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Developing Teacher Capacity with Culturally Responsive Classroom Management  
Practices

by  
Sarah Phillips

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
in  
Learning and Leading

University of Portland  
School of Education

2017

Developing Teacher Capacity with Culturally Responsive Classroom

Management Practices

by

Sarah Phillips

This dissertation is completed as a partial requirement for the Doctor of Education (EdD) degree at the University of Portland in Portland, Oregon.

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### **Abstract**

As elementary classrooms are becoming more diverse, school staffs remain predominantly White, with a perspective of mainstream sociocultural norms. Additionally, research has shown a disproportionate number of minority students receiving behavioral referrals. The cultural mismatch between teachers and students combined with the disproportionality seen in discipline data indicate that change is needed. The purpose of this quantitative study is to investigate the development of educators' capacity to foster their own identity development and use culturally responsive classroom management practices that meet the needs of diverse students through a series of professional learning experiences. Additionally, this study will examine the relationship between educator self-reported perceptions of their capacity to meet the needs of diverse students and the number of discipline referrals retrieved from School-Wide Information System (SWIS). The study included 35 certified staff members from a Pre-K through fifth grade elementary school in Oregon. Pre- and post-survey data were collected using the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS) and the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices (SOBMP). A paired-sample *t*-test indicated a statistically significantly higher mean scores on the post TMAS ( $p = .036$ ). A Pearson's *r* indicated there was not a statistically significant relationship at the  $p < .05$  probability level between the number of disciplinary referrals and either survey. There were statistically significantly higher mean scores on

the SOBMP for those who participated in the Circles book study than those who did not ( $p = .037$ ). These findings supported the importance of understanding how privilege and bias impact how individuals interact with others and how learning about other cultures can change how a person then interacts with/or understands those different than himself. Additionally, it highlighted the effectiveness of the Circles book study on increasing capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices. A lack of findings in regard to the relationship between behavioral referrals and a change in teacher capacity could be due to the length of the study. Additional results, opportunities for future study, and program recommendations are presented.

## **Acknowledgements**

Without the guidance of my chair and committee members, openness of the study school administrator and teachers, and support my family, I would never have been able to complete my dissertation.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude for my chair, Dr. Jacqueline Waggoner. I would have not begun this journey without her encouragement and support. Her patience, kind words, and guidance throughout the dissertation process made my research possible. Additionally, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Richard Christen and Dr. Hillary Merk. I greatly appreciate the support and feedback they have provided me the past three years. Their expert knowledge in the area of culturally responsive practices ensured that my dissertation accurately reflected the field of CRCM. The topics covered my first semester with Dr. Christen led me to identifying a need for culturally responsive practices in schools and a desire to investigate the impact that professional learning in this area would have on teachers and students.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the administrator and teachers at the study school. Without the support and flexibility of the administrator, this study would not have been possible. He ensured that I had the time and space to provide professional learning on culturally responsive practices to the staff and was collaborative in designing and implementing these learning experiences. I appreciated

the openness of the staff in sharing their opinions and beliefs, especially when the conversations were difficult. They were flexible to try new classroom management practices and reflective about the implementation process. Their commitment to the process made this study possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. They were there to cheer me on throughout the process. They provided me space to work and words of encouragement when I was feeling discouraged or overwhelmed. They were there to listen when I needed to talk through my ideas. Completing this dissertation would not have been possible without strong family support and guidance.

### **Dedication**

For my children, Alex, Nickolas, and Makayla, I could not have done this without your love and support. My hope is that one day, you too, will reach for your dreams and know that anything is possible. I love you all to the moon and back.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

As elementary classrooms are becoming more diverse, school staffs remain predominantly White, with a perspective of mainstream sociocultural norms.

According to a 2014 report from the Center for American Progress, almost half of the public school population is made up of students of color, while the teaching profession is 18% teachers of color. This divide has grown by 3% in the past three years. Based on this same report, the statistics for Oregon show percentages for teachers of color and students of color to be slightly lower than the national average. Oregon's teaching profession is 11% teachers of color, while 34% of the student population is made up of students of color. The diversity index for Oregon, which looks at the demographic differences between teacher and student populations, is 22. The National diversity index is 30. Ullucci (2011) posited that this cultural mismatch between teachers and students requires thoughtful study.

While schools are believed to be less segregated now than 30 years ago, the opposite is actually true. Schools went through a period of resegregation, and education was not equal for all students. Stroub and Richards (2013) posited that segregation in schools increased throughout the 1990s, especially in the South. Segregation was worsening for Blacks and Hispanics, and in the mid 1990s Black students were more segregated than they were in the early 1970s. Further, desegregation orders have been removed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which may have facilitated the resegregation occurring in schools. However, Stroub and Richards have found that by 2009, segregation in schools had begun to decline. The segregation of Black students has declined more rapidly than that of Hispanic students, though. Hispanic students

were 4.8% more segregated from White students in 2009 than in 1993. Kozol (2005) explained that students in the poorest and most segregated sections of cities are becoming more isolated. These disadvantaged students often feel hidden and unvalued. The gentrification of neighborhoods is further contributing to these issues of segregation.

At the same time, research has shown a disproportionate number of minority students receiving behavioral referrals or being suspended. In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights reported that 16% of Black students are suspended, compared to 5% of White students. A 2013 report from the ACLU shows that 3% of Oregon's student population is composed of Black students, while 7% of all out-of-school suspensions are received by Black students. A 2012 report from the Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families & Community found that in Multnomah County, 23 out of every 100 students of color are excluded from school, which is twice the rate of White students. According to Carter, Fine, and Russell (2014), the discipline disparities were not present for clearly defined infractions like violence, drugs, or weapons, but rather were present for more subjective infractions like defiance, disruption, insubordination, clothing, or "talking back." These subjective infractions could be due to cultural misunderstandings on the teacher's part. In an effort to combat this unconscious bias against minority students, Oregon passed Senate Bill 553 in 2015, which limits when students younger than fifth grade can be suspended out of school or expelled.

Due to the growing issue of disproportionate discipline, the *Discipline Disparities Research to Practice Collaborative* convened throughout the country to

investigate and assess discipline disparities. This group looked at research, policy, student experiences, student outcomes, and structural conditions. Carter, Fine, and Russell (2014) shared the findings of this Collaborative. It was found that promising intervention strategies that addressed discipline disparities included Restorative Justice, building strong and sustained relationships, using cooperative approaches rather than punitive approaches to discipline, and being attentive to bias and issues of race and ethnicity. Introducing and implementing these culturally responsive practices will aid schools in addressing and reducing the disproportionality being seen in discipline data. As these interventions are beginning to be introduced into teacher preparation programs, there is a need for on-site trainings for in-service teachers who would not have had the opportunity to study these interventions in their teacher preparation programs.

The cultural mismatch between teachers and students seen in classrooms combined with the disproportionality seen in discipline data indicates that change is needed. Prior research has demonstrated the need for teachers and students to develop their sense of racial identity to create common understandings and clear up misconceptions. This cultural mismatch in classrooms can also be addressed through the implementation of culturally responsive classroom management practices (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004; Carter, Fine, & Russell, 2014).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study is to investigate the development of educators' capacity to foster their own identity development and use culturally responsive classroom management strategies that meet the needs of diverse students.

This study will examine the relationship between educator self-reported perceptions of their capacity to foster their own identity development and meet the needs of diverse students and the number of discipline referrals retrieved from SWIS (School-Wide Information System).

### **Research Questions**

Given the statistics that students of color are disciplined at a disproportionate rate than their White peers, and that there is a cultural mismatch in schools between students and school staff, it is imperative that steps are taken to address these issues and that professional learning experiences are designed to aid teachers in meeting the needs of the current student body. This study addresses these needs by examining the answers to the following research questions.

1. Do educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for cultural competencies after participating in a series of professional learning experiences?
2. Do educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices after participating in a series of professional learning experiences?
3. Is there a relationship between a change in educator self-reported capacity and the number of discipline referrals received by students in the educator's classroom?

### **Summary of the Research Design**

In order to investigate the development of educators' capacity with culturally responsive classroom management practices and examine the relationship of the

change in capacity to disciplinary referrals and suspensions, a diverse school setting was identified. The participants in this study are educators at a Pre-K through fifth grade elementary school in Multnomah County. Based on school discipline data and changing school demographics, the educators at the school determined there was a need for learning about the various cultures represented in the school and developing classroom management practices that were more effective for the students. The educators will complete the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey and the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices at the beginning and end of the study to evaluate a change in capacity and personal identity development. A paired sample *t*-test tested for significant changes in teacher capacity and personal identity development. Educators participated in bimonthly professional learning experiences focusing on identifying White privilege and personal bias, developing an understanding of other cultures, and investigating culturally responsive classroom management practices. Disciplinary referrals and suspensions were collected through the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to examine a relationship between disciplinary events and educator capacity.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant, because it addressed gaps in current literature regarding culturally responsive classroom management practices. These gaps include a lack of research about changing teacher capacity or developing identity of in-service teachers, the generalizability of past studies due to low participant numbers, and a lack of studies on professional development for in-service teachers on how to work with a diverse student population.

Most literature about changing teacher capacity and developing identity revolved around pre-service teachers (Bloom, Peters, Margolin, & Fragnoli, 2015; Wiseman, 2014; Chang, Anagnostopoulos, & Omae, 2011). The changes called for in these studies were changes for teacher education programs and how to better prepare future teachers for the diverse classrooms they would experience in the field. Any research conducted on in-service teachers studied why teachers were successful in the field in relation to culturally responsive classroom management practices. Instead of investigating how to change capacity of teachers already in the field, the research discussed what strategies were successful for specific teachers in urban schools (Bondy, Ross, Galligane, & Hambacher, 2007; Ullucci, 2009).

Another gap in the research is the generalizability of existing studies. The majority of studies conducted on developing identity or developing culturally responsive classroom management practices had very small participant sample sizes, with only four participants in one study (Han, West-Olatunji, & Thomas, 2010-2011) and six in another (Ullucci, 2011). Because most studies were qualitative, a small number of teachers were studied, making it difficult to generalize the results to the general population. Prior studies also have not investigated a correlation between teacher capacity with culturally responsive classroom management practices and discipline referrals and suspensions.

Finally, it was difficult to find studies describing professional development that could be conducted with in-service teachers to increase their capacity to work with diverse students. The studies examined in the literature review focused on strategies that would be successful for teachers to implement in their classrooms in

order to be more culturally responsive (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007; Ullucci, 2009).

Through the exploration of the research questions, this study filled some of these gaps in the literature and contributed to the field of culturally responsive practices by highlighting potential solutions to disparities in discipline practices and contributed to the literature on professional learning for in-service teachers. First, this study was focused on changing the capacity of in-service teachers, specifically the staff of an urban elementary school, through the development of professional learning experiences. This was a quantitative study, which explored the correlation between a change in teacher capacity and the number of disciplinary referrals. While the sample size of this study was small, with only 35 participants, the number was larger than the four or six participants in prior studies and has provided a starting point for further research in the area that could become more generalizable.

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

To gain insight into how teachers are able to build the skills necessary for developing cultural competencies and culturally responsive classroom management practices that meet the needs of diverse students, racial identity development theory and literature about identity development, adult learning, and culturally responsive classroom management were explored. For students to become more successful in schools, it is imperative that teachers use practices that meet the needs of students.

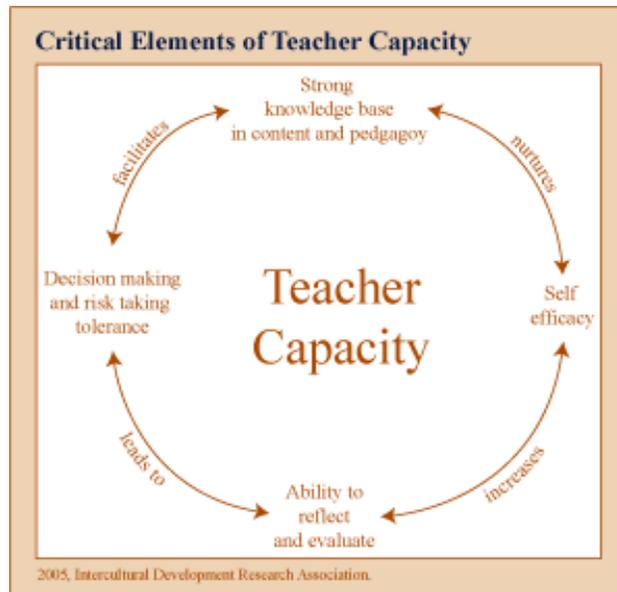
Helms' (1990) racial identity development theory, specifically White Racial Identity Theory, focused on exploring oneself as a racial being and increasing the awareness of one's own whiteness. Literature on developing identity has focused on

how educators begin to develop an understanding of their own identity and how their perceptions impact how they relate to students through teacher education and professional development (Han, West-Olatunji, & Thomas, 2010-2011; Gushue et al., 2013; Bloom, Peters, Margolin, & Fragnoli, 2015; Ullucci, 2011; McGowan & Kern, 2014). As educators gain a stronger sense of identity, they become open to changes in practice. Literature about adult learning has focused on how to address the learning needs of adults. An understanding of adult learning allows for the development of effective professional learning experiences (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005; Knowles, 1972; Mezirow, 1978). Transformative learning literature further explained that while deeper learning occurs when perspectives begin to change, an exposure to opposite perspectives can also create resistance (Mezirow, 1978; DeMulder, Stribling & Day, 2014; Christie, Carey, Robertson & Grainger, 2015). The literature about culturally responsive classroom management practices has provided ideas for how teachers can frame their classroom management approaches and create a classroom community to be inclusive and welcoming for diverse students (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007; Ullucci, 2009; Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003; Dray & Wisneski, 2011; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004).

### **Operational Definitions**

For the purpose of this study, it is essential to define significant terms. Capacity will be defined as “the perceived abilities, skills, and expertise of school leaders, teachers, faculties, and staffs ... to execute or accomplish something specific” (“Capacity,” 2013, para. 1). Building capacity is further defined as “any effort being made to improve the abilities, skills, and expertise of educators” (“Capacity,” 2013,

para. 2). Villarreal (2005) visually displayed the elements of teacher capacity in Figure 1.



*Figure 1.* The critical elements of teacher capacity. This figure visually illustrates the cyclical nature of the elements of teacher capacity.

Culturally responsive classroom management is defined as providing “all students with equitable opportunities for learning by minimizing discriminatory school discipline practices that occur when the behaviors of nondominant populations are misinterpreted” (Finley, 2014, para. 13). Finley explained that a focus on building relationships was far more effective than bolstering authority. Understanding how cultures resolve conflict is an important component of culturally responsive classroom management. Finley explained that in Asian cultures, open conflict is avoided. Instead, allowing students to solve the conflict in a written form may be more effective and culturally responsive. Finally, expectations need to be clear and modeled. For example, when students are asked to work in partners, teachers should demonstrate how helping a partner differs from doing the partner’s work.

