



CULTURAL RECIPROCITY

UNDERSTANDING THE INFLUENCE OF
CULTURE ON STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR

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Created by Dr. Maya Kalyanpur as part of the *Leaders for Inclusion Project* at the University of San Diego and generously funded by the Johnson Family Foundation.
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OUTLINE

- Understand that behavior has a cultural basis
- Learn about cultural reciprocity as an approach towards enhancing self-awareness of cultural difference
- Learn the four steps of cultural reciprocity to apply in your own classroom

ALIGNMENT WITH DSE TENETS

The objectives of this module are to:

- Promote the understanding of disability from a social model perspective
- Reduce some of the social inequities that occur in classrooms with students from culturally diverse backgrounds by explaining the influence of culture on behavior
- Enable teachers to assume competence and reject deficit models of disability
- Privilege the interests and voices of culturally diverse families towards building more effective parent-professional relationships.

WHAT'S "WRONG" WITH THIS PICTURE?



Boy sitting on book and reading book. CC0



Person sitting and keeping legs on books and reading. CC0

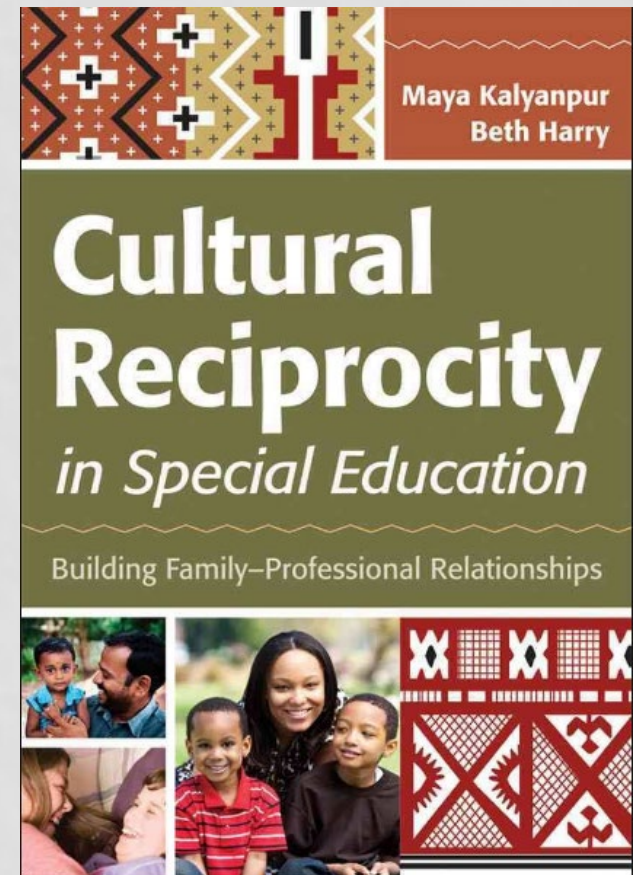


LEVELS OF CULTURAL AWARENESS

- Overt level
 - Obvious differences like color of skin, religious headgear, accent
- Covert level
 - Less obvious differences that become apparent with time or proximity like interpersonal communication styles
- Subtle level
 - Deeply imbedded, taken-for-granted assumptions like values and beliefs

WHAT IS CULTURAL RECIPROCITY?

