

# The Power of Three Little Letters

SPHEX Talk by Crystal M. Edwards

October 21, 2021

**This paper is written to compliment the companion PowerPoint slides that were shared during the October 21, 2021 SPHEX talk that are included at the end of this paper.**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight about The Power of Three Little Letters. Those letters are CRT. And tonight, I will share my 50-year history with these three little letters. [Slide 1 \(CRT Title slide\)](#)

There are 5 stops on this journey:

1. When I was first exposed to CRT
2. How CRT hooked me
3. When I chose to plunge deeply into the world of CRT
4. When CRT turned to the dark side
5. And the new and unexpected face of CRT that currently exists [Slide 2 \(History 1960-2021\)](#)

The first stop on our journey begins in the 1960s when I first met CRT. [Slide 3 \(The 1960s\)](#)

My first exposure occurred during my toddler years when I was learning how to write the letters CRT, all of which are in my first name. Of course, like any toddler, I had lots of questions. [Slide 4 \(The Alphabet\)](#)

My questions started very early when I was learning to write the letter C. My question was, “Why is one big and one little?” My parents had no problem helping me understand the concept of big and little. And even as a toddler I could easily connect the difference between big and little C with big and little people and animals. My very primitive understanding of the alphabet was centered on lowercase letters “*growing up*” to be uppercase letters. Pleased with myself, I moved on to conquer the next letter. [Slide 5 \(Understanding Same & Different\)](#)

Having mastered the concept of upper- and lowercase letters, I used my newfound toddler knowledge to write what I thought was the perfect big T and little T. It took very little time to find out that I had it wrong and this led to more questions with a toddler's favorite word, "why." Why is lowercase t's line lower than uppercase T? Little did I know that this would set the stage for future questions that I would ponder during my adult life about such as: Why other lines were are lower than others? Why are there more men in C-suite executive positions than women? Why are there fewer people of color in these positions? Even today, I continue to try to understand the why behind this. But that is a SPHEX talk for another time. [Slide 6 \(Comparison of C-Suite Executives 2019\)](#)

Now let's examine my experience writing the letter R. And again, I tried using the same *big and little* technique that helped me write upper- and lowercase C, only to find out that I was wrong again. And of course, more questions arose about the obvious inequities that existed between upper- and lowercase R. Uppercase R seemed to have more *parts* than lowercase r...but why? How can two letters with so much in common in how they function, the sounds they make, and their identity as consonants, be drawn so differently once the pen hits the paper? That question led me to a much deeper examination of the haves and have nots. Even as we approach elections in November 2021, I still question whether voting rights "R" equal. [Slide 7 \(History of Voting Rights\)](#)

And on a side note, I learned something else from my childhood as I reflected on the alphabet. During my formal education, I was taught that our alphabet originated from the ancient Greeks and Romans. Greek and Roman history and mythology were essential units in my curriculum of study. I can recall seeing pictures of these ancient people busy laying the foundation for our future lives, yet none of them looked like me or anyone in my family. And while my teachers briefly mentioned hieroglyphics and showed us these pretty cave paintings, there was little to no emphasis on the significant role that ancient Egyptians (people of color) had for the foundations of our modern alphabet. If I desired to learn more about the significant contributions of people of color, I would have to wait until high school and take an elective course. [Slide 8 \(History of the Alphabet\)](#)

The second stop on our journey finds me in middle school, high school and college, when I fell in love with CRT. *Slide 9 (1970-1990s)*

I credit my awesome middle school science teacher for my next exposure to and love for CRT. She had a way of taking complex science concepts and breaking them down in a fun and understandable way...and she made you hunger for more. She used an inquiry-based teaching approach to develop my ability to question the world around me. My exposure to this level of thinking was my first introduction to what would be my future career as a science teacher.

So it was no mystery that my love for science continued in high school and I was most interested in the field of chemistry. I was fascinated about the discovery of subatomic particles and J.J. Thompson's Plum Pudding model of the atom and his use of the Cathode Ray Tube to discover negatively charged particles later to be named electrons. Again, through inquiry and hands-on learning, I made my own predictions and explored these scientific theories at my lab station. At this point I and hooked by CRT and found my passion for science. And for those of you who may not have enjoyed science as much as I did, you may remember that CRTs were widely used to produce images on a screen and we used to use them in computer screens, TV sets, radar screens, and oscilloscopes. *Slide 10 (Middle School Science)*

As I began to explore my "scientific self" in high school and college, I quickly observed that there were few people like me, women and people of color, in my advanced science classes and I wondered why. As I grew older, I heard many things about myself including, "you're different, you're not like the others, you're smart for a black girl, and I'm pleasantly surprised by your talent." As a young adult, I learned to take the compliment on the surface level but also probed much deeper to understand why *my* work in the science field was considered such an anomaly. I became curious about other students' experiences and were they similar to mine. As much I enjoyed the lab work, I felt my real gift was to teach and inspire others. *Slide 11 (The Scientist & Teacher)*

So began my journey to take my love for CRT and STEM and use it as a way to cultivate young minds and mentor young women and people of color. *Slide 12 (The Teacher & Mentor)*

The third stop on this journey takes us to the turn of the century. If I was going to have any impact on achieving my goals, I needed to dive deeply into CRT and understand all the intricacies that came along with this complex concept. *Slide 13 (The 2000s)*

I needed answers as to why there weren't more women and minorities in STEM. As I began to question the world around me, I was given a copy of Carter G. Woodson's book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. Woodson had me questioning the intersection between imparting knowledge and equipping persons to do something with that knowledge. As a teacher, I had mastered the delivery of knowledge but as an educator, had I effectively equipped all of my students to do something with that knowledge?

Two things were confirmed for me that changed my teaching practice. The first was that imparting knowledge was not education. I think I spent the first few years in my career teaching content before I really understood what it meant to children. The second was that I needed to make sure that the educated people leaving my class were actually equipped to succeed in their world, *not just my class*. *Slide 14 (Carter G. Woodson)*

So, I began to study CRT (culturally relevant teaching) more closely. If my students were going to succeed, I had to do more than just impart knowledge. I had to understand their learning styles and make learning relevant for them. Gloria Ladson-Billings referenced this new type of CRT in her book, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. She described excellent pedagogy that is grounded in first believing that students can achieve excellence then accepting responsibility for ensuring that they achieve excellence. In order to get there, we must first recognize, validate, and incorporate the children's cultures into the very fabric of our classrooms.

We recognize that not all children are part of the dominant culture. Children also recognize when they are not part of the dominant culture. Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT) uses student culture to maintain it and transcend any of the negative effects children may experience by not being part of the dominant culture.

These negative effects can manifest themselves in two ways: The first is **absence**.

- Not seeing any or equal representation of people of color in high-wage school positions
- Not seeing any or equal representation of students of color in advanced courses
- Not seeing one's history, culture or background present in the textbook or curriculum

The second is **overrepresentation**.

- Seeing an overrepresentation of people of color in low-wage school positions
- Seeing an overrepresentation of students of color in remedial courses
- Seeing an overrepresentation of one's history, culture or background distorted or negatively displayed in the textbook or curriculum

Thus, the essence of the CRT (culturally relevant teaching) pedagogy is to empower all students by “using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”

However, politically savvy extremists would have you believe otherwise. Rather than understanding the possible negative effects of not being part of the dominant culture, extremists would like people to believe that CRT (culturally relevant teaching) teaches children that the dominant culture is negative. This is the problem we are having today when common folk don't understand or are misinformed about this concept. *Slide 15 (Gloria Ladson-Billings)*

While I was in New Jersey, I had the pleasure of meeting this wonderful educational practitioner named Geneva Gay. She had a slightly different version of CRT in her book titled, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice*. While she agreed that you needed to have cultural relevance, teachers needed be intentional as they responded to the learning needs of the students who sat before them. During one of her presentations, she stumped us with two simple questions. We could only pick one that represented heart of our teaching. The first was, “Does how I teach influence how you [student] learn?” The second was, “Does how you [student] learn influence how I teach?” It is the second question that the culturally responsive teacher ponders as she plans instruction.

