

CCSSO DLRT Teacher Pipeline Series:

What does Teacher Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practice have to do with a ... WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION?

Introduction

In 2018, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) engaged nine states¹ in their Diverse and Learner-Ready Teachers (DLRT) Initiative. CCSSO also engaged a range of national organizations as collaborators to support the work of the DLRT states. One subset of national collaborators, the Communications and Advocacy Work Group², identified the need for developing a common language for policymakers around diverse teaching and learning. The group worked to address this need by developing two resources. First, they collaboratively assembled the following definitions for two key terms – teacher diversity and culturally responsive practice:

- Diversity can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. The dimensions of diversity include race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, class, and immigration status. **Teacher Diversity** refers to the representation of dimensions of diversity in the collective makeup or pool of individuals within the K-12 public school teacher workforce. The work of the CCSSO DLRT Initiative focuses specifically on increasing the *racial* diversity of the teacher workforce.^{3,4}
- **Culturally Responsive Practice** in the classroom refers to both: 1) the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for all students; and, 2) the embodiment of attitudes and dispositions that empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The work of the CCSSO DLRT Initiative focuses specifically on increasing the culturally responsive practice *aptitude* of the teacher workforce.^{5,6,7}

Next, based on these definitions, group members developed a series of short papers that would address how these two terms relate to nine key aspects of the teacher pipeline: Accountability, Compensation, Data Systems, Induction and Mentoring, Preparation, Recruitment, Retention, Student Demographics, and Well-Rounded Education. These papers form a series that seeks to provide both language and rationale to state policymakers as they work to incorporate teacher diversity and culturally responsive practice in policy initiatives across the spectrum of teacher pipeline issues. The current paper specifically addresses the intersection of diversity with a Well-Rounded Education.

What is a well-rounded education? What is its role in the larger Teacher Pipeline?

A well-rounded education helps students reach their full potential by providing opportunities to develop a wide range of skills - including communication, collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, persistence, and creativity - through improving background knowledge and comprehension across a variety of subject areas.⁸ These skills and competencies are highly valued by both employers and postsecondary institutions; therefore, the enriched curriculum central to a well-rounded education can also more effectively bring students to college and career readiness.⁹

To provide a well-rounded education to all students, K-12 schools must hire and retain teachers who are able to effectively teach – and draw connections between – a variety of subject areas, including hard-to-

staff areas such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields.¹⁰ Building a teacher workforce able to take on this challenge may require educator preparation programs to revisit recruitment strategies, degree pathways, and curriculum structures.¹¹ Developing this capacity in schools may require state and district leaders to revisit existing funding, staffing, and student support structures.¹²

What does Teacher Diversity have to do with a well-rounded education?

A significant body of research demonstrates the variety of ways in which teachers of color support increased achievement for students of color, particularly when teachers and students are race-matched.^{13,14,15} In terms of a well-rounded education, this can take the form of engaging students of color in additional subject areas through culturally relevant curriculum materials; helping students of color build connections across subject materials through shared experience and voice; and both serving as, and providing connections to, role models of color in the community that can amplify student ambitions and provide concrete guidance in terms of the relevance of classroom learning to future career paths.

The ability to reach, engage, and increase the achievement of students of color is, in itself, a strong argument for increasing teacher diversity in service of providing all students a well-rounded education.¹⁶ Yet multiple studies demonstrate that racial diversity in the teacher workforce also enhances the education of non-minority youth.^{17,18} Teachers of color are viewed by both minority and non-minority students as highly engaging.¹⁹ They can effectively transfer their cultural competence, developed through the need to reach their minority students, to their non-minority students.²⁰ As a result, all students are challenged, encouraged, respected, and held to high standards in the classroom of a teacher of color.²¹

A racially diverse teacher workforce can also enhance cross-cultural understanding, reduce unconscious bias, and enrich the practice of all teachers.²² In a school striving to provide a well-rounded education for all students, a racially diverse workforce can create space for all teachers to engage in the types of conversations that lead to both infusing culturally relevant and engaging materials in all subject areas, and broadening the range of connections among those areas.

How can policymakers and school leaders leverage a well-rounded education to diversify the teaching force?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) encourages states to provide all students a well-rounded education, and provides some funding and flexibility to help states make it a reality (Jones & Workman, 2016). Knowing that teacher diversity enhances a school's ability to provide a well-rounded education to all students, both state and local leaders can leverage this ESSA requirement in service of increasing and leveraging the racial diversity of the teacher workforce. States can include teacher diversity data in reporting requirements for school accountability, whether for or outside of federal reporting requirements (Atchison, Diffey, Rafa, & Sarubbi, 2017).²³ In addition, state leaders can specify teacher diversity as a priority for LEAs seeking a share of ESSA Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants to provide a well-rounded education to all students (Poiner, 2016).²⁴ State leaders could also set up targeted scholarship programs for students of color wishing to become teachers in the arts, humanities, and STEM fields (Johnson, 2018) (TeachStrong Coalition, 2016).^{25,26}

State requirements can help diversify the teacher workforce, but such requirements are limited in their ability to help schools take advantage of the benefits of a diverse teacher workforce. District and school leaders can help all students receive a well-rounded education by creating explicit structures to make the most of the diversity within their teaching communities (Hanover Research, 2014).²⁷ Creating non-judgmental space for all teachers to learn from each other in a professional learning community can allow teachers of color to shine without being overburdened (Colton & Langer, 2015).²⁸ Considering scheduling and staffing across the school can help more students encounter a diverse set of teachers (Lynch, 2016).²⁹ Finally, both state and district leaders can create opportunities for school leaders and teachers to discuss their successes and challenges in harnessing the diversity of the teacher workforce to increase the effectiveness of a well-rounded curriculum.

