Classroom Cultures: Equitable Schooling for Racially Diverse Youth by Michelle G. Knight-Manuel and Joanne E. Marciano. Teachers College Press, 2018, 160 pp. $34.95, paperback.

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Providing educators with the support and capacity for a more equitable classroom environment for all students is the premise of *Classroom Cultures: Equitable Schooling for Racially Diverse Youth by* Knight-Manuel and Marciano. The authors, who are both former secondary educators, and are currently college professors and researchers, have documented their professional development (PD) work with a range of teachers across 28 schools communities in New York City (NYC). Their multi-year study (2013-2015) focused on the successes and challenges educators face supporting racially and ethnically diverse students. Knight-Manuel and Marciano's PD series complemented work with the NYC Department of Education funded Expanded Success Initiative, which was created to improve the dismal graduation rates and college and career ready indicators of Black and Latino students in 40 participating high schools in NYC.

Taking into account the educational, social, and political climate, the increase in racial and ethnic diversity, and the disproportionality that exists currently in NYC, the authors contend that culturally relevant education (CRE) is a key component to equip teachers working with students of Color to provide equitable solutions. Using an asset-based approach to empower teachers to better support students and improve their educational outcomes, Knight-Manuel and Marciano discuss the influence the CRE-PD series workshops had on the beliefs, knowledge, and practices of participating teachers. The authors use the tenants of CRE (student learning and achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness/critical consciousness) developed by Gloria Ladson-Billings as their conceptual framework for their work. Ladson-Billings coined and is an expert in the field of culturally relevant pedagogy. Developed in the early 1990s, the culturally relevant pedagogical approach affirms classroom diversity and students' cultural identities ultimately focusing on students' academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2005). The chapters in the book begin with teachers reflecting upon and understanding their identities, positionality, and biases. Later chapters address topics such as stereotypes, relationship building, and college and career access. Inquiry focused questions, everyday practices, and autobiographical reflections from the authors are included in each chapter as well.

In chapters 1-3, the authors set the context for the book and provide quotes and vignettes from teachers as they use self-reflection and address stereotypes using CRE-PD. While chapter 2 focuses on teachers' self-reflection and identity, much of chapter 3 focuses on unintended stereotypes teachers harbor beneath the surface. Through CRE-PD, the authors provided multiple modes for teachers to tap into their biases through self-reflection, film review, and small group work. Both chapters illustrate a respectful multistep process for teachers to comfortably talk about their own stereotypes and unearth those that were embedded and reinforced in mainstream media and culture. This nonjudgmental approach allowed room for uncomfortable discussions to occur in a supportive and nonjudgmental environment.

Building relationships and approaches to capitalizing on those relationships were focus areas for chapters 4 and 5. Specific strategies include showing care, expressing shared interests, and providing support were shown as prevalent characteristics teachers used to create healthy relationships with their students in chapter 4. Providing teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their positive and negative experiences as students with educators allowed them to make the

connection of how their experiences shaped their connections in school. Teachers were then able to reflect on their own practices with their students and revise their approaches as necessary. While chapter 4 focuses on the teacher and student relationships, chapter 5 introduces the concept of educators capitalizing on peer relationships within school hours. Examples of strengths-based approaches and collaborative curricular activities peers engaged in were provided. Teachers watched and discussed videos (e.g. the Posse Foundation (Andrews, 2007) and youth perspectives on what they learn from their peers) in groups to see examples of peer activities and the positive influences peers have on one another.

Chapter 6 highlights the variability in college and career conversations teachers have with their students. Key to college talk success was understanding and using CRE in engaging with all students regardless of their academic standing. More specifically, providing structured conversations rather than informal, random ones were noted as most successful. An example includes educators engaging in specific academic and financial steps students need to take to apply to community colleges or four-year institutions matched to their interests and capabilities, which in turn provide the pathway from them to thrive.

The conclusion provides recommendations for teachers and school administrators to continue their CRE experience by advancing efforts in curriculum and school policies. Although the authors state the recommendations are not exhaustive and lend themselves to be precursors for additional work, the need for system change is apparent. Notably, the conclusion provides brief descriptions in which school leaders can provide CRE PD to enact a trajectory towards positive educational, college, and career outcomes for students of Color. Examples include: (a) creating PD around CRE, (b) enacting a schoolwide inquiry approach, (c) considering varying contexts for enacting CRE, (d) encouraging discomfort, and (e) taking action.

As the authors promise, they have provided school leaders and teachers with tools and strategies to support students from an asset-based perspective grounded in theory and research. The authors provide a compelling argument for CRE-PD highlighting objectives, strategies, and thought-provoking questions in each chapter. While the authors provided examples in each chapter, it would have been helpful if they had provided a deeper dive into the ways to track the outcomes of CRE-PD for educators and students. In the end, the book provides practical expertise that will resonant with educators and administrators who work with students. Hopefully, the authors will continue researching and documenting the action taken as CRE-PD continues to permeate throughout schools.

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