

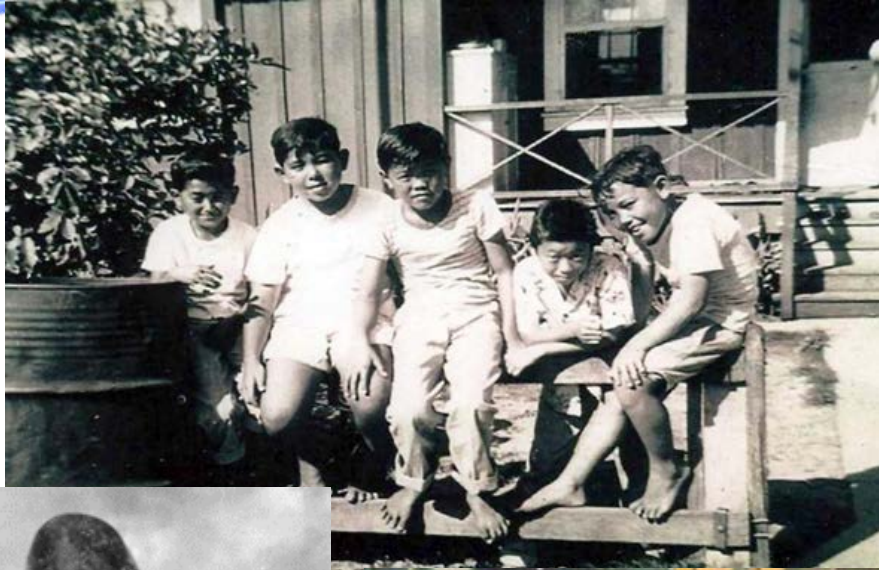


CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ENGAGEMENT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

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Association for Migrant Educators of Texas - AMET

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SELF REFLECTION

- *How do my different identities influence my worldview and relationships?*
- *How do I understand and engage with the cultures of my students?*
- *How brain-friendly are the practices in and out of my assignment? How can those practices be made more culturally responsive?*
- *What resources might I need to sustain the work?*



OUR JOURNEY

- Anchored action plan  
- What does it mean to be culturally responsive?
- Brain development, emotions, and learning
- Integrating culturally responsive strategies
- Action plan ready!

LET'S ANCHOR AN ACTION PLAN!





OUR OBJECTIVES

- **Content Objective:**

Identify foundations of culturally responsive engagement and brain research which impact the academic achievement and well-being of our students.

- **Language Objective:**

Create a plan to encourage culturally responsive, brain-informed strategies to provide equitable services to all students.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE?

Cultural responsiveness requires individuals be *culturally competent*. This competency is having

- an awareness and affirmation of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and
- the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Use *critical-thinking skills* to

- interpret how cultural values and beliefs influence conscious and unconscious behavior;
- understand how inequity can be and has been perpetuated through socialized behaviors; and
- disrupt inequitable practices to achieve greater personal and professional success for yourselves and others

(Mayfield citing Clark, Zygmunt & Howard, 2016; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2010).



HOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND AND ENGAGE WITH THE CULTURES OF YOUR STUDENTS?

classroom observations, community walks, home visits, dialogue journals and think alouds



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR STUDENTS?

Complete as much of
this information about
the student you selected
as possible.

Funds of Knowledge	
Home Language	<i>E.g., Arabic; Spanish; Navajo; Italian</i>
Family Values and Traditions	<i>E.g., holiday celebrations; religious beliefs; work ethic</i>
Caregiving	<i>E.g., swaddling baby; giving baby pacifier; co-sleeping</i>
Friends and Family	<i>E.g., visiting grandma; barbecues; sports outings</i>
Family Outings	<i>E.g., shopping; beach; library; picnic</i>
Household Chores	<i>E.g., sweeping; dusting; doing dishes</i>
Educational Activities	<i>E.g., going to the museum; taking a walk in the neighborhood</i>
Favorite TV Shows	<i>E.g., watching Dora; Sesame Street; Sid the Science Kid</i>
Family Occupations	<i>E.g., fishing; office; construction; policeman</i>
Scientific Knowledge	<i>E.g., recycling; exercising; health</i>
	<i>Additional Funds of Knowledge</i>



DEFINING CULTURE

- Comprises the abstract, learned, shared **rules/standards/patterns** used to interpret experience and shape behavior.
- Encompasses the **social behavior and norms** found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups.
- Allows for ease in everyday life. **We know what is expected, how to behave and communicate, how to find common meaning.**

The iceberg concept of culture

Surface Culture

Above sea level

Emotional level: relatively low

food • dress • music
visual arts • drama • crafts
dance • literature • language
celebrations • games

