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## Gifted Culturally Linguistically Diverse Learners: A School-Based Exploration

Robin M. Greene

University of Denver, [rgreene12@gmail.com](mailto:rgreene12@gmail.com)

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GIFTED CULTURALLY LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS: A SCHOOL-  
BASED EXPLORATION

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A Doctoral Research Project

Presented to

The Faculty of Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Robin M. Greene

June 2017

Advisor: Dr. Norma L. Hafenstein

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Author: Robin M. Greene  
Title: GIFTED CULTURALLY LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS: A  
SCHOOL-BASED EXPLORATION  
Advisor: Dr. Norma L. Hafenstein  
Degree Date: June 2017

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this case study was to explore educators' perceptions of characteristics, needs, and practices relating to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. The research questions guiding the study included the following: What are educators' perceptions of the characteristics, needs, and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners? How do educators describe gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners? How do educators describe their understanding of culturally responsive teaching as it relates to diverse gifted learners? What are school-based practices for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners that support or hinder learning?

This study focused on an elementary school within Colorado. Seventeen educators (administrators and teachers) voluntarily participated in the study. One 30 minute semi-structured interview as well as one 60 minute classroom observation was conducted at the research site. The classroom observation tool was developed using culturally responsive pedagogical tenets (Gay, 2014) as well as gifted multicultural competencies (Ford and Trotman, 2001). Artifacts were also collected. Using the frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Constructivism as a guide, data was analyzed and coded to determine emerging themes.

Results showed educators had positive perceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners; however, the practices related to gifted culturally

linguistically diverse learners were inconsistent and showed differences between espoused theory and actual practice (Fullan, 2006; Argyris, 2000). The author proposes a new theoretical framework, GiftedCrit™ to examine gifted education. Lastly, a conceptual model is proposed highlighting the intersection of culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies through which to view gifted classrooms.

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To my mother, Jan: Thank you for showing me strength comes from within. I am a better person because of you. You have shown me that perseverance through difficult

times only makes us stronger as individuals. You reassured me in times of doubt and have believed in my abilities, even when I did not. You made sure I knew that having an education opens doors to worlds that I may not even know exist yet, and for that I am forever grateful.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

“Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery,” (Horace Mann, 1848, p. 669). What happens when a system is set so that there is no balance wheel for certain a group of children? What happens when, even with the best intentions, students, 60 years after *Brown vs Board of Education* are still being segregated from their intellectual peers? Access is still denied. Even as demographics in the nation continually change, Black and Hispanic youth have historically been denied access to gifted education programs at the national and state level (Ford, 2012).

While there are multiple reasons for such lack of access including identification practices student self-perception, underachievement, and lack of culturally responsive teaching (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Ford, 2007; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford & Milner, 2005; Jensen, 2009; Worrell, 2014; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2007; Johnsen, 2004; Gay & Kirkland, 2005) and many other researchers still point to a persistent problem of practice that the researcher witnesses: Educators struggle to identify gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and do not understand the nature and needs of those students. Because of this lack of understanding, teachers do not modify their teaching practices to develop talent and nurture promising learners; thus continuing to deny access to appropriate gifted programming.

The rest of this chapter will describe the problem of practice from the national, personal and situational context as well as include information about the community partner, research questions and research methodology. This chapter is unique in that researcher voice will switch between third and first person when describing the personal context.

### **National Context**

In “Unlocking Emergent Talent” (2012), Paula Olszewski-Kubilius and Jane Clarenbach found that one of the most significant barriers to the identification of low-income, high ability students as well as the development of those abilities and talents was the perceptions of gifted teachers about the capabilities of the students. These misperceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students lead to inequalities in teacher nominations and referrals to gifted programming and lead to underrepresentation in programming (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012).

Donna Ford (2001; 2002; 2003) contends that this “deficit thinking” is the root of the problem. Deficit thinking framed in this manner includes viewing individuals as inferior because of culture, language, or socio-economic class and what students do not have instead of the strengths that they bring to the classroom (Ford, Harris, Tyson & Trotman, 2001). This type of thinking leads to misinterpretation of a “...lack of economic, social, and cultural capital as a lack of interest and/or motivation in school” (Ford, 2001). This misinterpretation is a lack of acknowledgement of cultural preferences for learning and the various expressions of knowledge and manifests itself into a lack of strong program models that capitalize on the unique cultural experiences of the students (Ford, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2003).



The deficit thinking model that Ford researched is not unique to gifted education (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Valencia, 2010). Valencia posits that deficit thinking is a construct created by man and was documented as early as 1927. He states that deficit thinking is reinforced by school failure of students who are among a "...substantial amount of low-SES students of color" (Valencia, 2010).

Special education classrooms are impacted by deficit thinking as well (Chu, 2011). Although gifted education has a disproportionate amount of White students, special education classrooms are disproportionately filled with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Patton, 1998; Patton and Townsend, 1997; Oswald et al., 2002; Chu, 2011). In a study by Chu (2011), educators reported that they lacked competence to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students with and without disabilities. Her review showed that teachers were using deficit thinking model, and with this thinking model, teachers were funneling students into special education classrooms and away from gifted classrooms (Chu, 2011). According to the study, part of the funneling occurs because of the perceptions of the teacher regarding the culturally and linguistically diverse students in his or her classroom (Chu, 2011). "The incompatibilities of CLD students with school standards makes teachers view them as deviant and puts them in a disadvantaged position (Gay, 2002)."

**Identification and assessment.** In addition to negative teacher perceptions based on deficit thinking (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Ford and Grantham , 2003), assessments used to identify gifted children may also be linked for this persistent problem of practice because they perpetuate myths regarding who should be placed in gifted programs (Borland, 2014). The National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.) revealed racial disparities in

those being enrolled in gifted programs. Borland stated, “Across all ethnic and racial groups, 6.7% of students were enrolled in gifted programs...only 3.7% of African American student and 4.3% of Latinos/Latina students were enrolled,” (Borland, 2014). Borland continued, “...The statistical underrepresentation contrasts with the statistical overrepresentation for Caucasian students (7.9%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (11.9%),” (Borland, 2014).

Missett and Brunner (2013) report that standardized tests continue to “...dominate the identification of giftedness in most states and school districts.” Additionally, the use of traditional and standardized assessments contributes to the under-identification of culturally linguistically diverse students (Callahan, 2005; Chart, Grigorenko, and Sternberg, 2008). Ford and Harris (1990) suggest that underrepresentation in gifted classrooms may be due to an over-reliance on intelligence tests and a lack of attention on cultural influences. In multiple studies, alternative assessments such as portfolios, local norming, multidimensional assessments, performance assessments, dynamic assessments, and even opportunity norming have been shown to have the potential increase representation in gifted programs (Van Tassel Baska, Johnson and Avery, 2002; Callahan, 2005; Johnsen, 2005; Lohman, 2007, Borland, 2014).

Similar to the National Center for Education Statistics, the State of the State Report (National Association of Gifted Children [NAGC], 2005), reports that the average proportion of Caucasian students identified as gifted is 76% for gifted programming. Hispanic students comprise 15.4% of the total identified gifted population nationally, and African Americans comprise 16.7% (Ford, 2012). These numbers reported reflect

formally identified students, but do not account for students who show promise but lack formal identification (NAGC, 2015).

**Programming.** Appropriate educational programming and placement is crucial to the success of culturally linguistically diverse learners (Ford, 2003). When identification is elusive, there is support for the use of talent development models for students who may or may not be formally identified (Johnsen, 2005; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012). The Colorado Department of Education (CDE), also mentions the need to develop talent in their guidelines around identification of students. In Chapter Three, Identification (2016), CDE states, “Students identified for a talent pool will require further differentiated instruction and experiences with monitoring of progress over time...” The chapter goes on to state, “...As students are presented with additional levels of challenge and rigor, increased achievement may occur” (CDE, 2016). In these models, students may not be identified, but the students are receiving access to programming and that programming may include self-contained or ability grouping, cluster grouping, push-in and inclusion, pull-out, or grade acceleration, to name a few (Rogers, 2007).

### **Personal Context**

As the researcher, I am in my fifteenth year as an educator, and I continue to advocate for the same issues that I did fifteen years ago. A majority of my career in education has been dedicated to working with culturally and linguistically diverse students from poverty, and I owe much of that passion and drive to my own life-experiences prior to teaching. I spent the majority of my youth in situational poverty. Situational poverty is “...caused by a sudden crisis or loss and is often temporary,” (Jensen, 2009). The situational poverty impacting my life was caused by the divorce of

my parents and the subsequent loss of my mother's long-time job. Our economic status changed almost overnight and it impacted where my mother and I had to live, what schools I attended, and who I considered my friends and peer group.

In my new schools, I was one of a few White students. A majority my friends were students of color and most of them were not in my gifted classes. As a child, I was frustrated with the lack of social justice for my friends who were just as intelligent, if not more so, and were not present in my advanced classes. My frustration only grew when I was in high school as I became quite upset with the quality of instruction that took place in advanced classes when compared to the instruction in the traditional or elective classes. I noticed that the teachers had lowered academic and behavioral expectations of the students in traditional and or elective classrooms. We did worksheets and students were often reprimanded for speaking out against the teacher and the activities. I could not help but notice that the students in those classes were primarily African American and Hispanic, whereas in the Advanced Placement and Honors classes, the students were primarily Asian and White. With the exception of my orchestra and drama classes where multiple cultures were represented, I was frustrated in my electives' classes because I wanted something more rigorous. My gifted friends in those classes were dealing with discipline issues, and I just tried to follow the rules so that I was not the next victim of my teachers' dismay with behavior.

When looking at gifted types, I am considered School House Gifted (Reis, Burns, & Renzulli, 1992) or Type One, Successful (Betts and Neihart 1988; 2010). I did my work and turned it in, but I was creative and had a strong sense of social justice. While I could not articulate over twenty years ago that my White privilege (Ladson-Billings,

2003) was acting as a protectant coat of armor for me, I knew something was amiss. In high school, I spoke with my friends about their actions and there were many times when my friends articulated that they acted out because they felt disrespected by the teacher or that they did not think the teacher cared about them. The teachers did not seem to understand the students of color in her class, nor adapt his or her teaching practices to include aspects of their lives. There was a lack of culturally responsive teaching occurring and the researcher's friends reacted (Gay, 2010).

What I experienced in high-school directly impacted my decision to choose a very specialized undergraduate major in teaching. When I entered my undergraduate program, I chose to major in Interdisciplinary Studies with a specialization in Elementary Education and English. My undergraduate program allowed me to take multiple electives where I was able to focus on at-risk youth including sociology, psychology, and multiple history classes related to different cultures. The university did not have any pre-service classes on gifted learners nor were there classes specifically focused on culturally responsive teaching and pedagogy. However, I created lesson plans and interdisciplinary units in my preservice classes that were at DOK 3 and 4 and incorporated student backgrounds. I tried to take the lessons that I learned from the teachers who were engaging my friends and those who were not, and create my own version of teaching.

When I began teaching, I was instantly drawn to the culturally linguistically diverse gifted students who were in my class, but who did not show their ability as they would if they were members of the dominant culture. I quickly amended my teaching to meet the needs of my students' culture and provided authentic learning experiences. I asked my students questions about their backgrounds, I learned about their families, and I

did research about various cultures within in my classroom because my teaching was working for a portion of my learners, but not for all of them. The perfectionist in me was not satisfied with only a portion of my students getting what they needed.

I drew on the experiences I had with my friends from high school who refused to participate and were not engaged because of the curriculum and the teaching practices. I continually had to dive deeply into understanding the nature of collective cultures and modify my own teaching. As a teacher, I did not expect my students to conform to my teaching- instead, it was my responsibility to change for them.

Upon actually working with culturally linguistically diverse learners, I found very quickly that I had a passion for gifted culturally diverse learners. I wanted to create rigorous experiences for the students in my classroom who were moving a quicker pace than other students. I began researching on my own and investigated giftedness with culturally linguistically diverse learners (Castellano, 2002; Ford, 1996; Ford and Harris, 1991; Frasier and Passow, 1995) and saw that I had created culturally responsive environments for learners, but I had to continue to work to create rigorous learning environments for those learners. Therefore, I sought out continuing education classes on differentiation and rigor and earned my endorsement in gifted education.

In my tenth year in education, I became an Itinerant teacher in Denver Public Schools and was charged with the responsibility of creating programming in four different schools. Creating equitable programming in four very different schools with very different sets of resources proved to be quite difficult at times. I found that my primary challenge was to help move the schools forward in their thinking about gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and the types of learning activities they received.

I saw that perceptions regarding the ability of gifted culturally diverse learners were not positive. Both teachers and principals indicated to the researcher that there schools had little to no gifted children. I heard on multiple occasions phrases like “I don’t know what you are going to do here because we don’t have any gifted students here,” (Anonymous, 2011.) and the most disturbing, “These kids aren’t gifted, they are like animals who need to be caged” (Anonymous, 2011). The latter statement infuriated me because of the racist condescending nature of the comments regarding a school or primarily African American students; as well as the persistent belief that gifted students are well-behaved (NAGC, 2015).

The teachers and the principals at some of the schools insisted that their schools were filled with struggling learners. They were operating from a deficit thinking mindset (Yosso, 2005) as well deep-seated beliefs about gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Deficit thinking and racism did not deter me. Instead, I was thankful that I had witness and heard their espoused beliefs about their learners so that I could develop a plan and approach the educators differently. It gave me more resolve to have those learners gain recognition for their strengths. At the time, only one of the schools had trained their staff with culturally responsive teaching methods, and none of the schools had offered training on gifted characteristics.

Additionally, in the Itinerant role, I walked into schools with 99% of the student population classified as “free and reduced lunch” and there was not one child identified as gifted and talented. In two schools where the free and reduced lunch rate was 75% and the population was predominately African American, the rate of participation in gifted programming was skewed towards Caucasian students. Therefore, I focused my efforts

on working with teachers to help them recognize the manifestations of giftedness in these culturally linguistically diverse groups of learners. I believed I could make a difference, one classroom at a time. Each year, with teacher turn over, I had to continue to address characteristics of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Each year, I had to convince teachers and administrators that there were gifted children sitting in their classrooms.

Once I was able to work with teachers and help them understand the characteristics of culturally and linguistically diverse students, I had to teach the teachers about the nature and needs of those students. I started with culturally responsive teaching practices that teachers could use with all of their students. I embedded work from Donna Ford on multicultural competencies (2001) and the work of Gay (1997, 2010) and culturally responsive classrooms. I modeled lessons and helped the teachers write some of their lesson plans. Additionally, I brought in culturally responsive texts with gifted children of color to help students begin to identify with gifted characters. I was able to work with multiple teachers at different buildings to build capacity within those teachers, but my work alone with those groups touched only a small portion of students. Knowing that I was only reaching a small group of educators was not satisfying to me because I realized that the problems I was witness to had existed throughout my entire life (prior to even stepping into my own classroom). I knew that I needed to work to change the systems in place for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.

The drive to impact a larger number of students as well as educators, led me on my path into administration. Currently, I no longer have my own individual classroom, and I am in central administration in the gifted and talented department. I am now able to



help drive identification practices and programming at 200 schools within her district. I work with over one-hundred gifted and talented teachers who serve students both formally identified through district and state practices, as well as students who are not identified formally, but have data points to support talent development. The students not formally identified are often in the top 10% of students in their individual schools in Reading, Math, Science, or Social Studies as the district supports looking within buildings to develop talent. Some of the students in the talent development group are recognized for their creativity and leadership abilities and teachers are working to nurture those talents.

During my five years in central administration, I have continually thought about culturally linguistically diverse students sitting in the classroom without recognition of their gifts and without changes in programming for them. Therefore, I work closely with the teachers and expect that they inform the educators within their buildings about characteristics of culturally and linguistically diverse students. I have embedded gifted culturally diverse learners' characteristics into the gifted department teacher trainings as well advocated that the characteristics are included in observations scales. I wrestle with the reality that our students are still placed at a disservice with current state identification practices that are achievement focused as well as the social injustice that occurs for these students on a daily basis because of the color of their skin or the language(s) that they speak. With that in mind, I have also worked across departments to ensure that the gifted department is touching teacher trainings as often as possible. Working with departments like the English Language Acquisition department, our Native Students' department, and the Federal Programs department is essential for helping promote understanding and

touch as many teachers throughout the district as possible. I know, however, that by only focusing on teachers we are still missing some of the key decision makers in the district: principals.

### **Situational Context**

When examining this persistent problem of practice on a local and district level, the researcher still sees schools within districts which are struggling to provide equitable opportunities to access gifted education. In one of the largest school districts in Colorado, gifted students from diverse backgrounds have been identified as gifted through multiple pathways set forth by the state for identification (Denver Public Schools, 2016). The various multiple pathways, while they do include alternative assessment opportunities, are still primarily grounded in nationally normed achievement and/or ability assessments that diverse students continue to score lower in (Denver Public Schools, 2016; CDE, 2016; Borland, 2014).

The overall district's population of identified gifted learners who receive programming is approximately 12% (Denver Public Schools, 2016). In 2015, the school leaders in this study reached out to the Gifted and Talented department to form a partnership. The school has a diverse population that includes 93.6% of its students participating in the Free or Reduced Lunch program (CDE, 2016). In addition to this, 91.9% of all students are classified as Minority students and 21.3% are classified as English Language Acquisition students whose primary language is something other than English (CDE, 2016). As of 2016, the school has four formally gifted identified students (Denver Public Schools, 2016). With a population of 357 students, the identified gifted population is 1.1%. This percentage does not reflect the national average and expectation

for identified gifted learners, nor does it match the school district's expectations of 5%-10% (Denver Public Schools, 2016).

In reviewing the percentage of students identified who are gifted and culturally linguistically diverse, two things were apparent: the lack of teacher's voice explaining what he or she understands about gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and the lack of culturally responsive pedagogical professional learning opportunities. In working with the gifted and talented department for six years, there is not a time where the district has solicited the general education or gifted education teachers' understandings of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners in Denver Public Schools. Furthermore, in reviewing professional development offerings, the opportunity to learn about culturally responsive pedagogical practices is not evident (Denver Public Schools, 2016). If the school and the district aim to recruit and retain gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, then these two observations from the researcher should be reviewed (Ford and Grantham, 2008).

### **Community Partner**

The community partner for this project is the principal at the elementary school in the study (See Appendix A for the signed community partner's letter with pseudonyms for the study). The principal offered his school as a learning lab for others and has a strong personal vision that includes the belief in the importance of developing all students (Fullan, 2002). His belief that every student's academic strengths can be developed led to a partnership with the principal and the Gifted and Talented department mentioned in the previous section. At the time of the study, the principal had already started working with his teachers so that they could understand the characteristics of students who were

gifted culturally diverse learners. He began his school year introducing teachers to characteristics of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners through the Kingore Observation Inventory, or KOI (Kingore, 2001).

The community partner also asked the gifted and talented teacher to observe general education teachers in the classroom and provide feedback on rigor and gifted practices. The community partner believed that having an additional layer of support through his gifted teacher would benefit all of his learners at the school (Stephen, 2016).

In his partnership with the district, the principal wanted to focus on best practices in gifted education that will benefit all of his students (Stephen, 2016). Therefore, he has worked with the Gifted and Talented department a framework for talent development that includes teacher professional learning because he sees the same persistent problem of practice. The work in this research study, however, did not interfere with the work of the talent development model. The community partner stated that he understood that educators' attitudes and perceptions also have the opportunity to create barriers and therefore welcomed the study of perceptions and practices. While the community partner and the elementary site will remain anonymous, it is important to note that the district approved the use of the district's name for use in the study.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to explore educator's perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. The research question and sub questions were developed based on the exposed gaps in literature detailed in Chapter Two as well as persistent problem of practice noted by the researcher: Educators struggle to identify gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and do not understand the

nature and needs of those students. Because of this lack of understanding, teachers do not modify their teaching practices to develop talent and nurture promising learners; thus continuing to deny access to appropriate gifted programming.

The central research question for this study was: *What are educators' perceptions of the characteristics, needs, and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?* Sub questions included

1. How do educators describe gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?
2. How do educators describe their understanding of culturally responsive teaching as it relates to diverse gifted learners?
3. What are school-based practices for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners that support or hinder learning?

Through the research and work with the community partner, the researcher sought to discover teacher perceptions and their related practices so that the district could develop a strategy to address the identified persistent problem of practice.

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology for this study was a case study approach. Case study "...investigates real world phenomena (the case) in its real world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomena and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2009) Case studies may study as little as one case (single case study) or more than one case (multi case study). As a research method, case study has been used to contribute to public knowledge of individual, group, social, and political phenomena. In this case, the phenomenon was educators' perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and how the whole school represents those perceptions and

practices.

This particular exploratory study was considered a single embedded descriptive case study because there was one particular concern selected, and multiple people were used to illustrate the issue (Creswell, 2013). In this case, the unit of analysis was the school. Exploratory case study was the selected framework for understanding educators' perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse students so as to have a starting point for future professional development and research (Yin, 1984; Zainal, 2007; Yin, 2009).

Essential to a quality case study is the in-depth understanding of the case (Zainal, 2007; Creswell, 2013). In order to do this, the researcher collected many forms of qualitative information including interviews with questions related to the literature review, observations incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies, and visual materials of the school environment including student work (Gay, 2010; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Creswell, 2013). In order to truly tell the story of the case, the researcher was unable to rely on one resource alone (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). The specific components of the methodology of this case study are detailed in Chapter Three.

## **Conclusion**

National research, personal experience, and local statistics reinforce the notion that teachers lack understanding of the nature and needs of culturally and linguistically diverse gifted students and therefore do not modify their teaching practices to develop talent and nurture promising learners; thus continuing to deny access to appropriate gifted programming. Having a community partner who is invested in the development of all of

his students and his teachers is crucial in moving the work forward. The following chapters will dive more deeply into this persistent problem of practice and will show the researcher's attempt to understand those barriers, one educator, and one school at a time.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the intersection of gifted, culturally linguistically diverse students, teacher perceptions, and culturally responsive pedagogy. While there is a plethora of information on gifted education, a growing body of work regarding culturally linguistically diverse students as well as more research being done regarding culturally responsive pedagogy, this literature review is not meant to summarize every piece of literature pertaining to these different topics. Instead, it focuses on gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and their educational needs. Additionally, the literature review will explore Critical Race Theory, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, and Constructivism as central tenets in educating gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. For without understanding these theories, educators cannot adequately teach the students they serve daily, nor can they grow in their practice (Ladson-Billings 1995; Taylor et al., 2016; Ford and Grantham, 2008).

Throughout the literature review, generalizations will be made about gifted learners, gifted students from culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds, teacher perceptions and their understandings of gifted diverse learners, as well as the impact of culturally responsive teaching practices on these learners. These generalizations are not meant to perpetuate stereotypes, but to help create understanding of the unique challenges these learners and their teachers face. These generalizations will help form a framework



for understanding the body of evidence that supports the need for further research by identifying gaps in the literature.

### **Definitions**

Terms used throughout this work may have many varied meanings. For the purpose of this body of work terms will have the agreed upon definitions

- *African American* and *Black* will be used interchangeably and will identify an ethnic group of Americans whose ancestry originates from the Black populations of Africa whose life experiences and language uses are grounded in their culture (Nieto, 2004).
- *Colorblind/Colorblindness* will be used to describe the belief that people should “ignore ethnic group membership in judgments of individuals” (Ryan, et al. 2007).
- *Culturally, linguistically diverse learners* are those “students who may be distinguished [from the mainstream culture] by ethnicity, social class, and/ or language” (Perez, 1998, p. 6).
- *Culture* is defined as “the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldviews, created, shared and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors [such as] common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion” (Nieto, 1999, p. 48).
- *Culturally responsive teaching* is defined as “using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse

students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2000, p. 29).

- The term *Hispanic* will be used to define “a person of Latin American or Iberian ancestry, fluent in Spanish. It is primarily used along the Eastern seaboard, and favored by those of Caribbean and South American ancestry or origin. English or Spanish can be their “native” language” (Hispanic Economics, n.d.).
- *Microaggression(s)* refers to the daily “verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue, et al. 2007).
- *Microassault(s)* and *Microinsult(s)* refer to a form of microaggression involving purposeful discriminatory actions (Sue, et. al, 2008).
- *Multicultural education* is any form of education that infuses histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives from people of different cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2000).
- *Poverty* refers to the condition of living below the poverty line as determined by the federal government (Bureau, n.d.).
- *Professional Learning Communities* are a group of educators who meet regularly to share expertise and works so as to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students (Stoll, 2010).
- *Programming* specifically refers to a continuum of services that “address gifted and talented students’ needs” (NAGC, n.d.)

- *Socio-economic status* refers to a family's class as it relates to income, education, and occupation (American Psychological Association, n.d.).
- *Talent development* is the term used to describe the approach of teaching to students strengths and is the definition being used by research site (Anonymous, 2016).
- *Underrepresentation* refers to the discrepancy between national demographics and their representation/participation in gifted programs (Ford, 2012).
- The term *White* will be used when referencing Caucasians whose history and culture stems from Europe (Bass, 2009).

### **Definitions of Giftedness**

The State of the State report (NAGC, 2015), presented multiple state definitions for giftedness. In researching definitions of giftedness, there are multiple representations of the term based on prominent theorists' work including Leta Stetter Hollingworth (1916) Joe Renzulli and Sally Reis (1978), Howard Gardner (1983), Francoys Gagne (2004), and countless other notable names. For the purposes of this dissertation, the following definitions will be used when discussing gifted children:

The Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT; Gagne, 2004) defines giftedness and talent as

Giftedness designates the possession and use of entrained and spontaneously expressed natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts), in at least one ability domain, to a degree that places an individual among the top 10% of age peers. Talent designates the superior mastery of systematically developed abilities (or skills) and places an individual within the top 10% of age peers who are (or have been) active in that field.

In a similar vein, the National Association of Gifted Children has its own definition that incorporates some of Gagne's tenets, but offers more specificity in defining competencies and domains of giftedness. The National Association for Gifted Children (2015) defines giftedness as

Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports).

In addition to these definitions, the federal government also defines giftedness. In 2002, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was passed, and the Jacob K. Javits Act originally authorized in 1988 dedicated specifically to gifted youth and developing talent was reauthorized and included in NCLB. The grant allowed competitive statewide funding (NAGC, n.d.). In 2002, the federal government modified its definition of giftedness as

...a child, or youth, means students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.

The definitions for giftedness as determined by Gagne, NAGC, and the federal government serve as additional layers to help build context and understanding of the various ways in which giftedness has been and continues to be defined across the country. However, even with the national and historical definitions of giftedness, each state has further defined what giftedness means within their local context (NAGC, n.d.). For example, the Colorado Department of Education (2016) defines giftedness as

[Gifted and talented children] means those persons between the ages of five and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so

exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Children under five who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e. twice-exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic and ethnic, cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these following areas of giftedness:

- General or specific intellectual ability.
- Specific academic aptitude.
- Creative or productive thinking.
- Leadership abilities.
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities.

In a review of definitions, giftedness is present in every culture, socioeconomic group, geographical location, and is not limited to the English language only (NAGC, 2011). Yet, even with definitions that purposely do not exclude students based on race, language, and/or socioeconomic status, students who are not part of the dominant culture are still underrepresented in gifted education programs (Ford, 2012). Jim Delisle (2015) argued that these varying definitions and concepts regarding gifted children may be detrimental to the authority of the field (Delisle, 2015). He stated, “It is hard to serve these students well when we can’t even agree on who they are” (Delisle, p.13). Because of multiple definitions and a lack of culturally and linguistically diverse students, those in the field of gifted education find themselves continually advocating for the need for programming (Delisle, 2015).

### **Framing of Persistent Problem of Practice**

**Rationale for gifted education.** Supporting gifted education and the need to recognize gifted learners as those who need learning experiences that are qualitatively different from their peers have been a source of contention for over a century (NAGC,

2015). Although conceptions of giftedness have changed over time for cultural, political, or research reasons (Purcell, 2006), one theme remains constant: In order to be successful students, gifted and high ability learners require appropriate learning experiences and challenges that meet their cognitive and emotional needs (NAGC, n.d.; CDE, n.d., Delpit, 1995; Delpit, 2006; Webb, 1995; Matthews, 1998; Delisle and Galbraith, 2002; Assouline et al., 2006; Tomlinson, 2005; Winebrenner and Brulles 2008; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Castellano, 2010; Ford, 2011, 2012, 2014; Plucker, et al., 2010; Ford, et al., 2013).

***Academic needs.*** Giftedness is found in children regardless of ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language, and even students with special needs or disabilities (CDE, 2016; Castellano, 2010, Frasier and Passow, 1995; Ford, 2012; Delisle and Galbraith 2002 and 2016). However, a majority of gifted students are not performing at their optimal levels and are limited in opportunities to achieve potential due to educational constructs and social policy (Colangelo and Davis, 2003; Ford, 2012) that focus on reaching proficiency. Finn (2014) stated, “In our effort to leave no child behind, we are failing the high-ability children who are the most likely to become tomorrow’s scientists, inventors, poets, and entrepreneurs and in the process we risk leaving our nation behind”

***Social emotional needs.*** In addition to having academic needs fulfilled, gifted students have social emotional characteristics that are “accompanied by concomitant needs” (Wiley and Hebert, 2016) and should also be addressed. In a research analysis by Cross (2011) as well as Willey and Herbet (2016) the researchers discovered that the culture in

which the gifted child is “immersed” (Cross, 2011, Wiley and Herbert, 2016) impacts their social emotional experiences as they mature into adulthood.

Webb (1994, 2013) noted that gifted children’s social emotional characteristics may lead to difficulty with “... peer relations, excessive self-criticism, perfectionism, avoidance of risk-taking, multipotentiality, the presence of disabilities, difficulties adjusting to the school culture and norms, relating to expectations of others, depression, and problems in peer and family relations” (Webb, 1994/ 2013). According to Webb (2013), those difficulties can lead to disillusionment for the gifted learner. Webb states, “As these individuals examine themselves and their place in the world, they can see how things might be and should be” (Webb, 2013, p. 9).

Research shows that disillusionment crosses cultural lines (Kendrick-Dunn, 2015). Tiombe Bisa Kendrick-Dunn (2015) noted that if gifted students with culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds who lack financial resources are identified and being served in lower quality programming, then they may recognize that and may have negative feelings about themselves and their culture (Kendrick-Dunn, 2015). These negative feelings then may feel as if their education is not as important as the majority culture and lead to disillusionment (Kendrick-Dunn, 2015). That disillusionment, in turn, leads to anxiety, depression, and lack of motivation in gifted culturally diverse learners (Kendrick-Dunn, 2015; Whiting, 2009; Grantham, 2004).

A teacher’s understanding of individual social and emotional needs may also include understanding that gifted students may also experience overexcitabilities that allow them to experience the world in an intense and unique manner (Daniels, et al.,

2008; Mendaglio and Tillier, 2006). “Overexcitabilities describe an intensified manner of experiencing and responding to the stimuli in the psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginal and emotional areas” (Yakmaci-Guzel and Akarsu, 2006).

Overexcitabilities as identified by Kazmir Dabrowski (1973) through his theory of positive disintegration include: intellectual, emotional, imaginal, sensual, and psychomotor. In Yakmaci-Guzel and Akarsu’s 2006 study, Turkish students who were identified as gifted showed greater propensity for having higher levels of intensities than their non-identified peers. While, Kerr, et al. (2016) presents research to show that overexcitabilities are evenly distributed throughout the population, it is helpful for teachers to understand this additional dimension for all of their learners (Kerr, et al., 2016). The relationship, however, between giftedness and Dabrowski’s overexcitabilities is supported by repeated empirical findings (Wiley and Hebert, 2016).

Another social emotional characteristic that research has focused on and teachers should be aware of is asynchronous development (Neihart, et al. 2002). According to NACG (2008), “...to be gifted is to be asynchronous at some level.” Robinson and Moon (2002) reported that “Gifted children seldom grow all of a piece. Most (not all) are somewhat less mature socially than they are mentally...”

In their review of research, Wiley and Herbert noted that asynchrony is not a condition to be treated, but is a part of which a gifted child is developmentally and environmentally (Wiley and Herbert, 2016). Analysis of highly gifted students showed that “...the internal mismatch in gifted students produces difficulties independent of environment.” Research could not be found to discuss asynchronous development in



culturally linguistically diverse learners and if there was a difference seen between different cultural groups.

In reviewing the research regarding affective needs, Maureen Neihart (2006) revealed that there is evidence that failing to address affective needs of gifted children contributes to difficulties in peer-relationships, academic underachievement, and even mal-adjustment. Casper (2014) asserts that gifted learners need highly qualified teachers endorsed in gifted education who understand their individual social and emotional needs and who are flexible in their approach to teaching and learning (Casper, 2014). Without focused attention on this special population of learners, research shows that the possibility of detrimental impact is great. Finn (2014) stated

Continuing on our current path and ignoring this problem would be bad for the economy, for society, and for the hundreds of thousands of gifted children who now lack the opportunities they need to thrive. There is no excuse for neglecting our best and brightest students (p. 51).

**Changing demographics.** The racial, ethnic, and income landscape of the United States is ever evolving. Between 2014 and 2060, the United States' population is projected to grow from 319 million to 417 million (Colby and Ortman, 2015). By 2044, more than half of all Americans will belong to a minority group; and by 2060, 64% of all children under 18 will belong to racial and ethnic minorities (Colby and Ortman, 2015). Hispanic and Asian communities are projected to see the largest amount of population growth, as they are expected to double in size (Bureau, n.d.).

In addition to racial and ethnic demographic changes, the income levels for a majority of Americans are also evolving (Bureau, n.d.). In 2014, 46.7 million people (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor, 2015) reported living below the poverty line. Of that

number, approximately 42% of children under 18 currently live below the poverty line (Bureau, n.d.). In comparison to the number of children living below the poverty line in 2014, the percentage of children living below the poverty line in 2015 increased by 20% (Bureau, n.d.). 65% of students who are English Language Learners (ELL) qualify for free and reduced lunch (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor, 2015).