This is what culturally responsive teaching (CRT) looks like:

1. Acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups
2. Builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences
3. Uses a variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles
4. Teaches students to know and praise their own and one another's cultural heritages
5. It routinely incorporates multicultural information, resources and materials

Now again we have the problem of what the politically savvy extremists want you to believe.

According to these extremists rather than what is listed above, this is what culturally responsive teaching (CRT) looks like:

1. Delegitimizes whiteness
2. Serves to separate cultures and increase the racial divide
3. Indoctrinates students to hate white people
4. Teaches white students that they are inherently racist
5. Attempts to rewrite history through the incorporation of false narratives like the 1619 project

These extremists have rewritten the 5 tenets to have a totally different meaning, one that stimulates fear, controversy and resentment. [Slide 16 \(Geneva Gay\)](#)

And my final educational exposure to CRT comes from Gholdy Muhammad in her book, *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*. Gholdy builds on both culturally relevant and responsive teaching practices but through a lens of literacy histories of black people. As I listened to her speak, I pondered how could generations of black people go from being prohibited to learn how to read and write during the time of the Nat Turner Rebellion to having prolific literacy societies and scholarly writings during early Reconstruction, to significantly lagging behind their white counterparts on standardized literacy assessments today?

In 1837, James Forten spoke of literacy societies and how black people in the north created spaces to read, write and speak since they were not invited to participate in white literacy groups.

Forten viewed literacy as **action**. People of color needed to be well-versed in the art of listening, speaking, writing, and cultivating a cogent argument. Today, Gholdy Muhammad also argues that culturally relevant and historical literacy be the foundation for action in our classrooms today. *Slide 17 (Gholdy Muhammad)*

### **Slide 18**

There are 4 layers to the historically responsive literacy framework:

1. **Identity Development** – How will my instruction help students learn something about themselves and/or about others?
2. **Skill Development** – How will my instruction help students read something, think about the content, consider new ideas, and communicate those words to the intended audience with the opportunity to discuss and debate?
3. **Intellectual Development** – How will my instruction help students accumulate knowledge, do something with the knowledge, put knowledge into action through their public addresses, writings and learning, and pass on knowledge to future generations?
4. **Criticality** – How will my instruction help students read, write, and think in ways of understanding power, privilege, social justice, and oppression, particularly for populations who have been historically marginalized in the world with the ultimate goal to have the agency to build a better world for all?

No one would argue the merit of the first three tenets of the historically responsive literacy framework. However, the politically savvy extremists do not support the fourth tenet, criticality. In their arguments against it, they seem to leave out of the most important part of criticality...the ultimate goal, to have the agency to build a **better world for all**. *Slide 18 (Historically Responsive Literacy)*

We have a responsibility to ensure that all students receive a culturally responsive education. And that was one of the reasons why I accepted the invitation to participate on the African American History Education Commission in 2019-2020. *Slide 19 (VA Commission on African American History)*

The African American History Education Commission (AAHEC) was divided into two subcommittees: one that reviewed the history standards and one that looked at professional development. I was a member of the professional development subcommittee and we made the following major recommendations:

1. Revise Virginia's Teacher Evaluation Regulations and Virginia's Uniform Performance standards for School Leaders to include cultural proficiency efficacy.
2. Require every Virginia educator to certify that they have enrolled in Cultural Competency Professional Development by 2022.
3. Allocate funding and personnel resources to develop and implement comprehensive professional development in the areas of cultural competency and African American History content for Virginia educators.
4. Mandate certification (Continuing Education Units) in African American History for all holders of education licenses issued by the Virginia Department of Education (this includes initial licensure and renewals).
5. Amend requirements for licensure endorsements in History/Social Science to require evidence of course study in African American History.
6. Require a credit in African American History as a new requirement for graduation in Virginia. The new elective course in African American History developed by VDOE and WHRO could be used to fulfill this requirement.

I served on the commission for 1.5 years and our recommendations were submitted in August of 2020 and later approved by the state board of education and the general assembly. During the entire time I served on the commission and even after the recommendations were submitted which are grounded in Culturally Competency and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), there was very little pushback. *Slide 20 (AAHEC – Professional Development Subcommittee)*

Which brings us to the 4<sup>th</sup> stop on this journey. This would be a journey to the dark side of CRT, one that would put public schools in the center of a national political debate. *Slide 21 (2020)*

So what happened that caused CRT to become a bad word spoken in public schools? It was as if a bomb was dropped on school divisions everywhere. *Slide 22 (CRT & Public Schools)*

Well shortly after the Commission's recommendations were presented to the state board of education in August 2020, a memo to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies was issued in September 2020. The memo was from the Executive Office of the President (Donald J. Trump), Office of Management and Budget and was signed by Director Richard Vought.

In the bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph is a directive to cancel all contracts and divert federal dollars from agencies using these training sessions. It reads:

In the meantime, all agencies are directed to begin to identify all contracts of other agency spending related to any training on "critical race theory," "white privilege," or any other training or propaganda effort that teachers or suggests either (1) the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or (2) that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil. In addition, all agencies should begin to identify all available avenues within the law to cancel any such contracts and/or to divert Federal dollars away from these un-American propaganda training sessions.

And two weeks after that memo was issued, on September 17, 2020, President Trump gave this public address at the National Archives Museum which started a firestorm.

Students in our universities are inundated with critical race theory. This is a Marxist doctrine holding that America is a wicked and racist nation, that even young children are complicit in oppression, and that our entire society must be radically transformed. Critical race theory is being forced into our children's schools, it's being imposed into workplace trainings, and it's being deployed to rip apart friends, neighbors, and families.

These words have been copied and pasted into several emails that I have personally received from community members. They have also been the subject of several phone conversations superintendents and school board members across the nation and here in Lynchburg have had with those who have accused public schools of doing these things. Despite the evidence to the contrary, these extremists would not be swayed from their political thoughts. [Slide 23 \(CRT is Banned\)](#)

CRT became a hot topic in the media such that Fox News alone mentioned CRT over 1900 times in a 3.5 month period. This only served to enhance the controversy and continue the national debate. *Slide 24 (CRT & Fox News)*

Schools across the country and even right here in Virginia made headline news and faced accusations that public schools were teaching CRT and indoctrinating young children to hate this country. In some cases, once peaceful school board meetings now were filled with individuals shouting, yelling, being asked to leave and even being restrained and physically escorted out of the building. Superintendents and school board members were the targets of hate speech, stalked and threatened by angry citizens, and in some cases needed to be escorted to their cars after meetings. *Slide 25 (CRT in the News)*

Even our Lynchburg City School Board had to address the topic of the teaching of CRT in our schools. For the extremists, my work with the African American History Education Commission served as evidence of the existence of CRT being taught in our schools. And even now as I write this SPHEX paper, CRT being taught in public schools has become a political platform for the upcoming gubernatorial race right here in Virginia. *Slide 26 (CRT, Lynchburg & Virginia)*

CRT has become the national talk that is dominating our TVs, schools, campaign races, and even laws. This map illustrates how the conversation about CRT has sparked local, county, city and state bans and laws in July 2021. *Slide 27 (Anti-CRT Laws by State)*

So to be perfectly honest, I had not even heard of or studied critical race theory when I attended Penn State, Rutgers and Seton Hall. Despite earning three post-secondary degrees from three different institutions, none of those accredited schools deemed critical race theory (CRT) to be an essential part of my training as a teacher and school leader. Yet, there are those who want you to believe the critical race theory (CRT) is the same as many of the things we are doing in public schools, such as culturally relevant and responsive teaching. Let me tell you what critical race theory (CRT) is not. *Slide 28 (CRT is Not)*

- CRT is **not** something that was included in the recommendations made by the African American History Education Commission.

