

# Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the Choral Classroom

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# Guiding Questions

- \* **What** is culturally responsive pedagogy?
- \* **Why** is it important?
- \* **How** do we incorporate it in the secondary choral setting?



**The What**



# Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

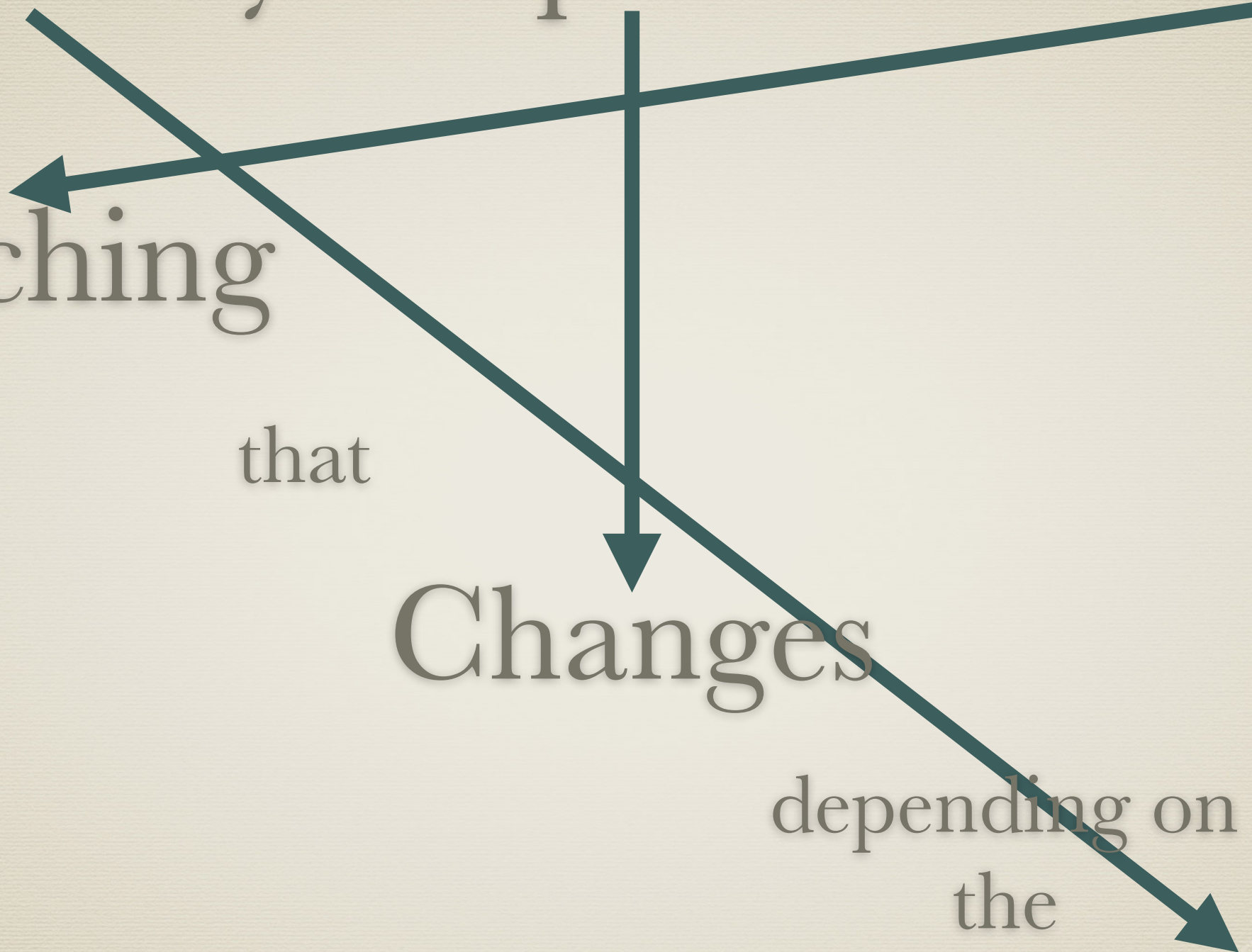
Teaching

that

Changes

depending on  
the

Students





# Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP)