Deep Culture

Unspoken Rules

Partially below sea level

Emotional level: very high

courtesy • contextual conversational patterns • concept of time
personal space • rules of conduct • facial expressions
nonverbal communication • body language • touching • eye contact
patterns of handling emotions • notions of modesty • concept of beauty
courtship practices • relationships to animals • notions of leadership
tempo of work • concepts of food • ideals of childrearing
theory of disease • social interaction rate • nature of friendships
tone of voice • attitudes toward elders • concept of cleanliness
notions of adolescence • patterns of group decision-making
definition of insanity • preference for competition or cooperation
tolerance of physical pain • concept of “self” • concept of past and future
definition of obscenity • attitudes toward dependents • problem-solving
roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and so forth

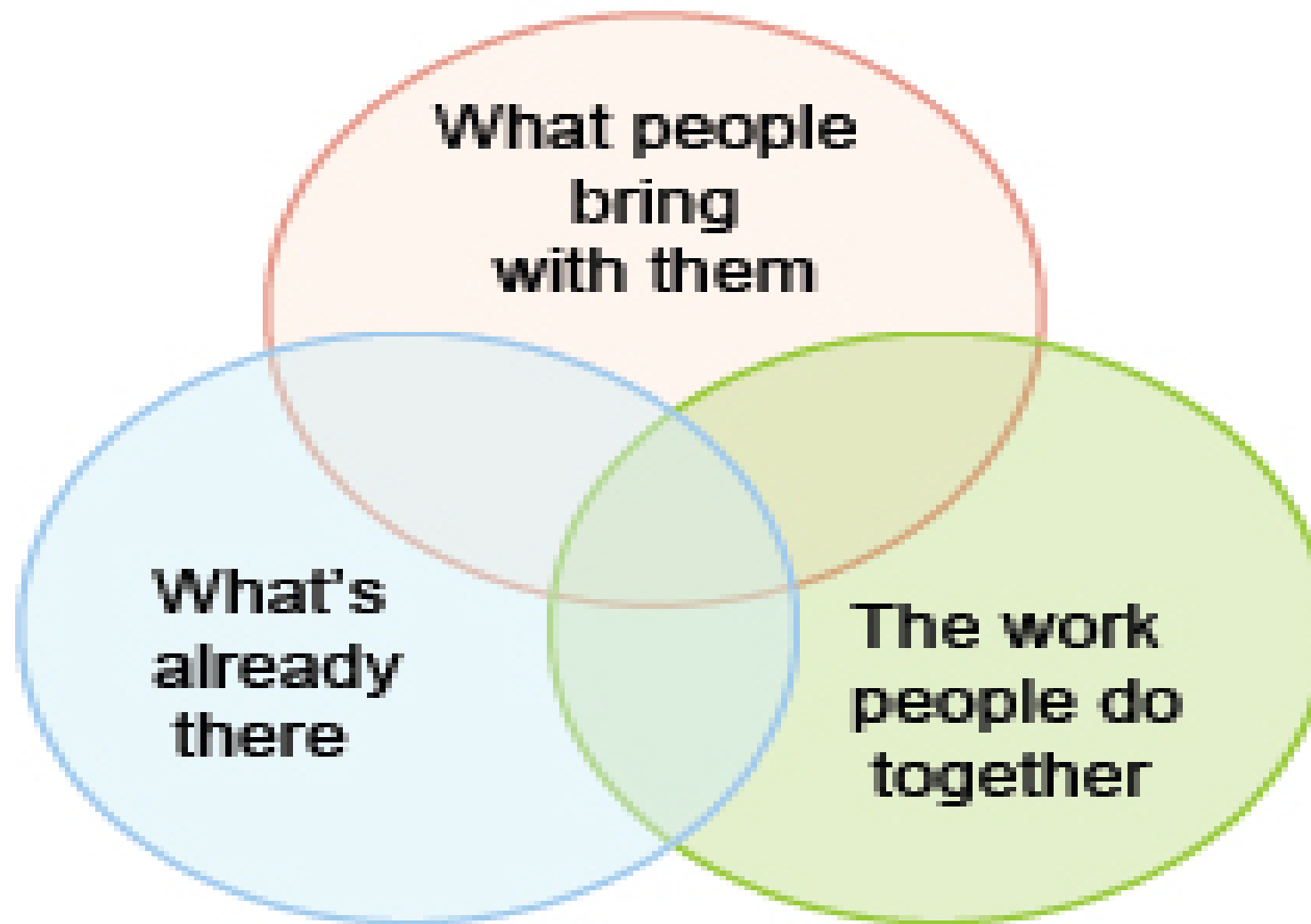
Unconscious Rules

Completely below
sea level

Emotional level:
intense



Cultural Histories

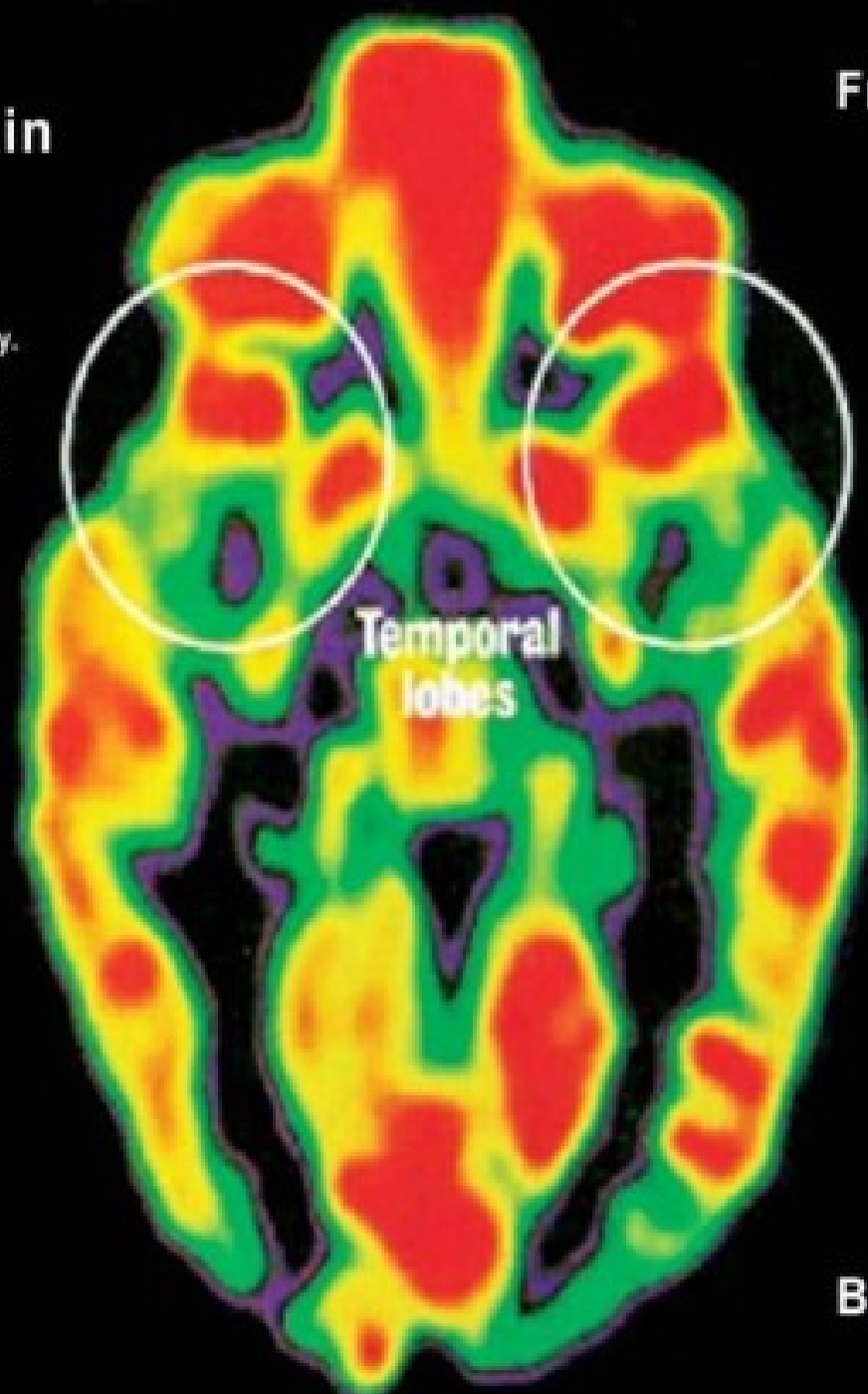


Institutional Culture

The Culture We Create

Healthy Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.

