CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE
Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Practice

The cultural competence of adults is intimately connected to the achievement of students.

Gary R. Howard

Virginia’s Equity Framework, or the Road Map to Equity (https://www.doe.virginia.gov/edequityva/navigating-equity-book.pdf), prioritizes our strategy into two categories that are informed by Virginia achievement data, best practice, and research: (1) Increasing the
Cultural Proficiency of Virginia's Educator Workforce, and (2) Closing Opportunity Gaps for Virginia Students. The Roadmap is guided by the EdEquityVA Compass (https://www.doe.virginia.gov/edequityva/navigating-equity-book.pdf#page=22), which articulates the essential competencies necessary to advance these equity priorities.

Culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers bring to the instructional process, making culturally responsive educators necessary for the equitable achievement of today's increasingly diverse student population.

Establishing expectations for culturally responsive practice among Virginia's educator workforce is critical to ensuring inclusive learning environments and equitable outcomes for all students. Our strategy will focus on the following tactics as the primary vehicles for Increasing the Cultural Competency of Virginia's Educator Workforce:

- Increasing Teacher Diversity
- Supporting Culturally Relevant Teaching Pedagogy
- Enhancing Teacher Preparation
- Amending Licensure Requirements to include Cultural Competency
- Developing new Professional Learning Opportunities
- Supporting Courageous Leaders
- Revising Educator Evaluation to include Cultural Competency Efficacy
- Incorporating Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion into School Climate Evaluation

Defining Culturally Responsive Practice for Virginia Educators

Establishing expectations for culturally responsive practice among Virginia's educator workforce is critical to supporting the effective delivery of professional development. These expectations are framed into four quadrants that represent practices at the following critical levels: (1) culturally responsive schools, (2) culturally responsive leadership, (3) culturally responsive educators, and (4) culturally responsive pedagogy.

These four leverage points represent components of the educational ecosystem that can be transformed by culturally responsive practices to better serve students historically marginalized by race. Defining what culturally responsive practices look like in these four levels also aids in identifying data points, situating student outcomes through an equity lens supported by culturally responsive pedagogies, identifying capacity building needs, and creating spaces for continuous community input and support.
Culturally Responsive Practices in Four Critical Levels

Culturally Responsive Schools

- Safe, inclusive, and secure environments where all students are affirmed.
- Have established and evolving pathways, access, and support to rigorous college and career preparatory classes for all students.
- Provide universal access to culturally relevant pedagogy that builds positive cultural identities.
- Have an educational environment that is free from implicit and explicit racial/ethnic and gender biases.
- Produce high student achievement rates in state accountability (the most basic outcome).
- Have systems in place to mitigate racial or cultural tensions.
- Have a climate in which all students and staff have a sense of membership and belonging and provide forums both inside and outside of the classroom where everyone can learn about each other’s diverse backgrounds.

Culturally Responsive Leadership

- Deploy resources and professional learning opportunities to advance cultural proficiency.
- Evaluate cultural responsive efficacy during teaching observations and evaluations.
- Establish high expectations for all students.
- Mitigate power imbalances based on race, culture, ethnicity, and class.
- Establish policies and procedures to advance anti-racist school culture and climate.
- Ensure recruitment and retention of teachers of color and demonstrable cultural responsiveness competencies.
- Establish mentoring practices for new teachers and staff in culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.
- Accept cultural responsiveness as endemic to effectiveness in all areas of learning for students from all ethnic groups.
- Create caring learning communities where heritages are valued

Culturally Responsive Educators

- Reflect on their own cultural lens.
- Model high expectations for all students.
- Promote respect for student differences.
- Recognize and redress bias in the system.
- Challenge stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of intolerance, and oppression.
- Are change agents for social justice and academic equity.
- Cultivate relationships beyond the classroom anchored in affirmation, mutual respect and validation.
- Engage in reflection of their beliefs, behaviors and practices.
- Communicate in linguistically and culturally responsive ways.

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy/Teaching**

- Is student-centered.
- Identifies and nurtures students’ cultural strengths to promote student achievement.
- Affirms cultural and individual identity.
- Uses cultural differences as assets necessary to inform the development of instructional resources.
- Mediates power imbalances based on race, culture, ethnicity, and class.
- Utilizes students’ culture as a vehicle for learning.
- Establishes high expectations for all students and provides support to ensure success.
- Diverse groups from all rings of culture are represented, validated, and affirmed.
- Establishes a 3-pronged approach:
  - **Institutional**: recognizes a need for reform of school policies and procedures based on cultural factors.
  - **Personal**: requires teachers to become culturally responsive.
  - **Instructional**: provides educational materials that are culturally affirming and aid in delivering culturally responsive instruction.