## Nomenclature Timeline

**1981: Cultural Congruence,**  
Mohatt & Erickson

**1981: Cultural Responsiveness,**  
Cazden & Leggett

**1987: Mitigating Cultural  
Discontinuity,** Macias

**1981: Cultural  
Appropriateness,** Au & Jordan

**1985: Cultural  
Compatibility,** Jordan

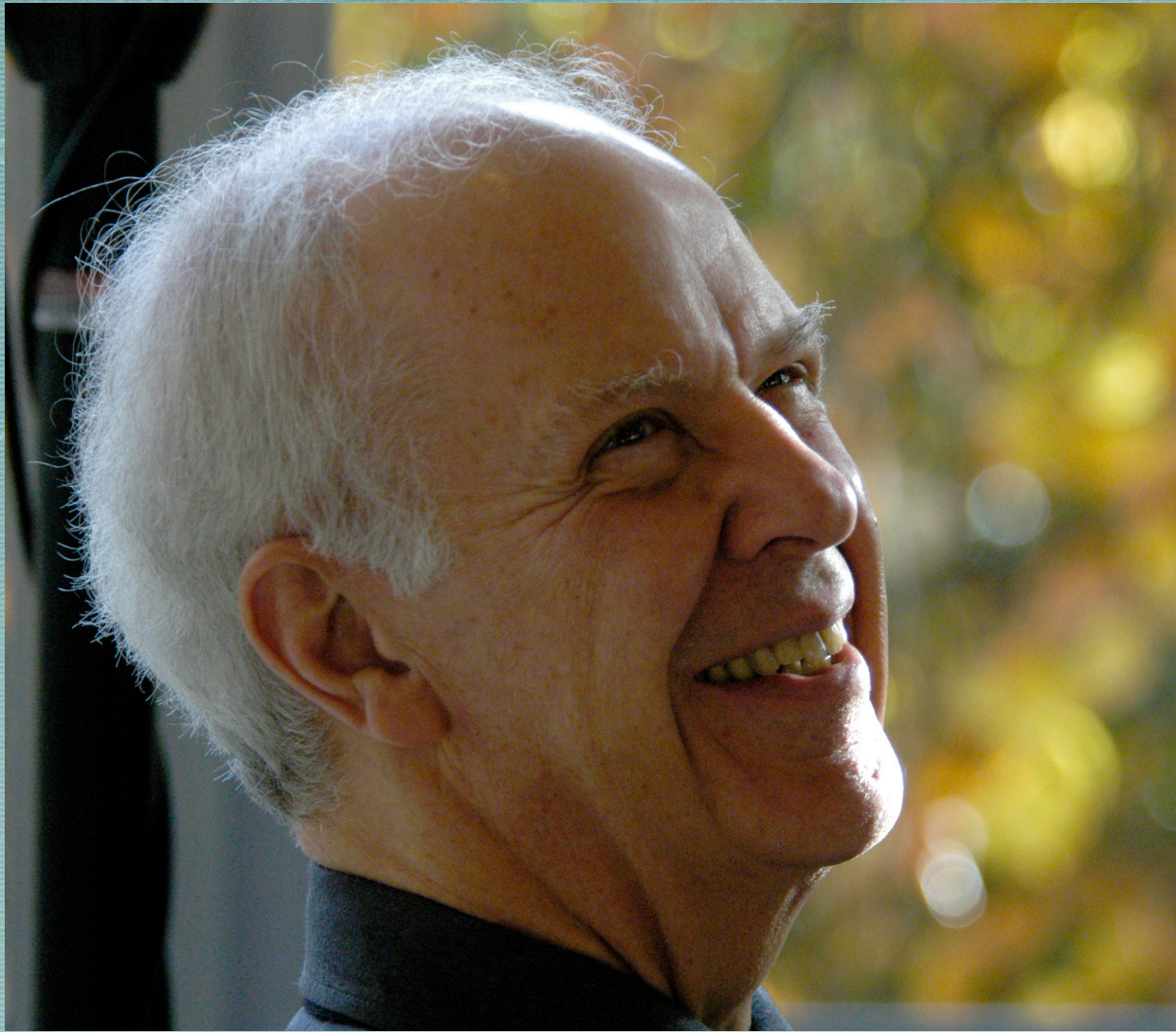
**1992: Culturally Relevant  
Teaching,** Ladson-Billings

**2000: Culturally  
Responsive Pedagogy,** Gay



# The Why





“We teach who we are.”

