

CCSSO DLRT Teacher Pipeline Series:

What does Teacher Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practice have to do with ... PREPARATION?

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 Preparation.

What is teacher preparation? What is its role in the larger Teacher Pipeline?

- Our nation's schools currently employ approximately three million teachers, most of whom are trained in around 27,000 programs housed in 2,000 institutions (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2018).⁸
- Teacher preparation is the vehicle for providing these teachers with the training, knowledge, and skills that they need to succeed in the classroom.
- *Traditional teacher preparation* refers to training provided through an educator preparation program at a two-year college or four-year university. *Alternative teacher preparation* refers to training provided through a different route and is typically aimed at college-educated individuals

who would like to become teachers but did not receive teacher training during their two- or four-year undergraduate college experience.

What does Teacher Diversity have to do with teacher preparation?

- The candidates in [most](#) traditional teacher preparation programs reflect the same demographic composition as the current teaching profession: white women (Partelow, Spong, Brown, & Johnson, 2017).⁹ In fact, teaching program graduates are less diverse than graduates as a whole: overall, 69 percent of bachelor's degree graduates are white, 9 percent are Hispanic, and 9 percent are black; yet of teacher preparation graduates, 82 percent are white; 4 percent are Hispanic; and 6 percent are black.
- This is particularly problematic considering that - [by any measure](#) - the United States' student population is comprised of a majority students of color. Students deserve teachers who look like them and relate to their identities.¹⁰
- Importantly, the twin aims of a high-quality, diverse teacher workforce are [not at odds](#); instead, they are mutually [reinforcing](#) (Hansen & Quintero, 2018) (Partelow, Spong, Brown, & Johnson, 2017).^{11, 12}

What are some policies and practices that could help make Teacher Diversity an integral part of teacher preparation?

- Teacher candidates of color often assume higher rates of debt for teacher training; accordingly, these candidates may be less likely to graduate and enter the workforce.¹³ States should consider specific programs to incentivize diverse teacher candidates to enter the profession, such as: scholarship programs, loan repayment incentives, relocation incentives, pathway programs, and grow your own programs.
- For example, [Tennessee's](#) "Minority Teacher Fellows Program" provides up to \$5,000 per year for teacher candidates of color who enter the teaching profession and [Connecticut](#) is implementing a pilot program under which eleventh and twelfth grade students of color can take education courses at four partner state universities that comprise the Connecticut State University system (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2017) (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2017).^{14, 15} Connecticut's program requires participating school districts to counsel participating students in teacher shortage areas, among other topics.
- States should further consider specific support for institutions that have historically served diverse student populations, including: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

What does Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP) have to do with teacher preparation?

- States must consider how to ensure that all teachers are prepared to educate diverse learners.¹⁶ Because the current teaching profession is overwhelming white, teacher preparation programs must do more to prepare the teaching workforce understand, educate, and interact with our increasingly non-white student population.

- As stated in [guidance](#) from the Network to Transforming Educator Preparation (NTEP), “While increasing and supporting the number of teachers of color matters for our nation’s students, it is equally urgent to ensure that all teachers, regardless of background, can demonstrate culturally responsive practice that ultimately leads to positive learning outcomes for each student.”¹⁷ (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2018) Teacher preparation programs, then, have an obligation to ensure that the teachers they are training and graduating are well-versed in educating all students, not just students who look like them.
- Some traditional teacher preparation programs have made strides in grounding their coursework in racial and social justice, inclusion and diversity, and cultural awareness and understanding. For example, [Loyola](#) Marymount University’s School of Education has been recognized for not just intentionally recruiting diverse teacher candidates, but also rooting their program Culturally Responsive Practice (McCabe, 2016).¹⁸ All teacher preparation programs should offer curriculum coursework and field experiences that equip them with the knowledge and tools to teach diverse students; however, many do not.
- In sum, while teacher preparation programs must work to increase the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of their admitted students, they should simultaneously ensure that their coursework is designed to prepare the entire future teacher workforce to educate our increasingly diverse student population.

How can policymakers and school leaders leverage teacher preparation to increase teacher proficiency in Culturally Responsive Practice?

- States should consider either requiring or incentivizing teacher preparation programs to embed culturally responsive practice in their required coursework for program completion and degree attainment.
- Given the [importance](#) of student teaching in teacher preparation, states should further consider requiring teacher preparation programs to ensure that candidates have a diverse range of student teaching experiences (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2008).¹⁹
- States should also consider requiring mentor teachers to demonstrate effectiveness in modeling culturally competent practices, but also in teaching adults how to implement culturally responsive practices. South Dakota’s [WoLakota Mentoring Program](#) serves as one model designed to ensure that new teachers have the necessary support to engage with all learners in a culturally-relevant manner.
- States should further consider adopting and scaling effective, evidence-based practices that have been implemented and/or piloted in smaller scale settings (e.g., through alternative certification programs or residencies).

Where can I go to learn more?

- [America Needs More Teachers of Color and a More Selective Teaching Profession](#), Center for American Progress
- [Culturally Responsive Education: A Primer For Policy And Practice](#), NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

- [Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Guide to Evidence-Based Practices for Teaching All Students Equitably](#), Region X Equity Assistance Center at Education Northwest
- [High hopes and harsh realities: The real challenges to building a diverse teacher workforce](#), Brookings Institute
- [Preparing “Learner-Ready” Teachers: Guidance from NTEP States For Ensuring A Culturally Responsive Workforce](#), Council of Chief State School Officers

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 National Council on Teacher Quality. (2018). *2018 Teacher Prep Review*. From National Council on Teacher Quality: <https://www.nctq.org/review/home>

⁹ Partelow, L., Spong, A., Brown, C., & Johnson, S. (2017). *America Needs More Teachers of Color and a More Selective Teaching Profession*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

¹⁰ For a review of the relevant literature, see: Stewart, J., Meier, K. J., & England, R. E. (2014). In quest of role models: Change in black teacher representation in urban school districts 1968 - 1986. *Journal of Negro Education*, 58(2), 140-152.; Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. F. (2005). Diversifying the teacher workforce: A retrospective and prospective analysis. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 103(1), 70-104.

¹¹ Hansen, M., & Quintero, D. (2018). *Can states lean on diverse teacher recruitment to stem teacher shortages?* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute.

¹² Partelow, L., Spong, A., Brown, C., & Johnson, S. (2017). *America Needs More Teachers of Color and a More Selective Teaching Profession*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

¹³ See <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/news/2017/10/16/440711/new-federal-data-show-student-loan-crisis-african-american-borrowers/>.

¹⁴ National Council on Teacher Quality. (2017). *Program Entry: Connecticut*. From NCTQ 2017 Yearbook: <https://www.nctq.org/yearbook/state/CT-Program-Entry-81>

¹⁵ National Council on Teacher Quality. (2017). *Program Entry: Tennessee*. From NCTQ 2017 Yearbook: <https://www.nctq.org/yearbook/state/TN-Program-Entry-81>

¹⁶ See <https://www.brookings.edu/research/high-hopes-and-harsh-realities-the-real-challenges-to-building-a-diverse-teacher-workforce/>.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ McCabe, K. (2016, February 18). Loyola Marymount Selected for Multicultural Best Practice Award. *AACTE EdPrepMatters*.

¹⁹ Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2008). *Teacher Preparation and Student Achievement*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, AIR.