TEACHING THROUGH CULTURE IN THE K–12 CLASSROOM

By

Janice DeVore Littlebear, M.E.

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Cross-Cultural Studies and Education: Interdisciplinary

University of Alaska Fairbanks
May 2018

© 2018 Janice DeVore Littlebear

APPROVED:

Dr. Theresa John, Committee Chair
Dr. Barbara Adams, Committee Co-Chair
Dr. Ray Barnhardt, Committee Member
Dr. Joan Parker Webster, Committee Member
Dr. Michael Koskey, Chair, *Center for Cross-Cultural Studies*
Mr. Todd Sherman, Dean, *College of Liberal Arts*
Dr. Michael Castellini, *Dean of the Graduate School*

Abstract

This study explores how quality experienced teachers use culture to successfully deliver K-12 classroom instruction. Additionally, it develops and tests the effectiveness of a resource designed to instruct early career teachers on the use of culture to deliver classroom instruction.

Research was conducted in two phases over a four-year time frame (2014-2017). The study followed a mixed methods exploratory sequential design, using a participatory action research approach. Phase 1 gathered qualitative data from 20 experienced teachers located in two states, which were analyzed using constructed grounded theory. The results of this analysis, accompanied by a literature review, resulted in the development of a Chapter about Culture (CAC), an instructional resource on teaching through culture for early career teachers.

Phase 2 gathered quantitative data using a Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI) from eight Alaska early career teachers and one Montana experienced teacher, and were analyzed by averaging the pre/post CAC scores and comparing the differences. In addition, one open-ended question after use of CAC provided additional qualitative data about the resourcefulness of CAC, as well as the process for implementing the lessons.

Phase 1 results revealed five common themes when teaching through culture: Relationships, Communication, Connections, Respect, and Multicultural Resources. These themes contributed to the construction of a value-added theory of practice for teaching through culture, and served as the basis of the CAC. Phase 2 results demonstrated growth by early career teachers after using the newly created CAC in all five themes of teaching through culture.

DEDICATION

To my best friend and partner for life, Richard Earl Littlebear, for his patience, support, unconditional love, and total belief in my ability to successfully navigate this educational journey of obtaining a doctorate degree.

and

To my grandchildren and children:

Gabe, Isabella Rose & Jason

Theodore & Diana Echo

for your nonstop encouragement and cheerleading throughout the process.

> No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.
>
> —Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)

Table of Contents

Page

Title Page i

Abstract iii

Table of Contents vii

List of Figures xiii

List of Tables xv

List of Appendices xvii

Acknowledgements xix

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

- Introduction to the Study 1
- Background of the Study 2
- Statement of the Problem 4
- Theoretical Framework 4
  - Definition of Culture 4
  - Evolution of Culture in Education 9
- Purpose of the Study 12
  - Research Questions 12
  - Glossary of Terms 12
- Overview of the Methodology 26
- Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations of the Study 28
  - Delimitations 28
  - Assumptions 29
  - Limitations 29

Organization of the Remaining Chapters 29

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature 31

Introduction to the Literature Review 31

Organization of Literature Review Chapter 33

Culture in Education 33

Colonization 34

Self-Determination and Education Act of 1975 35

Western Ways of Teaching Compared With Indigenous Ways of Knowing 39

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy 43

Evolution of Cultural Models in Education in America 43

Cultural Deficit/Deprivation Model 44

Cultural *Difference* Model 44

Cultural Asset Model 45

Proposed Cultural *Value-Added* Model 46

Why It Is Important to Use Culture in Education 48

Critical Pedagogy 48

Equity and Social Justice 51

Connect Content to Diverse Learners 54

Academic performance by diverse populations 55

Qualities of Educators Who Teach Through Culture 57

1. Building relationships 57

2. Knowing your students, parents, and community 58

3. Creating a caring environment 58

4. Validating and respecting the cultures and background of all students 58

5. Using rigorous, place-based and culturally relevant curriculum 59

6. Employing and knowing teaching strategies and activities proven to work with diverse student populations 60
7. Having high expectations for all students 61
8. Becoming a life-long learner 61
Conclusion 62
Chapter 3: Methodology 63
Introduction 63
Organization of Chapter 64
Research Question 65
Mixed Methods Research Design 65
Exploratory Sequential Design for Mixed Methods 67
Procedural Framework 67
Researcher's Role/Positionality 77
Site Selection 84
Participants 91
Phase 1 93
Constructed Grounded Theory Approach 93
Timeline 100
Participants for Phase 1 101
Data Sources 103
Data Collection Techniques 104
Managing and Recording Data 104
Data Analysis Procedures 105
Methods for Verification or Trustworthiness 105
Limitations 106
Creation of Chapter and Lessons 106

Phase 2 107

  Descriptive Statistics Approach 107

  Timeline for Phase 2 108

  Participants 109

  Data Sources 110

  Data Collection Techniques 111

  Managing and Recording Data 112

  Data Analysis Procedures 113

  Methods for Verification or Trustworthiness 113

  Limitations 113

Summary of Methodology 114

Chapter 4: Findings 115

Introduction 115

Organization of Chapter 4 116

Research Question 116

Phase 1 Results 117

  Coding of 14 Interview Transcripts 118

    Step 1 118

    Step 2 118

    Step 3 121

    Step 4 124

    Step 5 126

  TTC Chapter Resource 126

Phase 2 Results 126

  Pre–Post Averages 126

    Open-Ended Question ... 128
  Summary of Chapter 4 ... 131
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations ... 133
  Introduction ... 133
  Statement of the Problem ... 134
  Review of the Methodology ... 134
  Summary of the Results ... 136
    Phase 1 Results ... 136
      Theory of practice ... 136
      Chapter about Culture ... 137
    Phase 2 Results ... 138
  Discussion of the Results ... 138
    Researcher's Insights ... 138
    Theoretical Implications of the Study ... 140
    Explanation of Unanticipated Findings ... 140
    Interpretation of the Findings ... 141
    Relationship of This Study to Previous Research ... 150
    Recommendation for Educators ... 153
    Suggestions for Additional Research ... 155
  Conclusion ... 156
References ... 159
Appendices ... 169

List of Figures

Page

Figure 1: The iterative process of action research. 68

Figure 2: Insider–outsider continuum. 79

Figure 3: Map of Alaska. 85

Figure 4: Map of Montana. 85

Figure 5: High school graduation rate, Alaska and Montana, 2004–2013. 87

Figure 6: Rank of population described as multiple race and ethnicity, Alaska and Montana, 2006–2013. 87

Figure 7: Google Map, as Modified by Researcher inserting numbers to correlate with Table 5. 90

Figure 8: Visual comparison of PAR and CGT cycle. 99

Figure 9: Step 2: Sample initial coding. 121

Figure 10: Step 3: Sample focus coding. 122

Figure 11: Step 3: Five themes emerge. 123

Figure 12: Theory of practice for teaching through culture. 124

Figure 13: Checklist final pre–post averages. 127

Figure 14: By question pre–post responses. 127

Figure 15: Phase 1 data: Wordle word cloud. 151

Figure B1: Alaska cultural standards and indicators for teacher evaluation. 171

Figure C1: Teaching through culture: Theory of practice. 173

Figure K1: Initial coding categories. 234

List of Tables

Page

Table 1: List of Culture Nomenclature 5

Table 2: History of Cultural Paradigm Models Over Time 11

Table 3: Outline of Research Design's Cycles 69

Table 4: Cornwall's PAR Purpose Continuum 82

Table 5: School Choice Near Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Montana........ 90

Table 6: Participant Sample Population 92

Table 7: Grounded Theory Compare/Contrast Constructed Versus Objective Table........ 97

