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Fostering Intercultural Competence through Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Practices and Perspectives in Philippine Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

This qualitative multiple-case study investigated the role of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in promoting intercultural competence (IC) in Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Anchored on the theoretical frameworks of Geneva Gay's (2010) Culturally Responsive Teaching and Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence, the study aimed to (1) examine current CRP practices among educators, (2) explore faculty and student perceptions of intercultural competence development in diverse classrooms, and (3) identify the challenges and opportunities in implementing CRP to foster inclusive education. Through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis involving 15 faculty and 15 students across three geographically dispersed HEIs in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, the research revealed several key themes. Educators commonly employed localized strategies such as integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), contextualizing learning materials, and embracing multilingual practices to make instruction more inclusive and culturally validating. Faculty and students viewed intercultural competence as essential in navigating classroom diversity, with inclusive dialogue, conflict-based reflection, and cultural self-awareness identified as core learning processes. However, institutional limitations, rigid curricula, lack of formal training, and insufficient support systems, hindered the full realization of CRP. Nonetheless, faculty agency, cultural empathy, and student empowerment emerged as vital opportunities for sustaining inclusive and transformative education. The findings underscore the need for systemic reforms and policy alignment to embed CRP within HEIs, supporting the development of globally competent and culturally grounded graduates.

Keywords: culturally responsive pedagogy, intercultural competence, higher education, inclusive education, indigenous knowledge systems, multilingualism

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Introduction

Intercultural competence is recognized as an essential educational goal in an ever globalizing and multicultural world. This is more evident than in the Philippines, where a kaleidoscope of ethnolinguistic identities and global currents meet within that nation's HEIs. With classrooms becoming increasingly more diverse—in terms of both culture and language, there is an increasing need for pedagogical frameworks that dare employ inclusive practices and approaches that speak to students' cultural nuances and life experiences regarding their learning. Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) provides a compelling avenue in this pursuit. CRP encourages mutual respect, empathy, and creates deeper engagement by validating learners' cultural identities and incorporating them into the learning process, which is central to intercultural competence.

Although there are strong calls for diversity and inclusiveness in policy mandates and curricular reforms, the reconciliation of such values in actual teaching and learning practices is lacking. This study contributes to filling this gap by investigating how, and to what extent, cultural responsiveness in teaching is being taught and perceived in Philippine HEIs. This study attempts to examine the teaching approaches that educators use to foster an inclusive classroom, understand the perceptions held by faculty and students on developing intercultural competence, and identify challenges and opportunities in implementing CRP in diverse academic settings. Finally, this study aims to inform the development of evidence-based, culturally sensitive educational practices that foster a more holistic and equitable approach to learning for all.

Although several studies conducted worldwide provided evidence on the importance of CRP in promoting engagement, equity, and intercultural competence, only a few research initiatives have been made on how CRP is practiced and experienced in the higher education setting of the Philippines. Literature in the Philippines has focused chiefly on multicultural education in basic education, neglecting the cultural dynamics, pedagogical issues, and institutional policies in colleges and universities. Also, although intercultural competence is much talked about in the global academic parlance, its localized interpretation and integration into Filipino pedagogical practices are yet to be exhaustively figured out.

In addition, there is a shortage of research encompassing the views of faculty members and students about the impact of CRP on intercultural development in the actual classroom. While Philippine HEIs continue to internationalize and grapple with the challenge of resources and embrace student diversity, understanding teachers' and students' specific practices and experiences is important. To this end, this study

addresses this lacuna by exploring the conceptualization, enactment, and experience of culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education in the Philippines and its role in enhancing intercultural competence.