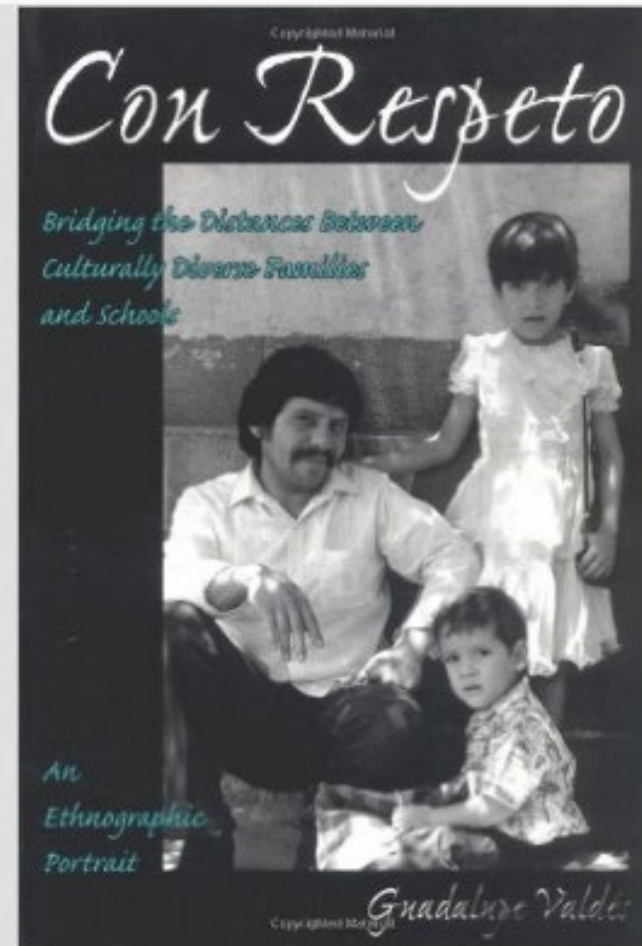
- An effort to go beyond the overt and covert levels of cultural awareness is to start understanding the values and beliefs that underlie students' behaviors.
- It is not about developing cultural COMPETENCE, but cultural RECIPROCITY
- Both professionals and families learn to negotiate other cultures (gain "social capital").



(Kalyanpur & Harry, 2012, Cover).
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CASE #1

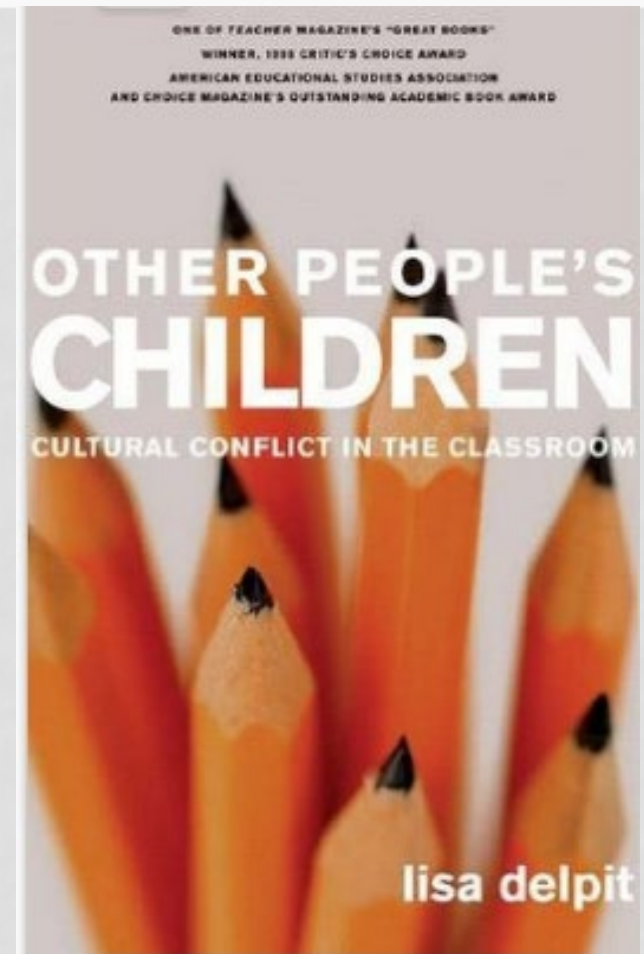
- You have ten students in your class whose parents are Mexican immigrants. They sit quietly in the classroom, never participate or raise their hands to answer questions. Are they under-achieving students?