Table 8: PAR and CGT Comparison 98

Table 9: Phase 1 Experienced Teachers 102

Table 10: Interview Date and State of XTs 103

Table 11: Timeline for Phase 2 109

Table 12: Phase 2 Early Career Teachers 110

Table 13: 5-Step Coding Process 117

Table 14: Step 1: First Read of Transcripts 119

Table 15: Sample Initial Coding Process 120

Table 16: Phase 2 Coding of ECT Responses 129

Table 17: Sample Responses from Phase 2 Open-Ended Question 130

Table 18: Reflect/Plan/Question/Take Action/Repeat 157

Table A1: Alaska Cultural Standards and Elements for Educators 169

Table D1: List of Culture Nomenclature 180

Table D2: Lessons Attached to Chapter About Culture 185

Table J1: Sample Coding First Read Alaska 227

Table J2: Sample Coding First Read Montana 229

Table J3: First Read, Focus Group 1 231

Table J4: First Read, Focus Group 2 232

Table L1: Initial Coding Categories 235

List of Appendices

Page

Appendix A: Alaska Cultural Standards and Elements for Educators 169

Appendix B: Alaska Cultural Standards and Indicators for Teacher Evaluation 171

Appendix C: Teaching Through Culture: Theory of Practice 173

Appendix D: Chapter About Culture and Lessons With CC 175

Appendix E: Checklist of Classroom Inventory 217

Appendix F: Directions for Phase 2 Participants, With Videos.. 219

Appendix G: Questions: Individual and Focus Group.. 221

Appendix H: Consent Form for Both Phases.. 223

Appendix I: Demographics: Phases 1 and 2 225

Appendix J: Step 1: Coding First Read... 227

Appendix K: Initial Coding Categories 233

Appendix L: Initial Coding Categories... 235

Appendix M: Optimal Learning Environment Framework 239

Appendix N: Phase 2 Responses to Questions 241

Acknowledgements

Humankind has not woven the web of life.
We are but one thread within it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.
All things are bound together. All things connected.
—Chief Seattle, Duwamish (1780–1866)

Connections. I would like to thank the many people in my life who believed I was up to the task of earning this advanced degree, especially at my "advanced" age. I especially want to thank those many students of color at Mt. View & Tyson Elementary and Clark Middle School who informed my own teaching practice so many years ago in the first years of my career. I further owe a great deal of gratitude to the early career teachers who allowed me into their lives in their first years of teaching, especially in rural Alaska where oftentimes these new teachers felt like outsiders—I learned a lot from these energetic educators. Then when I traveled the nation and even a few distant countries, working with teachers from all grade levels, the lessons for me did not stop—teachers are a giving group. Thanks to my fellow presenters of writing workshops, you continued to help me learn and grow in this field of education. All we educators want to do is help students learn—and each of us recognizes what a daunting task that can be. There is no more supportive field than that of teaching. I have been blessed.

Friends, co-workers, and fellow mentors have held me up, cheered me on, and never doubted my ability to finish, even when I held such doubts. Thank you to my supervisor, Glenda, for giving me the flexibility to juggle work, doctorate, family, and travel in order to meet all deadlines. Thanks to co-workers Putt and Keiko for your continued cheerleading, positive feedback and ongoing encouragement. Thanks to Marcia, Sperry, Martha, and Carol who read endless renditions of many aspects of this research, helped create graphs from data, let me talk for hours in order to process the study, and never said no to any request I asked of them. Thank you. To the mentors who found me teachers to work with, thank you. To the participants in both phases of the study, thank you, for without your involvement there would be no study. To Diana and Kay who read, edited, and did it all over again, thank you, especially as I was rushing to meet end-of-the journey deadlines. To my committee, the Dream Team, thank you for your input, guidance, nudging me to produce a quality study, and for forcing me to think! To Dr. Barbara Adams, my co-chair who single-handedly nurtured, nudged, and pushed me when I needed it most—especially on the final stretch. I would not be writing this page in my dissertation but for your belief in my work and my ability to complete the research.

And finally, thank you family. Thank you to my parents for always modeling a strong work ethic, and to my sisters, brothers, Niece Statia, grandchildren, and children—each of you at one time or another shared your belief that I could do this and gave me the confidence and courage to continue to completion. Your belief in my ability is largely responsible for the fact I am about to complete the journey. When I walk across the stage in May 2018, Fairbanks, Alaska, to receive the diploma, hood, and recognition as a Ph.D., please know that I accept this accomplishment on behalf of all of us—we were/are a team, and we have earned this degree together, as a family of life-long learners. I love you all.

Yes, Richard, Dr. Littlebear, my soulmate, role model, and inspiration—you too have served as a partner not only in my pursuit of a graduate degree, but also as a best friend and confidante for more than 50 years, starting when you helped me with a 6th grade Ivory soap-carving homework assignment—our relationship began then and continues through today. Truly, life's journey, and our work together have been all about relationships—and I love you very much. Thank you.

Chapter 1

Introduction

> *I am an educator who thinks globally.*
> *—Paulo Freire*

Introduction to the Study

Diversity in America is at an all-time high. Educating America's diverse student population is a fluid process requiring continual attention to issues of equity, social justice, and critical thinking. Teaching our youth means much more than simply delivering algorithms or formulas or language arts lessons. Teaching today's youth means shaping our future by producing critical thinkers: citizens from many different backgrounds capable of solving the global issues of today, tomorrow, and the next century. Critical thinkers do not just "happen," they can engage in critical discourse only if in a safe environment that provides educational opportunities to think, explain their thinking, adjust their thinking, and make decisions that contribute to a better world. Thus, educators today are tasked with designing classroom environments that emphasize the safety, unique perspectives, and individual backgrounds of an increasingly diverse population.

Like Freire, I, too, am an educator who thinks globally. My teaching experience in Mt. View, Anchorage, Alaska gifted me the opportunity for a global perspective based upon the 6–8 diverse student populations filling my classroom each year for nearly two decades. This dissertation is a study about teaching through culture (TTC) as a foundational step for building teacher–student relationships that result in a learning environment where critical thinking can occur. This study was based primarily upon interviews with experienced Alaska and Montana teachers successful with TTC. Chapter 1 introduces the study's purpose and theoretical underpinnings. It defines critical terminology, explains the significance of this study, and presents an overview of the methodology used. Chapter 1 concludes by noting the, assumptions and limitations of the study, and finally presents an outline for the remaining chapters.

Background of the Study

This task of teaching our youth to think critically falls squarely on the shoulders of America's public education model, and its teachers. If you are a teacher, you must be a learner and your students must become teachers. Freire (2000) claims education must begin with the solution of the student-teacher contradiction by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. This research on TTC explores how best to help teachers become *learners* and students become *teachers* through reciprocal teaching-learning relationships.

In the United States, expectations for K-12 curricula are set through state-directed standards, or in some instances, through Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Most teachers are handed the curriculum for their grade levels and told to go forth and teach, which includes teaching and reaching America's diverse student population. Expectations for the curriculum have been spelled out in great detail. Standards for classroom instruction in all subjects have existed state by state in our nation for many years. In the summer of 2010, the Common Core State Standards for two subjects were released nationwide, claiming to have been built on the best that states had to offer. Shortly thereafter, at a meeting among National Governors, it was believed that it should now be clear to every student, parent, and teacher *what* the standards of success are in every school (National Governors Association, 2010) no matter the state.

Clarity of expectations surrounding specific content is one thing; helping teachers discover the "how" of delivering that same content is quite another. Forty-two states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the Common Core State Standards as of summer 2017. Regarding the two states observed in this study, Alaska and Montana, Alaska has not adopted these standards, although Alaskan content standards are closely aligned with CCSS, and some Alaskan school districts have adopted CCSS. Montana implemented modified Common Core standards that were adapted to meet additional state legislated priorities established by Montana's Indian Education for All law (Cates, 2015).

While CCSS provides a roadmap for rigorous content to be taught at each grade level, these standards provide no guidance on instructional methods. Teachers are given a detailed, externally developed set of learning objectives for their grades, but how to ensure students learn is left entirely up to teachers. From the perspective of this study's author, providing content standards to teachers without guidance for *how* to teach or create the environment in which to deliver the curriculum, especially to a globally diverse American student population, is like giving a 1000-piece puzzle to a classroom of diverse learners without the picture on the box or any corner pieces. Students might accidentally connect a few pieces given enough time. If teachers knew *how* to create the environment for student learning—how to scaffold the puzzle construction by chunking the pieces, and how to teach students to connect the pieces—students could construct the puzzle more easily.