- CRT is **not** part of the Virginia social studies curriculum or standards of learning.
- CRT is **not** synonymous with Culturally Relevant Teaching
- CRT is **not** synonymous with Culturally Responsive Teaching
- CRT is **not** part of the VDOE’s EdEquity initiative
- CRT is **not** part of the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in Lynchburg City Schools

Since I had no formal training in critical race theory (CRT), I had to do some research to find out the tenets of this theory. To adequately critique the theory one must also understand the time in which it was first introduced. This framework was crafted during the 1970s by Derrick Bell, Alan Freedman, and Richard Delgado. It was primarily used in university-level coursework as a way to help law students think critically about the impact of historical and present-day racism on the legal system. So what was occurring in our nation just prior to the rise of the critical race theory?

We were already experiencing the lasting effects of the documented redlining practices which led in part, to the birth of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 in an attempt to eliminate these discriminatory practices. Even here in Lynchburg during the 60s and 70s after Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954, we still struggled with institutional segregation in our public schools. In 1971, Lynchburg City Schools received a federal order to desegregate the public schools and we are still under that order today. We even had some not so proud moments here in Lynchburg in 1961 when we closed swimming pools and filled them with dirt to avoid some of the integration efforts proposed.

So for the sake of educating ourselves let’s take a closer look at the tenets of critical race theory (CRT) as proposed by Derrick Bell, Alan Freedman, and Richard Delgado and as outlined in the book, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*:

1. Racism is ordinary, not aberrational – “normal science,” the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country. Racism is difficult to address or “cure” because it is not acknowledged.

- **Storytelling:** Racism is an ordinary experience for people of color. Just ask them. Share the story during my first year teaching in a mostly white high school where I was the only black teacher. One of my students wrote the n-word on the back of a ruler that had my name on it. I used it as a teaching lesson.
2. Interest convergence or material determinism suggests that racism advances the interests of both white elites (materially) and working-class whites (psychically), larger segments of the society have little incentive to eradicate it.
    - **Storytelling:** Conform to the norm, with no incentive to change. Share the story of being an African American woman trying to get her hair washed and styled at a salon at Penn State. They did not do hair like mine and did not want to learn either.
  3. Social constructionism thesis holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient.
    - **Storytelling:** Race doesn't exist. Share the story of taking standardized tests in the late 80's when there were only four race categories of to choose from: white, black, Asian or Latino. Since then we've created more categories to classify students...biracial, two or more races, Hispanic, AAPI, etc.
  4. CRT draws attention to the ways the dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labor market.
    - **Storytelling:** One only need to look at television shows over time to see how society racializes minority groups. Share the story of how original TV shows portrayed as black people as funny, clowns, minstrels and later TV shows portrayed black people as drug dealers, drop outs, thieves, and thugs. Even black families in the 1970s were portrayed differently: The Cunninghams on Happy Days vs. The Evans on Good Times.

5. CRT draws attention to the unique voice of color thesis which holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, people of color may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters that whites are unlikely to know.
  - **Storytelling:** Black families have unique stories and lessons they share with their children. Regardless of economic status, education, zip code or decade, almost all black families teach their sons and daughters what to do if they are ever pulled over by the police. My husband and I have given our children and particularly our 6'2" son, "the talk" with regard to being pulled over by the cops and being mindful of any sudden body movements, holding a phone that may be mistaken for a weapon, using the *wrong* tone of voice, making sure their hands are visible and avoiding eye contact for prolonged periods of time.

This may not have been your experience but you cannot deny that may have been someone's experience. But regardless of experiences, our public schools are not indoctrinating children to embrace and adopt discriminatory practices. Critical Race Theory is simply that a theory to explain the experiences of a group of marginalized people – it's not a How to Book full of divisive concepts that is passed out to children in public schools. *Slide 29 (Tenets of CRT)*

And now to our last stop on this journey...this is the most foreign CRT territory for me. The current reality of being an effective school leader today is being skilled at managing the public health crisis otherwise known as the COVID-19 pandemic. To do so, one needs a dedicated and diligent COVID Response Team, the new CRT. *Slide 30 (2021)*

Teachers are at the heart of this team busily planning and delivering instruction during a time when students are in/out of the classroom due to positive COVID-19 tests, quarantines or just plain fear. As a CRT member, teachers have had very little medical training, but must become well-versed in infectious disease mitigation. Society expects them to stay abreast and implement all of the recommendations from the CDC, VDH, and AAP in a timely manner. And did I mention the recommendations and requirements are ever changing and often conflict with one another? This page on the VDH website is one of many that we must keep up with and this one has been updated 5 times in a two month period. *Slide 31 (CRT Member: Teachers)*

Nurses also make up a critical part of our CRT (COVID Response Team). They are the only ones in our educational system who can administer the vaccine to staff and the thousands of children who may soon be eligible to receive the shot in schools. On a daily basis, they make decisions regarding whether or not staff and students should report to school. This is often a thankless job any many of our nurses have been subjected to unkind words by those they hope to protect and keep safe. *Slide 32 (CRT Member: Nurses)*

Even the support staff have joined the CRT in making contact tracing phone calls, managing paperwork, and keeping the website up-to-date. This graph shows the success of contact tracing in England. If it wasn't for the persistence of our support staff with repeat calls, we may have similarly low success rates. *Slide 33 (CRT Member: Support Staff)*

Another essential member of the CRT (COVID Response Team) is the human resources department. With positive COVID-19 cases, quarantines, family quarantines, and just plain old fear of getting COVID-19 being daily occurrences, the HR members of our CRT have the tough job of keeping schools fully staffed and up and running. And we're not the only ones in town looking for employees. There are plenty of community jobs in Lynchburg. Some of these jobs pay more than LCS but that is a talk for another time when we discuss funding of public schools. *Slide 34 (CRT Member: Human Resources Dept.)*

The competition for employees has led to a substitute shortage and many unfilled positions. So we're actively raising our substitute rates to meet this demand. But even if we are fully staffed with a cadre of substitute employees ready to fill in, there are other things that this CRT (COVID Response Team) needs to prepare to do. *Slide 35 (Compensation Comparison)*

Through a partnership with ViSSTA, Virginia School Screening and Testing Assurance we will now manage both diagnostic and voluntary random COVID-19 testing for staff and students. And then there's the Biden plan which requires mandatory vaccines or mandatory weekly testing. We await more information as to how this will impact us here in Virginia. While this is

a noble effort to keep staff and students safe, it is one more burden that falls on the shoulders of our school nurses. *Slide 36 (Vaccination in Virginia Schools)*

This last stop on our CRT journey is the most unpredictable. National teacher, principal and superintendent organizations are already collecting data on the number of educators leaving the profession and citing this new CRT as being a major influencer. So there you have it...the 5 phases of CRT and you may be wondering after this presentation why I and other educators continue to do this job amid such controversy today. *Slide 37 (Why?)*

Why do I continue to do this job? Because there is power in these three little letters CRT and the power rests with Charles, Christopher, Cali, Cynae, Rob, Ryan, Rashell, Roberto, Talia, Tsun-Chin, Teddy, and Tamir. They are the real CRT and these children need us to keep stepping. *Slide 38 (PreK Students)*

## References

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Additional references are denoted in the PowerPoint presentation.