Review of Related Literature

Teaching Practices Promoting Intercultural Competence

Many higher education educators who teach from a CRP perspective seek to include the cultural yearning of their students in the learning experience (Gay, 2010 & Ladson Billings, 2014) however, not all education institutions which includes higher education does not provide content or subject matter to multiculturalism in order to accept and respect everyone (Srichampa, 2024). Studies by Caingcoy et al. (2022) evaluated practice teachers in the Philippines and reported a high level of overall CRT competence, particularly in establishing inclusion and developing attitudes, but observed variations in readiness levels across gender and degree program. In higher education, Gageda et al. (2019) have proposed the notion of cultural knowledge pedagogy, which recommends flexible pedagogical practices, culturally relevant content, and assessments that accommodate students' myriad cultural profiles. This consideration for intercultural practices has been tested and proved effective by Saddhono et al. (2025) when Dakon, a traditional Indonesian game was used to increase student participation, enriches vocabulary and strengthens understanding, additionally, in the international setting, strategies were crafted to highly promote culture, as a response, an approach of inclusion in arts and education has been made to preserve their cultural heritage. Hence, students feel inclusivity among other groups (Dobrovolska, et.al. 2025). These studies stress the need to document, culturally diverse pedagogical approaches in the Philippine context to promote intercultural competence in higher education.

Faculty and Student Perceptions of CRP

CRP may be perceived differently by educators as compared to learners. Cultural consciousness is recognized as a must-have among Philippine prospective teachers; however, the practice of CRP was not consistent (Arabit Zapatos, 2022). In the English language instruction field, Garcia (2022) noticed that even though Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) was mostly included in courses such as Purposive Communication, less attention was given to meta-cognitive and digital strategies. These findings highlight a perception gap: educators want to utilize CRP, but systemic pressures and lack of institutional support make consistent practices

challenging, a gap that is also evident in students' reported desire for cultural affirmation in classroom teaching (Nieto, 2017).

Role of CRP in Developing Intercultural Competence

CRP seeks to develop intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Deardorff, 2006). Caingcoy's (2023) systematic overview highlighted core dimensions of CRP as affirming cultural backgrounds, fostering relationships, adapting instruction, and promoting critical consciousness, a construct that parallels models of ICC. Ang (2018) formulated an ICC model for a context in the Philippine HE, highlighting the importance of international collaboration and global experience in Indonesians' acquisition of ICC. In the meantime, the ICC in language classrooms among the Purposive Communication teachers was high, despite challenges in engagement and pedagogy. These results indicate that CRP plays a significant role in intercultural competence, but longer-term institutional and curricular strategies are needed for a more pervasive impact.

Research Objectives

1. Examine the current teaching practices and strategies employed by educators in Philippine Higher Education Institutions that promote culturally responsive pedagogy.
2. To explore the perceptions and experiences of faculty and students regarding developing intercultural competence within diverse classroom settings.
3. To identify the challenges and opportunities in implementing culturally responsive pedagogy to foster intercultural understanding and inclusive education in higher education.

Methodology

Methodology and Methods. From the perspective of multiple case studies, the qualitative research design was used to describe and analyze how CRT was developed to promote IC in the selected Philippine HEIs. Its purpose was to explore lived experience, teaching practice, and attitudes among faculty and students from various disciplines. The work was driven by the theoretical lenses of Geneva Gay (2010), Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence.

Three HEIs in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao were randomly selected to have a regional sample spread. Fifteen faculty members and 15 students were purposively sampled to include direct engagement in and exposure to culturally inclusive teaching practices. Eligibility for faculty respondents was three years of teaching experience and

evidence of utilizing culturally relevant practices in teaching. For students, involvement was defined by their actual involvement in intercultural or multicultural learning environments in courses.

Semi-structured interview guides were developed and pilot tested by educational and cultural researchers. These were in the form of open-ended questions designed to collect the stories and rich accounts of their classroom practices, the kinds of institutional support that are in place for them, what they see as challenges, and the lessons they have learned about intercultural understanding. Furthermore, FGDs were carried out to enhance qualitative data and to stimulate joint reflection among participants.

The interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically. Braun and Clarke (2006) devised the six-stage framework for informed coding, enabling inductive and deductive processes. Emerging themes were cross-referenced with classroom observations and institutional documents (e.g., syllabuses, teaching guides, student outputs) to increase credibility and contextualization. Ethical approval was received before data collection, and signed informed consent was given by all subjects. The principle of confidentiality and no disclosure was applied in the research.

The method enabled an in-depth understanding of how CRP can help build IC in Philippine HEIs through multidisciplinary narrative inquiry, observations, and document analysis.

