Fall 2017

Teachers' Conceptualization of Diversity, Teaching, and Learning In a Culturally Responsive School

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TEACHERS' CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DIVERSITY, TEACHING, AND LEARNING IN A
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL

by

Kelly McElroy

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the Education

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Jason Harshman
Thesis Mentor

Fall 2017

All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
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Abstract

This paper seeks to understand how teachers at a local high school conceptualize and value diversity in regards to their own school and community. Through analyzing teachers' responses to interview questions about their understanding of diversity and evaluation of multiculturalism in their school, researchers can gain a valuable insight into the school culture and seek to produce a learning atmosphere that welcomes, embraces, and values diversity. As schools become increasingly diverse all around the United States, it is essential to understand how faculty and staff members are understanding effects of increasing multicultural in schools, and how they can create a culturally responsive learning atmosphere and community. Thus, this research seeks to answer the question, "how do teachers create, understand and value a culturally responsive teaching and learning environment?"

TEACHERS' CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DIVERSITY, TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL

Introduction

This research paper is called, "Teachers' Conceptualization of Diversity, Teaching and Learning in a culturally Responsive School", and is part of a larger project is titled, "Teaching and Learning in a Culturally Responsive School". The primary researcher is Dr. Jason Harshman, an assistant professor at the University of Iowa with a PhD in Social Studies and Global Education. Dr. Harshman is committed to diversity in education, and has published numerous works on social studies and global education. He also holds the 2017 Audrey Qualls Commitment to Diversity Award as well as the 2017 James N. Murray Faculty Award. Dr. Harshman's credentials exemplify his dedication towards encouraging a global perspective in education, and works very hard with all of his students to accomplish this goal.

Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to "examine how students, staff, and faculty in a large Midwestern high school think about connections between the culture of a school building, student identity, and teaching in a culturally responsive manner" (Harshman, Project Proposal). The question the research attempts to answer is, "What does it mean to be a culturally responsive educator and how can faculty, staff, and students create an inclusive learning environment that values diversity?" In answering this question, the project seeks to understand the following:

(1) What does it mean to value diversity in education?
(2) What does a culturally responsive learning environment look like?
(3) What do teachers, staff, and students think is needed to create a culturally responsive learning environment?

Justification

This is an important topic to study as schools become increasingly diverse, and students and staff must adjust to the changing demographics in their schools and communities (Maxwell, 2014, August). Schools are becoming more diverse over time, so the application of the conclusions of this research can be far-reaching as more schools across the United States work to understand the changing demographics in their communities and student population. By looking at how students, teachers and staff conceptualize diversity and multicultural education in their schools, therefore, researchers can better inform professional development opportunities and assist members of the community in creating an environment that values and embraces diversity in the classroom and community.

About the Study

This is a mixed-methods study with both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The quantitative aspect will take place in the form of a survey, where faculty, staff, and students will be asked questions aimed at gauging their intercultural competence and understandings of diversity. The data from this portion will inform the rest of the process in establishing a culturally responsive learning environment. The qualitative component of the project is in the form of multiple interviews of students, staff and faculty members that help the researchers understand the three questions provided above. The interviews were transcribed so that researchers can analyze the language that the participants used when describing how they conceptualize diversity.

Author's Involvement

My specific involvement in this research process focused on how the teachers at this school conceptualize diversity. I worked to transcribe all of the teacher interviews, and then analyzed the language that the teachers used when describing their philosophies about diversity and teaching in a culturally responsive manner. Through analyzing the language and phrases used in conceptualizing diversity, researchers can find patterns that will provide an indication as to how the school culture embraces diversity and the changing demographics of students over time.

Literature Review

"We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams."

-Jimmy Carter

This quote from one of our former Presidents highlights a key characteristic of the United States: It is a nation that (theoretically) welcomes and values the acceptance of people from all around the world. As a result, U.S. citizens have an ever-changing cultural and ethnic composition that, over time, is becoming increasingly diverse (Maxwell, 2014, August). This, therefore has implications in terms of education, teaching and learning, and fostering an environment that welcomes and embraces diversity (Paris, 2012). Teachers, in order to create a setting that is adaptable and effective for students of all cultures, must be equipped with the knowledge and understanding that would enable them to successfully foster a culturally responsive learning environment (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This literature review, therefore, will

outline the definition of "culturally responsive", talk about the effects of cultural differences

and misunderstandings between teachers and students, and explain other important concepts

that appeared throughout the literature.