In other words, student achievement could improve if teachers knew the "how" of teaching in addition to the "what" of teaching. Teaching through culture is like a puzzle when it comes to meeting the needs of the varying diverse students in America, and this research hopes to provide insights into how best to solve this puzzle.

This research explores what accomplished teachers do to deliver classroom instruction using the culture of the student to connect content and standards with student background knowledge in ways that lead the student to success. This study aims to explore teaching through culture to discover how TTC contributes to student learning.

Statement of the Problem

The current United States student population requires teachers skilled in creating environments for diverse learners in order to connect content to differing cultural backgrounds so that all students can think critically, learn, and grow. The availability of quality teachers skilled in TTC is key to meeting this challenge. Experienced teachers who have successfully used diversity and student culture to create engaging environments where all students can learn have much to teach us. This research explores TTC, specifically, what does TTC look like in an American K–12 classroom? How does TTC contribute to student learning? And how can educators use culture to improve classroom practices?

Theoretical Framework

In order to describe the theoretical framework of TTC first requires defining "culture" in the educational context. Once culture has been defined for purposes of this study, the history of culture in education in America and the relevant theories will be presented to frame this research.

Definition of Culture

Culture can be viewed at a global, national, state, local, or even familial level. Culture, as it is commonly used in today's parlance, can encompass gender, classroom environment, or a broad construct of adolescent culture.

Academic definitions of culture and cultural concepts as they relate to the classroom are varied, and reflect shifts in thinking about culture over time. Nearly two decades ago Phuntsog shared how researchers had already contributed to the cultural *differences* concept of improving academic achievement of students from culturally diverse (Phuntsog, 1999) backgrounds. With each new author, another phrase or term using *culture* emerged: culturally *compatible* (Jacob & Jordan, 1987), culturally *responsive* (Erickson, 1987), culturally *congruent* (Au & Kawakami, 1994), culturally *relevant* (Ladson-Billings, 1990), as well as *TTC* (Barnhardt, 1990). More recently, culturally *sensitive,* (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005), as well as Paris (2012) added to the conversation with research suggesting "culturally *sustaining* pedagogy be an alternative that embodies some of the best research and practice in the resource pedagogy tradition and as a term that supports the *value* of our multi-ethnic and multilingual present and future" (p. 1). By contrast, Gay (2002) and Banks and Banks, (2004) coined the phrase *multi*cultural education. Which term to use? Sustaining? Multi? Relevant? Responsive? Compatible? Congruent? Diverse? The best way to clarify these terms and come away with a single shared understanding, is to look at the *one* word common to all: *Culture*.

Table 1

List of Culture Nomenclature

Year	Term	Author
1987	Culturally compatible	Jacob & Jordan
	Culturally responsive	Erickson
1990	Teaching through culture	Barnhardt
1990	Culturally relevant	Ladson-Billings
1994	Culturally congruent	Au & Kawakami
1999	Culturally diverse	Phuntsog
2003	Multicultural education	Gay
2004		Banks & Banks
2005	Culturally sensitive	Gonzalez et al.,
2012	Culturally sustaining	Paris

Culture comes with almost as many definitions as there are contributors to the field of culture in education. Over the years, fresh definitions and terminology have been created to reflect contemporary thinking about culture, as the above table demonstrates. Anthropologist Norma Gonzalez (Moll, Amanti & Gonzalez, 2005), one of the authors of *Funds of Knowledge*, captures the challenge provided by the multitude of cultural concepts:

> As educators, we are urged to be aware of cultural issues and try to incorporate culturally sensitive pedagogy. Yet, once we start to peel back the layers of this common usage, we find a complex history, a variety of definitions, and wide disparity in theories of culture. (p. 29)

Gonzalez (Moll et al., 2005) explained that the academic study of culture had its early start through the work of Franz Boas, a natural scientist and anthropologist, who shared his ideas about culture as being the "genius of a people" (p. 30). Gonzalez suggested culture evolved from the ideas of Boas and scientific racism, to a laundry list of cultural traits (Spindler, 1996), back into anthropology and educational circles, including some hybrids, postmodernism and poststructuralism, and finally into *Implications for Educators* (p. 38). It is in this context, viewing culture as implications for educators, I wish to define culture, the word, for this study.

Described in *Funds of Knowledge* (Moll et al., 2005), an anthropologist (Gonzalez), a researcher (Moll), and a teacher (Amanti) conducted a Participatory Action Research qualitative study to coordinate three interrelated activities: 1) the ethnographic analysis of household dynamics, 2) the examination of classroom practices, and 3) the development of after-school study groups with teachers (p. 72). Through the first activity of ethnographic analysis of household dynamics, *Funds* arose "representing a positive (and, we argue, realistic) view of households as containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great potential utility for classroom instruction" (p. 75). Per the authors, one's "funds of knowledge" include not only the cultural background of ethnicity, heritage, values and norms of a select group of people (which is the definition familiar to most and perhaps closest to Boas' notion of "genius of a people"), but also the cognitive knowledge gained within households through extended family interaction, shared living and collaborative familial experiences. These "funds," together with heritage background including values and norms, provide opportunities for educators to connect the content of new learning. Later research on education supports a similar way of thinking: Tapping into students' prior cultural knowledge can help to establish dynamic mental models that network to the learners' existing schema, adding meaning to the new knowledge for the learner (Griner & Stewart, 2012).

The dynamic and temporal aspect of culture should also be noted. Gurung & Prieto, (2009) offered, "Culture has many dimensions. Culture can be broadly defined as a dynamic yet stable set of goals, beliefs, and attitudes shared by a group of people. Culture is dynamic because some of the beliefs held by members in a culture can change with time" (p. 12), making the concept of "culture" a moving target when it comes to trying to pin down a single definition.

Building on Gonzales et al. (2005) and Gurung and Prieto's (2009) previous work, culture for purposes of this study includes one's background experiences and cognitive "funds of knowledge" gained since birth, together with Gurung's suggested dynamic "set of goals, beliefs, and attitudes shared by a group of people" (p. 12) which originate from the values and norms of one's heritage.

When I began this research the summer of 2013, I used the term *culturally-relevant/ responsive*, as that was the phrase used most frequently in journal articles and books. With each new phrase or term uncovered in my study, as outlined above, I found myself in cognitive dissonance, continuously readjusting my understanding, until finally I came to settle upon one phrase, embracing all others, that captures the essence of what this study explores. The work of connecting the learning and curricular content to the student is bigger than being responsive or relevant to culture, it is more about the teacher as learner, and as such, a learner recognizing the significance of delivering the content in ways that connect content to the student doing the learning of new content. Teaching through culture, therefore, is greater than simply learning about the diverse cultures represented in the classroom, although learning about is the “starting” point. TTC is a commitment by the teacher to learn from the student about each classroom member’s culture in order to connect all content to the student, making the student a teacher and the teacher a learner. TTC, therefore, requires teacher-as-learner, as listener, and teacher being committed to building a relationship with the student in order to present content and lessons in authentic ways so student-learners can make meaning. TTC compels relationship-building in order to teach-learn-deliver content, reflect, and teach again. It is a never-ending collaborative, reciprocal cycle of teaching and learning together with the student. This reciprocity component can be found among many native cultures in North America, and complements indigenous ways of knowing (Bell et al., 2010):

> Respect, relationship, reciprocity and responsibility are concepts that form the foundation of Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee ceremonies, life-ways, ways of being, systems of governance and worldviews. … One cannot live in a respectful way without tending to one’s responsibilities. One cannot have a relationship or interact with the land in a good or respectful way without reciprocity. All four concepts are interdependent and connected in Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee ways of knowing. (p.14)

Therefore, the cultural phrase used in this study, a phrase that reflects reciprocal indigenous ways of knowing, is TTC. Teaching through culture captures the essence of best practices in classroom instruction and is at the heart of this study: Teaching "through," not about culture. Teaching "through" is more than being relevant or responsive or sustaining or revitalizing. TTC incorporates all other positive cultural terms—being culturally responsive, relevant, sensitive, sustaining, revitalizing, and congruent while addressing multiple cultures. TTC teachers commit to doing whatever methods, actions and strategies are necessary to learn from the student in order to connect the content to the student's existing funds of knowledge and familial history as shaped by cultural heritage. Truly the phrase "teaching *through* culture" defines the purpose of this study, discovering What does TTC look like in the K–12 classroom? How does TTC contribute to K–12 student learning? What part does TTC play in contributing to the creation of K–12 classroom environments?

