

What is CGCT's pedagogical foundation?

CGCT works to honor students' requests for relevant curriculum by supporting our dedicated classroom and community educators in the development of grassroots curriculum. As a team we strive not only to situate community and student expertise as the unit of analysis, but also intend to develop skills and strategies for youth to generate, investigate, and address relevant critical issues in Chicago through their own inquiry. Positioned as relevant curriculum, this peoples' history of Chicago seeks to develop a comprehensive counter-narrative of Chicago. Additionally, this rigorous curriculum encourages a social and structural analysis of Chicago as well as the identification of young peoples' roles in movements for justice throughout the city – past, present, and future.

What are our guiding theoretical frameworks?

Believing that relevant curriculum must be firmly rooted in the real world lives, interests, learning conditions, and socio-economic struggles of students, families, and communities, CGCT recognizes that any theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and academic perspectives we hold must follow these tenants we hold true.



Critical Pedagogy: CP encourages us to critically analyze the processes by which we teach and encourages us to think about power relations in society with formal education being a critical part of shaping who wins and who loses. In CP, social justice is promoted by revealing power relations and by questioning the foundations of inequality altogether. The goal is to eliminate all forms of discrimination and oppression. “Education is inherently directive and must always be transformative,” says *Donald Macedo* (also see *Paolo Freire, Henry Giroux, Jeff Duncan Andrade, Ernest Morrell, Gloria Ladsen Billings, Patrick Camangian, Bree Picower*)

Key elements: critical literacy, social justice, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-oppressive, critical / creative thinking, conceptual / systemic analysis, self-reflection

Participatory Action Research: PAR positions students to become the subject of their own research as opposed to the object of their research. Students collect information for learning and organizing that honors and centers on the people most directly affected by injustices in our communities. Research then leads to actions for justice. (See *Michele Fine, Caitlin Cahill, Julio Cammarota, Maria Elena Torres, Augustine Romero*).

Key elements: planning, acting, observing, reflecting, gather information to inform actions for change, group discussions, focus groups, oral interviews, video, storytelling and community art, to name a few!



Cultural Relevance / Critical Multiculturalism: CR/CM asks us to examine how we think about the social context of students to make relevant choices of content and instruction of students. Says Gloria Ladsen-Billings, this framework is “a type of teaching that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural reference to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes.” (See Gloria Ladsen Billings, Christine Sleeter, Carl Grant, Ira Shor, Sonia Nieto, Geneva Gay, Kevin Kumashiro, Janice Hale-Benson).



Key elements: accurate histories, self-determination, global analysis, multiple perspectives, indigenous narratives, real-world analysis, current events, urban studies, geography

Grassroots Curriculum: GC seeks to develop curriculum and curricular-based movements that are deeply embedded in the lives of students and their particular communities. GC responds to the monopolization, corporatization and standardization of classroom curriculum by encouraging educators and communities to gather, produce, publish, distribute, and advocate for liberatory curriculum driven by critical pedagogy, participatory action research, cultural relevance and critical multiculturalism.

Key elements: student and community-generated curriculum, primary sources from community struggles, popular education, interdisciplinary, social justice, thematic project, arts integration

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