

Watering the Cultural Roots: Expand Culturally Responsive Pedagogy to a Community-Based Art Project Through Affective Learning

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Abstract

This study explores a Community-Based Art Education (CBAE) project integrating Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) to revitalize Taiwan's marginalized Ocean Hakka culture and strengthen cultural awareness among Hakka youth. The Ocean Hakka, whose distinct fishing heritage is threatened by climate change, standardized education, and gentrification, face increasing risk of cultural erasure, leaving younger generations disconnected from their roots. Working with fifth-grade Hakka students in Taiwan, this CRP-informed CBAE practice highlights affective learning experiences, enabling students to reconnect with their cultural assets through fieldwork, collaborative artmaking with villagers, and critical engagement with environmental and cultural challenges. Expanding beyond the U.S.-centric CRP framework, which primarily focuses on racial justice and ethnic representativity, this adaptation emphasizes cultural revitalization in Taiwan's context. Given the Hakka community's historical trauma, familial diaspora, and environmental vulnerabilities, this pedagogical model leverages affective engagement to rebuild cultural connections and deepen students' relationships with their surrounding cultural and ecological assets in engaging ways. Through a case study ap-

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proach, this research conceptualizes CRP-informed CBAE practice as an ever-growing plant, unfolding in three interconnected stages: Rooting, Sprouting, and Flowering, with affective learning as the nurturing process that cultivates cultural competency. By engaging with local artifacts, traditions, and ecological restoration efforts, students reshaped their subjectivities through embodied engagement, became empowered as cultural citizens, and contributed to the preservation, enrichment, and evolution of marginalized narratives.

Keywords: Community-Based Art Education, culturally responsive pedagogy, affective learning, Ocean Hakka culture, environmental engagement, Taiwan, cultural competency

Introduction

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), rooted in critical race theory, has evolved over 30 years (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and remains a key educational framework, now incorporated into state-level teacher training (California Department of Education, 2024; New York State Education Department, 2018). These initiatives emphasize culturally relevant, sustaining, and responsive teaching practices that affirm students' racial, linguistic, and cultural identities. However, implementing CRP remains challenging, as cultural contexts vary, requiring educators to adapt CRP through a deep understanding of students' backgrounds, educational environments, and their own preparedness and lived experiences regarding local cultural issues (Koukoulidis et al., 2024).

This study explores how Community-Based Art Education (CBAE) fosters affective connections among Hakka youth to revitalize the endangered Ocean Hakka culture in Taiwan. Rather than merely addressing cultural decline, this project actively engages students in cultural continuity through artistic and community-driven initiatives, empowering them to reconnect with and celebrate their heritage.

The Hakka people, often called *guest people*, have a history shaped by migration, resilience, and adaptation (Constable, 1996; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, n.d.). Hakka are defined by centuries of displacement due to warfare and upheaval, leading to ongoing identity struggles (Erbaugh, 1996). Further marginalized by gentrification, political diaspora, and historical stigma, many early Hakka settlers in Taiwan, perceived as cultural outsiders, concealed their traditions and identities (Martin, 1996). The Ocean Hakka, a small Hakka group in Taiwan, have maintained a distinct fishing culture and ecological knowledge for centuries, yet they remain misunderstood (Ocean Hakka Leisure Agricultural Region, 2019). Younger generations, shaped by internalized identity neglect, often perceive their heritage as distant and irrel-

evant. Additionally, climate change disrupts coastal ecosystems and threatens traditional fishing practices, further weakening the Ocean Hakka's deep connection to the land and sea.

To address the urgent need for cultural awareness and environmental preservation, this study engages younger generations through affective pedagogy to sustain and transform marginalized traditions. Designed for fifth-grade students, this CRP-informed CBAE project extends traditional CRP practices, which primarily focus on diversity and racial justice, by innovating new ways to reconnect young Hakka with their roots and nurture them as cultural actants.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Challenges of Localization

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), grounded in critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2013), addresses race, equity, and inclusion in education, advocating for racial justice. It challenges systemic discrimination by fostering cultural competency and resisting the marginalization embedded in dominant educational structures (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRP is defined by three key principles: valuing marginalized students' strengths, sustaining their cultural identities, and empowering them to critically engage with inequitable systems (Gay, 2010). It leverages students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and perspectives to create meaningful and affective learning experiences (Gay, 2002).

Recent studies highlight educators' crucial role in CRP, as their commitment and preparedness to diversity and inclusivity shapes their teaching (Koukoulidis et al., 2024). Teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and skills influence whether they view marginalized students as assets rather than deficits (Zorba, 2020) and how they tailor support for students and families (Tran et al., 2016). Tran et al. (2016) further emphasized that educators actively engaging with diverse languages and cultures develop greater empathy and sensitivity, fostering more inclusive learning environments.

