Article

Human Resource Development for Racial/Ethnic Diversity: Do School Systems Value Teachers of Color?

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Abstract

The Problem.
The small representation of Teachers of Color in comparison with their White counterparts continues to trouble the teaching profession. Since Teachers of Color often have a vital impact on student engagement and academic outcomes, there is a pressing need to identify policies and practices that increase recruitment and retention.

The Solution.
Given the current state of racial/ethnic teacher diversity in the United States, human resource development scholarship can be informative for addressing teacher retention. The Diversity Intelligence (DQ) and People as Technology (PT) Conceptual Model, as human resource development conceptual tools, are useful for understanding ways to support the academic and professional growth of Teachers of Color. These models are positioned to advance educational leaders' and human resource professionals' understandings of the ways in which the education field works to increase the number of Teachers of Color who enter and remain in the profession.

The Stakeholders.
School leaders, policymakers, human resource development professionals and researchers, and reformers can better understand how school systems value (or do not value) Teachers of Color.

Keywords

Diversity Intelligence, Teachers of Color, teacher diversity, human resource development, People as Technology Conceptual Model

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The research literature is replete with evidence documenting the value Teachers of Color[1] add to the profession, students, and community (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Teachers of Color significantly affect academic and nonacademic outcomes for students of color (Dee, 2004; Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016), demonstrate racial and social justice commitments (Gist, 2014a), possess cultural and community knowledge that positions them as bridge builders (Flores, Claeys, & Gist, 2018), and elicit caring warm demands of high expectations (Acosta, 2015). What is less clear, however, is how to retain and increase the number of Teachers of Color with such attributes in the profession. In fact, the disproportionate number of Teachers of Color represents long-standing systemic, historical, social, and political legacies of disenfranchisement and marginalization that have worked to shape a predominately White female K-12 teacher workforce (Sleeter, Neal, & Kumashiro, 2014). Although the number of Teachers of Color has slowly but steadily increased since the 1990s (Ingersoll & May, 2011), the racial parity between students and teachers will remain stagnant for at least the next 40 years (Putman, Hansen, Walsh, & Quintero, 2016) without significant policy and practice intervention.

Although there have been many teacher diversity initiatives focused on recruiting Teachers of Color, by comparison, significantly less attention has been paid to the types of supports they receive when they enter local school districts to become teachers of record. A lack of attention to the school context in which Teachers of Color teach has resulted in a revolving door phenomenon among some groups of Teachers of Color, creating a situation in which they leave the profession at a higher rate than their White counterparts (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Human resource development policies are positioned to support the academic and professional growth of Teachers of Color, and as such, play a vital role in working to sustain the number of Teachers of Color who enter the profession. Given the current state of racial/ethnic teacher diversity in the United States, coupled with the growing need to identify policies and practices that increase representation in the teaching profession, this article utilizes the Diversity Intelligence (DQ) and People as Technology (PT) Conceptual Model to grapple with current trends in the research literature on the experiences of Teachers of Color, and consider the ways in which human resource development frameworks can help the teacher development field better understand how school systems value (or do not value) Teachers of Color.

Strategies for Recruiting Teachers of Color

In recognition of the value Teachers of Color add to the profession, notable efforts have been made to increase their presence in teacher education programs. Gist (2014b) notes the following:

> The research literature indicates that recruitment efforts by teacher education programs involve the following: 1) early recruitment programs targeting pre-college students in middle and high schools and providing them support to enter college and encouragement to pursue a teaching career (Stevens, Agnello, Ramirez, Marbley, & Hamman, 2007,

Villegas & Lucas, 2002); 2) financial incentives largely in the form of scholarship or loan forgiveness (Bennett et al., 2000; Grow Your Own Illinois, 2006; Irizarry, 2007; Stevens et al., 2007; Villegas & Clewell, 1998); 3) career ladder programs for paraprofessionals (Villegas & Clewell, 1998; Villegas & Davis, 2008); and 4) partnerships between two and four year colleges to facilitate the transition of community college students into four-year colleges. (Flores, Clark, Claeys, & Villarreal, 2007, pp. 13-14)

Given the consistent calls for racial/ethnic teacher diversity, it is important to note strategies for increasing the number of Teachers of Color entering and graduating from educator preparation programs have made an impact. For instance, the teaching force has experienced growth in racial/ethnic diversity as the number of Teachers of Color (1987-1988, 12.4%, 327,200 total, in comparison with 2015-2016, 19.8%, 757,765 total) has outpaced growth of students of color and White teachers (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017; Taie & Goldring, 2017). Still, retention remains a significant issue since more recent analysis across major U.S. urban cities indicate Teachers of Color leave schools at a higher rate than their White counterparts (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Thus, understanding the challenges Teachers of Color face once they enter school systems is key.