## **Summary**

As the cultural mismatch between educators and students continues to grow, and students of color are excluded from school due to disciplinary issues at a higher rate than their White peers, it is necessary to investigate approaches that will aid school staff in becoming more culturally responsive in their classroom management practices. The goal of this study was to investigate the change in educators' capacity with culturally responsive classroom management practices and examine whether there was a relationship between the change in capacity of the school staff and the number of disciplinary referrals and suspensions awarded to the students of those individuals who demonstrated a change in capacity. In Chapter 2, the literature review explores White Racial Identity Theory, identity development, adult learning theory, and culturally responsive classroom management practices. In Chapter 3, there is a description of the methods of this current study, including a description of the participants, survey tool, professional learning experiences, and data analysis tools. In Chapter 4, there is a description of the results of this study. In Chapter 5, there is a discussion of the results and what future research is needed in this area.

## Chapter II Literature Review

### Overview

In order to investigate the impact of new professional learning experiences on teacher capacity with cultural competencies and culturally responsive classroom management practices and examine the relationship of the capacity change on student discipline referrals, relevant literature was reviewed. This literature review explores White Racial Identity Theory, identity development, adult learning theory, and culturally responsive classroom management practices.

Helms' (1990) racial identity development theory, specifically White Racial Identity Theory, focused on exploring oneself as a racial being and increasing the awareness of one's own whiteness. Literature (Han, West-Olatunji, & Thomas, 2010-2011; Gushue et al., 2013; Bloom, Peters, Margolin, & Fragnoli, 2015; Ullucci, 2011; McGowan & Kern, 2014) on developing identity has focused on how educators begin to develop an understanding of their own identity and how their perceptions impact how they relate to students through teacher education and professional development. As educators gain a stronger sense of identity, they become open to changes in practice.

Mezirow (1978) introduced the idea of transformative learning as a means to recognize the dimension of adult learning that allows one to recognize or reassess assumptions and expectations, which form one's frame of reference. Mezirow and Taylor (2009) further explained that transformative learning is a process, which transforms problematic frames of reference, resulting in creating inclusive, open, and reflective frames of reference. These new frames will then generate beliefs and actions

that are more justified in guiding action. Transformative learning literature (Mezirow, 1978; DeMulder, Stribling & Day, 2014; Christie, Carey, Robertson & Grainger, 2015) explains the conflicts and benefits that arise when perspectives begin to change. Literature about adult learning has focused on how to address the learning needs of adults (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005; Knowles, 1972; Mezirow, 1978). An understanding of adult learning allows for the development of effective professional learning experiences.

Finally, literature about culturally responsive classroom management practices has provided ideas for how teachers can frame their classroom management approaches and create a classroom community to be inclusive and welcoming for diverse students (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007; Ullucci, 2009; Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003; Dray & Wisneski, 2011; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004).

### **Identity Development**

Historially when researchers have discussed identity development, the discussion has focused on White vs. Black. While the diversity is greater now, the literature presented maintains that focus due to a lack of the inclusion of diverse populations in older research. White Racial Identity Theory, developed by Janet E. Helms (1990), explored the need for the development of racial identity and how one might develop such an identity. Helms explained that the progress of racism and the development of White identity are connected. It is more difficult to develop a positive White identity if the extent of racism present is great. Individual, institutional, and cultural racism are all pieces of the White person's racial identity. To develop a

positive racial identity, a person needs to overcome the forms of racism in his or her personal life. White racial identity refers to a person's unspoken thoughts, beliefs, and experiences about himself and his relationships to others. Helms further contended that one must be accepting of one's Whiteness, accept the cultural implications of being White, and develop a new view of self that is not reliant on being superior to another group. For this process to occur, two processes need to be accomplished, the abandonment of racism and the development of a positive White identity.

The abandonment of racism and the development of a positive White identity is a linear process that can be accomplished in six stages. Helms (1990) stated that how a White person progresses through these stages differs and depends on the extent to which the person acknowledges racism and his or her own consciousness of Whiteness. The final stage of this development results in an awareness of one's personal responsibility for racism and an understanding of his Whiteness.

According to Helms (1990), the first three stages address the abandonment of racism. The first stage is known as the Contact stage of identity. In this stage one benefits for institutional and cultural racism, but is not conscious that he is doing so. In this stage, a person may claim to be color-blind and does not see himself as having biases or prejudices. Interactions with other races are limited. Because experience with other cultures and races is limited, individuals are oblivious of the historical oppression and racism on people of color. The length of time a person remains in this first stage is dependent upon his experiences with Blacks, especially in regards to racial issues. Disintegration is the second stage. In this stage, a person becomes conscious of his Whiteness, but is conflicted. He begins to question the racial realities

that he has been taught. One begins to realize that Blacks and Whites are not considered equal. An awareness of being between two racial groups develops, and one must decide how to proceed. Does he choose to remove himself from interracial environments, or does he choose to work to change others' attitudes? The final stage in this first process is the Reintegration stage. Now one consciously acknowledges his White identity, but regression is seen. He believes that racism is the White person's due and tends to conform to stereotypes. It is in this stage that acts of violence or exclusion to protect White privilege can be seen. Racial minorities are blamed for their problems, and there is a stronger belief in White superiority. This is an easy stage to remain in, and it often takes a jarring event, like a painful encounter with Black people or an event such as the Civil Rights Movement, to cause people to question their racial identity (Helms, 1990).

The final three stages address the development of a positive White identity. Helms (1990) explained that the first stage in this process is known as the Pseudo-Independent stage. Here, one begins to actively question the belief that Blacks are innately inferior to Whites. He begins to understand the role Whites play in racism. Now, not comfortable with one's racist identity, he begins to search for ways to redefine his identity. An understanding of racial and cultural differences begins to develop, and one begins to reach out to minority group members. At this point, the person does not have a negative or positive White identity. He is also met with suspicion from Whites and Blacks. The next stage is known as the Immersion/Emersion stage. Now, White and Black myths and stereotypes are replaced with accurate information about what it means to be White. One begins to search for

answers to questions about who he is racially and who he wants to be. The goal becomes changing White people instead of changing Black people. One re-experiences emotions that were denied or distorted in the past and begins to deal with his own biases. Now he is able to address racism and oppression. The final stage is the Autonomy stage. In this stage, one internalizes, nurtures, and applies his new definition of Whiteness. There is no longer a need to oppress people based on race. He abandons cultural and institutional racism. One seeks to learn from other cultural groups and works to eliminate other forms of oppression (Helms, 1990).

In order to assess attitudes related to the stages of White racial identity, Helms (1990) created the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale. This tool was created due to the belief that racial identity development is propelled by one's attitudes about Whites, Whiteness, White culture, Blacks, Blackness, and Black culture. Each stage in identity development is measured by ten items using a Likert scale. The results are used to establish in which stage an individual resides (Helms, 1990).

Empirical research has used the ideas and tools provided by White Racial Identity Theory. Han, West-Olatunji, and Thomas (2010-2011), Carter, Helms, and Juby (2004), and Gushue et al. (2013) used this theory and the White racial identity attitude scale to explore cultural competence among teachers and students. The researchers surveyed teachers and students to determine their understanding of their racial identity development. Han, West-Olatunji, and Thomas (2010-2011) and Gushue et al. (2013) also investigated how the racial identity development of their participants impacted their perspectives of culturally diverse individuals.

Gushue et al. (2013) conducted a study using the White racial identity scale and the differentiation of self inventory. The differentiation of self inventory explored emotional reactivity, the ability to define oneself and stand by one's convictions, emotional cutoff, and fusion with others. The purpose of the study was to explore a relationship between the two measures and to examine if the results help to understand social interactions in a racially diverse society. It was found that White participants displayed attitudes of racial openness and engagement when they were less likely to withdraw when experiencing interpersonal anxiety. This would reflect that the participants were in the pseudo-independent or autonomy stages of identity development. They also had a clearly defined sense of self. Gushue et al. (2013) also found that the awareness of how White privilege and racism operate, as well as the ability to identify strengths and deficits across cultural perspectives, increases with a differentiated sense of self. It was found that for people of color, those with an externally defined sense of self and greater emotional reactivity showed conformity to racial identity attitudes. However, if they display a strong sense of self and have lower emotional reactivity, participants are more likely to appreciate their own cultural values and the cultural values of others. Gushue et al. (2013) further posited that the racial identity status of individuals influences their perceptions and responses to racial issues at school, work, or in interactions with others.

For the purpose of their study, Han, West-Olatunji, and Thomas (2010-2011) shared stories from teachers to give concrete examples of what would be seen in each of the stages of identity development. The researchers found that the teachers residing in the Contact stage had limited cross-racial experiences and this limited their

perspectives in working with diverse students, which supports Helms' (1990) description. It was found that those teachers in the Disintegration stage had emerging consciousness of racial/cultural differences, and experienced dilemmas in teaching diverse students. For example, one teacher feared that if she spent too much time teaching about Martin Luther King, Jr., she would upset the White parents (Han, West-Olatunji, & Thomas, 2010-2011). Han, West-Olatunji, and Thomas (2010-2011) shared that teachers in the Reintegration stage became defensive when asked about White privilege. They also lacked an understanding of the minority students in their classrooms. Teachers who were able to demonstrate attitudes associated with the Autonomy stage showed an appreciation of multicultural education and were aware of the impact of their identity on teaching diverse students. One teacher explained that people are not all the same, and that it is important to know where children are coming from in order to meet their needs. Further, it was found that the racial identities of the teachers did influence their teaching and understanding of diverse students (Han, West-Olatunji, & Thomas, 2010-2011). Han, West-Olatunji, and Thomas (2010-2011) concluded by stating that higher statuses of White racial identity are associated with an increased ability to accept, understand, and appreciate cultural differences. This helps them become more effective teachers for their diverse student population.

Carter, Helms, and Juby (2004) explored the relationship between racism and racial identity for White Americans. White college students were surveyed in this study using the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale developed by Helms (1990), and the scoring protocol was used to identify racial attitudes of participants. Carter, Helms, and Juby (2004) found that the most common profile in the sample was flat or

undifferentiated. Participants with this profile show no particular commitment to any one stage. This may be due to socialization regarding race. This profile has higher racism scores. According to White Racial Identity Theory, this would be due to an individual being influenced by society's view of race, so he tends to endorse subtle racist beliefs (Carter, Helms, & Juby, 2004). Carter, Helms, and Juby (2004) also found that the Autonomy profile had higher racism scores. This contradicts the theory, but it could be due to the fact that the Autonomy status has not been studied in relation to other statuses. It could also be due to the small number of participants in the study.

Bloom, Peters, Margolin, and Fragnoli (2015) examined the White racial identity growth of preservice teachers. The researchers believed that addressing issues of institutional racism should be a component of teacher preparation programs. Participants responded to questions at the end of their student teaching. It was found that initial assumptions about the school and community differed based on the diversity of the placement. Those placed in diverse placements responded with negative expectations of the school and community, while those in nondiverse placements responded with positive expectations. However, those in diverse placements explained that their impressions changed over time. Bloom, Peters, Margolin, and Fragnoli (2015) asked students about how the diversity of their placement made them think about their own ethnic background and social status. Half of those placed in diverse settings answered that they were more aware of the differences between them and their students, as well as, how they have privileges and advantages not experienced by their students. Only 22.9% of those placed in nondiverse placements experienced the same awareness. In fact, many stated that the

experience did not change their thoughts about their own backgrounds. Being aware of White privilege is the first step in developing a positive White racial identity. Bloom, Peters, Margolin, and Fragnoli (2015) found that the placement of student teachers in diverse settings is important in understanding the differences and privileges given to those of different races and ethnicities. Some participants in both groups expressed a belief that all students are equal and that race does not play a role in education. This is known as the color-blind approach. While this may seem to be positive, in reality it does not foster culturally responsive practices. Finally, Bloom, Peters, Margolin, and Fragnoli (2015) explained that many answered that they needed to provide additional support to diverse students. This belief indicates a perception that students of color need more assistance in the classroom.

Chang, Anagnostopoulos, and Omae (2011) studied the impact of multicultural learning of pre-service teachers on their awareness of their own biases, awareness of cultural diversity and structural inequities, and their commitment to disadvantaged student populations. It was found that engaging in discussions was critical in developing an awareness of their own beliefs and the inequities that exist. It was also found that multicultural learning assists pre-service teachers in overcoming the negative perceptions they may have of students who are racially different than them

Ullucci (2011) explained why the need for developing identity is necessary in schools. Through conversations with pre-service and in-service teachers, the researcher shared hearing that Latino students struggle in school because of poor parenting and a lack of effort. Some resent discussing race. Other teachers believe that race matters in school and can see the injustices reflected in tracking and special

education placement. These teachers understand that racism is not a historical issue, but rather is one that still exists today. This study investigated how some White teachers became successful educators in urban schools. The goal was to focus on the teachers' lived experiences that shaped them into effective educators, instead of focusing on the difficulties White educators have in urban schools. Ullucci (2011) was interested in examining teachers' experience before and after their studies in education. Teachers' interactions with students from many racial backgrounds was also explored.

Ullucci (2011) claimed that three common themes developed throughout the study. These themes were the importance of shared life experiences with people of color, understanding how equity did or did not function in the community, and lessons gained through personal struggle. Participating teachers attended diverse schools, lived in multiracial neighborhoods growing up, and had friends from other races. They had shared experiences of seeing the challenges that people of color faced in their neighborhoods. These were lessons that could not be learned in school. Their understanding of diversity was not built on assumptions but rather on the experiences of day-to-day life. Ullucci (2011) further alleged that these teachers were better suited for empathizing with students due to their own experiences with violence, poverty, being a poor student, and feeling like an outsider. They understood what it felt like to be marginalized and can see pieces of themselves in their students. While it is often believed that White teachers have not explored their own racial biases and identities, stories like those in this study build an understanding of how shared experiences build relationships necessary to be a successful educator in urban schools.

## **Adult Learning**

In order to develop effective professional learning experiences for in-service teachers, there needs to be an understanding of adult learning. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) and Knowles (1972) posited that an andragogical model was an effective model to use when planning professional learning for adults. The andragogical model is based on six assumptions. The first assumption is that adults need to know why they need to learn something before they begin to learn it. Another assumption is that adults want to be responsible for their own decisions. Adults may resent trainings if they feel that other people's ideas are being forced upon them. The third assumption is the role of the adult learner's experiences. Professional learning opportunities should be focused on tapping into the experience of the learners. The readiness to learn is the next assumption. Adults have a readiness to learn when the topics covered help them cope with real-life situations. The fifth assumption is the orientation to learning. Adults have a life-centered orientation to learning. Adults are motivated to learn when they believe the learning will help them with tasks or problems they confront in their daily lives. The final assumption is motivation. Adults respond to internal motivators like the desire for increased job satisfaction and self-esteem, however, these motivators can be blocked by a negative self-concept, time constraints, or the inaccessibility of opportunities.