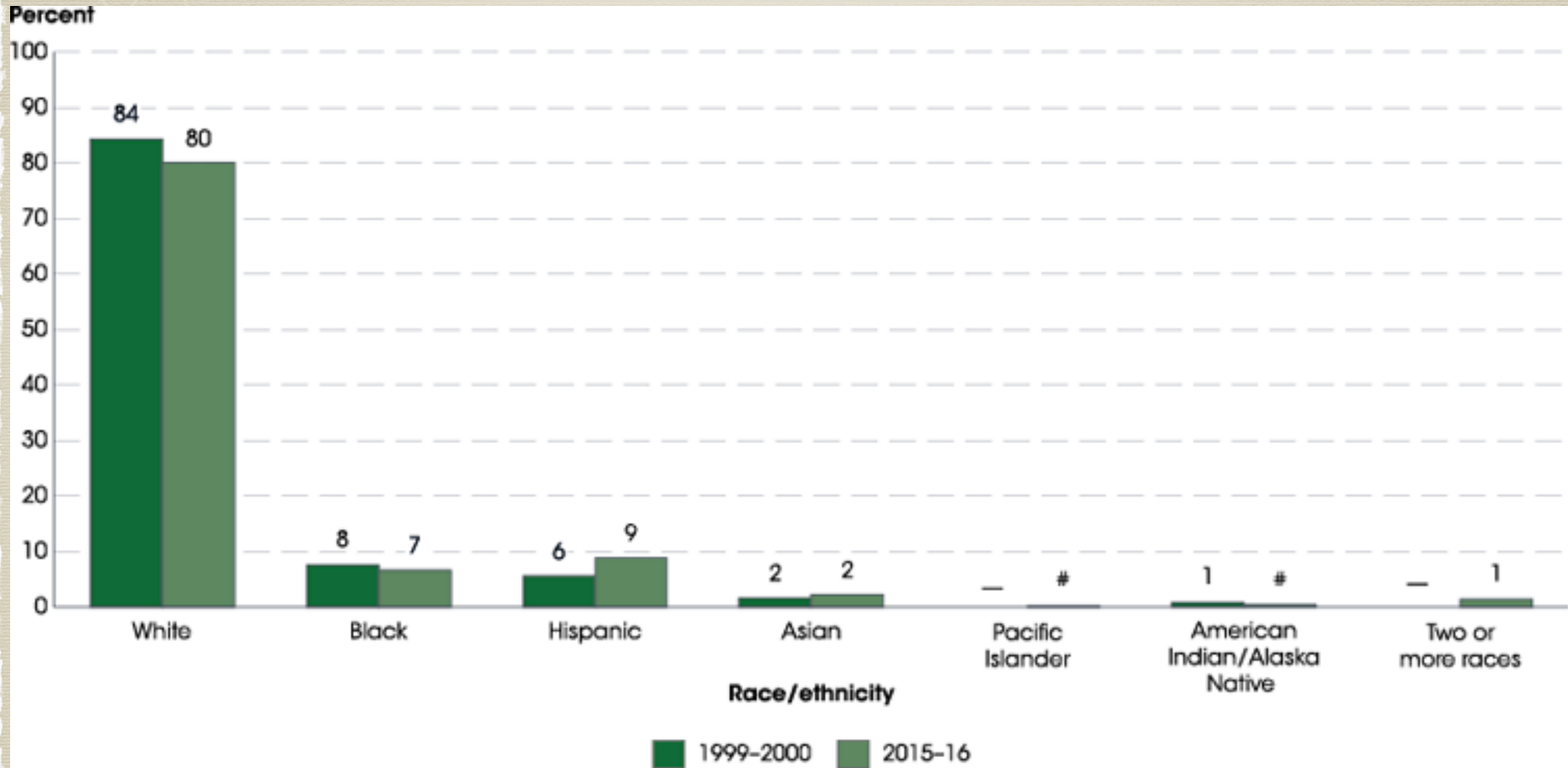
*Parker Palmer*

World-Renowned Writer, Speaker  
and Activist focusing on issues in  
education, community, leadership,  
spirituality, and social change



