

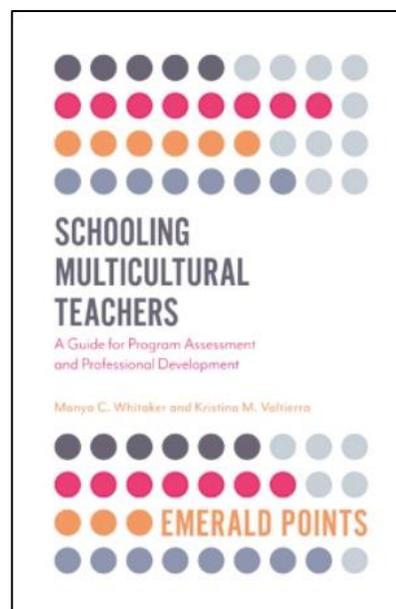
**Whitaker, M. C., & Valtierra, K. M. (2019). *Schooling multicultural teachers: A guide for program assessment and professional development*. Emerald Publishing.**

**Pp. 222**

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**Reviewed by Hille Elwood  
University of Wyoming  
United States**

In the last two decades, the cultural and linguistic diversity of school-age children has increased dramatically, with a persistent gap in the educational outcomes between White students and students of color. The diversity of students, however, is not reflected in the population of teachers, who are overwhelmingly White (NCES, 2019). In their book, *Schooling Multicultural Teachers*, Whitaker and Valtierra acknowledge that the great majority of educators truly want their students to achieve. Despite their desire, the authors suggest that we cannot assume teachers have the dispositions and cultural experience to ensure equity and inclusion for *all* students. To “mitigate structural inequities in our educational system,” the authors argue that “we need to focus not only on teachers’ instructional practices, but also on the beliefs, values, and attitudes underlying educational decision-making” (p. 4). The book is centered around the authors’ thesis that the dispositions necessary for multicultural teaching can be assessed, taught, and continuously refined. To this end, Whitaker and Valtierra created the Dispositions for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Scale (DCRPS) to assess teachers’ understanding of multicultural pedagogy and provide guidance for teacher educators working with pre-service and in-service teachers.



The book is organized in four parts: (1) historical context and the development of the DCRPS, (2) practical application of the DCRPS in program evaluation, (3) incorporation of DCRPS in education programs for pre-service teachers, and (4) incorporation of DCRPS in professional development for in-service teachers.

Part One introduces the historical and social constructs underlying the inequitable access to education for diverse students in the United States, followed by the multicultural theories which guided the development of the DCRPS. The authors' concise summaries of educational initiatives and reforms over the last 65 years emphasize the systemic barriers people of color have encountered, from segregated schools in the 1950s to the colorblind goals of No Child Left Behind in 2001 to the current push for school choice. Although each subsequent initiative had the lofty goal of improving the quality of education, the authors illustrate how each reinforced deficit perspectives of culturally and linguistically diverse students and excluded families with lower socioeconomic status.

Having set the purpose for the DCRPS within an historical context, the authors firmly ground the development of DCRPS items in distinguished scholarship, such as James Banks's (1993) research in multicultural education, Gloria Ladson-Billings's (1995) study of culturally relevant teaching, Geneva Gay's (2014) work in culturally relevant pedagogy, and the philosophy of Critical Pedagogy (Giroux, 1983). Recognizing the gap between theory and pedagogy, the authors also framed the development of the DCRPS in sociological theory, specifically racial identity development and Critical Whiteness (e.g., Helms, 1990).

The robust connection between theory and practice is clearly a strength of the DCRPS scale. The authors not only created items reflecting the pedagogical frameworks and sociological theories mentioned above, but they also consulted guiding standards for teacher education programs to ensure the items are relevant to teachers' work. Gary Howard's (2007) work on teacher dispositions and identity was the basis for the overarching themes of the scale. After extensive review and analysis, the final items of the DCRPS were grouped into three subscales: Disposition for Praxis, which measures teacher reflection and recognition of the need for professional learning; Disposition for Community, which measures the value teachers place on collaboration and relationships; and Disposition for Social Justice, which measures teacher willingness to work for social and educational equity.

Several aspects of the DCRPS are particularly noteworthy. The items were methodically crafted according to principles of measurement design, then evaluated through extensive pilot testing and collaboration with experts in the field. It has subscales to facilitate the identification of themes and patterns in responses. The analysis of the results has a predictive purpose by

indicating differentiated paths for teacher education and professional development.