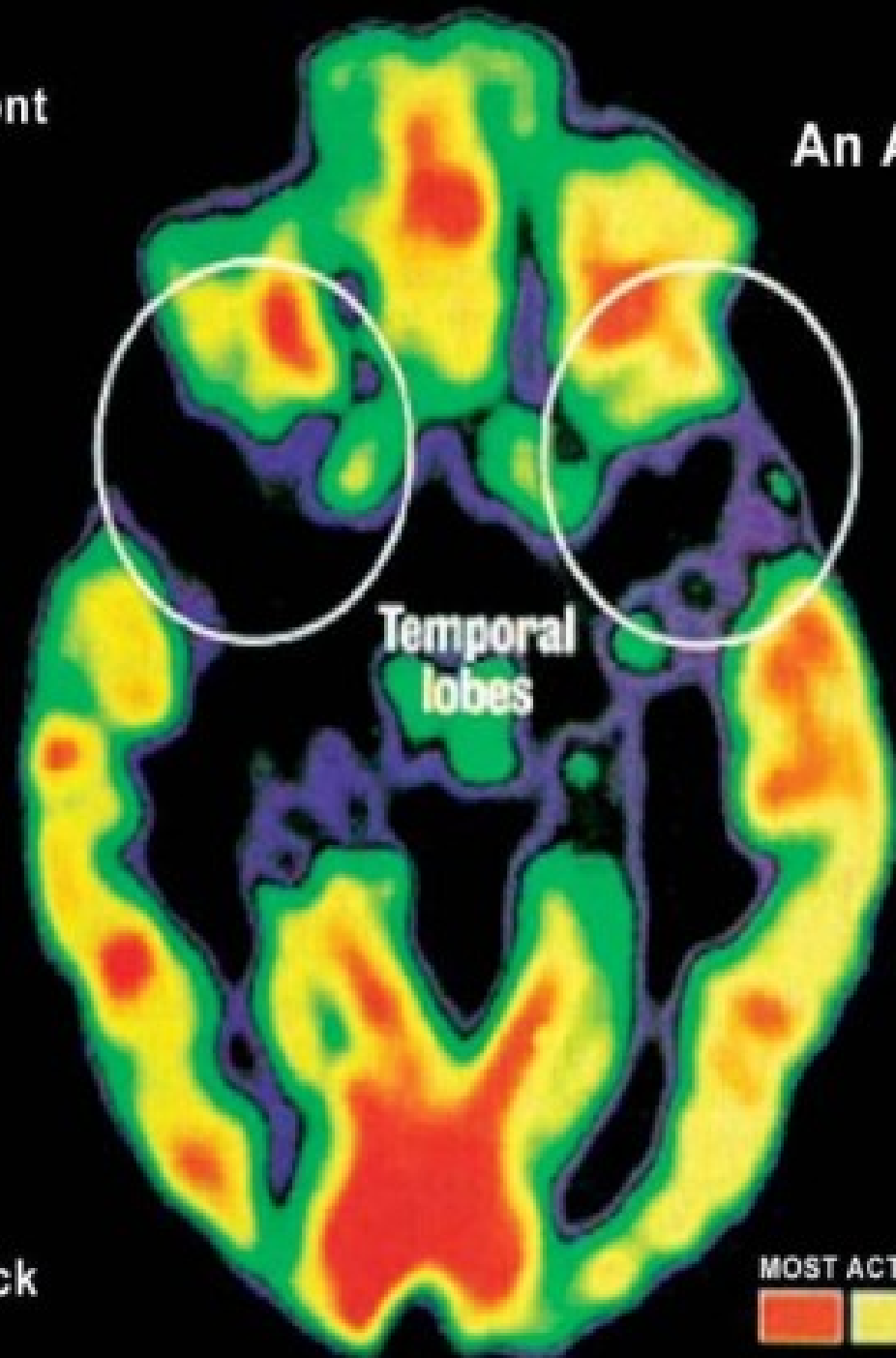


Front

Back

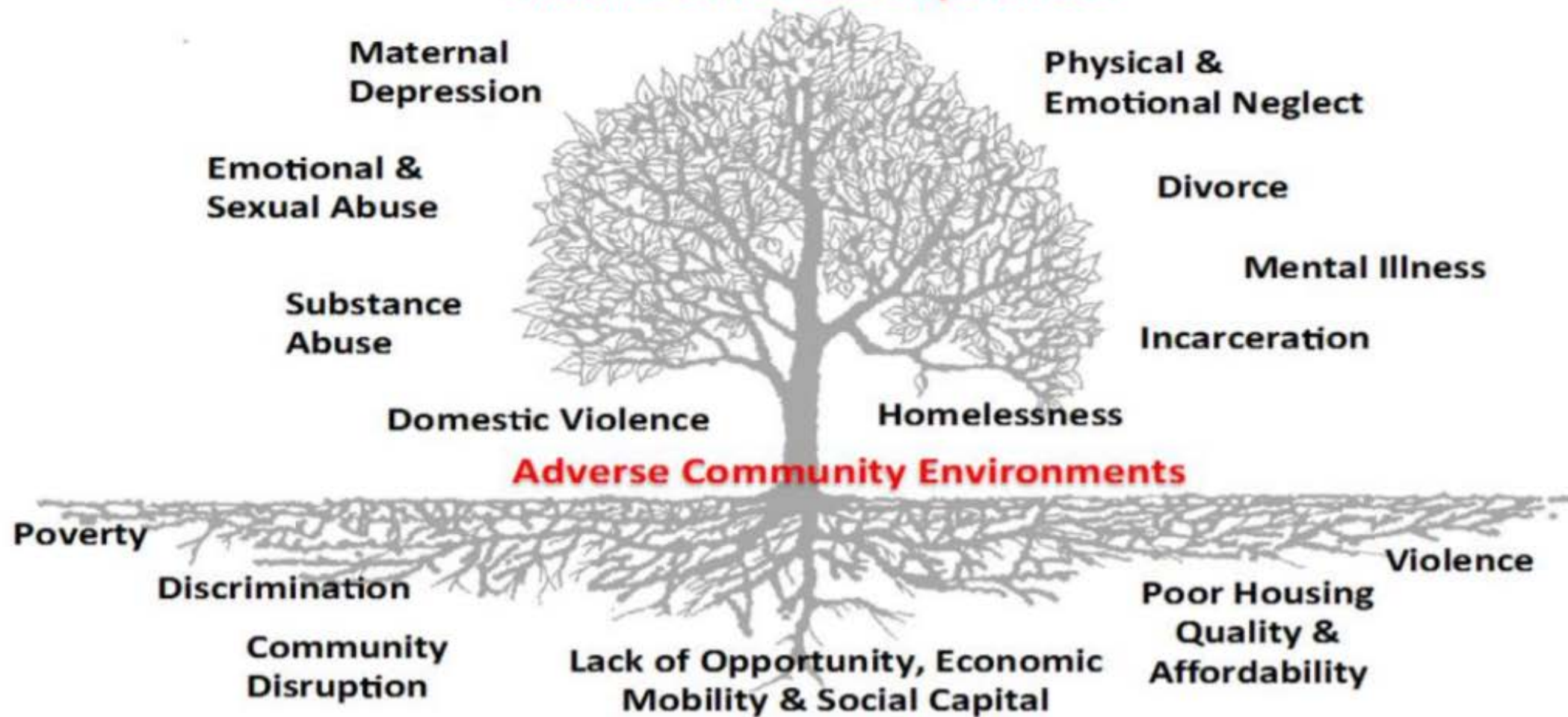
An Abused Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian Orphan, who was institutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.



