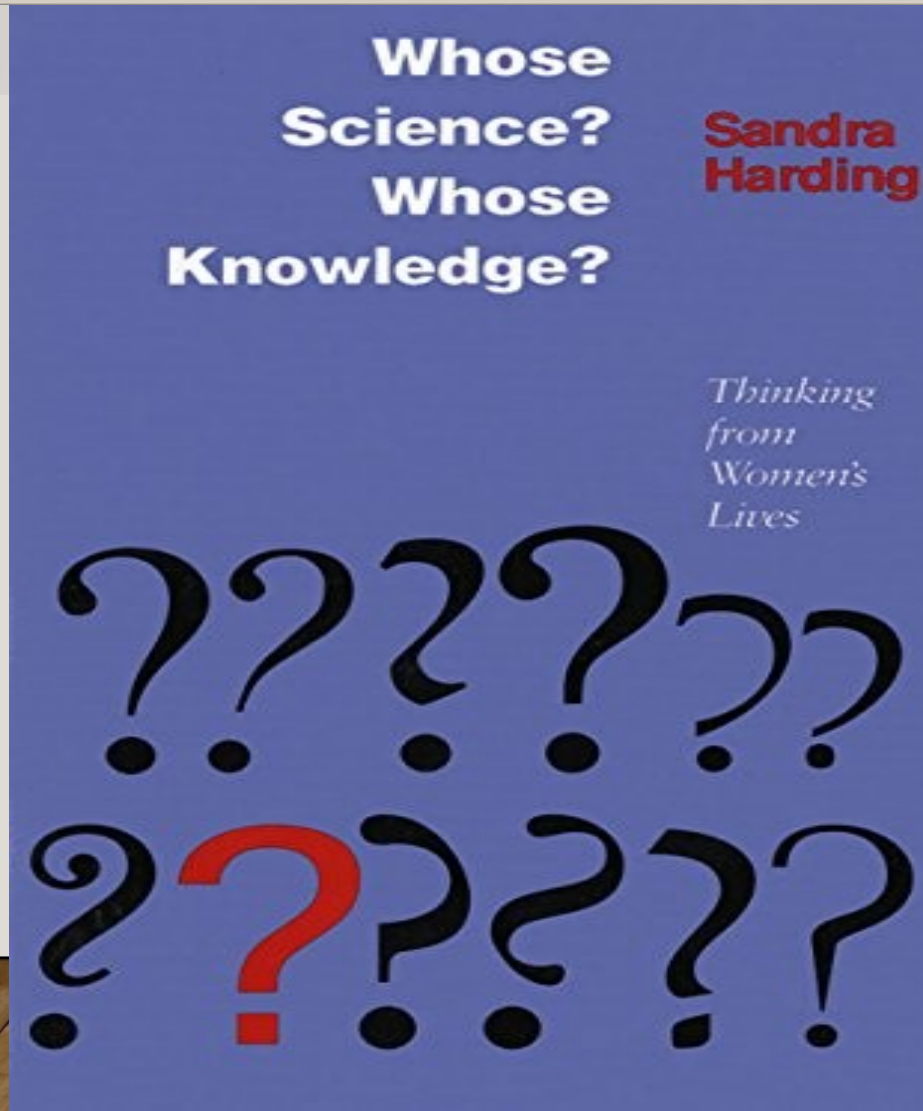
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### KEYWORDS

Critical pedagogy;  
curriculum; history  
education; minorities;  
multicultural education