## Slide 1



# The Power of Three Little Letters

Crystal M. Edwards

SPHEX Presentation

October 21, 2021

## Slide 2



### Explore My CRT Journey

1. The First Exposure – 1960s
2. The Hook – 1970s - 1990s
3. The Plunge – 2000s
4. The Dark Side – 2020
5. The Current Reality - 2021

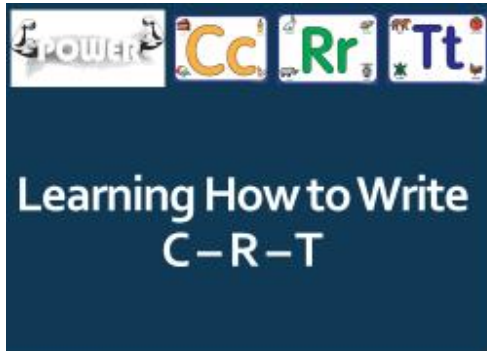
## Slide 3

# The First Exposure: 1960s

*(When I first met CRT)*



## Slide 4



Crystal Murphy - 3 years

A toddler's favorite question:

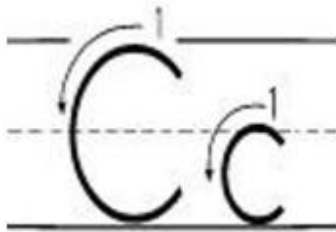
**WHY?**



## Slide 5

POWER Cc Rr Tt

### A Closer Look at the Letter C



Understanding Same and Different by Asking

# WHY?

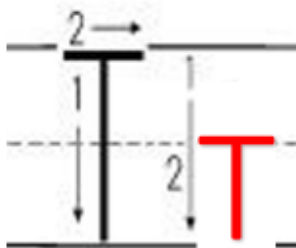
Why is one big and one little?



## Slide 6

POWER Cc Rr Tt

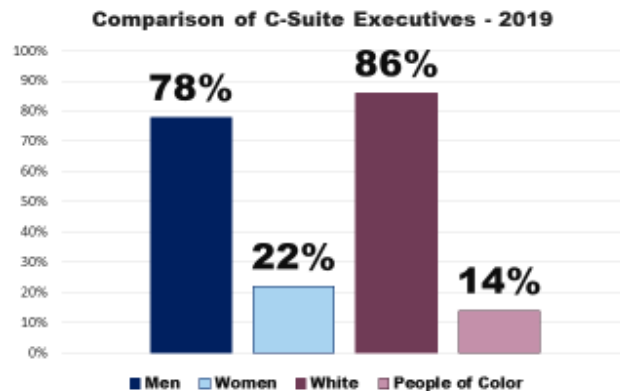
### A Closer Look at the Letter T



Understanding Same and Different by Asking

# WHY?

Why is little t's line lower?



Source: McKinsey & Company, "Women in the Workplace 2019"

## Slide 7



### A Closer Look at the Letter R



Understanding Same and Different by Asking

# WHY?

Why does the big R have more parts?

Why do people with “more parts” get to vote?

- 1776 – Must be a landowner (Declaration of Independence)
- 1790 – Must be a free white immigrant (Naturalization Law)
- 1807 – Must be a tax-paying, white male citizen (NJ law)
- 1848 – Must be an English-speaking citizen (Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo)
- 1868 – Must be a male citizen (14<sup>th</sup> Amendment)
- 1870 – Must pay poll tax and pass literacy tests (15<sup>th</sup> Amendment)
- 1876 – Must not be a Native American (Supreme Court)
- 1882 – Must not be of Chinese Ancestry (Chinese Exclusion Act)
- 1887 – Must give up tribal affiliations (Dawes Act)
- 1920 – Women can vote (19<sup>th</sup> Amendment)
- 1922 – Must not be of Japanese Heritage (Supreme Court)
- 1964-65– Voting rights guaranteed (24<sup>th</sup> Amendment & Voting Rights Act)
- **2021 – “R” voting rights equal today?**

## Slide 8



These 3 Little Letters Revealed Something Else From My Past



# Slide 9

# The Hook: 1970s – 1990s

*(When I Fell In Love With CRT)*



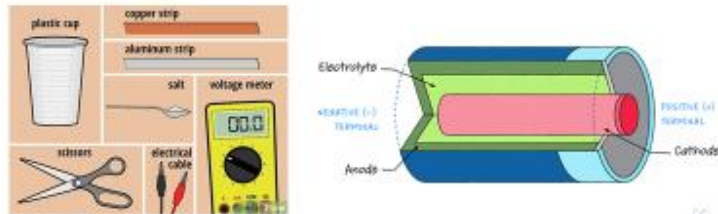
# Slide 10

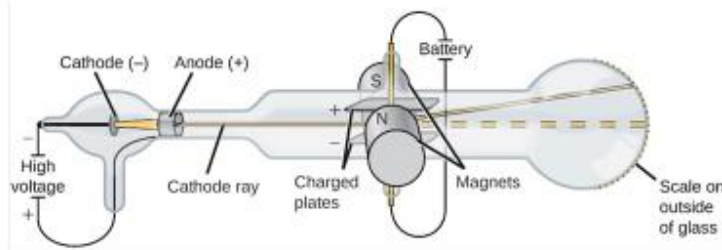
## Early Interest in Science & Math ...and CRT



### Middle School Science – Make Your Own Battery



### High School Chemistry – Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) Experiment



# Slide 11

POWER Cc Rr Tt

## Learning while Teaching Students about CRT

From the Cathode Ray Tube (CRT)...

to the next work force

to the next work force

Scouting the younger scientists

### ternship gives teachers hands-on lab experience

By Mike Wajack  
Staff Writer

Two East Orange teachers, summer vacation — a free month — was also a time for learning. In Scott High School and Vernon L. Dwyer High School biology teachers Crystal Roundtree and Mark Burke conducted research in the laboratories of Merck & Co. in Rahway as summer interns this year. They performed lab work and attended seminars on the lab of the major drug manufacturer.

Roundtree said she conducted research on cholesterol and its effect on cholesterol. To study this, she cloned genes which were later introduced into liver cells.

She said she worked on the transformation of bacteria, culture and general lab assignments.

Roundtree said, "I learned so much. I now know about bacteria."

Roundtree said, "I liked the opportunity to work with a research technician."

The internship program was arranged through the New Jersey Industry Science Education Consortium which is funded by a National Science Foundation Grant.

Roundtree said she received a \$3,000 stipend.

Teachers who have completed the program are not allowed to repeat the internship, Burke said. "You are only allowed to go through this once," she said. "It's kind of sad."

Roundtree said she was selected because of her efforts to incorporate science into her lessons and the hands-on science she does in class.

Burke said the internship will have an impact on their teaching methods and approaches that school year.

"I'm ready for the kids," Roundtree said. "I will have more hands-on work for my classes and will teach some of what I learned in the lab."

Merck & Co. will give Roundtree access to the chemicals she needs for class, she said.

Because of the internship, Burke said she is more enthusiastic about teaching.

"The textbooks I use are too familiar to me," she said. "I never get to see far outside world."

After having to follow lab procedures themselves, the teachers said that they were able to see lab work from the students' perspective.

"I've learned not to be so rigid," Burke said. "Teachers don't know the little things that kids don't understand."

Roundtree and Burke said they frequently worked together in the lab during the summer.

"I enjoyed working with Ms. Roundtree," said Burke, who has been teaching at VLD for 16 years.

Teachers who have completed the program are not allowed to repeat the internship, Burke said. "You are only allowed to go through this once," she said. "It's kind of sad."



Biology teacher Crystal Roundtree is pictured in the lab. Roundtree spent part of her summer furthering her education as a Merck intern.