**Impact of change on education.** The increase in both culturally linguistically diverse students and students of poverty has put stress on a fragile education system, and the system, itself, has been slow to change (Ford, 2012; Burroughs and Plucker, 2014). Nothing shows the fragility of the system better than the excellence gap that continues to grow every year (Plucker, et al. 2015). From 2010-2014, excellence gaps in reading and mathematics across the country increased for culturally linguistically diverse students (Burroughs and Plucker, 2014, p. 260). Additionally, African American, Hispanic, and ELLs "...are severely underrepresented among the top 1%, 5%, and 10% of students at all levels of the educational system from kindergarten through graduate and professional school" (Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012). Conversely, African American, Hispanic, and ELLs make up an overwhelming majority of impoverished communities (Bureau, n.d.; Jensen, 2009). Using data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Plucker (2010) noted that less than two percent of African Americans and Hispanics were classified as advanced in both fourth and eighth grades. In contrast, 7.6% and 9.4% of White students were classified as advanced (Plucker, 2015, p. 244). Similar results were found in Reading (Plucker, 2015, p. 244).

The statistics on gifted and promising learners from culturally linguistically diverse and low SES backgrounds shows that their lack of achievement may cause them to be overlooked for programming (Ford, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012; Plucker and Burroughs, 2014; Plucker, 2015). Furthermore, a comprehensive review of the effects of socio-economic status on student achievement showed, using longitudinal data, that there is an income-based gap that is exceeding the racial gap (Reardon, 2011). Duncan and Murnane (2011) concluded, "...low income students are much less likely to receive enrichment opportunities than those in affluent families...this gap has grown dramatically over the last several decades" (Duncan and Murnane, 2011).

**Underrepresentation.** As national demographics continue to change, so have the demographics in education. Underrepresentation of culturally linguistically and economically diverse students has been well documented in literature (Borland, 2004, Borland 2014; Ford, 1998; Ford, 2012; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012; VanTassel-Baska, 2007). The National Academy of Sciences (Donovan and Cross, 2002) noted that there has been an increase in the number of students identified for gifted programming who are American Indian, Black, and Hispanic. Yet, even with the increase in representation in programming, that Black and Hispanic students are still "...less than half as likely to be in gifted students as White students (Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford, 2012).

In 2004, the National Center for Educational Statistics uncovered racial disparities in gifted enrollment when they showed that 6.7% of students across all racial and ethnic groups were enrolled in gifted programs, however, only 3.5% of African American

students and 4.3% of Hispanic students were enrolled. This is in contrast to the overrepresentation of Caucasian students at 7.9% and Asian students at 11.9% (Borland, 2013). Frasier and Passow (1995) wrote, “the under-inclusion of economically disadvantaged and children of minority cultures in programs for the gifted has been so well document over the years that it hardly needs further recounting...” (Frasier and Passow, 1995, p. 198). Callahan (2005) also reiterated the “...underrepresentation of these groups continues to plague our educational system” (Callahan, 2005).

Multiple theories and reasons for underrepresentation exist including theories of intelligence and identification practices that rely heavily on culturally biased assessments, potential bias for exclusion in selective referrals, and educator attitudes (Borland, 2013; De Wet and Gubbins, 2011; Plucker, 2010; Ford and Grantham, 2008; McBee, 2006; Callahan, 2005 Frasier, Garcia, and Passow, 1995; Peterson and Margolin, 1997; Harris, Plucker, Rapp and Martinez, 2009).

Identification. In 2010, McBee found that being African American or Hispanic decreased the probability of being identified as gifted once the student was referred. The findings suggested that although the students were being referred at equal rates to their majority peers, and they were not being identified based on the identification measurements/qualifications (Worrell, 2014).

Lower rates of qualification may be attributed to the types of measures that are being used to identify students (Plucker, 2010; Borland, 2013; Ford, 1995; Ford, 2012). Over 20 years ago, 90% of states used IQ assessments as the sole means for entry into a gifted program (Ford, 1995). Historically, gifted programs have relied specifically on IQ

assessments and other standardized “clean” quantitative data points to identify students (Brown et al., 2005). IQ assessments and other standardized tests have been shown to have cultural bias, and yet gifted programs still continue to use them (Borland, 2013).

These traditional identification assessments rely heavily on a strong understanding of the English language (Menken, 2008; Solano-Flores, 2008; Plucker and Callahan, 2008). Students from culturally diverse backgrounds, linguistically diverse backgrounds, and/or poverty, may not have the prerequisite language skills necessary to navigate such assessments and may have as much as a 30 million word gap before they enter school (Hart and Risley, 1995). In response to language deficits, and the need for culturally sensitive instruments, some attention has turned to using nonverbal measures of general intellectual ability (Naglieri, 2014; Lohman, et al. 2008), using multidimensional assessments that have multiple criteria including nontraditional means of assessment like portfolios, observations, and curriculum-based performance (Borland and Wright, 1994, Borland et al., 2000; Borland, 2004; Borland, 2013; Johnsen, 2011; Van Tassel-Baska, et al., 2003). When considering identification for underrepresented populations, Robinson et al. (2007) wrote

Multiple identification criteria based on multiple sources may help solve this problem [underrepresentation of minority students in gifted programs] if programs are appropriately diversified and matched to criteria chosen, if they are used to include rather than exclude, and if their design and implantation is undertaken in partnership with parents and teachers representative of the diversity in the community served. (p. 235)

**Teacher perception and attitudes.** In addition to identification practices, teachers perceptions of high-ability or gifted learners impacts gifted education because “Teachers have implicit theories and beliefs about intelligence, knowing, and learning”

(De Wet, 2011). It is these beliefs that inform their daily instructional practice and instructional moves. In a study by Cramond and Martin (1987) teachers were asked to rate their attitudes about athletic, brilliant, studious, and nonathletic students. The study found that teachers had the most favorable perceptions of athletic students (Cramond and Martin, 1987). The methodology in the study was criticized because of its use of widely different descriptors; however, the study did cause other researchers to investigate teacher perception phenomena (Siegle, et al., 2010; Geake and Gross, 2008; McCoach and Siegle, 2007; Olszewski-Kubilius and Lee, 2004; Tomlinson, et al. 1994).

The literature on educator attitudes, bias, and beliefs include teacher demographics and competencies that require the ability to identify gifted students is quite nuanced (Siegle, et al., 2010; Geake and Gross, 2008; Tomlinson, 1994; McBee, 2010; McCoach and Siegle, 2007; Vidergor, 2012; Copenhaver and McIntyre, 1992 ; Baudson, and Preckel, 2013) Results vary greatly based on methodology and societal beliefs about giftedness at the time of the studies (McBee, 2010; McCoach and Siegle, 2007; Vidergor, 2012; Copenhaver and McIntyer, 1992; Baudson and Preckel, 2013). In general, teachers who have more experience with gifted children report a relatively positive view of gifted and high-ability students (McBee, 2010; McCoach and Siegle, 2007; Vidergor, 2012; Copenhaver and McIntyer 1992; Baudson and Preckel, 2013).

It is important to note that these studies were done on gifted children in general and were not specific to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Siegle, 2010; Geake and Gross, 2008; Tomlinson, 1994; McBee, 2010; McCoach and Siegle, 2007; Copenhaver and McIntyre, 1992; Baudson, and Preckel, 2013). Few studies or literature

reviews have focused on teacher referral and identification of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Borland, 2013, Worrell, 2008, Plucker and Callahan, 2008). Ford (2008) noted that there is, however, "...a body of scholarship has shown that some teachers have negative stereotypes and inaccurate perceptions about the abilities of culturally linguistically diverse students- and their families." African American teachers have higher expectations of African American students than White teachers (Ford, 2008). White teachers, in turn, have a higher propensity for referring white children to gifted programs (Ford, 2008).

In literature by Guskey in 1998 and Tucker, et al. in 2005, research was conducted and showed that new teachers' negative assumptions about diverse students as well as their lack of confidence in their ability to teach different ethnic groups resulted in lower expectations (Gutsky, 1998; Tucker, et al., 2005). Elhoweris, Mutua, Alshreikh, and Holloway (2005) added to that work in their study of teachers' decision making using vignettes of gifted children. The profiles of the gifted children were the same in the study, but the researchers changed the ethnicity of the children (Elhoweris, et al. 2005). When the experimental vignettes were associated with culturally linguistically diverse learners, the amount of teacher referrals of the children reduced significantly (Elhoweris, et al. 2005). When the participants in the study thought the children in the vignettes were White, the amount of referrals for gifted screening increased (Elhoweris, et al. 2005).

Teachers have assumptions about giftedness that impact the identification of gifted students, and those assumptions/beliefs influence their decisions about nominating students (Callahan, 2005; Elhoweris, 2005; Bass, 2009). Frasier, et al (1995) found ten

barriers to identification of low SES students and students with limited English proficiency. The following six are attributed to teacher belief/perception

- Teachers' inability to recognize indicators of potential
- Use of narrow screening/selection process
- Differences in language experiences
- Teachers' prejudicial attitudes and beliefs that intellectual giftedness is not valued by certain groups
- Teachers' fears about program quality diminishing
- Beliefs that limited number of gifted children come from low SES and limited English proficiency backgrounds

In over 20 years, however, there seems to be some hope that perceptions are changing. In a national study by De Wet and Gubbins (2009), teachers reported more favorable views of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students. The study showed that a majority of teachers had favorable perceptions of culturally linguistically diverse students and thought that gifted culturally linguistically diverse students were a value-add to gifted programming (De Wet and Gubbins, 2011). Teachers who had some background information and training about the manifestations of giftedness in culturally linguistically diverse students reported a more favorable perception over all (De Wet and Gubbins, 2011).

In a review of the literature, results from studies similar to De Wet and Gubbins are scarce. More studies show that there are negative perceptions about gifted culturally linguistically diverse students that are creating barriers to identification and programming (Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford, 2012; Ford and Whiting, 2007; McBee, 2010; Harris et al., 2009; Plata, Masten, and Trusty, 1995). There is a gap in the literature regarding teachers' perceptions of the basic characteristics and needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. In a review of the literature, teachers were not asked to



describe their understanding of the nature and needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Instead, the research conducted explored whether or not teachers perceived students negatively, but they did not use qualitative measures to determine if the teachers could articulate their knowledge. Additionally, there is a gap in the literature as to whether teacher training specifically about culturally linguistically diverse gifted students has occurred and if it has improved teacher perceptions and identification rates of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature around teacher perceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and their representation in programming.

**Access to programming.** Identification practices and teacher perceptions can be barriers to programming for gifted students (Ford, 2013; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Borland, 2013; Worrell, 2008). Even the definitions that the field uses may unwittingly stop access to programming (Ford, 2013). Neither Gagne's (2004) definition of giftedness, the federal government's definition (2002), nor NAGC's (2015) definition of giftedness include the word potential (talent development). However, an emphasis on potential is a future-oriented definition that denotes students' ability to become acclaimed is essential for creating opportunities for access (Ford, 2010). Most definitions of giftedness focus on intelligence and achievement; however, historically underrepresented populations are not necessarily high-achievers culturally linguistically diverse students are not showing the same levels of achievement as their White counterparts (Plucker and Burroughs, 2013; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012; Ford, 2013). By excluding potential from the definition, ideas about inclusiveness dissipate as well (Ford, 2013).

**Identification.** Researchers, theorists, and educators alike have attempted to address underrepresentation for decades. Borland, Schnur, and Wright (2000) state:

In order to address the problem of disproportionate educational failure among economically disadvantaged students more effectively, we need to identify the sociological and psychological processes that shape the attitudes and behaviors underlying educational disadvantage and to understand how these develop and operate within specific sociocultural contexts. (p. 14)

Identification practices, as mentioned earlier in this literature review, must be dynamic and have multiple criteria (Johnsen, 2013). Research also suggests that identification practices should be reviewed if they do not include a) selection criteria that do not evaluate ability or potential in light of previous opportunities to learn (Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2007; Lohman, 2013); b) reliant on teachers with little or no training on multicultural competencies (Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2007; Ford, 2007, Stambaugh and Ford, 2013); c) only have one chance (“shot”) to enter into gifted programming (Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2007, Van Tassel-Baska, 2007).

**Dynamic thinking.** In addition to reviewing identification practices, Ford and Grantham (2003) advocate for a move from deficit thinking to dynamic thinking in education. Deficit thinking occurs when educators hold negative, stereotypic, or counterproductive views about culturally linguistically diverse students (Garcia and Guerra, 2004; Ford and Grantham, 2003). Deficit thinking exists when teachers lower their expectations of culturally linguistically diverse students because of stereotypical views (Ford, 2010, Garcia and Guerra, 2004; Ford and Grantham, 2003; Valencia, 2002). When deficit ideologies exist, access to gifted education becomes harder to obtain (Ford and Grantham, 2003 p. 218). Deficit thinking about culturally linguistically diverse

students can be linked back to segregation of schools with *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) and has been reinforced throughout the history of American education. This issue of access based on deficit thinking is viewed by some educators as an additional way for culturally linguistically diverse students to be segregated at school (Ford and Grantham, 2003; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Borland, 2013).

### **Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was introduced to education over 40 years ago (Gay, 1975; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004). CRT begins with the idea that “racism is normal, not aberrant in American society” (Ladson-Billings, 2016) and is found in every aspect of society. Thus, a key component to CRT is unmasking racism in its various permutations (Ladson-Billings, 2016). Solorzano and Yosso (2000) offered up the following understanding of CRT

CRT in education is defined as a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify analyze, and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the marginal position and subordination of African American and Latino students. CRT asks such questions as: What role do schools, school processes, and school structures play in the maintenance of racial, ethnic, and gender subordination?” (p.42)

In literature, CRT explains the “...sustained inequity that people of color experience” (Ladson-Billings, 2016). It aligns closely with education as more and more students of diversity come to the classroom and the majority of teachers are still White (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Gay, 2010; Bureau, n.d.).

In reviewing the scholarship regarding CRT and gifted education, there is a gap in which studies critically examine gifted education. In a critical inquiry study about barriers to advanced programming for African American high school students (Evans,

2015), the researcher used student voice to describe their perceptions regarding programming. The researcher used critical race theory through which to analyze the statements of the students. In doing so, Evans found students identified "...teacher bias, deficit thinking, social pressures from peers and media, culturally incongruent pedagogy, and the overreliance on testing," (Evans, 2015) as reasons for barriers to advanced programming. Evans' study also showed that students internalized their own achievement based on teachers' expectations of them and that those internalized expectations also served as barriers (Ford, Harris, Tyson, and Trotman, 2002). Advanced placement classes, while not solely for gifted learners, are classrooms for advanced content that appeal to gifted learners (NAGC, 2015). However, Evans study showed that the particular students in the inquiry were not participating in those programs because of some of the reasons outline by critical race theorists (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-billings, 2004)

In an article by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), the authors view gifted programming as a re-segregation and tracking of students of color. Specifically, the authors see programming in the form of honors classes, advanced placement and gifted programs as a way to reinforce White society's "absolute right to exclude" Black students from appropriate programming (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997).

Critical race theorists postulate that intelligence testing was a movement that legitimized African American student deficiency (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Tate, 1997). Through a CRT lens, intelligence tests support deficit thinking (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Tate, 1997; Ford and Grantham, 2008). Because

intelligence tests, as well as abilities tests and standardized tests are used to identify learners for gifted programming (CDE, 2015; NAGC, 2015, Borland, 2013, Worrell, 2008; Plucker and Burroughs, 2013, Ford, 2014), CRT theorists may argue that these processes continue to legitimize African American and culturally linguistically diverse learners' deficiencies (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2016; McDermott et al., 2014; Warne, et al., 2014; Ford, et al., 2016; Erwin and Worrell, 2012).

There is a gap in the literature showing the use of CRT to examine and study problems of practice in gifted education. CRT is used to describe certain problems in gifted education, as well as create theories, but it is not used to review data to look for evidence of CRT in gifted programming (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford, et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the examination CRT and the result of culturally responsive teaching practices are synonymous with one another and the fields overlap (Ladson-Billings, 2016, Aronson, 2008; Gay, 2010; Gay 2000). There is a gap, however, in the literature where a CRT framework is used to explicitly detail how culturally responsive pedagogy, multicultural education, and gifted education intersect and overlap.

### **Culturally Competent Teachers**

A review of the literature on gifted education offers studies and descriptions of the characteristics and competencies needed to teach gifted students (Hansen and Feldhusen, 1994; Karnes, Stephen, and Wharton, 2000; NAGC, n.d.); however, there is little written about the characteristics and competencies needed to work with gifted

culturally linguistically diverse students (Ford and Trotman, 2001 as cited by Bass, 2009 p. 21).

In culturally responsive literature, characteristics and competencies for effective teachers shows that they feel responsible for student success and failure, seek opportunities to increase their own cultural awareness, and they embed multicultural education into traditional curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Further studies by Sue, Arredondo and McDavis (1992), Cushner (2001) and Pang (2001) revealed that culturally competent teachers show a) self-awareness and understanding; b) cultural awareness and understanding; c) social responsiveness and responsibility; d) use culturally sensitive techniques.

Limited research can be found on culturally competent teachers of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students. Ford and Trotman (2001) blended multicultural competencies with gifted competencies to develop the following competencies about culturally competent gifted teachers have

- knowledge of the nature and needs of students who are gifted and diverse.
- the ability to develop methods and material for use with students who are gifted and diverse.
- skills in addressing individual and cultural differences.
- skills in teaching higher level thinking skills and questioning techniques using multicultural resources and materials.
- ability to recognize the strengths of students who are gifted and diverse.
- skills in developing students' sense of self as a gifted individual.

- skills in counseling students who are gifted and diverse.
- skills in creating an environment in which diverse gifted students feel challenge and safe to explore and express their uniqueness.

As demographics continue to change, literature suggests teachers of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students become culturally competent (Ford, 2013, Borland, 2013). Literature by Ford (2013), Stambaugh and Ford (2013), Ford and Grantham (2003), advocate for professional development focused on not only on identification and needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students, but on multicultural competencies that will recruit and retain diverse learners. More research regarding these competencies specific to gifted culturally linguistically diverse students is needed to understand the impact on the representation of diverse learners in gifted education.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Although the literature and research regarding the impact of culturally responsive teaching has depth and breadth (Daniel, 2016; Sujin and Slapac, 2015; Lopez, 2016; Gay, 2010; Vavrus, 2008; Ware, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Gay, 2002; Villegas and Lucas, 2002; Montgomery, 2001; Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995; Villegas, 1991) the literature specific to the intersection culturally responsive pedagogy in gifted education is still sparse (Castellano, 2016; Ford, 2010; Ford and Trotman, 2001). Culturally responsive classrooms specifically acknowledge diverse learners and the need for them to find relevant and authentic connections among themselves, with content, and with the tasks that they are being asked to perform (Montgomery, 2001).

A growing body of work focused on culturally responsive teaching lays out specific steps teachers can take to create culturally responsive classrooms (Castellano, 2016; Ford, 2010; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Gay, 2002; Ford and Trotman). Steps include using a range of culturally sensitive methods and materials such as interdisciplinary units and literature that has diverse students as the main characters, called mirror books (Gay, 2010; Sleeter, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Gay, 2002) It also includes ensuring that authentic interactions among students takes place with a respect for all cultures in the classroom (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Delpit,2006) Lastly, a culturally responsive classroom has authentic regalia that represent the cultures present in the classroom (Gay, 1975; Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Gay, 2010, stated

Culturally responsive teachers have unequivocal faith in the human dignity and intellectual capabilities of their students. They view learning as having intellectual, academic, personal, social, ethical, and political dimensions, all of which are developed in concert with one another. p. 46

**Culturally responsive gifted classrooms.** Research in gifted education shows a gap in relation to culturally responsive teaching practices and their practice diverse gifted classrooms (Castellano, 2016; Ford, 2012; Ford, 2010; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford and Trotman, 2001). Torrance and Safer's (1990) work in creativity found patterns in characteristics of the needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and students from poverty. Their studies showed that students from poverty and diverse cultures prefer to learn in exploratory models (Torrance and Safer, 1990). Gifted African American students, specifically, prefer to work concretely, are creative storytellers, and show leadership skills in manners that question authority (Ford, 2010). Torrance and



Safer's (1990) study, however, did not show the application of their findings in a classroom.

Ford's (1999 and 2010) literature regarding culturally responsive learning environments includes the review of multicultural curricular modifications as outlined by Banks (1999). Ford reviewed Banks' (1999) four approaches to integrating multicultural content: contributions, additive, transformation, and social action. She then described each level, gave examples in the classroom, offered strengths of the approach as well as challenges (Ford, 2010, p. 28). She offered explanations, but there were no research studies to support her assertions regarding the integration of Banks' work (Ford, 1999; Ford 2010). Furthermore, no research studies were observed in which they incorporated Ford's theories.

Next, Ford( 2010) reviewed the work of Boykin's Afrocentric Model (1994). In Boykin's model, nine cultural styles commonly found in African Americans: spirituality, affective, movement, verve, social time perspective, harmony, communalism, oral tradition, and expressive individualism were identified (Boykin, 1994). Ford believes that understanding the identified cultural characteristics will help teachers then modify their process and instructional strategies to meet the needs of gifted African American learners (Ford, 2010, p. 34). Ford goes on to explain the ways in which the cultural characteristics may manifest in the classroom (Ford, 2010). Ford asserts, "Teachers should learn to modify their teaching styles to accommodate different learning styles" (Ford, 2010, p. 32).

Furthermore, in classrooms with gifted first generation Hispanic students, research has shown that those students have a strong desire to learn a second language and culturally sensitive (Stambaugh and Ford, 2013). Often, these students have pride in their native language and their English as well as want to share their culture with others (Brulles, Castellano, and Laing, 2011). Again, research regarding diverse learners details their characteristics, but it does not show what an effective classroom for these learners actually looks like (Stambaugh and Ford, 2013; Brulles, Castellano, and Laing, 2011; Ford, 2010).

**Microaggressions and microassaults.** Students of diversity face microaggressions and microassaults daily (Stambaugh and Ford, 2013). The ongoing exposure to these can lead to negative emotional stress responses such as depression and mental strain (Torres, Driscoll, and Burrow, 2010). Gifted culturally linguistically diverse students face various microaggressions and microassaults based on perceived notions of intelligence or cultural expectations (Ford, 2010; Ford, 2012) Because gifted students feel at a deeper level than others their same age and care about world events and social injustice, a culturally responsive classroom with a culturally competent teacher can help speak to those needs (Clark, 2012). Therefore, an argument can be made that a culturally responsive classroom is an excellent match for diverse gifted students, yet there are no current studies that explore the connection between the two.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

Two theoretical frameworks will be used to frame the research for this study. Aspects of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Constructivism will be used throughout this research.

**Critical race theory.** Critical Race Theory is a framework that emerged from the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). CRT, as described earlier in the chapter, acknowledges that racism is normal and exists as function of White supremacy (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2016) regarding deficit thinking. CRT aligns with the study as it pertains to the underrepresentation of gifted culturally diverse learners in gifted education and deficit thinking.

Ford and Grantham (2003) stated

the under-representation of diverse students in gifted education is primarily a function of educators holding a deficit perspective about diverse students. Deficit thinking exists when educators hold negative, stereotypic and 20 counterproductive views about culturally diverse students and lower their expectations of these students accordingly (p. 217).

Furthermore, viewing the classroom through a CRT lens as it will help expose the attempt at colorblindness in curriculum and instruction (Aronson, 2008; Lucas, 2008; Sleeter, 2008; Taylor, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2004). For example, some research shows a rejection of deficit models and deficit thinking while recognizing effective teachers of African American students (Foster and Newman, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The studies found that effective teachers recognize and acknowledge race (Foster and Newman, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Additionally, a CRT lens is beneficial to the field of gifted education because of

the increase in diverse students, their needs, and their barriers to programming (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, Grantham, and Whiting, 2008; Ford and Grantham, 2003; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Borland, 2013; Worrell, 2008). A CRT framework offers a critical view of gifted education practices that focus on intelligence tests because of the cultural bias found in the tests as well as the institutionalized racism in educational programming (McDermott et al., 2014; Warne, et al., 2014; Ford, 2016; Erwin and Worrell, 2012; Harris and Plucker, 2009). This framework will help to tell the story of the data through a critical eye to begin to understand the barriers that exist for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners within the school.

**Constructivism.** Constructivists believe that true learning occurs when people connect new understandings with previously acquired information, and the teacher is the facilitator of that connection (Henson, 2015). Research regarding constructivism and teaching shows that effective teachers have a depth of understanding different curriculum theories and models, and are therefore “able to choose a combination that works best at any particular time” (Reed, 2010; Powell and Kalena, 2009; Miller and Crabtree, 1999).

Constructivists also believe that the event of learning happens when learners help each other (Henson, 2015). One research study focusing on constructivism and multicultural education found that groups of learners who represent the classroom makeup regarding race, gender, and culture had the opportunity to maximize their learning when in diverse groups (Armstrong, 2015).

Regarding constructivism as a framework for qualitative research, Miller and Crabtree (1999) noted that the constructivist paradigm “...recognizes the importance of

the subjective human creation of meaning, but doesn't reject outright some notion of objectivity" (Miller and Crabtree, 199, p.10). Additionally, constructivism is built upon the idea of a social construction of reality between participants and researchers (Armstrong, 2015; Henson 2015; Reed, 2010; Miller and Crabtree, 1999). An advantage to this approach is found in the collaboration between researcher and participants, and allows participants to tell their stories (Miller and Crabtree, 1999). Through their stories, the participants describe their views, or perceptions, of reality (Lincoln and Guba, et al., 2013). Participants' stated perceptions then enable to researcher to better understand the participants' actions (Lee, 2011). This framework will "expose the linkages between seemingly unrelated social phenomena---in order to begin to think whether this is the world we wanted to create" (Lincoln and Guba, 2004).

### **Gaps in the Literature**

There are gaps in the literature regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse students. There is a gap in the literature exposing the field's inattention to culturally responsive pedagogy and implementation in diverse gifted classrooms (Ford, 2014; Ford, 2016; Ford, 2010; Ford and Grantham, 2008. Stambaugh and Ford, 2014; Ford and Trotman, 2001). Scholarship explores culturally responsive pedagogy robustly in the typical, special education, and second language classrooms, however, it is not explored explicitly with the gifted population (Gay, 2010; Santamaria, 2009; Klingner, et al., 2005; Gay, 2002; Villegas and Lucas, 2002; Ford, 2014; Ford, 2016; Ford, 2010; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995).

Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature regarding educators' perceptions of the characteristics and needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners as well as specific culturally responsive gifted educator practices related to those gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford and Trotman, 2001).

There is gap in the literature studying the suggested multicultural competencies and the implementation of those competencies in the classroom (Ford and Trotman, 2001).

In addition to these gaps, there are gaps in the literature as they address CRT with gifted culturally diverse (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Taylor et al., 2016; Ford and Grantham, 2003). There is not a large body of scholarship that uses critical race theory to examine the inequities in gifted education (Evans, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Tate, 1997) Critical race theory scholarship reviews education as a whole (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Taylor, et al., 2016). However, critical race theory has not been used to place a critical eye upon gifted education historically.

Furthermore, there is not a conceptual model of the intersection of culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies through the lens of critical race theory as they support the gifted culturally diverse learner.

## **Conclusion**

Gifted culturally and linguistically diverse students have been and continue to be underrepresented in gifted programs (Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford, 2013; Borland, 2013; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010). This denial of access to a free and appropriate education is a civil rights issue that must remain a focus for educators until inequity is reversed (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; 2016; Ford, 2010; Ford and Grantham, 2008).

There are multiple reasons identified in the literature as to the causes of underrepresentation, but there is a lack of literature that supports any one particular way to close the excellence gap (Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Plucker and Callahan, 2008).

Furthermore, there is a lack of literature regarding Critical Race Theory and gifted education. The scholarship that exists takes a critical view of gifted education for its use of biased intelligence tests and segregated classrooms based on intelligence tests (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Taylor, Gillborn, and Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2009). Scholarship does not exist, however, to examine the pedagogical practices of a classroom to determine if oppressing factors are in existence and to what degree.

Without taking a critical approach to understanding the institutionalized racism that exists within programming, the field may not see areas for growth and how it may block access to programming (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Pollock, 2009; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2016).

A review of the literature also shows that there is little scholarship to support the efficacy of the suggested multicultural gifted competencies. While the competencies are based on other theories, there is not breadth of empirical evidence to support the competencies (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford et.al, 2002; Ford, 2016; Boykin, 1994; Moore, 2005; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982) and therefore will be explored in the study.

When reviewing the literature there is not scholarship to demonstrate the intersection of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010, Gay, 2000; Pollock, 2009;

Ladson-Billings, 2014), Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Taylor, Gillborn, and Ladson-Billings, 2016; Litowitz, 1996; Litowitz, 2016), constructivism (Wiggins, 2004; Chmiel, 2014) and multicultural gifted cultural competencies (Ford and Trotman, 2001) as they express themselves in the classroom. This study will seek to explore the connections of the various frameworks to add to the scholarship where there are gaps in the literature.



## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### Introduction

The previous chapter provided theoretical frameworks and research-based support regarding the need for this study and the intersection of multicultural pedagogy, giftedness, and perceptions of culturally linguistically diverse learners. This chapter will provide a detailed explanation of the research methodology used in this qualitative case study. This chapter will detail the purpose of the research. It will describe the research context including setting and participants, the author's role as researcher, intervention and or innovation, instruments used and data collected, as well as the strategies for data analysis and threats to validity.

### **Purpose of study**

The purpose of this case study is to explore educators' perceptions of characteristics, needs, and practices relating to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners in an urban elementary school in Colorado. The central research question as identified through the literature is the following: *What are educators' perceptions of the characteristics, needs, and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?*

### Sub-questions

1. How do educators describe gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?
2. How do educators describe their understanding of culturally responsive teaching as it relates to diverse gifted learners?

3. What are school-based practices for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners that support or hinder learning?

### **Rationale for case study**

Baxter and Jack (2008) noted that case study design should be considered when one or more of the following occurs:

- 1) The focus of the study is to answer “ what”, “how”, and “why” questions
- 2) The researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of the participants
- 3) The researcher wants to cover conventional conditions that he/she believes are relevant to the phenomenon under study
- 4) The boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context

The researcher has chosen to use case study for its ability to describe in depth and detail a phenomena (Yin, 2012). Specifically, the researcher is using exploratory case study to understand what educators already perceive about the nature and needs as well as the practices they use regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse students so as to “...develop propositions for future inquiry” (Yin, 2012, p. 10).

Current scholarship does not address the perceptions teachers have about the nature and needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students through exploratory case study. Studies that do exist are either quantitative or mixed methods with descriptive analysis and do not always address gifted culturally linguistically diverse students (Copenhaver and Mc Intyre, 1992; Ford et al., 2001; Jarvis, 2009; Ford, 2015; McBee, 2016). The studies that address teacher perception have research-created stems and perceptions that educators select (Copenhaver and Mc Intyre, 1992; McBee, 2016). Nor are there studies that use educators’ articulation of their perceptions,

nor do the studies seek to include the school itself as the case (Copenhaver and Mc Intyre, 1992; Ford et al., 2001; Jarvis, 2009; Ford, 2015; McBee, 2016). Studies explore gifted students, culturally linguistically diverse students, or culturally responsive classrooms, but they do not explore everything together (Copenhaver and Mc Intyre, 1992; Ford et al., 2001; Briggs et al., 2008; Jarvis, 2009; Gay, 2010; Ford, 2015; McBee, 2016).

### **Study setting and participants**

Research for this bounded (Creswell, 2013) case study occurred in winter of 2017 at one elementary school in Denver Public Schools, the largest school district in Colorado (CDE, 2016). The 17 participants of this study comprised of teachers and administrators who work in the school and are all considered to be educators. These educators are what Creswell (2007) describes as a purposeful sample because both the site and the participants can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem.

The research site was chosen because it seemed to highlight the persistent problem of practice identified by the researcher as previously stated in Chapter One and Chapter Two. The participants were educators in a school that was chosen specifically because of the low numbers of identified students in the school (Denver Public Schools, 2016) in contrast to the large numbers of diverse learners comprising its population. The age, educational background, experience with teaching, and gender of the teachers participating in the study varied. Experiences working with gifted individuals also varied. Table 1 illustrates the demographics of the participants in comparison to the students with whom they work.

**Table 1.**

Illustration of disparity between student and educator demographics

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
American Indian	2.2%	0%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	1.4%	0%
African American or Black	25.7%	5%
Hispanic or Latino	59.9%	20%
White	8.1%	75%
Multiple Races	2.5%	0%
English Language Acquisition Eligible	21%	N/A
Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible	93.6%	N/A

Research has shown that culturally diverse learners are more academically successful when they have teachers who represent them culturally (Delpit, 1995; De Wet and Gubbins, 2011; Bryan and Ford, 2014; Iyer and Reese, 2013). However, there is research to support academic success of culturally linguistically diverse learners if their teachers seek to understand their culture (Cole, 2008; Gay, 2010; Sloan 2008; Bass, 2009). Regardless of ethnicity, in Critical Race Theory (CRT), teachers who acknowledge race in the classroom and as it exists throughout the societal structures have the possibility of impacting students positively (Taylor et al., 2016).

In case studies, researchers may investigate the case with as little as one participant or one case (Yin, 2008). This study focused on a single case with an embedded unit of analysis whereas the unit of analysis is the school. The researcher study required educator participation so that the researcher could explore stated perceptions and actual practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Because the unit of analysis was the school, the

researcher requested participation of each grade level teacher, K-5, the Intervention and Electives' teachers, as well as the administrators in the building so that there was a comprehensive understanding of the case (Yin, 2013). This approach allowed for multiple perspectives to help the researcher understand the phenomena occurring within the building (Creswell, 2014). While Wolcott (2008) would advocate for the study of one individual as the case, that goes against the nature and purpose of this particular study. As Bromley (1986) noted, "A case is not only about a person, but also about that kind of person." Best, et al. (1998) stated, "...the selection of the subject of the case study needs to be done carefully to assure that he or she is typical of those to whom we wish to generalize."