# Inequality and Power Exist in the Production and Dissemination of Knowledge

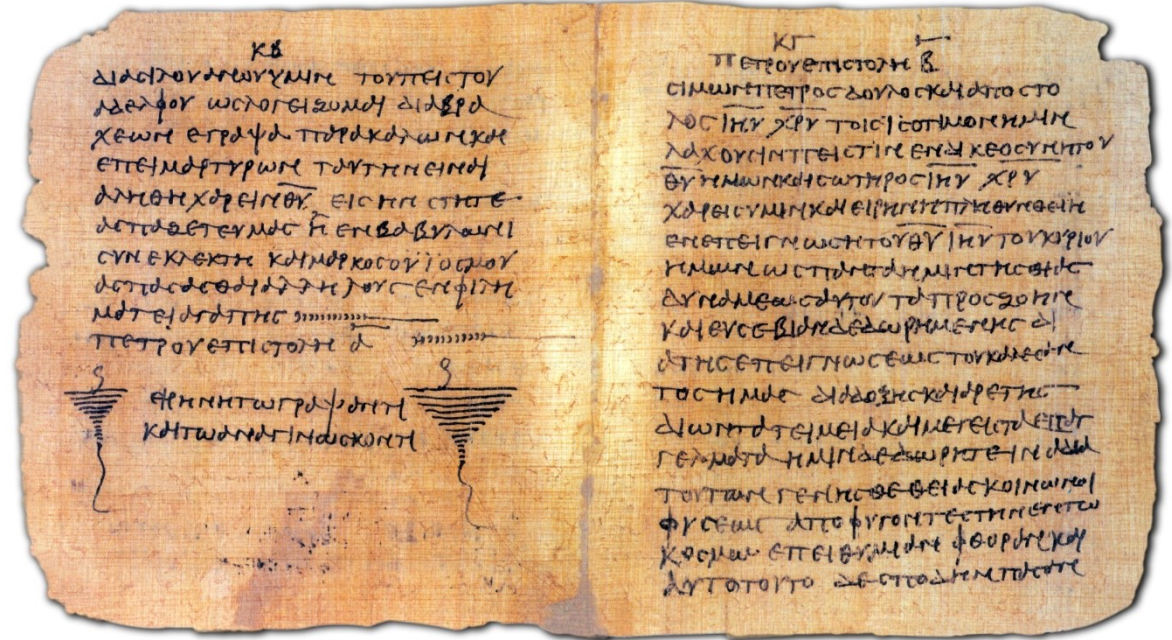


Sciences describe and explain the world primarily from the perspectives of the lives of the dominant group

# Modernity and Anglophone Academic Philosophy

The history of the development of Western science shows that it developed in Europe

The beginnings of civilization were founded in ancient Greek thought, and accordingly, that distinct intellectual developments and trajectories from this seat of civilization can be tracked through Western Europe and eventually to Anglo-America





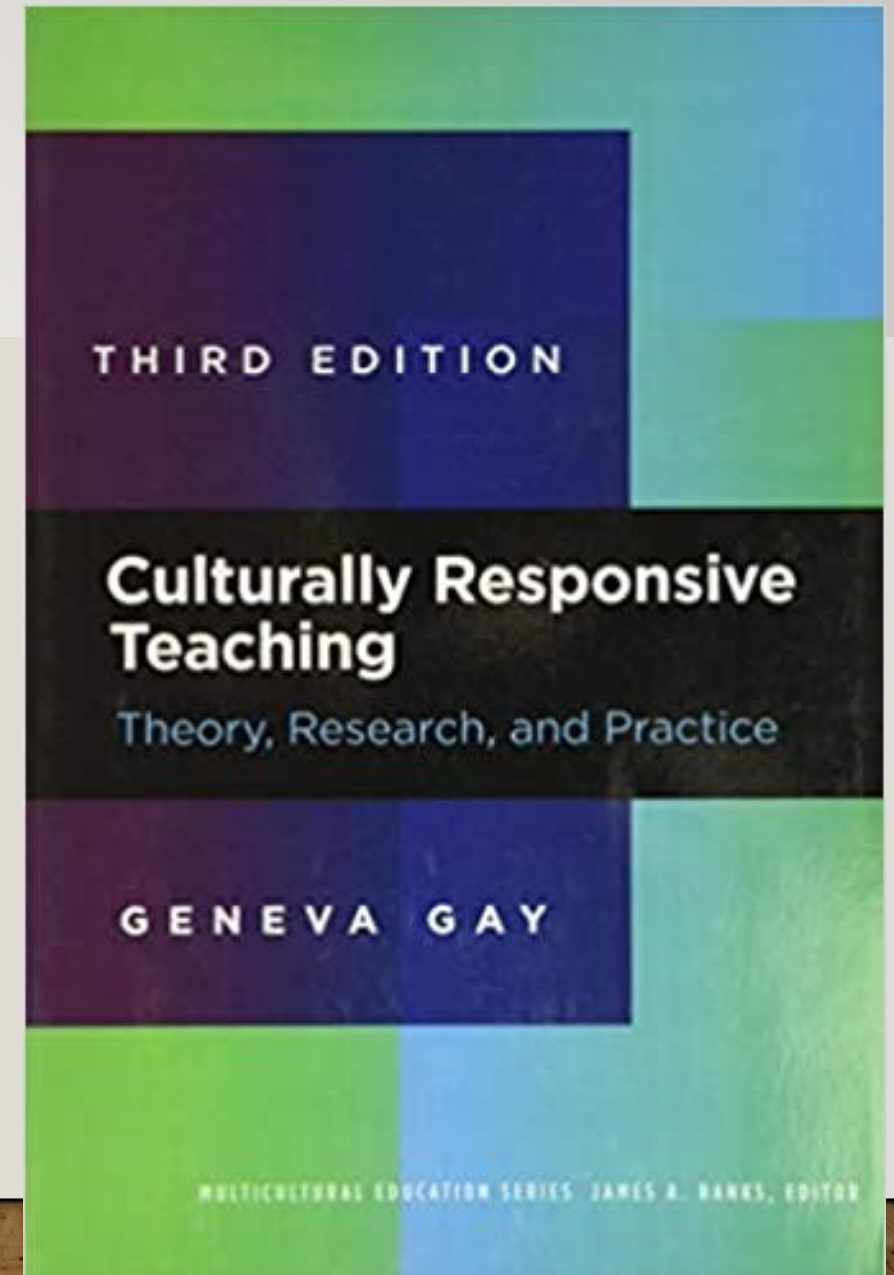
# How to ensure equitable learning outcomes for all students?

- Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching
- Epistemic pluralism

Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive teaching as mobilizing students'

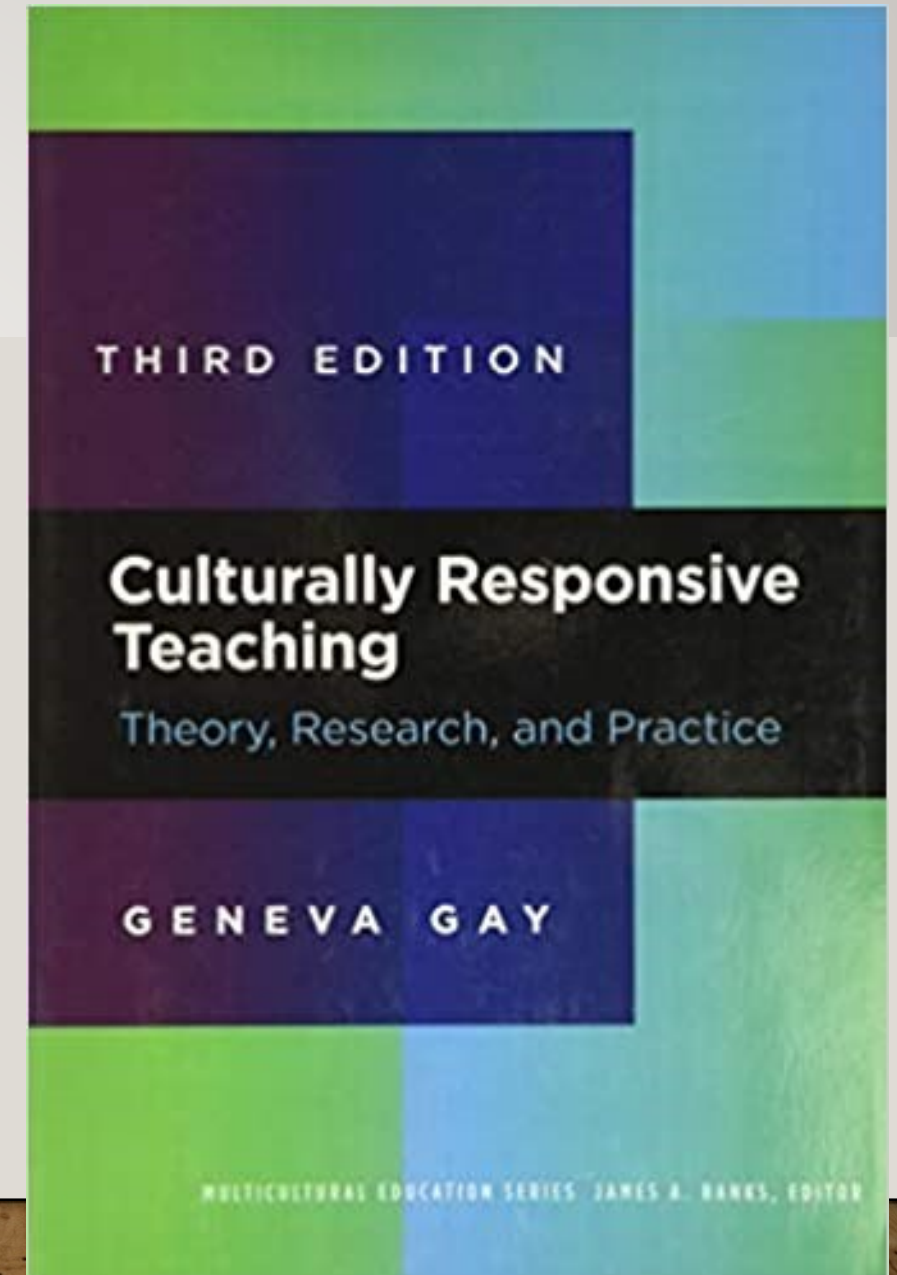
- **cultural knowledge**
- **prior experiences**
- **frames of reference**
- **performance styles (p. 31)**