...to Cultivating Young Minds

# Slide 12

POWER Cc Rr Tt

## Mentoring Women & Minorities



## Women in STEM careers

47% of the U.S. workforce are women\*

- BUT WOMEN HOLD JUST -

24% of the nation's STEM jobs\*

Enrollment growth in the College of IST (2013 - 2017)

84% increase in undergraduate female students enrolled

65% increase in overall undergraduate enrollment

PennState College of Information Sciences and Technology

\* U.S. Department of Commerce Economic and Statistics Administration's Women in STEM 2017 Update

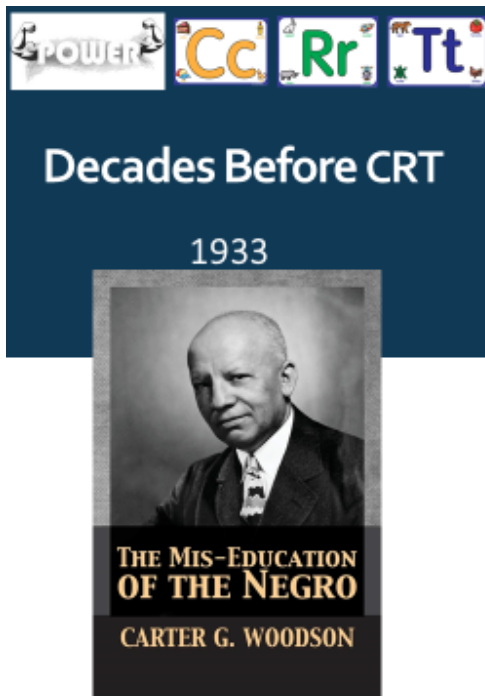
## Slide 13

# The Plunge: 2000s

*(When I Dove Deep into CRT)*



## Slide 14



Understanding Same and Different by Asking

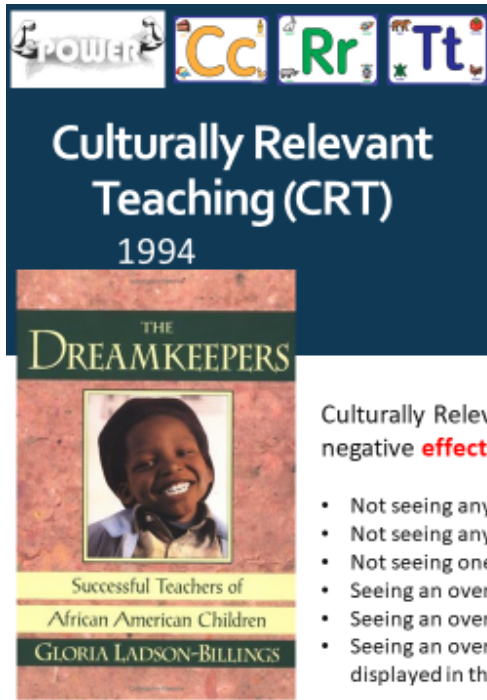
# WHY?

Why aren't there more women and minorities in STEM?

"Only by careful study of the Negro himself and the life which he is forced to lead can we arrive at the proper procedure in this crisis. The mere **imparting of information is not education**. Above all things, the effort must result in making a man think and do for himself just as the Jews have done in spite of universal persecution." *pg 1*

"The only question which concerns us here is whether these **"educated"** persons are **actually equipped** to face the ordeal before them or unconsciously contribute to their own undoing by perpetuating the regime of the oppressor." *pg 2*

## Slide 15A



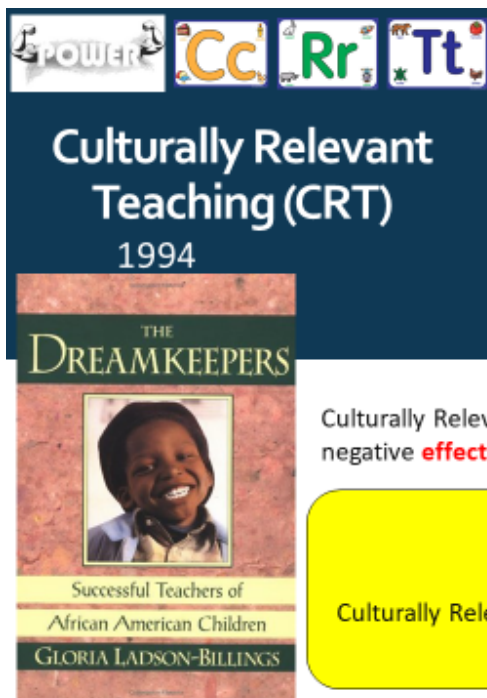
### What is Culturally Relevant Teaching?

“Specifically, culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” *pg 17*

Culturally Relevant Teaching uses student culture to maintain it and transcend the negative **effects of not being a part of the** dominant culture.

- Not seeing any or equal representation of people of color in high-wage school positions
- Not seeing any or equal representation of students of color in advanced courses
- Not seeing one’s history, culture or background present in the textbook or curriculum
- Seeing an overrepresentation of people of color in low-wage school positions
- Seeing an overrepresentation of students of color in remedial courses
- Seeing an overrepresentation of one’s history, culture or background distorted or negatively displayed in the textbook or curriculum

## Slide 15B



### What is Culturally Relevant Teaching?

“Specifically, culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” *pg 17*

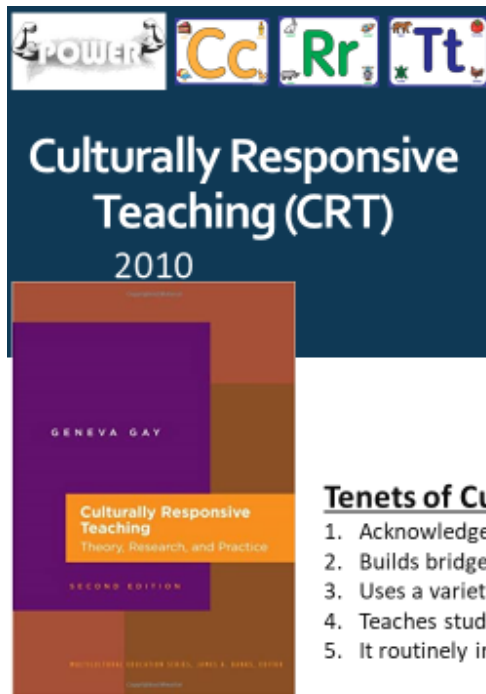
Culturally Relevant Teaching uses student culture to maintain it and transcend the negative **effects of not being a part of the** dominant culture.

### The Extremist View

(removes relevant & important words)

Culturally Relevant Teaching uses student culture to maintain it and transcend the **negative dominant culture**.

## Slide 16A



### What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

“Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them.” *pg 31*

#### **Tenets of Culturally Responsive Teaching**

1. Acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups
2. Builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences
3. Uses a variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles
4. Teaches students to know and praise their own and one another's cultural heritages
5. It routinely incorporates multicultural information, resources and materials

## Slide 16B



### What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

“Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as

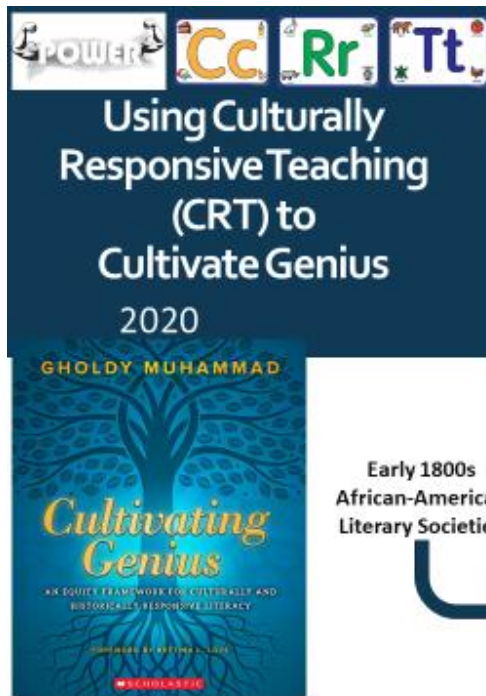
#### **The Extremist View**

1. Delegitimizes whiteness
2. Serves to separate cultures and increase the racial divide
3. Indoctrinates students to hate white people
4. Teaches white students that they are inherently racist
5. Attempts to rewrite history through the incorporation of false narratives like the 1619 project