# Who Are We As Teachers?

as of 2015-2016 school year



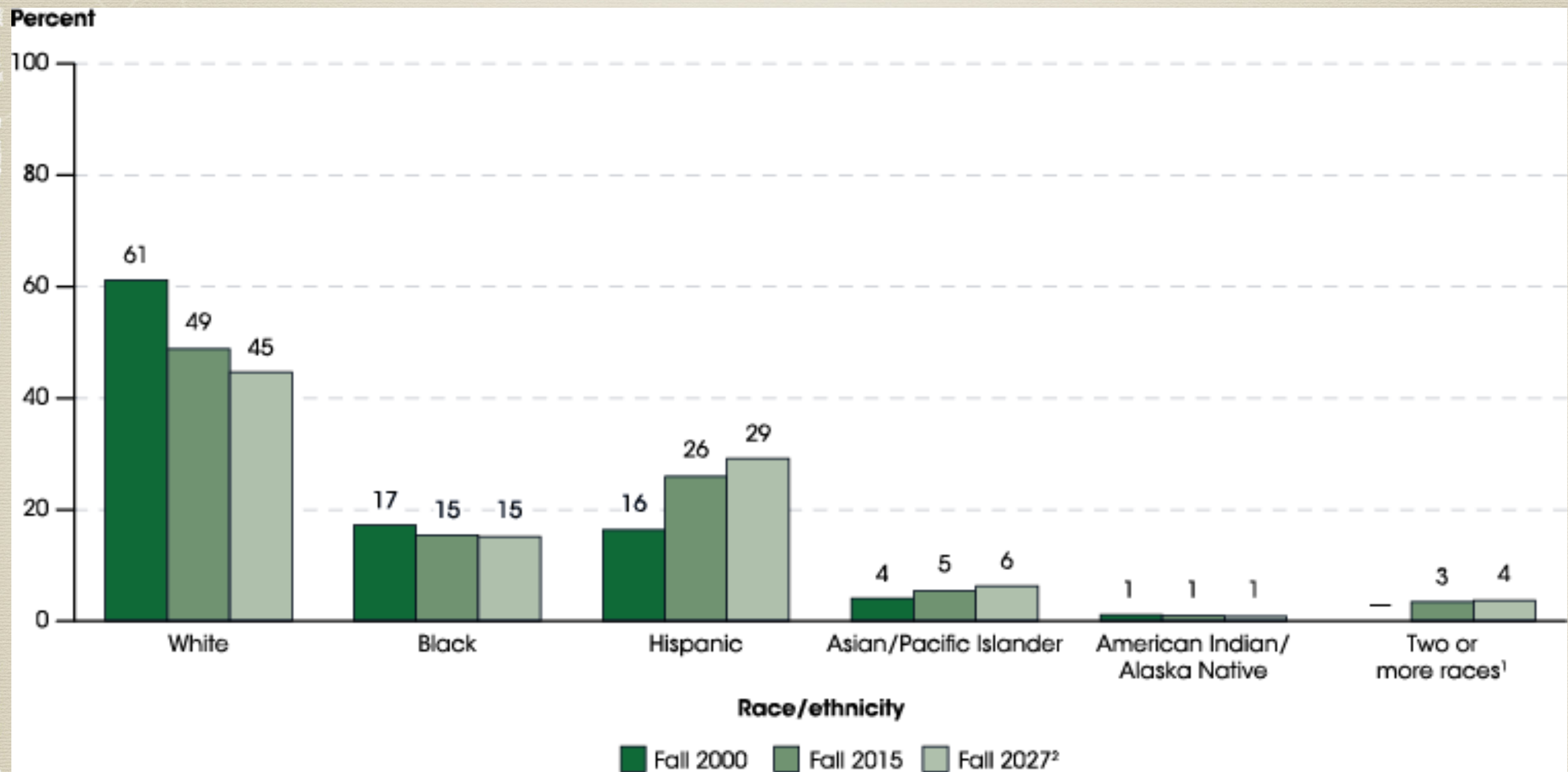
\*Approximately 3.6 million U.S. teachers