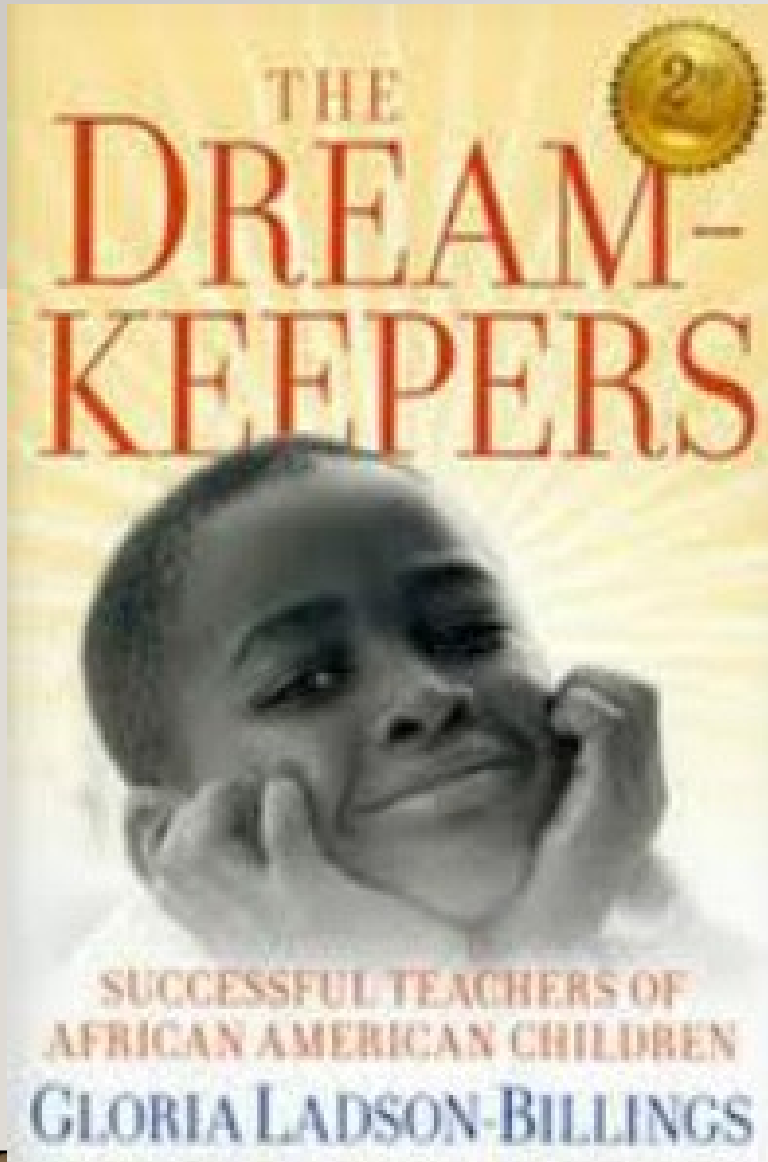
as a means to make learning meaningful and effective. It teaches to and through the strengths of students and is culturally validating and affirming



