

# The Learning Curve

## Episode 5: Culturally Responsive Teaching with Kati Fosselius

### Presented by the Academic Commons

[00;00;00;05 - 00;00;13;18] **Demi Harte**

Welcome to The Learning Curve, a podcast presented by the Academic Commons.

[00;00;13;20 - 00;00;17;07] **Demi Harte**

Your host for today's episode are Demi Harte and.

[00;00;17;09 - 00;00;18;24] **Jacob Santos**

And me, Jacob Santos.

[00;00;19;01 - 00;00;37;14] **Demi Harte**

Our mission is to illuminate higher education, teaching and learning through the power of shared experiences and research informed practices. Through engaging discussions and expert insights, we aim to empower educators to transform their teaching practices enrich student learning experiences and contribute to a culture of evidence based pedagogy in higher education.

[00;00;37;16 - 00;01;05;14] **Jacob Santos**

On this episode, we'll be discussing culturally responsive teaching with Kati Fosselius MS, RDN, LDN. She is the director of the Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetic Practice program in the Jefferson College of Health Professions. She teaches a variety of nutrition courses and social justice and health care seminars, and her research focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion in health professions education.

[00;01;05;21 - 00;01;07;29] **Jacob Santos**

Welcome, Kati.

[00;01;08;02 - 00;01;12;21] **Kati Fosselius**

Thank you so much. I'm really excited to be chatting with you both today.

[00;01;12;24 - 00;01;16;01] **Demi Harte**

So we're going to start with just one more introduction stuff.

[00;01;16;08 - 00;01;23;18] **Jacob Santos**

Can you try your best to describe your teaching practice in three words? If you had to pick three?

[00;01;23;21 - 00;01;40;25] **Kati Fosselius**

Yeah, that is not easy. But I would probably I would probably say sort of the through lines are collaborative, curiosity driven and active.

[00;01;40;28 - 00;01;42;01] **Demi Harte**

Those are great words.

[00;01;42;04 - 00;01;42;15] **Kati Fosselius**

Okay.

[00;01;42;16 - 00;01;58;15] **Demi Harte**

Things now definitely answers that. And so, for the topic of today, how do you define culturally responsive teaching and why is it essential in higher education?

[00;01;58;17 - 00;02;48;19] **Kati Fosselius**

Yes. So it's hard to put this into a short definition. So I apologize in advance that this, has a lot of, components to it, but, culturally responsive teaching or CRT is a framework, for education that is grounded in neuroscience. And I would say, that it is about creating a trusting learning community where it's safe to be brave and to take risks where all members of the community have learning to do, as well as wisdom to share, where each learner is recognized as an individual within the context of their environment and their lived experiences, and that that learner is also recognized as having relevant strengths and skills and the capacity

[00;02;48;19 - 00;03;21;10] **Kati Fosselius**

to grow and succeed. And that that is a learner who will receive wise feedback that holds them to high expectations, coupled with strategies for achieving them. So that's my crack at a definition. And in terms of its importance in higher education, I, I, I think that culturally, culturally responsive teaching offers an approach for us as educators to accomplish things that we I believe, all want to do as educators.

[00;03;21;17 - 00;03;51;29] **Kati Fosselius**

It's a way to hold our students to high expectations, and to believe that the students can achieve those expectations. It's about holding them accountable for their learning, while also following through on our promises to them to provide the resource and the tools and the strategies and the guidance that will allow them to to again achieve what their potential is in that, you know, in that course for that time that you're with them.

[00;03;51;29 - 00;04;26;01] **Kati Fosselius**

It balances these key ideas of care and push. So it really is about having authentic and genuine caring for each of our students, our learners, while pushing them to go beyond their comfort zone, or maybe even what they might believe in that moment that they are capable of. It provides them with chances to recognize their own skills so that they can build on them, sometimes through small wins in the beginning.

[00;04;26;03 - 00;05;01;04] **Kati Fosselius**

It allows them to recognize that it's okay to make mistakes, seeing their errors as a gift and being able to utilize that as a catapult for growth. And, you know, for, further, you know, pushing themselves toward, again, sort of what their goals are as a learner, as a future professional. And, and this framework does all of that in a way that, shows not just respect, but affirmation for every single one of the learners in our classrooms and recognizing that they all have different needs.