#### **Tenets of Culturally Responsive Teaching**

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## Slide 17A



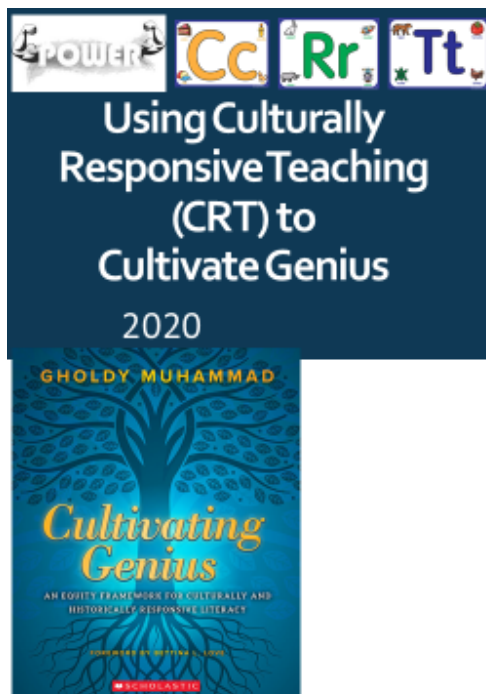
### How does Historically Responsive Literacy Align with Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching (CRT)?

“Historically Responsive Literacy aligns with these models of responsiveness and relevancy as well as other cultural models in education, but is more pointedly centered on the literacy histories of Black people and a practical framework that teachers can use to guide and shape instruction.” pg 48

Early 1800s  
African-American  
Literary Societies




## Slide 18A



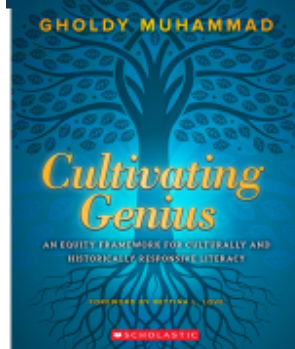
### What are the 4 Layers of the HRL Framework?

1. **Identity Development** – How will my instruction help students learn something about themselves and/or about others?
2. **Skill Development** – How will my instruction help students read something, think about the content, consider new ideas, and communicate those words to the intended audience with the opportunity to discuss and debate?
3. **Intellectual Development** – How will my instruction help students accumulate knowledge, do something with the knowledge, put knowledge into action through their public addresses, writings and learning, and pass on knowledge to future generations?
4. **Criticality** – How will my instruction help students read, write, and think in ways of understanding power, privilege, social justice, and oppression, particularly for populations who have been historically marginalized in the world with the ultimate goal to have the agency to build a better world for all?

# Slide 18B



**Using Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) to Cultivate Genius**  
2020




## What are the 4 Layers of the HRL Framework?

**The Extremist View**

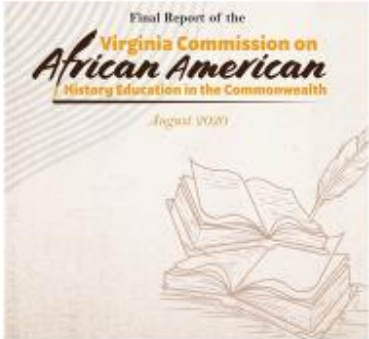
“For decades, the America-blaming left has been relentlessly pushing a vision of America that casts our history, culture, traditions, and founding documents in the most negative possible light. Yet in recent years, this deeply unnatural effort has progressed from telling children that their history is evil to telling Americans that they are evil.”  
*Former President Donald Trump, June 18 op-ed on the website [realclearpolitics.com](http://realclearpolitics.com):*

4. **Criticality** – How will my instruction help students read, write, and think in ways of understanding power, privilege, social justice, and oppression, particularly for populations who have been historically marginalized in the world with the ultimate goal to have the agency to build a better world for all?

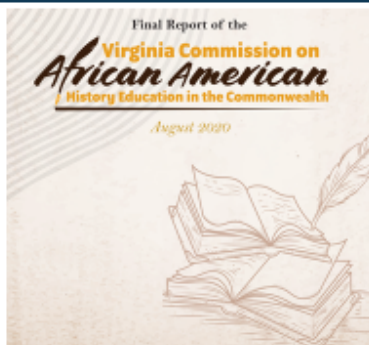
# Slide 19



**VA Commission on African American History Education**  
2020




## Slide 20



### Professional Development Subcommittee Recommendations:

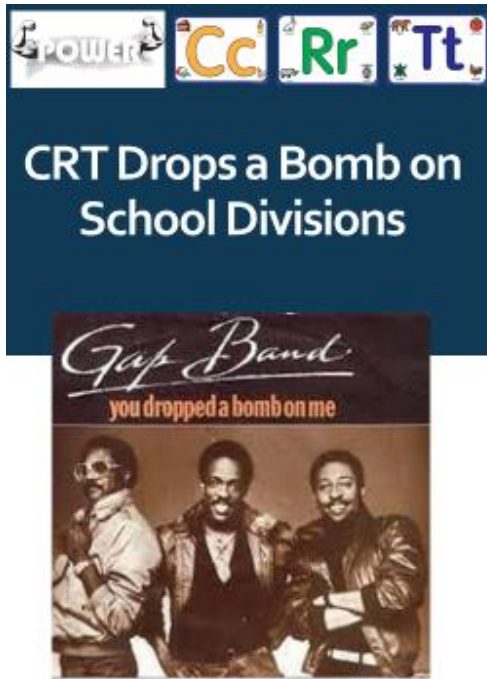
1. Revise Virginia's Teacher Evaluation Regulations and Virginia's Uniform Performance standards for School Leaders to include cultural proficiency efficacy.
2. Require every Virginia educator to certify that they have enrolled in Cultural Competency Professional Development by 2022.
3. Allocate funding and personnel resources to develop and implement comprehensive professional development in the areas of cultural competency and African American History content for Virginia educators.
4. Mandate certification (Continuing Education Units) in African American History for all holders of education licenses issued by the Virginia Department of Education (this includes initial licensure and renewals).
5. Amend requirements for licensure endorsements in History/Social Science to require evidence of course study in African American History.
6. Require a credit in African American History as a new requirement for graduation in Virginia. The new elective course in African American History developed by VDOE and WHRO could be used to fulfill this requirement.

## Slide 21

# The Dark Side: 2020 (CRT...What is Going On?)



## Slide 22



## Slide 23



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

THE DIRECTOR

September 4, 2020

M-20-34

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Russell Vought *R. Vought*  
Director

SUBJECT: Training in the Federal Government

It has come to the President's attention that Executive Branch agencies have spent millions of taxpayer dollars to date "training" government workers to believe divisive, anti-American propaganda.

For example, according to press reports, employees across the Executive Branch have been required to attend trainings where they are told that "virtually all White people contribute to racism" or where they are required to say that they "benefit from racism." According to press reports, in some cases those training have further claimed that there is racism embedded in the belief that America is the land of opportunity or the belief that the most qualified person should receive a job.

These types of "trainings" not only run counter to the fundamental beliefs for which our Nation has stood since its inception, but they also engender division and resentment within the Federal workforce. We can be proud that as an employee, the Federal government has employees of all races, ethnicities, and religions. We can be proud that Americans from all over the country seek to join our workforce and dedicate themselves to public service. We can be proud of our continued efforts to welcome all individuals who seek to serve their fellow Americans as Federal employees. However, we cannot accept our employees receiving training that seeks to undercut our core values as Americans and drive division within our workforce.

