Create an environment that is intellectually and socially safe for learning
Make space for student voice and agency
Build classroom culture and learning around communal (sociocultural) talk and task structures
Use classroom rituals and routines to support a culture of learning
Use principles of restorative justice to manage conflicts and redirect negative behavior

Know and own your cultural lens
Understand the three levels of culture
Recognize cultural archetypes of individualism and collectivism
Understand how the brain learns
Acknowledge the socio-political context around race and language
Recognize your brain’s triggers around race and culture
Broaden your interpretation of culturally and linguistically diverse students’ learning behaviors

Provide appropriate challenge in order to stimulate brain growth to increase intellective capacity
Help students process new content using methods from oral traditions
Connect new content to culturally relevant examples and metaphors from students’ community and everyday lives
Provide students authentic opportunities to process content
Teach students cognitive routines using the brain’s natural learning systems
Use formative assessments and feedback to increase intellective capacity

Reimagine the student and teacher relationship as a partnership
Take responsibility to reduce students’ social-emotional stress from stereotype threat and microagressions
Balance giving students both care and push
Help students cultivate a positive mindset and sense of self-efficacy
Support each student to take greater ownership for his learning
Give students language to talk about their learning moves

Students are Ready for Rigor and Independent Learning

ACADEMIC MINDSET
I belong to this academic community.
A strong sense of academic belonging where students see themselves as members of not only a social community, but an intellectual community.
This work has value for me.
The intrinsic value placed on academic tasks and topics that connect in some way to students’ lives, future educational pursuits, or current interests.
My ability and competence grow with my effort.
The degree to which students have a growth-mindset means they are more likely to interpret academic challenge or mistakes as opportunities to learn and develop their brains.
I can succeed at this.
The degree to which students believe they are “good” at a particular kind of task or field of study is strongly associated with academic perseverance.

COMPONENTS OF ACADEMIC MINDSET
1. ACADEMIC MINDSET
   Student begins with belief that learning is relevant and is worth paying attention to.
   His belief is reinforced by evidence of progress.
2. ENGAGEMENT
   Brain’s attention is captured by positive emotion, physical energy, curiosity or a puzzle, signaling the brain to engage.
3. EFFORT
   Engagement gives way to assessing, managing and regulating mental energy needed to complete the task, understand the concept, or solve the puzzle.
4. TASK PERFORMANCE
   Student applies various cognitive routines to completing the task or understand the concept based on mental energy assessment. Student willing to adjust perseverance and tenacity (effort and grit).
5. FEEDBACK ON PROGRESS
   Self-assessment and external feedback helps brain go back and adjust – correct misconceptions or revise the task, which deepens learning & builds a sense of accomplishment and competence. This strengthens academic mindset.
READY FOR RIGOR FRAMEWORK:  
THE FOUR PRACTICE AREAS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

Learning to put culturally responsive teaching into operation is like learning to rub your head and pat your stomach at the same time. This move feels a bit awkward at first because you have to get your hands to perform two different movements in unison. The trick is to get each movement going independently then synchronizing them into one rhythmic motion. Learning to operationalize culturally responsive teaching is much like rubbing your head and patting your stomach at the same time. The practices are only effective when done together. In unison they create a synergetic effect. The Ready for Rigor framework lays out four separate practice areas that are interdependent. When the tools and strategies of each area are blended together, they create the social, emotional and cognitive conditions that allow students to more actively engage and take ownership of their learning process. The framework is divided into four core areas. The individual components are connected through the principles of brain-based learning:

Practice Area One: Awareness

Successfully teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds—especially students from historically marginalized groups—involves more than just applying specialized teaching techniques. It means placing instruction within the larger sociopolitical context. In this first practice area, we explore the development of our sociopolitical lens. Every culturally responsive teacher develops and sociopolitical consciousness, an understanding that we live in a racialized society that gives unearned privilege to some while others experience unearned disadvantage because of race, gender, class, or language. They are aware of the role that schools play in both perpetuating and challenging those inequities. They are also aware of the impact of their own cultural lens on interpreting and evaluating students’ individual or collective behavior that might lead to low expectations or undervaluing the knowledge and skills they bring to school. Mastering this practice area helps teachers:

- Locate and acknowledge their own sociopolitical position
- Sharpen and tune their cultural lens
- Learn to manage their own social-emotional response to student diversity

Practice Area Two: Learning Partnerships

The second practice area focuses on building trust with students across differences so that the teacher is able to create a social-emotional partnership for deeper learning. Culturally responsive teachers take advantage of the fact that our brains are wired for connection. As they move through the work in this area, teachers build capacity to:

- Establish an authentic connection with students that builds mutual trust and respect
- Leverage the trust bond to help students rise to higher expectations
- Give feedback in emotionally intelligent ways so students are able to take it in and act on it
- Hold students to high standards while offering them new intellectual challenges
Practice Area Three: Information Processing

The third practice area focuses on knowing how to strengthen and expend students’ intellective capacity so that they can engage in deeper, more complex learning. The culturally responsive teacher is the conduit that helps students process what they are learning. They mediate student learning based on what they know about how the brain learns and students’ cultural models. This practice area outlines the process, strategies, tactics, and tools for engaging students in high-leverage social and instructional activities that over time build higher order thinking skills. Moving through this area, teachers learn how to:

- Understand how culture impacts the brain’s information processing
- Orchestrate learning so it builds student’s brain power in culturally congruent ways
- Use brain-based information processing strategies common to oral cultures

Practice Area Four: Community Building

In the fourth practice area, we focus on creating an environment that feels socially and intellectually safe for dependent learners to stretch themselves and take risks. Too often, we think of the physical set up of our classroom as being culturally “neutral” when in reality it is often an extension of the teacher’s worldview or the dominant culture. The culturally responsive teacher tries to create an environment that communicates care, support, and belonging in ways that students recognize. As they move through this practice area, teachers understand how to:

- Integrate universal cultural elements and themes into the classroom
- Use cultural practices and orientations to create a socially and intellectually safe space
- Set up rituals and routines that reinforce self-directed learning and academic identity