Definition of "Culturally Responsive"

In order to move forward, it is essential to provide a working definition of what is meant

by "culturally responsive" in this paper. This definition is largely influenced by the term

"culturally responsive pedagogy," which according to Gloria Ladson-Billings is, "a theoretical

model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and

affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that

schools (and other institutions) perpetuate," (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469). Therefore, an

environment that is culturally responsive works to affirm students' cultural identities while also

promoting student achievement. Geneva Gay contributes to this definition by noting that a

culturally responsive environment should promote "knowing, understanding, and representing

cultural and ethnic groups," as well as foster social consciousness and the adoption of a

critically thinking mindset (Gay, 2010, p. 45). Thus, this research seeks to answer the question,

"how do teachers create, understand and value a culturally responsive teaching and learning

environment?"

Cultural Differences: Race

Culturally responsive education is becoming an ever-increasing need in the United

States as what is called the "diversity gap" between students and teachers is continuing to

widen (Cho, 2005). This is the result of a lack of relative change in the demographic of teachers

(primarily white, middle class individuals) compared to the increasingly diverse student population (Maxwell, 2014, August). This naturally calls into question how schools are going about ensuring educational equity and maintaining an inclusive learning environment that welcomes and embraces diversity. One of the first steps in answering this question is to understand how students and teachers understand diversity in their own communities.

The literature indicates that the increasing diversity gap between teachers and students has many implications for teaching and learning. First, James Banks showed that cultural differences matter a significant amount in regards to classroom management and various student learning styles (Banks, 2001). For example, teachers from predominantly white backgrounds with little-to-no exposure to the inner-workings of other cultures have a higher probability to mistake the linguistic patterns of their African American students to be harsh, or attribute laziness to their Pacific Islander students who resist engaging in competitive activities because they place a high value on harmony amongst their peers (King, 2001). To combat this, teachers should take the effort to recognize their own ethnocentricity and identify any cultural prejudices or biases they may have that could affect and warp the way they perceive their students' behavior (Weinstein, 2004).

The literature also shows that teacher introspection is especially valuable, as most teachers in the United States come from a white, mono-ethnic, homogeneous, middle-class cultural background with little exposure to cultural diversity (Cho, 2005). Members of these communities tend to possess hints of ideology that is termed "dysconscious racism", or beliefs that implicitly subordinate minority groups and systematically devalue diversity (King, 2001). An example of this is the adoption of a "colorblind" perspective by members of an affluent,

homogeneously white suburban town, where the teachers and administration ignored issues of race and cultural differences between the few students of color in the school, asserting that race didn't matter when there were clear indications that it, in fact, did (Lewis, 2001). In these cases, fundamental misunderstandings between teachers and students occur as a result of the teacher failing to identify deep and specific cultural differences, and instead they attribute the discrepancy to the delinquency of the students. Addressing these discrepancies caused by the diversity gap, according to the literature, will help to foster a culturally sensitive learning environment.

Put in a different way, the literature suggests that the leaders of our education system overwhelmingly come from the dominant, white-oriented status quo. As a result, aspects of the dominant culture permeate the educational system, and in many ways, forces the production of a mono-ethnic culture by making marginalized minority students adapt to the customs of the dominant culture. This practice is detrimental for minority students and contributes to the increasing educational gap between them and white, affluent individuals (Lewis, 2001).

Cultural Differences: Class

The literature indicated that cultural differences between teachers and students don't just arise in the realm of race. There also exists many difficulties with respect to socioeconomic status and class (although there is a correlation between the two). One of which, articulated by James Gee, relates particularly to the differences in the linguistic patterns of teenagers (Gee, 2001). He concluded through this research that there's a difference between what he calls the "social language" of individuals with different socioeconomic backgrounds, indicating a

difference in the way in which they craft and present their identities. Wealthier students typically used language that follows a logical structure accepted in settings of academia, while less wealthy students used language that expressed expresses a narrative relating to everyday experiences and interactions. "What this means, is there's a growing inequality between the wealthy and the non-wealthy because academic discourse involves a single-layered approach to literacy that includes the adoption of an academic social language. We must reconceptualize literacy as being a dynamic, integrated concept through which all of us can read and write more equitable selves and worlds" (taken directly from Gee, 2000, P. 419). It is through that reconceptualization that will enable teachers to create and value a culturally responsive teaching and learning environment.