Evolution of Culture in Education

Cultural *Deficit*: The history of culture in education actually began with a deficit model of classroom practice; while not exactly an identified 'theory,' the deficit thinking model did prevail for some time. According to one theorist, Craig Storti (1989), deficit thinking produces a domino-like effect:

> Deficit Thinking: The more we retreat from the culture and the people, the less we learn about them. The less we know about them, the more uncomfortable we feel among them. The more uncomfortable we feel among them, the more inclined we are to withdraw. The more we withdraw from the people, the more faults we find with them. The less we know about their culture, the more we seem to dislike it. And the worst of it is that, in the end, we begin to believe the very lies we've invented to console ourselves (p. 54).

Deficit thinking persists to this day in some areas of our national educational system, including to some extent in Alaska and Montana where this study takes place, as revealed by some comments overheard by me during the course of this study: “These kids need to speak English and get with the 21st century.” “These kids come from families who don’t care about education.” “Their home lives are holding them back.” *We begin to believe the very lies we’ve invented to console ourselves.*

Culture as *Different:* The emergence of cultural difference followed on the heels of deficit, and represents the first positive construction of culture’s role in education. Pioneers such as Ramirez and Castaneda (1974), Edmonds (1986), and Boykin (1986) constructed the cultural difference paradigm in the 1970s and 1980s to counter the cultural deficit or deprivation model. Under the difference model, one’s cultural values, norms, and practices are considered assets and academic lessons built on those assets result in improved student learning. Similarly, using a student’s funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2005) when planning lessons, delivering instruction, and learning about the child is a *positive* and key model when working within the cultural difference paradigm.

Culture as an *Asset*: Following the difference model of the 1970s and 1980s, Moll et al., (2005), Ladson-Billings (1990), and Gay (2002), among others, took culture in education a step further and together constructed the culturally responsive theory (sometimes called culturally relevant theory), which focused on the assets of diverse cultures.

Culture as *Value-Added*: Paris (2012) has suggested sustaining terminology, as bringing value to the conversation about culture in education. The author of this study has colleagues at the University of Alaska Fairbanks discussing this very issue right now, winter 2017, suggesting yet another value-added term of revitalizing. The debate continues on the signification of this term, as some believe revitalizing to be a sign one's culture has gone away and is coming back.

Table 2

History of Cultural Paradigm Models Over Time

Decade	Paradigm model	Student influence
Up to and through 1960s	Deficit-deprivation	Negative
1970s and 1980s	Difference	Positive
1990s and 2000s	Asset (Culturally responsive theory emerges) Responsive-relevant-sustaining-multi	Positive
2010s → today 2018	Value-added Sustaining (Revitalizing?)	Positive

Relationship building plays a part when focusing on the assets of diverse cultures. According to Ladson-Billings (2009) and Gay (2010), relationships matter. Teachers with culturally-relevant practices are careful to demonstrate a connectedness with each of their students and must consciously work to develop commonalities with all students (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The importance of relationship building with students emerges as never before, making it a focal point for creating environments where students can learn. And, there is a place for cultural diversity in every subject taught in schools. Furthermore, culturally responsive teaching deals as much with using multicultural instructional strategies as with adding multicultural content to the curriculum (Gay, 2010).

Building on previous definitions of culture, and the evolution of cultural theory in education, this study will propose a new theory, a value-added paradigm model of teaching through culture.

Purpose of the Study

This study has three purposes. First, to determine how teachers use culture to successfully deliver K–12 classroom instruction. Second, using those lessons learned to create a Chapter About Culture (CAC) resource to inform early career teachers (ECTs) how to use culture to deliver classroom instruction. And, finally, to help ECTs reflect upon their own classroom instruction by completing a Classroom Checklist Inventory (CCI) before and after using the newly created CAC. In addition to providing an opportunity for teacher reflection, the CCI serves to measure any differences in classroom practices after having used the CAC. This study seeks to discover the "how" of TTC in order to support student learning, and then share the results with others.

Research Questions

This study addresses a single primary research question:

RQ 1. What does teaching through culture look like in a typical K–12 classroom?

In addition, this study looks at three related questions that arose during the study: 1) How does state policy influence or inform TTC in the K–12 Classroom? 2) What do undergraduate study programs do to prepare teachers for delivering classroom instruction through culture? And, 3) How does TTC contribute to student learning?

Glossary of Terms

In order to facilitate a shared understanding between researcher and reader, several terms used throughout this study are defined below.

Active learning. Active learning is an educational term that refers to several models of instruction that put the responsibility for learning upon the student; the student is *active* in his or her own learning by desire and interest. This represents a constructivist approach.

Alaska state cultural standards. Alaska state cultural standards (Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, 2012) refer to state-developed standards that use Alaska cultural values and norms to guide the teacher's instruction; these standards can be used in all content areas. Alaska's Department of Education & Early Development (Alaska DEED) developed a guide designed to help educators self-assess and measure their own progress in the use of these Alaska standards for teaching for the purpose of becoming more aware of how to use culture when delivering classroom instruction.

Assessment. In this research, assessment refers to measuring the progress or lack thereof in student learning and student engagement.

Comprehensible input. Comprehensible input—making lessons understandable—is a term first coined in the 1970s-80s by linguist Stephen Krashen. Many have applied Krashen's findings to models for bilingual instruction, in which teachers are taught to make lessons comprehensible for second language learners. The term refers to five separate hypotheses about language acquisition; one of which is explored in this research, the Affective Filter hypothesis (Krashen, 2003). Krashen hypothesized that a learner's emotional state can act as a filter that impedes or blocks inputs that are necessary for language acquisition, making learning that much more difficult. Teachers need to be aware of this filter and use methods and strategies that address this filter in ways empowering student learning.

Constructivist. A constructivist approach refers to a theory of learning whereby learners gain information by being actively involved with meaning-making and constructing their own new knowledge, as contrasted to passively being handed information (Freire's banking model). According to Henson (2003), by using Piaget's theory of learning, educators focus on their students as learners. Educators who apply Piaget provide an education that is learner-centered and constructivist-based to an extent. Piaget's theory allows teachers to view students as individual learners who add new concepts to prior knowledge to construct, or build, understanding for themselves.

Culture. Culture is one's background experiences and cognitive funds of knowledge gained since birth, together with Gurung's (2009) suggested dynamic, ever-changing **ethnic** "set of goals, beliefs, and attitudes shared by a group of people" (p. 12), which originate from the values and norms of one's heritage.

Cultural knowledge. Cultural knowledge refers to a teacher's knowledge about a student's culture, and includes background information such as native language, geographic location of birth and upbringing along with the values, norms, mores, and philosophy of the society, home and lifestyle from which the student comes.

Culturally diverse. Culturally diverse refers to a variety of unique, separate backgrounds, ethnicity, languages, values, norms and mores of a given student population. In the context of this study, areas of rural Alaska and rural Montana are likely to be less culturally diverse, with only two or three differing cultures, compared to urban areas of each state where as many as 100 different countries of origin are represented. Across the state of Alaska, it is expected there will be clusters of unique Alaska Native populations: Inupiaq and St. Lawrence Island Yup'ik, Yup'ik and Cup'ik, Athabascan, Aleut and Alutiq, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian. Across the state of Montana, it is expected there will be clusters of unique Native American populations: Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Cheyenne, Crow, Gros Ventre, Kootenai, Salish, Sioux, and Shoshoni.

