

A Pedagogy of Recognition: Placing recognition at the center of teaching and learning

“Children and youth need and want our attention, and they’ll get it...one way or another.”
~ John Harris Loflin

If the *unmet need for recognition is at the root of human aggression and violence*, then schools, particularly, must be places where the lives, family and friends, strengths, culture, neighborhood, and problems of each student must be regarded and validated. This calls for a way of teaching students based on this essential human need.
~ [Pedagogy of Recognition](#)

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Below are the 5 pedagogies of recognition Dr. Luis Rodriguez suggests educators use to become “transformative mentors” who surround, inspire, and support youth so that they can enact their own agency as people.

- **Relational recognition** involves the ways in which urban youth are viewed, named (labeled), greeted, and acknowledged within the school context. It asks teachers to question: *In what ways do I know, relate to, and respect my students?*
- **Curricular recognition** considers the ways in which the knowledge and experiences of urban youth are affirmed, validated, and legitimized within the school context. It challenges teachers to ask themselves: *In what ways does the curriculum reflect the lived realities of the youth I serve?*
- **Recognize the importance of a holistic Black history to a strong sense of community, identity, and well being for African American children and youth**
It is vital Black history is in schools throughout the curriculum so K-12 African American students have a strong sense of community, as well as personal identity and well-being. Garry Holland’s *Historic Journey* curriculum is a good example <https://thehistoricjourney.org/>.
- **Contextualizing recognition** urges educators to connect urban students’ dispositions and lack of engagement from school to the social-historical context for the purposes of transgressing the dominant paradigms that students experience today (i.e., school–community disconnection).
When educators “contextualize” recognition, they must consider the ways in which urban youth are recognized within their social context as a means of understanding their existential experiences in school and beyond. Here a teacher must ask: *In what ways does the social context help me understand the lives and schooling experiences of the students I serve?*
- **Pedagogical recognition** happens when teachers’ lessons stem from and are shaped by students’ experiences in schools, the values they place on particular knowledge and experiences, and how these experiences and life lessons interact within the larger social context in which they live. A teacher using this approach to pedagogy asks: *In what ways does power influence the learning and relational environment of the classroom?*
- **Transformative recognition** is a constant process where questions are forged about the purpose of recognition and education. In this situation teachers must question: *In what ways do all aspects of the educational endeavor live up to principles of justice, transformation, and freedom?*

Read more on the [Pedagogy of Recognition from Dr. Louie Rodriguez](#)

Proposed Action Item

AACI will organize a Research Action Team of educators, community representatives, and students to develop a series professional development sessions encouraging and preparing schools and teachers to create their lesson plans with these questions in mind—questions validating the lives and circumstances of their students.

- Relational respect and regard: In what ways do I know, relate to, and respect my students?
- Curricular respect and regard: In what ways does the curriculum reflect the lived realities of the youth I serve?
 - In what ways does the curriculum recognize the connection of a holistic Black history curriculum to a strong sense of community, identity, and well being for my African American students? <https://thehistoricjourney.org/>
 - There is now an ethnic studies law/curriculum <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/standards/ss-2018-ethnic-studies-standards.pdf>
 - For working-class African American students, we can add a history of labor curriculum so they will know that their ancestors regarding a 40 hour work week, child labor, safe working conditions, the right to unionize and bargain collectively, unemployment and health insurance <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/SEW-CTF-Keeping-urban-students-in-school-Adding-a-history-of-labor-course-to-the-curriculum.pdf>
- Contextualizing respect and regard: In what ways does the social context help me understand the lives and schooling experiences of the students I serve?
- Pedagogical respect and regard: In what ways does power influence the learning and relational environment of the classroom?
- Transformative respect and regard: In what ways do all aspects of the educational endeavor live up to principles of justice, transformation, and freedom?

The Pedagogy of Recognition Research Action Team will set benchmarks and conduct before and after longitudinal research studies to see if the uses of these pedagogies of recognition positively affect school climate, student academics and behavior and other factors. The studies that will be peer reviewed and published.