[00;05;01;04 - 00;05;26;02] **Kati Fosselius**

They're all coming from a different starting point. They all have different priorities and backgrounds and values, and it's a big soup that we're trying to sort of, you know, stir up together and and really do it in a way that truly is going to be meaningful and, successful for each of those students. So that's why I'm really drawn to this framework.

[00;05;26;04 - 00;05;33;16] **Kati Fosselius**

And, I'm a continuous student of, what it means to be a culturally responsive educator.

[00;05;33;18 - 00;05;53;12] **Jacob Santos**

I love how you just ended with that idea of continuously learning. Right. We are never, really going to quite crack it right away. And I think that's important for listeners who may not do this quite yet. It's good for them to hear that, you know, it's okay if you're not going to master it right at first. Small steps are what really matter here.

[00;05;53;15 - 00;06;18;00] **Jacob Santos**

And, so you talked a lot about the individuality of the learners and how you've kind of got this big soup here, throwing all these ingredients together, trying to make something work. So can you speak towards what specific strategies you use to incorporate the students cultural backgrounds, as diverse as they can be, into your curriculum and your classroom activities?

[00;06;18;03 - 00;06;43;04] **Kati Fosselius**

Yeah. You know, the reality is, I, I really let the students lead me in in this. And I think that is when I am most successful. It is because I am not trying to make guesses or assumptions about what is really going to resonate with students. So certainly there's some trial and error things that have worked in the past, may work again.

[00;06;43;04 - 00;07;03;03] **Kati Fosselius**

And that and I do try to bring back things that I've done before that have resonated with, one group of students along the way. I hope that it will do so again for the next group. You know, I think one thing that's important is that sometimes when we hear the word culture, there's an assumption, right, that it might be reflective of, perhaps, I should say, a certain group.

[00;07;03;10 - 00;07;23;08] **Kati Fosselius**

And I think for a lot of us, we might be thinking about racial groups or ethnic groups as sort of the first cultural groups that come to mind. So I think first, it's important to define that it's not that narrow. Everyone's culture is made up of sort of multiple identities and groups of which they are a part.

[00;07;23;10 - 00;07;54;14] **Kati Fosselius**

And so I think it's foolhardy to try to say, oh, well, we're going to bring in this culture, you know, and do an activity that's fitting for them, for this group of students, this this comes directly from Zaretta Hammond who's written extensively and researched extensively on CRT. The idea is that instead of focusing on a particular group that we really want to think about, CRT as essentially being about infusing our content with what's relevant to our students lives.

[00;07;54;14 - 00;08;22;24] **Kati Fosselius**

And that's not going to be the same with every group of students, or from year to year, or even semester to semester. I think for us as educators, and one of the things that I'm trying to do and again, constantly finding new ways to to be doing this better, but is to think about becoming familiar with our students' cultures sort of writ large, as well as the larger socio political climate in which they are living and learning and themselves evolving.

[00;08;22;24 - 00;08;52;21] **Kati Fosselius**

One of the important takeaways for me about culturally responsive teaching is to emphasize, when we're thinking about cultures on what Hammond refers to as deep culture. And so, you know, certainly there are going to be times where it might be fitting to bring in, you know, traditions. I teach in dietetics. So talking about cultural foods that are traditional, for instance, is something that I think a lot of educators in my field try to tap into.

[00;08;52;26 - 00;09;17;20] **Kati Fosselius**

But if we're really trying to be culturally responsive educators, it needs to go deeper. And in some ways I find that easier, in its own way, because I don't need to be knowledgeable about the nuances of every single cultural group of which my students might be a part. So deep culture is really about one's worldview, core beliefs, and embedded values.

[00;09;17;23 - 00;10;05;25] **Kati Fosselius**

And so those are things that I can try to continuously work to understand about my students through creating a lot of opportunities for them to share some of that information with me, and for me to be aware of, you know, the communities in which my students, again, are part and try to infuse my teaching with those things in mind. You're asking me about my practices, but I want to also say that a lot of what I'm describing, there are similar strategies being utilized by the faculty across my team in our program, which I am very grateful for, and it's something that I, I know I'm learning from my colleagues and hopefully, offering sometimes some

[00;10;05;25 - 00;10;31;13] **Kati Fosselius**

learning for them as well. But one of the things that I like to do is an activity where, my students reflect on multiple cultures of which they are a part, and I really push them to think broadly about what that means. And I've had everything from, you know, students talking about certainly race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual identity or gender identity.