The President has directed me to ensure that Federal agencies cease and desist from using taxpayer dollars to fund these divisive, un-American propaganda training sessions. Accordingly, to that end, the Office of Management and Budget will shortly issue more detailed guidance on implementing the President's directive. In the meantime, all agencies are directed to begin to identify all contracts or other agency spending related to any training on "critical race theory," "white privilege," or any other training or propaganda effort that teaches or suggests either (1) that the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or (2) that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil. In addition, all agencies should begin to identify all available avenues within the law to cancel any such contracts and/or to divert Federal dollars away from these un-American propaganda training sessions.

The President, and his Administration, are fully committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals in the United States. The President has a proven track record of standing for those whose voice has long been ignored and who have failed to benefit from all our country has to offer, and he intends to continue to support all Americans, regardless of race, religion, or creed. The divisive, false, and demeaning propaganda of the critical race theory movement is contrary to all we stand for as Americans and should have no place in the Federal government.



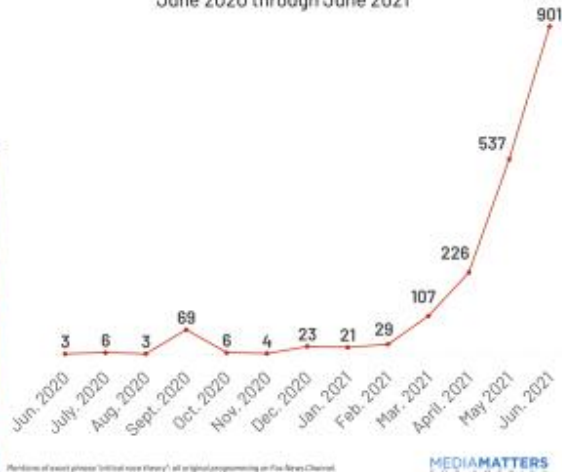
"Students in our universities are inundated with critical race theory. This is a Marxist doctrine holding that America is a wicked and racist nation, that even young children are complicit in oppression, and that our entire society must be radically transformed. Critical race theory is being forced into our children's schools, it's being imposed into workplace trainings, and it's being deployed to rip apart friends, neighbors, and families."  
President Trump, National Archives Museum Speech, Sep 17, 2020

# Slide 24



**Update (7/14/21):** Following the publication of this study, Media Matters continued to track mentions of "critical race theory" on Fox News. In June, there were 901 mentions on the network, the highest number of any month and an increase from 537 mentions in May. In the past 3 1/2 months there have been over 1,900 mentions of critical race theory on the network.

**Fox News mentions of "critical race theory"**  
June 2020 through June 2021



# Slide 25



**Botetourt school board addresses race education and treatment of transgender students**

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Chaos Breaks Out Over Critical Race Theory at Prince William School Board Meeting

By Drew Wilder • Published September 16, 2021 • Updated on September 17, 2021 at 1:08 pm



### Officials: Critical race theory not taught in Bedford County Public Schools



School Board chair: Critical race theory isn't part of CCPS curriculum

BY JAM MCCONNELL, SENIOR WRITER

# Slide 26

## Critical race theory draws more public input at Lynchburg school board meeting

by Madison Doner | Wednesday, July 14th 2021



The Lynchburg City School Board meeting Tuesday, July 13, 2021. (Credit: Lynchburg City Schools, YouTube)



LYNCHBURG, Va. (WSET) — Tuesday night numerous parents went to the Lynchburg City school board meeting to talk about whether they were going to teach critical race theory.



**Glenn Youngkin**

stated on July 9, 2021 in a speech:

**“We actually have this critical race theory moved into all our schools in Virginia.”**

VIDEO | [VIEW VIDEO](#)



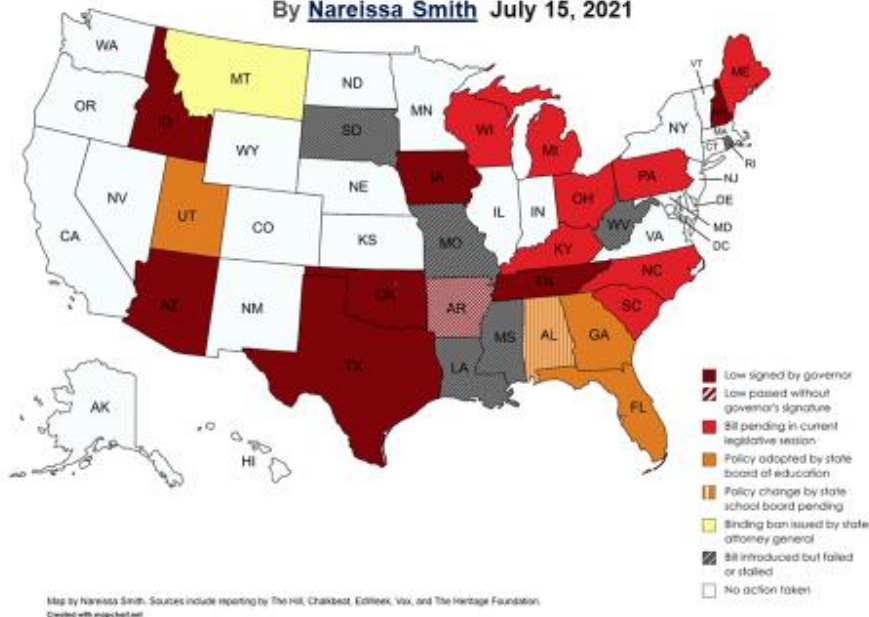
By Nareissa Smith

August 10, 2021

**Youngkin offers little proof critical race theory is in 'all' Virginia schools**

# Slide 27

## State actions on critical race theory By Nareissa Smith July 15, 2021



## Slide 28



### What is Critical Race Theory?

- A framework and/or analytical tool primarily used in university-level coursework as a way to help law students think critically about the impact of historical and present-day racism on the legal system.
- Founded by Derrick Bell, Alan Freedman, and Richard Delgado – 1970s

### What Critical Race Theory is NOT?

- CRT is **not** something that was included in the recommendations made by the African American History Education Commission.
- CRT is **not** part of the Virginia social studies curriculum or standards of learning.
- CRT is **not** synonymous with Culturally Relevant Teaching
- CRT is **not** synonymous with Culturally Responsive Teaching
- CRT is **not** part of the VDOE's EdEquity initiative
- CRT is **not** part of the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in Lynchburg City Schools

## Slide 29



### What are the Tenets of Critical Race Theory? *pgs 8-11*

1. Racism is ordinary, not aberrational – “normal science,” the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country. Racism is difficult to address or “cure” because it is not acknowledged.
2. Interest convergence or material determinism suggests that racism advances the interests of both white elites (materially) and working-class whites (psychically), larger segments of the society have little incentive to eradicate it.
3. Social constructionism thesis holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient.
4. CRT draws attention to the ways the dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labor market.
5. CRT draws attention to the unique voice of color thesis which holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, people of color may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters that whites are unlikely to know.

# Slide 30

# The Current Reality: 2021

*(I'm in the Business of Education Managing a Public Health Crisis)*



# Slide 31



## COVID Response Team (CRT) *(Teachers)*

Plan and Teach In-Person Lessons (5 days/week)  
Prepare Lessons for Quarantined Students  
Cover Classes for Quarantined Colleagues  
Be Accountable for Student Academic Growth  
Come to Work Every Day – They have Families



### Check for Updates

- Jul 18, 2021
- Jul 27, 2021
- Aug 5, 2021
- Aug 12, 2021
- Sep 16, 2021

### K-12 Education


On July 27, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated their K-12 school mask recommendations in response to emerging data about the Delta variant. CDC recommends universal masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status.

On August 12, 2021, State Health Commissioner Dr. M. Norman Oliver issued a Public Health Order requiring all students, teachers, staff, and visitors in K-12 schools aged two years and older to wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. All Virginia public and private K-12 schools (including PreK classrooms) must implement a requirement that students, teachers, and staff wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. Please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information regarding this Public Health Order.

