ICUCARE (pronounced “I see you care.”) is a framework for building equitable classrooms that was developed by Dr. Kyndall Brown. Initially designed for mathematic classrooms, the concepts defining this framework are rooted in culturally responsive practices and applicable to all subjects.

Below is the ICUCARE framework coupled with culturally responsive instructional strategies.

**The Seven Principles of ICUCARE**

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| **Principle number** | **Principle title** | **Equity Concern** |
| 1 | **I**nclude others as experts | * Classrooms tend to focus on the teacher and a few “really smart” students.
* This dynamic creates a hierarchy that identifies who is smart and who is not.
* Students who are struggling often withdraw from learning when such dynamics are present.
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| **COMPATIBLE TECHNIQUES:*** Create opportunities for students toshare what they know in ways that are relevant to the lesson.
* Use techniques like differentiated instruction, open questions, and parallel tasks that allow students to participate in the same discussion but approach it in a way they each understand.
* Use non-exemplars to show students what mistakes to avoid as you teach them what to do.
* Provide genuine feedback that helps students see themselves as doers and learners.
* Eliminate red pens and big Fs on quizzes and tests. Words like “Not yet but getting closer” replace a failing grade on a test paper.
* Mistakes are expected, inspected, respected, and corrected. Students must be encouraged to see mistakes as learning opportunities and be taught to self-correct. Feedback from teachers should be supportive, clear, and timely and connected to high expectations.
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| **Principle number** | **Principle title** | **Equity Issue** |
| 2 | be **C**ritically conscious | * Intentionally work on bias detection and disruption
* Know how biases work to hinder instruction especially through deficit thinking and fixed mindsets
* Learn strategies for how to manage inappropriate comments
* Understand how social, historical, and economic factors impact learning.
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| **COMPATIBLE TECHNIQUES:** * Use materials that support instruction and are relevant to the students’ lives or interests.
* Use “resistant materials” that run counter to stereotypes and negative images of select racial-ethnic and cultural groups.
* Use authentic primary sources to help create windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors.
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| **Principle number** | **Principle title** | **Principle description** |
| 3 | **U**nderstand your students well | * Know what your students’ needs as individuals and as learners
* Those who are struggling must move forward faster than their peers to catch up.
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| **COMPATIBLE TECHNIQUES:** * Allow for student voice and choice on assignments to build relevance.
* Provide explicit instruction for core concepts and vocabulary words.
* Create a community environment within the classroom.
* Explicitly teach how to collaborate and work as partners.
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| **Principle number** | **Principle title** | **Principle description** |
| 4 | Use **C**ulturally relevant curricula | Use materials, videos, posters, etc. that allow students to see themselves in the curricula (create windows and doors). Establish the relevance of what is being taught. |
| **COMPATIBLE TECHNIQUES:** * Use primary sources.
* Use “resistant” readings and discussion materials that feature multiple perspectives.
* Use real-world and relevant information sources and problems.
* Capitalize on communal learning styles such as Problem and Project-based Learning.
* Use visual, auditory, and multimedia representations.
* Allow for variety and creativity in lesson and assessment design.
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| **Principle number** | **Principle title** | **Principle description** |
| 5 | **A**ssess, activate, and build on prior knowledge | Value and use the funds of knowledge that students bring into the classroom. Connect what students already know to new knowledge and skills. |
| **COMPATIBLE TECHNIQUES:** * Metaphorical Strategies

Examples:• How is a computer firewall the same as a building’s security guard? • How is a newly formed government like a child?• How is human circulation like a transit system? • How is a mathematical proof like a machine? • How is a chemical reaction like a recipe?* Truth or Dare Exercise

Provide students with a brief paragraph about previously taught concepts, facts, skills, etc. Have students identify the intentionally included errors in the paragraph, make corrections, and then explain why their corrections are accurate.[Are You Tapping into Prior Knowledge Often Enough in Your Classroom? | Edutopia](https://www.edutopia.org/blog/prior-knowledge-tapping-into-often-classroom-rebecca-alber)[Anticipation Guide - YouTube (youtube-nocookie.com)](https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/jQCKXQUquTc?playlist=jQCKXQUquTc&autoplay=1&iv_load_policy=3&loop=1&modestbranding=1&start=37) |

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| **Principle number** | **Principle title** | **Principle description** |
| 6 | **R**elease control | * This ties in with other principles such as understanding your students and including others as experts
* Teachers can prepare themselves and their students for more student initiative by teaching and modeling the desired behaviors.
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| **COMPATIBLE TECHNIQUES:** * Allow students to create projects that meet your instructional goals.
* Provide for a variety of tasks and differentiated assessments.
* Enable students to take control of their own learning by setting personal academic goals. Teachers can assist by helping students discover ways of achieving said goals and ways of tracking progress.
* Create performance rubrics so students will know what the work requirements are and how to achieve them.
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| **Principle number** | **Principle title** | **Principle description** |
| 7 | **E**xpect more | * See students’ potential
* Eliminate psychological (biases) and academic barriers (assignments that have no relevance)
* Expect the best out of students and provide support to help them achieve.
* Avoid deficit mindsets that impede learning.
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| **COMPATIBLE TECHNIQUES:** * Gradual Release of Responsibility to model skills and help students master them.
* Look for gaps in understanding. Fill them through techniques such as

Diagnostic Storytelling. * Differentiate instruction and make use of open and parallel tasks.
* Assist students in setting academic goals for your subject area and strategies to achieve them.
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