With that in mind, the sampling for this work will be purposeful. It will employ two types of sampling strategy: maximum variation and convenience. Creswell described the purpose of maximum variation sampling is to "document diverse variation of individuals or sites based on specific characteristics," (p. 158). This type of sampling increases the likelihood of different perspectives. While all participants were teachers and administrators, the participants in the sample differed in grade level, job role, years of experience, ethnicity, and gender.

Convenience sampling was another sampling method that was utilized. Convenience sampling can be voluntary and captive (Yin, 2011). In this study, the convenience sample was from the school that the Gifted and Talented department staff has worked with to provide professional development around differentiation. Participants were invited to participate in the study during a faculty meeting lead by their principal. The researcher briefly introduced the study to gain interest to obtain informed consent. Upon announcing the study, no educator

volunteered. Next, the researcher posted a letter (found in Appendix B) in the faculty lounge and sent an email with the same content as the posted letter. The email was sent first to everyone in the school via mass email. Five educators responded to the mass email from the researcher. Upon receiving a small initial response, the researcher worked the community partner to determine another approach. The community partner suggested that the researcher send personalized emails (Dillman et al., 2014) to each of the grade level teams asking for participation. Upon the second email to the teachers, the researcher had 17 participants and representation from every grade level as well as all three administrators, Special Education, Intervention teachers, Electives teachers, and the Gifted and Talented teacher. The letter (and or email) introducing the study can be found in Appendix B.

Informed consent was obtained from study participants during their interview and prior to their observation. Only participants agreed and signed the informed consent were involved in the research study (Creswell, 2014). The informed consent sample is included in Appendix C. The researcher reviewed the informed consent in person participants and answered any questions that they had about the research process. Participants were informed of the following

- The information collected will be used as a part of a research project that seeks to understand educators' perceptions of the nature, needs, and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners
- Study participants will agree to participate in one 30 minute interview
- Participants will agree to one 60 minute classroom observation

- Participation in the research study is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. Information from those who withdraw from the study will not be included in the data analysis or final discussion
- Participant names will be changed in the data collection and research write up to obscure participant identity. Due to small sample size, complete privacy cannot be guaranteed, however, measures for maintaining confidentiality will be in place
- The researcher will take photographs of the school environment, including the classroom, student work/product, hallways, cafeteria, and administrators' offices. No students or staff will be photographed
- Interviews will take place individually and will focus on participant's perspectives, perceptions, and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Appendix D contains interview questions.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In qualitative research, the researcher is the “instrument” (Patton, 2011). In the case study methodology, the researcher is a collector of information, an observer, and engages in deep analysis of information. Therefore, the researcher will participate as a research practitioner by conducting interviews, observing classrooms, and collecting photographs as visual artifacts (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2008).

It should be noted that the researcher's role in the district may skew some of the results. The researcher is the Gifted and Talented Program Manager and the participants' knowledge of that role may cause them to answer questions differently (Yin, 2010). In qualitative research, there are arguments both for and against familiarity of the researcher with research environment

(Unluer 2012; Creswell, 2014). According to Unluer, 2012, the researcher's role in the district allowed for her to be considered an "insider-researcher" (Unluer, 2012). The researcher is considered an insider researcher because she had "... a greater understanding of the culture being studied, did not alter the flow of social interaction unnaturally, and had an established intimacy which may have allowed for telling of the truth" (Bonner and Tollhurst, 2002).

Although there are advantages to being an insider-researcher, there are disadvantages. For example, the researcher could lose objectivity and let bias inform decisions with the Halo Effect (Unluer, 2012). Additionally, some teachers may feel obligated to participate because of the principal's direction for the school (Creswell, 2013). Educators may also provide an inaccurate initial perception of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners because they want to represent themselves as thinking inclusively and positively about all learners in their school (Creswell, 2013). There is the possibility that the researcher's own bias, whether positive or negative, about gifted culturally diverse students may impact judgement of the data through the Halo Effect (Yin, 2010; Creswell, 2013).

### **Intervention or Innovation**

In this case study, the intervention is not a prescribed action. Instead, it is the interaction with the researcher that allows for impact to take place. Kvale (1996) noted that the process of being interviewed "...may produce new insights and awareness, and the subject...may change his or her descriptions or meaning (p.31). The purpose of this study is not to measure an intervention, however, it is to explore the perceptions of educators, and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse students so as to understand what the schools' and or educators' needs may be for future study (Yin, 2009; Zanail, 2007).



## Instrument and Data Collection Procedures

Case study data collection involves a wide array of procedures. In Yin’s (2009) extensive work on case study he suggests six forms of data collection that are suitable and appropriate for case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. In this exploratory case study, the unit of analysis is the entire school. Therefore, the researcher has chosen specific data to collect so that it aligns with the purpose of understanding perceptions and practices as they relate to gifted culturally linguistically diverse students. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the case, the researcher used semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and audio visual materials to create artifacts for future analysis. Table 2 gives an overview of the data collected in this study.

**Table 2.**

Examples of various data collected			
Data type	Observation	Interview	Audio-Visual
Structure	Nonparticipant	Semi-structured	N/A
Timeframe	60 minutes per classroom	30 minutes per participant	Ongoing
Types of information collected	Extensive field notes that focus on culturally responsive pedagogy tenets and multicultural gifted teacher competencies	Educators’ perceptions, understandings, opinions, and real-life context through their experiences.	Photographs of regalia, classroom environment, school environment student produced work

**Interviews.** Interviews are additional tools that will be used to understand the cases being studied because they can obtain empirical knowledge about teacher perceptions and

practices. Kvale (2007) asserts that “The qualitative interview attempts to obtain descriptions that are comprehensive and prepositionless as possible...” The use of a qualitative interview within exploratory case study allows for the attempt to understand the world from the subject’s point of view, uncover meaning of experiences, and understand the participants lived world (Kvale, 1996, p.1). Both principals and teachers were interviewed so that their own experiences and points of view were shared. With these understandings in mind, interviews were utilized in this exploratory study.

As seen in Table 3, the researcher formulated eight interview questions that related back to the central research questions, sub-questions, and the literature. Interview questions were based on findings in the literature regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and the gaps that exist.

**Table 3.**

Interview Questions

Question	Reference to Literature
Describe your understanding of gifted learners	NAGC, 2015; Gagne, 2004; CDE, 2015; Federal definition, 2002; Piechowski, 2009; Webb, 2014; Delisle, 2002; Renzulli, 1984; Renzulli, 2002; Betts and Neihart, 2009; Kingore, 2001
Describe your understanding of culturally linguistically diverse learners	Rhodes et al., 2005; Banks and Banks, 2009; Hammond, 2014; Banks, 2015; Solorzano and Yosso , 2000; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2002
Describe your understanding of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Ford, 2010; Ford, 2012; Ford, 2014; Castellano and

How does your school support gifted learners?	Diaz, 2002; Castellano, 2014; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Frasier and Passow, 1995 NAGC, n.d.; CDE, 2015; Assouline, et al 2006; Webb, 2014 ; Cross, 2014 ; Piechowski, 2009 ; Johnsen, 2011 ;
How does your school support culturally linguistically diverse learners?	CDE, 2015; Genishi and Dyson, 2015; Gay, 2010, Gay, 2002; Bass, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson Billings, 2016; Pollock 2008.
How does your school support gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012; Solorzano and Yosso, 2000.
Tell me about a culturally linguistically diverse child with whom you've worked or known and who you thought was gifted or really bright. What did you notice about him or her?	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford and Whiting, 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Worrell, 2008; Borland, 2013; Borland, 2014; Bass, 2009, Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012.
What might you need to effectively work with gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Fullan, 1994; Senge et al., 2013

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Creswell (2014), Yin (2012), and Kvale (2007) support the use of no more than eight interview questions that are open-ended enough to illicit meaning and structured enough to keep focus on the research questions being studied. Appendix D contains the interview protocol.

The researcher conducted one 30 minute semi-structured loose interview (Kvale, 2007) in the winter of 2017. The semi structured interview, "...attempts to understand themes from the lived daily world from the subject's own perspectives" (Kvale, 2007). The semi-structured interview occurred in person and was set in the educators' classrooms, offices, and even the library as those were the places in which the educators requested. The structure of the interview lent itself to an exploratory framework because it allowed the researcher to continue to ask second questions such as, "tell me more about... or tell me why"; thus, exploring the perceptions and practices (Kvale, 2007, Creswell, 2014, Yin, 2013).

The researcher interviewed participants before school, during their planning periods, on lunch, and after school (Creswell, 2014). In order to capture the interview so that the researcher could review what was said, the researcher used a secure recording device to audio record what was said (Creswell, 2014). During the interview, the researcher took notes and recorded reactions to what was being said (Kvale, 2007; Yin, 2013). The researcher then listened to the recording and transcribed the audio (Kvale, 2007).

**Observations.** Observation is a critical tool for collecting data and information in this study. Observation is the "...act of noting a phenomenon in the field through the five senses" (Creswell, 2013, p. 166). Through both classroom observations and environmental observation, the researcher will note the teaching practices and instructional moves as noted in culturally

responsive teaching used with gifted learners. In the first classroom observation, the researcher will look for the following tenets of a culturally responsive classroom illustrated by Gay (2010)

- The teacher provides space and relationships where ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected, valued, seen, and heard.
- The teacher knows culturally diverse students thoroughly personally and academically.
- The teacher cultivates a sense of kindredness and reciprocal responsibilities among culturally diverse students.
- The teacher enables ethnically and culturally diverse students to be open and flexible in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, as well as being receptive to new ideas and information.
- The teacher builds confidence among students from different aspects.

The second component of the observation will focus upon looking for Ford and Trotman's (2001) multicultural competencies for gifted students in the classroom. As mentioned in the literature review, Ford and Trotman (2001) specifically blended multicultural competencies with gifted competencies that include

- knowledge of the nature and needs of students who are gifted and diverse.
- ability to develop methods and material for use with students who are gifted and diverse.
- skills in address individual and cultural differences.
- skills in teaching higher level thinking skills and questioning techniques using multicultural resources and materials

- ability to recognize the strengths of students who are gifted and diverse.
- seeks to develop students' sense of self as a gifted individual.
- skills in counseling students who are gifted and diverse.
- skills in creating an environment in which diverse gifted students feel challenge and safe to explore and express their uniqueness.

During the observation process, the researcher acted as a nonparticipant (Creswell, 2014) so as not to disturb the learning environment any more than the mere presence of the researcher would. There were no elements of deception during the observation process as the teacher and the students were aware of the reason that the researcher was in the classroom (Creswell, 2014).

During the observation, the researcher used an observation protocol (Appendix E) as a lens through which to observe the practices of educators in the room. The researcher noted the classroom arrangement of chairs by sketching the classroom setting on the back of the protocol (Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010). The researcher tallied how many times each specific culturally responsive tenet (Gay, 2010; Creswell, 2014) as well as each gifted multicultural competency (Ford and Trotman, 2001) was observed. The researcher wrote down specific examples as they related to the tally marks such as conversations between teacher and student, descriptions of interactions between students, as well as student work observed (Creswell, 2014).

The field notes were both descriptive and reflective in nature so as to describe the case as a whole while bracketing for researcher bias (Creswell, 2014). The researcher recorded aspects of the environment such as colors on the wall and the amount of student regalia (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Gay, 2010) as well as student activities. During the observation, the

researcher recorded personal reactions such as excitement or frustration to what was being observed in the classroom or in the building so as to reflect upon the data and tell an unbiased account of what was observed (Creswell, 2014).

Observations in case studies can range from one hour to several days including follow up (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009; Best and Kahn, 1998). In this study, the researcher observed classrooms one time for 60 minutes as that was the requested amount of time from the community partner (Anonymous, 2017). Prior to beginning the study, the researcher visited the research site three times so as to establish rapport with the educators that lead to unobtrusive observations and authentic interviews as well (Creswell, 2014; Kvale, 1996).

**Audio-visual materials.** Photographs have the potential to demonstrate important case characteristics to outside observers (Yin, 2013). During the classroom observation, the researcher photographed the walls of the classroom, the work the students are doing, and the regalia that was found in the room. Photographing the classroom before students entered as well as after they left was an unobtrusive way to collect data (Yin, 2009). Photography of student work (e.g., products, work samples) was also included in the audio visual materials as they tell the information about the school environment, educators' apparent understanding, and their responsiveness to the nature and needs of culturally linguistically diverse gifted students (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Gay, 2010; Ford and Trotman, 2001).

In addition to the participating classrooms, the researcher photographed the school environment including the hallways, gymnasium, cafeteria, office, and every surface possible so as to capture the different ways in which the school as an entire case was supporting or hindering gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Yin, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Harrison,

2002). In research with case studies, visual materials are crucial to obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the case (Creswell, 2014). In a paper describing the use of photography in qualitative inquiry, Harrison(2002) writes that photographs can be seen as a form of storytelling, exploring narrative, and providing insight into memory and identity construction (Harrison, 2002).

The use of photographs added depth and helped the researcher create a complete understanding of the case (Yin, 2013). The researcher took ten photographs per classroom as well as the common areas for a total yield of 250 photographs of the environment. This number is in alignment with various research case studies that utilized photography in the types of data collected (Yin, 2013). However, it should be noted that a review of the literature does not specifically advocate for a particular number.

### **Data Analysis**

The research analysis portion of the study was framed in inductive and holistic philosophy (Yin, 2009). Multiple analysis philosophies were incorporated to understand the case as a whole (Yin, 2009; Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2014; Kvale, 2007). After the collection of data, the researcher began to “play” (Yin, 2009) with the data that was present. The researcher used a data analysis spiral as outlined by Creswell (2013, 2014) and supported by Yin (2013) that allowed for a systematic and organized approach to analyzing data. As the researcher collected data, the researcher used the inductive method of looking for patterns to emerge while utilizing the frameworks of Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2016) and Constructivism (Lincoln and Guba, 2004).



Interviews, photographs, and observations were reviewed independently first, with the researcher taking notes and reviewing initial reactions (Creswell, 2013). Then the interviews, photographs, and observations were reviewed simultaneously to look for patterns and emerging themes (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Following the work of Agar (1980) as supported by Yin (2009) and Creswell (2014), the researcher read transcripts, listened to interviews, reviewed field notes, and photographs multiple instances to get a picture of the whole case before breaking it into smaller parts and looking for emerging themes (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher began with observations and counted the total tallies within the tenets and competencies that were noticed. Then the researcher compared the notes on the observations to one another to review the consistency within the building to see how the school supported or hindered gifted culturally diverse learners (Ford, 2010). During the analysis of the observation, the researcher reviewed corresponding photographs and noted themes and patterns that emerged (Creswell, 2014).

Once that reading and “seeing” (Yin, 2009) occurred, the researcher used Tesch’s eight steps for coding (Tesch, 2013). The researcher categorized and coded emergent themes as well as ensured there were multiple forms of evidence to support categorization (Tesch, 2013). Stake (1995) advocated for categorical aggregations as one of four different forms of data analysis. For the purposes of this study, the researcher reviewed categorical aggregations because that allowed the researcher to seek a collection of instances from the gathered data that allowed issue-relevant meanings to emerge (Stake, 1995).

Categorizing and coding occurred in the describing phase of the analysis (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2014). The researcher developed detailed descriptions based on what the researcher

observed within the context of the setting of the “person, place, or even” (Creswell, 2013). The researcher utilized the analysis technique of categorical aggregation that looked for issue-related meaning to emerge (Stake, 1995).

Within the analysis of interviews, Kvale (2007) discussed steps to determine meaning. First the researcher read and reread the transcribed interviews thoroughly (Kvale, 2007). Next, the researcher began to make meaning units of the text (Kvale, 2007). Then, the researcher explicated central themes (Kvale, 2007; Seidman, 1998). The researcher then “interrogates” the meaning unit in terms of the purpose of the study (Kvale, 2007). Lastly, the researcher took non-essential understandings and created a descriptive text from those understandings (Kvale, 2007; Yin, 2009).

Regarding the interpretation and investigation of interviews, the researcher used hermeneutical philosophy (Creswell, 2014). In hermeneutical philosophy, the researcher goes beyond what is directly said to create structures and relations of meaning that are not immediately apparent (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2014). For those relations that are not immediately apparent, the researcher employed ad-hoc meaning interpretation during the interview analysis (Creswell, 2014). Ad hoc interpretation was used because of its purposefully unstructured-structure (Creswell, 2014). In ad hoc meaning interpretation, the researcher read the interviews once they are transcribed, then listen to them again, and then may read them once again and started noting how often certain phrases were mentioned and the themes that emerged (Creswell, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). Ad hoc analysis allowed for freedom in interpretation method in that the researcher had the option to incorporate narrative, metaphors, and use visualization techniques by incorporating flow charts and graphs (Kvale, 1996 p. 204).

Next, the researcher looked for patterns and correspondence between categories that were present in the observation, the interviews, and photographs (Creswell, 2014). The researcher then developed naturalistic generalizations from analyzing the data (Creswell, 2014). Part of the coding and categorization was done through the assistance of computer software program Dedoose (n.d.). However, most of the coding and categorization was done by hand.

### **Threats to reliability and validity**

The researcher addressed threats to validity of information by triangulating information (Creswell, 2014). The researcher corroborated evidence from different sources to support the codes and themes that emerge from the findings (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2014). The researcher supported emerging themes with those found in culturally responsive pedagogy, critical race theory, and or constructivism as well as within theories of gifted education.

The researcher employed member checking solicited participants' views on the credibility of the findings and interpretations of the materials (Ely et al., 1991; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). This approach included taking the data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they were able to judge the accuracy (Creswell, 2014). Threats to validity were also accounted for through the employment of a rich, thick description that allows readers to make decisions about transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 Lincoln and Guba, 2004). With this level of description, the researcher described the participants and/or setting in detail. A description of the case is considered rich "...if it provides abundant interconnected details," (Stake, 2009, p. 249).

The researcher included an addition safeguard against threats to validity and reliability by ensuring the data was kept confidential and stored in an area where no one else could access

to it while it is being interpreted (Creswell, 2014). Information stored on the computer program was protected through internet security, a firewall, and the site was password protected (Creswell, 2014). All data will be shredded or deleted within two years of completion (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

The methods employed in this section followed research supported case study protocols and designs (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Stake, 1985). The researcher collected a variety of qualitative data including interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials to help understand the case. The researcher ensured that research safeguards were in place for reliability and validity of data so as to report the perceptions of teachers in a manner that is authentic and valuable to those represented in the study (Creswell, 2014, Yin, 2013). Through the use of the methods employed in this case study, the researcher hoped to embody the words of Elliot Eisner (1998) when he stated

...the aim of education research and evaluation is the achievement of virtue; the creation of knowledge, thus enlarging our understanding of education, whether they [researchers] are conducting qualitative or statistical studies, [they] are attempting to do something that is socially useful.

## **Chapter Four Results and Analysis**

### **Introduction**

Chapter four presents the data collected to describe and represent the case being explored. The purpose of this study is to explore educators' perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Research for this study was conducted at one elementary school within Denver Public Schools during the winter of 2017. The research questions that guided the study were a) What are educators' perceptions of the characteristics, needs, and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners? b) How do educators describe gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners? c) How do educators describe their understanding of culturally responsive teaching as it relates to diverse gifted learners? d) What are school-based practices for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners that support or hinder learning?

### **Overview of study**

In the winter of 2017, the researcher conducted an exploratory case study (Yin, 2009) at an elementary school in Denver Public Schools. Case study methodology was chosen because it "facilitates exploration of a phenomenon" (Baxter, 2008). In this study, the phenomenon was the identified persistent problem of practice as found in the literature: Educators struggle to identify gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and do not understand the nature and needs of those students. Because of this lack of

understanding, educators do not modify their teaching practices to develop talent and nurture promising learners; thus continuing to deny access to appropriate gifted programming (Ford, 2010; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford, 2002; Bernal, 2003; Frasier and Passow, 1995; Castellano and Diaz, 2010; Borland, 2013; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012).

Utilizing the framework of Critical Race Theory, or CRT (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2016), the understandings of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010) and constructivism as outlined by Vygotsky and then adapted for case study by Lincoln and Guba (2008), the researcher developed data tools for the study, as well as conceptual lenses through which to analyze the data collected.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The data for this study was collected using a variety of collection tools: observation, interviews, and photographs. Table 4 displays an overview of the data collected for this study and includes: type, structure, timeframe, information, and amount. Data was collected through non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and through photography and artifacts. Extensive field notes of the environment, including common areas where all students walk through or visit as well as notes regarding the individual classrooms were taken. The researcher focused upon culturally responsive pedagogy tenets and multicultural gifted competencies. Interviews were used to capture participants' perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and photographs were also taken to help gather a complete picture of the case.

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**Table 4**Examples of various data collected

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Data type	Observation	Interview	Audio-Visual
Structure	Nonparticipant	Semi-structured	N/A
Timeframe	60 minutes per classroom	30 minutes	N/A
Types of information collected	Extensive field notes culturally responsive pedagogy tenets and multicultural gifted teacher competencies	Educators' perceptions, understandings, opinions, and real-life context.	Photographs of regalia, classroom environment, school environment student produced work
Amount of data collected	15 observations	17 interviews	250 photographs

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First, the observation protocol was developed by the researcher based on the literature regarding culturally linguistically diverse gifted learners and culturally responsive pedagogy (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004) A synthesis of the literature showed that barriers to both identification and programming for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners included lack of understanding gifted diverse students (Ford, 2010; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Worrell, 2008; Borland, 2013), the cultural mismatch between teacher and student (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Ford et al., 2000), the lack of culturally responsive pedagogical practices in place in schools (Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2016), and the lack of observed gifted multicultural competencies

( Ford and Trotman, 2001), the researcher created an observation tool that incorporated tenets of culturally responsive teaching and gifted multicultural competencies.

In considering which tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy to use, the researcher first reviewed the literature to determine which components of Gay’s tenets (1975, 2002, and 2010) were researched and supported throughout other literature (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995; Villegas and Lucas, 2002; Montgomery, 2001; Ware, 2006; Vavrus, 2008). The researcher then reviewed culturally responsive pedagogical practices that existed throughout the literature regarding CRT (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Pollock, 2008) and were the most frequently referenced. The researcher then reviewed those tenets to determine what pieces were present in the literature regarding gifted culturally diverse learners (Ford, 1997; Ford and Grantham, 2003; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Whiting, 2009). Table 5 details the components of the observation protocol the researcher used.

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Table 5

Observation tenets

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2000; 2010)	Gifted Multicultural Competencies (Ford and Trotman, 2001)
The teacher provides space and relationships where ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected valued, seen and heard	Knowledge of the nature and needs of students who are gifted and diverse
The teacher knows culturally diverse students thoroughly personally and academically	Ability to develop methods and materials for use with students who are gifted
The teacher cultivates a sense of kindredness and reciprocal responsibilities	Skills in addressing individual and cultural Differences



among culturally diverse students

The teacher enables ethnically and culturally diverse students to be open and flexible in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, as well as being receptive to new ideas and information

Skills in teaching higher level thinking skills and questioning techniques using multicultural resources/materials

The teacher builds confidence among students from different aspects

Ability to recognize the strengths of students who are gifted and diverse

Seeks to develop students' sense of self as a gifted individual

Skills in counseling students who are gifted and diverse

Skills in creating an environment in which diverse gifted students feel challenge and safe to explore and express their uniqueness

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In addition to observations, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). The interview protocol was created based on a synthesis of the literature regarding the identified persistent problem of practice related to educators' perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. The interview questions were structured based on literature regarding teachers perceptions and understandings of gifted and or culturally linguistically diverse learners (NAGC, 2015; Gagne, 2004; CDE, 2015; Federal definition, 2002; Piechowski, 2009; Webb, 2014; Delisle, 2002; Renzulli, 1984; Renzulli, 2002; Betts and Neihart, 2009; Kingore, 2001, Rhodes et al., 2005; Banks and Banks, 2009; Hammond, 2014; Banks, 2015; Solorzano and Yosso , 2000; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2002).

The researcher also constructed interview questions that aligned with the gaps in literature regarding how school buildings and their practices support or hinder gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. These interview questions were then reviewed within the context of CRT to see if there was alignment with CRT literature (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012; Solorzano and Yosso, 2000).

The question on the protocol related to educator needs was developed so as to explore what self-identified needs were so that the researcher could develop future interventions (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Fullan, 1994; Senge et al., 2013). Table 6 displays the interview questions on the protocol that were developed based on the literature review.

**Table 6**

Interview Questions

Question	Reference to Literature
Describe your understanding of gifted learners	NAGC, 2015; Gagne, 2004; CDE, 2015; Federal definition, 2002; Piechowski, 2009; Webb, 2014; Delisle, 2002; Renzulli, 1984; Renzulli, 2002; Betts and Neihart, 2009; Kingore, 2001
Describe your understanding of culturally linguistically diverse learners	Rhodes et al., 2005; Banks and Banks, 2009; Hammond, 2014; Banks, 2015; Solorzano and Yosso, 2000; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2002

Describe your understanding of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Ford, 2010; Ford, 2012; Ford, 2014; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Castellano, 2014; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Frasier and Passow, 1995 CDE, 2015; Assouline, et al 2006; Webb, 2014 ; Cross, 2014 ; Piechowski, 2009 ; Johnsen, 2011 ;
How does your school support gifted learners?	CDE, 2015; Genishi and Dyson, 2015; Gay, 2010, Gay, 2002; Bass, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson Billings, 2016; Pollock 2008.
How does your school support culturally linguistically diverse learners?	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012; Solorzano and Yosso, 2000.
How does your school support gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford and Whiting, 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Worrell, 2008; Borland, 2013; Borland, 2014; Bass, 2009, Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012.
Tell me about a culturally linguistically diverse child with whom you've worked or known and who you thought was gifted or really bright. What did you notice about him or her?	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Fullan, 1994; Senge et al., 2013
What might you need to effectively work with gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?	

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In addition to observations and interviews, the researcher collected data in the form of photographs, student work, and teacher-created assignments. In a review of the

literature regarding culturally responsive or culturally competent classrooms as well as CRT, one way in which educators showed their cultural competency was through their assignments and student regalia (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010; Lopez, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Vavrus, 2008). Because the entire school was the case being studied, the researcher photographed participant classrooms as well as common areas such as hallways, gymnasium, cafeteria, and the Extended Day classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Pollock, 2008). Combined, the researcher collected 250 photographs, pieces of student work, and teacher assignments that served as a tool to explore the case.

### **Participants**

In order to understand the case as a whole, the researcher requested participation across grade levels and content. Having participation from each of these groups allowed the researcher to have a more complete understanding of the perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally diverse learners from multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2014). This also allowed for a cross-section of the school and aided in the reliability and validity of the sample size (Creswell, 2013).

Because the researcher employed maximum variation sampling, the sample of educators who participated in the research varied in their age, gender, ethnicity, years in education, and their experience with gifted education. Therefore, participants also varied in the content and grade levels in which they taught. Table 7 illustrates the number of educators who participated in the study, roles within the school, and the type of data collected from each participant.

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**Table 7** Participants in the study and data collected

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Role in school	Participated in Study	Number Participating	Observation	Interview	Photographs
Administration	X	3	X	X	N/A
ECE	X	1	X	X	X
K/1	X	1	X	X	X
2	X	1	X	X	X
3	X	1	X	X	X
4	X	2	X	X	X
5	X	1	X	X	X
Intervention and or Gifted Teacher	X	3	X	X	X
Electives Teachers	X	2	X	X	X
Special Education Teachers	X	1	X	X	X
Social Emotional Support Staff	X	1	X	X	N/A

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Although this elementary school had more than one teacher working in each grade level or subject area, not every teacher volunteered to participate in the study. In some grade levels, there was only one male who teaches. Therefore, the researcher took steps to ensure anonymity by utilizing neutral pronouns when appropriate as well as in the attachment of themes (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, all three administrators participated in the study because they see themselves not only critical to the learning for the school, but

they view themselves as educators (Stephen, n.d.).

In this chapter, both the school and the participants have been given pseudonyms (Creswell, 2014; Yin 2009). The school shall be referred to as Joshua Elementary and the participants pseudonyms are as follows: Alison, Steven, Thomas, Elizabeth, Amber, Paula, Kenneth, Shannon, Amanda, Jenna, Lara, Caitlyn, Kimberly, Lawrence, Brianna, Eva, and Gabrielle.

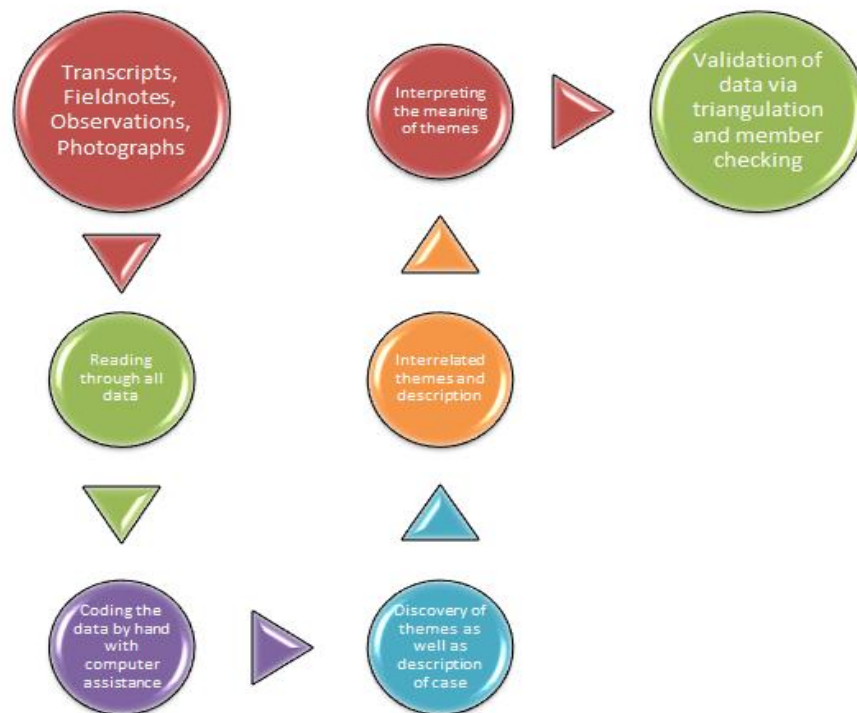
### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The first step in the data analysis process involved reviewing data and assigning codes. “The process of coding involves aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code from different databases being used in the study, and then assigning a label to the code” (Creswell, 2013, p. 184). The researcher used a combination of Creswell’s (2014) approach to coding as well as and Tesch’s (Creswell, 2014) eight steps to aid in coding the data. The researcher had some predetermined codes based on the literature, however, in utilizing Tesch’s eight steps, the researcher also allowed for codes to emerge based on themes found in the research. Using this process, the researcher developed 72 codes.

Steps taken to code data included a) the development of a priori codes based on the literature; b) reading and re-reading all transcripts and making notes; c) reviewing each document separately and looking for the underlying meaning of each document; d) making a list of all topics that emerged; e) abbreviating topics and inputting next to text; f) using descriptive wording and looking for interrelationships between topics; g) making final decisions about topics and materials for further analysis; h) recoding information as

necessary; i) utilizing the online platform, Dedoose, to assign codes to selected text for the researcher's ease of organizing excerpts.

Once all codes were reviewed, the researcher looked for emerging themes, interrelated concepts, and then validated data. The researcher was able to consolidate the codes into seven themes. A visual representation of the data analysis process can be found in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. Data Analysis*

### **Chapter Format**

The rest of this chapter will explore the case in detail and will identify emerging themes and or assertions (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009). The chapter is reported in a descriptive narrative approach (Touskas and Hatch, 2001) so as to describe the case as a whole. First, the setting will be described in detail with a separate focus on the common

areas used by all children, staff, and visitors to the school. After describing the common areas of the school, the researcher will then report on the individual classroom environments. During observations, the researcher treated the classrooms as an extension of the school and its beliefs about children (Sleeter, 2001; Sleeter, 2008); however, only the classrooms of study participants were observed and therefore those participating classrooms are the only other spaces that will be described.

Next, the researcher will report the findings from the observation protocol (Appendix E). In this section, the researcher will describe findings as they relate to each individual tenant of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010), and then the researcher will describe observations of multicultural gifted competencies (Ford and Trotman, 2001). When reporting the data collected during the observations, the researcher will include corresponding visual materials to corroborate and or further illustrate what was observed (Creswell, 2014).

After the findings from the observations have been presented, the researcher will report responses from educators' interviews. Findings related to each interview question will be reported separately (Yin, 2009). Next the chapter will report themes and or assertions which emerged through observation and interviews as they relate to the theoretical frameworks of CRT and constructivism (Creswell, 2014). Finally, the chapter will conclude with the researcher describing data analysis procedures and areas for further research.



## **Setting**

Every single aspect of the school, from the explicitly taught curriculum to the hidden curriculum of the “...unwritten, unofficial, and often unintended lessons, values, and perspectives of the school” (Edglossary, n.d.) create a reality for students on a daily basis (Wiggins, 2004). Therefore, in order to understand how the school supports or hinders access to gifted programming for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, it is essential to review all areas of the school so as to help tell the story of the learners within its walls (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Gay, 2010; Pollock, 2014). This section will explore the setting of the school, both common areas as well as classrooms as participants and will describe the setting in detail.

