Cultural Competency Resources

FOR
TEACHERS
SCHOOLS
DISTRICTS

Practicing Equity and Ethics | Building Relationships and Partnerships | Fostering Collaborative Culture | Advancing Instruction and Student Learning | Driving Initiatives

Introduction

The Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework (Ohio Department of Education [ODE], 2017) and Ohio's Strategic Plan for Education (Ohio Department of Education [ODE], 2019) highlight equity and ethics as key components of leadership. Specifically, the framework asserts that teacher leaders employ principles of inclusiveness and equity in their daily practice and make a concerted effort to understand and respect every child and their uniqueness by creating the learning conditions that ensure each student's success. Accordingly, teacher leaders value the experience of all students and champion a culturally competent and responsive practice. Doing so provides a greater possibility for students to receive an equitable education, irrespective of race, gender, language, socioeconomic status, etc. Accordingly, this document identifies some tools and resources for individual teachers, and for school and district leaders responsible for providing professional development in culturally competent and responsive practices. It also includes examples from other state education agencies and some of the tools and resources they have created to address cultural competency/responsiveness and equity.

Resources for Developing Cultural Competency and Responsiveness

1. **Culturally Responsive Education: A Primer for Policy and Practice (2017),** available at https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/atn293/pdf/CRE_Brief_2017_PrintBooklet_170817.pdf.

The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools (Metro Center, https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/), based at New York University, promotes equity and opportunity in education through engaged sciences (e.g., research, program evaluation, policy analysis). One of the center's focus areas is culturally responsive education (CRE), or an educational experience that connects curriculum and teaching to students' experiences, perspectives, histories and cultures. In the linked brief, Metro Center outlines the history and development of CRE and some of its practical applications, and then explores next steps for CRE by examining some unanswered questions about CRE's impacts, policy and practice. Specifically, the brief examines: the inclusiveness of CRE; limitations on the concept of "culture"; implications for teacher recruitment and retention; implications for curriculum and standards; and implications for school choice and educational reform in general.

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2. **The National Education Association's (NEA's) Diversity Toolkit**, available at
http://www.nea.org/tools/diversity-toolkit.html.

NEA developed a toolkit for educators on how to become culturally competent to teach diverse learners. The toolkit offers strategies for teaching students of diverse social classes, languages, genders, races and ethnicities, and sexual orientations. The toolkit also has sections that conceptually break down cultural competency and social justice. In addition to the toolkit, the NEA website provides links to many other resources focused on diversity and cultural competency.

3. **Teaching Tolerance's Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education**, available at
https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/critical-practices-for-antibias-education.

Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, provides free resources to educators—teachers, administrators, counselors and other practitioners—to inform their practice and create civil and inclusive school communities. Among these resources is a free, online professional development seminar consisting of four 1-hour modules designed to help teachers implement culturally responsive practices. The modules focus on the following topics: instruction, classroom culture, family and community engagement, and teacher leadership. Modules include videos and structured activities to help educators apply the concepts in the classroom. The seminar can be completed independently or in a group.

In conjunction with the online seminar/modules is the corresponding *Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education guide,* which is also divided into the above categories, with recommended practices under each. The guide also includes the Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework, on which the critical practices are based.

4. **Teaching Channel's Coaching for Equity** video, available at
https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/coaching-for-equity.

Teaching Channel is an online community where educators can watch and share videos that highlight diverse techniques to impact student learning and growth. There are currently over 1,250 videos included on the site, and viewers can search videos based on topics of interest, subject areas and grade levels. The Coaching for Equity video, logged under Professional Learning, gives the perspective of one high school English language arts/math coach on equity and what it means to coach for equity; i.e., helping teachers support every student.

5. **Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools (MCPS) Equity Initiatives Unit**, available at
https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/clusteradmin/equity/index.aspx.

The MCPS Equity Initiatives Unit site contains training and tools to help staff develop cultural proficiency. For example, the site features presentations called Short Takes, which are a companion tool to MCPS's Equitable Classroom Practices 2010 document. The Equitable Classroom Practices resource presents 27 best practices for teaching diverse students, and the

Short Takes elaborate on each practice, in an effort to help educators think about how they can more purposefully incorporate equitable instruction. The short takes are suitable for individuals, small groups and entire staff.