Engaging. Engaging refers to soliciting student participation with active learning. An engaged learner refers to a student's intrinsic approach to the learning, and that is generally based upon the objective of each lesson. A student wanting to interact in the learning is an engaged student.

Indigenous ways of knowing. This term refers to the way in which native peoples from around the world originally gained their lessons of life. Indigenous ways of knowing are closely related to one's epistemology, the individual belief system about what is and is not knowledge. For purposes of this research, indigenous ways of knowing refers to the processes of learning that occur within and at the intersection of diverse world views and knowledge systems (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). For many indigenous groups of people that process includes observing, listening, watching, trying, and observing some more. Traditional Native knowledge systems and beliefs often can differ from Western Science knowledge systems.

Montana's Indian Education for All. Montana's Indian Education for All (McCulloch, 2000) is a state law passed in 1999, Article X, Section 1(2) of the Montana Constitution stating: The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity. This law includes a depth and breadth of Native American resources and lessons created and designed for Montana's educators targeting tribes found within the borders of Montana.

Native. In this study, *Native* refers to indigenous people from North America. Native will include Alaska Natives, and Native Americans from the contiguous continental U.S.; broadly, a category that refers to those people whose ancestors inhabited North America before the arrival of explorers from Europe and Russia. There exist many different names for this group of indigenous North American people: Native, Alaska Native, Native American, American Indian, Indian, people of color and so forth. In some places within this study, Native also refers to indigenous people from Canada, the Islands of Hawaii or other Pacific Islanders, south to and including Australia and New Zealand. Native (indigenous) people is meant to refer to the group whose ancestors originally inhabited a continent or place before the arrival of "outside" explorers.

Place-based context-responsive teaching. Amy Vinlove (2012) explained that the phrase context-responsive teaching "consolidates into one concept the pedagogical knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with culturally responsive teaching, place-based teaching, differentiated instruction, and purposeful collaboration with parents, families and communities" (p. iii). Place-based context-responsive teaching is connected to the geography and location of the place from which the lessons and instruction originate in order to connect learning to student.

Setting. This study includes three school settings found within both Alaska and Montana: (1) *Urban*, which are the more populated areas of each state, including cities with multiple primary, elementary, middle and high schools as well as a variety of retail stores found within its urban boundaries; (2) *Rural*, which includes a low-density population area, with few, if any K–12 level school choices and limited retail store access available. Often rural locations are either a distance from a city, or off a road system entirely as in Alaska; And, (3) *Village/Community*, which refers to a geographically-isolated location of school sites most often limited to one school choice, frequently a single K–12 school, and one or no grocery store with no close access to any other retail store.

Teaching methods. Teaching methods refer to the many ways in which teachers choose to deliver their instruction: activities, strategies, choices made by teachers while planning lessons. While there is considerable individual variation in teaching methods, most teaching methods fall into certain categories. This research gathers data on which teaching methods accomplished teachers are choosing to use when delivering instruction through culture, and later identifies, groups, and shares these common teaching methods.

Professional Significance of Problem Statement

Today's diverse student populations in America require teachers skilled in creating environments for learning, classrooms that connect content to learner in ways where all students can think critically, learn, and grow. Delpit (1995) suggests students learn best when lessons connect to their existing knowledge base:

> We all carry worlds in our heads, and those worlds are decidedly different. We educators set out to teach, but how can we reach the worlds of others when we don't even know they exist? Indeed, many of us don't even realize that our own worlds exist only in our heads and in the cultural institutions we have built to support them. (p. xiv)

By mapping out rigorous content standards by grade level, Common Core State Standards provides valuable guidance on *what* to teach. Yet there is no comparable shared set of standards for the *how* of teaching, the methodology.

Contemporary experts generally agree that, to make input comprehensible and create engaging classroom environments for all students, requires teachers to know the cultures, background, and worldviews of their learners in order to connect content and teach. A school administrator, George Olanna of Shishmaref, Alaska, said, "In today's rural education, teachers often feel that the students don't know much because the students' experiences are not taken into account. Students are taught what the teacher chooses, whether or not that fits the students' everyday life" (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998). This quote exemplifies the 1960s' deficit model of thinking about culture in education. Teachers need to realize that perhaps they are the ones who don't have the necessary background knowledge or experience to help students succeed. It just might not be a student problem, perhaps it is a teacher problem. This study will help clarify how teachers can gain that necessary background information as it pertains to each year's student population.

In the early 1990s, I was the teacher who did not have the necessary background knowledge or experience early in my teaching career. Every year, throughout my 16 years at the helm of an urban classroom, it was normal to have from six to eight different languages spoken in my room of 25-30 students. While searching for ways to effectively reach all students, I eventually discovered Luis Moll's work about *Funds of Knowledge* (Moll et al., 2005). Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, and Norma Gonzalez use funds of knowledge "to refer to the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133).

> When teachers shed their role of teacher and expert and, instead, take on a new role as learner, they can come to know their students and the families of their students in new and distinct ways. With this new knowledge, they can begin to see that the households of their students contain rich cultural and cognitive resources and that these resources can and should be used in their classroom in order to provide culturally responsive and meaningful lessons that tap students' prior knowledge. Information that teachers learn about their students in this process is considered the student's funds of knowledge. (Moll's work, p.133 as cited by Lopez in Mount-Cors, 2006)

Students began to teach me and I was ready to learn. A potential solution to this problem is helping teachers gain strategies and ways to discover the many funds of knowledge brought into the classroom by each and every student. Lopez answers the question: Why is it important to understand the background (funds of knowledge) of my students? (Mount-Cors et al., 2006)

> While it may seem like a silly question to ask why it is necessary to understand the background of each student, it is important to remember that as teachers it is your job to understand something about everyone in your classroom. For students who come from similar backgrounds as your own this will not be a hard task, but for those students who have had an upbringing vastly different than your own, this may be more difficult. Funds of knowledge is one way to help you connect with your child and with their family. It is the responsibility of each teacher to attempt to learn something special about each child they teach. (2.1 online retrieval)

Teaching today requires much more than the content background as outlined in CCSS. While the field of education has provided the standards and expectations for students to be academically prepared upon completion of their high school education for college or careers, classroom teachers must first determine how best to connect with the learners in order to help them attain those standards and expectations. Becoming effective, quality teachers of the 21st century requires knowing much more than having a strong grasp of specific academic content. Today's teachers can only help students learn by first learning about their students in order to build relationships that can collaboratively create an engaging environment for learning to occur.

Cultural resources have been available for decades and professional development on using culture in the classroom is delivered to educators annually, yet a serious disconnect remains in the use of TTC methods and strategies to actually *connect* instruction with and deliver comprehensible lessons to the students in an environment that engages all learners. Achievement gaps almost always reveal Native Americans and Native Alaskans near the bottom of the list.

Education Trust (2013), an advocacy nonprofit group that claims they are "fierce advocates for academic achievement of all students," published a fact sheet in 2013 which shows progress for many students of color, yet falling scores and widening gaps for Native Americans specifically.

> Amidst all this progress, though, one group stands apart: Native students, a group that includes American Indian and Alaska Native youth. Unlike achievement results for every other major ethnic group in the United States, those for Native students have remained nearly flat in recent years, and the gaps separating these students from their white peers have actually widened. Indeed, while Native students performed above black and Latino students in both fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math in 2005, by 2011, that lead had all but disappeared. (p. 3)

Without some serious change in K–12 classroom practices, the future of Alaska and Montana students, especially rural and village/community indigenous students, remains grim. According to Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (2013) statistics, the 2011–2012 dropout rate by ethnicity in Alaska was highest for Alaska Native/American Indians at 8.0%. Similarly, in Montana, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, reported statewide American Indian dropout rates in 2013-14 were 6.5%, more than twice as high as all other ethnic groups in Montana (Juneau, 2014). Many claim these numbers are higher.