It is also important to note that some literature indicated that classism has been (and continues to be) perpetuated by the fact that the United States has persisted to disadvantage poor students in many different ways (Gorski, 2007). Poor schools consistently get less qualified teachers, have more teachers teaching outside of their content area, must deal with significantly less resources and funding, have curriculums that emphasize obedience and implement "surface level" educational curriculums, and many more disadvantages (Gorski, 2001).

An example of this is what's called the "digital divide," which essentially refers to the gap in the amount of technological access affluent communities have relative to non-affluent communities (Clark, 2001). In a world that is constantly undergoing rapid technological change, it is important for students to work with and be exposed to many different types of technology to better them prepare for future jobs that may require technological experience (Clark, 2001).

A great example of a piece of technology like this is "Excel,"; where many different types of professional, high paying careers involve an extensive knowledge of the tools Excel has to offer. Educators must find a way to bridge this socioeconomic gap and facilitate deep learning on a variety of different technologies for students of low socioeconomic status.

Conclusion

The effects outlined in the literature have many implications for schools now and in the future. In sum, after synthesizing much of the literature, it is clear that there are many aspects to be considered when understanding how to foster a culturally responsive learning environment. These include the beliefs and customs of each individual student, the school atmosphere, the relationships of the students to the teachers, the beliefs, customs, and potential prejudices of the teachers, and so on. In a large way, the success of fostering such an environment relies on the identification of various cultural barriers between the teachers and the students and the subsequent adjustments made to eliminate those barriers to help everybody get an equitable shot at academic success in a comfortable academic space. This task requires a complex understanding of an environment's characteristics that can only be seen through the eyes of the teachers and students themselves.

Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, this project has both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative component is based on the distribution of a questionnaire completed by the participants. This questionnaire provided researchers with data about demographics, helping them to examine patterns that informed future professional

development programming. The qualitative components of the project are the analyses of the journal entries completed by students, teachers and faculty, as well as their responses to the interview questions.

The interview questions helped the researchers understand how the participants conceptualized and valued diversity in their school community, as well as what it takes to create a culturally responsive learning environment. The participants outlined what they thought about diversity in their school, how they conceptualized diversity, challenges to establishing a culturally responsive learning environment in the school and in the classroom, and finally how they think they should move forward in this process.

Through analyzing these interviews and examining the language that teachers used associated with diversity, we can gain valuable insight into the current state of diversity within this particular school, from a teacher's point of view. This was my participation in the research. After transcribing the interviews onto Word documents, I then went through and read the interviews many times over, being sure to take note of commonalities and themes between the participants. I took note of similarities, differences, characteristics, and the language used between all of the participants and drew conclusions from that information. This analysis then let me to be able to gain valuable insight into the school culture and how responsive it is to the increasing amount of diversity in the classroom.

Discussion/Results

Analyzing the responses of the participants in the study gave researchers a fruitful insight into how the teachers conceptualize diversity in their school, the challenges they face,

and what they think needs to be done moving forward. I will break up the results from the

analysis into four sections: First is how teachers conceptualize diversity in their high school,

then I will discuss characteristics and life experiences that shape how the teachers

conceptualize diversity, followed by the challenges they face with increasing diversity in their

school, and finally what steps the teachers think should come next in regards to these issues.

Teachers' Conceptualization of Diversity

When talking about how the teachers conceptualized diversity, they focused mainly on

three different aspects; race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender. Most of the

discourse however, when shifting from talking theoretically to talking about diversity in their

school, centered around issues related to race and ethnicity.

Growing Asian Population

There were two common conversations across the teachers when talking about this. The

first involved the growing Asian population of the school, specifically students coming from

India. Many teachers were aware that the number of Indians migrating to Iowa was increasing

over time, and this had an impact on how the teachers conceptualized diversity within their

school.

