

### Cultural Wealth Model (Yosso, 2005)

In response to mainstream deficit thinking that portrays communities of color as “culturally disadvantaged,” Yosso (2005) draws on Critical Race Theory (CRT) to surface and enumerate the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by marginalized groups. Yosso’s goal is to help researchers and educators better serve students by recognizing and acknowledging their strengths and the rich cultural capital they bring into the classroom. According to Yosso, “this CRT approach to education involves a commitment to develop schools that acknowledge the multiple strengths of Communities of Color in order to serve a larger purpose of struggle toward social and racial justice” (p. 69).

1. **Aspirational capital** refers to “the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. This resiliency is evidenced in those who allow themselves and their children to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances, often without the objective means to attain those goals” (p. 77-78).
2. **Linguistic capital** includes “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style... Linguistic capital reflects the idea that Students of Color arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills. In addition, these children most often have been engaged participants in a storytelling tradition, that may include listening to and recounting oral histories, parables, stories (*cuentos*) and proverbs (*dichos*)” (p. 78-79).
3. **Familial capital** refers to “those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition... This form of cultural wealth engages a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship. Acknowledging the racialized, classed and heterosexualized inferences that comprise traditional understandings of ‘family’, familial capital is nurtured by our ‘extended family’, which may include immediate family (living or long passed on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends who we might consider part of our *familia*. From these kinship ties, we learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to our community and its resources” (p. 79).
4. **Social capital** can be understood as “networks of people and community resources. These peer and other social contacts can provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions... *Mutualistas* or mutual aid societies are an example of how historically, immigrants to the US and indeed, African Americans even while enslaved, created and maintained social networks... This tradition of ‘lifting as we climb’ has remained the motto of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs since their organization in 1896” (p. 79-80).
5. **Navigational capital** refers to “skills of maneuvering through social institutions. Historically, this implies the ability to maneuver through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind.

For example, strategies to navigate through racially-hostile university campuses draw on the concept of academic invulnerability, or students’ ability to ‘sustain high levels of achievement, despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly at school and, ultimately, dropping out of school’ (Alva, 1991, p. 19)” (p. 80).

6. **Resistant capital** refers to “those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality... This form of cultural wealth is grounded in the legacy of resistance to subordination exhibited by Communities of Color... Furthermore, maintaining and passing on the multiple dimensions of community cultural wealth is also part of the knowledge base of resistant capital” (p. 80)

We invite you to read the whole paper, which in addition to elaborating each of these kinds of cultural wealth, also provides a brief history and explanation of Critical Race Theory, and its importance to educational research and practice.

Yosso, T.J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), pp. 69–91.