Educators across the nation are clamoring to discover what TTC looks like, and specifically in Alaska and Montana, states with high Native populations, the need for using culture in the classroom is essential. Both of these states have enacted legislation regarding culture in education, signaling its importance in these state education systems. How to use culture in the classroom is the exploration piece of this study and the findings are the focus of this research, exploring and discovering exactly what it means to use culture to deliver classroom instruction.

The need for this study and its significance are further evidenced by the research of Linda Darling-Hammond, a global education expert who shares her findings on the importance of the teacher. Darling-Hammond responded to a question posed by Mark Goldberg, (2010) during an interview: What effect does the teacher have on how well students do in school?

> In the last ten years there's been a lot of research done about what makes a difference for student achievement, and it's now clear that the single most important determinant of what students learn is what their teachers know. Teacher qualifications, teacher knowledge and skills, make more difference for student learning than any other single factor. Clearly, this means if we want to improve student learning, what we have to do is invest in teachers' learning. We have to be sure that teachers understand not only their content area, which is very important, but also, how do students learn? How do different students learn differently? How do students acquire language? How do second language learners need to be taught? How do we organize curriculum in ways that are effective? Almost every study that's done that looks at these factors sees significant substantial effects on what students learn. Interestingly, well-qualified teachers make more difference for students who have struggled more. It's the most important for the students who have had the most difficulty in school in the past. (p. 687)

Darling-Hammond, in this Goldberg interview, asserts that the single most important determinant of success for a student is the knowledge and skills of the student's teacher. This suggests narrowing the achievement gap among ethnic groups will require teachers knowing more about their students. Implicitly, this means teachers must know more about differing cultures. This further suggests that more than an education degree in a specific content area is required. Methods classes need to be expanded so that teachers look at language acquisition, second language learners, students' preferred learning styles, the family philosophy, background and culture. These principles will serve as a guide throughout this research.

Finally, this study has professional significance for rural school districts and rural student populations, especially those with indigenous Native populations, as well as in urban schools with many diverse cultural student populations. Working through culture to create K–12 classroom environments more conducive to learning has the potential to improve: 1) student achievement, 2) district and statewide annual yearly progress, 3) teacher retention, 4) student engagement through classroom environments, and 5) teacher job satisfaction.

The geographic focus of this study is especially significant. Alaska and Montana recognize the importance of using culture in the classroom and have led the nation in laws, guides, and regulations requiring their educators to infuse culture into their K–12 instruction. It follows that connecting student culture with classroom instruction in these two states is a most significant objective for how to deliver quality instruction using culture.

Additionally, while both states are home to diverse populations, Alaska in particular is a hotbed of diversity. As of 2010, Anchorage's Mountain View neighborhood is the most diverse census tract in the entire United States. Three of the top 10 most diverse [tracts] are in Anchorage, followed mostly by a handful from the borough of Queens in New York (McCoy, 2013). A second news company reports three of the top 10 diverse high schools in the United States can be found within the city limits of Anchorage, AK, followed by Hawaii, California, Washington and Nevada. The same is true in middle schools. Anchorage leads with six of the top eight, followed again by Hawaii and Washington. Moreover, of the top 20 diverse elementary schools in the United States, Anchorage leads with the top 19, with Hawaii bringing in the 20th most diverse school in the nation (Tunseth, 2015). Culture in education matters in Alaska and that significance is underscored by recent state action.

The professional significance of TTC in Alaska is further evidenced by resources created by indigenous Alaskan educators, *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* and its companion *Guide*, (Alaska Native Stakeholders, 2012) plus a book entitled *Culture in the Classroom* (SERRC, 2015), each will be covered more thoroughly in chapter2. Alaska is the only state known to have created and received state endorsement for *Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators* (Appendix A), and four of the five cultural standards are today part of that state's teacher evaluation system. Alaska provides a *Guide to Implementing the Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators (Guide)* (Alaska Native Stakeholders, 2012), which provides a framework for individual teachers or groups for learning to Teach Through Culture. This Guide can help prepare new and seasoned teachers, alike, for working in schools in any state, both urban and rural, and it does so by building on much of the *Funds of Knowledge* foundation and findings provided by Moll et al. (2005).

A second Alaskan resource reflecting the professional significance of TTC is a book entitled *Culture in the Classroom* (Appendix B), which was recently created and published by Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC, 2015), an Alaskan educational nonprofit. This book was created over two years of work by many of the same Alaska Native authors of the *Guide*. A companion to the *Guide*, this book is an excellent resource for both administrators and teachers alike, for determining how to Teach Through Culture anywhere in America, while documenting and gathering evidence for the four (of the five) cultural standards required in the evaluation of an Alaskan teacher.

Although Montana does not appear to have the degree of diversity within its borders as does Alaska, Montana is home to a very large indigenous Native American population and the professional significance of TTC in that state is equally great. The state's Office of Public Instruction (1999) reports, "eleven of the twelve American Indian tribes in Montana are recognized as nations by the United States." All Montana educators interviewed for this study in Phase 1 come from either on or near one of those sovereign nations, the Northern Cheyenne, located in southeast Montana. Additionally, in 1999, the Montana Legislature passed House Bill 528 into law (MCA 20-1-501), which law today is commonly referred to as Indian Education for All (IEFA) (McCulloch, 2000). It reads:

> MCA 20-1-501. Recognition of American Indian cultural heritage -- legislative intent. (1) It is the constitutionally declared policy of this state to recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and to be committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural heritage. (Office of Public Instruction, 1999)
>
> The study revealed that despite the constitution's educational guarantees, many school districts and schools, including those adjacent to Montana's seven reservations, had no policy or information in their school curricula recognizing the cultural heritage of American Indians and that the small number of Indian teachers and administrators in public schools resulted in Indian students with no role models and a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity among non-Indian students. (Office of Public Instruction, 1999)

This law brought with it the creation, by the sovereign nation tribes found within Montana, entire sets of lessons designed for K–12 grade levels, across eight content areas, and located online for easy access. The lessons are broken into four age groups: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12, and cover all tribes of Montana. Montana focused much of its resources on the development of culturally responsive lessons that are place-based by Montana tribe, and made these hundreds of lessons readily available on-line for teachers. Although these resources are commendable, similarly to CCSS, these represent content without directions for delivery. Limited professional development was provided to share the pedagogy and strategies for delivering the lessons.

Achievement gaps continue to show indigenous Native students not making Annual Yearly Progress in Montana and several reservation schools are in the 10th year or more of "Holding at Corrective Action" by standards assessment across the state in order to make AYP (Office of Public Instruction, 2015). Passing laws about the importance of culture in education is a good first step, yet more work must be done to improve educational outcomes across diverse groups.

These recent cultural additions by state legislatures to Montana's and Alaska's educational requirements are evidence of the significance of this study about how culture should inform teachers in their daily delivery of instruction and content. Adding this layer of 'cultural' significance into state law shows the importance of culture in education, and underscores the significance of this study. Discussing a classroom without a TTC approach, one Alaska Native Elder put it: The schools are more concerned about preparing our children to make a living than they are in preparing them to make a life for themselves (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2011). TTC is intended to build a connection between the materials being taught and the values of the learner. It is a value-added paradigm intended to significantly improve quality instruction in all classrooms in ways that help teachers connect content with individual students by validating, reaffirming, and respecting that child's funds of knowledge and unique cultural background.

When you ask Native Alaskan elders and parents: What is it you want more than anything else for your child? Many often reply simply, "I want my child to be a good human being." TTC is a value-added paradigm intended to significantly improve quality instruction in all classrooms in ways that help teachers connect content with individual students by validating, reaffirming, and respecting each child's funds of knowledge and unique cultural background. Now is the time to follow this indigenous way of knowing and help children to become good human beings.

The professional significance of TTC cannot be overstated. TTC is an educational best practice with potential for improving educational outcomes. This study aims to uncover and share with all educators exactly how to teach through culture, and more concretely identify the benefits of these practices.