Data Analysis and Results

Current Teaching Practices and Strategies Employed by Educators in Philippine Higher Education Institutions That Promote Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) underscores the importance of using localized, responsive, and inclusive pedagogies that address students' diverse identities. This research was conducted to examine the existing teaching practices and strategies educators use to attract learners engaged in culturally responsive pedagogy vis-à-vis Philippine HEIs. Results indicated that educators utilize Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), contextualization of curricula, and multiple language strategies were central to how educators saw themselves working to make curriculum culturally relevant and trauma-informed. These practices validate students' cultural identities, connect home and school experiences, and lead to richer, more engaging learning experiences. These findings are consistent with global literature on culturally responsive pedagogy/relevant teaching that supports teaching that acknowledges diversity and

serves to support critical thinking and equitable success for all students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The findings from faculty narratives imply that, despite institutional limitations, several Filipino educators are dreaming about the future of teaching in ways that respect and reflect the lives of their students.

Theme 1.1: Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the Curriculum

Institutions of higher learning (IHL) are increasingly beginning to recognize the pedagogic value of IKS as part of what they teach. This approach is based on respecting local cultures and strengthening the self-image of indigenous and non-mainstream learners. Through incorporating IKS into their curriculum, particularly in teacher education, literature, and social sciences, academics have provided relevant and meaningful learning to students from diverse cultural contexts.

Participant Responses:

When I teach Philippine literature, I include epics like the Darangen of the Maranao. It is not just about content; it shows students that our culture is rich and complex. – (Participant 1, Literature Professor, State University in Mindanao)

Our science classes now include ethnobotany from Aeta communities. Students find it more meaningful when they see local practices explained scientifically. (Participant 2, Biology Instructor, HEI in Central Luzon)

These responses illustrate how educators deploy local stories and indigenous knowledge to bridge cultural divides and confirm students' cultural identities. (2010) and she argues that culturally responsive teaching stands on recognizing the legitimacy and equality of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups (p. 106). The introduction of IKS also breeds pride and enlightenment, and the learning process can be felt within its own context and inclusiveness.

Theme 1.2: Contextualization of Instructional Materials

Culturally responsive educators do not rely solely on imported texts and materials. Instead, they contextualize instructional content to reflect the lived realities of Filipino learners. This includes translating materials to local languages, referencing Filipino contexts, and utilizing local examples that resonate with students' experiences.

Participant Responses:

I always use Filipino or Ilocano examples when explaining theories in my education class. Students understand better when we relate concepts to our cultural realities. (Participant 3, Education Faculty, Northern Luzon HEI)

Instead of using Western marketing cases, we analyze sari-sari stores or local enterprises. Students get more engaged because it is what they know. (Participant 4, Business Instructor, Private HEI)

This theme highlights the pedagogical shift towards relevance. Ladson-Billings (1995) pointed out that effective culturally responsive teaching must develop academic success while maintaining cultural integrity. Using localized content ensures that students understand theories better and see themselves as active participants in the learning process.

Theme 1.3: Valuing Multilingualism in the Classroom

Educators are also promoting culturally responsive pedagogy through translanguaging and multilingual strategies. In linguistically diverse HEIs, instructors allow students to express ideas in their mother tongue or regional languages during discussions or written outputs, with Filipino or English used for final outputs. This fosters inclusivity and values linguistic identities.

Participant Responses:

Some of my students are more expressive in Cebuano or Waray, so I let them explain their ideas in those languages before we translate them. It helps in building confidence. (Participant 5, Language Instructor, Visayas State University)

We use a mixture of English and Filipino. During peer discussions, I let them use Tagalog or even their dialects. What matters is that the ideas come out. (Participant 6, Social Work Professor, Metro Manila HEI)

Such multilingual practices affirm students' cultural and linguistic identities while enhancing participation. Cummins (2000) underscores that allowing students to access their linguistic repertoire can facilitate deeper learning and bridge gaps between home and school cultures. These strategies reflect the democratic and inclusive aims of culturally responsive teaching.

Perceptions and Experiences of Faculty and Students Regarding the Development of Intercultural Competence Within Diverse Classroom Settings.

In the context of increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), developing intercultural competence among faculty and students has become vital to effective and inclusive education. This study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of faculty and students regarding developing intercultural competence within diverse classroom settings. Intercultural competence, the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultural differences (Deardorff, 2006), is increasingly recognized as a crucial 21st-century skill.