\*National Center for Education Statistics



# Who Are Our Students?

as of 2015-2016 school year

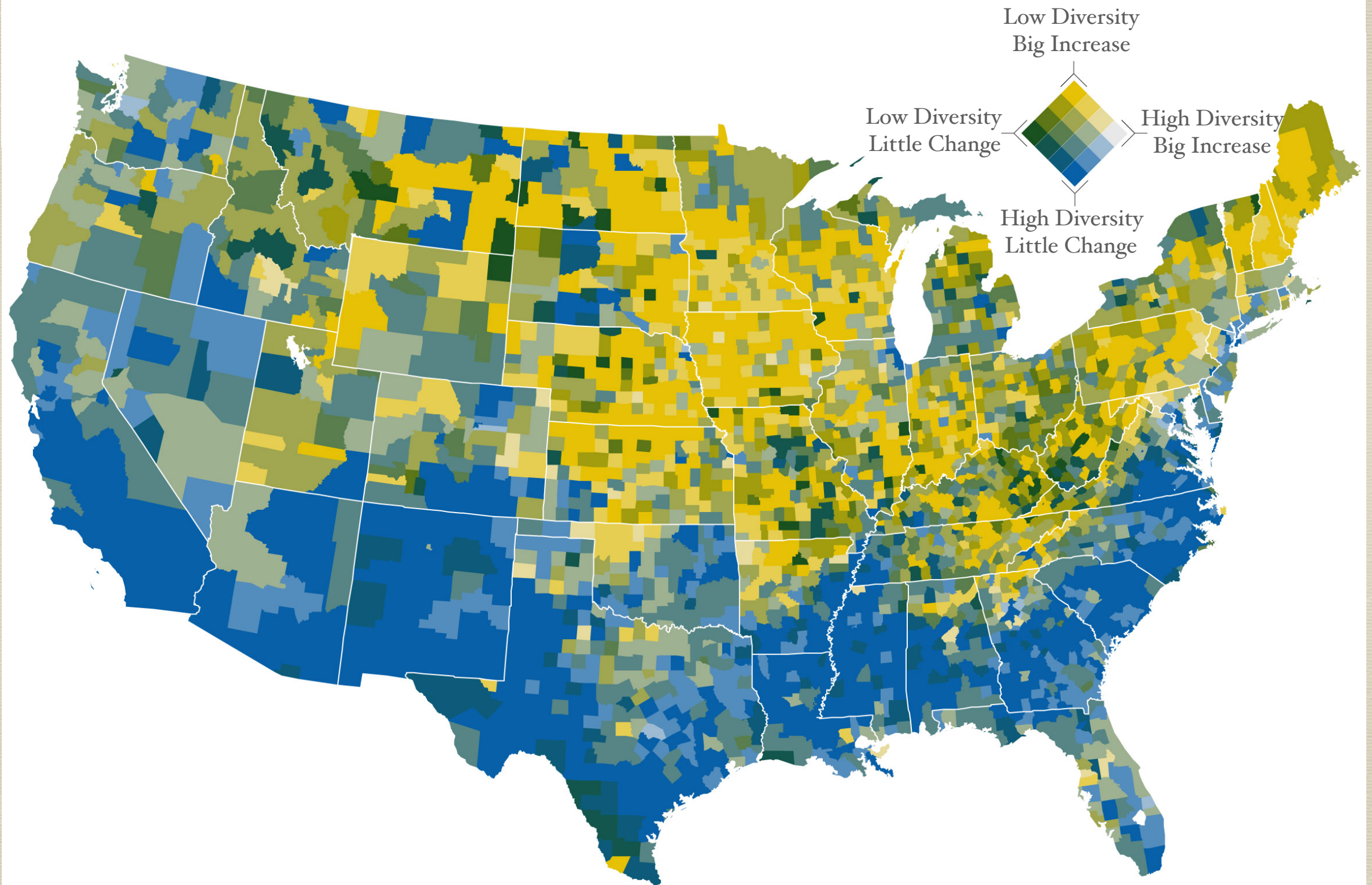


\*Approximately 58.6 million U.S. pre-k to 12th grade students

\*National Center for Education Statistics



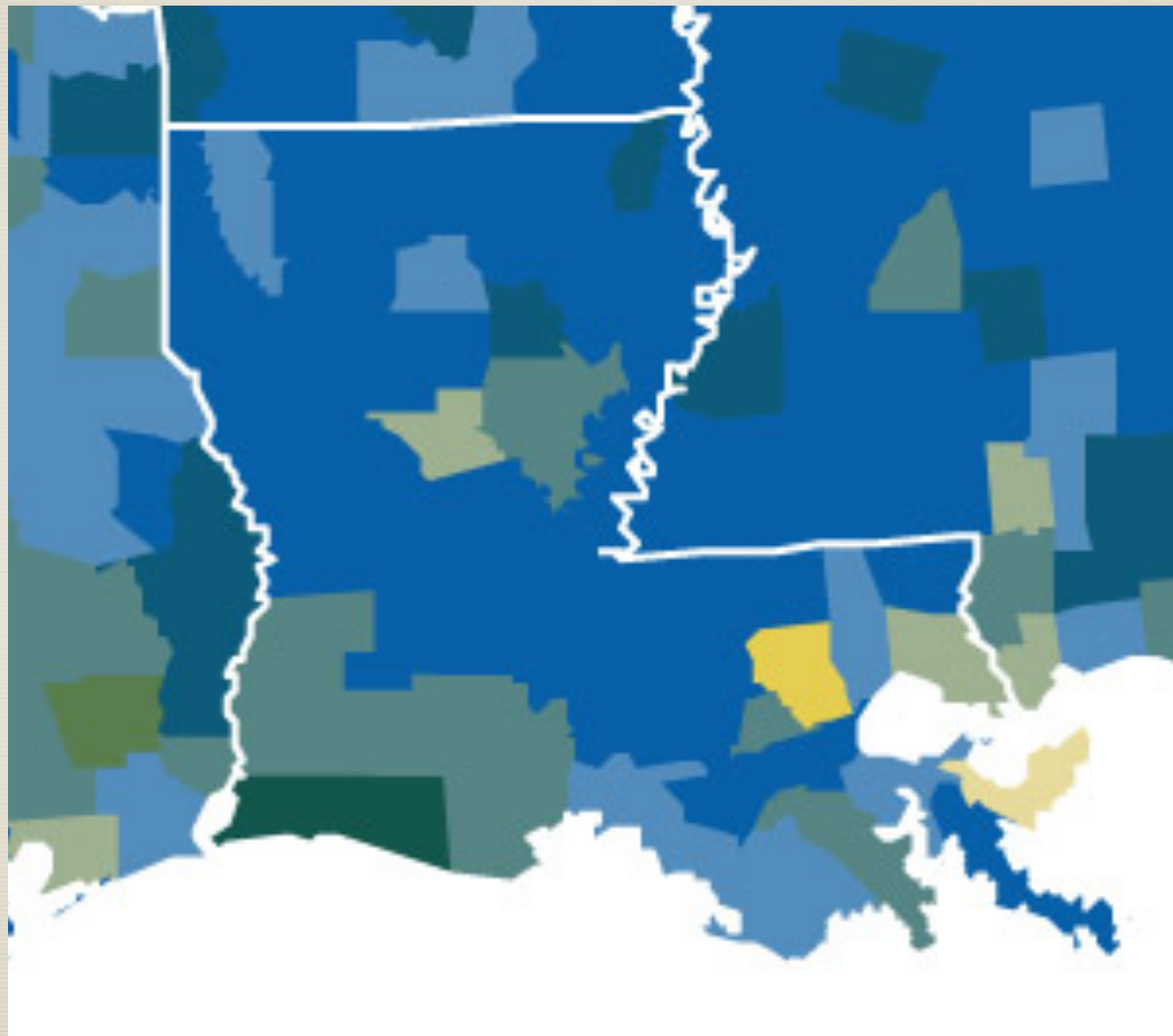
# Who Are Our Students?



\*Post analysis of census bureau data (Keating & Karklis, 2016)



# Who Are Our Students?





# Cultural Humility

“the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]”

(Hook, 2013)



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# **“The Danger of a Single Story”**

Chimamanda Adichie

\*Excerpted from a TED conference presentation



**The How**



“Culturally responsive pedagogy teaches *to and through* the strengths of culturally diverse students.”



*Geneva Gay*  
Professor of Education,  
University of Washington-  
Seattle



# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- **Understand cultural characteristics**
  - Protocols of Participation (passive-receptive vs. active-participatory)
  - Interactions with adults
  - Gender roles
  - Cooperative groups vs. independent learning




# CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SELECTING REPERTOIRE

- **Consider your students first.**
  - What would build on their prior experiences?
  - What would engage their cultural knowledge?
  - What would highlight their learning and performance styles?
- **Authentic —————> Culturally Valid (Abril)**
- **Serendipitous Opportunities**



# REHEARSAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Oral/Aural versus Written Notation**
    - Let the music guide your pedagogical decisions.
  - **Vocal Timbres**
    - Ditto
    - Culture Bearers, Students, Recordings
    - Validates multiple vocal timbres
    - Never sacrifice vocal health
- 



# PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- **Accompaniment:** instrument additions/substitutions
- **Culturally appropriate movement:** may be necessary depending on the music—videos, culture bearers
- **Culturally appropriate attire:** add a single item to uniforms, small group in full dress, images provided in performance
- **Role of conductor:** traditional conducting in front, joining the ensemble, playing an instrument, off-stage, cues from student leaders