Critics argue that cultural teaching in schools is often superficial, static, and reductive, focusing narrowly on racial and ethnic differences while neglecting the dynamic and relational aspects of culture (Castro et al., 2023). Such approaches risk reinforcing shallow narratives rather than recognizing cultural identities as evolving and complex (Paris & Alim, 2014). Acuff (2016) also critiqued art classrooms for reducing multicultural education to simplified artifacts and crafts, ultimately reinforcing Eurocentric and racist narratives. To address this, Castro et al. (2023) advocated for more innovative, student-centered cultural-

ly relevant pedagogy, urging educators to engage deeply with students' lived experiences rather than rely on top-down instruction.

Another challenge in implementing CRP lies in gaps of teacher awareness and systemic constraints within standardized education (Koukoulidis et al., 2024). Meihami (2023) found that dominant teacher training programs often overlook CRP, leaving educators unprepared to affirm diverse cultural backgrounds. However, hands-on experience is crucial in building teachers' confidence and capability in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Kaygısız, 2023). It underscores the need for teacher education research to support and validate models for implementing CRP into formal teaching settings.

Localizing remains critical issue in CRP, as its application varies across contexts (Gay, 2015). Rooted in the U.S. civil rights movement, CRP framework was designed to challenge white supremacy and uplift marginalized racial and immigrant groups (Carter & Vavrus, 2018; Valdez-Castro, 2021). However, racial struggles differ by region. Gay (2015) stressed the importance of educators understanding the cultural and demographic background of their students and navigating the complexities between theory and practice (Lawson et al., 2024).

In Taiwan, Chu et al. (2024) suggested teachers to conceptualize culture as dynamic in their cultural teaching, particularly in art education, where visual cultural elements can bridge students' lived experiences. This perspective aligns with art education scholars who have shown how art fosters cultural awareness, critical reflection, and social engagement, especially among marginalized communities (Kraehe, 2022; Acuff et al., 2012). By evoking both emotional and intellectual responses, art serves as a powerful tool for challenging inequity, such as examining artifacts through an anticolonial lens (Hsieh et al., 2023), amplifying silenced narratives through artmaking (Cooper et al., 2022), and collectively resisting dominant historical narratives in art-activism (Fendler & Shields, 2024).

In addressing Hakka cultural marginalization, this study's CRP approach focuses on cultural erosion caused by gentrification and internalized identity neglect (Ding, 2023; Leo, 2015). Rather than merely centering on racial oppression, as in conventional CRP (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), this project emphasizes rebuilding connections with cultural assets in affective ways. Given the risk of Hakka cultural disappearance, this approach moves beyond promoting cultural diversity to actively engaging students in rediscovering their heritage, critically reflecting on cultural loss, and participating in cultural regeneration in artistic engagements, lived experiences, and community activities by their curiosity and interest.

Affective Learning as a Way to Reengage Cultures

Instead of simply incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into structured learning through sociocultural-constructivist approaches (Gay, 2002; Valdez-Castro, 2021), this study extends CRP through affective experiences, exploring how embodied, immersive connections can revitalize students' relationality with their cultural assets.

Affect, as a pre-conscious, pre-emotional force, operates beyond cognition, shaping how bodies respond and connect to the world (Masumi, 1995). Affective encounters create dynamic interactions between materials and human bodies, generating feeling, sensations, and even new subjectivities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994). Artist engagement, in this sense, becomes an affective site which affects circulation between people and materials, and brings embodied, sensory learning. Hickey-Moody (2013) defined it as *affective pedagogy* in art practices that transforms sensibilities, relationships, and cultural understanding, where artists and viewers alike are affected and affecting, making learning an immersive and transformative act, and reassembling their understanding and subjectivities.

The affective turn in education highlights how embodied experiences deepen learning by integrating sensations, emotions, and material engagement, challenging the traditional separation of body and mind (Zembylas, 2016). Mulcahy (2019) attuned in students' experience in artistic engagements, such as viewing and discussing artifacts, students traced their sensory responses and shared experiences, fostering an emphatic and critical reflection toward diverse cultures. Hickey-Moody (2017) worked with students from diverse backgrounds, and through collective art practices, they connected with one another and developed a sense of community. These affective engagements move beyond cognitive comprehension, enabling meaningful interests, enduring cultural connections and heartfelt awareness of the world surrounding them (Rousell & Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, 2019).

Incorporating affective learning into CRP shifts knowledge-making from a language-centered, cognitive process, to one driven by bodily sensations and relational becoming. Rather than replacing constructivist approaches, this integration embraces the potential of the Affect to enrich cultural awareness and reengage students with their heritage through embodied artistic encounters (Mulcahy, 2019). Through this integrated approach, engagement with artifact and storytelling, cultural practices become a vital practice for rekindling cultural connections, allowing students to experience their identities as lived, felt, and continuously evolving.

