

Title: Culturally sensitive curriculum and policy

Date: June 2015

Question: >> Could you provide information on culturally sensitive curriculum and district or state policy?

Response:

We have developed the following memo on cultural sensitivity curricula and policies. The memo is divided into the following sections:

- References
- State and district policy
- Other organizations to consult

Citations include a link to a free online version, when available. They are accompanied by an abstract, excerpt, or summary written by the author or publisher of the document. We have not done an evaluation of the methodological rigor of these resources, but provide them for your information only.

References

Chen, D., Nimmo, J., & Fraser, H. (2009). Becoming a culturally responsive early childhood educator: A tool to support reflection by teachers embarking on the anti-bias journey. *Multicultural Perspectives, 11*(2), 101–106. Abstract retrieved on January 15, 2015, from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ857054>

Abstract: As children begin to construct an understanding of human differences and similarities during their earliest years, early childhood teachers are challenged to be culturally responsive to the diversity of the children and families. Based on our review of the literature and other existing tools, this article discusses a framework for thinking about this work and proposes critical elements for teachers to reexamine their practice. The article describes a reflective tool structured to provoke thinking about attitudes, assumptions, and knowledge base regarding culturally responsive teaching.

Derman-Sparks, L., & Edwards, J. (2010). *Anti-bias education for young children and ourselves*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. Available for purchase from <http://www.naeyc.org/store/node/17122>

Book Description: Become a skilled anti-bias teacher with this volume’s practical guidance to confronting and eliminating barriers of prejudice, misinformation, and bias about specific aspects of personal and social identity; most importantly, find tips for helping staff and children respect each other, themselves, and all people. Over the last two decades, educators across the nation and around the world have gained a wealth of knowledge and experience in anti-bias work. The result is

a richer and more nuanced articulation of what is important in anti-bias education. Individual chapters focus on culture and language, racial identity, family structures, gender identity, economic class, different abilities, holidays, and more.

Freeman, Y., & Freeman, D. (2004). Connecting students to culturally relevant texts. National Council of Teachers of English, *Talking Points*, 15(2), 7–11. Retrieved on January 16, 2015, from <http://www.sikana.com/Docs/Personalizing%20Literacy-CulturallyRelevantReadings.pdf>

Excerpt: Although a wide range of books is available, determining cultural relevance should go beyond the nationality or ethnicity of the main character and include a number of other factors. The rubric that we designed invites students to examine cultural relevance.

Hanley, M. S., & Noblit, G. W. (2009). *Cultural responsiveness, racial identity and academic success: A review of literature* (a paper prepared for the Heinz Endowments). Pittsburgh, PA: The Heinz Endowments. Retrieved on January 16, 2015, from http://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/Library/Culture-Report_FINAL.pdf

Excerpt: There is sufficient evidence to argue that culturally responsive programming and positive racial identity can promote achievement and resilience. Programs can be designed to develop these linkages and to more generally promote the wider project of racial uplift in ALANA communities. The approach will need to be systemic and directly address issues of racism and deficit thinking. Designing programs based on recognizing and building capacity in students, communities, educators, and schools will be necessary.

Lin, M. Lake, V., & Rice, D. (2008). Teaching anti-bias curriculum in teacher education programs: What and how. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35(2), 187–200. Retrieved on January 15, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ817318.pdf>

Abstract: One goal educators have is to empower students at all levels in this diverse and changing society whether they work with teacher candidates or with P–12 students. Teachers are seeing increased differences in race, ethnicity, culture, and special needs in children in their classrooms. The changing composition of early childhood classrooms challenges educators to be more responsive to the diverse needs of all children. Therefore, implementing a curriculum that is culturally responsive and inclusive to assist children’s needs is imperative. To prepare teacher candidates to integrate anti-bias or diversity curriculum with the regular curriculum then becomes a crucial goal of every teacher preparation program. Unfortunately, many teachers currently in the classroom report that they feel inadequate to teach multicultural or anti-bias curriculum. Implementing a diversity curriculum may not be easy because of the fear, uncertainty, or discomfort of many teachers and teacher educators. Teachers’ beliefs influence and affect their teaching practices and may become barriers that prevent the integration of anti-bias curricula. However, previous research found that teacher candidates’ level of intercultural sensitivity could be enhanced by their teacher preparation courses and activities and from teacher educators who encouraged teacher candidates to discuss and reflect upon issues. In this article, the authors discuss what an anti-bias curriculum is, provide the theoretical framework and rationale for involving teacher candidates in certain activities that promote the anti-bias curriculum, and offer additional anti-bias strategies for teacher candidates and teacher educators to implement in their classrooms.

