

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy for Urban Youth
Using Arts Education to Elevate Student Voice and Student Agency

Karen Eller

Arts integration in the elementary classroom plays a vital role in helping urban youth affected by trauma become a community of engaged learners. Using culturally relevant pedagogy, educators working with a diverse population can create learning environments that best promotes social justice by providing youth with opportunities and the space to make meaningful connections. These connections can elevate student voice and build student agency. This curriculum unit is designed to create the space needed to help my scholars elevate their voices far beyond the classroom and take what they learn and find ways to elevate their voices into their communities. Through arts integration, such as music, theatre, play, poetry, and photography they will share their stories and explore the stories of other individuals, whom despite their experiences with injustices, found ways to fight for a cause they believed in and became change agents for others impacted by an injustice. By elevating their voices through the arts, this unit was designed to help my scholars grow as a community of engaged learners and help them bridge the gap between home and school.