

of majority/minority polarity. We can turn the tide on this institutionalized situation by building systems that are responsive to cultural difference and seek to include rather than exclude difference. . . . Moreover, culturally responsive educational systems create spaces for teacher reflection, inquiry, and mutual support around issues of cultural differences. (NCCRESt 2008, 15)

Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and equity-focused approaches emphasize validating and valuing students' cultural and linguistic heritage—and all other aspects of students' identities—while also ensuring their full development of academic English and their ability to engage meaningfully in a range of academic contexts across the disciplines, as emphasized in figure 9.11.

### **Figure 9.11. Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching**

Culturally and linguistically 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. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming. Along with improving academic achievement, these approaches to teaching are committed to helping students of color maintain identity and connections with their ethnic groups and communities. It helps develop a sense of personal efficacy, building positive relationships and shared responsibility while they acquire an ethic of success that is compatible with cultural pride. Infusing the history and culture of the students into the curriculum is important for students to maintain personal perceptions of competence and positive school socialization.

#### **Source**

Los Angeles Unified School District. 2012. *LAUSD English Learner (EL) Master Plan*. Los Angeles Unified School District.

*Simply immersing students in standard English (SE) and ignoring differences between SE and the dialects of English that SELs use (or students' primary languages), and any cultural differences, is ineffective and not conducive to a positive and productive learning environment.*

Simply immersing students in standard English (SE)<sup>6</sup> and ignoring differences between SE and the dialects of English that SELs use (or students' primary languages), and any cultural differences, is ineffective and not conducive to a positive and productive learning environment. For example, students who are SELs may be unaware of language differences between SE and their home dialect because, as Rickford (1999, 12) points out, "extensive overlaps in vocabulary, phonology, and grammar can cause speakers to miss subtle but significant differences between their own and the target dialect." As awareness and appreciation of language and cultural diversity increase, misunderstanding and miscommunication in classrooms and schools decrease.

Teachers should adopt an asset-based stance toward the culture and language of their students and an additive approach to their students' language development by enacting the following principles:

- **Self-educate.** Teachers develop an awareness of and positive disposition toward their students' cultural and linguistic heritage, their communication styles, and of their students' dialects of English (LeMoine 1999; McIntyre and Turner 2013; Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González 1992).

<sup>6</sup> See earlier in this chapter for a discussion on Standard English and Standard English Learners (SEL).