ReadWriteThink, International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English. (2005). *Cultural relevance rubric*. Urbana, IL: Author. Retrieved on January 16, 2015, from http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson1003/CR-Rubric.pdf

REL West Summary: The International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English developed this “Cultural Relevance Rubric” for identifying culturally relevant texts.

Santamaria, L. J. (2009). Culturally responsive differentiated instruction: Narrowing gaps between best pedagogical practices benefiting all learners. *Teachers College Record*, 111(1), 214–247. Retrieved on January 16, 2015, from <http://educ625spring2011.pbworks.com/f/Culturally%20Responsive%20Differentiated%20Instruction.pdf>

Excerpt: This contribution to the discussion of differentiated instruction and its applications for culturally and linguistically diverse learners in general education classrooms begins by considering definitions and origins, practical applications, academic products, and theoretical frameworks, followed by gaps in the research and literature. This same discussion will be duplicated for culturally responsive teaching. These two considerations will provide a framework with which to discuss a reconciliation of the two theory-to-practice approaches with the hope that a common framework will better serve educators and preservice teachers working with diverse students in complex multidimensional classrooms. The focus of this work is to assist the educational community in recognizing pedagogical differences, while finding common ground, in identifying complementary teaching practices for all students, including culturally diverse and ELLs.

Willis, A. I., Garcia, G. E., Barrera, R. B., & Harris, V. J. (Eds.). (2003). *Multicultural issues in literacy research and practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Available for purchase from <http://www.amazon.com/Multicultural-Issues-Literacy-Research-Practice/dp/0805832416>

Book Description: This volume brings together researchers and participants from diverse groups, reflecting the different ways in which the field of multicultural literacies has been interpreted. A common theme across the chapters is attention to the ways in which elements of difference—race, ethnicity, gender, class, and language—create dynamic tensions that influence students’ literacy experiences and achievement. The hope of the editors is that readers will build on the experiences and findings presented so that the field of multicultural literacies will have a greater impact of literacy research, policy, and practice.

State and District Policy

Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Publications/Standards.html>

The following standards have been developed by Alaska Native educators to provide a way for schools and communities to examine the extent to which they are attending to the educational and cultural well being of the students in their care. These “cultural standards” are predicated on the belief that a firm grounding in the heritage language and culture indigenous to a particular place is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally healthy students and communities associated with that place, and thus is an essential ingredient for identifying the appropriate qualities and practices associated with culturally responsive educators, curriculum, and schools.

California Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/socialcontent2013.doc>

Senate Bill 48, effective January 1, 2012, mandates that California public schools include “a study of the role and contributions of both men and women, Native Americans, African Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, European Americans, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans, persons with disabilities, and members of other ethnic and cultural groups, to the economic, political, and social development of California and the United States of America, with particular emphasis on portraying the role of these groups in contemporary society.” California’s State Board of Education provides Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content to ensure that materials:

- Portray accurately and equitably the cultural and racial diversity of American society;
- Demonstrate the contribution of minority groups and males and females to the development of California and the United States;
- Emphasize people in varied, positive, and contributing roles in order to influence students' school experiences constructively; and
- Do not contain inappropriate references to commercial brand names, products, and corporate or company logos.

Michigan, Rockford Public Schools

<http://www.rockfordschools.org/?i=curriculumdiversityhomepage>

The Rockford Public School District fosters respect and understanding among all cultures and individuals who learn and work in our school community. We are committed to a philosophy that draws strength from our differences and builds on our similarities in order to:

- Create a positive learning environment in which all students can learn free of intimidation, harassment, or prejudice directed at them or others;
- Empower all people to reach their full potential;
- Remove barriers of bigotry and prejudice that infringe upon individual freedom, respect, and progress;
- Promote respect and dignity toward all persons; and
- Prepare students to function effectively in a multiethnic and multicultural society.