CRP-Informed CBAE

Community-Based Art Education (CBAE) is an inclusive, democratic practice that fosters collaboration, cultural awareness, and social engagement through art (Clark & Zimmerman, 2000; Ulbricht, 2005). By valuing community members' experiences and creative contributions, CBAE empowers individuals to use art as a means of expression and connection, cultivating a sense of ownership and pride (Zimmerman, 2010). Lawton et al. (2019) highlighted how CBAE's emphasis on collaboration and cultural engagement aligns with CRP, making it a powerful model for developing cultural competence.

CBAE practitioners traditionally work with communities to address shared concerns through art, strengthening social bonds and amplifying marginalized voices (Ulbricht, 2005). These participatory processes mirror CRP's goals of fostering cultural sensitivity, critical thinking, and equity in education (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The strength of CBAE in CRP lies in its aesthetic and social engagement, allowing students to interact with cultural heritage, histories, and social issues in visceral, embodied ways. Through artmaking, students experience cultural traditions firsthand, making learning more meaningful, critical, and personally relevant (Ulbricht, 2005; Zimmerman, 2010). Given its engagement with complex cultural histories and social issues, the art educator plays a crucial role in facilitating collaboration and fostering inclusivity, as Blatt-Gross (2024) highlighted the importance of cultivating students' agency, empathy, and adaptability to navigate contemporary challenges.

Integrating CRP and CBAE into this project, I examined both my own and the students' cultural backgrounds, recognizing the historical marginalization of Hakka culture and its relevance to our learning today. Students' connections to their cultural assets are often overlooked, limiting their potential as cultural agents. To counteract this, I reoriented my approach to center students' curiosity and critical thinking, positioning myself as a facilitator who nurtures cultural interest and exploration through their cultural assets in affective experiences.

Research Questions

My goal is to integrate CRP and CBAE with affective learning, to build cultural awareness among young Hakka students. Two key questions guided this project: (1) How to foster the cultural awareness of Ocean Hakka among students through affective experiences?; and (2) How to collaborate with Ocean Hakka resources to develop a community-based art project rooted in affective experiences?

Methodology

This study employs a case study approach to feature the integration of CRP with CBAE in affective learning, focusing on its real-life application in a fifth-grade classroom of primarily Hakka-descendant students in Taiwan.

Case studies focus on specific, bounded units, examining their development over time within a particular context. Flyvbjerg (2011) argued that case studies, by capturing real-world complexities, generate reliable knowledge through their developmental nature rather than broad cross-unit analysis. This approach highlights how cases evolve as interconnected events, allowing for in-depth exploration. According to Yin (2004), case selection can range from specific events to abstract processes, such as pedagogical practices, but should meaningfully contribute to knowledge building and the definition of critical topics.

This study employs a single-case design to examine the implementation of a CRP-informed CBAE practice within the marginalized Ocean Hakka community in Taiwan. Despite their heritage, many Hakka descendants overlook or disconnect from their cultural roots. As a teacher-researcher, I explore how CRP can enhance students' cultural literacy within this unique context. The study investigates how students engaged with cultural artifacts, traditional practices, and ecological restoration efforts to develop cultural awareness and community connections. Additionally, I delve in the role of affective learning in fostering students' recognition of their cultural subjectivities, to the development of a pedagogical model for cultural revitalization.

Emphasized that case study researchers should prioritize real-world inquiry over rigid theoretical propositions, Yin mentioned that innovative data collection and analysis methods to generate insights (Yazan, 2015). To capture the nuances of this teaching practice and its impact on students, data collection incorporated multiple sources, including field notes, reflective journals, course recordings, discussions, and documentation of artistic engagement. The analysis focused on students' affective reactions, language, and actions, examining how these processes informed their cultural learning and identity formation. By situating CBAE and CRP within the Taiwanese context, this study narrates the affective change of students and proposes an integrated teaching model.

Positionality, Context, and Site

Most of my students, like me, are descendants of the Hakka community. In this research, my positionality as a Hakka individual con-

nects me deeply with both my students and the Ocean Hakka community. However, I also face challenges in fully embracing my Hakka identity due to a lack of knowledge and understanding.

The name “Hakka,” meaning “guest people,” reflects their ethnic history shaped by migration, resilience, and cultural adaptation (Constable, 1996; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, n.d.). Unlike other Han Chinese subgroups tied to specific regions, the Hakka have been defined by centuries of displacement from northern China due to warfare and upheaval, prompting their southward migration, including to Taiwan (Constable, 1996; Li et al., 2003; Lin, 2019). The diaspora resulted in social conflicts and identity struggles, leading many Hakka to conceal their identity to maintain economic opportunities, avoid discrimination, and assimilate into the dominant culture (Erbaugh, 1996). This was particularly evident among early Hakka settlers in Taiwan, who faced historical stigmatization and oppression of their dialects and traditions (Martin, 1996). Following Taiwan’s political liberalization around 1990s, the Hakka in Taiwan began advocating for cultural legitimacy through constitutional recognition and political activism. However, rather than merely resisting the historical denial of Hakka identity, Martin (1996) posited that the New Hakka Movement represents a deeper desire to redefine and anchor a new Hakka cultural identity within Taiwan’s complex and conflicted historical landscape.