Current Workforce Challenges

Recently, I attended a leadership institute focused on preparing Black males to enter the teaching profession. One thing I was struck by was the contextualization of the charge and challenge for these young men. The characterization of the school setting they would enter was described as involving some combination of the following: no resources, operating in isolation, lack of autonomy, limited professional development opportunities, few prep breaks, and negative colleagues (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010). To face these barriers, the institute interjected mottos of encouragement, such as *grin and bear it, sink or swim, no excuses*, and *stay ready*. In a sense, the participants were being primed to operate in a constant state of emergency. Similar to triage, they must be ready to tackle any emergency they encounter in the school setting. To be sure, this sentiment is not simply editorial but grounded in research literature and program descriptions that have documented the reality Black male teachers may potentially face when entering schools (Bristol, 2015; Jones & Jenkins, 2012). A decision to willingly confront and endure difficult schooling conditions, in part, represents a legacy of justice work Teachers of Color have taken up on behalf of these children in the nation's schools since the early part of the 20th century (Gist, 2014a).

Despite this legacy, there is a new generation of Teachers of Color (Brown, 2018). Some Teachers of Color seek to shed the history of oppression and advance the legacy of their families each generation through professional and economic advancement, and are not readily compelled to take up long-term work in such meager professional conditions (Machado, 2013). Given the high stress nature of the work, it is no wonder, despite the best of intentions and social justice commitments, many Teachers of Color

are exiting the profession (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Thus, although a contextualization of inequality and oppression in schools is vital and necessary in educator preparation to ensure Teachers of Color are prepared for what they will face (Gist, 2017), it certainly does not represent a long-term solution for sustaining Teachers of Color or, for that matter, cultivating a more just and equal school system for those students most frequently marginalized.

Furthermore, commonly cited reasons for leaving the profession include inadequate educator preparation experiences (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011b), difficulty relating to administration (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018), limited professional development supports (Bristol, 2015), restrictive curriculum (Philip, 2013), racial microaggressions (Quinones, 2018), hostile racial climates (Kohli, 2016), and few career and leadership development opportunities (Rogers-Ard, Knaus, Epstein, & Mayfield, 2013). Across this broad set of findings are tensions between their personal commitments and the entire school setting and system, evidencing a type of double bind (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011a) that represents an inability to reconcile a host of working conditions. Achinstein et al. (2010) note several school context variables that comprise working conditions: student body characteristics, financial capital, human capital, social capital, and power structures and relations. Simon and Johnson (2015) note factors that influence teachers' decision to leave primarily involving administrative support, collegial support, and school culture. In general, Teachers of Color are over represented in certain settings where there are large percentages of low-income families; significant linguistic, cultural, and racial/ethnic diversity among students; and/or a majority of one racial/ethnic group that is non-White (Achinstein et al., (2010); Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017). School structure also plays a role because teacher leavers are generally higher at charter schools (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015).

There are also acute challenges for particular subgroups of Teachers of Color. For instance, Black teachers, across all Teachers of Color, are leaving at a higher rate (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). However, Black teachers are more likely to stay at schools serving Black students (Simon & Johnson, 2015). In contrast, in some major urban cities, the number of Latino teachers grew significantly, approaching parity (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). There is also some evidence that school district policies and practices have been particularly harmful for some groups of Teachers of Color pointing to possible systematic mistreatment. For example, in some cases, Black teachers are less likely hired by administrators (D'amico, Pawlewicz, Earley, & McGeehan, 2017), disproportionally evaluated at a lower rating than other subgroups of teachers (Bailey, Bocala, Shakman, & Zweig, 2016), and often overrepresented in the termination of jobs due to school closures (Cook & Dixson, 2013). Collectively, these issues raise questions about the role of human resource development in recruiting and retaining Teachers of Color.

Human Resource Development: Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives

To better understand how human resource development can assist with understanding the recruitment and retention challenges facing Teachers of Color, the conceptual

frameworks of DQ and PT are briefly described and then applied as a framework for analysis of current research trends regarding Teachers of Color.

DQ

Hughes (2016) describes diversity intelligence as ". . . the ability to navigate broad social, cultural, racial, and other human diversities and to comprehend and appropriately use extensive knowledge of diversity among protected class employees within the workplace" (p. 5). This requires a clear set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions when working with a diverse set of protected classes, which are identified as age, disability, national origin, race/color, religion, sex, and sexual orientation (Hughes, 2016, p. 96).