**Common areas.** Joshua Elementary is a small ECE-5th grade school and is one of 97 elementary schools within the larger Denver Public Schools system (CDE, 2017). Upon walking through the set of double doors and up the stairs into the 100 year old building, visitors are immediately greeted by the slogan of the school, “Home of the Stars, Heart of the City.” Directly below the slogan was a display case housing student work that was related to a monthly theme. Both the slogan and the display case of student work seemed to act as ways to communicate the values of the school (Gay, 2010, Ladson-Billings, 2014; Litowitz, 1996).

Across from the display case, on the western side of the school, was the front office of the building where parents and visitors must stop before moving throughout the building. Immediately outside of the front office was a small black bookshelf with free books for students to take and read at will. Next to the books, were four colorful and

cushioned chairs where parents could wait and or read with their children. In this small section of the school, all books were available in Spanish and English, and represented two of the three dominant school languages spoken by the students.

On the southern side of the office area, was the “Information Station” with flyers and announcements for the community, including free community resources such as healthcare and counseling services. The station included a calendar with school events listing student awards’ ceremonies, parent education nights, and nights to display student work. Multiple opportunities were listed for parent and or community engagement throughout the month.

Walking through the school, onto the first floor, speckled beige tiles lined the floor and the sounds of footsteps echoed throughout the hall. Red and black stripes of tile were interspersed perpendicularly throughout the hallway on the first floor and lead to individual classrooms.

The walls outside of the classrooms and down the hallways were primarily beige and white; and were covered with large photographs of culturally diverse students and the staff members in the building. Figure 2 illustrates the photographs lining the walls outside the classroom above the student cubbies.



Figure 2. Student photographs on the walls of the first floor hallway.

Moving from the entryway and first floor hallway, the researcher walked into the auditorium of Joshua Elementary. The auditorium was carpeted and had tables and chairs set to the sides of the space. Except for a white Grecian structure and a projector screen, the wooden stage in the front of the auditorium was bare. Large green and blue banners extending from the ceiling. Upon closer inspection, each banner listed one of Joshua's student pillars: healthy, expressive, and enlightened. The pillars are core practices and beliefs that the school created and educators discuss which they believe gives "...students the capacity and power to thrive in any setting," (Joshua Elementary, n.d.). Each pillar is written in Spanish, Somali, and English as those are the three dominant languages in the school (Denver Public Schools, n.d.). The auditorium, although minimalist in nature, has words of inspiration like "You are a rock star" on its walls. Figure 3 shows different sections of the auditorium and the student pillars.



*Figure 3. Auditorium with Student Pillars.*

Upon reentering the main hallway from the auditorium, the entire first floor seemed to have an energy that was palpable. The energy could have been associated with the constant movement and talking coming from the students in that section of the school. The entire first floor of the building housed the Early Childhood Education classrooms (ECE), Kindergarten/First grade classrooms, Intervention rooms, Head Start, the gym, and support services such as the Broncos Reading Room and the Family Liaison room.

In the Bronco's Reading Room, students were able deescalate when frustrated or angry, they were able to go and relax by reading, and or they were able to move around the room and released their energy on the play equipment in the room. The Family Liaison room was an additional resource for families that provided everything from backpacks to clothing. Student work, photographs of current students, materials in multiple languages, and resources for families (Gay, 2010; Chmiel, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2014) filled the first floor hallways and common areas of the school.

Even the stairwells in Joshua Elementary seemed to create a school-wide community constructed by the learners with signs of student ownership in the school

(Wiggins, 2004; Gay, 2010; Pollock, 2008) When walking up the northern staircase, student displays of art, along with the media used and an explanation of the artistic piece hung upon the wall. The artwork varied in ability and grade level, but it was student authored. It was culturally responsive in nature as students expressed themselves and shared their culture (Gay, 2010).



*Figure 4.* Northern stairwell.

Upon exiting the stairwell, the Art room greeted those who walk up the stairs onto the Northern side of the second floor with more student art work, each distinctive from the next. When turning away from the Art room and looking down the hall towards the southern end of the second floor hallway, there was a stark contrast in the appearance of the school in comparison to the first floor. Although student work was displayed, there were not the same large photographs lining the walls above the cubbies. Additionally, teacher displays were primarily written in English and were not as elaborate like the first floor displays. Student work was scarce in comparison. Figure 5 shows a side by side comparison of the first and second floors.



*Figure 5.* Side by side comparison of the first and second floors.

The second floor housed second through fifth grade classrooms, intervention rooms, art, the library, and computers. The second floor did not display student work, culture, or have elements of student voice (Gay, 2010) as frequently as the first floor. However, in the hallway, the researcher observed a large student- created quilt hanging above a set of coats. This was the largest physical display of the recognition of student culture at the school as observed by the researcher. The display helped provide evidence that the school “recognized the ethnicities and cultural backgrounds of the students” (Taylor, et al., 2016) and allowed for a student community (Gay, 2010). The quilt displayed what and where students recognized as their home. The quilt showed that the students in the school were from various parts of the world including, Liberia, Somalia, Mexico, Colorado, California and other places from within the United States. Figure 6 shows the quilt seen hanging in the second floor hallway.



Figure 6. Student created quilt

In continuing to walk down the hallway, a large open library with abundant light sat at the center of the second floor and was a space where students were able to read and research. Outside of the library were photographs of individual students next to their reading accomplishments displayed under a banner titled “AR Stars” (Accelerated Reader) and seemed to create a sense of ownership and community. In the library, there were mirror books with diverse characters pictured on them. In addition to mirror texts, there were books in Spanish and English, graphic novels, and leveled texts. Posters were also in English and Spanish. Upon closer inspection of the books, however, it did not appear that there were books with gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners as central characters. Those books may have existed, but they were not readily observed. Figure 7 shows the library.



*Figure 7. Library*

When leaving the library, sounds of learning, laughter, and the occasional raised voice of a teacher redirecting classroom behavior spilled out of the rooms. In contrast to the first floor, however, there was not as much movement in the hallways and even with classroom noise, this portion of the building was noticeably quieter.

Unlike the first floor, where there were large displays of teacher and student work, the researcher had to look more critically and closely to locate student voice. Student work hung on a corkboard strip above coats outside of many classrooms, but not all. The amount of displayed culturally responsive student product varied from teacher to teacher as did the observed level of rigor and complexity. Throughout visits to the school, culturally responsive student produced work was only noted outside of four classrooms on the second floor. Figure 8 shows examples of student produced work.





*Figure 8.* Student produced work (Gay, 2010).

When walking down towards the opposite end of the building and into the southern stairwell to travel back to the first floor, it was easy to notice distinct differences in the stairwells because the southern stairwell did not have any student work on the tiled walls. Instead, the walls were bare. However, the large blue and green banners with the student pillars hung down from the second floor landing as a reminder of the focus of the school.

The last two common areas explored were the gymnasium and the cafeteria; and were on the first floor and in the basement, respectively. When entering the gymnasium, the tile floor disappeared into the oak planks covering the expansive room. The tinny clicking of shoes on tile was replaced by a heavier clacking of the shoes on wood. The smell of plastic cones and rubber mats filled the gymnasium, while Hula hoops and beach balls sat on the floor.

On the northern wall of the gym was a climbing wall and blue mats. Attached to the ceiling were climbing ropes. Colorful chart paper with student objectives that varied

by grade level were taped upon the tiled walls. Abbreviated cardinal directions were near the ceiling and listed street names that faced the building. At the time of the observation, the gymnasium did not overtly show evidence of student work or voice. Figure 9 shows the gymnasium.



*Figure 9.* Gymnasium.

In the basement directly below the gymnasium sat the tiny cafeteria of Joshua Elementary. The cafeteria was empty at the time of the researcher's observation, however, the smell of lunch lingered through the air. The cafeteria was noticeably cooler than the gymnasium and was much darker due to the lack of windows. The cafeteria was much like parts of the second floor: stark in contrast to the rest of the school. Teal colored tile was the only color to be found amongst the familiar beige tiles. A few posters lined the walls encouraging students to drink their milk and eat healthy. However, there were no student-created items observed, nor was there any observable display of the student pillars. Figure 10 shows the cafeteria setting.



*Figure 10.* Cafeteria.

The common areas in Joshua Elementary showed inconsistency in displaying elements of a culturally responsive environment. The first floor showed student voice, mirror texts, information for families, and what seemed to be intentional displays to create a sense of community and communicate school values and norms (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Ford, 2016; Gay, 2010). The second floor, however, showed minimal attention to the creation of a school community and there was almost no student voice on display in the hallways. Students from lower grade levels do travel to the second floor to reach the library, the Art room, and the Computer Lab and whether they consciously are absorbing the difference in environment or not, the hidden curriculum may be one that is sending mixed messages that research shows can “...reinforce and reproduce inequalities,” (Cotton, Winter, and Bailey, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2014).

**Classrooms.** When leaving the common areas of the school and venturing into the classrooms of those educators participating in the study, the researcher noticed something that the classrooms all had in common: they were all very different from one

another. Each classroom had its own personality, energy, and differed from grade to grade. Upon walking into the ECE classroom, for example, the researcher noticed the vibrant blues and greens that covered most surfaces. There were student centers for Science, Reading, Dramatic Play, and Math. Student work lined the walls and every space in the room was used for interactive learning.

Student work hung outside of the classroom as well and welcomed parents and visitors in to the warm space. Child-size tables were available with small chairs to fit the smallest of students. The Reading corner had a couch and over 30 books from which students could choose. Students were allowed to move around the room without restriction. Figure 11 illustrates some of the reading selections as well as student-produced work.



Figure 11. ECE classroom with student work.

When walking around the corner into the Kinder/First grade wing of the building, the sheer size of the classroom immediately struck the researcher. The classroom was the size of two regular classrooms combined. On the western side of the classroom was a

Promethean board which served as a focal point for the classroom. This was where whole group lessons took place. A combination of kidney, rectangular and circular tables filled the classroom. Students moved about the room with purpose and ease as they brought mobile centers to their tables. Students sat in front of the Promethean board worked on adding three digit numbers using a specific strategy. Some students struggled to stay focused while in the larger group and had their “clips” moved more than once. Some argued with their teacher about staying still.

Students who were moving at a faster pace were getting in trouble while they waited for the other students to finish. Students working in the smaller mobile centers, however, did remain focused on their individual center goals and were moving at their own individual pace. Students were working next to one another, but they were not working with another during this observation.

This room was bright and warm with yellow hues on the wall, but it did not have the same amount of student work displayed as was observed in ECE. It, too, had a corner for reading with multiple books in different languages. During a classroom observation, this corner was also used as an area for students to deescalate and had pictures of children and their feelings.

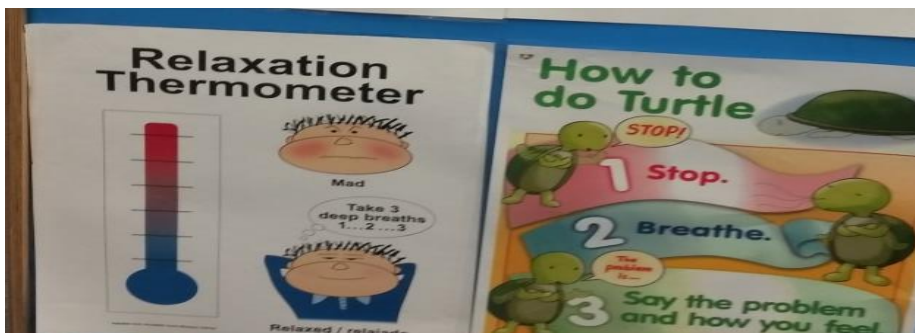


Figure 12. Kindergarten/ First grade relaxation corner.

The second grade classroom differed greatly from its ECE and Kinder/First predecessors. Separated physically on the second floor and at the southern end of the school, the second grade classroom was relatively bare. The white walls and brown cabinets had a combination of teacher and student created work. Most materials were teacher created; however, one of the sliding cabinets in the room featured interlocking puzzle pieces, one for each student, and their culture.

Although the student work around the room was sparse, the work that was up acknowledged issues of social justice. The work on the wall included sentence stems to support language development and aid in thinking. Like the rooms before it, the second grade classroom also had a reading corner with a couch and multicultural books in English and Spanish. Figure 13 illustrates instructional aides and books with culturally diverse characters or people.



Figure 13. Second grade classroom

The tables in this room were all rectangular, facing one another, and primarily in a style that would facilitate group and cooperative learning. Students moved from sitting



on the floor near the Promethean board on the southern wall, to working independently at their tables. Students spoke in Spanish and English in this classroom. Students were encouraged to speak in their native language as well as write in their native language. In the last five minutes of the observation, the teacher pulled a small group of monolingual Spanish speakers to ensure that they had understood the math lesson.

Next, just a couple of doors down was a bustling third grade classroom. On one of the two doors entering the classroom was a large piece of chart paper with the question: What do you need from your classmates to be successful in third grade? Student answers were written on post-it notes and included: “Be kind” and “Understand me” (Observation, January, 2017). The bright yellow wall that greeted visitors once they entered had examples of student writing displayed.

At the time of the observation, students were researching a topic of their passion and were engaged in their work. They moved throughout the classroom with comfort and asked one another for help when needed. Some students sat at the rectangular tables, and others went to the reading corner of the room to research their passion area.

In looking around the room, multiple styles of chairs were being used. Plastic chairs that rocked, director-style chairs with canvas, typical hard plastic and metal chairs, as well as beanbag chairs created an environment that acknowledged different learners’ needs. One of the chairs had a resistance band on it so that a student could bounce his or her feet on the band and continue to stay focused.

In addition to the buzz of student voices and engagement in the room, student work was located in one section of the classroom on the eastern wall and directly outside

of the classroom. The majority of the room was filled with books. Similar to the other classrooms in the building, there was a reading corner. Unlike the other classrooms in the school, this particular reading corner had hundreds of books available for students in multiple genres and languages. Figure 14 illustrates the third grade classroom



*Figure 14.* Third grade classroom.

As the researcher exited the third grade classroom and walked into the fourth grade rooms, once again there was the sound of students interacting with one another and the teacher. During the researcher's observation of the learning environments, students were moving around the room in active learning. In one classroom, students were sitting in chairs at the rectangular tables, on the floor, and on beanbag chairs. In another fourth grade classroom, students moved between sitting at the front of the room at the carpet, to exploring the room around them, to sitting at their desks in different groups. Both classrooms had their walls, windows, bulletin boards, and cabinets covered with a combination of student and teacher work.

In one of the classrooms, bright green paint covered the walls and broke from the



beige hallway outside. This classroom had an abundance of teacher created work on the windows and walls that focused on concepts in the curriculum. These chart paper displays were various Thinking Maps graphic organizers and were throughout the room. The teacher incorporated color throughout her room and even had bright neon organizers on the students' tables. The student tables were rectangular and faced the Promethean board. The bulletin boards around the room focused on different content areas taught by the teacher. There was one cabinet door that contained student work on it, and that was minimal. Above that cabinet were inspirational words to encourage the students to be their best.

The other fourth grade classroom had a wall painted in a navy blue with the school's motto written on it. On the cabinet doors underneath the blue section of wall was a combination of student and teacher produced work. Thinking Maps were used again this room; however the topics covered on the maps contained issues of social justice, literature, and vocabulary. In the shelves under the windows were books of different reading levels and different genres. The researcher did not observe the outright display of mirror books or culturally responsive texts as in the younger grades. Those books, however, may have been in the leveled bins. On top of the shelves under the windows was a bin of headphones for use either with a laptop or to block out sound as needed.

This fourth grade classroom broke from the typical mold of the other classrooms because it did not use rectangular tables. Instead it had individual student desks that were in groups of three, four, and even some singular desks for students. A kidney table was

in the center of the room and served as a small group meeting space for the teacher and the students. Figure 15 shows the two classrooms.



Figure 15. Side by side view of fourth grade classrooms.

The last grade level classroom the researcher observed was the fifth grade classroom. Upon entering the naturally lit classroom, the researcher noticed the students were calm and focused on the whole group lesson. Navy blue walls anchored the classroom and displayed both teacher created and student created work. The large rectangular tables were arranged so that some faced towards the Promethean board and some faced one another for cooperative learning.

Tucked away in one corner of the room was a set of two multi colored bean bag chairs on a large rectangular brown Persian rug. This area of the room had some books sitting on a shelf near it, however it was not just a space reserved for reading; instead, it was a place for students to go and work on a first come first serve basis. On the shelves next to the area with the bean bags, sitting under the large windows, were the remainder of the books available for students to read. The books were leveled by student ability and were in bright red, blue, yellow, and green plastic bins for students to use throughout the

day. As in the fourth grade classroom, the researcher did not observe the outright display of mirror books or culturally responsive texts as in the younger grades. Those books, however, may have been in the leveled bins.

Teacher created visuals lined a majority of the windows reminding students how to analyze characters and write robust narratives. On one set of windows near the teacher's desk were paper t-shirt cut outs designed by each student to represent the student's background and culture. The t-shirts displayed how each student contributed to the classroom community.

Student work was not only on the window in this classroom, it was throughout the classroom on the cabinets and walls. Work displayed included all levels of student ability and was a combination of works in progress and completed pieces. Student work included essays, completed Thinking Maps graphic organizers, and works of art to demonstrate understanding. Topics in the room ranged from immigration, the impacts of a global community, to "monumental moments" in history. Students in the room moved freely between their desks and the Promethean Board. They also moved to grab their books or get a tissue or go to the restroom with ease. It was as if routines had been established and it seemed as if the students followed the norms of the room. Figure 16 shows the table arrangement within the fifth grade classroom environment.



Figure 16. Fifth grade classroom.

Unlike the grade level classroom teacher, the Intervention teachers observed did not have any one classroom to call their own. Instead, they shared their student workspace with other school supports like Math Fellows (tutoring) or other intervention supports. . In the math intervention room observed, the space was divided into three sections. Each section was separated by whiteboards and filing cabinets. The teacher took her portion of the room and added stringed multicolored lights to the whiteboard the separated her from her coworkers. In addition to this, she added student and teacher co-created Thinking Maps to some of the cabinets and a behavioral incentive on one the wall leading back out into the hallway.

A group of 13 students sat at rectangular tables facing another whiteboard for whole group lesson. The whiteboard had colorful place value cards within student view as well as the points students had earned for using their math and sentence stems in spoken language. Above the whiteboard, was a student created circle map that multiple students contributed to developing. This graphic organizer was the one piece of student

owned work that was visible in the room. During the observation, students actively discussed the topic and lesson and were responsive to the teacher.

The reading intervention room was on the first floor of the building next to the ECE classrooms. The reading intervention room was divided into two spaces and was shared with another intervention teacher. Both intervention teachers worked with different age groups during the same time as one another. The room was an open-concept feel in that it was partitioned into two sections by a whiteboard.

Unlike the math intervention space, this space offered more room for students to get up and move; The space had one kidney table in which a group of four to five students sat in small group with the teacher. The teacher allowed for students to sit where they want to sit. A separate desk was available if a student wanted or needed to sit at it and apart from the group. Next to the kidney table was the window with a ledge displaying various picture books.

There was not observable culturally responsive text during the observation; however, there may have been books on the shelf underneath the windowsill that held culturally responsive texts. Although this space was very different from the other classrooms in the building, the students filled the room with laughter, jokes, and maintained focus on building student reading skills. Figure 17 shows an intervention classroom.



Figure 17. Intervention classroom.

Back on the second floor the researcher found the gifted classroom. Upon entering the brightly lit classroom, the researcher noticed a framed sign surrounded by Star Wars Storm Trooper figurines that stated “Developing our Talent” (observation, January, 2017). That sign was accompanied by other posters with inspirational song lyrics on them directly above the chalkboard. The chalkboard was lined with Thinking Maps waiting to be completed and objectives for the day. Immediately facing the researcher was a large piece of chart paper that had questions on it for students to answer about their goals for the rest of 2017. Across from the main entrance into the room were large windows with shelves sitting underneath containing neon colored bins of supplies.

The spacious room had two rectangular tables and one kidney table for students to work at. Like the third grade classroom, there were different styles of chairs for the students to sit upon. Soft cushioned swivel chairs surrounded one of the rectangular tables. The other rectangular table had hard plastic and metal chairs for students, and another table had hard plastic and metal chairs. The kidney table in the corner of the

room had softer plastic chairs waiting those who would want them. Containers of pencils could be found on every table, and one of the tables had a map of the world in its center. Clipboards were also available on one of the tables for students who did not want to sit at the table, but stand up, or place themselves on the large colorful rug in the room.

Unlike the other classrooms, student work was not displayed throughout the room. The room primarily consisted of teacher created posters and graphic organizers. Student work was displayed outside of the classroom, but was lacking inside of the room. There were bulletin boards that were outlined with a scalloped polka dot border that may have been for student work, however, none was seen.

During the observation students moved freely from the carpet to a table of their choosing. They focused on the assignment that they were given, and were able to continue to talk about their day with one another. They seemed excited to be in the classroom and eagerly answered questions posed by the teacher. Figure 18 shows the gifted classroom.



Figure 18. Gifted classroom.

The computer classroom was the next classroom observed by the researcher. When entering the computer classroom, the researcher noticed the blinds were closed and the lights were off. The only light came from the computer screens and the projector with the directions and objectives for students. CPUs and flat screen Dell monitors sat two to a table throughout the room. All student tables faced towards the entrance of the classroom where the teacher's projector faced and she often stood.

The cabinet doors, some of the walls, and one of the chalkboards were covered with colorful chart paper circle maps with different topics on each one. Some of the circle maps had been filled in with student responses. Above the circle maps on the chalkboard were vocabulary words associated with technology in alphabetical order so that they formed the alphabet near the ceiling. On the opposite chalkboard were technology standards for the students to master. Next to the chalkboard was a bulletin board to show student accomplishment in the room.

During the observation, ECE students filed into the classroom and went directly to their computers. Without being told what to do, the students immediately logged on to different websites to explore. Some students explored in Spanish and others in English. The students put on their headphones and even helped one another access different websites. This room was calm, quiet, and the students were focused. Figure 19 illustrates the classroom as well as instructional work.



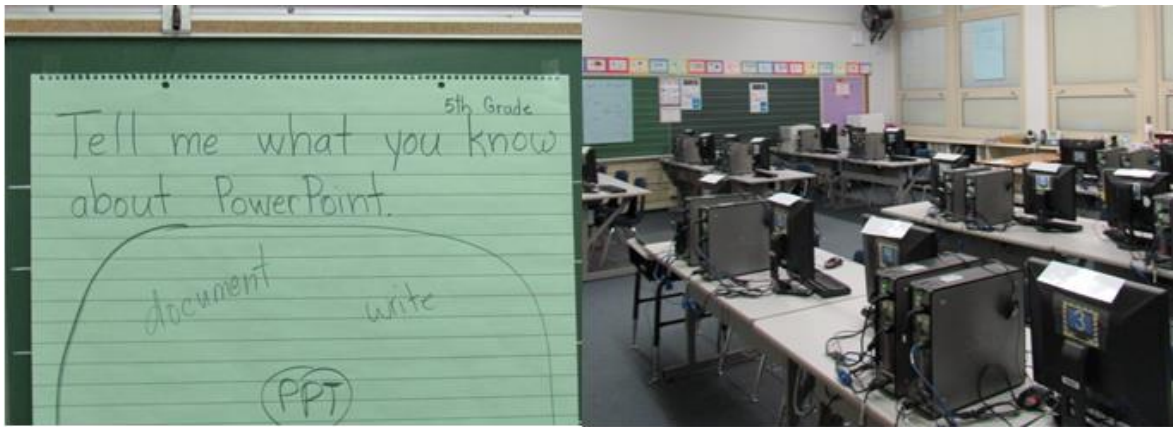


Figure 19. Computer classroom.

After leaving the computer classroom, the researcher ended her observations on the northern side of the building in the energetic art room. The smell of paint and glue greeted the researcher as she entered the room. Paint splatters could be found on almost every surface; from the window sills and tables, to the floor and even the teacher's desk, nothing was safe from arrant paint.

Paint splatters gave way to an array of student art work. Finished student products were displayed on the whiteboard, on filing cabinets, and outside of the classroom. Non student created work consisted of posters of famous artwork on the whiteboard, but this was minimal in comparison to the student work that was found in the room. On the windowsill across from the entrance into the classroom showed the works of art in progress. Students had created masks to reflect their culture and their personal values.

When the students entered the art room, they all went to the windowsill to see their creations. Their voices raised in excitement as they returned to their work. The students were frustrated at first when the teacher asked them to come to the large color blocked rug for a whole group lesson, they wanted to continue their work on their masks.

Once set free from whole group instruction, they needed little redirection. The teacher moved about the room working with students as needed. Students sat on stools at the oversized art tables. They sat where they wanted to sit and some even changed tables a couple of times. Some students chose to sit next to someone, and others chose to sit alone to work. Students spoke enthusiastically with one another about their creation and wanted to show one another their masks. The constant hum of student voices was still considerable lower in volume than in other classes because there were only ten students in the room. The small number of students, however, allowed the teacher the opportunity to sit with each one individually and discuss his or her art piece. Figure 20 illustrates student work in Art.



*Figure 20. Student art work.*

Finally, the researcher scheduled to observe the classroom setting of the Special Education teacher; however, it is important to note that the Special Education classroom was a rolling cart. The Special Education teacher pushed in classrooms throughout the day and the researcher observed her in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom that was not her own.

The classrooms in Joshua Elementary varied in content, grade, and even

classroom management. In a majority of the classrooms, students moved freely about the class as they were learning or working with one another (Wiggins, 2004). The ratio of student to teacher work on display also varied from classroom to classroom, with a majority of classrooms highlighting teacher-created work. Some classrooms, however, displayed student work and created spaces within the classroom that allowed for student voice and ownership (Gay, 2002; Pollock, 2008).

Most classrooms had mirror books readily available and seen; however, the classrooms in which mirror books were not observed may have had them in bins or on shelves unbeknownst to the researcher. Every classroom had observable teacher-created scaffolds in place to assist students with formulating linguistic responses either to other students or in responding to text (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Taylor et al., 2016; Gay, 2000).

Many core content classes had a reading corner or a relaxation corner for students to work in as well as a common behavior management system. No matter how large the classroom or how small each room had its own personality separate from the school with co-constructed experiences between the teachers and the students (Chmiel, 2014; Wiggins, 2004; Moreland, 2007).

## **Observations of Educators**

**Culturally responsive pedagogy.** Fifteen educators were observed using the literature –based observation protocol found in Appendix E. This section of the paper will display the data collected based on each observation element. The first components of the educator observation focused on culturally responsive pedagogy tenets described in

detail by Gay (2010). Table 8 represents the tenets and the number of classrooms in which they were demonstrated.

Table 8  
Demonstration of Culturally Responsive Tenets

Tenet (Gay, 2010)	Classrooms	
	Demonstrated	Observed
The teacher provides space and relationships where ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected, seen, and heard	14	15
The teacher knows culturally diverse students thoroughly personally and academically	13	15
The teacher cultivates a sense of kindredness and responsibility among culturally diverse individuals	13	15
The teacher enables ethnically and culturally diverse students to be open and flexible in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions as well as being receptive to new ideas and information was observed in every classroom	14	15
The teacher enables ethnically and culturally diverse students to be open and flexible in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions as well as being receptive to new ideas and information.	15	15
The teacher builds confidence among students from different aspects	11	15

The first tenet the researcher explored during observation was the tenet of *the teacher provides space and relationships where ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected, seen, and heard* (Gay, 2010). Of the 15 educators who participated in an observation, 14 demonstrated this culturally responsive element during a 60 minute time period. This trait was demonstrated in different ways throughout the classrooms. In

some observations, the researcher saw the tenet in the physicality of the room, and in other cases it was seen in the interaction and relationship between teacher and student. For example, in Kenneth's classroom, each of the thirteen students openly discussed their projects with the teacher, their successes, and their struggles. Kenneth pointed out to one student who was collaborating with another on research, "See, we are a building a sense of community through common understanding" (Kenneth, 2017).

In Jenna's class, her essential question opened up the space for recognizing and respecting students (Pollock, 2008; Taylor et al., 2016). Her essential question, "How can diversity affect a global community?" opened up a dialogue with her students. In the discussion, students discussed their own backgrounds, acknowledged their cultures, and even discussed different race and ethnicities (Taylor et al., 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2014) as she listened intently to them. She also redirected any students who were off task and encouraged active listening to one another (Jenna, observation, 2017).

Another educator, Eva, was working with a small group of students who were struggling to grasp a concept. At one point a frustrated student working on reading comprehension said to her, "You didn't tell us what to do. I can't do this." (Student, 2017) Eva immediately responded, "Tell me why you think that." When the student answered, she responded, "It's okay to think that, but yes you can do this. I know you can. I have seen you do this" (Eva, 2017) . As soon as the student heard Eva's words, he refocused and started working. Eva acknowledged the student, validated his feelings, and verbalized belief in his abilities (Gay, 2010).

Additionally, Brianna was observed demonstrating this ability to provide a space

and relationship with her culturally linguistically diverse students by listening to them when they talked about their families and answered questions when they asked about hers. She allowed all of her students to talk during their circle time and even waited to make sure those who had wanted to speak were able to before moving on to her lesson for the day. Even throughout her lessons, students freely went to her to talk to her about life outside of school (Gay, 2010).

Unlike the majority of the classrooms, there was one observation in which the researcher was unable to observe this element of culturally responsive pedagogy. In one of the classrooms, five of 25 students were argumentative with the teacher and disrupted her lesson for a total of 20 minutes in the hour long observation. The teacher redirected multiple times and in this section of the observation the researcher could not see that there was a space provided for relationships where ethnically diverse learners felt recognized, valued, seen, and heard.

The second tenet, *the teacher knows culturally diverse students thoroughly personally and academically* (Gay, 2010), was observed by the researcher in 13 of 15 observations. One classroom, however, did not show teacher knowledge of students personally or academically.

One of the classrooms which showed a personal and academic knowledge of students was Jenna's classroom. For example, as students were sitting in a circle at the carpet analyzing protest art and discussion of Native American culture, she turned to a student and asked, "This is what you did when you were on the reservation, right? Would you tell the rest of the class about what you told me?" The student then went on

to tell the rest of the class about specific aspects of her life on the reservation. Jenna also knew the students academically as she ensured that she had scaffolded work for them by providing sentence stems for her second language learners and struggling writers. She had more open ended work for her students she thought were moving at a faster pace.

Another educator, Elizabeth, demonstrated her ability to know her students personally and academically multiple times throughout her observation. For example, when a parent was walking in with a student, she asked the parent, “Is the new route getting here working out for you?” (Elizabeth, 2017) She then engaged the parent in a five minute conversation about the drive and commute living further from the school. Ten minutes later, the teacher followed up with the student who had entered first and asked her if she liked her new house and getting to school a different way. Elizabeth went on to discuss something individual with each of her 13 students who entered the room. She engaged one student in conversation about having a new sibling in the family, another about the amount of time it took to get the student’s hair braided, and another about leaving for Mexico over Spring Break. She was able to touch on something personal with every single student (Elizabeth, observation, 2017).

Academically, most of the students were engaged with the learning; however, there was one student who understood concepts in one repetition. After he knew the concept he remained on the carpet for 5 minutes while the teacher continued to explain to the concept to the rest of the class. Upon the third repetition of the concept, the student began moving around the carpet and began distracting other students by engaging them in conversation while the teacher was still giving her lesson. At ten minutes discussing the

concept, the student began walking around the classroom looking for books to read. During the hour long observation, this student had his clip moved more often than the other students, and it was moved only during whole group lessons.

Another teacher, Shannon, was also observed demonstrating her ability to know her students personally and academically. Shannon discussed immigration rights with her students and touched on very specific concerns from her students. She also spoke individually with students about their families and their plans for the weekend.

Academically, she had differentiated reading comprehension work so that the students could prepare for upcoming state testing. She utilized the site NEWSELA (n.d.) and pulled two different levels of text and questioning on the same subject: students of different religious faiths bonding over similarities.

In one classroom, the researcher could not determine how personally the teacher knew the students because her main discourse with them was around academics. While the teacher seemed to have a majority of the class academically engaged, there were five students who grasped the new strategy being taught with addition within two to three repetitions. They were also the students who raised their hands immediately or blurted out answers. Those students wanted to move on to another problem but were told by the teacher to wait. When they did not want to wait, they engaged in off-task activities such as talking with one another and walking around the classroom. The off-task students were both reprimanded (had to move their “clip” and redirected. The researcher was unsure if the teacher would have demonstrated an understanding of the students personally had the researcher observed for a longer period of time.



The third tenet, *the teacher cultivates a sense of kindredness and responsibility among culturally diverse individuals* (Gay, 2010), was observed in 13 out of 15 observations. For example, in Lara's small group, students were observed helping one another set up file folder dividers so that they could concentrate on their reading. The students laughed with one another when the teacher when Lara told a joke and one particular student even offered a joke, himself. Lara (2017) asked, "How did I do teaching this new book to you?" One student answered, "You did a good job," (Student, 2017). At the end of the observation, different students began putting away materials immediately. One student stated, "We want to this to be clean for your next class."

Another example of kindredness and responsibility was observed in Elizabeth's class. A student walked into the class crying, and the other students immediately went up to him and asked him if he was okay. The student went over to Elizabeth and she held him on her lap while the other students gathered around seemingly worried about him. Elizabeth asked the boy, "Are you okay?" When the boy did not answer she said, "That's okay. We are here to help you," (Elizabeth, 2017). Elizabeth then turned to the other students who were noticeably upset and said, "Okay everyone, let's give him his space. When he's ready to talk...sometimes people don't want to talk" (Elizabeth, 2017). At that point another student started rubbing the anguished boy's back and then another student asked him if he wanted to go read a book. When the boy shook his head to indicate 'no', his classmate, said, "That's okay, I can go get one for you," (Student, 2017). After 10 minutes of the student having time alone to read, he rejoined the group. When he did, the other students hugged him and one young man placed his arm around

the shoulder of the upset student. Elizabeth's classroom also had jobs that each of the students had, and they all helped clean their classroom.