Gay (2010) profiles culturally responsive teaching in five definitive ways:

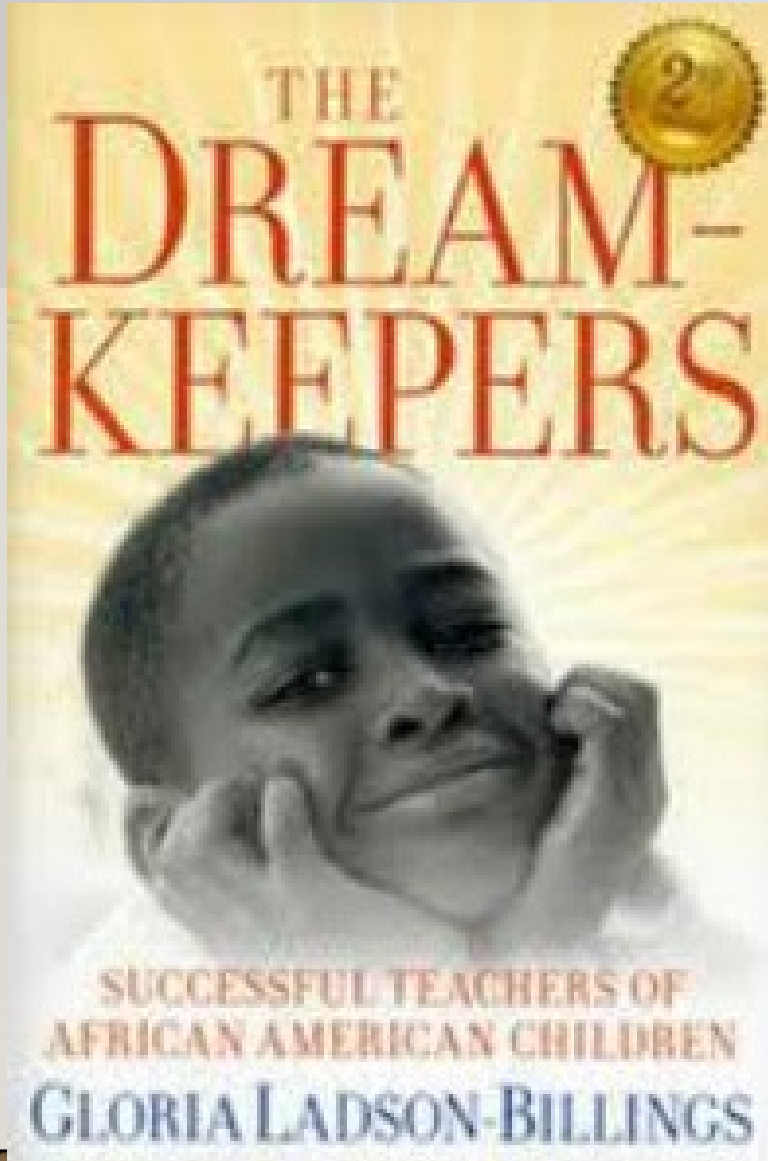
- Developing a culturally diverse knowledge base
- Cross-cultural communication
- Developing culturally relevant curricula
- Culturally responsive caring
- Cultural congruity in classroom instruction





Ladson-Billings' (1995) formulation proposed 'culturally relevant pedagogy', which she defined as empowering students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes





Ladson-Billings (2009) showed that culturally relevant teachers have specific conceptions on self and others

- The teacher is part of the community, believes in all students
- Social relations (e.g. the teacher connects with all students, encourages collaboration and community aspects)
- Knowledge (e.g. knowledge is co-constructed with students, viewed critically and diverse aspects are taken into account)

# Three main take-away from Gay and Ladson-Billings work

Schools and education systems must acknowledge/embrace diverse students (immigrants) as **KNOWERS** (Hybrid knowledge) and work with them

Schools must accept and accommodate diverse students culture and language repertoires as resource for teaching and learning