**Culturally Responsive Schools**

The culturally responsive school seeks the highest levels of achievement for all students by acknowledging, responding to, and truly integrating student, family, and community identity into all aspects of learning to foster a safe and equitable environment that recognizes the histories, struggles, achievements, and contributions of the racially marginalized populations it serves as fundamental to engaged student learning. Culturally responsive schools address fundamental equity concerns by holding high expectations for students and providing the highest levels of support for all students to succeed. Success in a culturally responsive school is defined by preparation for college and career readiness in an environment that is supportive, is asset-conscious, and fosters positive cultural identity.

**Culturally Responsive Leadership**

Culturally responsive school leaders create school contexts and curriculum that responds effectively to the educational, social, political, and cultural needs of students through policy creation, expectation setting and monitoring, and staff coaching to facilitate successful implementation of culturally responsive instruction. This leader also sets standards and expectations for high academic success regardless of perceived performance abilities. This means that the campus leader creates an inclusive school environment in which a climate free from implicit biases toward racial and ethnic groups exists. This leader also centers marginalized
families and communities as important in decision making and solution-seeking. These 17 leaders are courageous in challenging aspects of teaching and learning that marginalize students of color, and identify, protect, institutionalize, and celebrate all cultural practices from these students.

Culturally Responsive Educators

Culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers bring to the instructional process, making culturally responsive educators necessary for the equitable achievement of today’s increasingly diverse student population. Culturally responsive educators see the diversity in their classrooms as an asset and use their knowledge on students’ backgrounds to enrich educational experiences. These teachers form a thorough understanding of the specific cultures of the students they teach, how that culture affects student learning behaviors, and how they can change classroom interactions and instruction to embrace the differences.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

As the diversity in schools continues to grow, this instructional theory places an emphasis on creating a school environment in which all are affirmed for the beauty in their respective languages, beliefs, and ideas and in which students’ best interest is centered.

Culturally responsive pedagogy comprises three functional dimensions: (1) institutional, (2) personal, and (3) instructional. The institutional dimension of culturally responsive pedagogy emphasizes the need for reform of the cultural factors affecting the organization of schools, school policies and procedures (including allocation of funds and resources), and community involvement. It reflects the administration, its policies, and values.[1] The personal dimension refers to the process by which teachers learn to become culturally responsive. It includes both cognitive and emotional processes. The instructional dimension refers to practices and challenges associated with implementing cultural responsiveness in the classroom. It includes materials, strategies, and activities that form the basis of instruction. All three dimensions significantly interact in the teaching and learning process and are critical to understanding the effectiveness of culturally responsive pedagogy.[2]


Key Terms
Cultural Competency: Having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It is the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each student unique, while celebrating the between-group variations that make our country a tapestry. (National Education Association. “Why Cultural Competence?” August 27, 2020.)

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning. (Gloria Ladson-Billings, The Dream Keepers. 1994)

Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching: The behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning. An approach that emphasizes using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. (Geneva Gay, Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice. 2000).

Culturally Relevant Teaching Practices: expect and yield academic success, help students develop positive ethnic and cultural identities while simultaneously helping them achieve academically, and support students’ ability to recognize, understand, and critique current and past social inequalities.

Culturally Responsive Educators:

- See cultural differences as assets;
- Validate the inequities impacting students’ lives;
- Cultivate relationships beyond the classroom anchored in affirmation, mutual respect, and validation;
- Believe that ALL students can succeed and communicate high expectations for all students;
- Engage in reflection of their beliefs, behaviors, and practices;
- Utilize students’ cultures as vehicles for learning;
- Challenge racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of intolerance, injustice, and oppression;
- Mediate power imbalances in classrooms based on race, culture, ethnicity, gender, and class.

Cultural Proficiency: Environments that create opportunities for access, empowerment, and achievement by acknowledging, valuing, advocating, and empowering cultural diversity in all aspects of the educational process. (Adapted from: Cultural Proficiency, A Manual for School Leaders, 2nd Ed. Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell, 2003)

The following resources are meant to support teachers and leaders in developing these competencies within themselves, their staff, and the larger school community:

Resources

- Culturally Responsive Teaching Part 2a (https://youtu.be/Fs9thiFKQd0): Strategies to Support CRT Practice in Mathematics Presented by: Dr. Angela Byrd-Wright, Mathematics Curriculum Leader, Hampton City Schools

  Presented by: David Glass (https://youtu.be/yB5IYLdtMo), History & ESL teacher at Meadowbrook High School in Chesterfield County Public Schools,

Alma Kenup (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uKA5VEnizDhoat62C3dSpvtHrISXZucB/view?usp=sharing), English teacher at Quiocacsin Middle School in Henrico County Public Schools,

Victoria Parent (https://mychesterfieldschools.us-west-2.instructuremedia.com/embed/7ba8d5c2-b9a9-4131-880c-497d6bf409c4), English teacher at Monacan High School in Chesterfield County Public Schools, and

Dr. Jesse Senechal, Director of the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium (http://www.merc.soe.vcu.edu/) at Virginia Commonwealth University

To view individual action research project samples, click on each presenter’s name.