What does Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP) have to do with a well-rounded education?

For students to receive a well-rounded education – one where they engage authentically and substantively within and across a range of subject areas – they must be able to connect with and be supported by their teachers (ASCD, 1994).³⁰ Teachers that are well-versed in Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP) not only understand how to help students construct knowledge, they know and have affirming views about the lives of their students, and are therefore able to design instruction that both builds on what students know (drawing them in) while stretching them beyond their current boundaries of knowledge (helping them grow) (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).³¹ Their ability to make strong, supportive connections with students helps culturally responsive teachers to provide a well-rounded education for a diverse student population.

In addition to being better able to connect with their students, teachers fluent in CRP have the cultural competencies necessary to draw in a variety of relevant resources in their teaching. Such resources are not subject-bound; rather, they tend to bring in culturally relevant content that both engages and challenges students by drawing from multiple subject areas. For instance, reading comprehension is built just as much through engaging with authentic content in the disciplines as it is with reading practice (Hansel & Pondiscio, 2016).³² This idea of building skills through the integration of knowledge across fields of study is central to the idea of a well-rounded education.

How can policymakers and school leaders leverage a well-rounded education to increase teacher proficiency in Culturally Responsive Practice?

Understanding that culturally responsive teaching practices are core to a well-rounded education, state leaders can leverage the “well-rounded” ESSA requirement to build CRP proficiency in the teaching workforce (Jones & Workman, 2016).³³ Teachers are central to the delivery of a well-rounded education, and culturally responsive teachers are better equipped to reach student and provide the diversity of experience required to achieve this goal (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).³⁴ Thus, each assurance of a well-rounded education in a state’s ESSA plan is an opportunity for state leaders to embed CRP in educator preparation and mentor training curriculum, in licensure and certification requirements, and in evaluation, professional development and advancement structures. Finally, as they hold schools accountable for providing a well-rounded education, state leaders can be thoughtful about designing the “School Quality and Student Success” indicator (another ESSA requirement) to include measures of culturally responsive practice (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2017).³⁵

Where can I go to learn more?

- [ESSA's Well-Rounded Education](#), Education Commission of the States
- [How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students](#), The Century Foundation
- [Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Guide to Evidence-Based Practices for Teaching All Students Equitably](#), Education Northwest
- [Why Schools Need More Teachers of Color – for White Students](#), The Atlantic
- [Time for a Change: Diversity in Teaching Revisited](#), National Education Association
- [Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: An Overview of Research on Student Outcomes](#), Education Week & Teaching Tolerance Magazine

¹ The nine states initially engaged in CCSSO's DLRT initiative were: Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, and New York.

² The national organizations represented in the Communications and Advocacy Work Group were: American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), Center for American Progress (CAP), Data Quality Campaign (DQC), Education Commission of the States (ECS), Education Testing Service (ETS), Education Trust, National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Center for Teacher Quality (NCTQ), New America, and Teach for America (TFA).

³ Council of Chief State School Officers. (2018). Preparing "Learner-Ready" Teachers: Guidance from NTEP States for Ensuring a Culturally Responsive Workforce. Washington, D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers. From <http://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/Preparing%20Learner-Ready%20Teachers.pdf>

⁴ National Education Association. (2008). Diversity Toolkit Introduction. From <http://www.nea.org/tools/diversity-toolkit-introduction.html>

⁵ Council of Chief State School Officers. (2018). Preparing "Learner-Ready" Teachers: Guidance from NTEP States for Ensuring a Culturally Responsive Workforce. Washington, D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers. From <http://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/Preparing%20Learner-Ready%20Teachers.pdf>

⁶ Geneva Gay. (2010). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Teachers College Press.

⁷ Gloria Ladson-Billings. (1994). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. Jossey-Bass.

⁸ McCarthy, K., Ondaatje, E., Zakara, L., & Brooks, A. (2004). *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. From https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG218.pdf

⁹ Jimenez, L., & Sargrad, S. (2018). *A Well-Rounded Education: Rethinking What Is Expected of High Schools*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress. From <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/08/16/454864/well-rounded-education/>

¹⁰ Allen, R. (2011). Reaching for a Well-Rounded Education Creates Challenges for Educators. *ASCD Policy Priorities*, 17(5). From http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy_priorities/vol17/num05/Reaching_for_a_Well-Rounded_Education_Creates_Challenges_for_Educators.aspx

¹¹ Toon, D., & Jensen, B. (2017). *Teaching our teachers: a better way: Using K-12 curriculum to improve teacher preparation*. Melbourne, Australia: Learning First. From <http://learningfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2columnsITECoPPaper3CurriculumFINAL16Nov17.pdf>

¹² Connelly, G. (2015). The Well-Rounded Education Our Students Deserve. *NAESP's Principal Magazine*, 48. From https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Postscript_ND15.pdf

¹³ Egalite, A., & Kisida, B. (2017). The Effects of Teacher Match on Students' Academic Perceptions and Attitudes. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. From <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0162373717714056>

¹⁴ Godhaber, D., Thobald, R., & Tien, C. (2015). *The Theoretical and Empirical Arguments for Diversifying the Teacher Workforce: A Review of the Evidence*. Seattle, WA: The Center for Education Data & Research.