[00;10;31;14 - 00;10;56;09] **Kati Fosselius**

One person talked about her cultural identity as a swiftie and I that was probably the most unique example that I got. But I loved it because she had values and beliefs and a worldview that tied into that identity that I just thought was fabulous for that activity. Often the students take it more seriously, but it can be very broad, you know, other passions, things that they've invested so much time in their lives.

[00;10;56;11 - 00;11;16;24] **Kati Fosselius**

A lot of times, student athletes reference that as one of the cultural groups of which they belong. But when the students do that, then there are opportunities that that I create in the classroom for them to compare. Because they don't just write about what those cultures are, but again, how it has shaped each of those has shaped their worldview and their values.

[00;11;16;27 - 00;11;40;00] **Kati Fosselius**

And so then they compare and and what they tend to find is that there are a lot of commonalities between themselves and others in their class cohort who they might not have known before they would have so many similarities with. But when you get to that deep culture, you know the values and the core beliefs, and maybe it's because they're all drawn to the same profession and program.

[00;11;40;00 - 00;11;59;25] **Kati Fosselius**

And in this case, of course, all the students I work with are going, you know, preparing to go on to become registered dietitian nutritionists. But also at the end of the day, a lot of our cultures do have common values and beliefs that that shape and drive us. And so I think it's always really exciting for me to watch students make those discoveries.

[00;11;59;25 - 00;12;12;03] **Kati Fosselius**

And hopefully feel a little bit more connected to their peers through going through that exercise. So there are some other things I can say. Sorry. Okay, sorry.

[00;12;12;06 - 00;12;26;26] **Demi Harte**

No, no, I was I was going to ask if you could actually provide an example, more specific example of a project that you've led or a lesson that you've led, that has successfully engaged your students?

[00;12;26;28 - 00;12;49;24] **Kati Fosselius**

Yeah. So a lot of times this comes up in small ways as well as in sort of larger projects. One thing is that I, I definitely try to consistently find opportunities. And again, we've really looked closely as a team on where to do this across our curriculum, but to place our instruction and our content within that larger sociopolitical context.

[00;12;49;26 - 00;13;24;03] **Kati Fosselius**

Parts of culturally responsive teaching, entreat us to validate and recognize institutionalized and systemic oppression. I talked to my students about the fact that all education is inherently biased and political in its way, and I hope that that offers some context for the types of conversations that we intend to engage in. But in addition to, you know, the activity I was talking about before some of the things that I do, can start very simply.

[00;13;24;03 - 00;13;49;19] **Kati Fosselius**

And something I'll acknowledge here is that I think there are probably things that a lot of educators are doing that are reflective of some of the core tenets of culturally responsive teaching, but they just may not be aware of that. One way that I try to help students be able to make the content relevant for themselves, that I know there are plenty of other educators doing, is giving students opportunities for choice, right?

[00;13;49;22 - 00;14;17;15] **Kati Fosselius**

Choosing a topic of interest for a project? Of course, even for syllabus content. So, we have one of our seminars on, sustainability. And there's just so much to cover there, and we're never going to get to all of it in our rather short seminar course. So, there are certain things that, we as a team know we want to cover, but we leave a large proportion of that syllabus up to the students.

[00;14;17;15 - 00;14;55;02] **Kati Fosselius**

So each group is able to really direct the focus of that content so that it is material that is particularly relevant to them and their own experiences. And those are great opportunities that tend to launch, really rich conversations, where our students are sharing their own experiences and we have some amount of choice to that effect in all of our seminars, and many of our other courses as well, but especially

because, as you mentioned, at the beginning of our conversation, we have, several of our seminars, are social justice focused.