DQ is relevant for racial/ethnic teacher diversity because it requires leadership to understand the historical legacy of racism, and strategize and act in ways that support and value the racial/ethnic diversity of teachers. A sound understanding of the protected class of race/color acknowledges the endemic and persistent nature of racism and can work toward the reduction and elimination of challenges they may experience along their professional trajectory. Leaders who exhibit DQ assist their organization's ability to clearly define diversity and inclusion, develop and leverage systems of support for protected classes, and evaluate the support system's impact on protected class employees (Hughes, 2010). Although the definition of DQ may be straightforward, executing its principles are more complex.

PT Conceptual Model

Even if school leaders, policymakers, human resource development professionals, and reformers possess DQ, they must have tools to apply such understanding to change the professional environment of teaching and learning in schools. Indeed, this requires "a process of developing and valuing human expertise through training and development and organization development for the purpose of improving performance" (Swanson, 2007 as cited in Hughes, 2010, p. 49). In this sense, valuing the organization is rooted in valuing and developing humans executing the central functions of the organization. While this may appear commonsensical, many organizations overlook the value of human development. As a heuristic device to highlight the central role of human development in organizations, Hughes (2010) designed a human resource conceptual model, People as Technology, illustrating the need to attend to human investments with the same urgency as technological investments. To support this position, five key values are provided to describe connections between human resource development and technology development: (a) location, (b) use, (c) maintenance, (d) modification, and (e) time. Drawing from technology resource allocation approaches, Hughes (2010) outlines the following propositions of each value in relation to human development.

1. Location value: Location value is how employees are positioned within the power structure of organizations. The following three propositions anchor this

value: 1a) Employee performance increases as their comfort with the environment increases; 1b) As organizational investment in employee cohesiveness to environment and adaptability to organizational culture increases, employee performance and retention increase; and 1c) Organizations' career development strategies' success or failure may depend on the proper placement of employees internally and externally to the organization (Hughes, 2010, p. 58).

2. Use value: Use value is primarily focused on the integration of employees within the organizational structure and cultural environment. The proposition guiding this value is "As person–job fit becomes more specific through enhanced job analysis and selection strategy, employee use value increases" (Hughes, 2010, p. 60). The better the organization efficiently identifies and utilizes employee assets in the organization, the more valuable they become to the enterprise.

3. Maintenance value: Maintenance value represents preventive measures taken to support ongoing growth and development. The proposition for this value is described as, "When companies invest in training, development, and motivation of their employees, the employee maintenance value to the organization increases through improved performance" (Hughes, 2010, p. 60). This often involves support structures that enhance employee abilities to perform over time.

4. Modification value: Modification value accounts for employee growth and changes that take place by recognizing the need for changes or modifications. The two propositions for this value are: 4a) As organizations adjust to growth, change, and job enrichment needs of employees, employee modification value increases; and 4b) As organizational, employee, and leader expectations are better understood within organizations, better decisions that may lead to the success of the organization can occur (Hughes, 2010, p. 61). In general, this involves recognizing when something is not working and making adjustments to systems, teams, and individual employees when appropriate.

5. Time value: Time value is the amount of time an employee occupies in a position in relationship to the contribution employees make to the organization. The proposition for this value is "As organizational leaders better manage and understand how to enhance the time value of employees, employee length of service increases" (Hughes, 2010, p. 62). Overall, this focuses on valuing the time spent by employees in ways that contribute to the performance of the organization.

Because this framework helps assist organizations with understanding how to value human development within organizations, it can be applied to make sense of the current literature on retention issues for Teachers of Color in school systems.

PT Conceptual Model: How Do School Systems Value Teachers of Color?

To consider how the PT Conceptual Model for human development (Hughes, 2010) can assist the field's understanding of how to support and retain Teachers of Color, the

intersection between research trends on Teachers of Color and each PT value is briefly explored below.

The Location Value of Teachers of Color

Research indicates that Teachers of Color are more likely to be placed in under-resourced, low-income, majority students of color school settings (Achinstein et al., 2010; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017). This means they are often placed in the most challenging professional environments at the beginning of their careers. Many Teachers of Color enter the profession to work with students of color in schools (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). Yet the challenges of the school setting (e.g., limited resources and professional development supports), in addition to navigating relationships with colleagues and principals (Simon & Johnson, 2015), can take a significant toll and, in part, explains why Teachers of Color are exiting the profession at a higher rate (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Achinstein et al. (2010) pose a question salient to location value schools place on Teachers of Color, asking, "Is it problematic to promote retention policies so that Teachers of Color continue to work and remain in such schools longer than White teachers, when these are the very schools that are often characterized as low resourced with poor working conditions?" (p. 98). It seems the answer to this question is yes, especially if there is limited to no commitment of school districts and human resource leaders to improve these working conditions in these locations.