The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences



Ellis, W., Dietz, W. (2017) A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model. *Academic Pediatrics*. 17 (2017) pp. S86-S93. DOI information: 10.1016/j.acap.2016.12.011

Building Community Resilience's Pair of ACEs

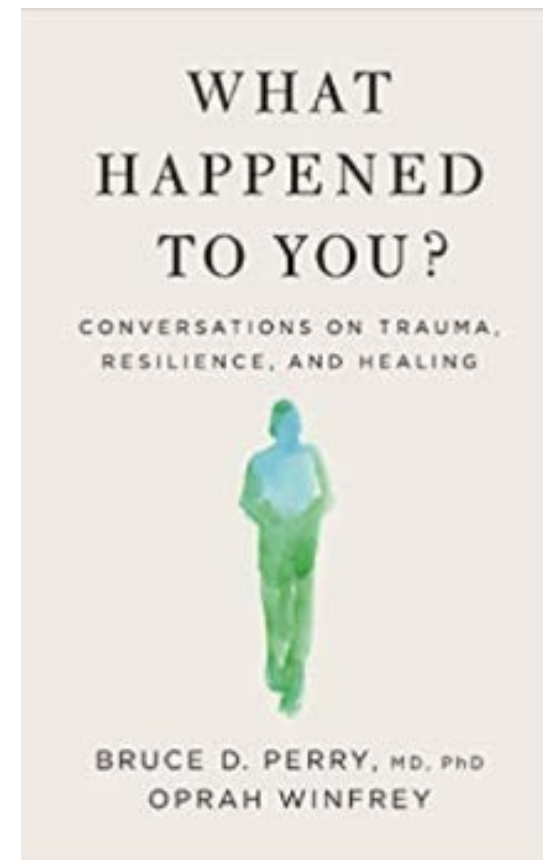


OUR APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT CHANGES

"What is wrong with you?" to
"What happened to you?"

A **child's or parent's** behavior may be indicative of:

- Coping mechanisms
- Survival techniques
- Resiliency



HOW THE BRAIN USES CULTURE

1. The brain seeks to minimize social threats and maximize opportunities to connect with others in community. The motto is stay safe and be happy.
2. Positive relationships keep our safety-threat detection system in check.
3. Culture guides how we process information. Oral traditions result in neural pathways primed to use story, art, movement, and music.
4. Attention drives learning.
5. All new information must be coupled with existing funds of knowledge in order to be learned.
6. The brain physically grows through challenge and stretch, expanding its ability to do more complex thinking and learning.



