



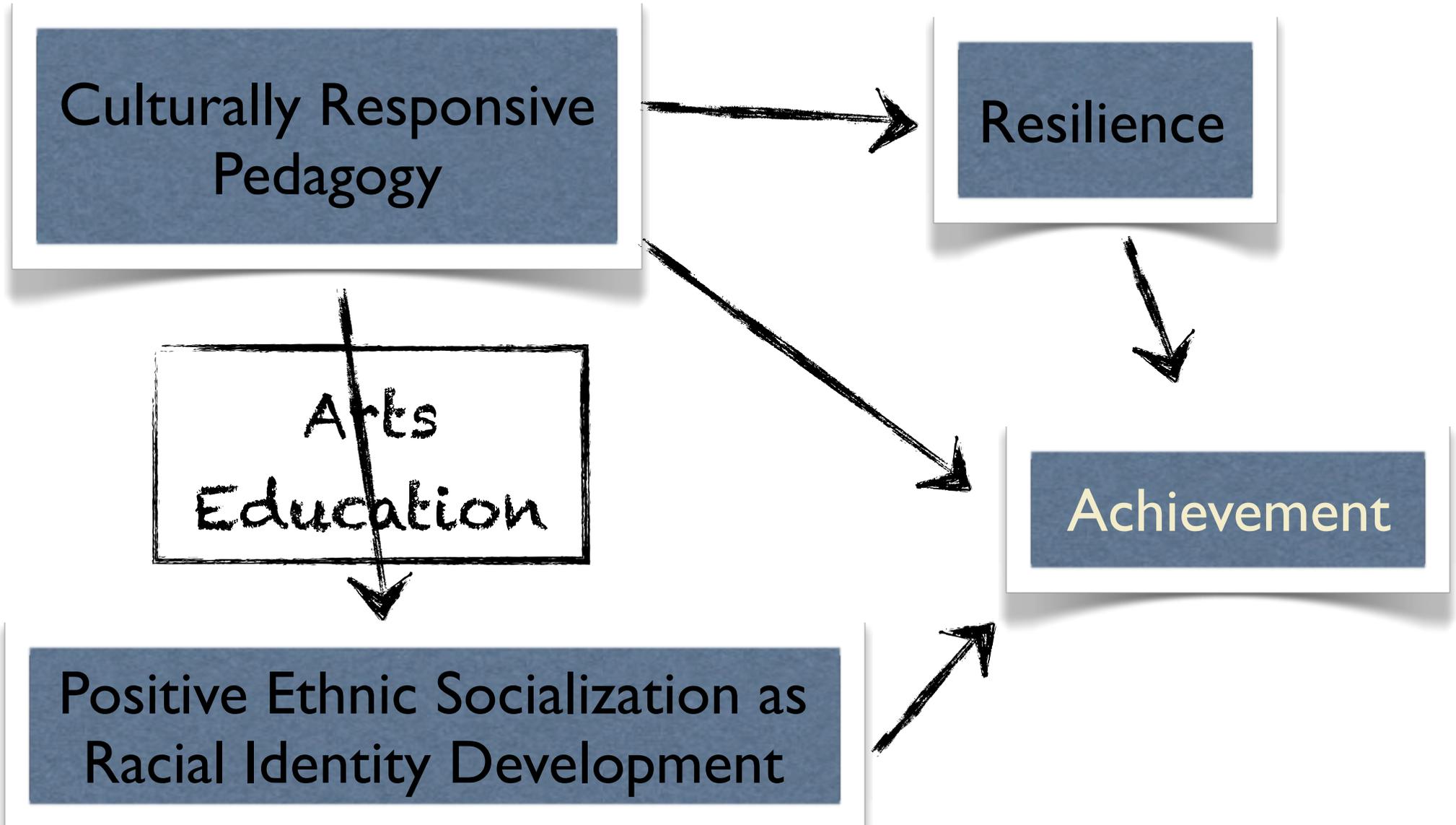
## Understanding and Supporting Racial Identity Development

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# Culture and Education Theoretical Model

From Hanley and Noblit, 2009



# The Permanence of Racism

We start out with the assumption that we live in a society where racism exists. Further, we will not be able to get rid of racism in our lifetimes. We help students understand how racism works so that they can deal with it. To navigate the system, we can help them create a *counternarrative*.

# Counternarrative... What's Your Story?

Every student needs their own path. Students of color cannot afford to let their story be written by stereotypes and statistics. A "counternarrative" is the student's own story. A counternarrative is the way someone navigates the tricky path of a racist society and finds a way to be successful.

## Horizontal and Vertical Allies

As a young person pursues their counternarrative path, they need allies to support them on their journey. Horizontal allies are people who are traveling the path along with you. Vertical allies are people who have travelled the path before you or who can help you along your path.

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### Vertical Allies:

- Family
- Mentors
- Teachers
- Coaches
- Role Models
- Heroes
- Older Students

### Horizontal Allies:

Peers who help you on your counternarrative journey.

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# I Am the Difference

I respect  
but do not define myself  
by the color of my skin,  
Because the me that you see  
Is not the me that I am.

## **Let me introduce you to myself:**

I am graceful, optimistic, and  
rad;  
athletic, courageous, and kind;  
Creative, persistent, curious, and  
fun.  
Every day I learn the truth of my  
story.

And whether you think I can  
make a difference  
Or not  
Is beside the point.  
The point is not what you think  
But what I do.

Because once, when I was at  
the movies,  
In the mall,  
At a restaurant,  
In school,  
Once, when I was anywhere at  
all,

A teacher  
A mentor,  
A counselor,  
A coach,  
Said to me: You have potential  
Said: I'm proud of you  
Said: You will succeed  
Said: Never give up your  
dreams  
Said: You can do it, you're  
unique, you're talented, you  
matter,  
And all the other words we use  
to say:  
**I love you.**

I still remember.  
It made a difference.  
And I can pass it on.  
I can make a difference

Because once I  
Saw a student being bullied  
Heard a kid who didn't speak  
the language  
Saw someone on crutches  
Met a homeless person  
Saw undocumented students  
fighting for their rights

And instead of looking away  
Or laughing  
Ignoring it  
Or acting like I didn't care  
Pretending I was different

Instead of all the things I could  
have done  
I calmed everyone down  
Offered to translate  
Carried her bags  
Handed the homeless person my  
taco.  
Stood up and said, "I'm  
undocumented, too."

You can keep power for yourself  
Or you can pass it on  
I know which makes you  
stronger.  
Keep moving forward.  
I have a purpose here.  
I can make a difference  
Because it's something I've  
already done.

**How about you?**