[00;14;55;05 - 00;15;19;12] **Kati Fosselius**

And so that kind of all ties in together again, because we're asking the students to look at that sociopolitical, context of their lives and also the lives of, the, the lives that they will be touching in the future. We, as a, health profession, are training our students to be able to work with patients and clients across, many different cultural groups and identities.

[00;15;19;12 - 00;15;45;08] **Kati Fosselius**

So giving students a chance to to tackle the topics that are most meaningful to them, I think is really resonant. And we also have, in a couple of our courses, projects that allow the students and actually expect the students to make, tangible change in some way in the Jefferson community or another, relevant community to them of their choosing.

[00;15;45;11 - 00;16;06;07] **Kati Fosselius**

And I think that has a whole extra level of, meaning for them because it goes beyond, you know, it's not just something that their instructor is going to read, right. It's something that is actually having some, some kind of an impact on themselves or other people who really matter to them. So that's kind of a broad piece.

[00;16;06;07 - 00;16;47;03] **Kati Fosselius**

I'll mention a couple of other more specific examples. So one thing that I like to do, this is not our research course, although that course has, I would say definitely some other CRT aligned, activities and projects as well. But something that I do in one of my social justice seminars, excuse me, is, we look at research articles, and do a pretty deep analysis, but they're asked to do that through, sort of critical lens with all of this sort of political context and the social justice context, which, again, is embedded in culturally responsive teaching.

[00;16;47;05 - 00;17;14;04] **Kati Fosselius**

So we look closely at who's left out of the research, what assumptions might be driving the study design, the interpretation of the findings, which research questions are even getting the funding needed to be able to conduct that research in the first place, and which questions are maybe not, being answered in the literature because of limitations or biases that might be driving, the sort of larger conversation in the literature.

[00;17;14;04 - 00;17;34;02] **Kati Fosselius**

So that's one that I've had multiple students, even some who are maybe a little bit less comfortable with some of the social justice oriented content, address how much they appreciated that activity and how it did open their eyes to a new way of thinking. So that's something I really have enjoyed doing with students. You know, seeing their work.

[00;17;34;02 - 00;18;02;02] **Kati Fosselius**

One of the tenets of culturally responsive teaching is to support and encourage information processing in a way that is relevant to students. So small things that I like to do, is to carve out time during, class meetings. And I know it's that time is always precious. But carving out time for the students to reflect on what they've been learning and to connect it to other areas of their lives.

[00;18;02;02 - 00;18;31;15] **Kati Fosselius**

So sort of building in a meaning making process for them. And depending on the class flow, sometimes they discuss that with others, but they are making time to write that down. And it also, is a dialog between them and me because I always respond to those, reflective writings that they, submit so that they can get feedback and input from me.

[00;18;31;17 - 00;19;04;00] **Kati Fosselius**

That's another tenet, culturally responsive teaching, is the feedback process and the, the partnership between the educator and the student. So that kind of goes back to a little bit of what I hinted at when I gave my definition. But I think of myself as a learner as well as an educator in my classroom. I think that's vital to to CRT practice and also is hugely, foundational to building trust between students and the educator.

[00;19;04;00 - 00;19;36;13] **Kati Fosselius**

And that is another piece of CRT that builds student success. So again, that's something that I, that I've built in. I will also mention, because of the, the value that CRT places on feedback, but also that, sort of that, that balance between care and push that I mentioned earlier, challenging students. And again, this is something that I think most educators are already doing or trying to do in some ways.

[00;19;36;13 - 00;20;11;10] **Kati Fosselius**

Right. We're going to do that in a way that is authentic and, not always easy for the students to hear in terms of the content. But if we can couch that in, you know, in language that is affirming of their individual strengths and what they're doing well. And if we are offering that, after having built or while continuing to build, you know, a relationship of trust, I think that goes much more successfully for a long time, resisted this.

[00;20;11;10 - 00;20;31;25] **Kati Fosselius**

But one of the classes I teach is, a course on nutrition counseling, and I do a lot of role plays in there, and there's a lot of student practice. But for a while, I did very little of having pairs of students say, come up to the front of the room and practice in front of everyone. Because I think it's vulnerable for the students.