(Valdes, 1996, cover). Copyright by Teachers College Press

CASE #2

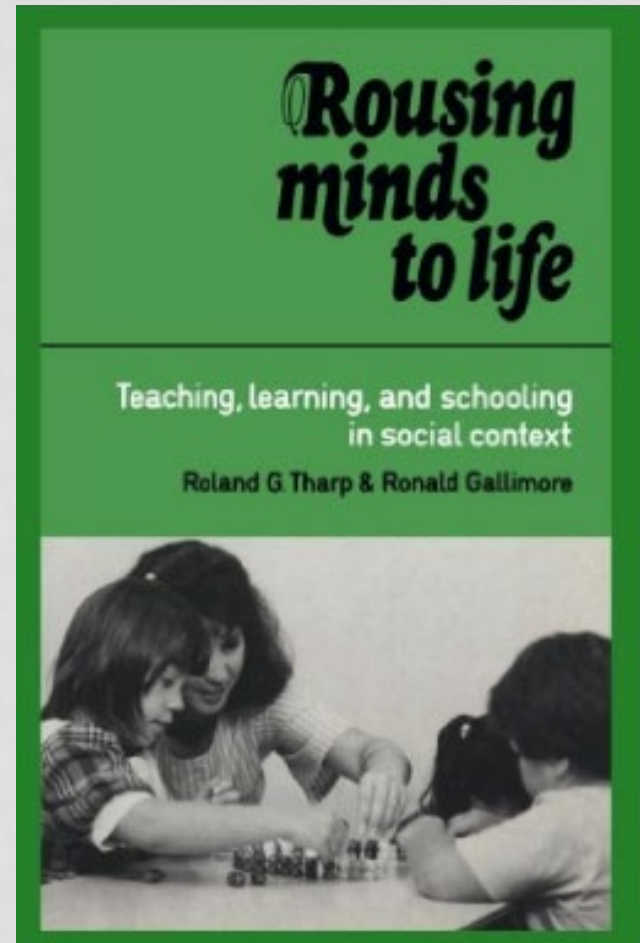
- At the end of the art activity, as a preschool teacher, you notice that an African-American student continues to cut his turkey shape even though you have told him that “The scissors go in the box”. Is he being defiant deliberately?



(Delpit, 2006, cover). Copyright by
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CASE #3

- A kindergarten Hawaiian student continues to interrupt you during storytelling even after you have told her not to. Why do you think she does not follow directions?



(Tharp, & Gallimore, 1995, cover).
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CASE #4

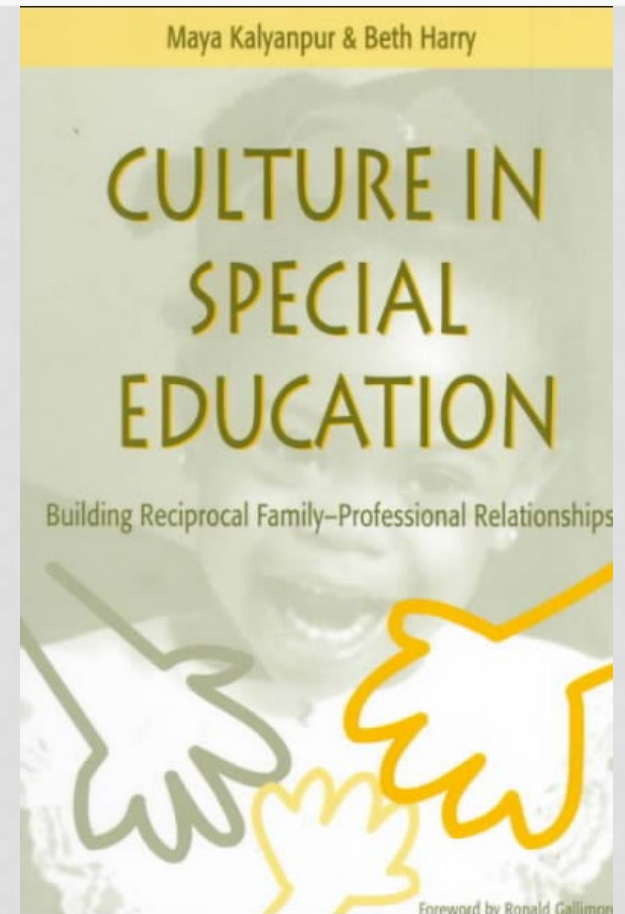
- An Afghani student refuses to clean up after play time or snack time. He tells you that at home, this is something his mother and older sisters do and he is not expected to clean up. Why do you think he refuses to clean up in the classroom?