The Use Value of Teachers of Color in Schools

The utility of Teachers of Color is typically described as beneficial for students of color, ignoring the benefit of Teachers of Color for all students. The benefits of racial match such as increases in recommendations to gifted settings, academic performance, and expectations of excellence for Black students are well documented in the literature (Gershenson et al., 2016; Grissom & Redding, 2016). Still, if Teachers of Color are not given pedagogical autonomy, or their skills are devalued (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015), it limits their utility, and ultimately, reduces job fit. There is also the issue of downplaying the benefit of Teachers of Color for all students (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). Furthermore, without a nuanced understanding of the positive attributes Teachers of Color bring to schools, within-group differences along race/ethnic, language, cultural, class, sex, gender, and exceptionalities can be too easily ignored (Gist, 2014b). Although Teachers of Color may reflect a racial match with a majority of school populations, if they are not prepared to teach in under-resourced schools, do not possess racial and social justice perspectives and viewpoints, or come from different social class backgrounds from their students, their ability to be successful with students is far from providential. Given the various ways in which the strengths of Teachers of Color can be framed, this suggests the use value of Teachers of Color in schools is complex, thus requiring a varied portfolio of tools to ensure the community cultural wealth they bring to schools is utilized to the utmost.

The Maintenance Value of Teachers of Color in Schools

Working conditions are a strong indicator of Teachers of Color exiting the profession (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015; Simon & Johnson, 2015), which suggests the maintenance value for Teachers of Color is relatively low. Maintenance value implies the need to create and invest in support structures for Teachers of Color to thrive and perform, an approach that is unlikely given the resource-strapped school context in which they are likely placed. Rogers-Ard et al. (2013) note the need for professional development supports that address issues of race and racism Teachers of Color often confront in their school settings. However, if these challenges are ignored and not seen as critical issues to address among Teachers of Color, then the ability of the school to maintain their presence becomes significantly reduced over time.

The Modification Value of Teachers of Color in Schools

Making modifications to the teaching and learning experiences for Teachers of Color to remain and thrive represents a value of their presence in schools. This requires adjustments to systems (e.g., structures of supports, promotion, and development for teachers), teams (e.g., collaborative teaching, planning and leadership opportunities and responsibilities), and individuals (e.g., new assignment or placement duties). Farinde, Allen, and Lewis (2016) found that factors influencing Black female teachers' decisions to stay in the classroom included administrative support, salary increases over time, and professional advancement. This suggests that concrete modification approaches must be in place to support the development and advancement of Teachers of Color. This differs from maintenance in that there is an intentional commitment to fine-tune and advance opportunities for Teachers of Color to remain relevant, effective, and valuable to students and schools.

The Time Value of Teachers of Color Within Schools

Perhaps most striking related to time value is the higher attrition rates among Teachers of Color in comparison with White teachers (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). This suggests at least two needed initiatives: (a) programs to increase the time Teachers of Color remain in the profession and (b) platforms to recognize and reward their value as they continue serving in the same school over time. In part, ensuring the sustainability of Teachers of Color points to the need for integrated systems of developmental supports that begin during educator preparation, extend as they transition to novice teachers, and continue when they become mid-career and eventually veteran teachers (Gist, 2018). The time value of Teachers of Color may also be linked to particular types of educator preparation programs, such as grow your own programs (Gist, Bianco, & Lynn, in press), in which graduates are more likely to remain in the profession over time. Furthermore, policies that enhance the value of Teachers of Color to the organization over time, through leadership and management incentives and programs, may also be particularly important.

PT Considerations for Valuing and Retaining Teachers of Color

Taken as a whole, contemplating current research trends on Teachers of Color in relation to the PT framework highlights possibilities for how the development of Teachers of Color can be better supported in school systems. The following considerations for policy and practice in relation to PT values—though there are overlaps and synergies across values—should be further explored in relation to the various roles key stakeholders play in education.

Location Value

- Offer preferential school placement options for Teachers of Color in school districts in which they are disproportionally assigned in under-resourced and underfunded schools.
- Provide DQ and critical race leadership development at the school level to support school leaders in creating collaborative and team building school climate in under-resourced schools.
- Incorporate broad school district professional development supports for Teachers of Color that are not dependent on individual school funding to ensure equal access to teaching and learning opportunities.
- Develop recruitment policies that seek out future Teachers of Color from the local schools who will be placed in the same schools to teach when they graduate educator preparation programs. This may potentially increase the likelihood of location fit for Teachers of Color who desire to remain in their communities.
- Develop preferential transfer tiers for Teachers of Color overrepresented in under-resourced schools to provide teaching opportunities in other schools.

