Wise Ways

All school personnel work effectively and equitably with racially, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students. (CL12)

Evidence Review:
Many students who drop out of school report that they were *pushed out* by systems that did not accommodate for differences, diversity, and disabilities (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2002, Dryfoos, 1990). Many children suffer from restricted opportunities associated with poverty and low income and some children have limited intrinsic facets that make learning difficult. Many schools do not have systems in place to address these barriers to learning which often results in students' frustrations escalating and possibly manifesting into emotional, behavioral, and learning problems (Kauffman, Alt, & Chapman, 2001). Many teachers are not prepared to address the problems of students from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds and as a result, often refer these students for "counseling or assessment in hopes of referral for special help-perhaps even special education assignment. Stemming the tide of unnecessary referrals requires enhancing the competence of teachers, support staff, and administrators with respect to differentially assessing the source of student problems and designing programs that are personalized to match student motivation and capabilities (Quintana, Castillo, & Zamarripa, 2000; Taylor & Adelman, 1999)".

Although many schools have a variety of supports in place to address barriers to learning (including some supports to address barriers to learning that students from diverse backgrounds face), they are often implemented in a fragmented and marginalized way which results in limited effectiveness. To address this prevalent issue, Adelman and Taylor recommend that schools/districts have policies that move toward and/or support a three component system (i.e., curriculum and instruction, governance, and a comprehensive coordinated system of learning supports). Operational infrastructure to support a comprehensive system of supports would include system mechanisms that:

1) unify all direct efforts to promote necessary conditions for learning (e.g., SEL and positive school climate) and address factors interfering with learning and teaching at a school (e.g., bullying, disengagement, mental health issues, behavior problems);
2) provide equitable capacity building;
3) connect families of schools with each other and with a wider range of community resources; and
4) weave together school, home, and community resources in ways that enhance effectiveness and achieve economies of scales.

In addition Learning Supports System must utilize a full continuum of interventions (i.e., promotion of physical, social, emotional, behavioral and cognitive development and prevention of problems, targeted interventions that occur early after onset, and intensive interventions) that encompasses:

1. Classroom Enhancement & Youth Development (e.g., ensuring teachers can accommodate student diversity and reengage students who have become disengaged)
2. Support for Transitions (e.g., supporting newcomers, such as immigrant populations as they negotiate school and grade changes as well as many other transitions)
3. Crisis Response and Prevention
4. Home Involvement (e.g., increasing home-school connections, specifically addressing needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds)
5. Student and Family Assistance (e.g., facilitating access to services and supports that are sensitive to diversity)

6. Community Outreach (including utilizing volunteers from diverse backgrounds)

Source- Adelman, H & Taylor, L. Reorganizing Student Support to Enhance Equity; Commentary #5 to Multicultural Handbook of School Psychology, An Interdisciplinary Perspective, 2007.

Evidence Review:
Effective teachers of students with diverse backgrounds have an awareness of the social constructs that shape their own identities and those of their students and what those identities represent in broader social contexts (Banks & McGee Banks, 1995; Bondy & Ross, 1998; Canella & Reiff, 1994; Chapman, 1996; Haberman, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995; Kailin, 1994; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Mazzei, 1997; Montecinos, 1994). Shujaa (1995) found that in order for teachers to effectively integrate culturally relevant teaching into their existing practices, professional development must enable teachers to recognize how they racially, culturally, and economically view themselves and others. Professional development must also focus on teachers' cultural knowledge and their classroom social structures. A study by Lawrence & Tatum (1997) of an antiracist professional development project in which teachers critically examined racial identity and socio-economic inequity found that over 50% of the participants implemented 142 antiracist actions including but not limited to: revising curriculum to be more inclusive of all backgrounds, encouraging the formation of cultural support groups, and applying their understanding of racial identity development in their interactions with students.

Source- Ryan, Ann Marie, (2002). Core Elements of Preparing Teachers for Culturally Relevant Practice.

References and Other Resources:

Banks, C. McGee & Banks, J. (1995). Equity pedagogy: An essential component of multicultural education. *Theory into Practice, 34(3),* 152-158.

Bondy, E. Y Ross, D. (1998). Confronting myths about teaching black children: A challenge for teacher educators. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 21(4),* 241-254.

Cannella, G. & Reiff, J. (1994). Teacher preparation for diversity. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 27(3),* 28-33.

Chapman, S.M. (1996). *Using effective teaching strategies to improve the academic performance of culturally diverse students in a public elementary school.* Ed.D. Practicum report, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED401012)

Haberman, M. (1995). Selecting "star" teachers for children and youth in urban poverty. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76,* 777-781.

Kailin, J. (1994). Antiracist staff development for teachers: Considerations of race, class, and gender. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 10(2),* 169-184.

Landson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching: The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice, 34(3),* 159-165.

Landson-Billings, G. (1992). Liberatory consequences of literacy: A case of culturally relevant instruction for African American students. *Journal of Negro Education, 61(3),* 378-391.