[00;20;31;27 - 00;21;05;13] **Kati Fosselius**



And I realized both through some wise feedback I received from one of my students, as well as through a deepening understanding of CRT that I'm holding the students back if I don't create those kinds of opportunities for them. And so instead of hearing just from maybe 1 or 2 peers being able to talk as a group about what students are doing well and how they can continue to grow, it is really another aspect of culturally responsive teaching because it again, it enhances the community and, builds psychological safety.

[00;21;05;15 - 00;21;35;01] **Kati Fosselius**

And these pieces are iterative. I don't think we could do an activity like that successfully if the students hadn't already had opportunities to build trust with each other. When they have that in place, or at least, a foundational, you know, foundation setting that, you know, can continue to build and evolve. Then the students are learning from each other not only when they're up there, but also when they're, you know, in the group, and then they feel more willing to take those risks.

[00;21;35;01 - 00;21;54;15] **Kati Fosselius**

You know, my peers did that and they weren't perfect at it. And so I can do that as well. And so again, it it allows me to see what is most meaningful to the students. What questions do they have? What knots would they like us to untangle? I'm not the only one with answers, but I can help facilitate that process.

[00;21;54;21 - 00;22;24;28] **Kati Fosselius**

And it allows me to really know each student on an individual level in terms of their learning and a really valuable way for me. That again, just enhances that wise feedback process. Again, to use a CRT term, that I help and often find that students telling me so, is meaningful to them and, and supportive of their growth and learning.

[00;22;25;01 - 00;22;43;27] **Jacob Santos**

Thank you. You. That was incredible. You gave us so many great points to think about and mull over and consider. I did want to pull out, a couple of things you mentioned there. And to our next question here, you talked about how, all education is inherently kind of biased and political, and you mentioned that to your learners.

[00;22;43;29 - 00;23;06;22] **Jacob Santos**

And then you also talk about how the importance of establishing trust between learner and instructor and between student and student or learner and learner. So the question I'd like to ask is that how do you then go about addressing biases in your content and teaching practices? You can even go a little further with that if you wanted to, and kind of talk about managing student bias as well.

[00;23;06;24 - 00;23;09;03] **Jacob Santos**

In there

[00;23;09;05 - 00;23;33;17] **Kati Fosselius**

Yeah, no, I'm happy to do that. And of course, it's all sort of interrelated. So you kind of picked up on the fact that I don't consider myself an expert in these practices, but someone who is working actively as I continue to grow in my ability to apply them and even understand all of the many ways that they can show up in my teaching.

[00;23;33;20 - 00;23;53;20] **Kati Fosselius**

So one of the things that I'm doing is just I am always self-reflecting, and I try not to do that just in a vacuum. I certainly do, you know, do that on an individual level. But I do seek out feedback and frankly, can do more of that. And that's something I'm aware. I again, I know this is incredibly vulnerable.

[00;23;53;20 - 00;24;22;07] **Kati Fosselius**

It's something that for a long time I thought this is probably something that would be really helpful for me and did not take the plunge of inviting, peers into my classroom regularly. Other than, you know, when you want to maybe check a box that you have had that happen. But I had the pleasure of having one of my colleagues sit in on an entire seminar, you know, for across the semester, just this past fall and had some wonderful dialog with her afterward.

[00;24;22;07 - 00;24;40;12] **Kati Fosselius**

And I think she and I both learned, along the way, which, of course, is exactly what you're looking for there. But she was able to help me recognize some of the things that I'm doing or saying that might be received differently by some members of my class that I might not have picked up on on my own had she not pointed those out.

[00;24;40;12 - 00;25;04;19] **Kati Fosselius**

So that was really helpful. I think in general, just getting more voices at the table, for building the curriculum as a whole. But also like to when you're looking at your own individual teaching, I think that's hugely important. I also definitely solicit student feedback. Of course, we all get our course evaluations. I try to also find some additional opportunities to do that.

[00;25;04;22 - 00;25;27;02] **Kati Fosselius**

I'm not as good as some colleagues here at Jefferson. I know about, you know, surveying students, you know, every semester, maybe even multiple times a semester about what's working. You know, what should I keep? What should I toss? But I do find, informal opportunities to do that fairly regularly. I'm fortunate enough to have one on one conversations with a lot of students and my cohort.