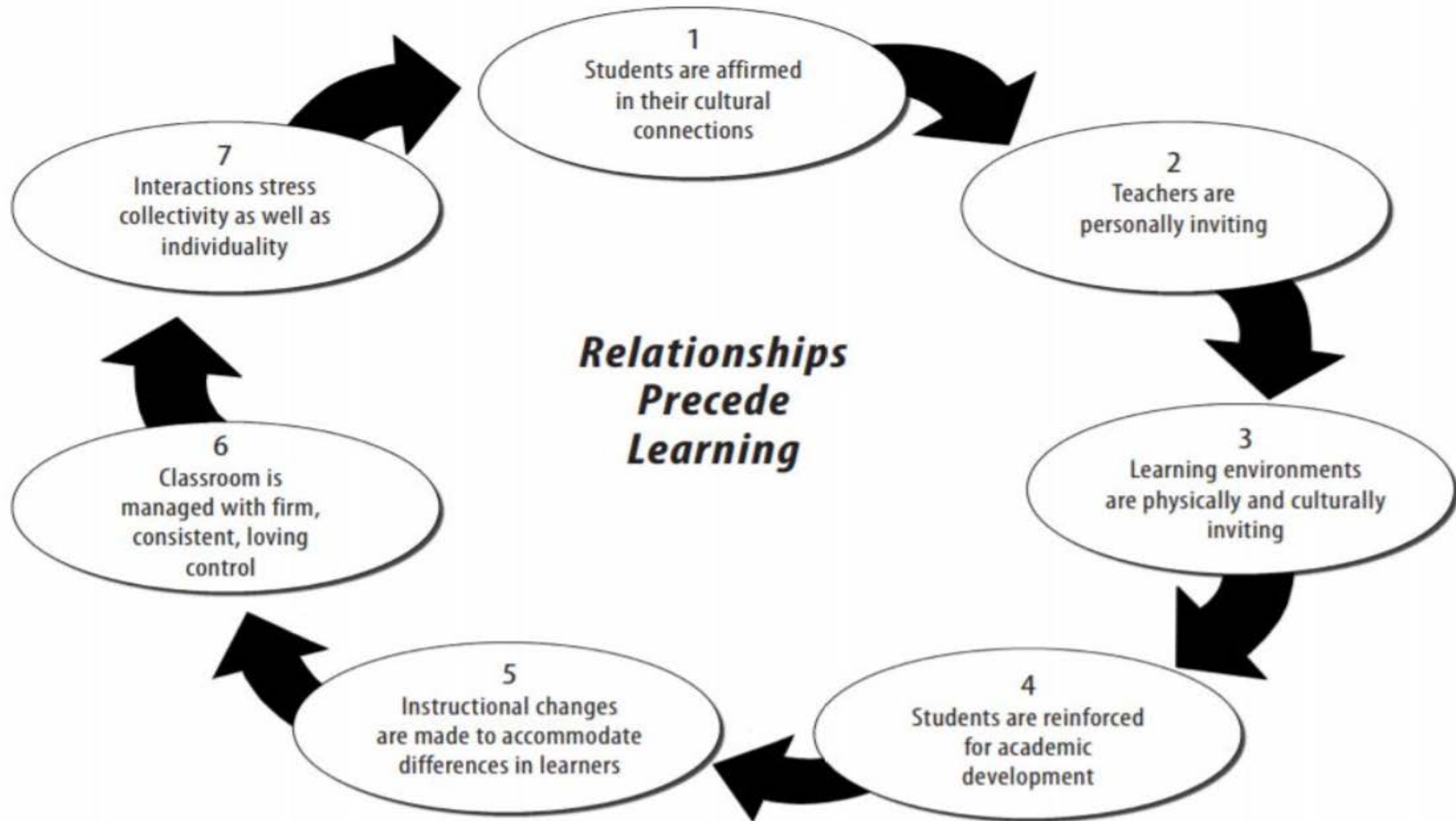


CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ENGAGEMENT

Cultural competence and high expectations play a central role.

- Look for strengths in every student.
- Consider multiple explanations for low achievement, classroom misbehavior.
- Communicate optimism about what students can accomplish.
- Objectively assess students' progress.

7 Principles for Culturally Responsive Teaching



HOW TO BECOME MORE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

- **Assessing your own behavior** creates an awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural differences not just between students, but also between yourself and your students.
- **Getting to know your students** as individuals in a one-on-one setting will help you learn about them and put them at ease.
- **Encouraging students to have positive interactions** with each other, where they can learn in a judgment-free environment, fosters critical thinking.
- By **including all cultures** in your teaching and **adapting activities** and materials to consider all students' backgrounds and readiness levels, teachers can encourage students to become more engaged in learning.

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

- Teaching is dynamic and flexible to reflect students' backgrounds.
- Facilitation of learning taps into background knowledge and experiences.
- Teachers shape and craft instruction to align with students' backgrounds.
- Goal is to make learning more relevant, engaging, and effective for students.

Linguistically Responsive Teaching

- Teaching is grounded in theoretical principles of language learning and development.
- Facilitation of learning taps into language backgrounds and proficiencies.
- Teachers attend to language demands and scaffold instruction by language proficiency.
- Goal is to promote disciplinary learning and language development for students.

MINDSETS!

- I might fail, even if I try
- I will look stupid if I ask a question
- I am not "smart" enough
- I will be bullied or made fun of because I don't "fit in"
- I will lose my friends or not have friends
- I might have a teacher that does not like me
- I will disappoint my parents
- I will never be able to afford to go to college
- I will be asked to read aloud in class
- I will never understand math
- I just do not have what it takes to be successful in school

Building Resiliency

- Relationship with at least one supportive adult
- Positive outlook
- Problem solving skills
- Hobby, interest, curiosity
- Goals, hopes, dreams
- Being needed by others
- Positive memories and images to hold onto



HOW DO YOU OR CAN YOU INTEGRATE THESE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES?