Introductory Resources


- Culturally Responsive Teaching: An Introduction (https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/strategies-0hu/culturally-responsive-teaching-0) (Brown University)

- Culturally Responsive Teaching: An Overview (http://assist.educ.msu.edu/ASSIST/school/principal/workbegintchrs/toolculturallyrelevant.htm) (ASSIST)

- Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching (https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/culturally-responsive-teaching/understanding-culturally-responsive-teaching) (New America Foundation)

- 5 Ways Culturally Responsive Teaching Benefits Learners (https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/5-ways-culturally-responsive-
But That’s Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (https://nationalequityproject.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/ladson-billings_1995.pdf) (Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings)

Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters (http://www.equityallianceatasu.org/sites/default/files/Website_files/CulturallyResponsiveTeaching-Matters.pdf) (Equity Alliance)

Culturally Responsive Teaching (https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/culturally-responsive-teaching-508.pdf#page=12) (Education Northwest)


Books


Videos, Webinars, and Podcasts

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uH6PLmkTrS0&list=PLRTyi0-OTu0KkOumXX2SqqKdDUyAsad&index=2) (VDOE)

Strategies to support LatinX and Dual Language Learners (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BFNL3sVc-Q&list=PLRTyi0-OTu0KkOumXX2SqqKdDUyAsad&index=3) (VDOE)

Successful teachers of African American students (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmA1zjNRm0l) (Video featuring Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings)
American Indian/Alaska Native Students

- **Culturally Responsive Instruction for Native American Students** ([https://www.csai-online.org/spotlight/culturally-responsive-instruction-native-american-students](https://www.csai-online.org/spotlight/culturally-responsive-instruction-native-american-students)) (WestED/CRESST)
- **Lessons Learned in Teaching Native American History** ([https://www.edutopia.org/article/lessons-learned-teaching-native-american-history](https://www.edutopia.org/article/lessons-learned-teaching-native-american-history)) (Edutopia)
- **Exploring Culture Through Art** ([https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/exploring-culture-through-art](https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/exploring-culture-through-art)) (Teaching Channel)
Multilingual Language Learner Students

- **How to Create Culturally Responsive Classrooms for ELLs**
  (https://www.middleweb.com/35762/how-to-create-culturally-responsive-classrooms/) (Valentina Gonzalez)
- **Are You Practicing Culturally Responsive Teaching?**
  (https://elementaryenglishlanguagelearners.weebly.com/blog/are-you-practicing-culturally-responsive-teaching) (Valentina Gonzalez)
- **Equity for English-Language Learners**
  (https://www.edutopia.org/blog/equity-for-english-language-learners-rusul-alrubail) (Edutopia)
- **Breaking Out of the Bilingualism Double Standard**
- **A Hidden Language: Supporting Students Who Speak Mixtec**
  (https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/hidden-language-supporting-students-who-speak-mixtec) (Colorín Colorado)

Students with Special Needs

- **Creating a Welcoming Classroom for Students with Special Needs**
  (https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/welcoming-special-ed/) (Cult of Pedagogy)
- **What are My Choices? Facilitating Meaningful Conversations with Families of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students during the Disabilities Referral Process**
- **Why Are So Many Minority Students in Special Education?: Understanding Race and Disability in Schools**
  (https://www.amazon.com/Many-Minority-Students-Special-Education/dp/0807755060/) (Beth Harry)

Asian/Pacific American

- **Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center’s Learning Together Page**
  (https://lnks.gd/I/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eJdWxsZXRpb25saW5rX2lkIjoxMDUsInVyaS16ImJwMjpi)
Culturally Responsive Family Engagement

- **Family Engagement Toolkits: Partnering with Diverse Families**

- **Making Immigrant Students and Families Feel Welcome**
  [https://www.colorincolorado.org/immigration/guide/welcome](https://www.colorincolorado.org/immigration/guide/welcome) (Colorín Colorado)

- **Engaging ELL Students: 20 Strategies for School Leaders**

- **Culturally Responsive Family Engagement**
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**LINKS**

Contact (https://Www.Virginiaisforlearners.Virginia.Gov/Contact/)


School Performance (Http://Schoolquality.Virginia.Gov/)


**CONTACT**

Email ConstituentServices@doe.virginia.gov (mailto:ConsituentServices@doe.virginia.gov)

Phone 1-800-292-3820

[Twitter](https://twitter.com/VAis4Learners)  [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/VDOENews/)  [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrbxl9wHSrcrWfKWEeUWNlfQ)  [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/vdoe/albums)  [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/virginia-department-of-education)

(https://www.doe.virginia.gov)