One of our participants, for example, said this: "I teach mainly upper-level classes, and

the diversity of students I have in there, um are typically, um- if, if-do we have cultural and

ethnic diversity it's some of the Asian populations that are, um, I guess stereotypically more

motivated and have um, sort of- those expectations of AP classes." Here we see this teacher

taking note of the cultural differences in academic expectations in his students. It is likely that

he uses the phrase "stereotypically more motivated" to reflect his own stereotypes about the Asian students in his class. He didn't have much to say about the shifting percentage of students from other cultures. This teacher also had among the least exposure to diversity throughout his life and his education, according to what he said in the interview.

Growing African-American Population

The second conversation revolved around the increasing population of African-American students in the school. According to the teachers, it seems that African-American students have a harder time adjusting to the climate of their school. Multiple teachers expressed a level of discomfort when discussing how they should talk about issues of race and ethnicity with an African-American student in the classroom. One example of this is when a biology teacher was talking to her students about how skin pigmentation can change for various reasons, which directly affects how society perceives you. She then began to reflect, and expressed uncertainty in whether that was a comfortable situation for her African-American student. She said, "afterwards I was thinking; I wonder how my African-American student felt when I talked about that, and I thought, well, I wonder if it made her feel uncomfortable, or made her feel, you know like, people were looking at her. And I don't know. Now that I thought afterwards, well, did I handle that correctly?" We will return to this uncertainty around discourse later on in the discussion of the result of this study as well.

Impact of Exposure to Diversity

Next, when analyzing the participants' responses to the interview questions, I noticed that the teachers' background had a direct effect on how they perceived diversity. In sum, the

teachers who indicated that they had a general lack of exposure to diversity throughout their

life conceptualized diversity in a much narrower way than the teachers who had rich

experiences with diversity throughout their life. The teachers with less exposure to diversity

primarily spoke in terms of how their observations in the classroom coincided with their

stereotypes about students. They also tended to focus their discussions on primarily race and

ethnicity, instead of widening the scope of the discussion to include gender differences,

socioeconomic status differences, and so forth.

To supplement this point, there were two teachers who married somebody from a

different culture, and as a result they expressed more willingness to embrace aspects of

diversity in their classrooms. However, their comfort level seemed to be limited by the amount

of exposure they've had to the culture, as well as to other cultures. For example, the teacher

who married a Hispanic man, said:

"I mean, I'm comfortable asking, I'm comfortable with the Hispanic culture because, you
know, there's somebody that's in my family, and so, you know, I've asked my, my mother-in-
law, I've asked her like, as a Hispanic parent, what like, what is this, you know, how would you
feel about me saying this? But I, I don't have anybody to go and say anything, and I think that
it's also a very charged issue right now, when we talk about racial diversity and all, with
everything going on in the media and the police, and you know, that people are afraid to say
the wrong thing, and so they just don't say anything at all."

This idea of avoiding discourse based on ignorance of a certain culture is also a theme

that we will return to in this discussion.

The teachers that had a background living or working in places with a large amount of

diversity conceptualized diversity in their school with a broader perspective. For example, the

teacher who had taught at multiple diverse schools, has a master's degree in international

relations, and has multiple years of experience abroad noticeably had a more global perspective of diversity than the teacher who has only taught in Midwestern suburban schools his whole career. In addition, the teacher with exposure to diversity had mentioned directly that he attempts to include diverse perspectives in his curriculum, whereas the other teacher said, "I have never necessarily gone out of my way to have a diversity type of lesson plan. I've never felt I needed to, just because the content and what we're doing, it's a bigger picture than that, so." In other words, this teacher figured that addressing diversity in his classroom was basically a non-issue simply because he was teaching science.

Challenges in Addressing Diversity

Difficulties with Communication

The participants were also asked what they thought were the biggest challenges in addressing diversity in their school, and there were two common responses. First, almost every teacher mentioned how they sometimes have difficulties communicating with students who come from a culture that the teacher might not be entirely familiar with. This arose multiple times throughout the interviews in the context of teachers hesitating to create a discourse in classes with African-American students in it, for fear of saying the wrong thing or making a student uncomfortable. One example of this is provided above with the quote about the teacher being comfortable to ask questions and clarify cultural misunderstandings with her Hispanic in-laws, but doesn't feel comfortable doing so with an African-American person.