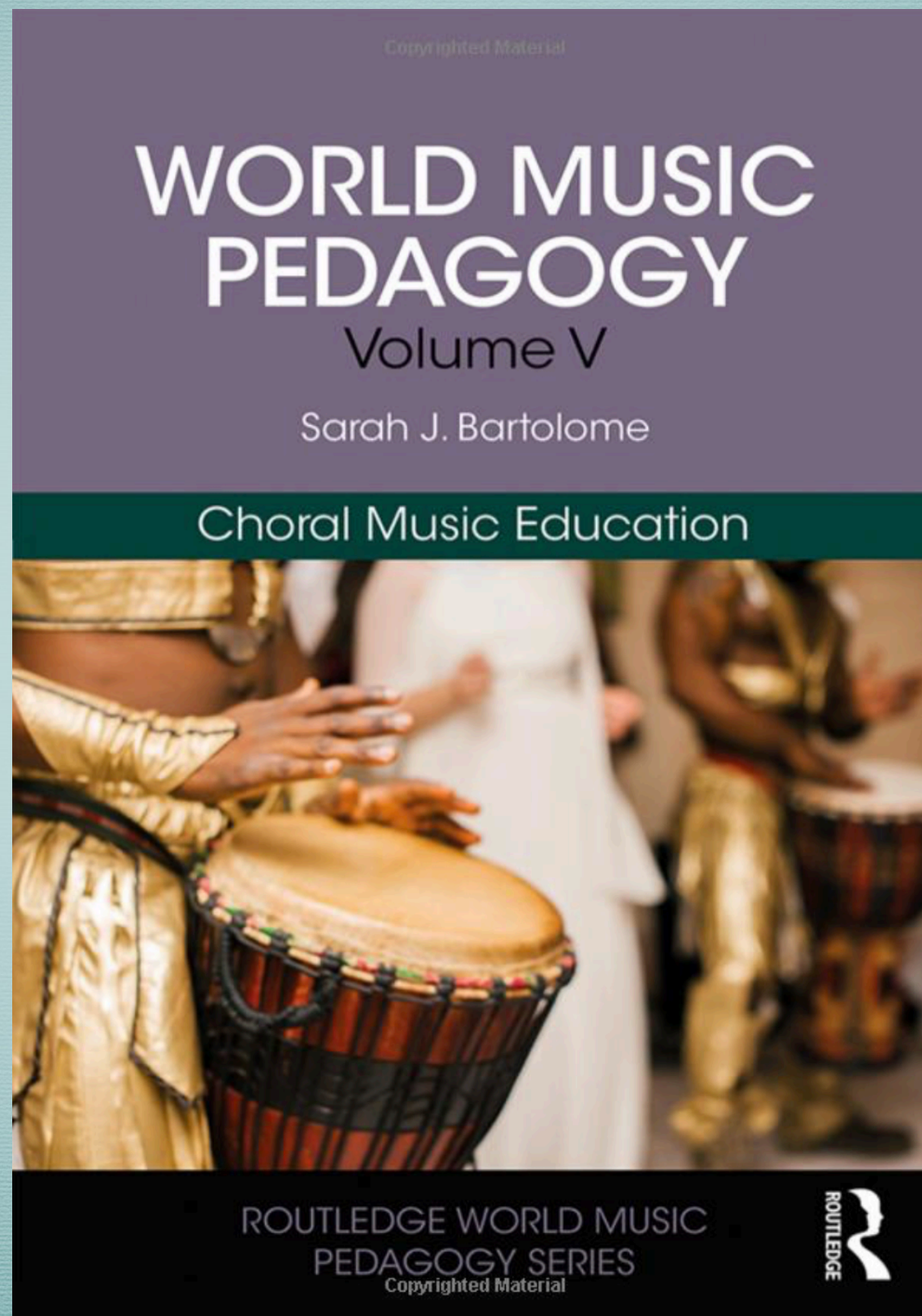
# PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

## Avoiding Cultural Appropriation

1. Don't focus on heroes and holidays.
2. Involve culture bearers in some way, if at all possible.
3. Engage with the cultures in a deep and meaningful way to encourage connection and learning.



# Suggested Reading





# DEVELOPING CULTURAL HUMILITY IN OUR STUDENTS

- **Have conversations.**
- **Select repertoire and materials that open dialogue.**
- **Empower students to action.**
  - Class Blogs
  - Music Compositions
  - Concert Themes
  - Program Notes