Schools and teachers must modify curriculum to deconstruct the dominant western knowledge ideology that pervades school textbooks

This may require some work and critical attitudinal transformation but there are resources available

# To Conclude



- Knowledge is not homogenous. No one person, authority or social group knows it all
- Culturally relevant pedagogies are humanizing pedagogies – it's all about connecting us
- Learning is not = monitoring or compliance
- The need to diversify the dominance of Western Knowledge as the gatekeeper of truth



# Thank you!

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Read my research:

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Emmanuel\\_Acquah3](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Emmanuel_Acquah3)





# RESOURCES

[Home](#) / [Resources](#) / [Catalogue of Good Practices on Inclusive Schools](#)

## Catalogue of Good Practices on Inclusive Schools



### **Catalogue of Good Practices on Inclusive Schools**



The Catalogue of Good Practices on Inclusive Schools supports the extensive work that ETUCE has done in the past years on equality and inclusion in education. The main aim of this Catalogue is to create a resource on building and maintaining sustainable inclusive learning in environments in various national and local contexts with the view to provide education trade unions and their affiliates with concrete and innovative tools and methods of social inclusion in the education and teaching profession. It presents a wide range, yet not an exhaustive overview, of inspiring practices that have been gathered in the framework of various ETUCE projects and initiatives.

**Year:**

2021

**Organisation:**

Education Trade Union Committee  
for Education (ETUCE)

**Keywords:**

learning environment, sustainable  
society, inclusive education



inclusive-HE

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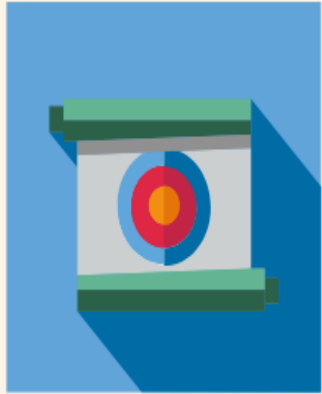
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# Designing and supporting inclusive practices in Higher Education

Supporting higher education institutions to develop innovative policies and practices for integrating inclusive practices in designing and teaching courses.



## Toolkit Instructions



Framework



Checklist



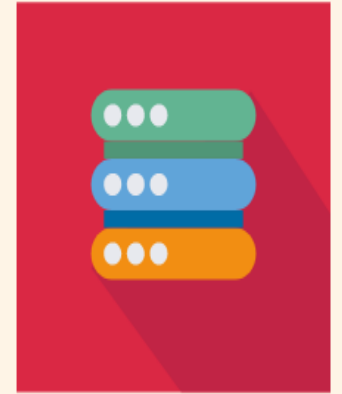
Canvas



SWOT-analysis



Strategy Worksheet



Database



Inclusive Higher Education toolkit - Framework





# INCLUSIVE HUBS

A whole school approach to transform  
schools into Inclusive Hubs

[Read more](#)

## Learning Materials and Activities



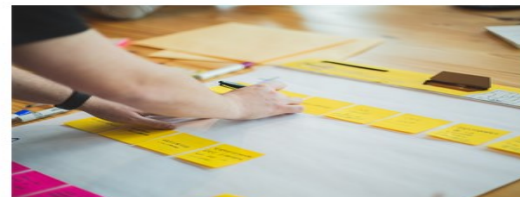
### Joint report with research & barriers to inclusion

The joint report provides a concise overview of essential findings and action plans from



### "Schools as Inclusive hubs" Toolkit

The "Schools as Inclusive Hubs" Toolkit encompasses all the essential steps and



### Curriculum

The Curriculum is a comprehensive set of modules designed to cater to the specific needs of school staff and



### Policy Paper

The Policy Paper addresses issues, gaps, and action calls identified during the project's implementation. It will cover





# WE ARE HERE FOR CHANGE

## THE LISTIAC PROJECT

[READ MORE](#)





## Review of Inclusive Education in Portugal

The Review of Inclusive Education in Portugal provides, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues regarding diversity, equity and inclusion in education in Portugal, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: i) to provide insights and advice to Portuguese education authorities; ii) to help other countries understand the Portuguese approach to inclusive education; and iii) to provide input for comparative analyses of the OECD Strength through Diversity project. The scope for the analysis in this report covers primary (incl. More

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