The site also provides a series of online modules — Communicating High Expectations to Students (CHETS) — that are designed to assist instructional staff to examine their beliefs, values, attitudes and dispositions that might influence teaching and learning; and which describe teacher practices that communicate high expectations to students. The series is intended to be presented in sequence as a whole professional learning experience, but each module can also stand alone as a single learning experience.

The site additionally provides various other resources and recommendations for learning related to equity and cultural competence.

6. **Fairfax County Public Schools' (FCPS') Cultural Competence Facilitator's Handbook and Participant's Workbook**, available at https://www.fcps.edu/node/32087.

The FCPS site contains a Cultural Competence Facilitator's Handbook and Cultural Competence Participant's Workbook. The materials aid facilitators in conducting sessions to help educators interact with diverse students. The district also developed a series of videos to accompany the Facilitator's Handbook. The handbook's sections (called "sessions") are described below.

Session 1 — Defining Culture and Reflecting on Personal Experiences. This session introduces participants to the definition of cultural competence and provides them with an opportunity to reflect on their prior experiences and beliefs of different cultures. Participants also explore the cultures they belong to and their associated practices, beliefs and languages.

Session 2 — The Four Stages of Cultural Competence. This session describes the four stages of cultural competence, which are awareness, curiosity, learning and participation. Participants reflect on the importance of cultural competency and its effects in schools. Specifically, participants are asked to think about the cultural representation of their schools, the different ways cultures are celebrated in the school environment, and the values associated with the celebrations.

Session 3 — Behaviors Leading to Greater Cultural Competence. Participants learn specific steps to increase cultural competence, such as the correct pronunciation of students' names. Participants are introduced to the differences in cultural ethos. Participants also reflect on how specific actions may be perceived as offensive to certain cultures.

Session 4 — Where Do We Go From Here? Participants reflect on steps they have taken to become more culturally competent since the last session, and share barriers they may have encountered. Participants also reflect on the cultures in their schools and ways to learn more about and participate in those cultures.

7. **National Equity Project**, available at https://nationalequityproject.org/.

The National Equity Project partners with schools, districts, nonprofits and other community organizations to build the culture, conditions and competencies for excellence and equity. The organization provides access to an array of equity-focused tools, resources and research (see "Resources" tab). Of note, a series of webinars are available[1] and cover the following:

- Equity 101: Starting the Equity Conversation;

- Designing Agendas for Equity Work;

- Equity in the Classroom; and

- Implicit Bias, Structural Racialization, and Equity.

Additional tools and resources that may be useful (among the many provided) include:

- Implicit Bias and Structural Inequity, which prompts deep conversation on implicit bias and outlines six considerations to ensure learning and meaningful change toward equity and inclusion; and

- Getting Ready to Lead for Equity, which is a reminder to prepare emotionally to lead equity initiatives, primarily through self-reflection and self-awareness.

The National Equity Project additionally offers a range of customized coaching and consulting services (see "Services" tab), including Coaching for Equity, Leadership and Team Development, and Professional Learning and Development, among others.

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[1] To gain access to the webinars, interested persons must complete and submit the form provided on the website.

8. Additional ODE Resources

For information on culturally responsive practices, please see the *2019 Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) Program* series within the ODE LMS system. This series contains four courses: Introduction, Cultural Responsiveness, Socio-Political Awareness, and Academic Achievement. Each course takes the participant through a progressive CRP learning journey through video discussions, transcriptions from the videos, and suggested activities for individual and group reflection. All of the courses contain learning modules that include videos, meaningful and engaging activities, and focus questions for reflection and action planning.

For additional information on supporting diversity, please see the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council's module, *Diversity: Ensuring Everyone Learns* at https://ohioleadership.org/mod_preview.php?preview=34

For information to assist in conducting an equity gap analysis, please see the *Comprehensive Educational Equity Gap Analysis* tool located on ODE's website.