Lawrence, S. & Tatum, B.D. (1997). Teachers in transition: the impact of antiracist professional development on classroom practice. *Teachers College Record, 99(1),* 162-178.

Mazzei, L. (1997, March). *Making our white selves intelligible to ourselves: Implications for teacher education.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED410215)

Montecinos, C. (1994). Teachers of color and multiculturalism. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 27(3),* 34-42.

Shujaa, M. (1995). Cultural self meets cultural other in the African American experience: Teachers' responses to a curriculum content reform. *Theory Into Practice, 34(5),* 194-201.

Evidence Review:

Focus on Learning
Effective teachers care that all of their students learn regardless of the obstacles they face because of their disabilities or economic conditions that limit their social capital. These teachers recognize when some students are not learning, reach out to them, and try different pedagogical strategies to help them learn. They do not allow students to sit in their classroom without being engaged with the content. They do not ignore the students who are withdrawn, depressed, or resistant to classroom work. They do everything they can to help students see themselves as learners and value learning. The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) (Viadero, 2004) at the University of California, Santa Cruz, has identified the following five standards as critical to improving the learning of diverse students:

1. **Teachers and Students Working Together**. Use instructional group activities in which students and teacher work together to create a product or idea.

2. **Developing Language and Literacy Skills Across All Curriculum**. Apply literacy strategies and develop language competence in all subject area.

3. **Connecting Lessons to Students' Lives**. Contextualize teaching and curriculum in students' existing experiences in home, community, and school.

4. **Engaging Students with Challenging Lessons**. Maintain challenging standards for student performance; design activities to advance understanding to more complex levels.

5. **Emphasize Dialogue over Lectures**. Instruct through teacher-student dialogue, especially academic, goal-directed, small-group conversations (known as instructional conversations), rather than lecture (CREDE, 2004, p. 1)

A key to helping students learn is to connect the curriculum to their culture and real-world experiences. They should be able to see themselves in the curriculum to provide meaning for their own lives. Otherwise, they may resist the curriculum and learning, which are seen as the dominant culture's way of denigrating their culture.

Encourage Student Voices
Teaching must start from the students' life experiences, not the teacher's life experiences. Effective teachers seek, listen to, and incorporate voices of students, their families, and communities. Students are encouraged to speak from their own experiences, to do more than regurgitate answers that the teacher would like to hear. Teaching that incorporates the student voice allows students to make sense of subject matter within their own lived experiences or the realities that they know because they have themselves experienced them. Listening to students helps teachers understand their prior knowledge of the subject matter, including any misinformation or lack of information that suggests future instructional strategies. Student voices also provide important information about their cultures.

Source:
Chapter 10, Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society, Gollnich and Chinn, 2009, pp. 378 and 385.

Reference and Other Resource:
Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE), 2004, Five Standards

Example:
A year-long study in a Chicago public school investigated the linguistic and cognitive interactions of 27 immigrant language-minority kindergarten students who participated in classroom collaborative talk in their native Spanish language. This study was based on the premise that new understanding is based upon what the learner already knows. The investigator, a bi-lingual teacher, looked at the students' sources of knowledge and collaborated with them to further explore their cultural capital. This sharing of power empowered the children to become independent and

self-respecting participants in their learning. This study is also based on the premise that language and learning are socially constructed processes that take place in social spaces, such as classrooms and through social interactions, such as collaborative talk.

Collaborative talk is characterized by equality and responsiveness and is based on the notion that the teacher and students equally engage in dialogue that is meaningful and interesting to all participants. Several other key components of collaborative talk include: "a challenging but non-threatening atmosphere, responsiveness to student contribution, connected discourse, promotion of discussion and participation, activation of prior knowledge, thematic focus, encouragement of more complex language and expression, and meta-cognitive scaffolding. When collaborative talk is seen as an organized and intentional form of assisted performance, opportunities for co-participation and co-construction of new knowledge are magnified." Collaborative talk allows the learners to share more of themselves, including cultural information, and their background knowledge. It also requires the teacher to be willing to be informed and "reformed" by the students' input.

Findings from the study showed how collaborative talk could be used as a springboard for:
- constructing and restructuring meanings and new understandings by using teacher and students' cultural values, assumptions, attitudes, and experiences;
- revealing how learners engage in oral literacies in collaboration with the teacher and then begin to formulate hypotheses and test them without teacher mediation;
- maximizing the use of language-minority students' linguistic, cultural, and cognitive resources;
- motivating learners by incorporating topics that are relevant to their lives;
- students making connections between the concepts embedded in discourse and their own experiences and understandings; and
- allowing culturally and linguistically diverse students to express their thinking and understandings in their more competent linguistic system and in the language of their cultural and social worlds.

Source- Solerta, Sonia White, (1999). Collaborative Talk in a Bilingual Kindergarten: A Practitioner Researcher's Co-Construction of Knowledge.