The district maintains a curriculum diversity committee that oversees several initiatives, including the integration of six "Cross-Cultural Competencies" into the larger K1–12 curriculum standards.

Oregon

http://www.ode.state.or.us/schoolimprovement/cdip/oregon_randrs_for_indistar_district_level.pdf

On May 19th, 2004 over 100 of the State's leaders in education gathered in Portland at Lewis and Clark College to engage in a dialogue about cultural competency. The Summit was sponsored by the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon University System, Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, Eugene School District LEAD Project, and the Oregon State Action for Education Leadership Project and was supported by a grant from the Wallace Foundation (<http://www.ode.state.or.us/news/ccfullrprt.pdf>). Published January 2015, the Resources & Research for Oregon's District Improvement Indicators include indicators that specifically address awareness of and responsiveness to cultural diversity and promotion of cultural proficiency.

Minnesota, Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS)

http://sss.mpls.k12.mn.us/positive_school_climate_tool_kit

Section F of the district's *Positive School Climate Tool Kit* addresses Cultural Competence and Equity, including how to adapt curriculum for cultural diversity.

Montana

- Five-Year Comprehensive Planning to Implement Indian Education for All Policy – <http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/IndianEd/IEFA/FYCPguidelines.pdf>
- A Process Guide for Realizing Indian Education for All: Lessons Learned from Lewis & Clark Elementary School – <http://www.opi.mt.gov/PUB/PDF/IndianEd/08ProcessGuide.pdf>

New Mexico Bilingual Multicultural Education Bureau

http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/Bilingual_index.html

The New Mexico Public Education Department's Bilingual Multicultural Education Bureau (BMEB) works to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the state Bilingual Multicultural Education

Act (2004) and Title III, English Language Acquisition (ESEA 2009). The Bilingual Multicultural Education Bureau (BMEB) serves with effective leadership, timely customer service, and relevant technical assistance to support districts and schools across the state of New Mexico implementing Bilingual Multicultural Education and Title III Programs addressing the academic learning and language needs of English learners (ELs) and immigrant students. *REL West Note:* See the Technical Assistance Manual at <http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/BilingualDocs/SY%202013-2014%20BMEB%20Technical%20Assistance%20Manual.pdf>

Pennsylvania, School District of Philadelphia

<http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/administration/policies/102.html>

Policy Statement: The policy of the School District is to foster knowledge about and respect for those of all races, ethnic groups, social classes, genders, religions, disabilities, sexual orientations (perceived or known) and gender identities (perceived or known). *REL West Note:* See website for policy explanation and procedures.

Virginia

The State Department of Education website includes resources related to teaching diversity and cultural competence:

- Patton, J., & Day-Vines, N. L. (2007). *For cultural competence: Knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to embrace diversity: A resource manual for developing cultural competence*. Virginia Department of Education
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/tech_asst_prof_dev/self_assessment/disproportionality/cultural_competence_manual.pdf
- **Arlington Public Schools** adapted and expanded the Patton & Day-Vines guidebook to more specifically address diversity education goals and practices in the district, as determined by the Council for Cultural Competence: Cultural Competence Curriculum Phase III 2009–2010
(http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/tech_asst_prof_dev/self_assessment/disproportionality/arlington_adapted_cultural_competence_notebook.pdf)

Excerpt: Section I provides an overview and rationale for cultural competence. Definitions are provided to create a common language and mutual understanding for users. Section II displays models of cultural competence, awareness domain competencies and covers topics related to oppression, responding to racism and privilege. Section III explores racial identity models and culturally distinct groups. Section IV provides specific strategies for developing cultural competence, and Section V focuses on culturally responsive teaching practices. The guidebook contains training activities and readings that enhance participants' discussions on a variety of topics related to cultural competence.