Part Two highlights the practical application of the DCRPS as one tool in the evaluation of teacher preparation programs. In collaboration with Acelynn Perkins, the authors highlight a “grow-your-own” (GYO) program in which individuals from within a culturally diverse community are recruited for teacher training programs. These teachers have valuable cultural expertise, and they also may have experienced similar struggles with marginalization or inequity. Analysis of the DCRPS with the GYO pre-service teachers revealed a strong motivation for educational equity and developing collaborative relationships and a cautious awareness of the influence of teacher identity. Specific recommendations for the program include training in teaching strategies and negotiating conflict.

The authors also describe how the DCRPS was used in evaluating and developing their own Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. The scale was used to assess their students’ dispositions for multicultural education at completion of the program and to identify the most impactful courses and tasks. Results from one cohort of students were used to revise the curriculum for a subsequent cohort. For both purposes, the DCRPS, in conjunction with subsequent interviews, provided meaningful guidance to program development.

Part Three of the book illustrates how the authors incorporated the DCRPS into their MAT program as a reflection and self-evaluation tool. These chapters have great utility for teacher educators with illustrative examples of impactful course assignments and tasks, such as the Reflection Wheel (Herrera, 2015). After an assigned reading, pre-service teachers reflected on their “positionalities from a lens of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and education” (p. 114). The final Reflection Wheel task asked the students to complete and analyze their responses to the DCRPS and reflect on their own dispositions. Quoted responses from the pre-service teachers show an impressive degree of reflection and self-awareness of their Dispositions for Social Justice, Community, and Praxis. As one student observed, “An assumption that I have had for some time is that because I am comfortable with my identity, that I do not need to continue to revise my values. This is something that was very ignorant of me to assume” (p. 122). Quotations from the students’ reflections are powerful and hopeful, and yet bear witness to the struggle to develop and maintain positive dispositions. It is evident that the DCRPS is valuable in confirming or disrupting assumptions of students’ dispositions for multicultural pedagogy.

The final part of the book addresses how the DCRPS has been used in professional development for in-service teachers in an urban and in a rural school district. In both cases, the authors collaborated with district leaders to identify the most relevant items to assess. By analyzing the mean scores and the variations in scores, the authors identified the dispositions that were

assets and could be leveraged to develop the dispositions with less consistent beliefs. For example, in the rural schools, the Disposition for Community was a strength for teachers, but the items in the Disposition for Social Justice subscale implied that teachers were less aware of racial inequality and their role in disrupting deficit perspectives. From this analysis, the authors and district leaders planned a four-semester course for teacher leaders to guide professional development in multicultural pedagogy. Building on Disposition for Community, professional development focused on creating a collaborative classroom climate, supporting collaborative learning, and leveraging the students' funds of knowledge through collaboration with families.

The DCRPS is clearly more than a theoretical construct; it can serve as a tool for evaluating and designing coursework for pre-service teachers and professional development for practicing teachers. The authors provide several specific examples of assignments designed for their courses, but it is not a step-by-step guide. To use a tool such as the DCRPS with intention, readers will be best served by ensuring their own understanding of multicultural theory along with thoughtful assessment and planning to address the specific needs of teachers as identified by the DCRPS.

One of the strengths of the DCRPS is that it is well-grounded in sociocultural and educational theory. The authors bring a diverse and complementary background to the work. Whitaker's expertise in developmental educational psychology integrates well with Valtierra's research in teacher preparation. The book is written in a style that makes it accessible to readers with a wide range of purposes. The content would be useful to a variety of audiences, such as university-level teacher educators, school district leadership, instructional coaches, and teacher professional learning communities. This volume contributes to an understanding of theory while also providing practical application in program evaluation, course development, and professional development for in-service teachers.

Many educators have a deep commitment to equity and access. However, intentional guidance and reflection in multicultural teaching is required to effectively implement culturally and linguistically responsive practices. Through the Dispositions of Social Justice, Community, and Praxis, Whitaker and Valtierra truly see teachers acting as agents of change in the classroom and within the school culture by "employing culturally responsive and culturally sustaining teaching practices" (p. 3). Their book provides needed guidance and resources for teacher educators and practicing teachers to provide the equity and access to education that multicultural students deserve.

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### About the Reviewer

**Hille Elwood** is a doctoral student at the University of Wyoming's College of Education and a K-5 Literacy Coach. Her career and research interests focus on the development of biliteracy and early literacy instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse children. Specifically, she seeks to study how diverse learners are positioned as readers and writers and the consequent implications for assessment and access to grade level content instruction.

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