# Effective Instructional Practice

This document frequently references deeper learning and/or effective instruction. We don’t view these terms as separate, but as deeply intertwined. Effective instruction is inherent to deeper learning, which incorporates many elements.

## Deeper Learning

**Deeper Learning** is defined as grade-level work that is relevant, real-world, and interactive and leads to student demonstration of Mastery, Identity, and Creativity.

* **Mastery** is evident when all students develop the knowledge and/or skills outlined in the standards and practices, with the ability to transfer that knowledge across situations.
* **Identity** is evident when all students become more invested in the discipline by thinking of and seeing themselves as capable and active agents who do that kind of work.
* **Creativity** is evident when all students shift from receiving knowledge of a discipline to acting or applying their learning to share ideas, solutions, and/or make something within the discipline.

To learn more about Deeper Learning, you can visit the Department’s [Deeper Learning web page](https://www.doe.mass.edu/kaleidoscope/overview.html). The components of effective instruction outlined below all work in tandem to create student-focused learning environments. They provide the instructional, planning, and organizational tools necessary for grade-level work that is relevant, real-world, and interactive.

## Culturally Responsive Learning Environments

**Culturally responsive learning environments** are where culture and identity are viewed as assets and valuable resources, including students' race, ethnicity, or linguistic assets, among other characteristics. When what is being taught is "situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference for students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly" (Gay, 2000). Educators should promote a school and classroom environment that is not only respectful of all cultures, but one that leverages student culture to improve and deepen learning. Culturally Responsive Teaching "should connect in-school learning to out-of-school living; promote educational equity and excellence; create community among individuals from different cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds; and develop students' agency, efficacy, and empowerment" (Gay, 2013).

## Linguistically Sustaining Practices

Like culturally sustaining practices, **linguistically sustaining practices** (Lucas, 2010) promote multilingualism as an asset and honor the linguistic resources students bring to the classroom.

In order to build linguistically sustaining learning environments, educators must get to know their students by understanding their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Linguistically sustaining practices (Lucas, 2010) rely on a research-based understanding of how students acquire language, including but not limited to an understanding of language acquisition as a socially-mediated process; of distinguishing conversational proficiency from academic proficiency; of the impact of an affective filter on learning; and of the importance of utilizing language skills in one's home language when learning a second language.

Leveraging their understanding of their students and the process of language acquisition, educators unpack the language expectations embedded in classroom tasks and design scaffolds and explicit language instruction that provide all students access to rigorous content. Language is taught through content, and language is used and developed in many ways in a classroom: "to interpret and present different perspectives, build awareness of relationships, and affirm their identities (WIDA Guiding Principles of Language development, citing Cummins, 2001; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; May, 2013, Nieto, 2010)."

## Culturally Sustaining Practices

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2017) and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (Lucas, 2010) build on prior culturally-affirming, asset-based pedagogical theory and research including Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2000) that work to further educational justice for students who have been historically underserved and marginalized.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy:

* Affirms and values students' cultures, prior experiences, and linguistic resources to make learning more relevant and effective, while building community and developing student agency.
* Promotes teaching and learning principles of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy of academic, achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness; a framework that "not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (Ladson-Billings, 1995).
* Values multilingualism as an asset and honors multilingual learners' languages to be leveraged, learned, and sustained through meaningful engagement in activities that are valued in their homes, schools, and communities.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy calls for schools as places that should be "sustaining—rather than eradicating—the cultural ways of being of communities of color" through:

* Critical centering on dynamic community languages, valued practices, and knowledges
* Student and community agency and input
* Content and instruction that acknowledges the histories of racial, ethnic, and linguistic communities
* Contending with internalized oppressions, and
* Educators to be able to "curricularize" (or adapt curriculum to) those learning settings.

Visit [this page](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-responsive/) to learn more about culturally responsive learning environments and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, including additional resources and works cited.

## Universal Design for Learning

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** is intended to increase access and engagement in learning by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers, and other obstacles. The UDL framework calls for creating curriculum from the outset that provides:

* **Multiple means of engagement** to tap into learners’ interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn,
* **Multiple means of representation** to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge, and
* **Multiple means of action and expression** to provide learners with options for demonstrating knowledge and skills.

## Evidence-Based Practices

**Evidence-Based Practices** are established from scientifically-based research and result in positive student outcomes for the cohort of students you are serving.

## High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)

**High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)** are aligned to Massachusetts standards, are culturally responsive, and exhibit a coherent sequence of target skills, instructional practices, and understandings. HQIM are accessible for all students, and strongly support teachers in their everyday work to be inclusive and culturally responsive.

Visit the Department’s [Curriculum Matters web page](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/) for additional information and resources.

## Standards-Based Instruction

**Standards-Based Instruction** describes instruction that is aligned to appropriate grade level and content-specific state standards.

## Trauma-Informed Practices

**Trauma-Informed Practices** fully integrate knowledge about trauma and use effective strategies that remove barriers presented by trauma.