The Ocean Hakka, a small subgroup within the Taiwanese Hakka community, remain marginalized due to gentrification and standardized education, which further erode their cultural identity among younger generation (Ocean Hakka Leisure Agricultural Region, 2019). As a result, efforts to sustain Hakka traditions and pass them on to younger generations have become crucial while difficult entangled with long-term neglect in socio-cultural reasons (Ding, 2023; Leo, 2015).

The cultural phenomenon and identity issues influenced my grandmother, a Hakka who migrated from rural area of Taiwan to Taipei city around 1950s. To ensure her descendants adapted into the dominant culture in Taiwan, and to prevent cultural differences from becoming a marker of otherness for me at school, she rarely shared her personal stories with me and avoid speaking Hakka dialects in family. As a result, I grew up with little understanding of Hakka rituals or cultural traditions.

This phenomenon is evident among my Hakka students as well. While being Hakka, many of them have never recognized as Hakka by their own families. Taiwan’s standardized education system, shaped by its colonial history, prioritizes economic competitiveness and neoliberal-oriented academic goals, leaving little room for cultural reflection or co-constructive knowledge-making between teachers, students, and

their contexts (Liu, 2015). Taiwanese Hakka students navigate this rigid educational structure, and, much like my own experience, they have had minimal exposure to Hakka traditions, language, or cultural environments. For them, being Hakka is merely a formal label tied to ancestry, carrying little presence or significance in their daily lives.

This Taiwan cultural context adds a distinct layer to implementing CRP, differing from the American model. Hakka cultural marginalization stems from internalized identity neglect, making identity reconstruction complex (Leo, 2015). Rather than facing explicit discrimination, Hakka people experience implicit cultural erasure, leading to declining dialect use and weakened cultural vitality as they struggle with insecurity and the challenges of sustaining their marginalized identity (Ding, 2023).

When I recognized the shared cultural crisis between me and 28 fifth-grade students, I began researching Hakka culture in Taoyuan, the area where the school I serve is located. I explored the Hakka communities along Taoyuan's coastal rim and their openness to school-community cooperation. This realization led me to view these communities as a resource for both the students and myself to explore Hakka culture through hands-on, real-world experiences. Driven by curiosity, I reached out to the Ocean Hakka Agriculture Association. Young (pseudonym), the association's representative, was exceptionally welcoming and enthusiastic about innovative collaborations to promote Ocean Hakka culture. This connection became the starting point for a culturally responsive learning journey through CBAE.

Ocean Hakka Culture and the Challenges Faced

Among the diverse Hakka communities, the Ocean Hakka represent a unique subgroup that adapted to coastal environments, developing distinct fishing practices and ecological knowledge. Located in regions such as the Xinwu District of Taoyuan, Taiwan, the Ocean Hakka has lived in harmony with its coastal surroundings for over two centuries. Practices such as Seine-haul fishing, the use of stone weirs, and an intricate understanding of tidal patterns reflect their deep connection to the ocean and its ecosystems (OceanHakka Leisure Agricultural Region, 2019).

However, this cultural heritage is increasingly at risk. Factors such as climate change, gentrification, and the commercialization of tourism have disrupted traditional livelihoods and marginalized Ocean Hakka traditions (OceanHakka Leisure Agricultural Region, 2019). Furthermore, the labor force in the village, particularly among younger generations, is rapidly declining due to the low birth rate and migration to urban areas. As a result, these individuals are increasingly disconnect-

ed from their cultural roots, with dominant discourses often overshadowing their heritage. This has led to a labor shortage and the gradual disappearance of the culture.

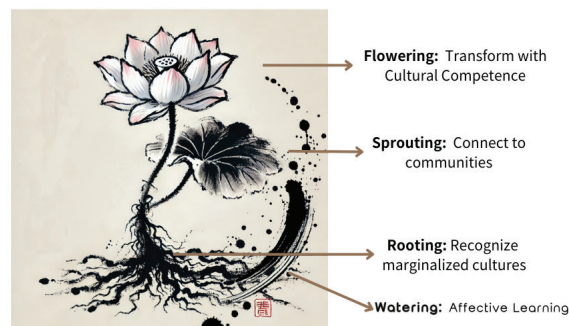
Efforts to preserve and revitalize Ocean Hakka culture are crucial for safeguarding this unique heritage and for fostering cultural pride and ecological awareness in future generations. Through the integration of CRP and CBAE, I developed a pedagogical model (Figure 1) for this project to ensure that the legacy of Ocean Hakka continues to thrive in contemporary contexts among Hakka descendants. Additionally, this model offers a practical approach for educators practicing CRP and CBAE in their schools and institutions.