Another example of kindredness and responsibility was observed in Amanda's class. During a math lesson where students were moving throughout the room, students began helping one another. When one student mentioned that she did not have a place to sit, a student welcomed her over to his table. When another student indicated that he did not know how to solve one of the problems around the room, two other students went over to help. Amanda was also seen modeling how students can help one another when they get frustrated or do not want to ask the teacher.

Jenna, Kenneth, and Caitlyn's classes all had reward systems in place that required the entire class working together. These same classes saw students assisting one another with help, speaking kindly to one another, and showing responsibility for their classroom space with the different jobs they had been assigned to in the classroom for that week.

In two observations, the researcher could not directly observe this culturally responsive trait in action. This does not mean that the trait does not exist, however, it was not observed.

The fourth tenet was *the teacher enables ethnically and culturally diverse students to be open and flexible in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions as well as being receptive to new ideas and information was observed in every classroom* (Gay, 2010). Examples of this tenet included students who, without observed reservation, vocalized their thoughts and disagreed with the teacher, those who spoke in

their native language (other than English) throughout the classroom, and those who received critical feedback from the teacher without getting upset.

Brianna, for example, was openly discussing advocacy for one's own learning needs. She told one student who had not spoken up about feeling like he was behind, "Let someone know how you feel. Let people know what you need. Don't just let me keep reading, but stop me," (Brianna, 2017). The student was not upset with his new directive. Once she stated that, the student then interrupted her a little later to ask for an explanation of what she was doing.

In the same observation, another student was working on an assignment and Brianna went around to the students to see how their break was. One student mentioned that he had hunted snakes in Mexico and would use the skin to make belts. He then went on to tell her that his family also hunted beavers and made rugs and towels out of the fur. When Brianna (2017) stated, "I didn't know that." The student freely responded, "Everyone knows that." Brianna then replied, "I didn't know that!" This interaction between the teacher and student showed an openness and willingness to express culture without rebuke.

Another observation of this tenet was found in Gabrielle's class. Gabrielle was working on creating a piece of art that represented student cultures. As she was walking around the room, one student shouted, "Miss, what do you want me to write again?" Another student said, "Yeah, I don't understand what we're supposed to do." Gabrielle stopped the students and asked if others were having trouble. When they said yes, she called everyone back to the carpet in the front of her room and reviewed the work. When

another student became frustrated with writing, Gabrielle went to her and the student blurted, “This is dumb. Why do I have to write?” (Student, 2017) Gabrielle thanked her for her honesty and then discussed the importance of writing with the artwork.

Gabrielle also allowed her students to speak in Spanish with one another freely.

Lawrence, another educator in the building, was also observed enabling diverse students to be flexible with their thinking and open with their thoughts. He was helping a student deescalate one on one from a confrontation with another student. He began by asking, “If you have a problem with someone, how can you deal with it?” (Lawrence, 2017) The student and he spoke freely back and forth about how to handle different interactions with people. He then asked the student if he could offer him some advice on how to handle interactions in the future. The student was receptive to Lawrence and his anger was diffused. (Lawrence, 2017).

Lastly, the fifth tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy that was explored was the *teacher builds confidence among students from different aspects* (Gay, 2010), was the least observed tenet of the six in this study. The researcher observed this element of culturally responsive pedagogy in 11 out of 15 classrooms. Similar to previous tenets, this particular tenet varied from classroom to classroom and moment to moment. In Eva’s small group, for example, she was building up the confidence of a student academically when she was observed telling students, “Meet me half way, you can do it”, and “I know you like your patterns, try this. It’s just a way to help you understand it differently.” (Eva, 2017)

In Kenneth’s class, this tenet was observed in a pep talk with a student who

seemed to be discouraged by the text he had to read. Kenneth implored, “Bad? Why? For someone who is SO smart and has learned so much, why is it [reading] bad?” (Kenneth, 2017) He then went on to ask if bad and hard were the same. He was eventually able to have the student say that he wanted help with reading.

Another educator, Pamela, encouraged her students in Spanish. She held a small group to ensure that her students understood the lesson that had just been taught in English. She used both English and Spanish words to describe the lesson, but she anchored her conversation in Spanish to show the students that they did understand what was being taught.

Finally, this tenet was not always observed throughout the school. Although this had lowest rate of being observed, the researcher cannot state definitively if this tenet lacks overall in the school, or if it was not observed during the time the researcher was at the school.

**Gifted multicultural competencies.** The second section of the observation protocol (Appendix E) focused upon the research-based gifted multicultural competencies developed by Ford and Trotman (2001). In order to explore educators’ practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, the researcher used the eight gifted multicultural competencies. Observations of gifted multicultural competencies were done in tandem with the culturally responsive tenets observed above. In some observations, the gifted multicultural competencies blended together based on the teacher and even married with the culturally responsive tenets. This section of the chapter, like its predecessor, will display the data collected based on each observation

element. Furthermore, this section will describe components separately but will note commonalities when applicable. Table 9 displays the gifted multicultural competencies and the number of observations in which the competency was demonstrated.

Table 9  
Demonstration of Gifted Multicultural Competencies

Gifted Multicultural Competencies (Ford and Trotman, 2001)	Classrooms	
	Demonstrated	Observed
Knowledge of the nature and needs of students who are gifted and diverse	9	15
Ability to develop methods and materials for use with students who are gifted	7	15
Skills addressing individual cultural differences	6	15
Skills in teaching higher level thinking skills and questioning techniques using multicultural resources and materials	4	15
Ability to recognize strengths of students who are gifted and diverse	8	15
Seek to develop students' sense of self as a gifted individual	7	15
Skills in counseling students who are gifted and diverse	5	15
Skills in creating an environment in which diverse gifted students feel challenge and safe to explore and express their uniqueness	6	15

The first competency, *knowledge of the nature and needs of student who are gifted and diverse* (Ford and Trotman, 2001), was observed in nine of 15 observations. The knowledge of nature and needs was demonstrated in a variety of ways throughout different classrooms. In several observations, this competency was demonstrated in the form of acknowledging the gifted diverse student's need for movement and in others it

lived in the form of social emotional supports and whole class discussions.

For example, Jenna demonstrated her understanding of the first gifted multicultural competency (Ford and Trotman, 2001) through her lessons on social justice, self-advocacy, and through allowing differentiated products to demonstrate understanding of concepts (Ford, 2014; Delisle and Galbraith, 2002; Tomlinson, 2002). In discussion with her class, Jenna stated, “America is all about different races and different religions. How can that diversity affect a global community?” (Jenna, 2017). Students then discussed the cause and effect of diversity and even exchanged thoughts about current events regarding immigration and religious freedom- debating the “rights” and the “wrongs” of current policy. Jenna then engaged the students in a discussion around diversity and where given the option of displaying their knowledge through different types of products in class (poster, song, or essay).

In Kenneth’s class, the competency was demonstrated through his passion project. His project allowed students to follow research passions and interests. His room was also movement friendly and tapped into some gifted children’s need for movement and novelty when learning. He had core balance chairs and resistance bands for students who need to move while sitting. He allowed for movement and did not restrict students from making choices about their own projects.

Eva and Amanda’s classes also allowed for free movement and the opportunity to talk with peers. Both classes were teaching different content areas, but they both had students moving so that they could learn. Students stayed on task during movement and Amanda even encouraged one student to move so that he could think clearer.

Finally, regarding the first competency, six of 15 classrooms did not demonstrate the competency at all. In the hour-long observation, some classrooms had no evidence of acknowledging the nature and needs of gifted diverse learners because lessons were all the same, some students lost focus on the lessons after one to three repetitions (Weinbrenner, 2013). In another classroom, the nature and needs of some students were ignored when students were arguing in the classroom about how to do an assignment, and the teacher did not respond. Although researcher did not see evidence, teachers may still acknowledge the nature and needs of gifted learners.

The second competency, *ability to develop methods and materials for use with students who are gifted* (Ford and Trotman, 2001), was seen in seven out of 15 classrooms. In some of these classrooms, the methods and materials used by teachers also showed an understanding of the nature and needs of gifted diverse learners. For example, Elizabeth's class allowed for choice in how students absorbed information including the use of wordless books, picture books with words, and a "question of the day" that peaked her students' intellectual interest.

In Jenna's class, again, the second competency was observed through the social justice project she was working on with her students as well as the project titled "Of a Revolution" (Figure 21). "Of a Revolution", shown in its entirety in Appendix H, was introduced to the students first through critiquing art inspired by revolutions throughout history and then by engaging students in discussions about different social causes they are interested in or passionate about. The observation in Jenna's class offered the chance to see the melding of multiple competencies at one time.



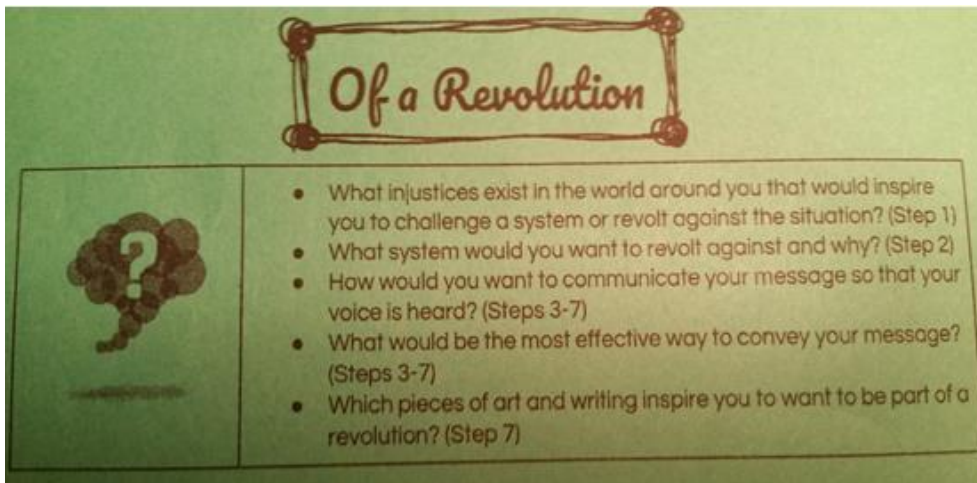
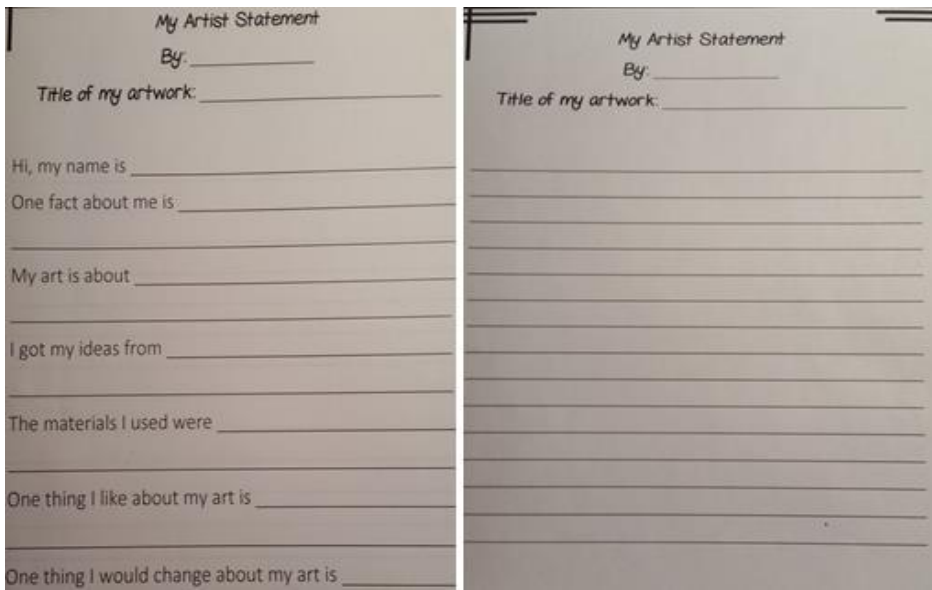


Figure 21. Social-justice project.

The second gifted multicultural competency was also observed in Gabrielle's class. Gabrielle provided two different options for students to create an artist's statement (Figure 22). One had scaffold language supports with sentence stems and the other option had just lines the students were expected to create their artist statement without the same scaffold support. Methods in her class included use of open ended questions and allowing students to create something that was of importance to them during her class (Gay, 2010; Ford, 2014). Figure 22 shows the differentiated options for students to process information (Tomlinson, 2001).



*Figure 22.* Scaffold writing example.

Another educator, Paula also had material that was used with gifted students. She told the researcher that she collaborated with the Gifted and Talented Teacher to develop something that would be of interest to students and still have them demonstrate their understanding of the topic being taught. Figure 23, shows one of the materials that Paula had available for her students to use. She prided herself on having the activity available for all of her students, but she stated she knew it was necessary for her gifted learners (Paula, 2017).

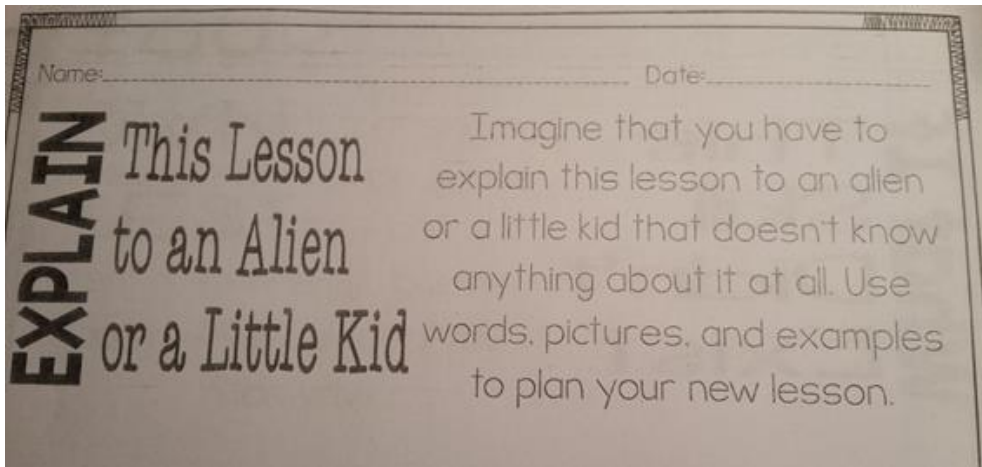


Figure 23. Second grade assignment.

The third gifted multicultural competency, *skills addressing individual and cultural differences* (Ford and Trotman, 2001), was observed in six of 15 classrooms. One educator, Brianna, showed this through her goal-setting “All about Me” lesson (Figure 23). In the observation, Brianna told her students that she intentionally left the figure bald so that each one of them could make the figure represent who they were. She mentioned to the students that they could put hijabs on the figure or whatever else they wanted so that the figure represented them (Brianna, 2017).

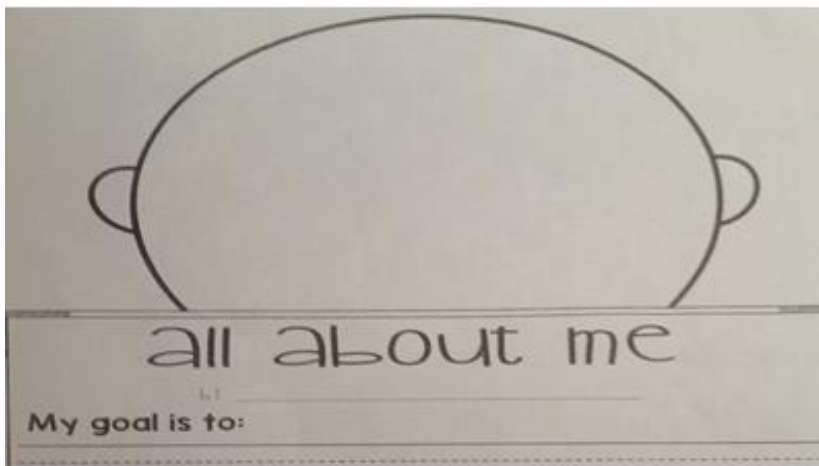


Figure 24. Goal setting in the Gifted classroom.

In addition to Brianna, Lara and Elizabeth were also observed addressing individual and cultural differences with their students. In one of Lara's small groups a student indicated the reading was hard, and Lara responded, "English is hard, I know. Let's look at how it is similar to Spanish" (Lara, 2017). In Elizabeth's class, she commented on a student's braids and texture of hair and then compared it to her own encouraging the student to touch her own hair. These additional moments and interactions between educator and student served as windows into honoring student's culture.

The fourth competency, *skills in teaching higher level thinking skills and questioning techniques using multicultural resources and materials* (Ford and Trotman, 2001), was demonstrated by four of 15 educators. During the observations, most educators were able to demonstrate skills in higher level thinking skills such as metacognition and questioning techniques, but they did not incorporate multicultural resources and materials.

Shannon was one educator who was able to incorporate multicultural resources and higher level thinking skills and questioning. Shannon used an article from the NEWSELA website on religious differences and similarities between children. At the end of the article, students answered pre-generated questions from the website based on their reading level. In addition to those questions, however, Shannon created another sheet that she asked her students to use. This sheet was for all students, but it asked two open response questions. The two questions scaffold in level of cognitive demand, but there is an expectation that the students think for themselves. The next part of the page

requires students to do research and justify some of their thinking. See Figure 25 for examples of this work.

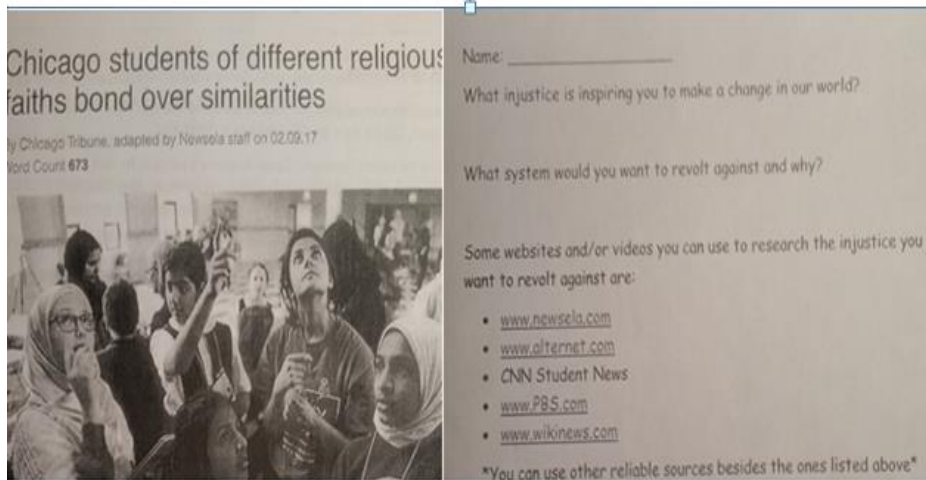


Figure 25. Multicultural news paper article and assignment.

As exemplified before, Jenna’s classroom and Gabrielle’s classroom both used multicultural resources and were skilled at asking higher level questions. Jenna used art throughout history to discuss revolutions around the world. She was observed asking, “How does the art make you feel? Why?” (Jenna, 2017) as well as other questions regarding cause and effect as well making inferences about what the artist was thinking based on their creation. Gabrielle also used multicultural art to discuss the masks her students were making. She also asked higher level questions regarding artist critiques during her lesson.

The last educator observed demonstrating this competency was Elizabeth. Elizabeth was reading a wordless book, The Lion and the Mouse, by African American author and illustrator Jerry Pinkney. Elizabeth discussed the illustrator of the book with the students and then as she asked the students to read the book with her. In order to get

them to read the book with her, she asked individual students to describe what they were seeing on the page and then predict what would happen on the next page. She then followed up by asking why students made their predictions (Elizabeth, 2017).

Again, there were educators in the building who were using higher level thinking, divergent thinking activities, and had complex assignments for their students. They did not, however, use multicultural resources at the time of the observation and therefore were not included in this section.

Next, the fifth competency, or *the ability to recognize strengths of students who are gifted and diverse* (Ford and Trotman, 2001), was observed in eight of 15 classrooms. This was demonstrated in various ways from classroom to classroom. For example, Kimberley complimented her students' ability to code switch between English and Spanish as well as translating for another student. She then praised the student's ability quickly grasp computer skills and still help others.

Another demonstration of competency occurred in Eva's small group when she was working with students who were below grade level in reading. As a student was reading, she noted his ability to bring voice into the text. She pointed out to him that he was talented in that respect and said that she was going to challenge him even more. The student beamed with pride at her compliment and told her he was ready for the challenge.

In addition to Eva and Kimberly, the competency was observed in Jenna's class when she was discussing the student assignment. She told the class, "I know some of you don't like art. So you can do a poem or do a rap" (Jenna, 2017). She acknowledged their various strengths and affirmed for them that it was okay to use those strengths.

Next, the researcher observed the sixth competency, *seek to develop students' sense of self as a gifted individual*, (Ford and Trotman, 2001) in seven of 15 classrooms. The sixth competency was seen most often when teachers were working one on one with a student and in some cases with the whole class. The seven teachers who demonstrated this competency did so through advocacy, either for one's self or for others. For example, in both Shannon and Jenna's classrooms, the teachers used social justice and joining a revolution to have students self-reflect on areas for which they felt they would advocate. In individual conversations with students, Jenna asked students to think about what steps they would need to take in order to advocate effectively for their cause.

Another example of the fifth competency was observed on the walls in Brianna and Pamela's classes. For example, Brianna had inspirational quotes and song lyrics mounted on the walls for everyone to see. Pamela had posters on her walls about activism and finding one's super power. Both of these teachers had environmental reminders for students.

An additional example of developing students' sense of self was seen in Kenneth's classroom. Kenneth had all students focus on self-regulation and had a planning sheet for them to complete their project. He also discussed with individual students how to advocate for their own needs when they were struggling with understanding his directions. He discussed how important it is for a student to speak his or her mind when he or she did not understand something. He told the student that it was his right to learn something new every day and that as a teacher, it was Kenneth's job to help "...make that happen," (Kenneth, 2017).

Next, the seventh competency, *skills in counseling students who are gifted and diverse* (Ford and Trotman, 2001) was observed in two of 15 classrooms. The seventh competency had the lowest rate of observation. However, when it was observed, it was in both times of crisis and opportunity for students. For example, in Elizabeth's class, she counseled a student who walked in crying about something that had happened before school started. She held the student on her lap and told the other student that he needed his space. She then asked the student if he wanted to draw or go read a book. When he wouldn't talk, she said to him softly, "I cannot help you unless you use your words and tell me how you are feeling" (Elizabeth, 2017). The student was able to tell her what he was feeling, and she discussed how he could measure his feelings and make himself feel better so that he could learn. He asked to go to the "cozy corner" and read a book. Other students who were upset also had the opportunity to go draw a picture after speaking with Elizabeth.

In another observation, Brianna worked on goal-setting with her students. She discussed goals with students and why setting goals is important for them to develop as individuals. She also then worked individually with students to determine what goals were most appropriate for them given the year that they had already had. As students were working on their goals, Brianna went to each one individually and asked why they chose the goals they did and helped them articulate what they were thinking. Figure 26 shows the prompt that Brianna had ready for her students when they entered her room.



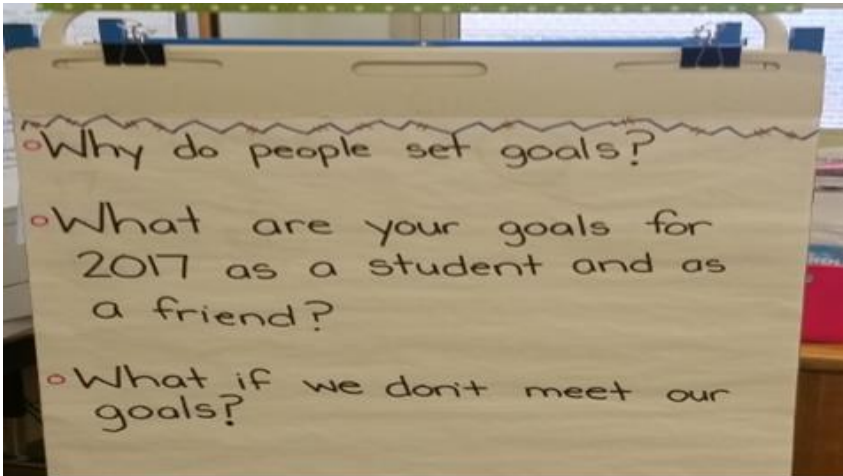


Figure 26. Goal setting with gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.

When reviewing the data collected for this competency, it is important to note that there may have been other examples of teachers counseling students, however, the teachers for whom data was collected were the teachers who indicated to the researcher that the students they were working with were identified as gifted or in the talent development group. Teachers were counseling students throughout the day, however, it is unknown if those students were identified as gifted or talent development.

Finally, the eighth competency observed was *skills in creating an environment in which diverse gifted students feel challenged and safe to explore and express their uniqueness* (Ford and Trotman, 2001). Six of 15 educators demonstrated this competency during observations at the school. This competency showed itself in different forms---from students laughing and using different voices in class, to those who asked questions, to environments where expressing one's feelings was encouraged.

Jenna's observation, once again, seemed to lend itself to demonstrating this competency. The nature of her lesson touched upon multiple competencies. However,

students were encouraged to express their uniqueness through the product they were developing for their museum walk. In showing art she discussed symbolism with the students and asked students how they would express something like the feelings they had when looking at art. Students discussed that when looking at different art pieces they felt broken, sad, energized, angry, and encouraged. The environment in Jenna's classroom allowed students to express themselves freely.

Another teacher who seemed to demonstrate multiple competencies, including this one, showed the eighth competency through his project with students. Kenneth's classroom was an environment where students felt like they were able to express their uniqueness through their own research topic and project.

Both Brianna and Gabrielle demonstrated the eighth competency through their lessons with students representing themselves through their cultures. Brianna also encouraged students to think creatively and brainstorm unique answers to a divergent thinking question that she posed to everyone: List as many ways to use an umbrella when it's not raining. When students started giving answers and laughing at their own identified different uses for the umbrella, she kept encouraging them to continue answering and think divergently.

Elizabeth and Stephen were also observed demonstrating the eighth competency. Elizabeth and her students were observed in imaginary play, hopping around the classroom, and using different voices to talk. Students in her room were encouraged to draw and express themselves. Additionally, Stephen was working with teachers on a rigor professional development. He encouraged them to work with another and come up

with creative ways to teach different lessons. Thus seeming to demonstrate the eighth competency for his teachers so that they could replicate the work in their classroom.

**Intersection of observations.** The observations of teachers yielded different results. In the first part of the observation protocol, the majority of teachers demonstrated the tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy. However, the understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy was met in stark contrast to the results from the second portion of the observation protocol. In observing gifted multicultural competencies, the researcher found that only a small number of educators could demonstrate the gifted multicultural competencies. In total, 16 tenets and competencies were observed in the protocol. Of the 15 educators who participated in observations, three educators demonstrated all sixteen components of the observation. Those educators, Jenna, Kenneth, and Gabrielle created culturally responsive classroom environments for gifted learners (whether formally identified or not). Both of these educators seemed to create a “safe space” (Sleeter, 2008) for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners to engage and potentially achieve.

It should be noted that gifted multicultural competencies should not be considered just good teaching or merely an extension of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ford & Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2014; Ford, 2016). Instead, the multicultural competencies are layered upon the culturally responsive tenets. While the multicultural competencies are good practices for all culturally linguistically diverse learners, they are essential practices for teachers of gifted culturally linguistically diverse (Seeley, 2004; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Gay, 2010; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982).

**Theoretical frameworks in observations.** In considering the theoretical frameworks of CRT and constructivism in the classroom, the researcher observed multiple opportunities for students to learn from one another and engage in discourse illustrating Vygotsky's theories that both knowledge from others and growth can come from discourse with other students and teachers (Morford, 2007). Furthermore, every classroom had opportunities for students to work together and construct their own realities within the classroom, also supporting Wiggins's (2004) theory that each "individual constructs his or her reality through experiences and interactions," (Chmiel, 2014). Each interaction, whether positive or negative shaped the reality for the learners in the room (Chmiel, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008).

Wiggins's thoughts regarding constructivism were also observed in the ways in which the school building incorporated student work as well as pictures of the students doing various activities as this was a way in which students constructed their environment (Wiggins, 2004). The hallways had large photographs of students as well as student work and created a reality for students when they walked in the doors of the school or down the hallway (Chmiel, 2014; Gay, 2010; Pollock, 2008).

Additionally, the opportunity to discuss and challenge the social construct within the classroom as well as the ideas being presented are supported by CRT (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Litowitz, 2016) as well as culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010). For example, during the observations, all students were allowed to discuss their thoughts and feelings about teacher practices and assignments. All educators listened to students. Most educators then modified or clarified their own thoughts (Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010).

In other cases, educators seemed to engage in forms of oppression as described in CRT (Ladson-Billings, 2016) within the classroom. Although most classrooms had culturally responsive environment, oppression towards gifted culturally diverse learners could be observed in a majority of classrooms in terms of the types of assignments within the classroom. The researcher cannot say if the oppression was intentional or was due to a lack of knowledge of those learners and their needs. Some classrooms were sensitive to the gifted multicultural competencies and the researcher observed modified teaching practices for those learners. However, the researcher cannot determine if the educators who demonstrated competencies with Ford and Trotman's work (2001) did so innately or because they had learned how to implement the competencies.

### **Interviews with Educators**

Educator interviews took place over the course of two months. The researcher worked with the schedules of participants and interviewed them all at the school in a location and time that was of comfort to them (Creswell, 2014). The first three questions of the interview were educator-centric in that the questions were focused on what the educator individually understood. Questions four through six, however, were school community centric in that the focus was on the school as a whole. The rest of this section will report the findings of each interview question. Interview questions can be found Appendix D as well as in Table 10.

**Table 10*****Interview Questions***

Question	Reference to Literature
Describe your understanding of gifted learners	NAGC, 2015; Gagne, 2004; CDE, 2015; Federal definition, 2002; Piechowski, 2009; Webb, 2014; Delisle, 2002; Renzulli, 1984; Renzulli, 2002; Betts and Neihart, 2009; Kingore, 2001
Describe your understanding of culturally linguistically diverse learners	Rhodes et al., 2005; Banks and Banks, 2009; Hammond, 2014; Banks, 2015; Solorzano and Yosso , 2000; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2002
Describe your understanding of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Ford, 2010; Ford, 2012; Ford, 2014; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Castellano, 2014; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Frasier and Passow, 1995
How does your school support gifted learners?	CDE, 2015; Assouline, et al 2006; Webb, 2014 ; Cross, 2014 ; Piechowski, 2009 ; Johnsen, 2011 ;
How does your school support culturally linguistically diverse learners?	CDE, 2015; Genishi and Dyson, 2015; Gay, 2010, Gay, 2002; Bass, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson Billings, 2016; Pollock 2008.
How does your school support gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012; Solorzano and Yosso, 2000.
Tell me about a culturally linguistically diverse child with whom you've worked or	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford and Whiting,

known and who you thought was gifted or really bright. What did you notice about him or her?	2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Worrell, 2008; Borland, 2013; Borland, 2014; Bass, 2009, Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012.
What might you need to effectively work with gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Fullan, 1994; Senge et al., 2013

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*Table 10. Interview protocol and literature support*

The researcher’s first question sought to understand what participants perceived about gifted students with the following question: *Describe your understanding of gifted and talented learners.* Answers to this question varied on a continuum of understanding of giftedness. Some listed the ways in which students could be identified and even characteristics of gifted learners and others described gifted learners on a conceptual level. Then again, some participants intertwined the two.

Brianna answered this question by saying, “I know that there is an academic component and that there are various areas of giftedness that aren’t always based on academics.” She then went on to say, “There is just something that is different in the way that they think from their peers...They aren’t always, on paper, the smartest kid in the class, but their minds just work in different ways and they process information differently and have different needs.”

Amanda went to a drawer in her desk and pulled out Bertie Kingore’s (2001) characteristics of gifted diverse learners. She mentioned that working with gifted and

talented students had been the focus of the school that year. Specifically, teaching to the high. She stated that her understanding of gifted learners "...could mean that they catch on quicker than other students. The knowledge is conceptual not procedural. They are able to come to conclusions to problems in creative ways instead of using the steps that you provided them," (Amanda, 2017).

Paula also referenced her understanding of gifted learners had changed when she stated, "I used to think, 'oh gifted that's just really smart and they should be able to just get things' but this year I've learned about the characteristics and how sometimes they might be perceived as negative..."(Paula, 2017). When asked what changed her thinking, she stated the professional learning that had occurred that year. Three other educators referenced the professional learning conducted at the beginning of the year as having an influence on their thinking about gifted learners.

Two educators, both electives teachers, mentioned students could be twice exceptional. Kimberly (2017) stated, "I do know they can have IEPs. They can be low in one area and high in another." Gabrielle also mentioned twice exceptional when she replied, "In Art, when I see gifted and talented students I see it as Two-X. Students who struggle academically but are really excelling in art. It's the way they communicate visually," (Gabrielle, 2017).

Thomas, an administrator, described gifted children as having "Specific gifts and talents in different domains...academics, sports, leadership so it's not just intellectually gifted. It's about their talents and how we can develop them and looking at them socially with a world view" (Thomas, 2017).



Lawrence (2017) succinctly stated, “They get in trouble a lot.”

Finally, when describing his understanding of giftedness, Stephen, an administrator stated, “I think they are often the most overlooked students. I think that we really have to serve our gifted students well because not many people understand they do need to be taught differently they do need to be looked at differently” (Stephen, 2017).

The researcher’s second question sought to understand what participants perceived about culturally and linguistically diverse learners in general with the question: *Describe your understanding of culturally linguistically diverse learners. Answers to this question were quite different from the first answers.* The question seemed to stump many of the participants. Brianna, for example, replied, “I don’t know. Yeah, I am just not sure.” Stephen also admitted a limited understanding when he stated, “My understanding of that is a little less so just because I’ve struggled with part of that approach myself.” As Stephen continued to process verbally he began talking about his previous school he said, “This year is the first year that I have really looked at it. My other school was more diverse in that it had a third white, black, Hispanic, and it was diverse economically. When it is that spread out and equal you can’t be your group. So I actually saw kids as kids. At a school where you have diversity as far as race but there isn’t diversity as far as economic status, I don’t know.”