¹⁵ Dee, T. S. (2004). *EducationNext*, 4(2), 52-59. From <https://www.educationnext.org/the-race-connection/>

¹⁶ Gershenson, S., Lindsay, C. A., Hart, C. M., & Papageorge, N. W. (2017). *The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers*. Bonn, Germany: Institute of Labor Economics. From <http://ftp.iza.org/dp10630.pdf>

¹⁷ Anderson, M. D. (2015). Why Schools Need More Teachers of Color - for White Students. *The Atlantic*. From <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/08/teachers-of-color-white-students/400553/>

¹⁸ Ferlazzo, L., Ladson-Billings, G., Bristol, T., & White, T. C. (2015). Response: The Teachers of Color "Disappearance Crisis". *Education Week*. From

http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazzo/2015/01/response_the_teachers_of_color_disappearance_crisis.html

¹⁹ Cherng, H.-Y. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers. *Educational Researcher*. From <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.3102/0013189X16671718>

²⁰ Wells, A. S., Fox, L., & Cordova-Cobo, D. (2016). *How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students*. New York, NY: The Century Foundation. From <https://tcf.org/content/report/how-racially-diverse-schools-and-classrooms-can-benefit-all-students/>

²¹ Anderson, M. D. (2015). Why Schools Need More Teachers of Color - for White Students. *The Atlantic*. From <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/08/teachers-of-color-white-students/400553/>

²² Albert Shanker Institute. (2015). *The State of Teacher Diversity in American Education*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute. From <https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=http://www.shankerinstitute.org/sites/shanker/files/The%2520State%2520of%2520Teacher%2520Diversity%25202015.pdf>

²³ Atchison, B., Diffey, L., Rafa, A., & Sarubbi, M. (2017). *Equity in Education: Key questions to consider*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. From http://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Equity_in_Education_Key_questions_to_consider.pdf

²⁴ Poiner, J. (2016). *Increasing capacity: An overview of ESSA's Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute. From <https://edexcellence.net/articles/increasing-capacity-an-overview-of-essas-student-support-and-academic-enrichment-grant>

²⁵ Johnson, S. (2018). *These States Are Leveraging Title II of ESSA to Modernize and Elevate the Teaching Profession*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress. From <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2018/02/02103704/StatesLeveragingESSA-brief.pdf>

²⁶ TeachStrong Coalition. (2016). *Leveraging ESSA to Modernize and Elevate the Teaching Profession*. TeachStrong Coalition. From <https://cdn.teachstrong.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/01102035/TeachStrong-ESSALetter-2016.pdf>

²⁷ Hanover Research. (2014). *Strategies for Building Cultural Competency*. Washington, DC: Hanover Research. From <https://www.gssaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Strategies-for-Building-Cultural-Competency-1.pdf>

²⁸ Colton, A., & Langer, G. (2015). *7 Features of Culturally Responsive PLCs*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

²⁹ Lynch, M. (2016). *4 Ways to Help Your Students Embrace Diversity*. Richmond, VA: The Advocate. From <https://www.theadvocate.org/4-ways-to-help-your-students-embrace-diversity/>

³⁰ ASCD. (1994). The Well-Rounded Classroom: Applying the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. *Education Update*, 36(8). From <http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education-update/oct94/vol36/num08/toc.aspx>

³¹ Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers: Rethinking the Curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education*. From http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/TitleV/Documents/Faculty/Teaching_Pedagogy/Preparing_20Culturally_20Responsive_20Teachers.pdf

³² Hansel, L., & Pondiscio, R. (2016). *Job One: Build Knowledge: ESSA Creates an Opportunity - and an Obligation - to Help Every Child Become a Strong Reader*. KnowledgeMatters. From <http://knowledgematterscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ESSA-brief.pdf>

³³ Jones, S., & Workman, E. (2016). *ESSA's Well-Rounded Education*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. From <http://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/ESSAs-Well-Rounded-Education-1.pdf>

³⁴ Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers: Rethinking the Curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education*. From http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/TitleV/Documents/Faculty/Teaching_Pedagogy/Preparing_20Culturally_20Responsive_20Teachers.pdf

³⁵ Council of Chief State School Officers. (2017). *Identifying a School Quality/Student Success Indicator for ESSA: Requirements and Considerations*. Washington, DC: CCSSO. From <https://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/CCSSOIdentifyingSchoolQualityStudentSuccessIndicator1242017.pdf>