Much like myself, my students had limited exposure to the Ocean Hakka culture, despite sharing Hakka heritage. The value of Hakka's cultural heritage and identity remained unexplored and largely insignificant for them. While I am not an expert on Hakka culture, I am committed to bridging this gap. Through building connections with the Ocean Hakka community in this CBAE project, I created new pathways for my students to engage with and connect to Hakka culture.

Conceptualizing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of CBAE in Affective Learning

This CBAE project, designed to foster cultural awareness in alignment with CRP, envisions implementing as an evolving process, metaphorized by an ever-growing plant with three interconnected stages: rooting, sprouting, and flowering. These stages represent an intensified exploration for students in CRP, facilitated by affective learning as the core driver, much like water nurturing a plant's growth. I illustrated the conceptualization of this project design in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Conceptualizing CRP-informed CBAE in Affective Learning



Note. Courtesy of the author.

Rooting: Recognizing Marginalized Cultures

The rooting phase recognizes marginalized cultures and values students' assets, family backgrounds, and local environments. This stage aims to cultivate students' curiosity to engage in their cultural roots and related subjectivities, laying a foundation for deeper exploration. Key questions guiding this phase include: Where are you from? What elements or materials are essential to your cultural roots? Any stories? What is Ocean Hakka culture?

In practical implantations, students researched Hakka traditions on the Internet and conducted interviews with their family members at home, as well as a collective interview with the Ocean Hakka expert, Young, during a school course. Through these activities and discussions, the students identified relevant objects and interesting stories related to their cultural experiences, Hakka practices, and explored what being Hakka means to them.

Sprouting: Connecting to Community

The sprouting phase involves creating bonds and fostering trust through corporal and collaborative engagements with the community. The cooperation between the community and school in this part helps the students gain more affective experience and material resources in sensory exploration, artistic practices, and community mapping. The guiding questions for this phase include: What happened in Ocean Hakka community and why ocean environments are endangered? What are my experiences with cultural practices? What am I engaging with, how do I feel? What is interesting for me?

In practical implantations, students corporally participated with villagers in Seine-haul fishing, visited Stone Weir and coastal ecology, and collected discarded buoys on the coast (see Figures 2 and 3). These embodied connections allow students to actively participate in and understand their culture in real-life situations to expand cultural competency through interaction and co-creation.

Flowering: Transforming with Cultural Competence

The flowering phase transforms students' understanding of their cultural identity. Here, they critically and consciously unveil the challenges happening in specific circumstance by hegemonic discourses. To flower means students can reflect and generate new insights or actions that negotiate inequitable power dynamics and enrich their cultural identity. The guiding questions for this phase include: What do I want

to do for the Hakka community? In what way can the challenges of Ocean Hakka culture be addressed? How is the artmaking process informing this action?

In practical implementations, students were empowered as Hakka individuals by brainstorming creative initiatives to revitalize endangered traditions. After discussions, they decided to promote seafood

Figure 2
Traditional Seine-Haul Fishing Experience



Note. Courtesy of OceanHakka Association.

Figure 3
Ecological Mapping



Note. Courtesy of the author.

from Xinwu village by making fish-meat balls and preparing dishes to attract a broader online audience for Ocean Hakka (see Figures 4 and 5). Additionally, they encouraged their parents to visit the Xinwu community more often, fostering a stronger Hakka consciousness. They also gave back to the community by creating art using discarded buoys (see Figure 6), which were repurposed as artistic installations for the Ocean Hakka Association's visitor center (see Figure 7).

Figure 4
Collaborative Fish Meatball Making



Note. Courtesy of the author.

Figure 5
Finished Fish Meatballs



Note. Courtesy of the author.

This transformative flowering phase encourages students to keep exploring cultural subjectivities in their own ways, emerging as aesthetic citizens (Hickey-Moody, 2013) in asset-driven CBAE that embodies responsiveness, inquiry, and collaboration (Blatt-Gross, 2024; Lawton et al., 2019).

Figure 6
Artmaking with Discarded Buoys



Note. Courtesy of OceanHakka Association.

Figure 7
Artistic Installation for Xinwu Village



Note. Courtesy of OceanHakka Association.

Affective Learning Nurtures the Cultural Competency Growth

In all these stages, affective learning serves as the essential water that nourishes the entire pedagogical practice. Affective learning emphasizes sensory engagement, materializing embodied, tactile, and experiential interactions that allow students to deeply touch their culture. Hickey-Moody (2013) describes this as a circulated cycle in which affect is both consumed and produced through artistic practices, generating new sensibility, emotions, relationality, understandings, and potential subjectivities.

In this CBAE project, local artifacts, collective artmaking, and community fieldwork function as affective circulation, inspiring students to explore their cultural heritage. In the affective engagement as a catalyst of connection and reflections, this pedagogical approach empowers students to move beyond the structured curriculums or passive participation in art projects. Instead, they are imbued with firsthand, relational experiences that transform CRP into a more creativity-oriented, self-reflective, and speculative practice (Fendler & Shields, 2024).