[00;25;27;02 - 00;25;49;19] **Kati Fosselius**

Our program is relatively small, and I know that offers me a lot of benefits in these processes. But, I have had really formative conversations with some of my students about, things that that I can be doing differently. For instance, we had a student who graduated a little over a year now, she identified as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

[00;25;49;19 - 00;26;41;06] **Kati Fosselius**

And, you know, we definitely had some content in our curriculum that addressed, you know, work with that population and some voices from that population represented in our curriculum. But, it was minimal, to be honest, and found an opportunity to utilize one of her projects as a way to develop, sort of curriculum recommendations for us across, the program, additional resources that we could utilize, activities we could incorporate, you know, did strategies that we could include to better prepare our learners for, you know, working, practicing in spaces where they're going to be with folks from that community and that was just incredible for me to be able to to learn from

[00;26;41;06 - 00;27;04;28] **Kati Fosselius**

her, to see our curriculum through, you know, through her eyes and, I think we're we still have a long way to go. In terms of, you know, being fully aware of our own biases, and omissions, I guess I would say more maybe to the point for that community. But I do think we're a lot further along because we invited her voice when she offered it to us.

[00;27;05;00 - 00;27;25;09] **Kati Fosselius**

So I'm really pleased with that. I think we're really good, and I like to think that I am good at listening to feedback when we receive it. And I do make changes, often in my courses and in my content, sometimes in smaller ways, or sometimes something as broad as that example I just shared. But, you know, we incorporate the feedback that we receive when it is relevant.

[00;27;25;09 - 00;27;52;21] **Kati Fosselius**

And it's certainly this is a place where other folks lived. Experiences are always going to be relevant and, and just, you know, the some smaller things along the lines of, you know, bringing in those other voices so a lot of opportunities for storytelling, whether that is from the students themselves. And we do try to do quite a bit of that, but also, you know, bringing in speakers who come and talk directly to the students or just utilizing content.

[00;27;52;21 - 00;28;13;06] **Kati Fosselius**

And we do a lot of, you know, videos and podcasts in our, curriculum, especially in our seminars, as well as more traditional, you know, texts, but so specifically looking for content created by members of traditionally marginalized communities. Those are, you know, some things that we try to do. And I'm sorry, you also asked about, managing student bias.

[00;28;13;09 - 00;28;30;13] **Kati Fosselius**

I'll just say, you know, we really try to address that right from the beginning of our program. Again, I'm in the fortunate position of, a program director. So I am able to look beyond just what happens in my own classroom, but, that the students are exposed to from the start to finish of their time in our program.

[00;28;30;13 - 00;28;54;17] **Kati Fosselius**

We at orientation. So right from the start, we spend time talking about and completing activities that allow our students to define and explore their own identity. And from the context of intersectionality to be

thinking about and processing their own. I privileges and biases. And, you know, there are opportunities for them to share some of that if they choose.

[00;28;54;17 - 00;29;17;20] **Kati Fosselius**

But we also give a lot of space for them just to sit and recognize we do some, you know, anonymous polling type activities that allow students to kind of see trends in the room without having to, you know, share anything that they aren't comfortable with. With the group right at the beginning when they're first meeting people, literally, we do a lot of this on the first day, but they do start to and that's always exciting.

[00;29;17;20 - 00;29;42;07] **Kati Fosselius**

And I think it goes back to that process of building community that I touched on just a little bit before. We are really transparent. Even before they get here, we're talking about our program values. It's on our website. It's things we reference when we interview students. So I think these things help set expectations with the students about their own, biases and the fact that they're going to be pushed on it a little bit.

[00;29;42;07 - 00;30;03;22] **Kati Fosselius**

And, and I think that's something else, going back to when you've built community and when you've built trust. And I think we have a lot of strategies that we utilize to do all of those things. Not that it's perfect by any means, but I do think that I think our students know that as a team, we do care about them as individuals.

[00;30;03;25 - 00;30;36;17] **Kati Fosselius**

We are here. They're not numbers to us. We are here to support them. We want to see each and every one of them succeed, and that makes it a little bit easier to push back. Sometimes when we recognize use of biased language or assumptions implicit in a student's response, you know, during a discussion, you know, I think we find gentle strategies for calling students and, and I think that couldn't be as effective as it typically is if we didn't have that trust in place.