Still, other educators possessed a more in depth understanding. Alison (2017), an administrator, for example, became animated with this question and stated, “They are not white middle class. Everything that we do is based on white middle class! It’s crazy!”

Lara went even further into explaining when said, “There is a huge range students

come to us speaking their first language and nothing else, there are students who are bilingual, and a range in between...they have a cognitive flexibility and their ability to shift between their home culture and their school culture makes them very skilled at a very young age.”

Other educators echoed Lara’s statement around cognitive flexibility. Caitlyn also addressed flexibility when she stated, “They have the ability think more flexibly when you have someone who is bilingual or multilingual.” She continued, “They have assets that are beyond someone who isn’t linguistically diverse because they do have the strength of having more than one language,” (Caitlyn, 2017)

Thirteen of the 15 educators responded that their entire school was culturally linguistically diverse. However, the researcher noticed that many of the answers focused on the language of the learners, rather than taking into consideration poverty, religion, and even race. Kimberly and Jenna were the only two educators to describe culturally linguistically diverse learners beyond language. Jenna stated, “In this school we have a lot of refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia, and we also have a Hispanic population. I see it as students whose world view and what they know about cultures may give them a leg up compared to students who know strictly American Culture. I see it as students whose world view, and what they know about cultures, may give them a leg up compared to students who know strictly American Culture.”

Thomas stated, “They live between two worlds. You put your Superman cape on when you come to school and you have to adapt to a new environment. Then you translate that back home and live between two realities.”

Next, the researcher's third question layered the two unique groups of learners together by asking the following: *Describe your understanding of gifted culturally and linguistically diverse learners.* This question caused many of the participants to pause. Some of them stated that there was no difference in their mind. Other discussed the work the school had done around talent development. Still others layered their previous answers together. For example, Caitlyn replied, "They have talents and abilities that extend beyond that of a typical learner and because they have strengths from their background and language background we can see that they have three strengths in their favor."

Some educators reflected upon identifying gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners with their answers. For example, Shannon (2017) stated, "I don't look at them too differently from a regular gifted learner. My biggest weakness would be identifying them when they are missing that proficiency in English. It's so much harder because they have a lot more breakdowns. That's a huge weakness of mine."

Katie (2017) also stated, "I think it's the same as other GT. It's not just academics. It's harder to identify sometimes, because some kids are super shy, and in their culture they are not supposed to be the outgoing talkative kid so it's hard to identify which ones are gifted."

Alison responded in terms of both identified and non-identified students, "If they are determined as gifted already in our system, they have probably learned the white middle class ways. I would say that they probably have the talent and they have found a way to work within the system of the white middle class system in the school. The kids

who aren't officially identified... most likely they could be expressing those gifts in ways that aren't traditional. They may not be a good writer or have the academic language, but they could be such a creative story teller," (Alison, 2017).

Next, the researcher's fourth question shifted the participants' focus from themselves as individuals to how the school community as a whole supports gifted learners with the following question: *How does your school support gifted learners?* In response to this question, educators discussed pull out services and the overall focus of the school in talent development.

Still, other educators focused on the professional development (PD) that had occurred at the beginning of the year. Gabrielle stated, "This year we were introduced to KOI and how to look for giftedness using KOI strategies if something bubbled up to the surface using the strategies we'd take note. That's new this year." Kimberly replied, "They actually started identifying students. Teachers have been given resources to identify students and support them. With open ended questions and lesson planning focused on higher level thinking with GT and academics. I see it throughout the school." Jenna reiterated, "We've had a lot of PDs about identifying gifted students by either doing extension activities or making essential questions for your unit more open ended and planning lessons."

Some teachers focused on the addition of a gifted and talented teacher who has helped them throughout the year. Jenna also focused on the additional help of the gifted and talented teacher when she stated, "She is really awesome and she comes in once a week and she pushes in and then pulls out. She gives me feedback when she observes my

lesson about how I can tweak a lesson to make it higher level.” Kenneth also mentioned the GT teacher and that she pushed in and pulled out students. Paula stated, “I know we have a GT teacher here who actually pulls students out.”

Not everyone, however, expressed that they perceived they had the support from the GT teacher. Shannon (2017) stated, “Apparently every other grade gets support for gifted learners, I’m going to be very blunt. There is zero GT support on the literacy side unless I go forward and ask for something.” Amber related similar feelings when she stated, “I don’t think we do a great job of it [supporting gifted]. Because certain kids aren’t being pulled because they don’t fit her [GT teacher] certain needs or wants or whatever,” (Amber, 2017). Amber continued, “There are certain kiddos of mine that because they weren’t producing enough work, or they aren’t doing the work, which I think sometimes is a sign of giftedness and they don’t get pulled. I know ECE doesn’t get pulled at all,” (Amber, 2017).

Although there were mental health and social emotional supports in the building, no teacher mentioned these as a way in which the school supported gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Instead, they focused on the academic supports in place for them and for their students.

Next, the fifth question followed the same pattern as above and asked participants: *How does your school support culturally linguistically diverse learners?* Participant responses varied, much like their answers around gifted school support. Most of the answers focused on instructional supports either in place or that was lacking for language learners, including specific language supports including in class language

supports and pull-out grouping. Stephen began by stating, “I think this is one of those things that we need to do a better a job. But also it is our whole student population.”

Alison stated, “Most of our school is CLD so what we do in our practices are culturally responsive and I hope that they support all students,” (Stephen, 2017) She also noted that “Our teachers are all getting their ELA certifications so that they learn the skills to support English language learners that the district provides,” (Alison, 2017).

Paula stated, “My classroom is bilingual. I don’t know that I’ve received specific training on culturally linguistically diverse learners. There is PD on how to support kids that are culturally linguistically diverse in DPS, just not at Joshua Elementary.”

When addressing language support, Jenna stated, “We have a lot of interpreters on hand. Our para staff speaks Somali languages and Spanish and English. We have a lot of people on site.” Both Amanda and Jenna showed language supports that they use such as sentence stems to help their second language learners access the learning.

Following the same pattern of the previous questions, the sixth question asked the following: How does your school support gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners? Alison enthused, “We’re trying to create a model that doesn’t exist. We want to be a neighborhood that has CLD students that can come here; and that we have not a stand-alone program, but that our whole school identifies the gifts and the talents of students and are developing them. That’s how we’re merging them, we want to create a model... We want to be a model that others can copy or follow.” (2017)

Amanda referenced professional development and work with the KOI (Kingore, 2001). Amanda stated, “When we were doing the talent development thing, they gave us

a checklist of things to look for and we would date it.” Amanda then went to her desk drawer and pulled out a list of characteristics as well as negative behaviors (Kingore, 2001). She continued, “We also had this sheet. It was a nice little guide to all of the different things you might see, and then this is the general population and compare them to our school. We did this the first 4 weeks of school, so when we would see these things we would note them,” (Amanda, 2017).

The researcher asked a follow up question of Amanda about school support by asking, “You mentioned that you ‘were doing the talent development’. Would you tell me more about that?” (Primary Researcher, 2017) Amanda replied, “I think it’s a work in progress...I haven’t heard about it in quite a while. I don’t know if it will come back around because they recorded what we picked. We had resources but not actual coaching,” (Amanda, 2017).

In contrast, Thomas explained he felt there was a lot of instructional support , specifically from the GT teacher, when he stated, “ She does a lot of work to create our materials and opportunities to create learning environments. So looking at higher order thinking questions, open ended questions, how do we pose questions to those kids, how do you get them to reflect, and think, and wrestle with it.” He continued, “She does meet with small groups and work with teachers on passion projects. Just to carry out what they’ve worked out with their lesson planning and give the mentorship.” (Thomas, 2017)

Other teachers, however, focused on what they were doing in their own classrooms and not what the school was doing as a whole. Jenna responded, “One of the things we can do is build our own units. So my focus is on diverse cultures and how

those cultures have built America. When I get the freedom to build those units, I feel like I get to ask those questions that really cater to kids from different cultures, and they get to actually talk about their culture and how it's influenced their lives in America.” (Jenna, 2017)

The answers to the sixth question varied in understanding between what the school was doing and what individual teachers were doing as a whole. There was also a difference between what educators were either receiving or perceiving as support as well as who was receiving that support.

Next, the researcher shifted the focus of the question towards the educators' personal experiences (Yin, 2009) and asked the following: *Tell me about a culturally linguistically diverse learner with whom you have worked and thought was gifted or really bright. What did you notice about him or her?* In doing this, the researcher sought to construct a reality with the participants by asking them to discuss specifics about children (Lincoln and Guba, 2004) At this point in the interview, there was a noticeable shift in the way in which the participants interacted with the researcher. The participants' eyes often “lit up” and they smiled when discussing what they noticed. Stephen, for example, chuckled, leaned forward and said, “Leadership. Now, it may not always be in the right manner, but it is innate. Also, there are kids who question and they may have acted out and struggled. They struggled with being smart because people, older people their parents or their siblings have used it against them.”

Alison, smiled, and said that she noticed, “They asked a lot of questions. A girl I had when I was teaching high school physics and chemistry blew me away. She had just



come to the country and struggled with reading, but she got the concepts! I mean, who does that?" (Alison, 2017)

Brianna also mentioned questioning as well as different ways of thinking resonated with her. She said, "Ah, I have one right now, they are from Somalia and I work with the whole family. They have different ways of thinking. The questions that he had, I was just like, 'Why are you even thinking about that?' He was always thinking . I loved it." Brianna went on, "He was inquiring about the craziest things. Like we were reading a book together and he would ask, 'What's holding this book together? I don't see staples, I don't see holes,'" (Brianna, 2017) She laughed and shook her head.

Kimberly smiled and said that the student she was thinking of was "Very quiet. Almost afraid. He had the answers but didn't want to raise his hand to answer them. He confirmed answers after class. He was a little sponge. He was reading at a 4<sup>th</sup> grade level, and he came in at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and he wanted more. I knew I couldn't support him, so I sent him to the grade level above."

One educator, after speaking about she noticed, questioned whether or not students identified as gifted or in need of talent development at Joshua Elementary would be identified at another school. Shannon stated, "The ones who have been pointed out to me as gifted. I mean yeah, they are bright, but I don't know that if we put them in another school, would they really be GT?" She discussed her frustration with some students who were not recognized as in need of gifted services in her classroom, yet she thought that they needed it. She described a student who was not being pulled and said, Shannon said, "He'll be grappling with this idea and he'll verbalize this beautiful

sentence when he's participating, and then when he goes to produce it---nothing. It could be an hour of just not knowing what to do, but he thinks so deeply and when he gets it, he's on a roll." She continued, "But there is something that just blocks him, head down/shut down, can't even articulate it verbally through writing. There is something that it is stopping it. It's frustrating for me because I can't unlock it so that he can just take it and run with it."

Finally, the last question of the interview was constructed so that the researcher could help determine what supports were needed for participants. The researcher did this by asking the following: *What might you need to effectively work with gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?* As part of an exploratory case study framework, the researcher is exploring and making recommendations to the community partner as well as topics or areas for future staff development

Participants' answers fell into four categories: Connection between CLD best practices and gifted practices, time, professional learning, and resources. For example, Stephen stated, "More connection between CLD best practices and what I know to be best practices in GT development. Time and professional development in getting teachers to be comfortable to make a jump in change."

Alison echoed the need for CLD best practices, specifically strategies. She also mentioned, "I need to figure out what the students need. I could do it in a small class, but in a big class of students how do you always think of the gifted first. It's not something that I naturally do, and I bet it's something that our teachers don't think of either. A lot of times our success stories are our struggling learners." (Alison, 2010)

Eva stated, “I would like to have better and broader assistive technology for students. Let’s take out certain disabilities and barriers and get right to what they know.” One participant was concerned about not being a part of the conversation with these learners. Elizabeth stated, “I feel like I need strategies to balance the academic needs with the social needs. I would need to feel like administration cares about the work that we do.”

Multiple participants indicated they needed more time. Lara said, “ Time. Time to get to know them and time to figure out the way to best draw out their gift. Time to get to know them and time to get to know their families,” (Lara, 2017). Lara went to say she wanted to ask, “What do you see as strengths in your child? How can we help you nurture that?” She said that she felt involving the family was needed, “...more so than other populations. I know it’s stressful for families to come into the school. Families have insight into their kids and there might be something we never thought of that we could use as a strength in their instruction and developing talents.” (Lara, 2017).

Another educator, Lawrence, went in a different direction from everyone else. He stated, that “You need gifted culturally and linguistically diverse teachers. You need teachers that look like the students. That’s definitely the huge first step. If you cannot find those people even though they do exist, even if you can’t find those there has to be an intentional way to dismantle this bias or perceived inadequacy of these certain groups of people.” Table 11 Shows all answers given to the questions

Table 11  
 What might you need to effectively work with gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?

Participant	Responses
Stephen	More connection between CLD best practices and what I know to be best practices in gt development. Time and professional development in getting teachers to be comfortable to make a jump in change.
Alison	I need to figure out what the students need. I need strategies that I can use to support them and the coaches- really specific strategies to meet their needs and push them.
Caitlyn	Case studies or working to understand one or two kids to transfer that learning across abilities.
Eva	I would like to have better and broader assistive technology for students. Let's take out certain disabilities and barriers and get right to what they know
Elizabeth	Strategies to balance the academic needs with the social needs. I would need to feel like administration cares about the work that we do.
Lara	Time. Time to figure out what would be so many of them have so many things they need to say.
Thomas	I think you need to be educated as to what it means to be gifted. Talent development is one aspect of it but I do think you need

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to have a formal education in it.  
Regardless if it's in your undergraduate program or go back and get your licensure like I did. It's not something that you can do by reading an article.

Kimberly

Resources. Just remember that it's not more work that it's higher level thinking work.

Amber

I need more tools. I know the idea is in that you don't just give them more work or harder work, you go deeper. In this setting with 30 kids, what does it look like?

Kenneth

Get rid of Common Core

Jenna

I need a diverse knowledge of these cultures.

Amanda

Strategies appropriate tasks. Examples of those. It's hard when you don't, when you're first jumping in and when you're given a resource, you can use it all wrong. So not only the resources but the implementation.

Shannon

That balance between the English proficiency and production. It's how to truly work with that.

Paula

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I'm really curious about kids of color maybe aren't identified as easily and I guess I would want training around that.

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Gabrielle	A few more strategies. I feel like in my content, we do open ended art projects that everyone's project is different.
Brianna	I need to get to know their backgrounds better.
Lawrence	You need gifted culturally and linguistically diverse teachers. You need teachers that look like the students.

Table 11. Answers given to researcher regarding participant identified needs

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**Theoretical frameworks in interviews.** In considering the theoretical frameworks of constructivism and CRT, the researcher noted that the participants and the researcher co-constructed their reality because the participants and the researcher were “linked so that the findings were literally created as the investigation proceeded,” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba assert that “Constructions are not more or less ‘true’...but more or less informed/and or sophisticated,” (Lincoln and Guba 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 2008). The constructions of the interview process allowed for the participants to articulate and describe their understandings and their realities regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Lincoln and Guba, 2004) without pre-determined and researcher created answers (Frasier and Passow, 1995; Ford, 2014).

Almost every participant indicated that their reality in how they viewed gifted children and gifted culturally diverse children changed through the acquisition of knowledge regarding characteristics through professional learning that occurred in the

Fall of 2016. This noted component of constructivism was unexpected for the researcher and the researcher wondered how and if the professional learning may have changed the perceptions of teachers. Michael Fullan noted that change theory or change knowledge, “,,can be very powerful in education reform strategies and getting results,” (Fullan, 2006). The researcher cannot conclude based on interviews alone that there are results, but the researcher does note that educators discussed the “push for change” regarding thinking about gifted learners from administration.

The researcher also “listened” (Yin, 2008) for components of CRT when interacting with the participants. The researcher very rarely heard the opposing story (Ladson-Billings, 2016) of the gifted and talented learner, however the researcher did hear the silent story (Ladson-Billings, 2016) of culturally linguistically diverse learners when some educators could not describe a culturally diverse learner. The interviews also revealed instances of colorblindness (Pollock, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2004) when some educators expressed how they did not view gifted culturally diverse learners differently from White gifted children. According to CRT, racism is “endemic to American life,” (Litowitz, 2016) and the act of colorblindness as reported by participants in this way continues to perpetuate racism.

During the interviews, the researcher also noted that the many of the teachers discussed that gifted culturally linguistically diverse children had been overlooked by them as individuals, by the school historically, and throughout the nation. This verbalized acknowledgement about the oppression of gifted culturally diverse learners is supported in CRT as well (Litowitz, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008).

## Emerging Themes and Assertions

Creswell (2013) defines themes as “broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated for form a common idea” (p. 186). While analyzing and triangulating the data collected, the researcher identified seven themes that were common throughout the observations, interviews, and audio-visual materials. The themes emerged out of the codes the researcher used (Creswell, 2014) and were based on topics and concepts that kept surfacing throughout the research (Tesch, as reported in Creswell, 2014).

Theme related components were also used to help code and were identified as they helped develop the themes. Next, all themes and theme related components were reviewed through the theoretical frameworks of CRT and constructivism, as well as supported by the literature. Additionally, as the researcher analyzed the data, components regarding change theory were noted. The researcher saw a connection between the research conducted and the work of Chris Argyris (2000) and Michael Fullan (2006) regarding espoused theories and theories in action. Table 12 displays the themes, theme-related components, assertions and ties to the literature and or frameworks.

Table 12  
Emerging themes and assertions

Themes	Theme Related Components	Assertions	Support from the Literature and or Theoretical Framework
Inconsistency between what educators reported as perceptions and	Reported positive characteristics and negative manifestations of	Educators hold espoused theories regarding gifted diverse learners that	Fullan, 2007; Argyris, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Litowitz,



<p>their practices as a school.</p>	<p>learners.</p> <p>Most educators acknowledge the need to focus on the overlooked population.</p> <p>Educators discussed the need to see students differently than they had in the past.</p> <p>Educator practices are inconsistent with a majority of educators not supporting gifted culturally diverse learners</p> <p>The school building has supports in place for social emotional needs, yet the educators do not specifically use them for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.</p> <p>Lack of professional learning mentioned regarding social emotional needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.</p>	<p>differ from their theories of action.</p>	<p>2016; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2000; Gay, 2010; Ford, 2014; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Frasier and Passow, 1995; Ford and Stambaugh, 2010; Bernal, 2000; Webb, 2014)</p>
<p>Professional learning opportunities</p>	<p>Professional development this year focused on</p>	<p>Professional development has impacted educators'</p>	<p>Fullan, 2007; Argyris, 2000; Ladson-</p>

regarding characteristics of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners impacted teacher perception.

identifying the characteristics of culturally linguistically diverse students

Teachers referred students for talent development after receiving training on KOI

Educators reported having a stronger grasp of what to look for in finding students for talent development or gifted services

espoused theories of gifted diverse learners.

Billings,2016; Lincoln and Guba, 2004; Litowitz,2016; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010; Ford and Grantham , 2003; Ford, 2001; De Wet andGubbins,2011

Educators have shifted how they think about plan lessons by planning for “the high”

Professional development on rigor

Educators mentioned “planning for the high” and “teaching to the top”.

Inconsistent rigorous lessons and activities observed.

Inconsistency in implementation and support of Talent Development model.

Some teachers receive coaching and support for gifted CLD students and

School-wide focus on talent development changed espoused theories while planning for student, however, not all practices have shifted yet.

Inconsistency of implementation and support will not move the school forward in their

Fullan, 2007; Argyris, 2000; Ladson-Billings,2016; Lincoln and Guba, 2004; Litowitz,2016; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010; Ford and Grantham , 2003; Ford, 2001; Fullan, 2006; Argyris, 2000; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Olszewski-Kubilius

	others do not	mission of teaching to the top.	and Clarenbach, 2012; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2016
	Professional development regarding Talent Development has not occurred since first semester		
Differences noted between cultural responsive pedagogy and teachers who are skilled in gifted multicultural competencies	Consistently, almost all educators observed were able to demonstrate Gay's (2010) culturally responsive tenets.  Most educators were not observed demonstrating gifted multicultural competencies.	Teachers may be able to identify gifted learners and they may be able to be culturally responsive to diverse students, but they are struggling to put best practices of both together.	Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Seeley, 2004; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982; Ford, 2014; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2016
Lack of understanding of how existing social emotional supports can assist gifted diverse learners	No mention of Restorative Justice, Extended Day, Bronco's Reading Room, or mental health supports.  No mention of the information station or family resources	Educators focus more inwardly on how they individually support with instructional strategies and miss the wrap-around services that the school provides for learners as this not a consisted part of their constructed reality.	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2014; Lincoln and Guba, 2004; Morford, 2007; Chmiel, 2014; Worrell, 2008; Webb, 2014; Cross, 2010)
There are some culturally responsive gifted educators evident	Three educators demonstrated all 13 components of the observation	Skill is required to understand the gifted culturally responsive pedagogical	Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2014; Seeley, 2004; Hultgren and Seeley,

practices

1982;  
Gay, 2010; Ladson-  
Billings, 2016

Table 12. Emerging themes and assertions as supported by literature

In developing themes as well as assertions, the use of theoretical frameworks guided the researcher's work. The foundational components of CRT focus on the history of racism and the segregation of culturally linguistically diverse learners throughout the education system (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Litowitz, 2016). With this component in mind, the researcher critiqued themes related to inequitable educational opportunities for students within the school and within the classroom based on statements and actions made by educators (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Litowitz, 2016; Gay, 2010; Ford 2014). In addition to critiquing the environment when looking for themes, assertions about educators' statements were also analyzed. The assertions regarding educator perceptions as well as the inconsistencies in practices are related to both CRT, Fullan's (2006) theory of change, as well as work around gifted culturally diverse student performance (Fullan, 2006; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Ford, 2008; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Ford, 2014, De Wet and Gubbins, 2011).

CRT seeks to eliminate oppression and issues a "challenge to hierarchy, itself" (Litowitz, 2016). Therefore as the researcher was reviewing data, the researcher looked at oppressing factors within the school, whether overt or not, to determine how the school supported or hindered gifted culturally diverse learners. Oppressing factors for gifted culturally linguistically diverse students include social emotional constructs and supports in place in the school and classroom as well as hierarchies within the educational

environment(Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2014; Gay, 2010) as well as education opportunities (Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Gay, 2010; Litowitz, 2016; Pollock, 2008). Hierarchies within the classroom between culturally diverse learners and their teachers (primarily Caucasian) were critiqued with CRT (Litowitz, 2016). Those hierarchies were then cross-referenced with the tenets of Gay's (2010) components of culturally responsive classrooms as well as Ford and Trotman's (2001) gifted multicultural competencies.

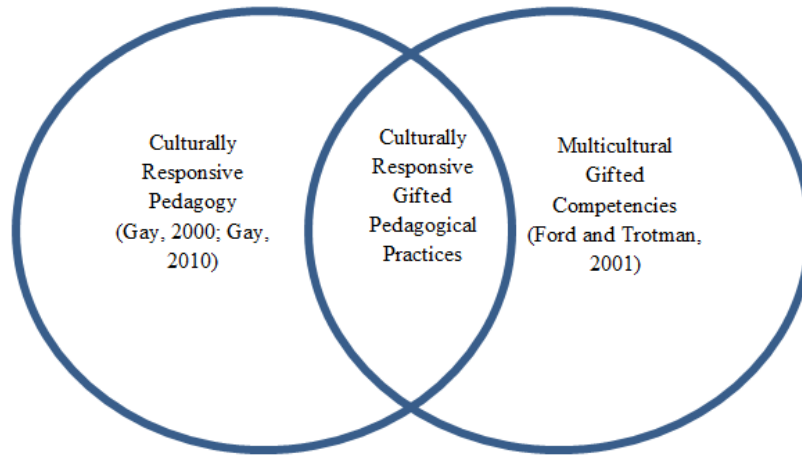
A theme emerged from the data that the researcher had not expected and that regarded professional learning that had already occurred prior to the study and that was the stated change in perceptions of educators due to professional learning. The professional learning focused on the observable characteristics of gifted diverse learners as described by Bertie Kingore (Kingore, 2001). During this professional learning, educators were trained on the KOI as well as positive and negative manifestations of giftedness in diverse populations.

As the researcher noticed differences in espoused, or stated, theories regarding gifted education, they all indicated that their earlier professional learning had an impact on their perceptions (Fullan, 2006; Argyris, 2000). Fullan (2006) notes that in order for educational reform to truly occur, there must be an alignment between an educators' espoused theories and their theories in use (or theories of action). When comparing the observations to the interviews and the photographs, the researched saw a difference between the espoused theories and the actual theories in use.

## **Conceptual Model**

In reviewing the observation components separately, the researcher noted that there were three educators at Joshua Elementary who showed evidence of culturally responsive pedagogical tenets and multicultural gifted competencies in their classrooms. As stated previously, these educators consistently demonstrated multiple components throughout the observation protocol. Therefore, through the intersection of culturally responsive pedagogical tenets as outlined by Gay (2000) and the multicultural gifted competencies outlined by Ford and Trotman (2001), these teachers seemed to engage their classrooms using a different and specialized skill from their colleagues. In thinking about the specialized skill set demonstrated, the researcher has created the Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model™. In current scholarship, there is no model that has conceptualized the layering and intersection of culturally responsive tenets and multicultural gifted competencies. Just as the observation protocol, the two concepts are often looked at separately.

The Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model, however, can be used as a guide for research-based and research evidenced best practices for educators. Figure 27 shows the model created out of the congruence of culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies.



*Figure 27.* Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model

The Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model was created by analyzing the observation data and noting that there were teachers at the study site who were demonstrating their ability to create a culturally responsive classroom environment while exhibiting multicultural gifted competencies. As stated previously, current scholarship does not offer examples of educators who are able to create culturally responsive classrooms while also demonstrating multicultural gifted competencies, however, this study does.

Jenna was an educator who seemed to be skilled at creating a culturally responsive environment while incorporating teaching techniques that are necessary for gifted students to thrive (Ford, 2016; Borland, 2013; Gay, 2010; Briggs and Reis, 2008; Grantham, 2004; Van-Tassel Baska and Stambaugh, 2005; Ford and Trotman, 2001). During her observation, Jenna demonstrated every tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy as well as every multicultural gifted competency. Jenna had specific culturally

responsive curriculum that spoke to the refugee crisis which was well received by some of the refugee students in her room. One student stated, “Miss, thank you for doing this topic. My family came over here and there are a lot of problems back home that Americans don’t know about (Student, n.d.). Another student seemed to get excited about picking a topic related to immigration and refugees when he said, “My dad originally came from Somalia and it was not easy for him to get a job or find food. The President should know that,” (Student, n.d.).

Furthermore, she created assignments that incorporated the gifted student’s need for social justice through the use of culturally relevant materials. She was observed scaffolding for learners who needed additional language supports while asking those same students higher level questions. The physical space in the room combined student and teacher voice that seemed to reflect one classroom of combined thoughts and interests (Gay, 2010; Gay, 2000; Pollock, 2009; Seeley, 2004; Ford and Trotman, 2001). Students moved freely throughout the physical space, and they were engaging with one another in academic conversations. Furthermore, the students advocated for their needs when they did not understand something and the teacher was responsive. She did not get defensive when a student questioned her thinking, instead, she seemed to honor and respect the challenge by providing answers and challenging students to develop their own reasons why she might have them investigate a topic of passion to them.

Kenneth, another educator, demonstrated culturally responsive gifted pedagogical practices throughout his observation. Kenneth’s individualized passion projects with scaffolded questioning and self-directed learning created a place where students were



ascending in their intellectual demand (Tomlinson, 2010). He was seen counseling individual students and recognized the strengths of his students who were diverse through statements like, “You’re really good at thinking visually, so why don’t you try to create a diagram or use a Thinking Map to tell your story,” (Kenneth, 2017).

Students in his class laughed with one another and were seen using different dialects when speaking with him, seemingly expressing their uniqueness. Kenneth’s space was observed to be culturally responsive in nature because students were honest in their conversations with him about their own ability with the material, their thoughts about the difficulty or ease of his assignments, and even in their own opinion of the way in which he dressed. It was also culturally responsive in that students were observed stating their opinions about work and were respected by Kenneth for doing so (Gay, 2010, Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Pollock, 2009). Students also seemed to have a sense of responsibility for the classroom beyond what would be considered classroom jobs. Students actively cleaned up after one another, they reminded each other when to turn in work, and offered to help one another in the class. Kenneth’s classroom seemed to be culturally responsive in nature and he exhibited the multicultural gifted competencies.

Next, Gabrielle was the third educator in the study who consistently demonstrated culturally responsive pedagogical practices. Gabrielle’s content, she said, lent “...itself to natural differentiation,” (Gabrielle, 2017). However, even with content or subject matter that is easily differentiated, the educator must be skilled in the art of differentiation to engage learners (Tomlinson, 2010; Ford, 2016; Ford and Trotman,

2001). She offered scaffolded work in expressing their rationale behind their art with different levels of language support to help students write.

Additionally, students were engaged in creating something that represented their own culture and their personal values. Those students who did not understand the work expressed themselves freely and Gabrielle re-taught. For the students who seemed to move at a faster pace than the other students in the classroom, Gabrielle went to them and asked them deeper level questions about why they chose certain symbols for their masks. When a student articulated that he was not a good artist, Gabrielle asked him why he thought that. She then highlighted how he was able to create a solid concept for his art, execute his writing, and choose symbols and colors that “speak to the audience” (Gabrielle, 2017). She focused on his strengths and he seemed to recover enough to continue to create his art.

Gabrielle also commented on something personal regarding every student in her classroom and seemed to connect with them. Not every student seemed to like everything that they were asked to do in class; however, they were engaged in their work. Students in this class spoke Spanish and English and Gabrielle encouraged the use of native language by stating, “Go ahead and talk with one another in Spanish if it helps your processing more,” (Gabrielle, 2017) All of these examples seem to demonstrate Gabrielle’s ability to navigate both culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies.

In reviewing the observations as well as the interviews with these educators one thing also became clear: these educators seemed to have individualized relationships with

the majority of their students, if not all. Other educators in the building seemed to have relationships with some of their students as observed when they would joke or laugh with certain students, or ask about the status of a family member. These three educators, however, seemed to have observable relationships with every single one of their students in which they knew something unique about each one and could speak to something specific with each one (Gay, 2010; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Briggs and Renzulli, 2009; Fan, 2011).

Finally, the Critical Race Theory framework underlies the conceptual model. This conceptual model attempts to show that through the intersection of culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies, there are educators practicing culturally responsive gifted pedagogical practices who are attempting to dismantle the oppressive factors in schools as outlined by CRT.

### **Areas for Further Research**

Based on the data collected, the researcher has identified multiple areas for future research. Because there was a reported change in the espoused theories of educators' further areas of interest regarding research for this group of learners includes

- impact of professional learning on espoused theories of practices for social emotional needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Webb, 2014; Cross, 2010; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2014; Delpit, 2006).
- impact of professional learning regarding Ford and Trotman's' (2001) gifted multicultural competencies on teachers' theories in use (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Fullan, 2006).

- impact of coaching on teachers' proficiency with gifted multicultural competencies (Fullan, 2006; Ford and Trotman, 2001)'
- impact of culturally responsive professional learning communities with CRT components on colorblindness in educators (Taylor, et al., 2016; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010).

Next, parent and student voices were not included in the study (Ford, 2014; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2016); therefore, the further areas of research include

- perceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners regarding their teachers (Ford, 2008, Ford, 2014, Pollock, 2008).
- perceptions of parents regarding teachers of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Ford and Grantham, 2003; Patrikakou and Weissberg 2000; Pollock, 2008; Ford, 2014).
- the use of GiftedCrit to guide future studies and its efficacy in doing so

Lastly, the conceptual model should be used to guide further research in other settings to see what data can be collected to support it. In researching the conceptual model, other examples of culturally responsive pedagogical practices may be discovered and used as a part of the model. Furthermore, a modified observation tool layering components together as well as adding authentic individualized relationships should be developed and tested.

## **Conclusion**

Chapter Four shared data gathered over the course of this research study including data analysis procedures and areas for future research. The case was described in depth

using a narrative descriptive approach (Yin, 2009). The researcher reported the case by describing the setting of school, classrooms, observations of educators, and interviews with educators. Seven themes which emerged from observations, photographs, and interview data sources were used to summarize the information collected and assertions were made based on literature and theoretical frameworks. The data reported how one set of educators perceived gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and how the school supported and or hindered these learners.

In addition to this, the researcher created a conceptual model based on the overlap and intersection of culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies (Ford and Trotman, 2001) to identify culturally responsive gifted pedagogical practices. This conceptual model was supported by data collected in the study and includes the addition of individualized authentic relationships as evidenced by the study findings.

Chapter Five will explore the research questions as well as the theoretical frames in relation to data collected. The conceptual model will also be revisited. Limitations and implications of this research will also be provided in the next chapter.



## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

### Introduction

Chapter Five will connect data collected throughout this study to the research questions and theoretical frame. The chapter will also address personal and practical lessons learned, limitations of the study, and implications for practice and future research. The purpose of the study was to explore educators' perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.

The purpose of the study derived from the identified gap in literature regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners: Educators struggle to identify gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and do not understand the nature and needs of those students. Because of this lack of understanding, educators do not modify their teaching practices to develop talent and nurture promising learners; thus continuing to deny access to appropriate gifted programming (Colangelo and Davis, 2003; Ford, 2007; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Milner, 2005; Jensen, 2009; Worrell, 2014; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2007; Johnsen, 2004, Gay and Kirkland, 2005 ).