By prioritizing affective engagement, this pedagogical model creates wondrous and unexpected moments, fostering the emergence of cultural citizens who can actively shape, sustain, and innovate their cultural identities in dynamic and empowering ways.

Results

During the affective learning that cultivate cultural competence, I integrate core values of culturally responsive pedagogy in this CBAE project. The Ocean Hakka project highlighted the importance of preserving and revitalizing underrepresented cultural identities by rethinking the intersections of culture, environment, and art.

Real-Life Challenges Trigger Cooperation

CBAE project revealed the intricate interplay between interpersonal, cultural-historical, and individual factors (Blatt-Gross, 2024). Ocean Hakka cultural practices, deeply reliant on natural resources and traditional fishing industries, are influenced by environmental elements such as weather and tides. These practices require situational knowledge and the willingness of various stakeholders, including students and parents, to participate actively. In the process-oriented learning, affective explorations involved artmaking with discarded materials in villages, cuisine-designing by environment resource, and installing of artistic installations, ini-

tiated through the discussion and cooperation among students and villagers.

Artmaking played a central role in this process by serving as both a means of cultural exploration and a tool for fostering collective engagement. Through artistic creation, students actively processed their experiences, negotiated identities, and transformed their learning into tangible expressions of cultural understanding. CBAE goes beyond social interactions; it relies on the collective contributions of students, teachers, villagers, parents, and even school administrators to make meaningful participation possible.

The project exposed diverse needs among students, including those requiring more attention or emotional support to engage fully. Despite these challenges, their unique perspectives and willingness to take risks enriched the experience and deepened the meaning of community engagement. For instance, during our visit to the coastal forest for a fishing activity, Ye, one of the students, appeared visibly anxious. He hesitated at the forest's edge, clinging to the boundaries of the group and scanning the unfamiliar landscape with wide eyes. It became clear that the environment—dense trees, shifting tides, and unfamiliar terrain—was overwhelming for him. From his body language and whispered exchanges with peers, I sensed he was grappling with fear of getting lost or swept away by the rising tide. This moment revealed how deeply unfamiliar environments can stir vulnerability in young learners, yet also offer powerful opportunities for growth. However, through the support and friendship of peers like Young and guidance from community members, Ye overcame his fears and embraced the challenge. This transformation highlighted the importance of emotional and social scaffolding in fostering resilience and engagement.

Additionally, students confronted the stark realities of subsiding traditional fishing techniques, exacerbated by climate change, labor shortages, and declining profitability. These real-life challenges became robust learning materials, prompting students to reflect on their community's cultural crisis. The physical and emotional engagement in these experiences sparked heartfelt commitments to protecting their cultural heritage and natural environment, cultivating a critical consciousness about the interconnectedness of culture and ecology.

The teamwork required to navigate these challenges was transformative. Students collaborated dynamically, brainstorming innovative solutions and engaging in affective communication. This participatory process fostered critical thinking and nurtured a collective sense of purpose among the younger generation. During one of our group activities, Mei, a student with Hakka heritage, expressed how surprised she

was by the diversity of cultural experiences within the group. Although many students shared Hakka ancestry, their understandings and connections to the culture varied widely. Mei seemed particularly moved by the collaborative nature of the activity, as she eagerly engaged in exchanging ideas and learning from her peers. The shared experience deepened not only students' cultural knowledge but also their appreciation for the plurality within a shared identity. Recognizing these differences, students were intentionally grouped to promote mutual learning and exchange of ideas. Their unique perspectives became invaluable assets in the participatory project. Each student constructed their understanding along individual trajectories, yet the experiential process allowed for collective growth. This project demonstrated that real-life challenges along with affective and collaborative engagements can inspire profound cultural and environmental stewardship among the younger generation.

Affective Discovery and Artmaking Develop Culturally Competent Individuals

In the Ocean Hakka project, the discovery of cultural identity began with students grappling with their limited understanding of what it means to be Hakka. Kai knew little about the Hakka culture beyond what his parents occasionally shared at home. He recalled hearing the Hakka dialect and seeing traditional representations in the media, like elderly women in floral shirts singing folk songs on TV, but these moments felt distant and even humorous to him. This sentiment underscores how structural marginalization has confined Hakka culture to narrow representations in public media, leaving students with little opportunity to engage meaningfully with their heritage.

Recognizing my own gaps in knowledge about Ocean Hakka culture, I collaborated with my students to consult with Young, a folklore expert in Xinwu village. Together, we explored ways to bridge Hakka culture in a manner that was not dictated top-down but instead fostered horizontal, affective, and meaningful connections for the students. As the project unfolded, students began to shift their perceptions of Hakka culture, which many had previously viewed as distant, despite their heritage.