Overview of the Methodology

This Participatory Action Research (PAR) study utilized a mixed methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. The study was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1 gathered qualitative data: The study first drew from interviews of experienced teachers (XT), both individuals and focus groups in Alaska and Montana, to discover how student cultures are used successfully in classroom instruction and delivery of lessons. Next, the researcher reviewed interview transcripts using constructivist grounded theory as an analytic method, after which instructional patterns and trends of TTC emerged. These findings led to a new theory of TTC (Appendix C), one of a value-added paradigm model grounded in the data gathered. Next, using the new theory and the data gleaned from those interviews, together with lessons gained through a Literature Review, a CAC (Appendix D) for TTC was created to be used by ECTs in Phase 2 of the research. This concluded Phase 1.

Phase 2 gathered both quantitative and qualitative data: Participating ECTs first completed a Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI, Appendix E) covering best classroom practices, then used the newly created CAC for a three-to-ten-week period between November 2016 to February 2017. Following the use of CAC, teachers completed the same CCI tool as a measure of any growth gained in best classroom practices. Changes in classroom practice were measured using the pre/post checklist scores by comparing average totals before and after use of the CAC. One open-ended question was asked of all participants in Phase 2, and responses were analyzed using constructed grounded theory to uncover any patterns.

Phase 1 data included descriptive demographics of 20 experienced teachers (XTs) and their settings from Alaska and Montana, as well as qualitative transcribed responses from 14 XT interviews held in Alaska and Montana, covering 2 focus groups of 8 XTs and 12 individual XTs.

Phase 2 data included descriptive demographics of eight ECTs from Alaska and one experienced teacher (XT) from Montana and their school settings; a pre-post quantitative Checklist of Classroom Inventory by all nine participating teachers, as well as their nine qualitative written responses to one open-ended question following their use of the newly created CAC.

All qualitative data (Phase 1 interview transcripts and Phase 2 open-ended responses from post query) were analyzed using a constructed grounded theory coding framework. Quantitative data (one pre-post Checklist of Classroom Inventory) were analyzed by comparing averages pre- and post- use of the CAC.

Descriptive demographics of all participants—XTs and ECTs—were placed into a table for ease of reference visually, as were descriptions of the three settings from which data were gathered: urban, rural, and village/community. Special consideration was given to ethnographic and indigenous interdisciplinary research methodologies by using an Action-Research-with-

Participants-approach cycle to the study. The researcher obtained IRB approval at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska, as well as from Chief Dull Knife College in Lame Deer, Montana, before data collection began.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations of the Study

Delimitations

Delimitations of this study, the boundaries of this research, include a small sample size of teacher participants: Phase 1 included 20 Experienced Teachers, six from Montana and 14 from Alaska. Phase 2 included nine participating teachers, eight ECTs from Alaska and one experienced teacher new to the study from Montana. Phase 2 intended to exclusively study ECTs, however, one participant in Phase 2 did not meet the ECT definition of being in her first or second year of instruction. Having such a small sample size in Phase 2 limits the generalizations that can be drawn from this study.

Phase 1 time for interviewing covered eight months in 2014, March through November, with six individuals from Montana, six individuals from Alaska, and two focus groups in Alaska—one consisting of two people, the other consisting of five teachers and one parent from an Alaska Native Charter School. Phase 2 time used by ECTs to implement CAC, review resources, and take a pre-post Inventory Checklist averaged 7.5 weeks.

Location of the study included two states, Alaska and Montana, with three distinct settings: urban, rural and village/community locales. While many similarities do exist between the two states and among the many settings, there are many differences as well.

Those interviewed in Phase 1 were hand-selected based on reputation as a proven and accomplished successful teacher using culture to deliver instruction. Their selection was solely based on reputation and word of mouth, with no other qualifying requirements.

Finally, in terms of scope, the study targets only select aspects of the problem statement. This research explored TTC, what does that look like in an American K–12 classroom? How does TTC contribute to student learning?

Assumptions

Assumptions include the experienced teachers interviewed were representative of the total population of teachers in Alaska and Montana who use culture to deliver instruction. Responses from the ECTs in Phase 2 accurately reflect their professional opinions after having completed the use of the provided CAC. Participants in Phase 1 and Phase 2 answered all interview questions openly and honestly.

Limitations

Limitations of the study include, as mentioned above, having a small sample size in Phase 2 results in a study lacking generalizability. Qualitative data is not generalizable in this study. The CAC focused upon only one of the emerging themes, Relationships, although four other themes were addressed to a lesser degree. Validating the theory of practice for TTC was limited.

Organization of the Remaining Chapters

In chapter 1, having already 1) introduced the reader to this mixed-methods research topic on culture in education, and 2) stated the problem of discovering and defining exactly what it means to teach through culture, and 3) having discussed the professional significance for conducting such a study, this paper will now present the literature supporting the use of culture to deliver K–12 classroom instruction (chapter 2); the research methodology used for this two-phase participatory action study and the data—both qualitative and quantitative—gathered in

Phase 1 and Phase 2 (chapter 3); the analysis and results of said data (chapter 4); as well as a discussion about implications from the research findings and future studies and/or proposed next steps (chapter 5). By the time the reader reaches the final page of this study, the primary research question will have been addressed and there will be more clarity on what it means to teach through culture as a *foundational* step for building teacher-student relationships resulting in a learning environment where critical thinking can occur.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction to the Literature Review

> Finally, I find that brown face of hope.
> He tells me the song—the sounds the marks make.
> I jump up and down singing it. I shout and laugh like when I was
> baptized in the creek. I have jumped into another world and I am saved.
> —Marie Bradby, *More Than Anything Else*

Literate in the ways of the world, young Booker T. Washington wants to move into the world of the word by learning to read and write. *More Than Anything Else,* Bradby's (1995) picture book novel about the young life of Booker T. Washington, describes how Washington, at age nine, worked the salt mines with his older brother and father from sun up to sun down. More than anything else he wanted to learn to read. His personal epistemology reflected the worldview of a generation of slaves, who had gained knowledge in a very different manner from the slave owners. Nine-year-old Washington reflected on his desire to read, asked questions to locate the fellow brown-skinned teacher man, and once found, took action to learn to read. Through a problem-posed constructivist educational model, 9-year-old Booker *reflected*, asked *questions*, and took *action* to learn to read.

Paulo Freire, often referred to as the father of critical pedagogy, (Freire, 2000) described the problem-posed education framework as a cycle of reflection-question-action to prompt learning. Dialogue about a problem, prompts questioning and critical thinking. Ultimately students act as teachers while teachers act as students, and together, collaboratively, learning occurs by both teacher and student. The problem-posed cycle of learning is similar to many indigenous people's ways of knowing and learning, and as a natural learning process can shed light on this study. The problem-posed cycle of learning also frames this two-phase research design for solving the puzzle of how to teach through culture.

Freire contrasted this problem-posed education framework with the *banking* education method found in many western classrooms. In the banking model, Freire (2000) claimed teachers ‘deposit’ lectures and information into the heads of their students, whereas in the problem-posed model, students observe, think critically, question, and construct their own understanding.

This literature review aims to examine existing literature on educational models and culture in the American classroom to gain insight into this study’s primary research question, what does TTC look like in a typical K–12 classroom? The chapter starts by exploring Freire’s problem-posed cycle of education, since this model forms the theoretical underpinnings of this study. Two additional frameworks of education, western and indigenous, are explored through literature on culture in American schools. In particular, research on the importance of using culture in education is described. Finally, the characteristics of and choices made by quality teachers who are experts in TTC are presented as a guide to address this study’s research question.

Today’s American student population requires teachers skilled in creating environments for diverse learners, in a variety of classroom settings that connect content to differing unique backgrounds so that all students can think critically, learn, and grow. The availability of quality teachers skilled in TTC is key to meeting this challenge. This review of literature, therefore, examines exactly what goes into the making of a quality teacher, one skilled in TTC.

