**Summary of Culturally Responsive Teaching - Geneva Gay**

**Gay, Geneva. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice.*Teachers College Press, 2018.**

In her book, Geneva Gay makes a convincing case for using culturally responsive teaching to improve the school performance of underachieving students of color. She combines insights from multicultural education theory, research, and classroom practice to demonstrate that African, Asian, Latino, and Native American students will perform better, on multiple measures of achievement, when teaching is filtered through their own cultural experiences and frames of reference. According to Gay (2018), good intentions are not enough “to prevent academic inequities among diverse students” (14). We must be aware of the harmful effects of “stereotype threat” whenever we discuss even well-meaning generalizations about cultural differences (19). At the same time, basing teaching on “individual differences” alone, without knowledge of culture, leads to critical misunderstandings about behavioral norms and attitudes (24). These behaviors should be celebrated and worked with, not misinterpreted as “off-task” or “uninterested in learning” or as an excuse to reduce learning expectations (60-63).  “Culturally responsive caring-in-action” teachers are those who foster respect, high achievement, confidence, cooperation, and cultural pride in the classroom (51). They deal “directly and bluntly” with racism and classism and provide “intellectually challenging and personally relevant learning experiences” in a way that is “personally supportive” (52).

“Cultural therapy” and “intergroup dialogues” are recommended to foster cultural self-awareness amongst teachers (70-74). “Academic Dialect Only” mandates are contradictory to culturally responsive teaching. Instead, “competency in more than one communication system is a strength, a resource, and a necessity to be cultivated [and celebrated] for students living in pluralistic societies” (82). Several studies show that employing the communication styles of a cultural group increases achievement (97-119). Cultural diversity in curriculum content is also important: “Relevant curriculum content for teaching African American, Latino American, Asian American, and Native American students includes information about the histories, cultures, contributions, experiences, perspectives, and issues of their respective ethnic groups.” Also, curriculum content includes sources from outside the formal classroom (128). “Students and teachers should become scholars of ethnic and cultural diversity, and generate their own curriculum content...” through “library research” and “personal stories” (171). We must make it a habit to learn about the authors of texts in order to practice “discern[ing] how the ‘positionality’ of authors affects their analyses” (225).

Culturally responsive teachers are confident in their teaching and use a great variety of teaching strategies (68). Instructors should understand “learning style” theory and how to create “compatible instructional strategies.” There is great overlap between such theories and “ethnic learning styles,” though there are abundant individual differences within groups (180). We must all remember the “active” and “emotional” nature of learning, not just the cognitive (197). Structured group work is key; “heterogeneous groups work best” (196).