The andragogical model is a process model, not a content model. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) shared eight steps in the andragogical model. The first step begins with preparing learners. Realistic expectations are developed and learners begin thinking about the content that will be covered. Next, a climate conducive to

learning is established. The climate needs to be relaxed, trusting, respectful, collaborative, open, and supportive. The third step is creating a mechanism for mutual planning. Members of the planning group must have influence in the decision making process. Adults have a difficult time committing to any decision that they feel they did not have an opportunity to influence. The fourth step is a diagnosis of needs. The setting of objectives is the fifth step. The objective should help the learner understand what he or she should be doing as a result of the learning. The sixth step is designing learning plans and these plans should be sequenced by readiness levels. Conducting the learning activities is the seventh step. Experimental, or inquiry based, techniques should be used in the learning activities. The final step is evaluation. It is imperative to collect data from the learners about what they liked and did not like about the experience. It is also important to gather data on what knowledge and skills the learners have gained from the learning experience. Following these steps will aid in implementing effective professional learning experiences for adult learners.

Mezirow (1978) introduced the concept of transformative learning. Transformative learning explained the dimension of adult learning that enables learners to recognize and reassess the assumptions and expectations that frame their thinking, feeling, and acting. This perspective allows a learner to set priorities for action and gives the learner a feeling that he can change his situation through his own initiative. Mezirow further posited that transformation cannot occur with simply acquiring new information. Transformation occurs when the learner takes the perspective of others.

Transformative learning literature further explained that while deeper learning occurs when perspectives begin to change, an exposure to opposite perspectives can also create resistance. DeMulder, Stribling, and Day (2014) conducted a study focused on helping teachers develop as critical educators. During the learning sessions, teachers were given the opportunity to experience the perspective of others through readings, film clips, and panel discussions. As the teachers gained a new perspective, they were better able to understand the challenges of their students and work to make changes to their practice. Providing multiple perspectives allowed teachers to develop a deeper understanding of the issues. However, other participants were resisting the learning because they felt their personal experience was not being honored. This anger and resistance inhibited these particular teachers from deeper learning. Resistance was also noted when the learning was focused on social change due to a fear of losing power.

### **Culturally Responsive Classroom Management**

Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) examined strategies for developing culturally responsive classroom management. Teachers often respond to student behavior from the perspective of the mainstream culture or from predetermined stereotypes. When this is done, students from minority groups are discriminated against. This discrimination occurs when teachers do not recognize that their behavior is influenced by culture and when they do not see that their management practices marginalize some students and privilege others. According to Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003), culturally responsive classroom management begins with understanding self. It is imperative that one recognizes that

he has his own beliefs, biases, and assumptions. Once cultural biases become conscious through the recognition of personal beliefs, biases, and assumptions, one is less likely to misinterpret behaviors of diverse students. It is also imperative that teachers acknowledge that differences in culture, race, and class exist. Learning about family backgrounds, cultural norms, parent expectations, and how various cultures treat time and space allow teachers to be open and willing to learn about cultural aspects that are important to students. Finally, Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) asserted that culturally responsive classroom management requires that teachers understand how schools reflect and perpetuate discriminatory practices. Differences are linked to power and the structure of schools can privilege some students, but marginalize or segregate others. Tracking, the uneven distribution of resources, and standardized testing are examples of how school structures have created privilege for some groups and marginalization or segregation of others.

There are six strategies for developing culturally responsive classroom management. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) provided explanations of the six strategies. The first strategy is organizing the physical environment. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) and Ullucci (2009) claimed that teachers should use the classroom environment to communicate respect for diversity and avoid marginalizing students. Displayed books should promote diversity and community. These books should also be used to teach core concepts. Being from another culture is respected and celebrated. All students know that they belong. Desks should be arranged in clusters to allow collaboration, discussions, and material

sharing. This desk arrangement aids in ensuring that everyone is able to participate in discussions and is engaged in the content.

According to Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003), the second strategy is establishing expectations for behavior. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) and Ullucci (2009) argued that expectations should be clear and students should have an understanding of what specific behaviors meet the expectations. It is important that teachers are explicit with their expectations, allow students to discuss them, model the expected behavior, and allow students to practice the behavior. Boundaries are set, but students are not controlled. Ullucci (2009) further contended that classroom management is not about being obedient, but rather learning how to thrive with others. They learn how to be productive and be a good neighbor. Clear expectations aid students in understanding how to be a member of a classroom community and how to demonstrate respect and compassion for those in their community.

Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) explained that the third strategy is communicating with students in culturally consistent ways. There are differences in how cultures communicate and this can impact student behavior. Some cultures are accustomed to straight-forward directives, while the dominant culture favors indirect discourse. If indirect discourse is used in the classroom, explicit lessons need to be taught on how these are a code for direct commands. Ullucci (2009) shared that teacher directions were clear and direct. Instead of asking students to do a task, they were told.

The fourth strategy according to Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) is creating caring, inclusive classrooms. One way to create caring relationships is to share personal stories and learn about students' interests and activities. Listening to student concerns and ideas also contributes to caring, inclusive classrooms. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) and Ullucci (2009) claimed that valuing the various languages spoken by students and including content from other cultures in teaching shows the teacher values diversity. Caring for students also involves communicating high expectations and holding students accountable for high-quality work. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) and Ullucci (2009) contended that creating a sense of community also contributes to this caring classroom. Creating a meeting space for community meetings help students build a sense of cohesion. This is a chance for students to share their worries and the good things that are happening in their lives. Students learn to empathize with characters in books and explain how they felt in different situations. Focusing on students' emotions in community meetings allows a teacher to connect with students. Students are given a chance to be heard. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) also argued that it is also imperative that teasing and bullying are not acceptable in the classroom. Ullucci (2009) further posited that community building should come before management tactics. The initial focus should be on relationship building and instilling a sense of belonging in students.

According to Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003), the fifth strategy is working with families. Working with families is an integral, yet challenging part of classroom management. When teachers and families come from different

cultural backgrounds, challenges can occur. It is important to understand that differing levels of parental involvement in school could be due to different perspectives about parent involvement, not a lack of interest. Teachers should work with parents to better understand a child's culture or prior experiences. It is also a chance to learn about cultural conflicts the child may be experiencing.

Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) explained that the sixth strategy is dealing with problem behaviors. Teachers should reflect on the behaviors they view to be problematic and how they may be related to race and culture. When a teacher is able to view behavior as a reflection of the student's cultural norms, he is able to remain calm and nondefensive. Ullucci (2009) shared how teachers use feelings to help students understand the consequences of behavior. They teach students the language they need to explain their feelings. It is also an opportunity to examine how race and culture influence disciplinary consequences. Minority students are often disproportionately referred for behavior problems (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003).

Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007) investigated how culturally responsive classroom management strategies establish an environment that supports students. The two key findings of this study were developing relationships and establishing expectations. The importance of building relationships was communicated the first day of school. The teachers explained that for students to succeed and face academic challenges, they need to feel supported. Relationships are the core of a learning community.

Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007) explained that building relationships is based on multiple practices. First, knowing the teacher is important. Sharing personal experiences, stories, and pictures allow the teacher to connect to the students. Connecting the personal stories to classroom activities and student feelings creates a connection between teacher and student. Second, it is imperative that students know and care about each other. Teachers aid students in talking with one another and in identifying similarities and differences between them. The teachers also played games with the students to help them get to know one another. Through these activities, students were also taught about the importance of respecting one another and being kind to others (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007).

Establishing expectations was the second key task explored by Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007). Teaching rules and procedures set students up for success. Some teachers assume that students know what appropriate behavior looks like. However, the teachers in this study explicitly communicate rules and procedures to students. These rules and procedures were developed with students and introduced within the first two hours of school. Establishing the rules takes more than a week and should be retaught throughout the year. The teachers were explicit with the expectations, modeled the desired behavior, and asked students for examples. A rationale for the rules was also provided to students. These teachers also understood that inappropriate behavior was the result of failing to be explicit with the expectations. Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007) further stated that the teachers also developed consequences, both positive and negative. Teachers also communicated their expectations for success. Students were told explicitly that the

teacher believed in them. Teachers believed that all students had the capacity to succeed.

According to Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007), it is also imperative that teachers hold students accountable for meeting expectations. Students were not allowed to continue behaviors that failed to meet the expectations set by the teacher. While repeating requests, teachers remained respectful. Consequences for failing to meet expectations were delivered calmly. Teachers continued to be kind and caring when implementing consequences, never punitive or threatening.

Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007) also investigated how teachers communicate in culturally responsive ways. Teachers in this study use terms of endearment and humor to communicate with students. Humor was used to build bonds with students, not sarcastically or in a manner that hurt students. Teachers also used words and expressions that were familiar to students. The call-and-response pattern was also used in classroom instruction. This style of communication was familiar to students and encouraged them to participate actively.

Developing the skills necessary to implement culturally responsive classroom management practices begins in pre-service teacher education courses. Gay (2010) and Gay and Kirkland (2003) argued that developing attitudes and beliefs about diversity should be a major component of teacher education programs. Gay and Kirkland (2003) claimed that self-reflection and cultural critical consciousness are key to improving the education for students of color. It is imperative that pre-service teachers understand their own culture and the cultures of other groups. It is also important to understand how this understanding impacts teaching and learning.

There are obstacles that pose a challenge for self-reflection in pre-service teachers. Gay and Kirkland (2003) maintained that a lack of understanding on how to self-reflect impacts pre-service teachers. Another obstacle is that students have limited opportunities for guided practice in self-reflection. Traditional beliefs about teaching can also hinder the development of self-reflection skills. An example of such a belief is that all students should be treated the same, no matter who they are. Developing critical consciousness about race and cultural diversity can be hindered when pre-service teachers try to divert attention away from the topic of race and diversity. For example, when discussing the achievement of students of color, pre-service teachers will often they cite trends or reasons they have heard from others for why discrepancies exist without examining their own beliefs, questioning the common explanations, or analyzing the influence of culture, class, or race (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Gay, 2010). Silence is also used to avoid having conversations about their own thoughts, biases, or behaviors about race and culture. Gay and Kirkland (2003) and Gay (2010) asserted that the final obstacle to thinking critically about race is a feeling of guilt about oppression or marginalization. Many feel that feeling guilty about racism is enough to make them supporters of equality. However, the causes and depth of their guilt is not examined in order to find ways to ensure that these actions do not continue in the future. Some even believe that racism no longer occurs in school and that racial problems in schools were solved in the past.

To combat the obstacles for developing critical consciousness and self-reflection, teacher education programs should create learning environments in which self-reflection is a part of the normal routine. Gay and Kirkland (2003) explained that

pre-service teachers should have the opportunity to have discussions with others about racial and culturally diverse issues in education. When students are able to process new knowledge, share it with others, and receive feedback, they receive valuable practice in self-reflection and critical consciousness. Students were also assigned projects that allowed them to analyze the cultural values embedded in schools and society that are often taken for granted. Students learn to modify content and practices to make them more responsive for diverse students (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

Gay (2010) further explored the idea of developing pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs about race and culture. These attitudes and beliefs significantly shape teacher conceptions and actions, but are not thoroughly developed in teacher education programs. When teachers have limited experience with and knowledge of culturally diverse groups, their attitudes and beliefs interfere with teaching and learning. Gay (2010) argued that teacher education programs should facilitate students in examining the causes of the beliefs and attitudes they have about different cultural groups. Problems in teaching related to cultural diversity cannot be solved until they are recognized and confronted. There cannot be a fear to discuss the issues. Cultural diversity should be seen as a valuable resource in teaching, yet it is often seen as a threat that needs to be avoided (Gay, 2010). Teacher education programs should also prepare teachers to understand how instructional behaviors are influenced by beliefs about race, class, and culture. When examples are given during instruction to support the content being studied, the examples often exclude diverse students. Many examples provided in formal curriculum convey strong beliefs about cultural diversity, many being biased. Teacher education programs can help pre-service teachers develop

skills to modify examples to be culturally diverse and use multiple culturally diverse examples to support teaching concepts, knowledge, and skills (Gay, 2010).

While the need for developing the skills necessary to implement culturally responsive classroom management practices is needed in pre-service teacher education courses, there is also a need to develop the same practices with in-service teachers. Dray and Wisneski (2011) claimed that in-service teachers are not always aware that their interpretation of students' actions and how they interact with students is impacted by diversity. In order to accept and embrace diversity in the classroom, a teacher needs to first reflect on the challenges that can interfere with acceptance. If cultural and individual differences are not given attention, some students may have limited opportunities to succeed. One way in which to combat misunderstandings between teachers and students is to develop reflective practices. In order for teachers to be sensitive to diversity, they need to be able to take an emotional risk and examine how their beliefs, assumptions, and biases can affect how they treat students. Teachers may also need to consider new ways to communicate with students in their classrooms (Dray & Wisneski, 2011). A person's life experiences and cultural background influence how one responds to others. Dray and Wisneski (2011) posited that teachers working in diverse settings should be aware of their own background and experiences and the cultural norms of others in order to avoid prejudice and overgeneralizations.

Dray and Wisneski (2011) presented a framework for mindful reflection, which is a process for teachers to follow when they are working to understand the meaning of behavior in their classrooms. This reflection process should help teachers transform historically deficit views and responses. This process also helps teachers

become aware of their biases so that they can become more culturally responsive in their practices. The first step is to unpack the attributions that one has about the student. Multiple incidents should be analyzed and the student should not be labeled or blamed in this step. The teacher should focus on listening and observing, while being open to learn something new. The second step asks the teacher to write out and reflect on his feelings and thoughts when working with the student. Were issues of prejudice or overgeneralizations present? While the answer to this question may be uncomfortable, it is an opportunity to rethink the response. Step three asks the teacher to consider alternative explanations for the behavior by reviewing the documentation and reflections. The teacher analyzes how he communicates and perceives the student. This is also the time to compare the student's behavior to other behavior in the classroom. Step four is a chance to check assumptions. In this step, the teacher shares his reflections with colleagues, parents, or community members. This provides an opportunity to develop alternative explanations for the behavior or to identify biases. It is also an opportunity to learn about the perceptions and ideas of the family. The purpose of this step is to find more productive solutions and positive outcomes for students. Step five is to make a plan. In this step, teachers work to change their behavior. The plan should focus on changing the classroom environment or teacher actions. The final step is to continuously revisit this process to reassess the progress being made with the student. It is important to evaluate whether or not the changes are supporting student success (Dray & Wisneski, 2011).