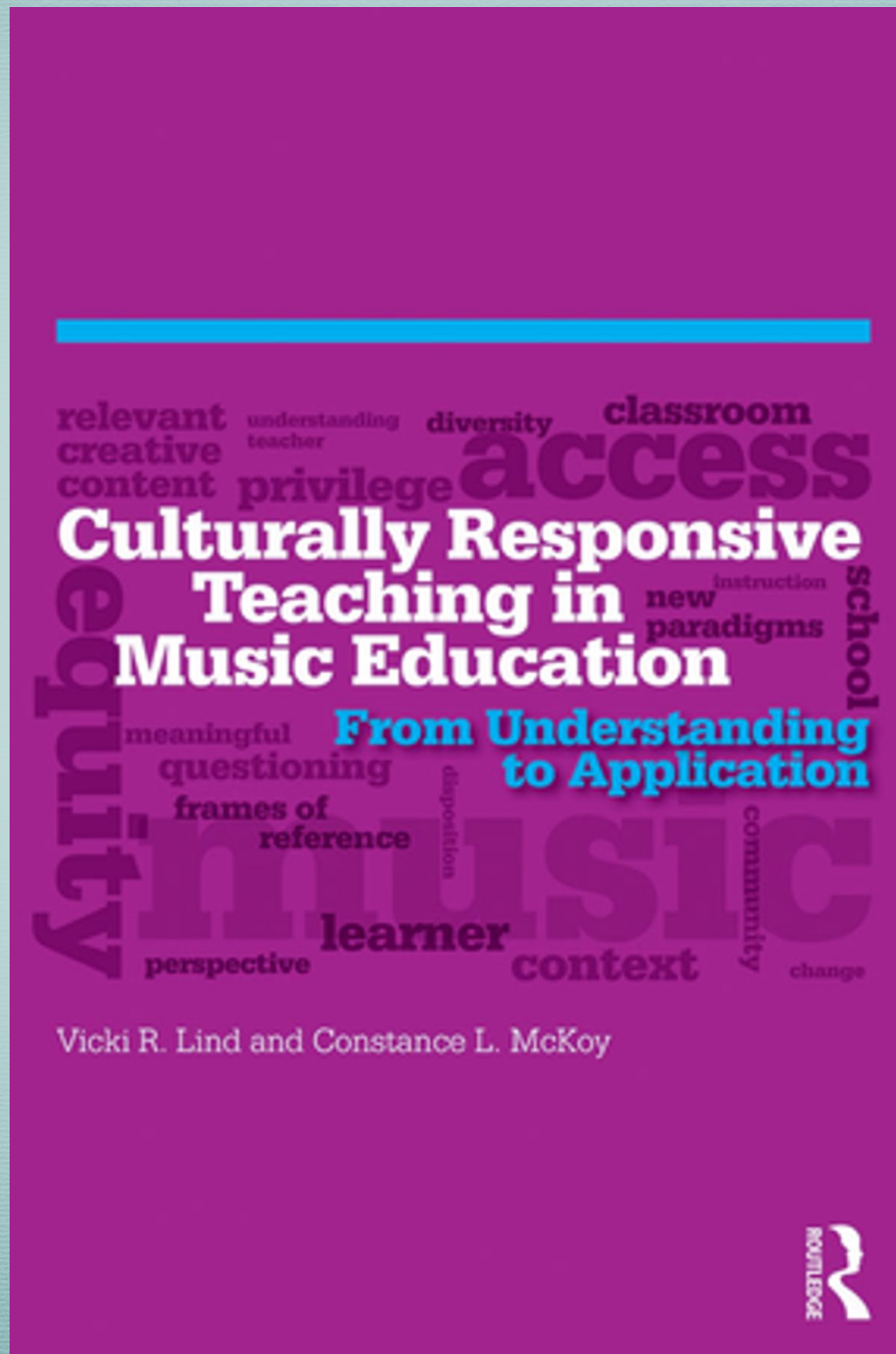
“People who want to teach in a culturally responsive way must constantly seek to do it.”

Constance L. McCoy

Professor of Music  
Education, University of  
North Carolina at  
Greensboro



# Suggested Reading





1. What is a culturally responsive practice you have employed that has made a noticeable impact in your program?
2. What is one culturally responsive practice you could incorporate next semester?



“It is the questions we raise and the ‘teachable moments’ we seize, no matter what music we choose, that can provide space for students to be thoughtful about issues of cultural connection.”



*Kate Fitzpatrick*

Associate Professor of Music  
Education, University of  
Michigan; Author of *Urban  
Music Education: A Practical  
Guide for Teachers*



# Questions?





# Additional Suggested Reading

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2), 106-116.

Gay, G. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, & practice* (2nd Ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Goetze, M. (2000). Challenges of performing diverse cultural music. *Music Educators Journal*, 87(1), 23-25+48.

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

Shaw, J. T. (2012). The skin that we sing: Culturally responsive choral music education. *Music Educators Journal*, 98(4), 75-81.

Shaw, J. T. (2015). "Knowing their world": Urban choral music educators' knowledge of context. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 63(2), 198-223.