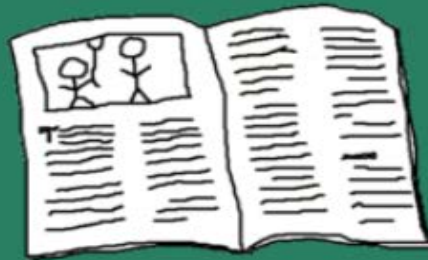
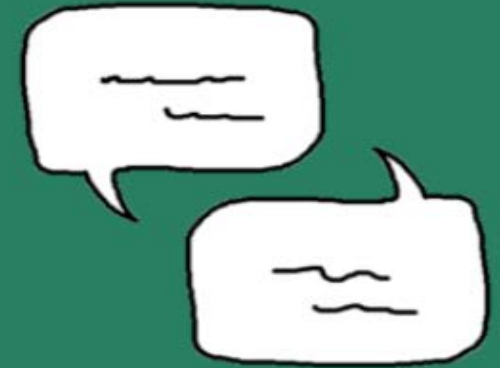


1. Gamify it.

Most games employ a lot of the cultural tools you'd find in oral traditions – repetition, solving a puzzle, making connections between things that don't seem to be related.

2. Make it social.

Organizing learning so that students rely on each other will build on diverse students' communal orientation.



3. Storify It.

Diverse students (and all students) learn content more effectively if they can create a coherent narrative about the topic or process presented.



STUDENT EXPRESSION

Dispatches from Quarantine

Alexandra Zapruder (*Salvaged Pages*)

- What students have to say matters.

This pandemic has shown what was already there and it will end as one of the most important times in the history of the U.S., if not the world.

And I am a witness.

I SPEND MY TIME
IN HIGH TOWERS
AND LOW VALLEYS,
RUSHING WATERS
AND DARK CAVERNS,
ENCIRCLED BY
THE BOOKS I LOVE.

The One Thing You'd Save

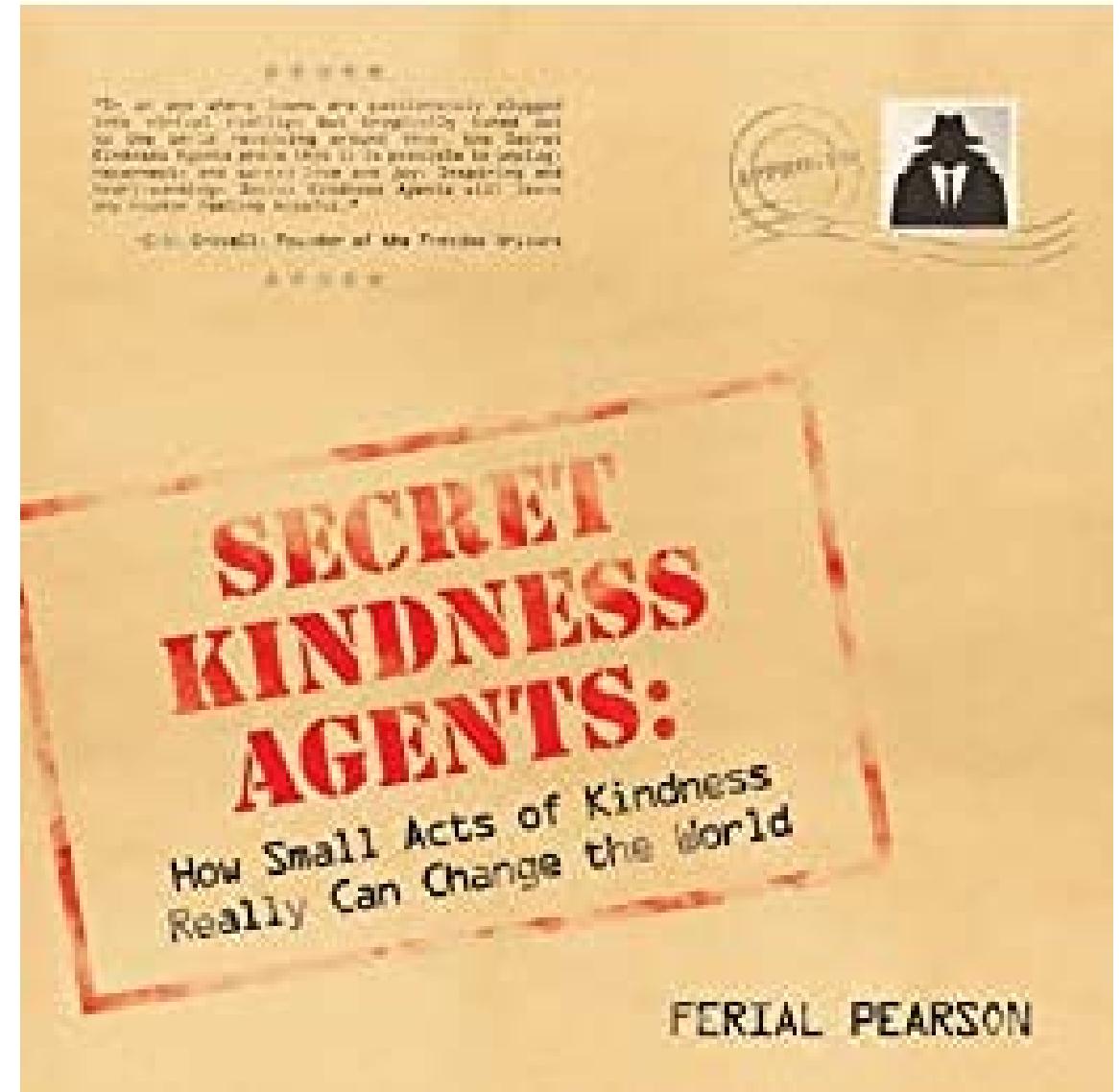
- If your house were on fire, what one thing would you save?