[School Back in Session](#) by Staff
Sgt. Marcus J. Quarterman. CC0

CASE # 5

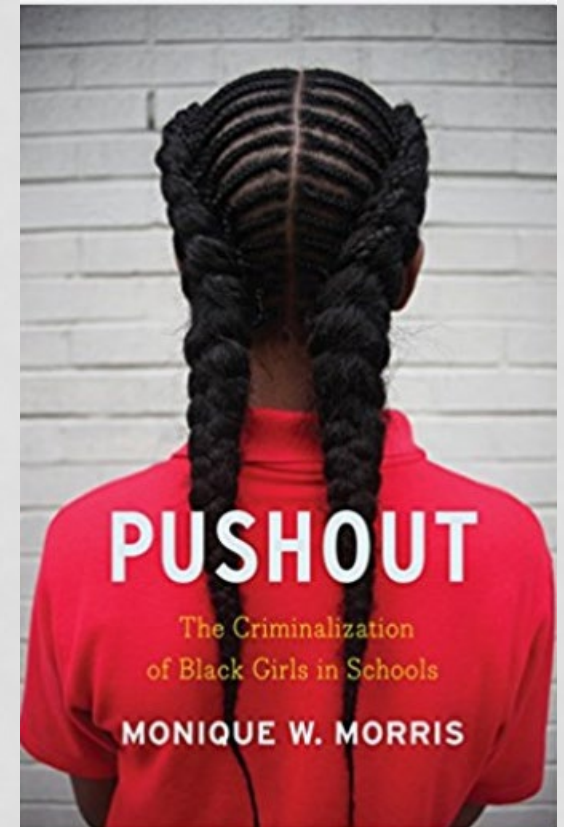
- Annie is an African-American single mother. Her 5-year-old son has a disability. She has a good relationship with her Anglo-American social worker who visits her in her Section 8 apartment once a month. One time, Annie told the social worker that she beat her son when he was naughty. The social worker reported her to Child Protection Services. Is this the appropriate action?



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CASE #6

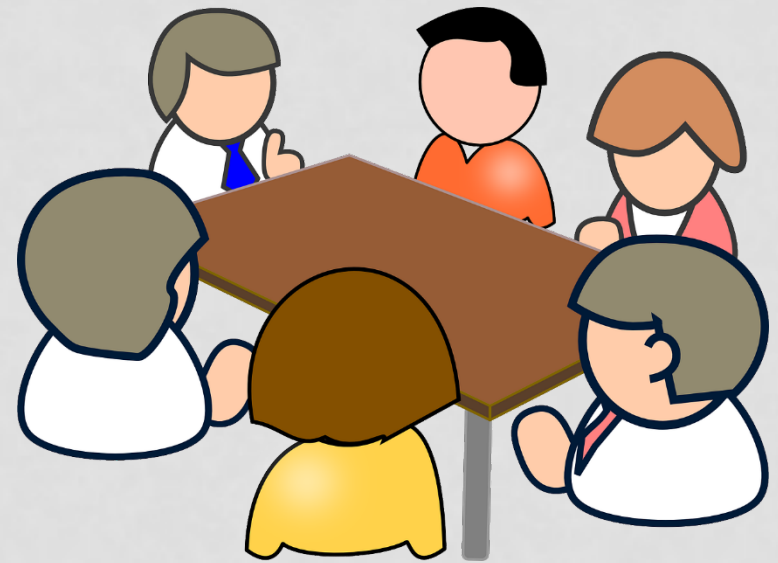
- In a classroom, you observed a Black girl being pulled out of the classroom due to misbehaving according to the teacher. But when a White girl engage in the same behavior, the teacher does not pull the student out of the classroom. Why do you think the teacher handled the situation differently?