Schools should follow [Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Virginia PreK-12 Schools \(UPDATED 09/16/21\)](#). This guidance emphasizes several key prevention strategies, including vaccination, masking, physical distancing, screening/testing, ventilation, hand hygiene, cleaning, staying home when sick, and prompt contact tracing once any cases are identified. Of all available prevention strategies, vaccination, masking, and physical distancing should be prioritized.

[CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools \(08/05/21\)](#)  
[American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\) Guidance for Safe Schools \(7/18/21\)](#)

More information about schools and COVID-19 can be found on the [VDH FAQs webpage](#) and the [DOE FAQs webpage](#).

-  [Interim Guidance \(Updated 09/16/21\)](#)
-  [School Metrics Dashboard](#)
-  [Vaccinations](#)
-  [Community Testing](#)
-  [K-12 School Testing](#)

# Slide 32

**POWER** Cc Rr Tt

## COVID Response Team (CRT) (School Nurses)

- Run Vaccination Clinics
- Take on Contact Tracing Duties
- Manage Medical Paperwork
- Stay Abreast of All CDC, VDH, and AAP Changes
- Come to Work Every Day— They have Families



LEADS | FALLING | PARENTS STUDENTS | COMMUNITY | OUR SCHOOLS | SCHOOLBOARDS | NEWS

VACCINATION CLINIC FOR 12 AND UP COMING WEDNESDAY, MAY 19

COMMUNITY, MAY 17, 2021

**VACCINATION CLINIC FOR 12 & UP**

← May & June 2021

Virginia plans to vaccinate children against COVID-19 in schools

NEWS RELEASE | May 17, 2021 | 10:00 AM EDT | 2021

← POSSIBLY November & December 2021

# Slide 33

**POWER** Cc Rr Tt

## COVID Response Team (CRT) (Support Staff)

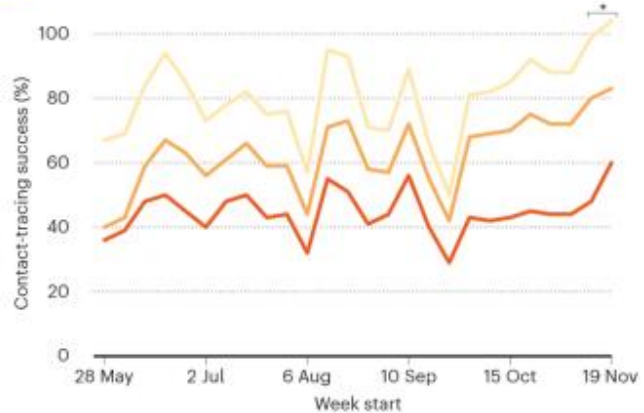
- Enforce Mitigation Strategies in Schools
- Get Staff and Students Signed up for Vaccinations
- Help Make Contact Tracing Phone Calls
- Manage Quarantine Paperwork
- Notify Close Contacts & School Community
- Keep the LCS Website Current
- Come to Work Every Day— They have Families



### MISSED CONTACTS

Between late May and November, contact-tracers in England generally reached less than half of the close contacts of people who tested positive for COVID-19.

- Confirmed cases of COVID-19 reached by contact-tracers
- Confirmed cases who gave details of their close contacts
- Estimated proportion of contacts whom tracers reached



\*Number rises over 100% because some positive cases were carried over from the previous week.



# Slide 34

**COVID Response Team (CRT)**  
*(Human Resources)*

- Hire Substitute Teachers
- Hire Substitute Nurses
- Hire Substitute Bus Drivers
- Hire Substitute Assistants
- Pay Staff to Stay Home When Sick
- Pay Staff to Stay Home When Quarantined

new

**In-Store Job Fair 10/12/2021 ALL STORES- Customer Service Ass...**

Food Lion 3.6 ★  
Lynchburg, VA +5 locations

\$10 - \$21 an hour

➤ Easily apply 🔴 Urgently hiring

- Job Types: Full-time, Part-time.
- Stand 100% of the time, frequently walking short distances.
- Tolerate working in extreme hot/cold temperatures for up to 20...

**Delivery Route Driver**  
PEE LOGISTICS INC (FEDEX Contractor)  
Virginia

\$20 - \$26 an hour

➤ Easily apply

- You will pick up your load and drive to the route and deliver to the address provided.
- High school or equivalent (Preferred).

**Warehouse Associate**

J.Crew Group, Inc. 3.8 ★  
Lynchburg, VA

\$14 - \$15 an hour

➤ Easily apply 🔴 Urgently hiring

- J.Crew is hiring temporary part-time and full-time roles through a local staffing agency.
- Job Types: Full-time, Temporary.
- 1st shift \$14.00/hr.

**Community Jobs**  
Average Starting Salary  
**\$14.38/hr**

**STORE TEAM MEMBER - #684 - DAYS/EVENINGS**

**Location:** Sheetz Stores #00684 - 7900 TIMBERLAKE ROAD LYNCHBURG, VA  
**Starting Rate of Pay:** \$13.50  
**Full or Part Time:** Part Time  
**Shift Needed:** Days/Evenings

# Slide 35

**COVID Response Team (CRT)**  
*(Human Resources)*

- Hire Substitute Teachers
- Hire Substitute Nurses
- Hire Substitute Bus Drivers
- Hire Substitute Assistants
- Pay Staff to Stay Home When Sick
- Pay Staff to Stay Home When Quarantined



Home | Departments | Human Resources

POSITION	RATE (EFFECTIVE 7/1/21)	
Teacher (Certified)	\$110/day	\$14.67/hour
Teacher (Bachelors)	\$100/day	\$13.33/hour
Teacher (60+ credits)	\$90/day	\$12.00/hour
Instructional Assistant	\$80/day	\$11.43/hour
Registered Nurse (RN)	\$110/day	\$14.67/hour
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	\$100/day	\$13.33/hour
Secretary	\$11.50/hour	
Custodian	\$11.50/hour	
Bus Driver	\$12.25/hour	
Bus Assistant	\$11.00/hour	

**Community Jobs**  
Average Starting Salary  
**\$14.38/hr**

**LCS Sub Jobs**  
Average Starting Salary  
**\$12.57/hr**

# Slide 36



**COVID Response Team (CRT)**  
*(Human Resources)*

Monitor Staff Vaccination Status  
Monitor Staff Weekly COVID Tests



ViSSTA will provide testing vendors, supplies, and staffing to support an end-to-end COVID-19 testing experience with the goal of maximizing resources available to schools to navigate full in-person instruction in the fall and minimizing added responsibilities to existing school staff.

## PATH OUT OF THE PANDEMIC

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S COVID-19 ACTION PLAN

### Requiring All Employers with 100+ Employees to Ensure their Workers are Vaccinated or Tested Weekly

The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is developing a rule that will require all employers with 100 or more employees to ensure their workforce is fully vaccinated or require any workers who remain unvaccinated to produce a negative test result on at least a weekly basis before coming to work. OSHA will issue an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) to implement this requirement. This requirement will impact over 80 million workers in private sector businesses with 100+ employees.



Under this model, schools' primary responsibilities are:

- ✓ Identify groups for testing (e.g., all students, all staff, specific extracurricular programs)
- ✓ Coordinate the collection of student/staff consent forms
- ✓ Provide space and time for testing
- ✓ Implement any containment/mitigation guidance
- ✓ Comply with reporting requirements

# Slide 37

## Why do you and other educators continue to do this job?



# WHY?



Crystal Murphy - 3 years



## Slide 38

### My "Why"

"To get through the hardest journey we need take only one step at a time, but we must keep on stepping."

- Chinese Proverbs



**POWER**



**Cc**

**Rr**

**Tt**