In order to implement culturally responsive classroom management practices, Weintin, Tomlinson-Clarke, and Curran (2004) posited that there needs to be a

commitment to creating caring classroom communities. Vaandering (2013) and Boyes-Watson and Pranis (2015) explained that implementing Circles in the classroom aid in creating caring classroom communities. Boyes-Watson and Pranis explained that Circles are a structured process of communication that creates a safe space for all participants to have their voices heard and move towards being their best self. Circles help build a healthy community so that all participants feel connected and respected. Circles are a tool that guide a community to work out how they will be together. This includes how relationships will be built and how the community will work through differences. All members of the classroom community sit in a circle during discussions and have a talking stick that is passed around the circle to ensure that all members have an equal voice in the discussion. Boyes-Watson and Pranis explained that many classroom behaviors and disruptions occur because students feel powerless and are trying to gain power in their lives. Circles helped students experience healthy power by giving every student a voice and showing that each student is valued. As students gain a sense of power, the need to act out behaviorally decreases. Vaandering explained that schools need to make an explicit effort to ensure students are heard in order to create an even distribution of power. Boyes-Watson and Pranis posited that a sense of belonging promotes learning and cooperative functions. It is important for schools to promote a sense of belonging because the pain and fear of not belonging are the basis of violence and harm in schools. Helping all students belong in school can lead to a decrease in behavioral problems in the classroom.

Vaandering (2013) posited that when adults create time and space for student perspectives to be articulated and heard, school culture changes occur. Further, Circles

should provide opportunities for students to address harm and formulate solutions for the future. Boyes-Watson and Pranis (2015) explained that restoring relationships ensures that both parties feel there is mutual respect and that the outcome is fair and just. This is fundamental to maintaining a healthy school culture.

Another culturally responsive classroom management practice, which can be implemented in schools, is Collaborative Problem Solving. Greene (2011) reasoned that behavioral challenges should be responded to in the same manner as academic challenges. When students struggle academically, interventions focus on the lagging skills. The same should be true for behavioral challenges. When students struggle behaviorally, staff should identify the lagging skills and then support students in developing these skills. Schaubman, Stetson, and Plog (2011) posited that misbehavior should not be viewed as a way to manipulate others, but rather a child trying to solve a problem without having the necessary skills.

In Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS), adults learn to understand challenging behavior, to communicate with students, and how to work together to solve problems. Schaubman, Stetson, and Plog (2011) explained that as teachers learned how to communicate and problem solve with students more effectively, students were able to remain in the classroom and not miss instructional time. Greene (2011) described the themes of CPS. The first is that students do well if they can. If a student is not doing well, it is because of interfering lagging skills. Second, doing well is preferable to not doing well. A lack of motivation is not the cause of not doing well. If a student had well developed skills, he would do well. Third, challenging behavior needs to be viewed within the context of a child's development. The fourth theme is

that every challenging behavior is caused by a lagging skill and a demand for that skill. When the demands of the environment conflict with lagging skills, a challenging behavior is likely to occur. This is often seen in schools when students struggle to begin an assignment or have problems interacting with peers. The fifth theme is that problems should be handled proactively. Often times, problems are solved reactively. It would be more productive to solve the problem before it occurs. Finally, problems should be solved collaboratively. If a student is lacking a skill, it is very difficult for him to handle the expectation being handed down from an authority figure. Instead, the student should participate in the process of problem solving.

Collaborative Problem Solving includes three steps. Greene (2011) shared that the process begins with gathering information from the student in order to gain an understanding of his perspective of the problem. Then the adult shares his perspective or concern with the same problem. The student and adult then work together to brainstorm possible solutions to the problem. The solutions have to be realistic and satisfactory to both parties. Using CPS improves relationships between adults, students, and parents. It allows for students to feel that they are heard and that their concerns will be addressed. The process provides teachers with skills to handle challenging problems as they come up in the classroom. Schaubman, Stetson, and Plog (2011) conducted a study on CPS. They found that the use of Collaborative Problem Solving reduced teacher stress and problem behaviors. There were increased opportunities for positive interactions, which improved the school climate.

### **My Contribution to the Literature**

Throughout the investigation of the literature, research gaps were identified. Most literature about changing teacher capacity and developing identity revolved around pre-service teachers. The changes called for in the literature were changes for teacher education programs and how to better prepare future teachers for the diverse classrooms they would experience in the field. Any research conducted on inservice teachers studied why teachers were successful in the field. Instead of investigating how to change capacity of teachers already in the field, the research discussed what strategies were successful for specific teachers in urban schools.

Another gap in the research is the generalizability of the studies. The majority of studies conducted on developing identity or developing culturally responsive classroom management practices had very small participant sample sizes. Because most studies were qualitative, a small number of teachers were studied, making it difficult to generalize the results to the general population. Prior studies have also not investigated a correlation between teacher capacity with culturally responsive classroom management practices and discipline referrals and suspensions.

Finally, it was difficult to find studies describing professional development that could be conducted with inservice teachers to increase their capacity to work with diverse students. The studies examined in the literature review simply focused on strategies that would be successful for teachers to implement in their classrooms in order to be more culturally responsive.

This study would fill some of these gaps in the literature and contribute to the field of culturally responsive practices and the building of capacity to work with

diverse learners. First, this study is focused on changing the capacity of inservice teachers, specifically the staff of an urban elementary school. Also, this study will develop professional learning experiences for staff. Staff will begin by developing their own racial identity. They will examine their biases and explore how their perceptions about diverse populations impacts their relationships and expectations of students. Once staff identities have been developed, professional learning will move into learning about the cultures of the students in their classrooms. Staff will explore the cultural differences present in their classrooms and identify pathways for better meeting student needs. Finally, professional learning experiences will focus on how to implement culturally responsive classroom management practices. The focus of the trainings will be on developing a sense of community and helping teachers learn to build trusting relationships with students. Setting clear and explicit expectations with clear consequences will also be discussed and explored. Teachers will have opportunities to practice these techniques in their classrooms and reflect on the experience. Time will be given to share with other teachers in the building to support the collective efforts of the school to become culturally responsive in an effort to make the school welcoming and inviting for all students and families. While the sample size of my study will be small, it will provide a starting point for further research in this area that could become more generalizable.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

This chapter will discuss the methodology used to investigate the impact of new professional learning experiences on teacher capacity with cultural competencies, as measured by participants' scores on the TMAS, and with culturally responsive classroom management practices, as measured by participants' scores on the SOBMP and student behavioral referrals. It will also include information on the research questions, rationale for methodology, participants and setting, design and procedure, instruments, ethical considerations, data analysis, and limitations.

#### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the development of educators' capacity to foster their own identity development and use culturally responsive classroom management strategies that meet the needs of diverse students. This study examined the relationship between educator self-reported perceptions of their capacity to foster their own identity development and meet the needs of diverse students and the number of discipline referrals retrieved from SWIS (School-Wide Information System).

Given the statistics that students of color are disciplined at a disproportionate rate than their White peers, and that there is a cultural mismatch in schools between students and school staff, it is imperative that steps are taken to address these issues and that professional learning experiences are designed to aid teachers in meeting the needs of the current student body. This study addressed these needs by examining the answers to the following research questions.

1. Do educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for cultural competencies after participating in a series of professional learning experiences?
2. Do educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices after participating in a series of professional learning experiences?
3. Is there a relationship between a change in educator self-reported capacity and the number of discipline referrals received by students in the educator's classroom?

### **Rationale for Methodology**

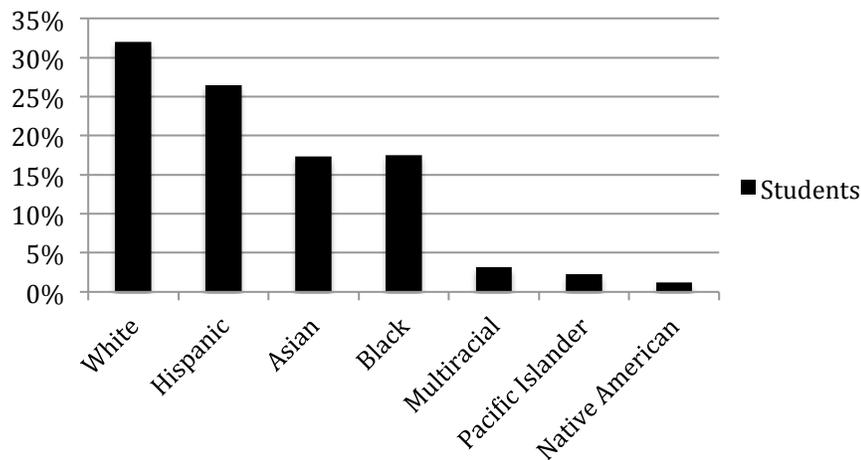
Since this study focused on investigating a change in teacher capacity and examining a relationship between teacher capacity and behavioral referrals, quantitative research methods were used for collecting and analyzing data. Muijs (2011) explained that in order to test a hypothesis, in this case if a change in teacher capacity leads to a decreased number of behavioral referrals, quantitative methods are needed. Quantitative methods require data to be in numerical form in order to analyze data using statistics (Muijs, 2011). The surveys used in this study incorporated a Likert scale in order to receive numerical responses.

Specifically, this study was non-experimental focused on survey research. Muijs (2011) posited that survey research is suited for exploring relationships between variables. Since this study was seeking to explore a change in teacher capacity with cultural competencies and culturally responsive classroom management strategies after a series of professional learning experiences, pre- and post-surveys were needed

to determine change. For time, cost, and logistical reasons, convenience sampling was used for the distribution of the survey and participation in the professional learning experiences. According to Muijs (2011) convenience sampling is when the researcher uses a population to which he has easy access. While this is advantageous for cost and convenience, there are also limitations. There can be bias involved in this method due to the site not being representative of the population or the results not being generalizable (Muijs, 2011).

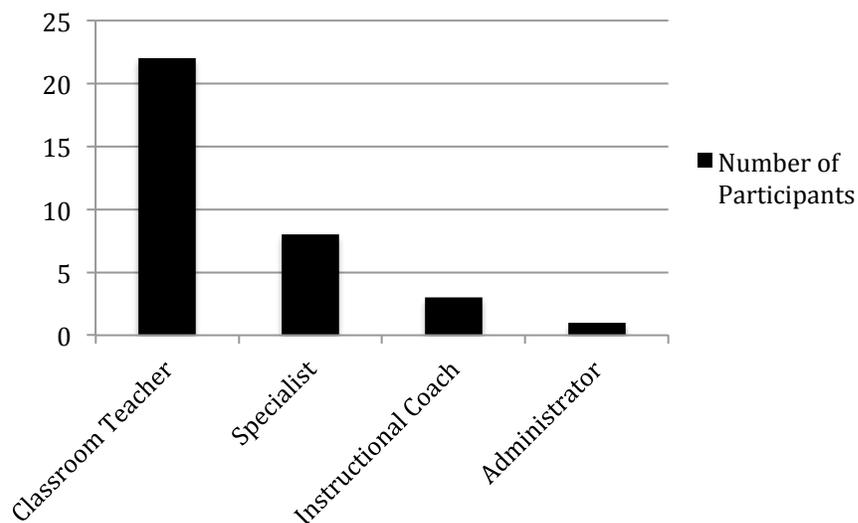
### **Participants and Setting**

This study was conducted at a Pre-K through fifth grade elementary school in Oregon. There were 566 students enrolled in the school, and 100% of students received free breakfast and free lunch. Of the total student population, 264 students were identified as active English Language Learners, which equates to 47% of the school population. However, there were 40 students enrolled in the pre-school program, and those students were not yet evaluated for identification as English Language Learners. English Language Learners made up 50% of K-5 student population. There were 28 different home languages spoken by students. The ethnic composition of the school is displayed in Figure 2. Of the total student population, 32% were White and 68% were students of color. The number of White students in the school has decreased from 54% to 32% since 2009.



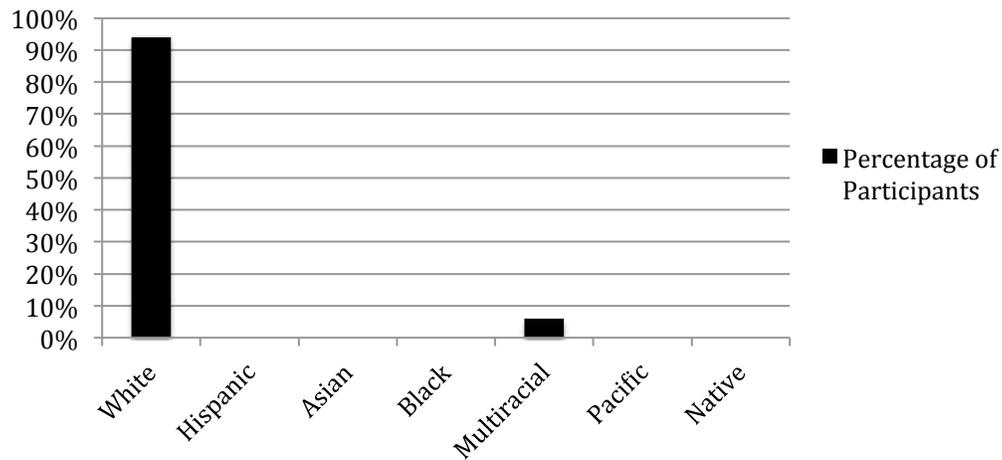
*Figure 2.* The ethnicity distribution of students. This figure visually illustrates the ethnic composition of students attending the study school.

The 34 participants in this study were educators at this urban school. Of the 34 participants, 22 were classroom teachers, 8 were specialists, 3 were instructional coaches, and 1 was an administrator. The participant roles are displayed in Figure 3.



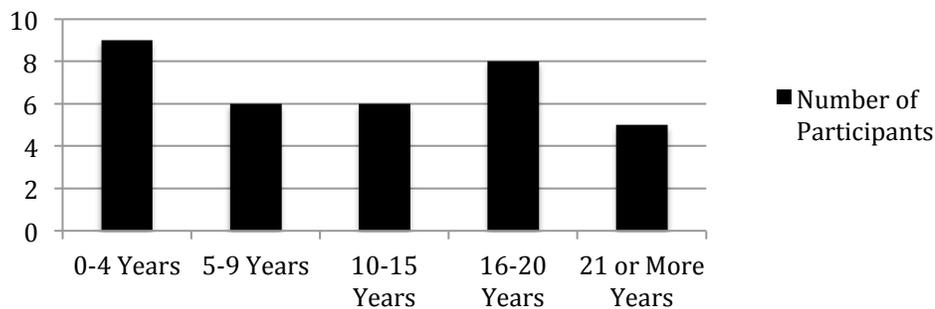
*Figure 3.* Participant roles. This figure visually illustrates the roles of the study participants.

Of the participants, 73.5% were female and 26.5% were male. White participants comprised 94% of the sample. The ethnic distribution of participants is displayed in Figure 4.



*Figure 4.* The ethnic distribution of participants. This figure visually illustrates the ethnic composition of study participants.

Nine participants had 0 to 4 years of experience as an educator, six had 5 to 9 years of experience, six had 10 to 15 years of experience, eight had 16 to 20 years of experience, and five had 21 or more years of experience. Figure 5 displays the distribution of the years of experience.



*Figure 5.* Years of experience for study participants. This figure visually illustrates the years of experience as an educator for each participant in the study.

Based on school discipline data and changing school demographics, the educators at the school determined there was a need for learning about the various cultures represented in the school and in developing more effective student classroom management practices. The administrator was also committed to providing equity trainings for staff for at least the next three years, and this work was included in the School Improvement Plan. A letter of consent was given to each participant explaining that his or her completion of the surveys constituted consent to participate in the study. There were no participants who declined to participate in the surveys.