In alignment with both Critical Race Theory (CRT) and constructivism the persistent problem of practice recognized the systemic and historical racism that exists in America (Litowitz, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Pollock, 2008) and the oppression of culturally linguistically diverse groups (Litowitz, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2016) that is reinforced through socially constructed realities (Chmiel, 2014).

The themes, which emerged from the data collected in this study, will be explored in relation to the following primary and secondary research questions as identified in the literature: What are educators' perceptions of the characteristics, needs, and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?

*Sub-questions*

- 1) How do educators describe gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?
- 2) How do educators describe their understanding of culturally responsive teaching as it relates to diverse gifted learners?
- 3) What are school-based practices for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners that support or hinder learning?

Themes will be discussed using a critical race theory framework, constructivist theory, and change theory when appropriate. As stated in previous chapters Critical Race Theory Solorzano and Yosso (2000) offered up the following understanding of CRT

CRT in education is defined as a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify analyze, and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the marginal position and subordination of African American and Latino students. CRT asks such questions as: What roles do schools, school processes, and school structures play in the maintenance of racial, ethnic, and gender subordination?" (p.42)

CRT can be a powerful explanation to the "...sustained inequity that people of color experience" (Ladson-Billings, 2016). It aligns closely with education as more and more students of diversity come to the classroom and the majority of teachers are still White (Ford and Grantham, 2006; Bureau, n.d.).

In addition to CRT, Constructivism served as another framework through which to analyze data because it was helpful in understanding the participants' reality (Lincoln and



Guba, 2004) as well as the socially constructed reality and acquisition of knowledge for learners (Wiggins, 2004).

### **Connections to Research Questions**

Although this study was qualitative, the data collected through photographs, artifacts, observations, and interviews demonstrated complementarity, thus providing the opportunity for a more robust and enhanced interpretation. Because the data complements one another, there is greater confidence in the inferences made regarding this study (Buss and Zambo, 2014). Each research question will be explored separately, and supporting data will be addressed below and elements of the theoretical frameworks will be used to help tell the data's story (Creswell, 2014). Finally, the conceptual model will be revisited in relation to the overall study.

The first question asked: *What are educators' perceptions of the characteristics, needs, and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners?* The majority of educators in this study stated positive perceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. They spoke with confidence and authority when naming characteristics. They referenced both positive and negative manifestations of giftedness in culturally linguistically diverse learners, thus telling the "other story" of diverse learners who are gifted (Ladson-Billings, 2016). They also discussed dominant culture characteristics commonly seen such as individualism, as well as multicultural characteristics seen like story-telling (Ford, 2014; Gay, 2010; Litowitz, 2016; Bernal, 2003).

Alison (2017) expressed gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, "... have

talents or gifts, most likely they could be expressing those gifts in ways that aren't traditional. I'm thinking like story-telling. They may not be a good writer or have the academic language, but they could be such a creative story teller." characteristics of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Alison's acknowledgement of story-telling as a strength is supported in CRT literature as way in which White educators can embrace the culture of diverse learners because it recognizes the diverse "history" of the student's culture (Litowitz, 2016, Gay, 2010).

Several educators acknowledged the code switching (Bernal, 2003; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Ford, 2004) that a gifted culturally linguistically diverse learner engages in on a daily basis and seemed to be in "awe" of those learners. Lara (2017), for example, seemed to express admiration for students when she stated, "They have a cognitive flexibility and their ability to shift between their home culture and their school culture makes them very skilled at a very young age...they are so impressive!" Thomas (2017) echoed those sentiments when he described students as having Superman capes that allow them to switch between cultures and languages. Their answers also revealed tenets of constructivism when they expressed that the students were constructing different realities and adapting to the world around them (Chmiel, 2014).

Although many perceptions stated focused on strengths of learners, there were "other stories" (the opposing views as detailed in CRT) that teachers espoused including the racially oppressive theory of colorblindness (Pollock, 2008). Elizabeth stated, "With this group...I don't see it as much different with me being a White person, I'm not seeing a huge difference with these kids. They are not reluctant at this age and I think that they

are still so open and not afraid to take risks. I haven't seen a difference between how different cultures affect giftedness.”

Another educator, Kimberly (2017), indicated that she did not treat her students who were gifted culturally diverse any different than her other students because, “they all have the same need,” (Kimberly, 2017).

Both Elizabeth and Kimberly's statement indicated a level of colorblindness when looking at their students. CRT posits that colorblindness is a form of oppression that appears innocuous to those who consider themselves “colorblind” (Litowitz, 2016). Colorblindness in the classroom can be detrimental to African American and Latino learners' self-esteem because when a teacher is colorblind, he or she does not acknowledge the value in diverse cultural backgrounds (Pollock, 2008). Furthermore, when an educator is colorblind, the White students in the classroom also become colorblind and help construct a reality where the only culture that becomes acknowledged and perceived as valued is White (Pollock, 2008, Bernal, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Gay, 2010).

Although espoused perceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners were primarily positive in nature, there were inconsistencies in the observed theories of action (Argyris 2000; Fullan, 2001). Inconsistencies in practices regarding multicultural gifted competencies from teacher to teacher created inconsistencies throughout the school as a whole and did not create a cohesive support structure for gifted diverse learners within the school (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Gay, 2010).

Furthermore, the researcher observed that almost all teachers were able to create

an overall culturally responsive environment for learners as indicated by the observation protocol (Appendix E) through the use of culturally responsive texts and the incorporation of student culture into the classroom. One teacher struggled with all but one tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy as she was observed arguing with students throughout her lesson, stopping instruction because students interrupted her, and did not have culturally responsive materials nor resources readily available (Gay, 2010).

Again, while almost all teachers had created a culturally responsive environment, not all teachers were observed incorporating multicultural competencies into their work and therefore showed inconsistencies between their espoused theories of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and their actual practices (Fullan, 2006; Ford and Trotman, 2001). When viewing this inconsistency through CRT and constructivism, the researcher saw oppression in the form of access to curriculum, and the construction of knowledge, whether intentional or not, regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Litowitz, 2016; Pollock, 2008; Wiggins, 2004).

There were, however, some teachers who were skilled in incorporating Ford and Trotman's (2001) multicultural competencies. Those who were skilled in incorporating the competencies were able to develop multicultural materials using multicultural resources. They were skilled in addressing individual differences in culture through conversations about hijabs, the Quran and religious differences. They sought to develop their gifted learners as individuals through inspirational posters, goal development, and social activism. Even with those practices in place, the majority of educators were not observed demonstrating these competencies.

In general, educators at Joshua Elementary had positive espoused (Fullan, 2006) perceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, but their theories in use (Fullan, 2006) practices were inconsistent in honoring both the cognitive and cultural needs of those learners. In being inconsistent, the potential for creating barriers to access increases and continues to support the identified persistent problem of practice through oppression (Bernal, 2000; Litowitz, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Ford, 2014).

The second question explored in the study was the following: How do educators describe gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners? When describing gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, educators, at times struggled with how to articulate what they were thinking. Some struggled with layering the two groups together because as Kimberly (2017) stated, “I don’t see a difference. Our kids are gifted and they are all culturally linguistically diverse.” The researcher was unsure if Kimberly’s colorblind statement was caused by her construction of reality or through some socially embedded level of oppression (Atwater, 2008; Litowitz, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Morford, 2007).

Most educators, as in the previous question, expressed admiration for these learners and took an asset-based approach (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Gay, 2000; Pollock, 2008). They focused on the strengths of both groups of learners combined. Lara continued her enthusiasm when she stated, “They just have a second source of power. Their brains are just flexible because they can call on two ways of thinking and two cultures because language and culture are intertwined.” Caitlyn stated, “I’m thinking

from an asset based approach. They have the ability think more flexibly when you have someone who is bilingual or multilingual.”

When the researcher asked educators to describe a gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners with whom they worked, characteristics of these learners flowed more easily than with the prior interview question asking for articulation of a diverse gifted learner. This could be because the educators were recalling something that was personal to them (Lincoln and Guba, 2008; Creswell, 2014). All of the educators smiled when they heard that question and characteristics like leadership, sense of humor, story-telling, and cognitive flexibility all surfaced for them.

The asset based approach taken by these educators contrasts the literature regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. In the literature, gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners are often perceived as having deficits (Ford and Grantham , 2008; Whiting, 2007; Frasier and Passow, 1995; De Wet and Gubbins, 2011) which is supported by the literature in CRT (Litowitz, 2016). Teachers with asset-based thinking regarding diverse learners can also be an illustration of change theory as it applies to educator’s espoused theories (Fullan, 2006). Furthermore, as the educators described their own personal experiences with the researcher, the researcher became a part of the participants’ constructed realities (Chmiel, 2014).

The third question guiding the study was the following: *How do educators describe their understanding of culturally responsive teaching as it relates to diverse gifted learners?* Every single educator discussed “teaching to the high”, but it was very rare that an educator mentioned using culturally responsive teaching and embedding that

with rigor (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2016).

One educator, Jenna, discussed the need for diverse learners to have materials that speak to social justice and human rights, “Especially in this population where they have been oppressed” (Jenna, 2017). Her acknowledgement of oppression as an educator is an “important tool in recognizing the injustices of whole groups of people,” (Pollock, 2008). Another educator, Kimberly, also discussed culturally responsive teaching and rigor with her diverse gifted learners when she stated, “You think you need to teach them lower level because they don’t have the exposure to technology. But they like to explore more and they catch on quickly. I let them go on to their native language. Once they get the exposure to technology, they run with it. They move on. I don’t hold them back” (Kimberly, 2017).

Jenna and Kimberly’s responses were unique in comparison to the rest of the educators because they also demonstrated their competencies during the observation as well; thus their espoused theories and their theories in use aligned (Fullan, 2006; Fullan 2007). Both educators created observable environments for students where they could work with another to acquire learning in a manner that acknowledged their cultural needs as well as their cognitive needs (Wiggins, 2004; Tatum, 2016; Litowitz, 2016; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2014; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 200; Gay, 2010).

In reviewing additional data related to this question, the researcher found that most participants indicated that they wanted to know more instructional practices when working with gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Most educators believed

that they had knowledge of how to identify characteristics of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, but they did not feel as if they had the instructional practices in place to adequately meet the learners' needs (Litowitz, 2016; Delpit, 1995; Ford and Trotman, 2001). Stephen, for example, mentioned that he needed to understand how to marry the practices together (Stephen, 2017) so that he could help his fellow educators. As one of the main instructional leads in the school, he felt as if it was his responsibility to share information with the school (Stephen, 2017). When reviewing responses to identified educator need and seeing the classroom practices, the espoused theories and theories in use align.

The fourth question guiding the study was the following: *What are school based practices for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners that supports or hinders learning?* In CRT, theorists identify that racism and oppression exist historically and currently within the entire education system; thus hindering learning for culturally linguistically diverse groups (Ladson-Billings, 2016). Furthermore, CRT identifies that education views culturally linguistically diverse groups of learners through a deficit lens (Litowitz, 2016). The administration at Joshua Elementary, however, have taken an asset based approach by expecting all teachers to “teach to the top” and “plan for the high.” In which all learners are viewed for their strengths (Thomas, 2017). The mission of the school aligns with an asset-based approach as the school believes its mission is to ensure that every “student will develop lifelong agency by becoming adaptable, well-balanced individuals who envision possibility in all environments” (Joshua Elementary, n.d.)

Throughout the 2016-2017 school year, the school has worked at creating and



implementing talent development model where all students are looked at as having strengths. In this approach, all educators received training at the beginning of the year regarding the characteristics of gifted learners, including diverse gifted learners. In addition to this professional development, there has been professional development on rigor- specifically using Webb's DOK. By approaching learners in this manner, Stephen indicated that he wanted to school environment to look different for learners. He wanted "students actively learning from one another and have the teacher be the facilitator of knowledge," (Stephen, 2017). In his talent development model, Stephen espouses the belief in constructivist classrooms that are rigorous (Stephen, 2017). The talent development model is one way in which the school supports gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.

The talent development model for the school also required professional learning focused on the characteristics of gifted culturally diverse learners. Through professional development and the use of the Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI, Kingore, 2002), more students were referred and cluster grouped by ability. The teachers also used Kingore's characteristics of culturally diverse learners to identify who they felt needed to receive additional support from the gifted and talented teacher (Brianna, 2017). The professional learning also impacted the ways in which teachers could describe and articulate gifted culturally linguistically learners for the researcher. The professional development seemed to create awareness of the characteristics of learners and allowed educators to notice the learners in the classroom (Hall and Hall, 2001).

However, even with supportive measures taken by administrators with

professional learning regarding characteristics as well as the school-wide focus to take an asset-based approach (Litowitz, 2016), the school as a whole has not been able to instruct gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners in a way that speaks to their cognitive needs. Therefore, throughout the research, the researcher noticed that there was a difference in the espoused theories of the participants and their actual theories in use (Fullan 2006; Fullan, 2007). The differences in theories for educators may actually hinder the support for gifted culturally diverse learners because there is inconsistency in implementation of instructional practices that are rigorous. An additional hindrance regarding professional learning was that it was not consistently delivered and educators wondered what was happening with the focus on gifted (Amanda, 2017; Elizabeth, 2017; Shannon, 2017). Therefore, teachers may espouse that they believe in talent development and the administrators may espouse that as well, however, without follow through from multiple educators, the constructed reality is one of inconsistency and theories fall flat in actually reforming the school or changing practices (Fullan 2006; Senge et al., 2013; Hall and Hall).

Another school based practice that may support gifted culturally diverse learners is the celebration of learners who are considered GT/Talent Development (GT/D). One educator in the school, Stephen, is actively reaching out to families and the neighborhood community to hold celebrations at the school to celebrate the success of the students selected as the GT/D. He has invited parents to the school to discuss the model (Stephen, 2017) and gather their input. He indicated that he wanted to shift thinking in his neighborhood around family and cultural perceptions of intelligence (Ford, 2010;

Boykin, 1994; Bernal, 2003). His practice of bringing in families to celebrate intelligence and thinking as well as discuss the GT/D plan is a culturally responsive way to construct and acquire knowledge regarding the programming in the school (Wiggins, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Gay, 2010). He, stated that he did not want giftedness and being smart "...to be taboo" (Stephen, 2017). He stated that "As an African American male, I know how the community can view giftedness, and I want to break down that stereotype," (Stephen, 2017). His work around bringing in the community to discuss the school's focus is supported in the literature regarding African American and Hispanic communities' communal group orientation (Ford, 2010; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Bernal, 2003; Gay, 2010).

Although there are specific school practices that support learning, there are practices within the case that may hinder learning for gifted culturally diverse learners. For example, inconsistent implementation of the talent development model or inconsistent understandings across staff members may unwittingly cause oppression of gifted individuals (Litowitz, 2016; Pollock, 2008, Atwater, 2008). Beyond observations of individual classrooms, many teachers indicated their own frustration with inconsistencies regarding talent development. Amanda, Shannon, and Kimberly were unsure when they would have professional development again specifically focused upon gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Elizabeth (2017) mentioned that she was not included in the professional learning as her grade level was not a focus for talent development (Elizabeth, 2017). She then mentioned she wanted "Administration to know what I am doing, but they don't even walk through to see if I am doing what's best

for my students,” (2017).

Some teachers voiced frustration with the lack of professional support regarding coaching in their grade and articulated that they noticed that some grade levels received additional gifted support through coaching, while other grade levels did not. Shannon was the most vocal when describing the lack of support she received stating, “Other grade levels get support like coaching and specific feedback but we do not...I want feedback,” (Shannon, 2017). The inconsistencies with professional learning as well as teachers’ stated perceptions of administrators’ expectations for them may work in opposition to the espoused theories of administration (Fullan, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Pollock, 2008).

Another school-based practice that may eventually hinder learning is the lack of professional learning around social emotional supports for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Ford, 2014; Webb, 2014; Cross, 2010; Bernal, 2003). The lack of social emotional learning professional development or professional learning communities is not culturally responsive pedagogical practice (Gay, 2010) in that it is ignoring the emotional aspects of the learner. Professional learning has been focused upon characteristics of gifted learners, but not their nature and needs socially emotionally Ford and Trotman suggest that culturally competent teachers of gifted diverse learners know, “...the whole child must be addressed in school settings...and they address academic, cognitive, moral, and social emotional development and skill,” (Ford and Trotman, 2001). Without this understanding of the whole diverse gifted child, CRT theorists would argue that this continues oppression for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners because they are

not being acknowledge for who they are as unique individuals (Pang, 2001; Cushner, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; 2016; Ford and Trotman, 2001). Thus the constructed reality further reinforces oppression (Chmiel, 2014; Lopez, 2016; Litowitz, 2016).

Another school-based practice that may hinder learning is the inconsistency with representation of student voice and creation throughout the building. The first floor is bustling with photographs of the students and the educators in the building. The second floor, however, has little to no overtly displayed student work outside of the classrooms. Student work is missing from the cafeteria and the gym as well. All of these places are part of the students' home and should reflect the culture of the school.

Additionally, the espoused theories of the administrators in the building versus their theories of action as well as their teachers' espoused and actual theories of action may hinder learners' access and therefore create barriers for programming (Fullan, 2006; Senge et al., 2013). With the inconsistencies in implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy, multi-cultural competencies, professional learning, and coaching and feedback, the school shows that there are opportunities that still exist to change practice (Fullan, 2006; Senge et al., 2013). The energy and excitement that was expressed about gifted learners throughout the interviews may not positively impact those learners if there is not consistency with implementation of rigorous learning environments with teachers who are culturally competent (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Hebert, 2014; Plucker and Callahan, 2008). The co-constructed reality of the administrators and teachers has gaps that if not addressed may unwittingly block access to programming or add to the oppression of gifted culturally linguistically diverse

learners ( Ladson-Billings; Sue, Arredondo and McDavis, 1992; Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010).

Finally, in seeking to answer the central research question guiding the study, What are educators' perceptions of the characteristics, needs, and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners? The researcher found that the educators at Joshua elementary have very positive espoused theories that they can share regarding the characteristics of gifted culturally diverse learners. However, the same educators who could describe characteristics of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners could not easily articulate the social emotional needs of diverse gifted learners. Furthermore, few educators demonstrated gifted multicultural competencies consistently or at all throughout the study. The inconsistencies throughout the school regarding instructional practices for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners may continue to oppress the marginalized groups ( Litzow, 2016) of students who attend Joshua Elementary. This oppression would appear to be unwittingly created because the educators in the school have positive espoused theories of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.

Without a focus on being more consistent with communication of expectations for the talent development program, including consistent administrative expectations and instructional follow through, the schools' theories in action (Fullan, 2013) may not lead to the type of education reform Stephen envisions. Currently, the theories in action from a majority of teachers continue to creating barriers to programming and for gifted learners to reach their potential (Ford and Trotman, 2001).

The educators with congruent espoused and actual theories allow students

access to programming that is not taking place throughout the school (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Banks 1995; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Worrell, 2008; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Briggs, Reis, Sullivan, 2008). These educators appear to be outliers as there has not been focused staff development on multicultural gifted competencies or the nature and needs of gifted diverse learners. Yet, these educators who are dismantling barriers to programming identified by the literature (Ford, 2010; Ford, 2008; Ford and Grantham , 2008; Borland, 2003; Borland, 2013; Borland, 2014; Worrell, 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002; Weinbrenner and Brulles, 2010) are examples of individuals who are pushing to construct a new reality with their learners in which they are helping to reverse oppression (Ladson-Billings, 2016) by acknowledging race and culture in the classroom (Litowitz, 2016, Gay, 2010) , as well as recognizing and planning for advanced cognitive need (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2010; Plucker and Callahan, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012).

### **Conceptual Model Revisited**

The educators who are outliers in the school happen to be the same educators who have found a way to intersect culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies (Gay, 2000; Gay, 2010; Ford and Trotman, 2001). These educators whose espoused theories in use and theories in actions overlap are also the same educators who exemplify culturally responsive pedagogical practices as conceptualized in Figure 28 through the Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model.

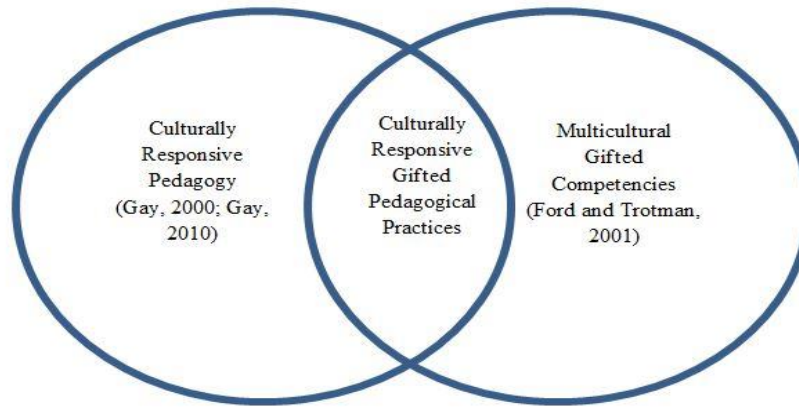


Figure 28. Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model

The educators in this study who, whether wittingly or not, are potentially changing parts of a historically racist system (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Taylor, Gillborn, and Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Pollock, 2009; Ford, 2000; Whiting, 2008) in favor of gifted culturally linguistically diverse students because the teachers are skilled at meeting the needs of gifted diverse learners (Ford, 2013; Ford, 2010; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Ford, 2007; Borland, 2013; Borland, 2014; Worrell, 2008; Castellano and Diaz, 2002).

In addition to having congruent espoused and actual theories, as well as congruent practices in the classroom, these educators seemed to be consistent in their practice. Although the researcher observed one time for 60 minutes, when comparing espoused theories, theories in use, to their interviews and their observations, the educators remained consistent. Consistency in delivery of culturally responsive gifted pedagogical practices will also be key in helping to tear down the barriers that exist regarding



programming (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Banks 1995; Ford and Grantham, 2008; Worrell, 2008; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010; Briggs, Reis, Sullivan, 2008; Litowitz, 2016, Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2007; Johnsen, 2004, Gay and Kirkland, 2005).

### **Personal Lessons Learned**

Conducting action research can be a “transformative experience and a way to develop leadership capabilities” (Furman, 2011; 2012). As a result of this particular study and process, I have learned several personal lessons that I can incorporate into future research. The most important of these lessons pertain to a) finding an area of passion to explore that is also a persistent problem of practice and b) maintaining an open mind to study findings that may be of surprise.

Finding an area of passion that is also a persistent problem of practice was key to staying energized throughout the process. Action research development and implantation does not happen over-night. At the beginning of the doctoral program, I had multiple ideas and topics for research and they all pertained to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. At times, it was hard for me to funnel her ideas and synthesize them into something coherent so as to narrow focus. As I continued to explore my own areas of interest and passion, I found that areas of passion aligned with persistent problems of practice in the field: gifted culturally linguistically diverse students and their access to programming.

Having an area of passion to guide my work was key to remaining focused upon the goal of impacting the field of gifted education. At the end of each observation and

interview, my mind was constantly processing and making connections to the literature and the theoretical frameworks. I was excited and energized. Because this topic was of interest, I was able to persist even when experiencing writer's block (either due to perfectionism and or lack of sleep). If I had explored a topic or persistent problem of practice that was not of interest, I may have found excuses to stop working on the project.

Another personal lesson I learned was that being a truly neutral researcher requires having an open mind and no preconceived expectations (Creswell, 2014). I am incredibly passionate about gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and have devoted my entire career in public education to identifying and supporting those learners. Therefore, when I began the doctoral program, I expected to see specific results from various studies on gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and had predetermined notions of what could be found. However, as I matured throughout the program, I learned that choosing a methodology and checking bias is helpful in remaining neutral. The choice of exploratory case study forced me to account for bias before reviewing all data (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2014).

In actively keeping an open-non-judgmental mindset, my personal understanding of the investigator's role in the process changed from expert to consultant to co-learner (Israel, et al., 1992). Had I not gone through the doctoral program, understood the true role as a researcher as well as the action research process, I would not have been able to separate biases from the investigation.

## **Lessons Learned Through Implementation**

As the study was being implemented, I learned several lessons that will guide future research. First, recruitment should be personal when possible and grounded contextually in the importance of the study (Yin, 2009). When I began the study, I spoke to the entire faculty in a staff meeting, placed a letter in the Teacher's Lounge, and then sent out a mass email to find participants. My email generated the interest of five people. With only five people participating, I knew that I needed some additional help. I went to the community partner to brainstorm recruitment ideas, and he suggested emailing teachers individually. Another administrator in the room suggested emailing grade levels and creating personalized emails with the teachers' names asking for someone on their grade level to participate. I heeded their advice and emailed the teachers personally and only included pertinent information: purpose of the study, time commitment, data collection type, and ensured anonymity. In addition to personalizing the email, I also appealed to participants' emotions by discussing why their individual grade level or content area was crucial to understanding the entire case (Yin, 2009). With that, the researcher was able to get half of the teaching staff and all of the administrators.

Another lesson learned regards the development of research tools, specifically the observation tool. My original intent was to note how many times a pedagogical tenet or gifted multicultural competency was observed. During the first observation, I realized how difficult that was to do when trying to capture every element of the observation possible, including what participants were saying and their actions in the classroom (Creswell, 2014). That section of the tool became cumbersome, and I modified the use of

the sheet by tallying at least once if the tenet or competency was seen. I then noted examples of how each tenet or competency was demonstrated.

During implementation, I also saw the impact an interview can have as intervention (Kvale, 2005). For example, when I asked Stephen to explain how the school supported gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, he said, “Now, I don’t know that I’ve ever been asked that. You’re making me think that I need to be able to explain that,” (Stephen, 2017). In answering that same question, another participant, Brianna (2017) stated, “Hmmm. I don’t know, but now I am going to go look up how to support these learners. You made me think about that.” Other participants made comments about the impact the interview after the last question was asked. Those who commented mentioned that the interview made them think about things that they did not normally consider.

An additional lesson learned through implementation was the impact of change on an organization. In Michael Fullan’s (2007) work regarding change theory, he posited that change happens in four stages: initiation, implementation, continuation, and outcome. During the research, I discovered that the professional learning that the educators had been doing at Joshua Elementary was already starting to change their perceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners even prior to the research project. It was even starting to change some educators’ practices. The researcher saw a difference between the espoused theories and theories in action (Fullan, 2006; Fullan 2007; Argyris, 2000). However, I wonder how the data collected might have yielded different results if research was conducted prior to the start of the professional learning.

An unanticipated finding was how much the educators could describe gifted and talented learners, yet they struggled at times with describing culturally linguistically diverse learners. Prior to beginning the study, I was curious to see if educators would be more likely to describe culturally linguistically diverse individuals because those were the learners in the school rather than describing characteristics of gifted learners. Instead, educators were better able to describe gifted learners and gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners than just culturally linguistically diverse learners as a separate group of individuals.

In reflecting upon the work in the study, it occurred to me that I had taken elements of gifted education and overlaid critical race theory to create a new lens through which to view my data. Although I have only viewed one article that used critical race theory as a framework with in a study on gifted African American males (Henfield, Moore, and Wood, 2008), the article did not incorporate multicultural education like DisCrit (disability critical race theory) or TribalCrit (indigenous theory and critical race theory combined); whereas, my study had. In a similar fashion to DisCrit and TribalCrit, I have named this approach GiftedCrit™. This lesson through implementation has made me excited for the future of this work and will be explored in more detail in the section, Implications for Practice.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This action research study, as with any other study, had limitations that should be noted. The study used a non-random, purposeful convenience sample that limits the generalizability of the findings. In addition to this, half of the educators in the school

participated in the study, which may have affected the outcome. Ideally, all educators in the school would have participated so that every classroom could be analyzed to create a more comprehensive view of the case.

The Hawthorne Effect (Creswell, 2014) was a concern of the researcher because the researcher was a district employee who had an administrative position in the district. The participants, knowing both the role of the researcher and the purpose of the study, may have felt obligated to say things that they thought the researcher wanted to hear. Other participants may have felt obligated to participate in the study because of the relationship between the researcher and the principal at the school.

Another limitation of the study may have been the researcher's own bias. As much as the researcher tried to remain neutral to the events in the study, specifically observations and interviews, the researcher may have unintentionally sent signals to the participants indicating bias towards answers or actions (Creswell, 2014). In order to maximize validity, the researcher analyzed interview recordings to monitor any bias in her voice or leading questions (Yin, 2009). In cases where the researcher identified bias, participants' answers were not included in the presented data or analysis (Creswell, 2014).

In addition to the researcher's own validation of data, the researcher incorporated triangulation of data to corroborate evidence as well as employing member checking check the credibility and interpretations of interviews (Creswell, 2013). Member checking, "...solicits participants' views of the credibility of the finding and interpretations" (Creswell, 2013). Finally, the lack of generalizability to other cases is a

limitation of this study. The researcher was analyzing one particular case to inform the field, however, this case is unique and the findings may not be able to be generalized without a cross case analysis.

A rich, thick description of the setting may allow for some transferability; however, the case overall, is not generalizable at this point. The methodology and framework for the study may be replicated; however, this study is not generalizable unless other schools have dedicated time to professional learning for gifted culturally linguistically diverse individuals prior to beginning the study.

The limitations for study should be considered when using findings to inform practice.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings from this study suggest there are multiple implications for future practice that could positively transform both the landscape of gifted education at the local, state, national, and even global levels, as well as the lives of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. There are also direct implications and next steps for both the research site's professional practice as well as the researcher's personal practice. These implications, when acted upon, will break down the identified barriers to programming and can change the lives of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners in ways that the field has been trying to do for the last 40 years (Henfield, Moore, and Wood, 2008).

**Gifted critical race theory.** As detailed earlier, the use of critical race theory in education is not a new phenomenon (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Taylor, Gillborn, and

Ladson-Billings, 2016; Litowitz, 2016). What is relatively newer, however, is the refinement of CRT to analyze finite and specific marginalized sections of the population (Dunbar, 2008; Connor, Ferri, and Annamma, 2016). The field of special education, however, has used DisCrit (Disability Critical Race Theory) as a way through which to view problems of practice regarding disability and race (Connor, Ferri, and Annamma, 2016). In doing so, researchers have found inequities stemming from racist structures such as disproportional numbers of students of color who were identified as having a cognitive delay or emotional disturbance (Connor, Ferri, and Annamma, 2016). In contrast, gifted education is struggling to identify students of color because there is a disproportional amount of identified White students (Colangelo and Davis, 2003; Ford, 2008; Worrell, 2008; Plucker and Burroughs, 2013; Borland, 2013). Disproportionality whether for special education or gifted education is the result of structures put in place to subjugate culturally diverse learners (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Connor, Ferri, and Annamma, 2016).

CRT is also used to analyze practices regarding indigenous people in a theory known as TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2006; Dunbar, 2008). By overlaying theories (Indigenous and CRT) researchers have viewed the colonization of Native Americans and the historical oppression that they faced. TribalCrit has specific tenets that can be used to critique and discuss endemic racism throughout society, including the education system for Native Americans. Both DisCrit and TribalCrit have begun to transform research regarding disenfranchised populations; however, there is much more to be learned about the impact of these theories on practice.



Although there is DisCrit and TribalCrit, there is currently no diversified critical race theory framework through which to analyze gifted education and the historical oppression of gifted culturally diverse learners. With a focus from NAGC on culturally diverse gifted learners and talent development (NAGC, n.d.) there is an opportunity for a new emerging theory to surface: GiftedCrit™, or Gifted Critical Race Theory.

GiftedCrit should be the framework through which the field of gifted education critically analyzes the educational and societal mechanisms in place for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. There are many authors and researchers in the field who have discussed oppression of culturally linguistically diverse learners, but the scholarship does not show a CRT framework through which that oppression has been viewed (Ford & Trotman, 2001; Ford and Grantham, 2003; Ford, 2008; Plucker and Burroughs, 2013; Borland, 2013; Ford, 2016) With shifting demographics in the nation (Bureau, n.d.) from predominately White to predominantly Hispanic and African American, the field will need to use a GiftedCrit lens to understand how to reverse disproportionality and develop talent systemically.

Furthermore, GiftedCrit should also actively critique the multicultural education practices and multicultural curriculum that may or may not exist within classrooms (Jay, 2003; Dunbar, 2008; Connor, Ferri, and Annamma, 2016). The research in this study was analyzed with a GiftedCrit lens developed by the researcher with specific attention to the multicultural educational practices in the classroom (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Gay, 2010). This lens on data can lead to direct tangible changes in practice that can be put into place and supported with training.

The structure of oppression is one that is covered thoroughly in CRT. Valle, et al., (2011) asserts that researchers and school reformists should view schools as a form of property that is to be attained and socially reconstructed; that is, property held by White European Americans who wittingly or unwittingly oppress culturally linguistically diverse learners. In CRT, the notion of schooling as property is a "...useful conceptual tool to explicate the machineries of class, race, and ability in school discourse" (Valle, et al., 2011). Ladson and Billings (1995) note that when "access to high quality curriculum and instruction, unequal impact of assessment-based accountability measures as well as funding impact students of color" (Ladson and Billings, 1995) then those student cannot obtain property; they cannot obtain school. Much like DisCrit or TribalCrit, GiftedCrit must be used to analyze gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners' ability to obtain property and the system-wide mechanisms that support or hinder access. Once the field has begun to uncover those mechanisms, then research-based recommendations can be made so as to change the practice of teachers and administrators; thus impacting the learners.

**Culturally responsive model.** In this study, the researcher's emerging theory, GiftedCrit, helped guide questions and methodology and was a lens through which to analyze data. In using the lens of GiftedCrit, the researcher developed the Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model through which to observe the classroom. The model was created in response to the lack of scholarship regarding observed gifted culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies in the classroom (Gay, 2010; Pollock, 2009; Ford, 2008; Ford & Trotman, 2001; Ford, et al. 2013) and emerged

through data collection. The model's supporting data suggests there are general education classroom teachers and building level administrators who demonstrated they have a culturally responsive environment that is blended with gifted practices and multicultural gifted competencies.