Other Organizations to Consult

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Multicultural Education Resources

<http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/multicultural-education-resources.aspx>

Founded in 1943, ASCD is a leader in developing and delivering innovative programs, products, and services that empower educators to support the success of each learner. Comprising 125,000 members—superintendents, principals, teachers, professors, and advocates from more than 138 countries—the ASCD community also includes 56 affiliate organizations. The nonprofit's diverse, nonpartisan membership is its greatest strength, projecting a powerful, unified voice to decision makers around the world. The association provides expert and innovative solutions in professional

development, capacity building, and educational leadership essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead.

Center for Multicultural Education at University of Washington

<http://education.uw.edu/cme>

Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA, focuses on research projects and activities designed to improve practice related to equity issues, intergroup relations, and the achievement of all students. The Center also engages in services and teaching related to its research mission. *REL West Note:* This site includes a list of successful multicultural programs in K–12 education.

Education Commission of the States (ECS) State Policy Database

<http://www.ecs.org>

The Education Commission of the States was created by states, for states, in 1965. We track state policy trends, translate academic research, provide unbiased advice and create opportunities for state leaders to learn from one another.

- From the ECS State Policy Database, Curriculum—Multicultural, a 50-state analysis: <http://b5.caspio.com/dp.asp?AppKey=b7f93000695b3d0d5abb4b68bd14&id=a0y7000000CbmpAAC>

National Association for Multicultural Education

<http://nameorg.org/>

NAME is a non-profit organization that advances and advocates for equity and social justice through multicultural education. Objectives:

- To provide opportunities for learning in order to advance multicultural education, equity and social justice.
- To proactively reframe public debate and impact current and emerging policies in ways that advance social, political, economic and educational equity through advocacy, position papers, policy statements and other strategies.
- To provide the preeminent digital clearinghouse of resources about educational equity and social justice.

Teaching Tolerance

<http://www.tolerance.org>

A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching Tolerance provides free, high-quality lessons and best practice guides, as well as a CCSS-ELA compliant K–12 anti-bias curriculum, *Perspectives for a Diverse America* (<http://perspectives.tolerance.org/>).

- Shuster Consulting. (2014). *A formative evaluation of Perspective for a Diverse America: Final report 2013–14*. <http://www.tolerance.org/publication/formative-evaluation-perspectives-diverse-america-final-repo>
- Teaching Tolerance. (n.d.). *Introducing the Teaching Tolerance anti-bias framework*. <http://www.tolerance.org/anti-bias-framework>
- Teaching Tolerance. (2014). *Teaching the movement 2014: The state of civil rights education in the United States*. <http://www.tolerance.org/TTM2014>
- Teaching Tolerance. (2014). *20 face to face advisories: Bridging cultural gaps in grades 5–9*. <http://www.tolerance.org/publication/face-to-face-advisories>
- Teaching Tolerance. (n.d.). *Critical practices for anti-bias education*. <http://www.tolerance.org/critical-practices>

METHODS

Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Search

("cultural sensitivity" OR "culturally sensitive" OR "culturally responsive" OR "multicultural" AND "curriculum" OR "district policy" OR "state education policy"); "culturally responsive" AND "teaching" OR "instruction."

Search of Databases

EBSCO Host; Google; and Google Scholar

Criteria for Inclusion

When REL West staff review resources, they consider—among other things—four factors:

- **Date of the Publication:** The most current information is included, except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- **Source and Funder of the Report/Study/Brief/Article:** Priority is given to IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols.
- **Methodology:** Sources include randomized controlled trial studies, surveys, self-assessments, literature reviews, and policy briefs. Priority for inclusion generally is given to randomized controlled trial study findings, but the reader should note at least the following factors when basing decisions on these resources: numbers of participants (Just a few? Thousands?); selection (Did the participants volunteer for the study or were they chosen?); representation (Were findings generalized from a homogeneous or a diverse pool of participants? Was the study sample representative of the population as a whole?).
- **Existing Knowledge Base:** Although we strive to include vetted resources, there are times when the research base is limited or nonexistent. In these cases, we have included the best resources we could find, which may include newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, organization websites, and other sources.

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by educators and policymakers in the Western region (Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) at WestEd. This memorandum was prepared by REL West under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-12-C-0002, administered by WestEd. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.