The interviews also revealed how cultural misunderstandings between teachers and students can sometimes result in the misperception of behavioral issues. This was the case

when a teacher had conflicts with an African-American student because the student perceived the teacher's directions and reprimands as "nagging" him. They resolved the issue, however, once they discussed their cultural differences and related on a more fundamental level. In essence, the main challenge to addressing diversity identified by teachers was being able to have comfortable discourse in their classrooms about cultural differences and perspectives.

Diversity Gap between Teachers and Students

The interviews also revealed that this cultural disjunction between students and teachers is caused by the fact that the demographics of the staff and faculty are not at all representative of the student body. The presence of a largely mono-ethnic school of teachers contributes to the lack of exposure to diversity, and therefore perpetuates the cycle of teachers not being culturally responsive to their students. This seems to be a critical issue of diversity in their school, as multiple teachers referenced how they sometimes feel uncomfortable when talking about the increasing population of African-American students.

One of the teachers with an extensive background in diversity noted that many teachers stereotype the incoming African-American students, especially if they are coming from the Chicago area. There is then a growing stereotype of "those Chicago Blacks" at this school that the teacher pointed out, leading to preconceived notions of the African-American students coming into the community. The teachers at this school regard this as a sensitive issue in the school climate, possibly contributing to the cultural disparity between students and teachers.

Class Conflicts

Another issue that was made apparent after examining the interviews was the

dominance of the more wealthy Caucasian students of the school. Multiple teachers noted that

this group of students holds the most social power within the student population, and

sometimes they tease students who are less wealthy or are considered poor. This underlying

class conflict mentioned by a few teachers has also been contributing to issues of diversity

within the school climate. Here is an excerpt from the text as an example:

> "I think there is quite a break between, um, those who are of higher socioeconomic
> status, and between those who are not. There's quite a, a lack of understanding from the um,
> more upper-class students. Um, I think sometimes even a little bit of teasing, I've heard, you
> know, about maybe someone who's not as, um, upper-class as they are, um or financially
> secure as they are, um, and you know, they, uh- many of the students feel a disconnect
> between the main population of Linn-Mar who they think is mostly just the upper-class
> Caucasian people. And I'm just being honest and frank that we have the largest population of
> more Caucasian people and depending on the group, lower-class Caucasian people feel
> disconnect with that. Lower-class African Americans feel disconnect, and um, struggling
> Hispanics and Indian Americans who don't connect with that, uh, higher class also struggle."

Next Steps in Addressing Diversity

Increased Exposure to Diversity

Finally, when asked about what the teachers think the next steps should be in

addressing these issues, their answers fell into two main categories. First and foremost, the

teachers agreed that more exposure to diversity is needed in order to make prominent

headway in promoting multicultural education. As the teacher with an extensive background in

diversity pointed out, teachers at this school, in general, are fairly mono-ethnic and have had

little exposure to diverse settings throughout their life. This results in many teachers having

American-exceptionalist attitudes, which can then hinder and further marginalize minority

students.

Many teachers recalled the schools "diversity day", in which students from different

backgrounds fostered dialogue about their cultures, brought food for people to try, and so

forth. They recalled this day as being especially beneficial for fostering dialogue and making

people talk about issues of diversity within the school. Multiple teachers then recommended

for the event to be continued in some way so that issues of diversity are made salient within

the school.

One teacher made the note in the interview that exposure to diversity should come

from the students. She reasoned that teachers would be much more receptive towards

embracing diversity if the movement was coming directly from the students instead of from the

administration. In this way, students can have a direct impact on how their unique cultural

perspectives are implemented and valued in their own school and community.

The Need for a More Inclusive Community Regarding Diversity

Multiple teachers also identified the need to establish a greater community of people

advocating for diversity. This included having more school clubs, and making it easier for

students who might feel marginalized by the system to become engrained in the school

community. Here is a quote from one teacher who advocated for this idea:

"I know an English teacher that I spoke with recently had another student that recently came
here from Chicago, and um, was kind of angry. He didn't want to move here. And so she was
trying to get him into some sort of extracurricular activity to meet friends and to feel more
comfortable, so the teachers really do a good job at that, so I think it would be nice if we did

that as a whole- as a community, so then we could see, you know, it's not only just these people that are involved in these clubs. It's everybody, and the teachers are involved."