(Morris, 2016, cover).
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CASE #7

- At an IEP meeting, you become more and more uncomfortable as the parents kept saying “Jesus be praised!”



[Meeting conference people](#) by OpenClipart-Vector. CC0.

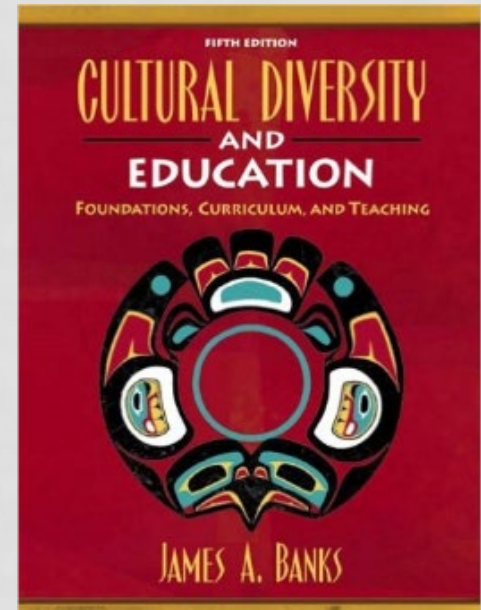


FOUR STEPS OF CULTURAL RECIPROCALITY

1. Identify the cultural basis in your instructional practice
 - a. Why do you do what you do in your classroom?
 - b. Fill out your cultural identity web
2. Identify the cultural basis in your student's behavior if there is an incongruence
 - a. Why does the student do what they do?
 - b. Speak to the parents or guardians
3. Make these differences in expectations explicit
4. Work out a compromise