[00;30;36;19 - 00;30;59;17] **Demi Harte**

Yeah, I think it's it's great that you, you know, kind of set those expectations from the start and let the learners know what they're coming into and kind of and challenge them for sure. And so, speaking of challenges, what challenges have you encountered in implementing these type of, you know, CRT and how have you addressed them to maintain inclusive and engagement?

[00;30;59;17 - 00;31;05;07] **Demi Harte**

And this could be student challenges or colleague challenges?

[00;31;05;10 - 00;31;25;21] **Kati Fosselius**

Yeah, I think so. The first thing I'll say is we're all on a learning curve. And we absolutely fumble the ball sometimes. I suspect I'm not going to speak for others, but I suspect that even people who, you know, have really built their whole career on, you know, utilizing CRT practices find that there are there are mistakes that are made.

[00;31;25;21 - 00;31;45;06] **Kati Fosselius**

Right. We again, we are all humans and therefore we are all fallible. And sometimes we are going to be faced with situations where we didn't get it right and, you know, first of all, I will say again, I'm grateful to have colleagues who offer input and ask tough questions. And I think we all do that for each other.

[00;31;45;06 - 00;32;06;02] **Kati Fosselius**

And it's something that makes my job infinitely more rewarding, as well as hopefully improves who I am as an educator. But I will say something that we really emphasize, and something I've had many opportunities to do, is to own up to it. When I make a mistake, you know, I follow up. I recognize it in front of the students.

[00;32;06;02 - 00;32;32;00] **Kati Fosselius**

So again, I feel like that's a way for me to model my own vulnerability and the fact that, not that it's okay to make a mistake of this type, and yet it doesn't, you know, and it's important, I think, to apologize, you know, and to make a genuine promise to continue to to do our best, to do better.

[00;32;32;03 - 00;32;53;24] **Kati Fosselius**

And I think it also does show the students that we recognize that none of us is perfect and that we, as I said before, are going to make those mistakes so that they know, because I think sometimes what shuts students down in those tough conversations when they come up in the classroom is the fear of saying the wrong thing.

[00;32;53;24 - 00;33;29;03] **Kati Fosselius**

And so if I've if I've said something in a way that harmed or hurt someone or missed an opportunity to address it, when somebody else in the room has done that, I think it is powerful for students to see that not just their peers, but also, you know, they're the faculty. Are able to continue to, to, to learn to, to do better, that we feel that commitment to, you know, when you know better, do better.

[00;33;29;06 - 00;33;51;00] **Kati Fosselius**

If you're not having those conversations, you're not able to find the places where you most need to grow, or at least not all of that. So I think those are some of the, the strategies that I utilize to manage some of those challenges. And I'm sure I will continue to find new strategies as I continue to make mistakes along the way.

[00;33;51;02 - 00;34;12;06] **Jacob Santos**

Thank you for sharing. I think it's important to acknowledge that vulnerability when, yeah, we make mistakes and we're not always going to get it. I think we all internalize that sometimes, and don't always say it out loud. So it's nice to hear it, and see, you know, we're all in that together. So kind of talking about that, you know, always looking for new ways to improve and grow.

[00;34;12;08 - 00;34;35;04] **Jacob Santos**

As we come to the end of our interview here with you today, I'd like to, question we always like to ask is, what are the top 1 or 2 pieces of advice or guidance you want to offer for someone who maybe wants to explore CRT in their course or curriculum?

[00;34;35;06 - 00;34;58;05] **Kati Fosselius**

Yeah, it's really hard to, to get it down to just a couple of things because I feel like they are so intertwined, not because I don't think one can start small. I think that actually is a great thing to do. And I guess I'll, I'll say just gives all of this within that context that we've kind of touched on already, that it will have bumps along the way.

[00;34;58;05 - 00;35;31;08] **Kati Fosselius**

I think for me, one of the things that was helpful when I was first learning and getting an understanding of what CRT is all about, was recognizing that I was doing some of this work already, and I it wasn't under the name or umbrella of, you know, culturally responsive teaching. But some of these strategies and the mindset, Hammond talks about, CRT as a mindset, when it comes to teaching.