### **Design and Procedure**

This study served as an overview and introduction for a three-year professional learning plan designed by the study school. According to Hollins and Govan (2015), there are four areas in which one can focus cultural competence trainings. First, a focus on awareness helps participants deepen their understanding of their own bias and attitudes toward others. Second, a focus on knowledge helps participants develop an understanding of diverse cultures. Third, a focus on skills allows participants to develop culturally responsive strategies for engaging students across cultures. Fourth, a focus on action and advocacy will help participants create institutional change. Hollins and Govan posited that one should not focus on all areas at once. However, due to the time constraints of this study, the first three areas were addressed in order to provide a solid introduction of the topic to staff and to begin to aid teachers in developing their capacity for classroom management strategies and identity development.

This study began in August of 2016 and concluded in December of 2016. In total there were seven one-hour professional learning experiences, a voluntary summer book study prior to the professional learning experiences, and the completion of a pre- and post-survey. The pre-survey was completed by all participants, including those who participated in the summer book study, prior to the first professional learning experience in August. The post-survey was completed following the last professional learning experience in December. The school equity/behavior team facilitated each professional learning experience. Table 1 depicts when each of the focus areas was discussed during the period of this study.

Table 1

*Professional Learning Experiences By Month*

| Topic     | August   | September                     | October  | November                        | December           |
|-----------|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Awareness | • PL-What is your hope for your students?                | • White Privilege: Color Line | • White Privilege: Beads                         |                                 |                    |
| Knowledge |  |                               |  |                                 | • Panel discussion |
| Skills    | • Community Circle Book Study<br>• PL-Community Circles. |                               | • Relationship building<br>• Restorative Circles | • Collaborative problem solving |                    |

Before the beginning of the school year, 16 staff members volunteered to complete a summer book study and training using *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community*. This book was written by teachers for teachers, and the purpose was to aid teachers in developing safe and compassionate schools. It provided a theoretical foundation for using Circles in schools and provided lesson

plans for teachers to follow in order to implement Circles in their own classrooms. Boyes-Watson and Pranis (2015) explained that Circles are a structured process of communication that creates a safe space for all participants to have their voices heard and move towards being their best self. Circles help build a healthy community so that all participants feel connected and respected. After reading the book, the group met for two hours in August to discuss questions they had, insights gained, and implementation strategies they planned to use.

During teachers' first week back to work in August, the school Positive Behavior Support team (PBIS) conducted a three-hour staff training. A portion of this training focused on the implementation of Circles in classrooms. According to Boyes-Watson and Pranis (2015), Circles are a tool that guide a community to work out how they will be together. This includes how relationships will be built and how the community will work through differences. All members of the classroom community sit in a circle during discussions and have a talking stick that is passed around the circle to ensure that all members have an equal voice in the discussion. This training opened with the staff participating in a Circle. They were asked to share why they chose to become an educator and a value that they bring to their work and want to model for students. After the conclusion of the Circle, the theoretical foundation and core assumptions of Circles were shared. How to structure and implement a Circle was also presented. Those who participated in the summer book study assisted in explaining the purpose of Circles and supported the rest of the staff in the implementation. Circles had been included in each teacher's daily schedule. Also during the first week back to work, certified staff were provided an opportunity to

explore a hope they had for their students. This encouraged them to develop a purpose for the equity work that was completed during the remainder of the fall term.

The remainder of the certified staff professional learning experiences took place bi-monthly through after school professional development days. Each of these sessions was an hour long. The one session in September and the first session in October focused on awareness. During the first session, certified staff completed and discussed *Understanding White Privilege: The Color-Line Exercise* taken from *Courageous Conversations About Race*. The certified staff participated in a privilege bead exercise during the second session. This activity came from Brenda J. Allen at the University of Colorado Denver. During this exercise, staff visited seven stations collecting beads for each privilege for which they could answer yes. Staff explored privilege based on sexuality, ability, gender, race, religion, class, and nationality. These two activities were designed to build awareness about White privilege and aid staff in developing their own identity, while also building an awareness of the biases and values they hold that may impact interactions with students.

The remaining October session and one session in November focused on skill building. The topics covered in these sessions focused on relationship building, collaborative problem solving, and restorative Circles. These trainings provided certified staff with methods for creating a safe classroom community and tools for addressing student behavior that went beyond writing an office referral. The October session provided a forum for teachers to share feedback on the effectiveness of Circles in their classrooms and allowed for professional collaboration to address less successful components of implementing Circles. Certified staff were also given

training on how to use Circles for restorative purposes when problems arose in the classroom. Boyes-Watson and Pranis (2015) posited that the most important goal for the well-being of the community and those involved in a conflict is restoring the relationship in a manner in which both parties feel there is equity and respect. Further, in order to grow and develop, it is important to understand how one's behavior affects others, while taking responsibility for the action and restoring a positive relationship with the community. The goal of restorative Circles is to include the whole community in finding a positive resolution for the wrongdoing in order to build a stronger community. A restorative Circle would begin with passing a talking piece around the circle beginning with the harmed party explaining the incident. The talking piece is passed around again providing each member the opportunity to share how the incident made him/her feel. The talking piece is passed around another time beginning with the harmed party explaining what is now needed so the wrong can be repaired and the community can move forward. As the talking piece moves around the Circle, a plan is created and agreed upon.

Collaborative problem solving was the focus of the November session. The school behavior specialist and school counselor provided differentiated instruction for certified staff. This meant that staff members in their first year at the school worked with the school counselor to learn what was collaborative problem solving, the theory behind it, and the research about why it was an effective means of conflict resolution, especially in diverse communities. These new staff also discussed when to use collaborative problem solving and the steps they would need to follow in the process. However, returning staff members worked with the school behavior specialist to

practice classroom-based collaborative problem solving and how to hone their collaborative problem solving skills in order to become more effective. These methods provided staff with culturally responsive ways to manage student behavior in an effort to decrease the racial disproportionality seen in discipline referrals. Based on school discipline data, the study school faculty members determined that students of color were receiving discipline referrals at a disproportionate rate than White students and had already begun working to adopt methods to address the disproportionality.

For the session in December, the focus was on building the knowledge base of the staff. Through a partnership with the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), a panel was formed that consisted of individuals from several different countries that were represented in the student population. This panel shared cultural insights with the school's certified staff in order to help staff better understand students' cultures and how this understanding could assist staff in meeting the needs of students of a different culture than the staff. The focus of this first panel discussion was the Somali, Burmese, and Karan cultures, and it included a full explanation of the refugee process and experience. The panel members also discussed education in their countries of origin, possible barriers to education that may exist in becoming educated in the United States, and how to help our schools feel more inclusive and welcoming to the diverse population of students being educated in the school involved in this investigation. A second panel featuring members of the Latino, Eastern European, and Arabic communities was scheduled, but it was forced to be cancelled due to a school closure for snow. This second panel could not be rescheduled until after the completion of this study.

## **Instruments**

In order to assess teacher capacity in cultural competencies and in the development of culturally responsive classroom management practices, two surveys were distributed. Both surveys were completed at the beginning and end of the study in order to investigate whether there was a change in capacity in regards to cultural competencies and/or the use of culturally responsive classroom management practices after participation in seven professional learning experiences. A statistically significant difference between the mean scores on the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey determined whether there was a change in capacity for cultural competencies. A statistically significant difference between the mean scores on the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices survey determined whether there was a change in capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices. The pre-survey was completed by all participants, including those who participated in the summer book study, prior to the first professional learning experience in August. The post-survey was completed following the last professional learning experience in December. In order to compile additional data to support the quantitative findings of this study, three short answer questions were added to the post surveys. Participants were asked which professional learning experience they found to be most useful and why, what topics they would like to see if future professional learning experiences, and how their thought process or practice has changed over the course of the professional learning experiences.

**Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS).** The first instrument was the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera,

1998). This 20-item survey was developed for teachers to self-report their multicultural awareness and sensitivity. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree. The survey was administered electronically using Qualtrics software and was completed by staff at the beginning and end of the study. The following are some examples of the survey items: *Teachers have the responsibility to be aware of their students' cultural backgrounds, I can learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds, and I am aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds in my classroom.* The score from each item was summed to create a total survey score, making the possible total score range from 20 to 100.

Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, and Rivera (1998) assessed the construct validity, criterion-related validity, and reliability for the TMAS. They included the interpretation for the following values. Construct validity was assessed by correlating with three similar instruments, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), the Quick Discrimination Index (QDI), and the Social Desirability Scale (SDS). It was found that the TMAS was positively correlated to the QDI with  $r = .45$  for race and  $r = .35$  for gender. The TMAS was also positively correlated to the MEIM with  $r = .31$ . These correlations support the convergent validity of the TMAS scores. It was also found that there was negligible correlation with the SDS with  $r = .00$ , which showed that social desirability contamination was not a limitation or concern for the TMAS (Ponterotto et al., 1998).

Criterion-related validity was assessed using the group differences approach. TMAS scores based on gender, race, and multicultural-specific trainings were

compared. The tests compared males to females, White vs. non-White participants, and those who attended multicultural workshops and those who had not. TMAS score differences based on the multicultural training levels was also examined. The only statistically significant result at the  $p < .05$  probability level was in regards to those participants who had completed multicultural trainings or workshops; those who had attended multicultural trainings or workshops scoring higher than participants who had not completed similar trainings (Ponterotto et al., 1998).

The internal consistency also was calculated for the TMAS. The coefficient alpha was found to be .86, and the theta coefficient was .89. Test-retest stability was .80 when conducted over a three-week interval. These measures of internal consistency indicated adequate levels of reliability (Ponterotto et al., 1998).

**Survey of Behaviour Management Practices (SOBMP).** The second instrument was the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010). This 31-item survey was developed for pre-service teachers to self-report their confidence with various behavior management strategies. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being not at all and 5 being extremely. The survey was administered electronically using Qualtrics software and was completed by staff at the beginning and end of the study. The following are some examples of the survey statements to which respondents indicated level of agreement: *Negotiated class rules along with students*, *Employed student centered teaching*, and *Moved yourself closer to the student*. Items were organized into four subscales: reward strategies, prevention strategies, initial correction strategies, and later correction strategies. The scores from each item were added together to create a total score for the instrument

responses. The internal reliability was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. The resulting coefficient alpha ( $> .6$ ) was found to be acceptable (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010). As this survey was created for the purposes of the study conducted by Reupert and Woodcock, tests for validity have not been conducted.

**School-Wide Information System (SWIS).** Discipline referral data were also collected for analysis. The site had a formal policy for the referral and suspension process. When a student committed a referable offense, as defined by the school district, a school staff member witnessing the offense determined if the offense was minor or major and wrote the appropriate referral. At the school site, staff received yearly trainings on which behaviors constituted a major versus a minor referral and were given a flowchart to use when deciding which referral to write. The flowchart was created by a district behavior team for use in all of the district schools. For example, pushing and shoving would be considered a minor offense for physical contact, while a punch would be considered a major offense for physical contact. Refusing to work or repeated calling out during instruction without being first called upon by the teacher would be a minor offense for disruption, while throwing an object out of anger would be a major offense for disruption. A minor referral was addressed by the classroom teacher and entered by the computer lab technician into Synergy, the school's student information system. A major referral was delivered to the school behavior specialist or administrator. Once the referral had been addressed, it was passed to the school secretary to enter into Synergy. The referral data for both minor and major offenses from Synergy were transferred each night to the School-Wide Information System. The referrals are specifically entered into the system as minor or

major offenses in order for the SWIS system to generate reports to analyze referral data. Reports were generated to facilitate the analysis of referrals by the time of the day of the offense, the day of week the offense was committed, the student's grade level, a description of the offense, the location of the offense, and the ethnicity of the student.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The Institutional Review Board at the University of Portland granted permission to conduct this research study on August 6, 2016. In order to protect the rights of the participants, surveys were completed anonymously using Qualtrics software program. To ensure anonymity of participants, each certified staff member received a code number to use when completing the surveys. A staff member not associated with this study had a copy of the codes associated with the names of the participants in the event that a staff member did not remember his or her code for the post-survey. A letter of consent was given to each participant explaining that his or her completion of the surveys constituted consent to participate in the study. There were no participants who declined to complete the surveys. Data were stored in a password-protected system to ensure that it remained confidential.

### **Data Analysis**

Staff members were given a pre- and post-survey for both multicultural awareness, using the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS), and classroom management practices, using the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices (SOBMP). Paired-sample *t*-tests were calculated using SPSS to determine if the differences from pre- to post-survey were statistically significant at the  $p < .05$

probability level. Cohen's  $d$  was also calculated to assess the effect size. An independent samples  $t$ -test was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  probability level using SPSS between the means of each post survey to determine whether there was any statistically significant difference in the post surveys of those who participated in the voluntary book study and those individuals who did not participate in the voluntary book study. A paired-sample  $t$ -test was also calculated at the  $p < .05$  probability level to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the mean number of discipline referrals in 2015 and in 2016 using the School-Wide Information System (SWIS). There had not been any noteworthy changes in the student or staff population between 2015 and 2016.

The purpose of this study also was to investigate if a relationship existed between a change in teacher capacity as measured by participants' scores on the TMAS and SOMBP and the number of discipline referrals written by each teacher. The pre-survey results for the TMAS and the SOMBP were compared to the 2015 SWIS data. The post survey results for the TMAS and the SOMBP were compared to the 2016 SWIS data. Pearson's  $r$  at the  $p < .05$  probability level was calculated using SPSS to investigate if there was a statistically significant correlation between the number of behavioral referrals and post-survey results. A score closer to +1 indicated a strong positive relationship, a score closer to -1 indicated a strong negative relationship, and a score near 0 indicated no relationship (Muijs, 2011).

Table 2 depicts the different tests calculated on the data sets collected during the course of this study.

Table 2

*Data Analysis Tests Calculated for Data Sets*

|            | Pre-TMAS           | Pre-SOBMP          | 2016 SWIS          |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Post-TMAS  | <i>t</i> -test     |                    | Pearson's <i>r</i> |
| Post-SOBMP |                    | <i>t</i> -test     | Pearson's <i>r</i> |
| 2015 SWIS  | Pearson's <i>r</i> | Pearson's <i>r</i> | <i>t</i> -test     |

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study. First, there were other school-wide programs that were beginning in conjunction with this study. The school site in this study received a parent involvement grant that began in August, 2016, the same month this study commenced. As part of the parent involvement grant, partnerships with community organizations had been developed, and staff were present in the building working to increase parental involvement for the diverse population. The school was also participating in a trauma pilot program, which included professional development for working with students who have experienced trauma. Due to the concurrent implementation of these programs, it was difficult to determine if changes to teacher capacity or changes in discipline data were reflective of only the study variables in the current investigation. Multiple treatment effects were a possible internal validity threat.