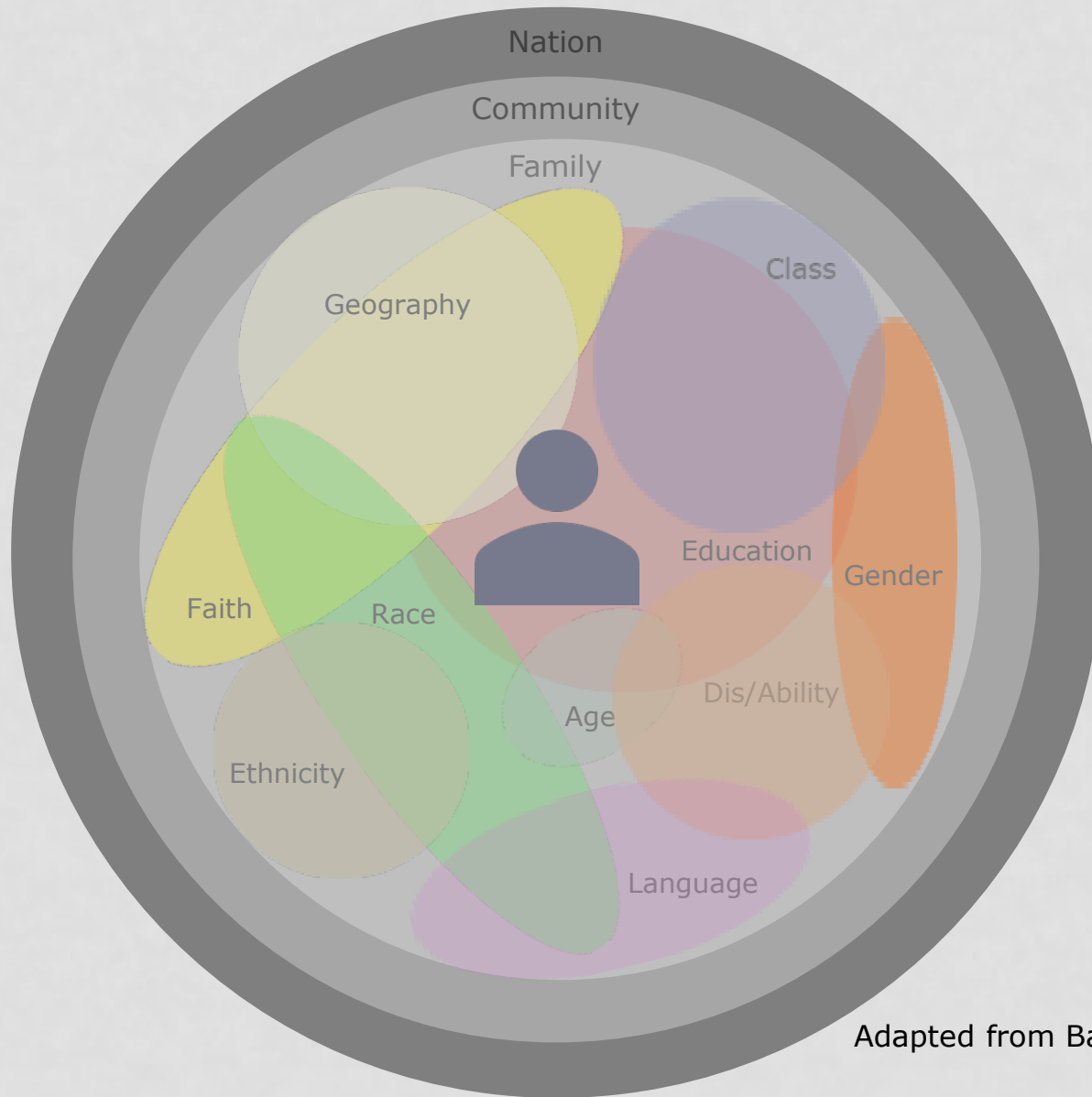
STEP 1: IDENTIFYING CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS IN YOUR TEACHING

- Asking yourself “why?”
 - Why do I want my student to walk in a line to get from one place to another?
 - What are the imbedded values?
- Recognizing “who am I?”
 - Identifying the macro- and micro-cultural groups that make up who you are
 - Socio-economic status/ class; Religion; Occupation; Ethnicity/ race; Age; Gender; Nationality; Birth order; Family relationship
- Intersectionality
- Positionality