Part of this exposure requires for there to be dialogue, and in order for meaningful dialogue to happen then there much be exposure. Multiple teachers expressed in their interviews that over the years, their school has been getting better at embracing and valuing diversity, but they also acknowledge that they have a long ways to go. One teacher advocated for more personal development opportunities on this topic, but other teachers expressed that usually professional development events are seen as a "duty" instead of as a valuable learning experience, so they were worried that emphasizing it in professional development content would trivialize the issue and not do much good.

Conclusion/Summary

In conclusion, analyzing the participants' responses to the interview questions has yielded a large amount of insight into how teachers at this large Midwestern high school think about and conceptualize issues of diversity in their school and community. To summarize the findings, many teachers at the school conceptualize diversity primarily through the lens of race and ethnicity, although they are aware of the impact of socioeconomic diversity in their community.

It was revealed that many teachers possess stereotypes about many of their students from difficult cultures. One main stereotype that is pervasive are the academic expectations of Asian students. Multiple teachers noted that they were aware how many of their Asian students were pressured at home to maintain perfect grades and perform the highest they

could academically as possible. The other main stereotype was with incoming African-American

students, who were often labeled as "the Chicago kids" and stereotyped by many teachers.

The interviews also shed light on characteristics and experiences that seemed to

correlate with teachers' conceptualization of diversity. For example, teachers who had

displayed an extensive background in diverse areas for a long amount of time had noticeably

broader and more globalized views of diversity, as opposed to multiple teachers who seemingly

lacked a diverse background. The implications for the exposure to diversity, therefore, have

been shown to be significant in how somebody conceptualizes and values diverse people and

perspectives.

Next, there were three main challenges that the teachers collectively identified as being

obstacles in promoting multicultural education and creating an environment that values

diversity. The most pressing challenge is the lack of exposure to diversity had by teachers. As

just explained, exposure to diversity is integral to the production of a school culture that values

diversity. According to one of the teachers, most teachers in the school are monoethnic, and

many of them have little exposure to diversity. As a result, stereotypes of minority students

exist and cultural misunderstandings between teachers and students are perpetuated.

The next problem, closely related to the first, is the very fact that most of the staff and

faculty members are Caucasian and aren't entirely familiar with the cultures of their students.

This becomes an issue especially in terms of determining whether certain behaviors are

delinquent, or simply just different from what the teacher is used to. Cultural

misunderstandings like these, therefore, work to perpetuate certain stereotypes and diminish

the integrity of a culturally responsive atmosphere. In addition, one teacher pointed out that minority students needs minority staff and faculty to work in the school so they have good role models. Therefore, a more culturally diverse staff and faculty at a school will easier lead to establishing an atmosphere and environment that values and embraces diversity.

The last challenge that teachers identified in the interviews was the comfort level of many teachers to engage in dialogue about issues of diversity with different students. Some subjects, especially the increased migration of African-Americans to the school community, have been shown to be particularly sensitive at this school currently. As a result, teachers are hesitant to engage in a meaningful dialogue about issues of diversity in their classrooms, for fear of making somebody uncomfortable or accidentally saying something offensive. These three challenges (dialogue, exposure, and the lack of minority cultural representation among teachers) are very closely intertwined with each other and create a positive feedback loop, either for better or for worse.

Finally, the interviews revealed how teachers would like to move forward with these issues and create a more culturally responsive learning environment. The primary suggestion was to gain exposure to diversity, whether it be from professional development opportunities, school activities, or education from the students. When people in the community have greater exposure to diversity, more dialogue will happen and people will gradually start to value and embrace diversity. Teachers also indicated that students should have more opportunities to gain a sense of community, by establishing more diversity-related clubs and getting students involved as much as they possibly can be. All in all, teachers conceptualize diversity in a diverse way, and while multiple teachers feel that their school has a ways to go in order to establish a

sufficient culturally responsive learning environment, there are still teachers with diverse

backgrounds and experience that can assist in this ever-growing process of improvement.

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