Use Value

- Develop governance structures (Achinstein et al., 2010) and communal spaces (Gist, 2017) that create opportunities to expand the voice and influence of Teachers of Color on pedagogical, curricular, and policy issues that drive the vision and direction of local school environments.
- Given the rich within-group diversity of Teachers of Color, offer differentiated professional development supports that address and build on the intersectional nature of their lived experiences across various identity markers to enhance their ability to be effective in their school environments.
- School leaders should utilize Diversity Intelligence and Critical Race frameworks, both of which have responsive and strength-based perspectives of racial/ethnic diversity, to guide professional recommendations and decisions related to teaching and leadership opportunities for Teachers of Color.

Maintenance Value

- Implement third-party protocols outside of the school and district setting for Teachers of Color to report inequities and challenges they are experiencing in schools (Hughes, 2016).
- Provide professional development spaces for Teachers of Color to address race and racism in their teaching and learning experiences (Kohli, 2016).
- Incorporate health and wellness opportunities within and outside the school setting on a consistent and ongoing basis to maintain the physical resilience of Teachers of Color in school systems.
- Offer additional sources of emotional, social, and psychological supports for Teachers of Color within and outside the school setting to grapple with the challenges they face in school systems (Rogers-Ard et al., 2013).
- Create opportunities to attend conferences and convenings outside of the local school context dedicated to challenges and possibilities related to working in under-resourced school contexts as Teachers of Color to provide a broader professional network of supports.

Modification Value

- Create integrated structures of support that begin at the educator preparation level and extend to veteran teacher status that account for teaching and learning developmental changes over time (Gist, 2018).
- Offer more pedagogical and curricular tools for professional development (Simon & Johnson, 2015).
- Develop professional titles and positions that enable Teachers of Color to transition to other leadership and professional roles in ways that capitalize on their experience.
- Collect data on the teaching and learning experiences of Teachers of Color at different developmental levels (e.g., novice, mid-career, and veteran) in an iterative and ongoing fashion to modify and enhance support structures offered at different points in their career.
- Offer differentiated professional spaces and supports that account for within-group differences (e.g., Black teachers and Latinx teachers), developmental levels (e.g., novice vs. veteran), and gender distinctions (e.g., Asian female teachers and American Indian male teachers).

Time Value

- Redistribute time allocations for Teachers of Color to allow for more planning, individual and small group meeting with students, and opportunities for reflection (Simon & Johnson, 2015).
- Develop and fund innovative routes to the teaching profession for Teachers of Color that are associated with higher retention rates, such as Grow Your Own programs (Gist, 2017).

- Implement pipeline opportunities for the professional advancement of Teachers of Color to leadership positions within schools and school districts.
- Pilot pay incentive programs for performance *and* length of time serving in under-resourced and underfunded schools for Teachers of Color.

Conclusion

Calls for increasing the number of Teachers of Color entering the workforce are growing as our nation becomes more racially/ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Yet such calls are likely to continue if school systems fail to take up substantive structural changes to increase and sustain a racially/ethnically diverse teacher workforce. This raises the question, "Do school systems value the retention of Teachers of Color?" Human resource development models, such as the PT Conceptual Model and the DQ Model, offer useful frameworks for considering the ways in which Teachers of Color are and are not valued. Granted, the challenge of such commitments is the required integration of efforts across multiple stakeholders beyond school district human resource departments, to include principals and instructional leaders, state education boards and officers, federal grant initiatives and policymakers, education foundations, and local grassroots educational leaders and organizations. Still, if educational leaders are committed to ensuring quality and equal schools for all children in our nation, the increased representation and retention of racial/ethnic teacher diversity in our schools must be squarely and resolutely addressed. The application of the PT conceptual framework offers a way to begin understanding how human resource development scholarship can be used as a lens through which to advance concrete efforts to value Teachers of Color in our nation's school systems.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Note

1. Teachers of Color share sociopolitical histories of marginalization by education institutions, structures, policies, and practices as well as a legacy of transformative pedagogical and resistant community-based practices (Gist, 2014a). Although there is certainly complex within group diversity between groups of Teachers of Color, positioning Teachers of Color from a group standpoint when theorizing and conducting research affords more comprehensive and rich understandings of their collective experiences. The term *Teachers of Color* is capitalized to acknowledge their collective history of advocacy, pedagogical excellence and struggle, and also to give credence to more contemporary efforts to view

group standpoints from a perspective of solidarity to advance and create equitable educational and professional opportunities.

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