STUDENT ACTION

Secret Kindness Agent

- **Step 1** Write down a list of about 10 to 15 potential positive benefits of Secret Kindness Agents, and make a list of the potential risks.
- **Step 2** Have students brainstorm anonymous acts of kindness, or jobs, and select Secret Agent names for themselves.
- **Step 3** Once students select their jobs and verbally commit to honor those jobs, have them perform their acts of kindness every day for a week.
- **Step 4** At the end of the week, have students write reflections on how their jobs have affected them and those around them.



KINDNESS...

- **Keeps your *heart healthy*:** Releases oxytocin (and nitric oxide), which helps to expand your blood vessels and lower blood pressure.
- **Makes you a *happier* human:** Releases endorphins that may help to elevate your mood.
- **Keeps you *young*:** Free radicals and inflammation, which are big contributors to the aging process, are reduced when you show love and kindness.
- Has been shown to strengthen your immune system and bring down stress levels.
- **Is contagious:** When you do something kind for someone, it is almost guaranteed that they will perform an act of kindness for someone else.

INCORPORATE A VARIETY OF BRAIN BREAKS

Brain breaks are mental breaks designed to help **students stay focused and attend**.

The brain breaks get students moving to carry blood and oxygen to the brain.

The breaks **energize or relax**.

The breaks **provide processing time** for students to **solidify their learning**.

(Jensen)

BRAIN BREAKS AT HOME



BEYOND EXERCISE

Exercise is central to **brain growth, mood regulation, and cognitive processing**

(Hillman, Erickson, & Kramer, 2008).

Figure 1: How Physical Activity Affects Learning

What movement does to the brain	How that impacts learning
Physical activity enhances circulation so individual neurons can get more oxygen and nutrients.	Oxygen fuels mitochondria activity, and those cells fuel brain function.
Exercise releases dopamine in the brain.	This improves students' mood, working memory, and effort.
Exercise regulates norepinephrine and heart rate, which is significant in terms of increasing blood flow to the brain.	This increased blood flow to the brain fosters long-term memory and improves focus and attention.
Exercise triggers the release of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF).	BDNF boosts neurons' ability to communicate with each other. BDNF also accelerates the development of long-term potentiation (LTP), or memory formation.
Daily, physical activity for 20 minutes or more yields the massive benefits of neurogenesis (the production of brand-new neurons).	Neurogenesis boosts mood regulation, cognitive function, and memory.

Research shows . . .

Culturally responsive teaching practices can provide students with a range of cognitive and social benefits*

- **Facilitating brain processing:** Drawing from students' cultural knowledge and norms contributes favorably to reading comprehension and mathematical thinking.
- **Motivating and engaging students:** Culturally responsive teachers connect academic concepts to the everyday lives of their students.
- **Cultivating critical thinking and problem-solving skills:** Culturally responsive teachers build students' awareness of social justice issues encountered in their daily lives and communities through rigorous, project-based activities and investigations of meaningful, open-ended problems.
- **Strengthening students' racial and ethnic identities:** The centering of students' identities in the classroom supports the development of students' racial and ethnic pride, which favorably links to school engagement, interest in learning, and better grades.
- **Promoting a sense of safety and belonging:** Culturally responsive teachers cultivate these feelings by demonstrating care, encouraging socialization among students, and establishing respectful relationships with learners.

* 5 Ways Culturally Responsive Teaching Benefits Learners, New America, 2019



ON THE JOURNEY, REMEMBER:

- Role of culture in school: Culture is central to learning.
- Educating students about diversity: Respect and celebrate our differences.
- Learning about students' cultures: Make an authentic connection.
- Culturally supportive classrooms: Embrace cultural ways of being.
- Family and community involvement and engagement: Make it real!



- Engage with the cultures of your students, their families, and your colleagues in authentic culturally responsive ways
- Implement brain-friendly practices in your setting
- Reach out for resources and network to sustain the work





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Thank you!

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