The guiding questions sparked their curiosity, prompting them to research Hakka cultural heritage, artifacts, costumes, music, and family histories. Some students experienced a moment of realization during the activity, recognizing that the everyday napkins used at their living environments featured a traditional Hakka fabric design. As Bei found

out about this, she had even received international recognition. This small discovery seemed to shift her perception of how cultural heritage could be woven into the ordinary. These affective discoveries ignited a passion in the students to delve deeper into their cultural identity.

Artmaking, brainstorming, or creative practices particularly serve as a process to cultivate cultural awareness. During our onsite engagement, students reflected on their positionality within the cultural and environmental context. Initially, students expressed both concern and hope. Many lamented the decline of traditional fishing practices and voiced frustration about the pollution along the seashore. These discussions revealed their growing awareness of the interconnectedness between cultural heritage and ecological preservation. Inspired by this realization, students began to propose creative, actionable ideas to support and sustain the local environment. They suggested a beach clean-up and use the wasted buoys to not only tidy up the environment but also beautify the rubbish into something decorated for the community. I joined the students' discussion to brainstorm with them how to realize this idea practically, where to decorate, how to make Xinwu village become better as the villages' expectations, and improve the environment.

When discussing on how to respond and utilize the local resource to address the current environment issue for Ocean Hakka culture in Xinwu. Recalling her memory of eating fish balls, a student named Bei envisioned creating seafood dishes as a sensory and aesthetic way to honor Xinwu's delicacies and fishing industry. She excitedly proposed collaborating with local villagers to prepare traditional fishery cuisine and share the process on social media. Her idea was met with enthusiasm and applause from the rest of the students. The hospitable villagers generously supported the initiative by helping gather materials and offering their expertise to promote local culture. Inspired by this collaboration, students worked alongside community members to source resources and tools for their projects, which culminated in a memorable meal featuring exquisite fish meatball soup. Through these creative engagements, students were able to connect their personal experiences with broader social and environmental issues, becoming culturally responsive practitioners who both honor and innovate upon their heritage.

The organic processes demonstrated that affective discovery and artmaking are powerful tools for assembling culturally competent individuals. Through their collective efforts, students gained a deeper understanding of Hakka culture and developed critical skills in communication, empathy, and problem-solving, laying the foundation for their future as engaged and thoughtful cultural practitioners.

***Environmental Engagements Materialize
Consciousness of Selves and Culture***

The Ocean Hakka project evolved into a profound cultural and environmental consciousness exploration as students moved from theoretical discussions to direct, hands-on experiences. The fieldwork allowed them to bridge the gap between abstract understandings of their Hakka heritage and the lived realities of Xinwu villagers. Beyond the fishing techniques and coastal tours, physically engaging with the land and community highlighted the fragile balance between cultural traditions and ecological sustainability.

As students observed and participated in daily life at Xinwu, they began to see themselves not only as learners but also as active contributors to the community's cultural efforts. By immersing themselves in the rhythms of local life and histories, they reflected on their roles in sustaining Hakka culture. They came to recognize that in Xinwu, heritage was not merely preserved through stories about the Hakka but embodied in everyday practices. This realization prompted a shift in their focus from passive receivers of knowledge to empowered agents who could make a difference. Their exposure to the challenges faced by the village, such as ecological degradation and cultural erosion, stirred a collective sense of responsibility to advocate for and preserve these traditions.

Students became increasingly aware of how human and environmental issues are intertwined. A beach cleanup activity was particularly impactful, demonstrating the tangible consequences of neglecting the environment. Seeing the trash on the beach made them realize how much humans take these beautiful places for granted. Students shared their growing awareness, which catalyzed discussions on sustainability and the broader role they could play in supporting the village.

***Fostering Cultural Consciousness
and Future Leadership through Partnerships***

The onsite engagements in the Ocean Hakka project allowed students to expand their cultural competence through meaningful partnerships with Xinwu village and the Ocean Hakka Association. These collaborations exposed students to rich cultural heritage, from historical stone weirs to traditional fishing techniques. These artifacts provided historical and aesthetic contexts, deepening the students' understanding of Hakka culture and its significance. Local villagers, experts in fishery, sustainable ecology, and Hakka cuisine, generously shared their knowledge, creating hands-on and embodied learning opportuni-

ties that strengthened the students' appreciation and commitment to their cultural roots.

However, the collaborative nature of CBAE presented its challenges. Students varied in their levels of experience, independence, and responsibility, requiring thoughtful facilitation to ensure productive teamwork. For instance, younger children often struggled with accountability, while others excelled in working independently. I addressed these differences by fostering open communication and modeling empathy, encouraging dialogue to resolve conflicts rather than allowing frustration to lead to disengagement.

The project emphasized the importance of teamwork and communication, enabling students to navigate differing perspectives and abilities within their groups. These collective efforts cultivated a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage while instilling the confidence to contribute to its preservation. Students came to recognize art as a critical tool for empowerment, capable of amplifying marginalized voices and addressing the challenges their community faces. By the end of the project, students had transformed from passive observers into active participants in their cultural narratives. They carried forward the knowledge and skills they had gained and a sense of pride and responsibility to sustain Ocean Hakka traditions for future generations. This experience demonstrated the transformative potential of CBAE in fostering cultural competence, collaborative problem-solving, and environmental stewardship.