[00;35;31;08 - 00;35;57;13] **Kati Fosselius**

And I think for me, as something is to as you're learning about it, find the ways in which you might already be practicing aspects of culturally responsive teaching, because I think that takes some of the sense of overwhelm out of the process, and allows you to feel just a little bit, perhaps more confident that this is something that you can implement more broadly in, in your work as an educator.

[00;35;57;13 - 00;36;23;14] **Kati Fosselius**

So that would be my first recommendation. And, and some of this may be my own bias and reflect a little bit about what I particularly value in in teaching both as a learner and as, an educator. But I would say that so much of culturally responsive teaching to me and the way I view it comes down to relationships.

[00;36;23;17 - 00;36;51;20] **Kati Fosselius**

And so I would say start there, start looking at the relationship between you and your students. And I'll say, I recognize again that maybe my content discipline, the courses I teach in particular, lend themselves to this a little bit more easily. But I will say there are always ways that we as educators, I mean, we we do create the community, whether it's across a program or just in our own classroom.

[00;36;51;23 - 00;37;15;18] **Kati Fosselius**

So anything you can do to, you know, again, make your values explicit, give students space to share their stories in some way or at minimum with you. Reflect on how the content is relevant to them, or if it's not, why not? And you know what those thoughts are, but how you can, draw them out, I think is important.

[00;37;15;18 - 00;37;54;21] **Kati Fosselius**

And then along with that, recognizing that the relationship between you and each individual student is so foundational to everything else that's going to happen in your work together. So seeing some of the ways that we build trust and some of this comes straight from the literature on CRT, but is that authentic connection? So I would think about just like, how can you connect with your students beyond the content so that they see you as a person and you see them as an individual person who has so much to to bring and contributes to the, to the classroom environment or the broader, educational environment I really should be talking about.

[00;37;54;21 - 00;38;23;10] **Kati Fosselius**

But, when you know your students as individuals, their strengths, their, you know, the, the points that might be tough for them, the goals that they have for their learning, you know, in your work with them or more broadly, in their futures, and that you can utilize that to provide feedback that is targeted. And I know if you're in a classroom much bigger than mine, for instance, it's hard to do that in every instance.

[00;38;23;10 - 00;38;46;28] **Kati Fosselius**

But if you can find a few points along the way to enhance that relationship with your students by offering specific feedback to 1 or 2 assignments where it really demonstrates, like, I'm working with you right now, and this isn't just sort of like the blanket feedback, but I'm an advocate and an ally for your growth. Here's what I know about you, where you are now, where you want to go.

[00;38;46;28 - 00;39;16;21] **Kati Fosselius**

And here's some actionable steps to getting there. That's just another way of building that relationship that I think, again, it's just a spin on, or maybe something that is already being done in your work as an educator. So just leaning into that, because that actually is an amazing starting point, from which I think so much of the rest of the tenets of, and principles of CRT can grow, that was a really long 1 or 2, but hopefully they fit under that umbrella.

[00;39;16;21 - 00;39;18;16] **Kati Fosselius**

I tried to tie a few things together.

[00;39;18;16 - 00;39;35;16] **Demi Harte**

There is no no, that's wonderful advice. Thank you for for saying all that. And that actually brings us to the end of our interview today. So Kati, thank you so much for taking time out of your day to be here with us and sharing your knowledge and expertise. There's this is a wonderful interview.

[00;39;35;19 - 00;39;36;16] **Jacob Santos**

Thank you.

[00;39;36;18 - 00;39;44;19] **Kati Fosselius**

It was thank you. It was truly a pleasure. Thank you so much for the opportunity.

[00;39;44;21 - 00;40;10;17] **Leah Miller**

Thank you for joining us this month on The Learning Curve. You can find more information and resources related to this episode at [academiccommons.jefferson.edu/thelearningcurve](https://academiccommons.jefferson.edu/thelearningcurve), and we hope to see you at some upcoming Academic Commons workshops. If you would like to be featured on a future episode of The Learning Curve, please contact us by using the button on our show page.

[00;40;10;24 - 00;40;12;01] **Leah Miller**

Thanks for tuning in.