

Nicole R. Robinson, Ph.D.

Cultural Connections by Design, Founder & CEO

Dr. Nicole R. Robinson most recently served the Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Leadership Fellow at the University of Utah. Before joining the faculty in 2013 as the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Presidential Endowed Professor, she served on the faculty at three research, urban-serving, anchor institutions including Syracuse University, University of Memphis, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Robinson is nationally acclaimed as an educator, scholar, speaker, and author; and has presented her research at national and international conferences, published in several of the industry's leading research journals, and authored two academic textbooks. She has committed her life's work to transforming educational and organizational cultures through systemic change processes centered around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Dr. Robinson has earned national recognition for her partnership and pipeline models and her ability to create sustainable, large-scale professional learning communities in urban school districts. One of her most notable partnership models, the MSM Project (Middle School Memphis Project), implemented a "retooling" design to improve teacher effectiveness of middle school music teachers in Memphis City Schools (now Shelby County Schools); then, a district of 125,000 students. Due to the success of this model, large urban districts across the country implemented components of the model to improve teacher effectiveness in their communities. Dr. Robinson now utilizes similar models to transform organizational cultures into more inclusive organizations.

As a scholar, Dr. Robinson researches issues of access to quality education for traditionally racialized and marginalized children, socio-cultural inequities in academic practices, and (re)conceptualizing methods to develop a more critical consciousness for inclusive excellence. Dr. Robinson is regularly invited to speak on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion and to provide diversity education sessions to various audiences.

Recently, Dr. Robinson launched Cultural Connections by Design, LLC, a diversity education consulting company that develops the critical consciousness and intercultural competence of K-12 and higher education educators to develop culturally responsive pedagogical practices that ultimately increases the academic success of all students. Also, she focuses on organizational change and helps organization shifts cultural climates in order to capitalize and leverage "differences" in a way that engages everyone as organizational partners—ultimately, yield maximum productivity. Her research-based professional development sessions and innovative teaching tools has been used at public school, colleges and universities, healthcare institutions, and corporations across the country.

Dr. Robinson began her teaching career as an elementary and middle school music teacher in Durham Public Schools and Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools in North Carolina. She earned a B.A. and M.M. in Music Education from North Carolina Central University and a Ph.D. in Music Education from The Florida State University.

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