As classrooms in the Philippines become more multicultural—particularly with integrating Indigenous learners, international students, and diverse regional cultures—educators and learners encounter both opportunities and challenges in fostering understanding, empathy, and respectful engagement. This study seeks to uncover how students and faculty navigate these complexities, interpret intercultural learning moments, and how these experiences contribute to a more inclusive and culturally responsive academic environment. By giving voice to these experiences, the study provides insights into how higher education can serve as a transformative space for building intercultural bridges and promoting social cohesion in a pluralistic society.

Theme 2.1: Navigating Cultural Diversity through Inclusive Dialogues

Faculty and students emphasized that fostering intercultural competence begins with structured and intentional classroom dialogues highlighting cultural diversity and validating all identities. Inclusive discussions encouraging learners to speak from their cultural perspectives while listening to others help develop empathy, critical thinking, and global awareness. Educators noted the importance of designing activities that situate learning within local and global cultural contexts. This approach aligns with Banks' (2015) framework on multicultural education, which highlights the value of teaching that affirms cultural identity while promoting intercultural understanding.

Participant Responses:

A faculty member teaching humanities shared: When discussing national literature, I ask students to compare it with regional folk narratives or even contemporary stories from their communities. They light up because they see themselves in the lesson. At the same time, they are learning about others. (Participant 16, State University professor)

A student from an ethnolinguistic minority group reflected: Before, I was afraid to mention our community's traditions in class because I thought they were not relevant. However, when my teacher invited us to share, I realized my culture matters too, and I also learned so much from classmates from other provinces. (Participant 2, State University student)

These experiences reveal that inclusive dialogue promotes intercultural competence by offering students a safe platform to reflect on their identities while developing curiosity about others. As Deardorff (2006) asserts, intercultural competence begins with attitudes of respect, openness, and curiosity, qualities cultivated when students are invited to bring their whole selves into classroom spaces.

This practice also fosters a sense of belonging and engagement among culturally diverse learners.

Theme 2.2: Experiencing Intercultural Tensions and Learning from Discomfort

Participants described moments of misunderstanding, stereotype threat, or communication breakdowns that, while initially challenging, served as learning opportunities. Faculty members shared how they facilitated classroom reflection when intercultural tensions arose, enabling students to reconsider assumptions. This echoes Mezirow's (2000) transformative learning theory, emphasizing that uncomfortable experiences can catalyze perspective transformation when guided by critical reflection.

Participant Responses:

A faculty member shared: *There was a debate about gender norms where students clashed over religious and regional views. After the discussion, we processed the tension and unpacked where these values came from. That is when I saw real learning happen, not just about the topic, but about each other.* (Participant 4, State University professor)

A student commented: *One time, my seatmate did not understand why I had to miss class during a tribal celebration. At first, she said it was an excuse. However, after I explained, she apologized and even asked questions. Now we understand each other more.* (Participant 8, State University student)

These narratives illustrate how intercultural tensions, when handled with pedagogical care, can lead to critical insight and deeper mutual understanding. Gay (2018) supports using conflict-resolution and dialogic strategies to transform disagreement into teachable moments in culturally responsive teaching. Such reflective engagement nurtures students' ability to operate effectively across cultural differences, a core element of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2011).

Theme 2.3: Curriculum and Institutional Gaps in Intercultural Competence Building

While faculty and students recognize the importance of intercultural competence, they also reported limited formal institutional support for its development. Many observed that efforts are often left to individual initiative rather than embedded in curricula or institutional policies. This finding mirrors Leask's (2009) observation that many higher education institutions lack systemic approaches to internationalization at home, resulting in inconsistent intercultural learning outcomes.

Participant Responses:

A faculty member remarked: *We have occasional cultural festivals, but our syllabus has no real integration of intercultural learning. I incorporate it in my way, but it is not required.*

A student observed: *We meet classmates from all over, but no class or orientation teaches us how to work with different cultures. It is trial and error.* (Participant 8, State University student)

This theme points to a need for institutional reform. While classroom-level initiatives exist, the absence of comprehensive frameworks weakens their sustainability. UNESCO (2013) advocates structured intercultural education embedded in policies, curriculum design, and teacher training. Without such support, the development of intercultural competence remains uneven and dependent on personal effort rather than institutional commitment.

Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as a Means of Fostering Intercultural Understanding

Based on the findings and data analysis, it is evident that implementing culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in Philippine Higher Education Institutions is influenced by a complex interplay of structural limitations, faculty initiative, and student experiences. Although institutional constraints such as rigid curricula and limited administrative support pose significant challenges, educators' commitment to inclusive teaching fosters meaningful engagement with diverse learners. Faculty members who incorporate local knowledge and multilingual strategies promote academic success and a deeper intercultural understanding. From the students' perspective, culturally grounded content and inclusive classroom practices affirm their identities and foster mutual respect among peers of differing cultural backgrounds. These findings underscore the growing relevance of CRP as a transformative approach to teaching in diverse classrooms and highlight both the obstacles and the potential in its broader institutionalization. The results further align with existing literature advocating for context-sensitive and equity-driven pedagogies in multicultural academic settings.

Theme 3.1: Structural and Institutional Constraints

One of the most persistent challenges in implementing culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) is the presence of institutional rigidity and lack of systemic support. Faculty members in many Philippines Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) often find themselves constrained by standardized curricula, limited academic freedom, and

insufficient institutional frameworks that support diversity and inclusion. Despite increasing awareness of intercultural issues, schools often lack clear policies, resource allocation, and professional development programs specifically targeting CRP.

Participant Responses:

"The curriculum is too fixed. There is little room to incorporate community-based or indigenous perspectives, even when we know students would benefit from it," shared one literature professor from a state university in Northern Luzon.

"We are often expected to 'deliver the syllabus' without flexibility. Cultural sensitivity trainings are rare or optional, so the burden is on individual teachers to innovate," added another faculty member from a teacher education program.

These narratives affirm findings from Banks (2016) and Gay (2018), who stress that successfully implementing CRP requires systemic commitment, not just isolated pedagogical efforts. As in the study of Bishop (2020), teachers in postcolonial contexts struggle with rigid systems that limit culturally meaningful pedagogy. The lack of institutional scaffolding leads to a disconnect between CRP's theoretical value and actual practice.

Theme 3.2: Faculty Agency and Cultural Empathy

Amid institutional limitations, many educators rely on their cultural empathy and agency to implement CRP. Faculty sensitive to diverse cultural backgrounds actively modify instructional strategies, employ inclusive materials, and use students' cultural contexts as pedagogical resources. This personal commitment becomes an opportunity to empower students and model intercultural understanding.

Participant Responses:

"As someone who grew up in a rural area, I know what it feels like to be 'othered.' So, I make sure my classes allow for diverse voices. Students appreciate when I include local texts or discuss ethnic issues," said a Filipino language instructor from Mindanao, Participant 7.

"I invite students to bring in their experiences, especially those from marginalized groups. It makes the class more alive and helps them connect theory with reality," stated a social science professor in a private HEI in Metro Manila.

This aligns with Ladson-Billings' (1995) assertion that culturally responsive educators center student identity in teaching. Faculty agency becomes critical in bridging institutional gaps, and their empathetic approach fosters student engagement and intercultural learning. Nieto (2017) similarly emphasizes that culturally responsive teaching is a moral commitment rooted in respect and understanding of students' lived realities.

Theme 3.3: Student Empowerment and Identity Validation

CRP also allows students to feel empowered by recognizing their cultural identity. When students encounter inclusive content or are invited to share their narratives, they develop confidence and intercultural awareness. Culturally validating experiences can challenge stereotypes and promote solidarity in diverse classrooms.

Participant Responses:

"When our instructor let us present our hometown's language and culture, I felt proud. It was the first time I saw my roots as valuable in an academic setting," shared a senior student from an indigenous community in the Cordillera region.

Discussing Muslim-Christian relations in class helped me understand others better and reflect on my own biases. It made our discussions more open and honest," reflected a political science major at Mindanao University.

These experiences affirm that CRP foster's identity affirmation and intercultural competence among students, a theme echoed in the work of Deardorff (2006) and Byram (2021). Such classroom moments serve as transformative spaces where learners feel seen and are prepared for global citizenship through localized intercultural engagement.