Discussion and Implication

This study presents a CRP-informed CBAE practice that emphasizes affective experiences, offering insights for educators on adapting CRP to diverse contexts. Incorporating affective pedagogy in CRP framework, this research responds to the cultural disconnection among young Hakka students in Taiwan. Unlike marginalized groups facing systemic Western oppression, Hakka students struggle with self-disengagement from their cultural assets, often perceiving Hakka identity as an ancestral relic rather than a lived experience. This study demonstrates how affective learning counteracts the erasure of cultural identity in standardized education, fostering deeper cultural connections. While grounded in CRP's values, this approach shifts the emphasis from diversity and racial justice to cultural revitalization.

Through affective engagement, such as family interviews, community mapping, material selection and discussion in artmaking, students reconnected with their heritage in embodied, immersive, and sponta-

neous ways. This research extends CRP beyond classroom instruction into community-based art, ecological restoration, and lived history, emphasizing cultural revitalization over rigid instructional methods. In response to the need for practical models for CRP implementation (Gay, 2015; Koukoulidis, 2024), this study integrates cultural education, community involvement, and environmental connections, becoming a three-phased pedagogical model. By expanding beyond cognitive, sequential understandings of CRP (Valdez-Castro, 2021), this model incorporates an organic and process-oriented pedagogy—affective learning—to open up more possibility for students to create their own exploratory trajectories and cultivate new cultural subjectivity.

This integrated approach does not eschew the traditional cognitive techniques aimed at improving marginalized students' academic performance; rather, it raises a philosophical question about the ultimate goals of CRP. To what extent can students be guided if they lack an understanding of who they are and where they are situated? What is the meaning of cultural learning if any human can truly *teach* it? This integrated approach attempts to rethink CRP by cultivating a space where humans, including teachers, students, and community members, can learn together from the environment and cultural heritage around them, which nurtures the capacity of their cultural awareness through an embodied, site-specific practice, rather than a static, prescriptive curriculum.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The Ocean Hakka CBAE project illustrates the transformative potential of integrating CRP with affective learning, fostering deep cultural connections through embodied participation, artistic collaboration, and community engagement. Conceptualized through three phases—Rooting, Sprouting, and Flowering, this innovative model centers on students' curiosity and affective experiences, empowers students as active participants in sustaining cultural heritage. Artifacts, cultural activities, and community partnerships further strengthen learning, positioning artistic engagement as a space for affective and cultural connections (Hickey-Moody, 2013).

Beyond individual identity formation, CBAE fosters leadership, critical thinking, and collective cultural agency (Lawton et al., 2019). Students engage in hands-on, material-based exploration, seeing themselves as cultural stewards who feel, create, and sustain their heritage through creative contributions. This participatory approach extends CRP beyond the classroom into social, ecological, and histor-

ical spheres, reinforcing its relevance for broader educational frameworks.

Educators play a crucial role as facilitators rather than knowledge providers, engaging in co-learning processes with students to create inclusive, participatory learning environments. Implementing CRP and CBAE all requires flexibility, collaboration, and responsiveness to students' needs, helping them navigate cultural complexities while fostering critical reflection and agency. Fieldwork, embodied workshops, and artistic engagement with local communities enhance both students' and teachers' confidence and interest in cultural learning.

Further Research

This study highlights the need for further research on how educators innovate and integrate different paradigms in CRP, as well as a call for process-oriented assessment for cultural teaching. The case explored in this study demonstrates how affective pedagogy and CBAE can enhance CRP, particularly lying in teacher's preparedness reflection on the background of the Hakka community in Taiwan. Also, since the processual course leads students to attend in their affective explorations by following their curiosity in distinct cultural contexts, it requires a more process-oriented understanding to the teaching effectiveness. Given that the data in this study primarily relied on self-reports, future research should employ or develop multiple analytical approaches to further examine the nuance, longitudinal and processual changes and effectiveness in innovative CRP practices.

Additionally, this study stresses the importance of teacher training and institutional support in CRP implementation. Future investigations should explore how professional development programs, policy frameworks, and school-community initiatives can cooperate with educators in adopting and innovating CRP practices, particularly in fostering teachers' readiness, motivation, and empowerment to develop new strategies tailored to various contexts.

Limitations

This small-scale study focuses on a specific context, limiting its generalizability and requiring adaptation for other settings. It captures students' immediate affective responses but does not assess the long-term impact on their cultural identity. Additionally, my role as a teacher-researcher may have influenced student engagement and responses.

Note

This curriculum-based project did not undergo IRB review, but parental consent for photography was obtained. All visual materials were anonymized, and minors are referred to by pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality in line with strict educational research ethics.

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