Another limitation was the use of convenience sampling, leading to the participants at this site not being representative of the population of Pre-K through fifth grade teachers in this school's district or other schools in the county in which the

school is located; this limits the generalizability of the results (Muijs, 2011). The use of surveys also created limitations. Muijs (2011) explained that when surveys are administered, it is difficult to identify causality and to understand processes deeply. Because staff were self-reporting their multicultural attitudes and their use of classroom management practices, and because the population of teachers consisted of volunteers, the data gathered about staff behaviors may not be reliable. Also, due to the small population size of only 34 participants, the results may not be generalizable. Another possible limitation is that behavior data between 2015 and 2016 were used in comparisons. As stated previously, there were not noteworthy changes in the student or staff population between 2015 and 2016, but there could have been differences that had not been identified that affected the number of referrals.

In searching for an instrument to measure multicultural attitudes, the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey emerged as a valid and reliable instrument with strong data to suggest it was worthy to be used in this investigation. However, it was developed in 1998 (Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera) when schools were different from the school in this investigation in terms of having different cultures and ethnicities from those represented in this school. However, this instrument had been used in more current studies, which supported the validity of this tool in current schools. Cho and Cicchelli (2012) and Bodur (2012) used the TMAS to determine the effect of coursework and field experience on multicultural beliefs and attitudes. This should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings.

Finally, I, the researcher, am also a member of the site staff and was responsible for the professional development trainings, which may have created some

bias. In an attempt to ensure that the professional learning experiences delivered in this study were not seen as my “agenda” or created biased results, a school equity/behavior team had been created to assist in leading the professional development sessions. The team collaborated in developing the content delivered in each session and in guiding discussions throughout this investigation.

### **Summary**

In order to investigate the development of educators’ capacity with culturally responsive classroom management practices and examine the relationship of the change in capacity to disciplinary referrals, a diverse school setting was identified. The participants in this study were educators at a Pre-K through fifth grade elementary school in Oregon. Based on school discipline data and changing school demographics, the educators at the school determined there was a need for learning about the various cultures represented in the school and developing classroom management practices that were more effective for the students. The educators completed the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey and the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices at the beginning and end of the study to evaluate whether there was a change in capacity in regards to cultural competencies and/or the use of culturally responsive classroom management practices after participation in seven professional learning experiences. A *t*-test was calculated at the  $p < .05$  probability level between the pre- and post mean scores on the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey to determine whether there was a change in capacity for cultural competencies. A *t*-test was calculated at the  $p < .05$  probability level between the pre- and post mean scores on the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices survey to determine whether there was a change in capacity for

culturally responsive classroom management practices. Educators participated in bimonthly professional learning experiences focused on identifying White privilege and personal bias, developing an understanding of other cultures, and investigating culturally responsive classroom management practices. Disciplinary referrals were collected through the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) and Pearson's  $r$  was calculated to determine the relationship between disciplinary referrals and educator capacity.

## **Chapter IV: Results**

This chapter will discuss the results of the surveys used to investigate the impact of new professional learning experiences on teacher capacity with cultural competencies and culturally responsive classroom management practices as measured by participants' scores on the TMAS and SOBMP and on student discipline referrals. This chapter will include an analysis of data for each research question and explain the significance of the data analysis.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the development of educators' capacity to foster their own identity development and use culturally responsive classroom management strategies that meet the needs of diverse students. This study examined the relationship between educator self-reported perceptions of their capacity to foster their own identity development and meet the needs of diverse students and the number of discipline referrals retrieved from SWIS (School-Wide Information System).

Given the statistics that students of color are disciplined at a disproportionate rate than their White peers, and that there is a cultural mismatch in schools in terms of the cultures of the student population and the cultures of the faculty members, the faculty members at this school believed it was imperative that steps were taken to address these issues; thus, professional learning experiences were designed to aid teachers in meeting the needs of the current student body. This study addressed these needs by examining the answers to the following research questions.

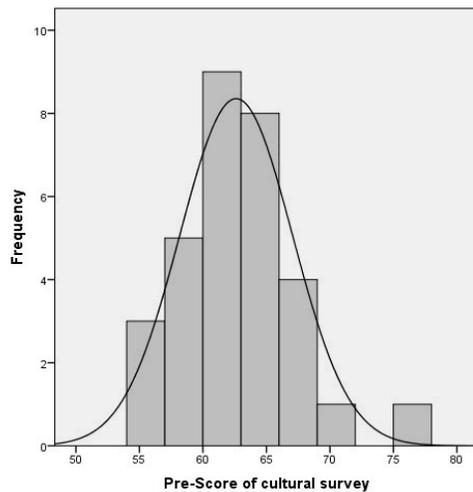
1. Do educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for cultural competencies after participating in a series of professional learning experiences?
2. Do educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices after participating in a series of professional learning experiences?
3. Is there a relationship between a change in educator self-reported capacity and the number of discipline referrals received by students in the educator's classroom?

Capacity was defined as the scores staff reported on the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey and the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices. First the data were examined to see if it followed the normal curve. The measures of central tendency were also examined. Table 3 displays the mean, median, and standard deviation of the pre- and post survey results for both the TMAS and SOBMP. While there was an increase in the mean scores on both surveys, there was a greater increase of the mean score on the SOBMP than on the TMAS. Statistical significance will be reported later.

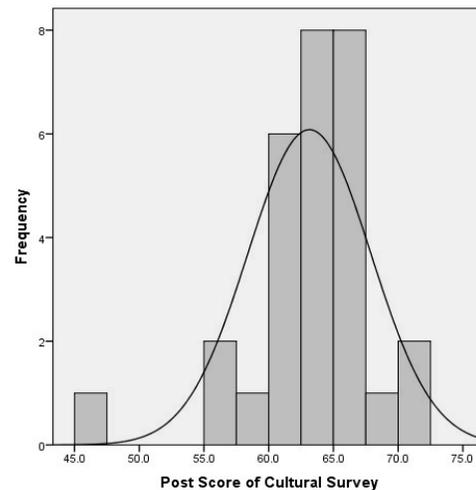
Table 3  
*Statistics of Survey Data*

|       | Pre-Survey     |        | Post Survey    |        |
|-------|----------------|--------|----------------|--------|
|       | Mean (Std.     | Median | Mean (Std.     | Median |
|       | Deviation)     |        | Deviation)     |        |
| TMAS  | 62.62 (4.44)   | 62.0   | 63.14 (4.76)   | 63.6   |
| SOBMP | 117.71 (13.52) | 116.5  | 123.00 (17.33) | 124.3  |

Figure 6 depicts how the pre-TMAS scores fit in a normal curve. The data fit the normal curve well, with a small number of outliers to the right of the mean. The post TMAS scores do not fit the normal curve, as can be seen in Figure 7, with outliers to the left of the mean and a heavy cluster around the mean.



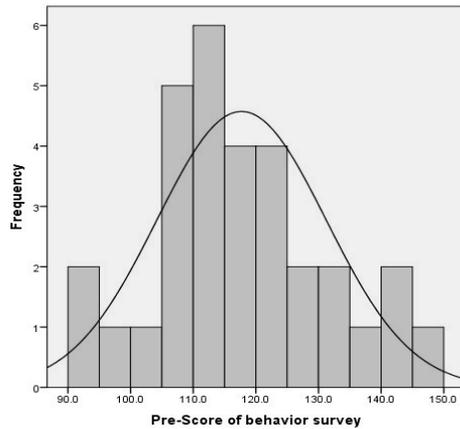
*Figure 6.* Scores on the pre-TMAS. This figure visually illustrates the scores for each participant in the study.



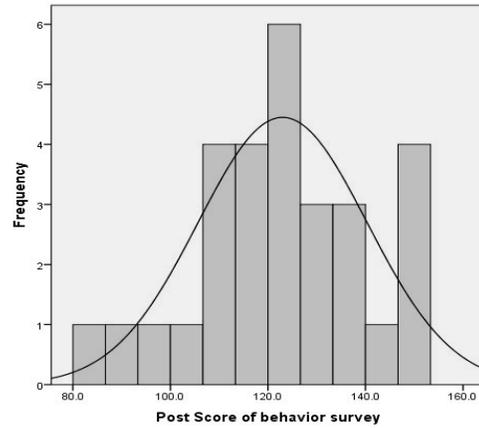
*Figure 7.* Scores on the post TMAS. This figure visually illustrates the scores for each participant in the study.

Figure 8 depicts how the pre-SOBMP scores fit in a normal curve, while Figure 9 depicts post SOBMP scores. While neither set of scores fit the normal curve, the pre-data were more evenly distributed than the post data. There was a cluster around the

left side of the mean in the pre-data, but there was a large cluster of outliers to the right of the mean in the post data.



*Figure 8.* Scores on the pre-SOBMP. This figure visually illustrates the scores for each participant in the study.



*Figure 9.* Scores on the post SOBMP. This figure visually illustrates the scores for each participant in the study.

### Data Analysis for Cultural Competence

An analysis was conducted to examine the first research question. Do educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for cultural competencies after participating in a series of professional learning experiences? Capacity for cultural competence was measured by the participants' scores on the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey. Due to family leaves, long-term substitutes, resignations, and snow days, only 25 of the 35 participants had both pre- and post survey data to be used in this analysis. A paired samples *t*-test was conducted at the  $p < .05$  probability level to compare scores on the pre- and post Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS) after a series of professional learning experiences focused on understanding teacher bias and developing cultural awareness about the students served in the school. There was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between the pre-TMAS ( $M$

= 61.89,  $SD = 3.26$ ) and the post TMAS ( $M = 63.58$ ,  $SD = 3.61$ ); ( $t = -2.218$ ,  $df = 24$ ,  $p = .036$ ). Using the statistics in Table 4, the effect size was calculated. Using Cohen's  $d$ , the effect size was found to be .49, demonstrating a modest effect between the pre- and post scores on the TMAS. These results suggest that the professional learning experiences did have an effect on increasing teachers' capacity for cultural competencies, as measured by their scores on the TMAS, though the effect size is modest as measured.

Table 4

*Participant Scores on Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey*

|           | $n$ | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|-----------|-----|--------|----------------|
| Pre-TMAS  | 25  | 61.89  | 3.26           |
| Post TMAS | 25  | 63.58* | 3.61           |

\* $p = .036$

Due to some members of the staff participating in a voluntary book study on community circles, an independent samples  $t$ -test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in scores on the post TMAS based on participation in the book study. There was not a statistically significant difference in the post SOBMP scores for those who participated in the book study ( $M = 62.95$ ,  $SD = 3.59$ ) and those who did not participate in the book study ( $M = 63.34$ ,  $SD = 5.90$ ); ( $t = -2.17$ ,  $df = 27$ ,  $p = .83$ ). These results suggest that participating in the voluntary book study did not have an effect on increasing teacher's capacity for cultural competencies as measured by their scores on the TMAS. However, participants provided feedback on the professional

learning experiences that supported the finding that their capacity for cultural competencies grew after participating in the two professional learning trainings. Participant discussions after the two professional learning experiences on privilege demonstrated that there was an increased awareness around privilege and bias. One participant shared a classroom incident that happened after the training. She shared that a student of color was not following a direction after being asked five times to do so. In the past, she would have written a referral for the student. Instead, she talked with the student to find out why the direction was not being followed. She discovered that the student could not see the board and was trying to get the information written on paper before it got erased. The participant realized that when directions are not being followed, it does not always mean that the students are trying to be disrespectful. Another individual expressed appreciation that the training did not focus on guilt or shame but instead showed how building awareness leads to becoming a change agent. This participant felt that trainings on White privilege usually focused on making people feel guilty about having privilege; this becomes a deterrent from moving forward. It was appreciated that this training used acknowledging privilege as a stepping stone for change.

The trainings also led to an awareness of student thoughts and actions. One participant explained that when she walked her class by the wall of teacher pictures, her class wanted to know where were the Black teachers. She realized that the students were aware that the teaching staff did not look like them. Participants also became more aware that students were sitting and playing by ethnicity. For example, it was noticed that Somali students tended to sit together and play together. The same was

true for African-American students and Latino students. There was a discussion about why this was happening and if it was a result of wanting to surround yourself with people who look like you look.

Participants also provided written feedback about the effectiveness and usefulness of the color line and privilege bead activities. During the color line exercise, participants scored themselves in regards to how true privilege statements were for them. During the privilege bead exercise, participants picked up a bead for each privilege statement for which they could answer yes. The privilege bead exercise provided participants a visual display for the amount of privilege they have. Both exercises concluded with reflective conversations about privileges each person had. One participant found that the color line exercise was very illuminating, because it helped give a better baseline to understand how implicit bias may inform one's actions. Another stated that the privilege workshops helped with becoming more aware of unfair tendencies.

Participants then explained how their thought process or practice changed over the course of the privilege trainings. One explained, "I've really been able to grow as an educator in the sense that I am acknowledging and trying to recognize my biases more. I feel that in order to be culturally responsive I need to first address my own privileges." Another participant shared that the trainings have helped him think more about his male privilege within the context of a female-dominated career field. He has thought more about how he expects to be heard sometimes, and how as a man he sometimes gets more attention because he is a minority in the field. He also felt that some students from non-Western backgrounds respected him more and sought

attention from him more than other teachers. While the majority of participants were positive about talking about privilege, one participant acknowledged his or her frustration with those resistant to the discussion. The participant shared, “I really enjoyed the trainings and found it fascinating to see how someone could approach helping a staff think and gain language about discussing and being aware of equity. I heard other staff members complain about how they thought the trainings were not useful. I find it frustrating that a mainly White staff complained about the equity PDs [professional developments] being not useful, and I think that it is a form of implicit racism, that they are not willing to spend time discussing their own privileges.”

The most positive written feedback was about the panel discussion about the Somali, Karan, and Burmese cultures. Participants thought that the panel gave them information that they could use to help communicate better with parents and students. The presentation also provided concrete examples of how to interact with refugee students and families appropriately. It caused individuals to think and wonder what they could do with the information to meet the needs of the students better. One participant expressed the importance of understanding where families were coming from. Another explained that the presentation allowed him or her to understand better some of the non-verbal reactions of students. Another expressed the opinion that the classified staff also would benefit from these trainings and education, because they have been heard talking poorly about our students from other cultures.

Participants further explained how their thought process or practice changed after the panel discussion. One found herself being more thoughtful and patient with students who come from various backgrounds. Another shared, “It has caused me to

rethink how I interact with some of my students and their parents, especially at conferences. I feel like there is still so much for me to learn.” Another participant shared a greater appreciation for the differences of his or her students and looked forward to learning even more about them. The presentation caused another participant to begin pondering how to incorporate more multicultural teaching within the classroom. One participant summed up the cultural competency trainings by stating, “In the course of reflecting on differences (cultural/poverty/race), I feel that I gained a better understanding of the different aspects of interactions between different groups of people. They also made me reflect on what we can learn from each other.”

