

Over 3 months, 5 educators joined a Co-Lab for Innovation  
to learn about  
**Culturally Responsive Teaching.**

**This isn't your typical professional development.**



Together, they benefited from each other's perspectives and expertise  
in different subjects, grade levels, and settings.



Gabby G.,  
High School Spanish  
Teacher, Belmont  
Public Schools



Marvin V.,  
Middle School Educator,  
Out-of-School Nonprofit  
Program



Kourtney H.,  
Kindergarten Teacher,  
Boston Public Schools



Francisco H.,  
High School Spanish  
Teacher, Revere Public  
Schools



Jeff S.,  
High School History  
Teacher, Belmont  
Public Schools

Through an inquiry cycle process, each educator dug deep into their practice and student data to better understand the challenge they wanted to solve and **why it was important to them**. In looking at resources and examples, they **developed a hypothesis**, **created a plan**, and **tried something new** in their classrooms. Along the way, they stayed connected to the team and celebrated successes, asked for advice, posed questions, and held each other accountable for sticking with it.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching is a big topic. Here's where this team focused:**

- Teaching kindergarten students the “language of power”
- Looking at the cultural diversity within Spanish-speaking countries
- Using student presentations as a tool for expressing identity
- Building empathy among privileged students to promote social entrepreneurship
- Collecting student feedback on efforts to make a global history course more engaging and relevant to all learners



Resources, advice, and more good stuff



## Here's what worked:

- Developing a classroom culture that celebrates (not just acknowledges) student identities is a first step, something to start at the beginning of the year. Then you can move toward students giving feedback to the teacher, each other, and about the course.
- You have to provide different entry points to help students build empathy with experiences they've never had. Design Thinking provides a process for doing this.
- Visuals, especially for younger students, like the Angry Octopus book, are great for helping students connect and understand the use of language.

## Headlines from the team:

"As teachers, we feel an urgency to see a final product or method, to visualize in total the fruits of their labors. The Co-Lab provided us with unwavering latitude and support in slowing down the creative, collaborative process in order to engage deeply with the topic and the possibilities for making a change in our practice."

"When something is bothering you, you keep scratching, scratching. You just need something to soothe the pain. I've been thinking about Culturally Responsive Teaching, but didn't have the time, place, or people to think about it with. The Co-Lab was the Neosporin for my CRT itch."

"When I think of Culturally Responsive Teaching now, I see those are all three separate things—cultural, responsiveness, and teaching. You have to take the lids off of all three of those things and think about how you can address them in your classroom."

## Some of the team's go-to resources:

### Articles & Books

- "What is intersectionality, and what does it have to do with me?," YW Boston Blog
- "Here's How You Know When You Need to Check Your Microaggressions at the Front Door," Shanna Peeples, Education Post Blog
- The Jane Addams Children's Books Awards for Peace, Social Justice, Global Community, and Equity for All People
- *Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real About Race in School* by Mica Pollock
- *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* by Django Paris
- *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain* by Zaretta L. Hammond
- *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools* by Glenn E. Singleton

### Multimedia

- Lee Mun Wah's "The secret to changing the world," TED Talk
- "The Consequences of Racism," TED Radio Hour Podcast
- Harvard's Implicit Bias Tests
- Teaching Tolerance readings, activities, and lesson builder



Want to know more about Co-Labs or connect with one of the educators involved?

Email Kat Johnston ([kat@theteachercollaborative.org](mailto:kat@theteachercollaborative.org))

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