(Banks, 2005, cover). Copyright by Pearson

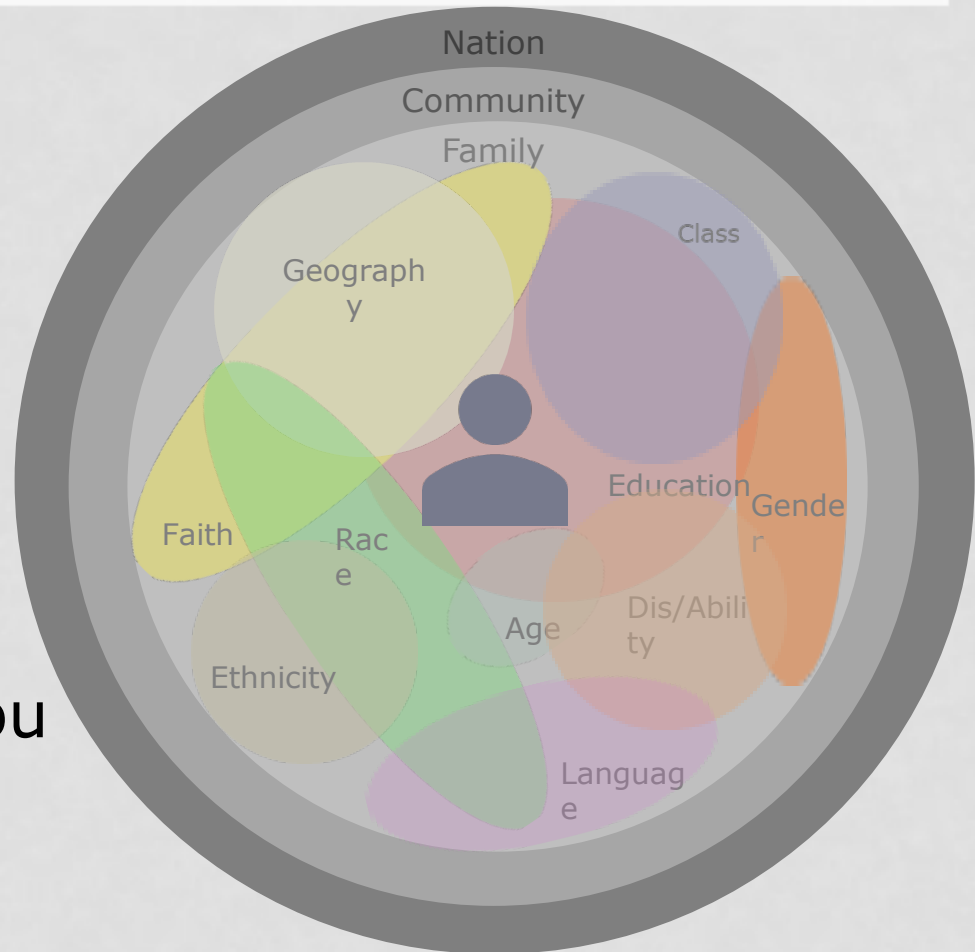
CULTURAL IDENTITY



Adapted from Banks (2005, p.52)

ACTIVITY #1

- Fill in your cultural identity web: Identify aspects of your macro- and micro-cultures, intersectionality and positionality.
- Discuss your cultural identity web with the person sitting next to you



Adapted from Banks (2005, p.52)

STEP 2: IDENTIFYING CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS IN STUDENT'S BEHAVIOR

- Asking the parent “why?”
 - Speak to the student’s parent or guardian
 - Find out if there are differences in your assumptions and theirs.



[Two people speaking](#) by Mscharwies. CC0

STEP 3: MAKE THESE DIFFERENCES EXPLICIT

- By explaining your expectations, you provide the parents with “social capital” (also called “cultural capital”) or the knowledge to understand our mainstream culture and to navigate through it.
- You also help them to make an informed decision



[Country road vector illustration](#) by OpenClipart. CC0

STEP 4: WORK OUT A COMPROMISE

- Respect the parents' culture, their values and beliefs.
- Negotiate a middle ground
 - A "mélange of styles" (Ballenger, 2004)
- Being uncomfortable is okay.



[Palette](#) by Rosa Bonheur. CC0

GROUP ACTIVITY #2

- Apply the approach of cultural reciprocity:
 - Think of a situation where a student might be presenting challenging behavior
 - What are your expectations? Why?
- With the group or the person sitting next to you:
 - Try to analyze what the parent's expectations might be and how they differ from yours.
 - Work out a possible compromise.



[Four hands holding](#) by Vicki Nunn. CC0

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- IRIS module on “Cultural influences on behavior”
- Culture’s influence on behavior doesn’t stop at the classroom door.
- How culture may impact behavior in the classroom
- The WEIRD Science of Culture, Values, and Behavior
- What is cultural reciprocity?
- What is cultural reciprocity in special education and why does it matter?
- Culturally Sensitive Individualization of Services and Supports

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