#### **Data Analysis for Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Practices**

An analysis was conducted to examine the second research question of whether educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices after participating in a series of professional learning experiences. Capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices was measured by the participants’ scores on the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices. Due to maternity leaves, long-term substitutes, and snow days, only 25 of the 35 participants had both pre- and post survey data to be used in this analysis. A paired samples *t*-test was conducted to compare scores on the pre- and post Survey of Behaviour Management Practices (SOBMP) after a series of professional learning experiences focused on Circles and collaborative problem solving. There was not a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the pre-SOBMP ( $M = 119.14$ ,  $SD = 12.44$ ) and the post SOBMP ( $M = 121.85$ ,  $SD = 17.62$ ); ( $t = -1.071$ ,  $df = 24$ ,  $p = .295$ ). These results suggest that the professional learning experiences did not have an

effect on increasing teacher's capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices as measured by their scores on the SOBMP.

Due to some members of the staff participating in a voluntary book study on Circles, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in scores on the SOBMP based on participation in the book study. There was a statistically significant difference in the post SOBMP mean scores for those who participated in the book study ( $M = 129.39$ ,  $SD = 15.64$ ) and those who did not participate in the book study ( $M = 116.14$ ,  $SD = 16.90$ ); ( $t = 2.193$ ,  $df = 27$ ,  $p = .037$ ). Using the statistics in Table 5, the effect size was calculated. Using Cohen's *d*, the effect size was found to be .81, demonstrating a large effect size between the post scores on the SOBMP and participation in the Circle book study. These results suggest that participating in the voluntary book study did have an effect on increasing teachers' capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices as measured by their scores on the SOBMP.

Table 5

*Participant Scores on Survey of Behaviour Management Practices Based on Participation in Book Study*

|            |                        |               | Mean    | Std. Deviation |
|------------|------------------------|---------------|---------|----------------|
| Post SOBMP | Book Study Participant | <i>n</i> = 15 | 129.39* | 15.64          |
|            | Non Participant        | <i>n</i> = 14 | 116.14  | 16.90          |

\* $p = .037$

Certified staff responses to national issues and school behavior issues also supported the effectiveness of the Circles and collaborative problem solving trainings.

Being that the school in this study had a highly diverse student population and contained a large immigrant and refugee population, the Presidential election created stress for students and families. As a result, the day after the election began with a staff meeting. Upon the principal asking how staff wanted to address the election with students, the staff immediately responded with the need to begin the day with Circles. They requested permission to vary their schedules for the day in order to provide a safe space for students to share their thoughts and feelings in a respectful manner. In regards to collaborative problem solving, teachers have begun to e-mail the leadership team requesting coverage in order to meet with a student for a collaborative problem solving session. The student behavior specialist also has begun to partner with teachers for collaborative problem solving conversations to assist in developing the skills needed to have these conversations with students.

Participants also provided written feedback about the effectiveness and usefulness of Circles and collaborative problem solving. One participant reported that the Circle professional learning experience was helpful, because he or she was able to implement what was being learned and discussed in the classroom. Another explained that hearing how other teachers were using community circle to address areas of concern to build a more sound community was valuable. A third participant summed up his or her thoughts about the need for culturally responsive classroom management practices by stating:

I do think we, including me, continue to disproportionately target black boys. I'm wondering about how to get that number down authentically (relationship building? Redefining what's acceptable?). I think some of the behavioral

clashes are related to noise level, energy, student physical contact and disrespect. However, I wonder if some of these boys feel disrespected by us. With a harder group of students, it's difficult to remain firm, yet avoid disrespect and contempt. I think some black boys feel targeted and react disrespectfully when targeted in the halls and outside the classroom by authority figures they don't know very well. I wonder what the impact would be if as a staff, we improved our respect towards kids.

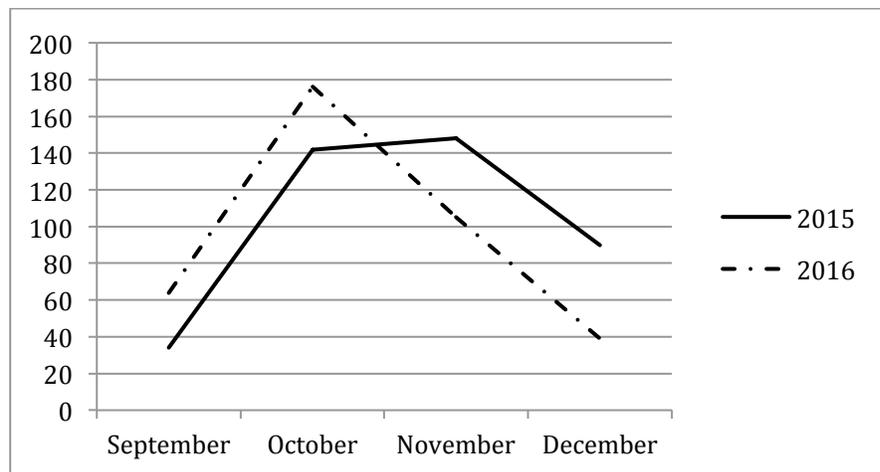
While there was not a statistically significant finding on the SOBMP that was chosen to measure whether the professional learning experiences had an effect on teachers' capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices, the written feedback provided evidence that the trainings had an impact on their practice.

#### **Data Analysis for Disciplinary Referrals**

An analysis was conducted to examine the final research question, is there a relationship between a change in educator self-reported capacity for cultural competencies and the use of culturally responsive classroom management practices and the number of discipline referrals received by students in the educator's classroom? A Pearson's  $r$  was calculated to examine if there was a correlation between the TMAS and SOBMP results and the number of disciplinary referrals given by teachers. The results suggest that there was not a statistically significant relationship between the number of disciplinary referrals written and either the score on the TMAS ( $r = .026, p = .892$ ) or the score on the SOBMP ( $r = .103, p = .597$ ). Both relationships could have occurred by chance.

Due to some members of the staff participating in a voluntary book study on community circles, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in the number of disciplinary referrals written in the fall 2016 based on participation in the book study. There was not a statistically significant difference in the referrals written by those who participated in the book study ( $M = 9.56$ ,  $SD = 12.47$ ) and those who did not participate in the book study ( $M = 9.21$ ,  $SD = 11.59$ ); ( $t = .086$ ,  $df = 33$ ,  $p = .932$ ). These results suggest that participating in the voluntary book study did not have a statistically significant effect on the number of disciplinary referrals written by teachers for their current students.

Due to the short timeframe of the study, a line graph seen in Figure 10 comparing referrals given in 2015 and 2016 was created to investigate trends in the data. While referrals were being written at a higher rate during the first two months of the study, there has been a drastic decrease over the last two months of the study. If this trend continued, there could be a statistically significant finding later in the year.



*Figure 10.* Trend of referrals. This figure visually represents the number of referrals written in 2015 and 2016.

## Summary

In order to investigate the impact of new professional learning experiences on teacher capacity with cultural competencies and culturally responsive classroom management strategies as measured by participants' scores on the TMAS and SOBMP and on student discipline referrals, survey results were analyzed. Paired sample *t*-tests were calculated to determine whether there were statistically significant changes in teacher capacity on the TMAS and SOBMP. Independent sample *t*-tests were also calculated to examine the impact of the voluntary book study on survey results. Finally, Pearson's *r* was calculated to examine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between survey results and the number of disciplinary referrals written by teachers.

## Chapter V: Conclusions

This chapter will discuss the findings of the impact of new professional learning experiences on teacher capacity with cultural competencies and culturally responsive classroom management strategies as measured by participants' scores on the TMAS and SOBMP and on student discipline referrals. Included in the discussion will be the findings of this study, how the findings connect to the literature, how the limitations of the study may have impacted the findings, what has been learned as a result of the study, and how it relates to instructional practices. Recommendations are provided along with ideas for future research topics.

### Change in Cultural Competencies

An analysis was conducted to examine the first research question. Do educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for cultural competencies after participating in a series of professional learning experiences? Capacity for cultural competence was measured by the participants' scores on the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey. The paired sample *t*-test showed there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between the pre-TMAS ( $M = 61.89, SD = 3.26$ ) and the post TMAS ( $M = 63.58, SD = 3.61$ ); ( $t = -2.218, df = 24, p = .036$ ). These results suggest that the professional learning experiences did have an effect on increasing teacher's capacity for cultural competencies, though the relationship is modest. Due to some members of the staff participating in a voluntary book study on *Circles*, an independent samples *t*-test was also conducted to determine if there was a difference in scores on the post TMAS based on participation in the book study. It was found that there was not a statistically significant difference in the post SOBMP scores for those

who participated in the book study ( $M = 62.95$ ,  $SD = 3.59$ ) and those who did not participate in the book study ( $M = 63.34$ ,  $SD = 5.90$ ); ( $t = -2.17$ ,  $df = 27$ ,  $p = .83$ ). These results suggest that participating in the voluntary book study did not have an effect on increasing teacher's capacity for cultural competencies as measured by their scores on the TMAS. However, since the book study was designed to address student behavior, it was not logical that it would affect cultural competencies.

The findings of the paired sample  $t$ -test for the TMAS and written feedback provided by participants supported the importance of understanding how privilege and bias impact how each person interacts with others and how learning about other cultures can change how a person then interacts with/or understands those different than himself. These results also implied that when beginning discussions about equity or when working to become culturally responsive with classroom management practices, learning experiences about privilege, bias, and cultural awareness are needed to build a foundation for change. Participants provided feedback on the professional learning experiences that further supported the finding that their capacity for cultural competencies grew after participating in the trainings.

These findings are consistent with literature on developing identity. The initial professional learning experiences provided during the course of this study focused on building an awareness of bias and privilege. Based on written feedback, participants explained that the privilege exercises helped give them a better baseline to understand how implicit bias may inform actions and helped them become more aware of their unfair tendencies. Developing this baseline for understanding how implicit bias informs actions is critical in addressing the disproportionality in discipline data.

Students of color are over referred for subjective infractions like disruption, insubordination, and defiance. Being aware of biases can aid a teacher in beginning to put thought into his reaction to a behavior before reacting. He begins to consider whether or not the referral is due to his bias or the actual behavior. Helms (1990) explained that in the initial steps of developing a positive identity, one begins to actively question the belief that Blacks are innately inferior to Whites. He begins to understand the role Whites play in racism and begins to search for ways to redefine his identity. An understanding of racial and cultural differences begins to develop, and one begins to reach out to minority group members. A participant explained, "I've really been able to grow as an educator in the sense that I am acknowledging and trying to recognize my biases more. I feel that in order to be culturally responsive I need to first address my own privileges." Gushue et al. (2013) posited that the racial identity status of individuals influenced their perceptions and responses to racial issues at school, work, or in interactions with others. Continued work to develop teachers' racial identities is needed since it was found that the racial identities of the teachers did influence their teaching and understanding of diverse students (Han, West-Olatunji, & Thomas, 2010-2011).

There were also frustrations shared about the resistance some staff demonstrated when participating in discussions about privilege and bias. One participant shared, "I heard other staff members complain about how they thought the trainings were not useful. I find it frustrating that a mainly White staff complained about the equity PDs being not useful, and I think that it is a form of implicit racism, that they are not willing to spend time discussing their own privileges." This has been

a common theme in literature used to explain the roadblocks that can hinder the development of critical consciousness. Often teachers have tried to divert attention from the topic. They cite trends or reasons for why discrepancies exist without examining their own beliefs, questioning the common explanations, or analyzing the influence of culture, class, or race (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Gay, 2010). Silence is also used to avoid having conversations about their own thoughts, biases, or behaviors about race and culture. Gay and Kirkland and Gay asserted that the final obstacle to thinking critically about race is a feeling of guilt about oppression or marginalization. Many feel that feeling guilty about racism is enough to make them supporters of equality. However, the causes and depth of their guilt is not examined in order to find ways to ensure that these actions do not continue in the future. This final obstacle was mentioned by a participant at the end of the second privilege exercise. He expressed appreciation that the training did not focus on guilt or shame but instead showed how building awareness leads to becoming a change agent. This participant felt that trainings on White privilege usually focused on making people feel guilty about having privilege and becomes a deterrant from moving forward. It was appreciated that this training used acknowledging privilege as a stepping stone for change.

The data regarding the panel discussion used to build cultural awareness also reflected findings in the literature. Participants felt it was important to understand where students and families were coming from. They valued the information shared that gave them concrete ideas about how to communicate with parents and students more effectively and how to interact with refugee students and families appropriately. It also caused them to think and wonder what they could do with the information to

meet the needs of the students better. This supported the argument made by Han, West-Olatunji, and Thomas (2010-2011) that higher statuses of White racial identity are associated with an increased ability to accept, understand, and appreciate cultural differences. This helps them become more effective teachers for their diverse student population.

Participants further explained how their thought process or practice changed after the panel discussion. They found themselves being more thoughtful and patient with students who come from various backgrounds and had a greater appreciation for the differences seen in their students. They began to rethink how they interacted with students and parents. The participants also felt there was so much more for them to learn. One participant summed up the cultural competency trainings by stating, “In the course of reflecting on differences (cultural/poverty/race), I feel that I gained a better understanding of the different aspects of interactions between different groups of people. They also made me reflect on what we can learn from each other.”

The literature supported the growth teachers made in the area of cultural competencies. Gay (2010) explained that when teachers have limited experience with and knowledge of culturally diverse groups, their attitudes and beliefs interfere with teaching and learning. Problems in teaching related to cultural diversity cannot be solved until they are recognized and confronted. Helms (1990) posited that as people move through the stages of identity development, they seek to learn from other cultural groups and work to eliminate other forms of oppression. Gay and Kirkland (2003) claimed that self-reflection and cultural critical consciousness are key to improving the education for students of color. It is imperative that teachers understand

their own culture and the cultures of other groups. It is also important to understand how this understanding impacts teaching and learning. Dray and Wisneski (2011) posited that teachers working in diverse settings should be aware of their own background and experiences and the cultural norms of others in order to avoid prejudice and overgeneralizations.

### **Change in Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Practices**

An analysis was conducted to examine the second research question. Do educators develop a change in self-reported capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices after participating in a series of professional learning experiences? Capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices was measured by the participants' scores on the Survey of Behaviour Management Practices. A paired samples *t*-test found that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the pre-SOBMP ( $M = 119.14$ ,  $SD = 12.44$ ) and the post SOBMP ( $M = 121.85$ ,  $SD = 17.62$ ); ( $t = -1.071$ ,  $df = 24$ ,  $p = .295$ ). These results suggested that the professional learning experiences on Circles and collaborative problem solving did not have an effect on increasing teacher's capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices as measured by their scores on the SOBMP. Due to some members of the staff participating in a voluntary book study on Circles, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in scores on the SOBMP based on participation in the book study. There was a statistically significant difference in the post SOBMP mean scores for those who participated in the book study ( $M = 129.39$ ,  $SD = 15.64$ ) and those who did not participate in the book study ( $M = 116.14$ ,  $SD = 16.90$ ); ( $t = 2.193$ ,  $df = 27$ ,  $p = .037$ ).