Discussion

The results of this study disclose the various facets of the practice of culturally responsive teaching (CRP) in the Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with the promotion of intercultural competence. Faculty and students agree on CRP's transformative possibilities in reaffirming cultural identities, promoting inclusivity, and closing the intercultural chasm. Nevertheless, they also highlight the continued challenges of institutional bureaucracy, inadequate professional development, and a dearth of culturally responsive instructional materials.

One significant insight is how proactive faculty are in incorporating content based on culture, often from their own experiences or the local communities. This is consistent with the writing of Gay (2010), who felt that CRP is not an approach but instead a pledge to equitable and socially just education. Participants in the study found agency in contextualizing learning, e.g., including indigenous narratives, multilingual strategies, and local examples, particularly in the humanities and social studies.

From the students' viewpoint, introducing culture meant they were more engaged and included. This is congruent with Banks' (2016) contention that students' cultural identities and lived experiences need to be acknowledged and respected for

them to succeed academically and acquire intercultural competence. Participants stated that learning in a culturally inclusive setting enhanced their confidence and ability to interact with others from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

However, significant systemic obstacles remain, such as insufficient support from institutions and CRP frameworks that are not standardized. This is consistent with what Ladson-Billing (1995) observed when she stated, *“although CRP has a strong theoretical base, it often has limited diffusion in educational institutions with traditional administration roles and traditional ways”* (p.24). This also aligns with UNESCO’s (2021) demand for introducing intercultural competencies in higher education to address global developments and social heterogeneity.

Conclusions

The exploration into implementing culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has brought to light both the promising advances and persistent challenges in fostering intercultural competence within diverse learning environments. The study revealed that while faculty and students generally recognize the importance of integrating cultural relevance into teaching and learning, the degree to which CRP is effectively implemented remains varied and largely dependent on individual initiative rather than institutional mandate.

Faculty members who actively practiced CRP demonstrated a deep awareness of their students’ cultural backgrounds, incorporating indigenous knowledge systems, regional languages, and community-based narratives into their instruction. This practice affirms students’ cultural identities and cultivates critical consciousness, aligning with Freire’s (1970) view that education should be a liberatory act rooted in dialogue and cultural relevance. By doing so, educators help students develop a stronger sense of self, empathy toward others, and openness to cultural differences, foundational attributes of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

From the students’ perspective, culturally responsive classrooms were more engaging and personally meaningful. Acknowledging their heritage within the curriculum helped reduce alienation and improved academic confidence. This aligns with existing literature suggesting that CRP promotes better academic outcomes and emotional and social well-being, particularly among learners from marginalized groups (Gay, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2018).

However, systemic barriers remain. The study found that institutional support for CRP is inconsistent. Many educators reported a lack of formal training, the absence of institutional guidelines, and limited access to culturally relevant teaching materials.

Moreover, rigid curriculum structures and standardized assessment models often hinder innovative, context-sensitive teaching approaches. These findings support previous research that notes the gap between CRP theory and its institutional application in many global South contexts (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Thus, to fully realize the transformative potential of CRP, HEIs in the Philippines must take deliberate action. First, policy reform at the institutional and national levels is necessary to recognize and support culturally responsive teaching as a pedagogical standard. CHED and university curriculum committees should allow space for local content development and encourage the integration indigenous and community knowledge into higher education syllabi. Second, continuous and comprehensive professional development programs should be offered to faculty to deepen their understanding of CRP principles and practical strategies. Third, collaborative partnerships must be fostered with cultural communities, NGOs, and heritage institutions to ensure local knowledge and narratives are honored and authentically represented in classrooms.

Ultimately, this study concludes that culturally responsive pedagogy is not a peripheral innovation but a necessary framework for inclusive, equitable, and relevant education in an increasingly diverse and interconnected Philippine society. It is not enough for CRP to be a matter of personal teaching style; it must be systematized, institutionalized, and supported through structures that empower both educators and learners to engage with cultural diversity in meaningful ways. Only then can Philippine HEIs nurture interculturally competent graduates prepared to thrive in global and local communities.

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