With that data in mind, the Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model Responsive Model has the potential to impact the field in such a way that could transform the traditional and historically oppressive structures in place (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Taylor et al., 2016). For example, the conceptual model could be incorporated into teacher evaluation systems and administrator evaluation systems at the state and local levels. Specifically, the model in tandem with detailed indicators could be used as examples of the minimum (proficient) standard for principals and teachers and could be used in multiple standards.

In Colorado, the model would be used in alignment with Principal Quality Standards II, III, and IV. Principal Quality Standard II, *Principals demonstrate instructional leadership* by having a "rich knowledge of effective instructional practices," and "...through needs based professional development of the staff" (CDE, n.d.). The model aligns with Standard III, *Culture and Equity Leadership*-specifically in that principals will be able to use the model to help train teachers and staff to create "an inclusive and positive school culture, and provide instruction in meeting the needs of diverse students, talents, experiences and challenges in support of student achievement" (CDE, n.d.). Additionally, the conceptual model could be used with Standard IV,

*Principals demonstrate human resources management*, regarding professional development and teaching other educators about culturally responsive gifted classrooms.

In addition to Principal Standards, Colorado Teacher Quality Standards (CDE, n.d.) also align with the findings demonstrated in the conceptual model. In Standard I, *Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach*, teachers are not only expected to be masters of content, but they are expected to understand research-based instructional practices as well as make content relevant and authentic for learners (CDE, n.d.); both of which are basic tenets of the Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model Responsive Model. Next the conceptual model could be used to help guide evaluation of Standard II (CDE, n.d.), *Teachers establish a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students*. Every single element of this standard mentions equity and inclusive learners, therefore, the model could work with this standard. Finally Standard III (CDE, n.d.), *Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction and create an environment that facilitates learning for their students*, is another standards in which effective practices and inclusive environments are specifically highlighted and could use concrete examples that have derived from the model to help drive change in practice. When diving deeper into these standards, CDE should give explicit examples of multicultural competencies for teachers and the instructional moves that create a culturally responsive classroom for all learners, regardless of intellect or talent (CDE, n.d.) If the system is to be transformed, adaptive changes and not technical ones must be made (Argyris, 1980) and lead by either the administrator or a teacher with a large sphere of influence (Argyris, 1980; Fullan, 2006).

Another implication or next step for practice which derives from the Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model is the creation of an observation form that could be utilized in environmental scans as well as the evaluations of teachers, administrators, and districts. The observation form would derive from the model and highlight the specific intersection of both culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies. Teachers could use the form to observe their own classroom and reflect upon their practices to see if they are creating equitable opportunities for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Administrators could also use the form to observe classroom environments, common areas, as well as their own practices with teachers to determine if their school's actual theories and espoused theories are congruent. Finally, the district could use the observation form as an overall view of the district and the practices that are occurring within it.

Using the observation form at the district level would involve senior level administrators visiting classrooms and schools around the district. The form would also require reflection upon their own values and expectations of teachers/administrators. It will give district-level administrators the opportunity to see if their vision of equity aligns with the practices in the field. If espoused and actual theories do not align, then all parties using the observation form can develop a plan in collaboration with other departments to support the learners in individual schools.

In addition to the direct implications on teacher, administrator, and district evaluations, the use of the conceptual model has implications for the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Office of Gifted Education (CDE, n.d.) as well as

NAGC. CDE's Office of Gifted Education page does not have a set of programming standards to follow; however it does have a list of documents and trainings related to compliance and state regulations. Depth and Complexity training is available, but there are no other resources readily available for teachers. There are not connections to other departments for cross collaboration (English Language Department or Title Department). With changing demographics and increase in talent development focus from national level, the Office of Gifted Education has a responsibility as leaders who set precedent to include multicultural education and the needs of culturally linguistically diverse learners on their website. The Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model could be on the website with specific characteristics of learners and teacher competencies. Like the concept of colorblindness (Ladson-Billings and Taylor, 1995) by simply *not* including this population of gifted learners or recognizing them as having unique needs, CDE may be participating in Whitewashing (Litowitz, 2016); thus playing a role in the oppression of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.

The NAGC Pre-K to 12 Gifted Programming Standards (NAGC, n.d.) set the minimum standard for effective gifted programming. The model could be used within NAGC as a way to guide programming and act as a visual within its programming standards section (NAGC, n.d.). Furthermore, the programming standards are just focused upon policies and programming within the classroom. The NAGC focus for the upcoming year is based on talent development and culturally linguistically diverse learners, therefore there seems to be the opportunity for there to be national con

On a global level, the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCTGC) is an international group that reaches educators, researchers and parents around the world (WCGTC, n.d.). The 2017 conference as well as some of the keynote speakers are focused on perspectives in gifted education and diverse learners. The WCTGC does not have global standards for gifted because countries and their education systems are quite diverse and not all countries recognize giftedness (Ford, 2008). The WCTGC does not offer professional learning modules in the same way that NAGC or CDE does. It does, however, give its members access to many professional journals where problems of practice are explored. However, there is an opportunity for the WCTGC to begin an advocacy campaign for culturally diverse learners around the globe. If they do, this model could be used to help other nations refine their standards, classrooms, and help their learners in a different capacity.

Both GiftedCrit and the Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model should be used throughout the field to understand the practices in place that oppress and or support gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, whether formally identified or not. The implications for research regarding GiftedCrit and the Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model will be explored in more depth within the Implications for Research section.

**The field.** Next, the findings from the study have overall implications for the field of Gifted Education. First, there should be a review of the NAGC Pre-K through Twelve (NAGC, n.d.) standards to include culturally responsive gifted pedagogical practices for administrators. Currently, the NAGC standards focus on best practices for

teachers and how teachers can create appropriate programming and environments for all gifted learners. In a review of the programming standards, however, there are no standards for administrators (NAGC, n.d.). As an organization, NAGC, does include administrators in its education series, however, there seems to be an opportunity to create standards for administrators so that they are able to help support the teachers in creating appropriate environments for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and so their schools are culturally responsive to their learners. As the national leaders in gifted education, NAGC should lead the way in providing specialized standards for administrators (building level or district level) specifically regarding culturally linguistically diverse learners.

There are state implications for practice as well. At the state level, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) should consider incorporating both culturally responsive pedagogical practices and multicultural gifted competencies into their website so that all stakeholders visiting the site are able to see that information as being of importance to the state (Ford, 2013; Ladson-Billings and Taylor, 1995). Ford and Trotman's (2001) multicultural gifted competencies are not only for gifted teachers but they should be a part of the general education standards for teaching (CDE, n.d.), because they do provide information as to how to appropriately work with gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. At minimum, CDE should incorporate culturally responsive pedagogical practices into their gifted education strands for endorsement so that gifted education teachers are better equipped to respond to the needs of their diverse learners (Ford and Trotman, 2001). In reviewing the potential educational courses offered for a gifted



specialist endorsement, there is no mention of culturally responsive pedagogy or practices (CDE, n.d.). The state's suggested courses for educator endorsement include work regarding the nature and needs of diverse learners and does specifically name culturally linguistically diverse learners in its "Nature and Needs" section. However, when looking further in the document in "Identification and Assessment" there is no mention of culturally linguistically diverse populations and appropriate assessments in the section that details what content must include (CDE, n.d.; Borland, 2013; Ford, 2008; Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Castellano and Diaz, 2002).

Additionally, culturally responsive pedagogy and pedagogical practices are missing from the "Programming and Instruction" (CDE, n.d.) section in the gifted endorsement coursework suggestions. Multicultural education is also missing from the content that is required for gifted education coursework. If the field is to create an inclusive environment where all learners are valued and programmed for, then this population of learners must be mentioned throughout the guiding document for universities and districts (Worrell, 2008; Pollock, 2008; Borland, 2013; Litowitz, 2016). Whether by oversight, or intentional exclusion, the visible void of multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally responsive pedagogy as they converge in gifted education sends a message to stakeholders that reinforces the existing hegemony. The state, however, has an opportunity to incorporate tenets of multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally responsive pedagogy so that teachers who are seeking endorsement and universities that are preparing teachers for endorsement are properly equipped to deal with this vulnerable population. Equally as

important, gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners will have a chance to be recognized and programmed for at a systemic and local level. Once this occurs, then gifted culturally diverse learners will be able to see themselves in gifted education because they will be there. They will become (Freire, 1970). Once they become, then the field can start making gains in closing the opportunity gap within the state and then the nation (Plucker and Burroughs, 2013; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2007; Colangelo and Davis, 2003; Van Tassel Baska, Johnson and Avery, 2002).

The Gifted Education Department within CDE should also consider the findings from this study to inform professional learning throughout the state and how it approaches educators in working with culturally linguistically diverse gifted learners. The new state guidelines for identification include the suggestion that districts have “talent pools” (CDE, n.d.) of learners who are not identified, but who show potential. This study and the model as well as GiftedCrit may impact the way members of the state think about how to serve those students who are in talent pools and are culturally linguistically diverse. Ensuring that basic culturally responsive pedagogical practices are learned and implemented is a first step (Gay, 2010; Gay, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The state can develop professional learning around the culturally responsive pedagogical practices that honor gifted learners and include coaching and continued support as educators attempt to close the opportunity gap (Plucker and Burroughs, 2013).

Furthermore, the state office should collaborate with other teams with CDE to help create cross-departmental training and follow up coaching to multiple groups (ELA, TITLE, SPED, etc....) and school district leaders throughout the state. By reaching out to

multiple groups, the sphere of influence has the potential to grow even larger, the information acts as a form of intervention (Creswell, 2013), and the system begins to be questioned and explored in ways that may change it (Ladson-Billings, 2014). In discussing structures in place, it will be critical to use a CRT lens that allows for open conversations about the structures that exist within the bureaucracy that may be hindering culturally diverse learners in general (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Lastly, cross-departmental training and collaboration may opportunities for discussion that the different aspects of learner's needs do not have to be disjointed and addressed separately. Instead these different aspects of the learner should coalesce to form one unique student.

Next, this study may impact both general education and gifted education teachers in ways that will cause them to be more aware of their own practices in the classroom. By just being exposed, this information can act as a way of intervention (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, because the information is research based, teachers may be able to make a case for changing how they teach with their administrator. The findings in this study show that there are teachers who are capable to blending culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies. The findings also show that it is rare. Therefore, it would be important for teachers to investigate what they are doing in their own practice that is helping or harming gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners (Ford, 2008; Ford and Trotman, 2001). They should review their espoused and their actual theories to develop a growth plan if needed (Fullan, 2006; Senge et al., 2013). The growth plan should include tenets of GiftedCrit to act as an additional layer through which to view practice. Gifted Education teachers who do not have a classroom can use this

information to advocate for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. They can use the information to program and help inform principals and families as to what should be expected in the classroom (Ford, 2008; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Castellano and Diaz, 2002).

Another group for whom there are implications regarding this study are the universities in the state and in the nation. Higher education institutions who are training teachers should include facets of culturally responsive teaching and gifted education in their preservice classes for both teachers and administrators. While culturally responsive teaching is a component of several Colorado universities (University of Denver, n.d.; University of Colorado, n.d.; University of Northern Colorado, n.d.), it is more difficult to find whether or not gifted education is a component of those classes---specifically gifted multicultural competencies or gifted culturally responsive pedagogical practices. As demographics of the United States continue to change, it is important for teachers to become as well-equipped as possible to "...teach the way students learn, rather than expecting them to learn the way we teach," (Noguera, 2003).

**Professional practice.** As the manager of the gifted and talented department in the district where research was conducted, the researcher was able to help identify key areas for future professional learning with teachers, school based administrators, and senior level administrators, as well as opportunities to work with parents.

First of all, the researcher will create an observation tool that is derived from the intersection of culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural competencies. The observation tool can be used with teachers to help identify areas of strength and areas of

professional learning and growth. The observation tool will have to be taught to teachers and explained. Therefore, there will need to be training in culturally responsive pedagogy for general education teachers as well as gifted education teachers. Training will also have to take place regarding the gifted multicultural competencies. Teachers need to be able to recognize what they are already doing well and where they have room to grow so that learners are impacted positively (Senge, et al., 2013).

Furthermore gifted education teachers should receive training in culturally responsive pedagogy and GiftedCrit. The gifted teachers are the ones who are directly working with both students and teachers and help create gifted programming at their schools. Therefore, it is critical that the gifted teachers know best practices in culturally responsive teaching, so that they can advocate for their gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Having an understanding of the study as well as the findings and the model will allow the GT teacher at the school level to potentially train administrators and teachers. GT teachers, if trained in GiftedCrit, would also be able to look at the structures in place in the school they work in and begin to advocate for the dismantling of oppressive structures. With their advocacy at the school level and the advocacy at the district level, there is the potential to make some large-scale adaptive changes (Argyris, 1980; Fullan, 2006; Senge, et al., 2013).

Another implication for the professional practice will be the use of this data when considering professional learning for administrators and senior level administrators. Principals at schools need to see the data collected from the study to understand the research-based best practices in culturally responsive gifted education. In a school

district that is approximately 75% free and reduced lunch and over 60% Hispanic, it is critical that other school leaders and senior leadership see the work that the research site has started so that they have a model from which to draw so that they are giving appropriate learning opportunities to all of their learners. It will also be appropriate for administrators to engage in GiftedCrit discussions in which they look at gifted education practices within their schools and see what systems of oppression exist that are within their locus of control (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Whatever is not within their control can still be advocated for and pushed upon; but the immediate professional learning focus would begin with what is in their immediate control. By approaching change in this manner, the possibility to influence change grows (Senge, et al., 2013).

In addition to district and school level implications, there are also parent implications. It will be important to share this study with parents across the district. In sharing findings, the gifted department will create an open line of communication about what best practices are for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. Parents will get to hear concrete examples of what a culturally responsive gifted classroom and teacher should look like so that they are able to advocate for their children as well. The parent meetings will allow parents to also give examples of what they need educators to understand about their diverse learners and the GT department can act as a liaison between the family and the school. It will also be important for the GT department to acknowledge the discriminatory practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 2014) within the field and share how the local department is attempting to change the system by forming a partnership with parents.

**Research site.** Study findings showed that there was inconsistency in implementation of the talent development model. The professional learning, while quite powerful for educators at the beginning of the year, was not consistently followed up with and therefore, some educators had different expectations of talent development and what was going to happen next. Therefore, implications for the school include ensuring that there is consistent follow through with initiatives in the form of communication regarding expectations of all stakeholders involved.

Joshua elementary could also become a lab-site for future research. The community partner appears to have already started to make changes in educators' espoused theories of giftedness, and with the data to support that there are teachers who demonstrate the intersection of culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies, this school has the potential to help change the field. The educators who are demonstrating these competencies could serve as model teachers for others in the building, the state, or the nation. Educators could come and observe the classrooms of these teachers and determine how their practice could be impacted by what they see.

The teachers at the school are on a continuum of learning regarding the culturally responsive gifted pedagogical practices and are ripe for professional learning and impact studies. Additionally, as a lab site, the teachers who are demonstrating this work could serve as an additional case study to understand what in their careers or paths brought them to the level of proficiency observed.

A thorough review of the literature showed educators' perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners deny those learners access to

programming. What is not explored, however, is how professional learning in topics of gifted education changes that narrative. The educators participating in this study had different espoused theories than those in the literature, and that could be due to the professional learning that occurred prior to the study taking place. If that is the case, then the proverbial dial has been moved for many of the educators in the study. Data collected indicates that initial perceptions can change, some even quite dramatically, when intentional professional learning occurs; however, actual practices to ensure change may not be as easily changed (Fullan, 2006). Therefore, it's critical to investigate when espoused theories and theories in use become congruent like the three educators at Joshua Elementary.

### **Implications for Research**

Future research is warranted based on study findings and lessons learned. Stringer posits that research is strengthened when it is replicated (2007). There should be future studies of other schools either within Denver Public Schools or with schools who have similar populations, who have not had any professional learning regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. This additional research would help answer the research questions and relate back to the persistent problem of practice. Study findings may also reveal if other schools have had professional learning and how that has impacted their understanding and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.

Conducting a cross-case analysis would enhance the generalizability of this study. Although some researchers will argue that a case study should not be generalizable,



Miles (1994) and Stake (2013) both advocate for cross-case analysis to help the researcher and the field know “...something about the relevance and the applicability” (Miles, 1994). Cross-case analysis will also help deepen understanding because it allows for multiple comparison groups across settings (Miles, 1994; Stake, 2013).

Evidence from this study also suggested that professional learning had a positive impact on teachers’ perceptions and practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. However, there were still gaps found in teacher’s ability to incorporate gifted multicultural competencies and theories in action (Fullan, 2006). Therefore, action research should be done to see the impact of professional learning focused on gifted multicultural competencies and the impact of that on educators’ perceptions and practices. At this point, Ford and Trotman have theories, but there are no current studies showing professional learning focused on the competencies and then the outcome of that learning (Ford and Trotman, 2001).

In the future, research should investigate the hegemony and hidden curriculum that exist within schools and which act as structure of oppression (Jay, 2003; Taylor, Gillborn, and Ladson-Billings, 2014). This research should be done at multiple schools so that there is a large enough sample size to draw conclusions and allow for transferability to other sites (Creswell, 2014). When conducting this particular study, GiftedCrit should be used as a framework through which to view the hegemony.

Additionally, the use of the conceptual model should be researched in other sites as well as the observation tool. The conceptual model, once specified traits are pulled out, should be implemented at other sites to see if there is correlation between observable

findings (Creswell, 2013). To truly impact the field of gifted education, researchers should conduct their own analysis using the conceptual model and or GiftedCrit so that a rich body of work can be developed.

### **Areas for Future Research**

Throughout the research process, there were identified gaps in the literature regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and their ability to be identified and or receive access to equitable programming. There are multiple opportunities for future research including various explorations regarding espoused theories and theories-in-use, gifted multicultural competencies, Critical Race Theory and colorblindness, culturally diverse parent perceptions of giftedness, and student perceptions of teachers abilities to meet their cognitive and affective needs.

The first area of future research regards the two theories in place at Joshua Elementary: Espoused theories and theories-in-use. Argyris (1980) and Fullan (2006) believe that “effectiveness results from developing congruence between theory-in-use and espoused theories,” (Infed, n.d.). Therefore, an area of future research should be the investigation of the length of time and necessary interventions to develop congruence between an educator’s espoused theories about gifted culturally diverse learners and their actual practices (theories-in-use). Understanding what interventions need to be put in place to change mindset, as well as the length of time those interventions should be in place, has the potential to help the field understand how to move educational practice forward. This particular research can inform administrators and school leaders; not just

about culturally linguistically diverse learners, but it can also inform future practice regarding how to effect and sustain change in schools (Fullan, 2006; Senge et al., 2013).

Another area for future research is the investigation of the impact of professional learning regarding gifted multicultural competencies on educators' theories in use. Sixteen years ago, Ford and Trotman suggested multicultural gifted competencies to develop culturally responsive and sensitive classrooms (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2012). However, the field lacks research studies regarding the teaching as well as the implementation of those competencies.

In continuing with areas of future researcher that involve the exploration of espoused theories versus theories-in-use, another area for future research regards the social emotional needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners. The researcher noted that educators could articulate the needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners during the study; however, educators struggled to support those needs with research based practices. Therefore research could include the study of the impact of professional learning communities on educators' espoused theories and theories in use regarding social emotional needs (Webb, 2014; Cross, 2010; Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford, 2014; Delpit, 2006). As more and more students come to the classroom from diverse backgrounds (Bureau, n.d.), it will be important for the field to not only articulate social emotional needs but plan for them accordingly.

An additional area for future research regards CRT and teacher understandings. The research should focus on the understandings of CRT components such as the understanding that racism is endemic and diverse populations are oppressed because of

the systems and structures in society that have been created (Taylor et al., 2016, Pollock, 2008; Gay, 2010). Current literature revealed a gap in studies that explicitly embed CRT and gifted education (Ford, 2010; Borland, 2003; Worrell, 2008). Therefore, a research study should be conducted to measure the impact on the teaching practices of a professional learning community as teachers explore tenets of CRT and colorblindness (Pollock, 2008; Taylor et al., 2016).

Another area for future research is the examination of the role that parents' perceptions of giftedness play in creating barriers or providing access to gifted education. The literature reports that giftedness is viewed differently from culture to culture (Frasier and Passow, 1994; Harry, 2008; Ford et al., 2001). In researching the perceptions of culturally linguistically diverse parents regarding giftedness, the researcher might be able to provide insight for educators and administrators when considering communication and programming with families (Ford and Grantham, 2003; Patrikakou and Weissberg 2000; Pollock, 2008; Ford, 2014).

In addition to parent perceptions, future research should include the perceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners regarding their teachers' ability to meet their individual cognitive and social emotional needs (Ford, 2008, Ford, 2014, Pollock, 2008). This research could be done in tandem with an intervention for the teachers and include student perceptions pre and post intervention, or it could be done without intervention at all. Either way, this research would be important to the field because gifted culturally linguistically diverse student voice regarding their teachers' cultural

competency is missing from the extant literature (Ford and Trotman, 2001; Ford et al., 2001; Berlin, 2009; Milgram, 1979).

## **Conclusion**

It is educational malfeasance to continue to deny gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners access to the educational programming and opportunities that they need to thrive. Actively ignoring academic potential of the fastest growing demographic groups (Bureau, n.d.) in the United States due to endemic racism, oppression, whitewashing, and or colorblindness (Litzow, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Pollock, 2008; Atwater, 2008; Pang, 2001) is a gross injustice to those learners. Therefore, understanding that the perceptions and practices of educators regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners is critical to the success or failure of bright and diverse minds (Ford, 2014; Plucker and Burroughs, 2010).

This understanding, in turn, has the potential to help other researchers determine how to address the barriers as identified in the literature in accessing programming. Researching and comprehending how the practices of educators support or hinder access to programming is also critical because practices and perceptions can act as forms of oppression for culturally linguistically diverse groups of learners (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Gay, 2010; Pollock, 2008). Continuing to deny access to these learners because of classroom practices that are in place perpetuates oppression and reinforces systemic racism (Taylor et al., 2001).

By understanding the perceptions and practices related to gifted culturally diverse groups, the field can help co-construct a new reality for those learners (Moreland, 2007;

Chmiel, 2014). This can be done by supporting educators as they incorporate culturally responsive practices into their daily pedagogical practices. The incorporation of culturally responsive practices, in tandem with understandings regarding the nature and needs of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners, has the opportunity to decrease the barriers found in the literature regarding access to programming within the educational system. Current research has highlighted the untapped potential across the United States. Finn (2014) states:

There are more potential high achievers among our 55 million students than are currently getting the opportunity to thrive. And plenty of them are hiding in plain sight in neighborhoods and schools where adults are unaccustomed to recognizing such potential and are ill equipped to challenge such students (p. 61-62).

This exploratory case study sought to understand how an entire school and the educators within it create or deny the opportunity and ability for gifted culturally linguistically diverse students to thrive. The findings of the study suggest that the educators at one elementary had positive espoused perceptions of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners yet struggled with putting their espoused theories into use (Fullan, 2006). Positive perceptions about gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners and their abilities were most likely informed by the focus of the school and the professional learning that had occurred prior to the research study taking place.

The instructional practices of these educators, however, were not grounded in gifted multicultural competencies, but in best practice for gifted learners in general. Some teachers were adept at incorporating culture with best practices in gifted education; however, they may have done so naturally. In focusing on differentiation and rigor without layering in students' cultures and values, the school is missing a key component

to the success of their students. Until these multicultural competencies are embedded along with instructional practices, educators may unwittingly deny access to appropriate programming, thus continuing the nationwide trend and the identified persistent problem of practice for gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.

In exploring this particular case, the Greene Culturally Responsive Gifted Model was created to show the overlap and intersection of culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural gifted competencies. The creation of the model was a direct result of the intersection of pedagogy and suggested competencies based on theory as evidenced by actual practice.

It was also through this exploratory study, that the researcher discovered the lack of scholarship regarding critical race theory as a framework through which to view gifted education and the development of GiftedCrit framework emerged. However, in using a traditional CRT framework, it can be argued that the United States education system has been stuck in the quicksand of oppression (Jay, 2003; Pollock, 2008; Taylor and Billings, 2016). Yet, in a nation that is increasingly multicultural and multilingual, “our nation’s success depends on our ability to develop the talents of high-ability students in every community” (Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012, p. 8) and the country cannot thrive in its current state.

In this particular study, one school and the educators within it are working towards developing the talents of high-ability students. However, without a critical eye uncovering the hegemony that exists in current systems as well as structures for accountability that support a commitment to change, gifted culturally linguistically

diverse learners will continue to stay in their subordinate positions; not just at this site, but around the world (Jay, 2003; Ford, 2008; Pollock, 2008; Henfield, Moore, and Wood, 2008; Ford, 2016; Taylor and Billings, 2016).

Without educators shifting their practices regarding how they engage learners in a culturally responsive and rigorous manner, students' potential will continue to go untapped (Jay, 2003; Henfield, Moore, and Wood, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach, 2012; Ford, 2008). Therefore, the field of gifted education needs researchers who use CRT or GiftedCrit to examine current problems of practice; because without this research, an argument can be made that the field of gifted education is being complicit with the mechanisms of racism that exist.

As a field, gifted education should seek to positively transform the lives of its learners. Therefore, the deliberate adoption of a critical race theory perspective in gifted education requires that we “not only identify and analyze those aspects of education that maintain a marginal position for students of color, but that we transform them” (Jay, 2003; Henfield, Moore, and Wood, 2008). When combining gifted education with critical race theory, the purpose of transformation and reformation becomes one of social justice. It is critical to remember that working for social change in gifted education requires “commitment, perseverance, and a vision for a better society” (Jay, 2003). In working for social change in education, Paulo Freire (1970) stated that “Education is...constantly remade in the praxis. In order to be, it must become.” Therefore, in order to be an instrument of social change, gifted education must become an instrument of social change. In order for gifted education to become the instrument of social change,



the structures of oppression must be transformed so that gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners become "beings for themselves" (Freire, 1970) For this transformation to occur, however, there must be action; and the time to act is now (Jay, 2003).

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## Appendix A

### Community Partner Letter

August 2, 2016

To whom it may concern,

I am pleased to participate as a community partner for the doctoral research study being conducted by Robin Greene titled: An Exploratory Case Study: Understanding Perceptions Regarding Culturally Linguistically Diverse Gifted Learners. As the principal of the elementary school being studied, (given the pseudonym Joshua Elementary) and someone who believes in the talent development for all of our gifted and talented culturally diverse learners, I have opened my school to lend itself to this study. Furthermore, it is my hope that this study will help us determine how to better serve our learners based on research findings.

As the community partner as well as a participant, I have been ensured that my school and all those participating, including myself will remain anonymous and given pseudonyms. I have used my pseudonym in the signature below. It is my hope that by being given pseudonyms, that all of our educators will be able to participate honestly and openly. As the community partner, I will help Robin by giving her time to speak to the staff as well as post anything needed in the teacher's lounge. I will also counsel Robin in communication with the teachers as well as allow the teachers to have time to go interview during one of our staff meetings. I will also review the final write up of the research project to lend my lens and provide feedback as needed.

I look forward to the findings of the study to help move my school building forward in providing quality programming for our gifted diverse learners.

\* 

Stephen Johnson

(\*pseudonym for the study)

## **Appendix B**

### Introductory Letter

Dear Teachers,

My name is Robin Greene, and I am pursuing my doctoral dissertation at the University of Denver. My research is focus upon teachers' perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse gifted students. This research has the potential to help the field of gifted education understand teacher perceptions and then plan meaningful professional learning opportunities based on those perceptions.

I am currently looking for study participants who are willing to engage in a process that will include the following: one interview, a classroom observation, and collecting pictures of classroom environment/student work. You do not have to have any identified gifted students to participate or be an expert in the field of gifted education. All voices are critical to developing an understanding of perceptions and practices.

If you are interested in participating in this research project, please reach out via my phone number \*\*\*\*\*or by email at\*\*\*\*\*.

Thank you for your interest in this study,

Robin M. Greene

Doctoral Student

University of Denver



## Appendix C

University of Denver

### Consent Form for Participation in Research

**Title of Research Study:** A Case Study: Understanding Teachers' Perceptions and Practices Regarding Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gifted Learners

**Researcher(s):** Robin Greene, Doctoral Student, University of Denver

**Study Site:** Greenlee Elementary

#### **Purpose**

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this research is to understand educators' perceptions and practices regarding gifted culturally linguistically diverse students.

#### **Procedures**

If you participate in this research study, you will be asked to do the following:

- 1) **Agree to engage in a 30 minute *interview* at a location and time of your choosing**
- 2) **Agree to allow the researcher to *observe* your classroom once for 90 minutes**
- 3) **Agree to allow the researcher to take photographs of the school environment including classrooms, hallways, lunchroom, and administrators' offices if applicable (no students or school staff will be photographed)**

#### **Voluntary Participation**

Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may choose to answer some or all of the questions in the interview. You may choose to discontinue the observation at any point during the duration of the observation. You will remain anonymous throughout the study and may discontinue your role in the study without penalty or other benefits to which you are entitled. You will be audio recorded during the interview process. If you do not want to be audio recorded, please inform the researcher, and only hand-written notes will be taken during the interview/focus group.

#### **Risks or Discomforts**

There is minimal risk to the participants in this study. Because of the small size of the participant group, measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality (see Confidentiality section). Inconvenience may include the 30 minutes of time you will give for the interview as well as a minimal inconvenience with the researcher as an observer in the classroom for 90 minutes.

### **Benefits**

Participation in the study will benefit the field of gifted education and potentially professional learning as it will add to the body of research that exists so as to inform other researchers, teachers, and administrators of teacher perceptions about this underrepresented group of students. Understanding teacher perceptions and classroom practices with these gifted learners will also allow not only DPS, but other school districts to better understand what professional learning opportunities should be in place to support educators.

### **Confidentiality**

The researcher will ensure that all names, including the name of the school, are given pseudonyms so as to keep your information safe throughout this study. Your individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published about this study. No one beyond the researcher will receive identifiable data. Data that is obtained via recorded interview will be stored in a locked filing cabinet that is in a location only known to the researcher. The researcher will work in a secure location while analyzing data. All data will be used for the purpose of understanding the findings of the study and will not be used to disparage or discredit any member of the faculty of Greenlee Elementary. All recordings will be destroyed within two years of collection.

The research records are held by researchers at an academic institution; therefore, the records may be subject to disclosure if required by law. The research information may be shared with federal agencies or local committees who are responsible for protecting research participants, including individuals on behalf of Dr. Norma Hafenstein.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about this project or your participation, please feel free to ask questions now or contact **Robin Greene** at **817-223-7301** or **[rgreene12@gmail.com](mailto:rgreene12@gmail.com)** at any time. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Norma Hafenstein at 303-871-2527 or [Norma.hafenstein@du.edu](mailto:Norma.hafenstein@du.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns about your research participation or rights as a participant, you may contact the DU Human Research Protections Program by emailing [IRBAdmin@du.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@du.edu) or calling (303) 871-2121 to speak to someone other than the researcher.

### **Options for Participation**

Please initial your choice for the options below:

- The researcher may contact me again to participate in future research activities.
- The researcher may audio/video record or photograph me during this study.
- The researcher may NOT audio/video record or photograph me during this study.
- The researcher may photograph the learning environment
- The researcher may NOT photograph the learning environment

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

## Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Project: Understanding Teachers' Perceptions and Practices Regarding Culturally Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Robin Greene

Interviewee:

Role of Interviewee in the school:

Position of Interviewee:

State: The purpose of this case study is to describe teacher perceptions of characteristics and needs as well as their practices related to gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.

### Questions:

1. Describe your understanding of gifted and talented learners.
2. Describe your understanding of culturally linguistically diverse learners.
3. Describe your understanding of gifted culturally linguistically diverse learners.
4. How does your school support gifted students?
5. How does your school support culturally linguistically diverse students?
6. How does your school support gifted culturally linguistically diverse students?

7. Tell me about a culturally linguistically diverse child with whom you've worked or known and have thought was gifted or was really bright. What did you notice about him/her?
8. What might you need to effectively work with gt cld students?

## Appendix E

<b>Observation Protocol</b> (Creswell, 2013) Location of Observation: _____ Time of Observation: _____ Date of Observation: _____ Length of Activity: 60 Minutes			
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b> (Gay, 2010)	<b>Mark with tally</b> <b>the amount of</b> <b>times observed in</b> <b>the setting</b>	<b>Evidence of observed</b> <b>trait or competency-</b> <b>How is it displayed in the</b> <b>setting?</b>	<b>Researcher's reflections, if</b> <b>any</b>
The teacher provides space and relationships where ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected valued, seen and heard			
The teacher knows culturally diverse students thoroughly personally and academically			
The teacher cultivates a sense of kindredness and reciprocal responsibilities among culturally diverse students			
The teacher enables ethnically and culturally diverse students to be open and flexible in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, as well as being receptive to new ideas and information			
The teacher builds confidence among students from different aspects			

<b>Gifted Multicultural Competencies (Ford and Trotman, 2001)</b>	<b>Mark with tally the amount of times observed in the setting</b>	<b>Evidence of observed trait or competency. How is it displayed in the setting?</b>	<b>Researcher's reflections, if any</b>
Knowledge of the nature and needs of students who are gifted and diverse			
Ability to develop methods and materials for use with students who are gifted			
Skills in addressing individual and cultural differences			
Skills in teaching higher level thinking skills and questioning techniques using multicultural resources/materials			
Ability to recognize the strengths of students who are gifted and diverse			
Seeks to develop students' sense of self as a gifted individual			
Skills in counseling students who are gifted and diverse			
Skills in creating an environment in which diverse gifted students feel challenge and safe to explore and express their uniqueness			