Using Cohen's  $d$ , the effect size was found to be .81, demonstrating a large effect size between the post scores on the SOBMP and participation in the Circle book study. These results suggest that participating in the voluntary book study did have a large effect on increasing teacher's capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices as measured by their scores on the SOBMP.

Participants also provided written feedback about the effectiveness and usefulness of Circles and collaborative problem solving. One participant reported that the Circle professional learning experience was helpful because he or she was able to implement what was being learned and discussed in the classroom. A common complaint from past professional learning experiences had been that the learning could not be applied immediately in the classroom. This participant felt that the Circle trainings provided skills and tools that could be immediately implemented in the classroom, which made them a valuable use of time. Another explained that hearing how other teachers were using community circles to address areas of concern to build a more sound community was valuable. Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007) investigated the importance of developing relationships with students from the first day of school. The teachers explained that for students to succeed and face academic challenges, they needed to feel supported. Relationships are the core of a learning community. Research conducted by Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) also supported the use of Circles to build community as a way to create culturally responsive classroom management. One way to create caring relationships is to share personal stories and learn about students' interests and activities. Listening to student concerns and ideas also contributes to caring, inclusive classrooms. Weinstein,

Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003), Ullucci (2009), and Bondy, Ross, Galligane, and Hambacher (2007) contended that creating a sense of community also contributes to this caring classroom. Creating a meeting space for community meetings help students build a sense of cohesion. This is a chance for students to share their worries and the good things that are happening in their lives. Sharing personal experiences, stories, and pictures allow the teacher to connect to the students. Connecting the personal stories to classroom activities and student feelings creates a connection between teachers and students. Students are given a chance to be heard. Boyes-Watson and Pranis (2015) explained that many classroom behaviors and disruptions occur because students feel powerless and are trying to gain power in their lives. Circles helped students experience healthy power by giving every student a voice and showing that each student is valued. As students gain a sense of power, the need to act out behaviorally decreases. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) also argued that it is also imperative that teasing and bullying are not acceptable in the classroom. Ullucci (2009) further posited that community building should come before management tactics. The initial focus should be on relationship building and instilling a sense of belonging in students. Boyes-Watson and Pranis posited that a sense of belonging promotes learning and cooperative functions. It is important for schools to promote a sense of belonging because the pain and fear of not belonging are the basis of violence and harm in schools. Helping all students belong in school can lead to a decrease in behavioral problems in the classroom.

One important aspect for creating culturally responsive classroom management discussed in the literature but not included in this study was the development of clear

expectations. This missing aspect may have contributed to the lack of a statistically significant change in culturally responsive classroom management practices as measured by the SOBMP. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) and Ullucci (2009) argued that agreed upon expectations should be clear, and students should have an understanding of what specific behaviors meet the expectations. It is important that teachers are explicit with their expectations, allow students to discuss them, model the expected behavior, and allow students to practice the behavior. Boundaries are set, but the goal is students' learning of self-management as opposed to mindless control. Students learned that there were limits in the classroom, while additionally learning that the classroom was like a family and there needed to be respect, responsibility, and accountability. Ullucci (2009) further contended that classroom management is not about students being obedient without thinking, but rather students learning how to thrive with others. They learn how to be productive and be a good neighbor. Bondy, Ross, Galligane, and Hambacher (2007) also explored the key task of establishing expectations. Teaching rules and procedures set up students for success. Some teachers assume that students know what appropriate behavior looks like but willfully choose not to exhibit that appropriate behavior. However, teachers need to communicate rules and procedures explicitly to students. These rules and procedures were introduced within the first two hours of school (Bondy, Ross, Galligane, & Hambacher). Many students enter the school after that instruction occurs and never receive it. Each time students enter or leave a classroom, the environment and student power structure changes, which can change classroom behaviors. Establishing the rules takes more than a week, and they should be retaught

repeatedly throughout the year. The teachers were explicit with their expectations, modeled the desired behavior, and asked students for examples. Teachers and students discussed the rationale for the rules to ensure that students understood the purpose of the desired expectations. These teachers understood that inappropriate behavior was the result of failing to be explicit with the expectations. Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007) further stated that the teachers also developed consequences, both positive and negative and communicated their expectations for success. Students were told explicitly that the teacher believed in them, because the teachers believed that all students had the capacity to succeed.

The Collaborative Problem Solving strategy provided to staff had just started to be utilized by the staff at the conclusion of the study. Teachers have begun to e-mail the leadership team requesting a member of the leadership team by available to cover the staff member's class so that the staff could meet with a student for a Collaborative Problem Solving session. Additionally, the student behavior specialist began to partner with teachers for collaborative problem solving conversations to assist in developing the skills needed to have these collaborative conversations with students. The importance of using this strategy was supported in the literature. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) explained their strategy for dealing with problem behaviors. Teachers should reflect on the behaviors they view to be problematic and how they may be related to race and culture. When a teacher is able to view behavior as a reflection of the student's cultural norms, he or she is able to remain calm and nondefensive. These reflections should be considered before developing classroom expectations. Ullucci (2009) shared how teachers use feelings to help students

understand the consequences of behavior. They teach students the language they need to explain their feelings. Bondy, Ross, Galligane, and Hambacher (2007) explained that consequences for failing to meet expectations needed to be delivered in a calm manner. Teachers should be kind, caring, and direct when implementing consequences, never punitive or threatening.

While the SOBMP survey results did not find a statistically significant change in the use of culturally responsive classroom management practices, the need for culturally responsive classroom management practices was reinforced by the faculty member who discussed the disproportionate targeting of black students. The staff member questioned how to decrease the number of black boys targeted for discipline and wondered if relationship building or defining expectations would authentically decrease that number. In this person's opinion, it appeared that cultural differences had led to the behavioral clashes between students and staff. Additionally, it was proposed that black boys feel targeted by authority figures and that there may be an impact on student behavior if staff improved their respect towards students.

This call for culturally responsive classroom management practices was supported by Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003). Strategies were examined for developing culturally responsive classroom management practices. It was found that teachers often responded to student behavior from the perspective of the mainstream culture, because that is how "acceptable behavior" is defined in schools. When this is done, students from minority groups are, in effect, discriminated against by the teachers, if the teachers do not recognize that the students' behaviors are influenced by the students' culture. The teachers do not see that their behavior

management practices marginalize some students and privilege others. According to Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003), culturally responsive classroom management begins with the teacher understanding himself or herself. It is imperative that the teachers recognize that they have their own beliefs, biases, and assumptions. Once cultural biases become conscious, one is less likely to misinterpret behaviors of diverse students. It is also imperative that teachers acknowledge that differences in culture, race, and class exist. Learning about family backgrounds, cultural norms, parent expectations, and how various cultures treat time and space allow teachers to be open and willing to learn about cultural aspects that are important to students. Finally, Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) asserted that culturally responsive classroom management requires that teachers understand how schools reflect and perpetuate discriminatory practices. Differences linked to power and the structure of schools can privilege some students, but marginalize or segregate others.

Dray and Wisneski (2011) further supported this call when they claimed that teachers are not always aware that their interpretation of students' actions and how they interact with students is impacted by diversity. In order to accept and embrace diversity in the classroom, a teacher needs first to reflect on the challenges that can interfere with acceptance. If cultural and individual differences are not given attention, some students may have limited opportunities to succeed. One way in which to combat misunderstandings between teachers and students is to develop reflective practices. In order for teachers to be sensitive to diversity, they need to be able to take an emotional risk and examine how their beliefs, assumptions, and biases can affect

how they treat students. Teachers may also need to consider new ways to communicate with students in their classrooms (Dray & Wisneski, 2011).

### **Change in Disciplinary Referrals**

An analysis was conducted to examine the final research question, is there a relationship between a change in educator self-reported capacity for cultural competencies and the use of culturally responsive classroom management practices and the number of discipline referrals received by students in the educator's classroom? Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to examine if there was a correlation between the staff's scores on the TMAS and the number of disciplinary referrals given by teachers, and if there is a correlation between the staff's scores on the SOBMP and the number of disciplinary referrals given by teachers. There was not a statistically significant relationship ( $r = .026, p = .892$ ) between the post TMAS scores and the number of disciplinary referrals given in 2016. Likewise, there was not a statistically significant relationship ( $r = .103, p = .597$ ) between the post SOBMP scores and the number of disciplinary referrals given by staff in 2016.

Due to some members of the staff participating in a voluntary book study on Circles, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in the number of disciplinary referrals written in the fall 2016 based on participation in the book study. The book study focused on building a classroom community in which all students had a voice and were given an opportunity to be heard. The book study also focused on the use of Circles for restorative practices. Teachers learned how to use Circles to restore the classroom community when harm had been done. There was not a statistically significant difference in the referrals

written by those who participated in the book study ( $M = 9.56$ ,  $SD = 12.47$ ) and those who did not participate in the book study ( $M = 9.21$ ,  $SD = 11.59$ ); ( $t = .086$ ,  $df = 33$ ,  $p = .932$ ). These results suggest that participating in the voluntary book study did not have a statistically significant effect on the number of disciplinary referrals written by teachers for their current students.

A lack of findings in regard to this research question could be due to the length of the study. This study was conducted over the course of four months. This may not have been enough time to show a change in referrals written. As the line graph showed, the beginning of the school year discipline referrals rose, as students are learning and testing the school rules, and the faculty members are beginning to build relationships with students. The validity threat of history could have been operational during this study, as the fall in which this study was conducted was an election season and culminating in a new President of the United States being elected. Students and staff expressed stress, due to the fears raised about discrimination and deportation of immigrants. The staff worked especially hard to work with students' fears, which might be reflected in referrals falling, in spite of what was happening in the students' world. The discipline referrals just did not fall enough to be statistically significantly lower. However, the trend data in Figure 10 implied that if the study were to continue for the remainder of the year, there might be a statistically significant finding. This should be monitored to see if that is the case.

### **Role of Limitations**

One limitation of this study was that there were other programs that began in conjunction with this study. The school site in this study received a parent

involvement grant that began in August, 2016, the same month this study commenced. As part of the parent involvement grant, partnerships with community organizations had been developed, and staff were present in the building working to increase parental involvement for the diverse population. Because this program was new, the work with families did not begin until late fall. This limited the impact of the program on this current study.

The school participated in a trauma pilot program, which included professional development for working with students who have experienced trauma. During the course of this study only a few members of the leadership team attended the initial training. A full staff training on trauma was conducted after the completion of the study, limiting its impact on the results.

The limitation with the largest effect on the study was time. The short duration of the study made it difficult to show changes in the number of referrals written and a change in the use of culturally responsive classroom management practices. While there was a downward trend in the number of disciplinary referrals written, there was not enough time to show if this trend would become statistically significant. While new culturally responsive classroom management practices were introduced to participants, there may not have been enough time to create a change in staff's classroom practices.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

Based on the results found in this study, there are several implications for a change in instructional practices and teacher professional learning. The statistically significant finding that there was an increase in teacher capacity for cultural

competencies as measured by the TMAS implies the importance of staff trainings in both acknowledging bias and privilege and developing cultural competence.

First, additional trainings on bias and privilege would be beneficial for the participants in this study. While some participants found value in the previous privilege trainings and wanted to participate in similar trainings, there were others who thought the staff was still resistant to discussing bias and privilege and thought that the discussions needed to continue. In order for teachers to be able to use culturally responsive classroom management practices effectively, staff first need to be able to acknowledge how their own beliefs and biases impact their reactions to students' behaviors. It would be important to aid staff in digging deeper into their beliefs in order to help them move forward in their identity development. For staff resistant to discussions about bias and privilege, it would be necessary to aid them in exploring the root cause of the discomfort and resistance in order to move forward in their identity development.

Second, the partnership with IRCO should be continued to provide future culturally specific presentations. These presentations were found to be the most useful to staff and also had the most buy-in. Based on feedback from participants, the future presentations should focus on one culture at a time in order to develop a deeper understanding of the culture and how to interact with students and families more appropriately. Developing a better understanding of the cultures present in classrooms will aid teachers in creating classroom management routines that are more culturally responsive and will also aid teachers in better understanding the behaviors displayed by students and how to react to those behaviors. When teachers understand their own

culture and the cultures of their students, they can understand better how the differences impact teaching and learning.

The lack of a statistically significant finding for an increase in teacher capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices as measured by the SOBMP implies the importance of continued staff trainings on Circles, collaborative problem solving, and setting clear expectations.

This study lacked a provision of professional learning experiences that would improve a teacher's ability to set clear expectations with students. It would be of value to institute an in depth training on how teachers can create classroom expectations with student input. For diverse students to be successful following classroom expectations, the expectations should be clear, written in collaboration with students, and students should have an opportunity to talk about what the expectations look like and what would happen if the expectations are not followed. Students also should have the opportunity to practice the expectations. Adding this training to the study may have helped reduce the number of referrals written during the first two months of the study and would aid in developing culturally responsive classroom management practices.

While Collaborative Problem Solving was introduced during this study, participants were just beginning to implement the strategy when the study concluded. This is an effective strategy for helping diverse students solve problems, because it allows students to participate in finding a way to restore the harm done. For staff to implement this strategy fully, they will need continued support from the school behavior specialist and counselor and will also need additional follow-up trainings to

practice classroom scenarios and receive feedback on their practice discussions. These experiences would help teachers increase their capacity for culturally responsive classroom management practices and may help reduce the number of disciplinary referrals written.

### **Future Research**

Currently, other elementary schools within the same school district as the study school have requested more information on this study and the materials used. These schools are interested in replicating the trainings to increase the cultural responsiveness of their staff. A future research study could collect survey and referral data from these school sites and compare the results to the data in this study in order to begin to generalize the findings.

The district has begun implementation testing of the Circle component of this study to determine the feasibility of using Circles in the middle and high schools. The field testing will be complete by the Spring of 2016. If the results of the pilot testing indicate it is successful, Circles will be implemented district wide for all elementary, middle, and high schools. Should this occur, a research study could investigate referral data district wide to determine the impact that relationship building with students has on disciplinary events.

Finally, a year-long study is necessary to fully study the impact of professional learning experiences on teacher capacity with cultural competencies and culturally responsive classroom management practices. Additionally, a year-long study would allow for an investigation of the impact of a change in capacity for cultural competencies and culturally responsive classroom management practices on student

disciplinary referrals. The current study was too short to explore the long-term impacts of the professional learning on a school's ability to provide culturally responsive classroom management practices. A year-long study would help determine if these findings would be strengthened over time and would be sustainable. Replication of the study would allow for more generalizable recommendations to be made for diverse schools.

### **Summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of the impact of new professional learning experiences on teacher capacity with cultural competencies and culturally responsive classroom management strategies as measured by participants' scores on the TMAS and SOBMP and on student discipline referrals. The findings of the study were compared to the literature written on culturally responsive classroom management practices. Based on the findings and literature, recommendations for further actions were provided. Finally, ideas for further research on this topic were shared.

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