This review covers theoretical and empirical literature treating multiple issues related to culture in education: 1) What does it mean to use culture in education; 2) How has culture in education evolved over time in America; 3) Why is it important to use culture in education; and

4) Who qualifies as a teacher skilled in TTC and what exactly does this person do when delivering instruction in a K–12 American classroom setting?

Organization of Literature Review Chapter

This literature review begins by restating the definition of culture introduced in chapter 1, followed by a brief examination of colonization and Native self-determination in public policy and education. Next, indigenous ways of knowing are contrasted with western ways of teaching. Culturally responsive pedagogy, a more recent, related theoretical construct, is also explored.

Next, this chapter follows the evolution of culture in American schools, surveying in greater detail the three cultural models introduced in chapter 1: deficit, difference, and asset models of education. The review investigates why it is important to use culture in education in order to create safe learning environments that foster climates of critical pedagogy in order to bring about equity and social justice in American classrooms so that all students can succeed. Diversity in America is briefly covered to further support the need for TTC.

Finally, the review concludes by exploring literature that directly relates to the study's research question, including research describing choices made by quality teachers who use culture in the classroom and research identifying best practices utilized by teachers when TTC.

Culture in Education

For purposes of this literature review, the definition of culture offered in the first chapter is used throughout: Culture includes one's background experiences and cognitive funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2005) gained since birth, together with Gurung's (2009) suggested dynamic, ever-changing ethnic "set of goals, beliefs, and attitudes shared by a group of people" (p. 12), which originate from the values and norms of one's heritage. A natural starting point for an examination of education across diverse cultural groups in America is the colonization of

North America, when European settlers first came into contact with the Natives inhabiting the continent of North America.

Colonization

Historically, colonization of any geographical area, has often been accompanied by an imported foreign method of education forced upon the conquered, displaced indigenous people. As European settlers spread across North America, not only did they confiscate land and displace indigenous people, colonists also replaced the indigenous ways of knowing (similar to Freire's problem-posed framework) by imposing a western way of teaching that was as deadly to Native Americans as were the measles. Through assimilation strategies delivered through harsh boarding schools and western educational methodologies, including what Freire calls the "banking" model for depositing data, Natives began to lose touch with their cultural heritage, language, and background experiences. For more than 150 years, America was known for its colonizing attempts, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other federally-funded programs, aiming to eliminate indigenous peoples, their languages, histories, and ways of knowing. Less than 50 years ago, the United States returned the control of education of Native people to tribal governments through the Self-Determination and Education Act of 1975. President Nixon (1970) addressed the issue of self-determination at his July 1970 Special Message to Congress on Indian Affairs:

> It is long past time that the Indian policies of the Federal government began to recognize and build upon the capacities and insights of the Indian people. Both as a matter of Justice and as a matter of enlightened social policy, we must begin to act on the basis of what the Indians themselves have long been telling us. The time has come to break decisively with the past and to create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions. (p. 565)

Self-Determination and Education Act of 1975

The 1975 Act allowed for Native Americans to influence educational decisions in order to "create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions" (Nixon, 1970). Many U.S. tribes have worked to return to an educational structure that celebrates their history and returns to their roots, their origins, and includes their indigenous ways of knowing. Nixon (1970) enacted the Self-Determination Act "both as a matter of Justice and as a matter of enlightened social policy," two policy objectives which still guide educational goals in the current day.

In Montana, during a 1972 Constitutional Convention, two young Indian students representing student groups of the Fort Peck Reservation asked the all non-Native delegates what the Convention could do to assure them they would have the opportunity to study their own culture, language, and to develop a real feeling of pride in themselves for their own heritage and culture (Carjuzaa, 2010). They wanted all students in Montana to recognize the importance and the dignity of American Indians in the life of Montana. As a result, the delegates responded formally by adding language to the state's constitution in Article X, Section 1(2) pledging, "The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity" (Indian Education for All Act of 1999). The addition of this language to the state Constitution was just the start. It took 38 years to reach fruition, and since 2015 said Act continues to evolve each academic year.

> Now a funded reality, this audacious legislation incorporates the teaching of American Indian cultures and histories in the statutory definition of a quality education serving as a model for all educators dedicated to embracing American ideals of social justice and educational equity. (Carjuzaa, 2010, pp. 192–198)

A goal of this Montana law is to do just that, embrace the "…American ideals of social justice and educational equity."

Following the passage of the Self-Determination Act and Education Act in 1975, Alaska Native populations began to exercise greater autonomy in their own education. Chapter 1 introduced two resources unique to Alaska: *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* (Appendix A) and *Culture in the Classroom* (Appendix B). In 1998 Alaska Natives from five distinct cultural state regions came together to create *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* in order to provide a template against which schools and communities can examine the extent to which they are attending to the educational and cultural well-being of their students and preparing them to make a life for themselves (Barnhardt, 2011). More than a decade later, in April 2012, a *Guide to Implementing the Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators* was created by many of the original authors of the cultural standards to give teachers a clear picture of what each of these standards means so teachers could self-reflect on their own use of the Cultural Standards for Educators. In the following year, the Alaska State Department of Education & Early Development put districts on notice that these cultural standards would be included in the teacher evaluation models soon to be implemented in Alaska. Currently, teachers in Alaska are held accountable for TTC, not simply *about* culture. Both Montana and Alaska have drafted legislation to allow for the development of an educational model that embraces indigenous ways of knowing and values the history and culture of its Native people.

Culture in the Classroom, (Appendix B), another resource unique to Alaska yet available across the nation through Amazon.com, was created in response to the new Alaska teacher evaluation requirements for teachers to address four of the five Alaskan cultural standards in addition to the state's eight teaching standards. *Culture in the Classroom* takes four of the five

Alaska's Culture Standards A, B, D and E and for each: 1) Begins by writing the standard exactly as written in the *Guide*, 2) Describes its purpose; 3) Provides a focus statement; 4) Provides the desired outcome; 5) States each of the sub-elements (cultural indicators) of each standard in different language from the *Guide* and places a star by those cultural indicators that can be observed in the classroom; 6) Provides a reflection question for each of the sub-elements in order to facilitate an educator's thoughtful approach to the sub-element; 7) Offers, examples of planning for non-observable elements as an alternate way to show evidence; and 8) Provides examples of both student and educator behaviors for observable elements.

Culture in the Classroom, describes the transferability of Alaska's *Guide* content to all indigenous students in our nation, including the diversity found within most urban areas. Together, the two uniquely Alaskan resources provide guidance, content, direction and the framework needed for TTC that could be applied outside of the Alaskan context.

Beyond the U.S., a parallel movement to return indigenous culture to education can also be found. Marie Battiste, (Madjidi & Restoule, 2008), a member of the Potlotek First Nation in Nova Scotia, Canada, shares insights for Canada's indigenous ways of knowing.

> Mi'kmaq scholar Marie Battiste describes indigenous epistemology as theories, philosophies, histories, ceremonies, and stories as ways of knowing. She offers the following commonly used understanding of indigenous knowledge: "Indigenous knowledge comprises all knowledge pertaining to a particular people and its territory, the nature or use of which has been transmitted from generation to generation" (p. 80).

And, further, on the western borders of Canada, in Yukon Territory and Northwest Territory, a study (Lewthwaite, 2014) about culturally responsive teaching in Canada finds,

> Motivated by the tenor of SGAs [Self-Government Agreements] to work towards education practice more responsive to the Yukon's 14 First Nations, "culture-based education" has been more recently endorsed by YE [Yukon Education] and its Education Act as one of the foundational principles for school development in the Yukon. (p. 2)

Coincidentally, the Classroom Teaching Inventory used as a tool in this Canadian study was slightly modified and adjusted, with author's permission, for use in Phase 2 of this research, as the Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI).

Imposing western ways of teaching upon indigenous people was not limited to the colonization of the North American indigenous people. One Australian researcher (Brady, 1992) shares:

> My ancestors had in place systems of education, cultural practice and maintenance, spirituality and social cohesion which sustained them for 40,000 years. After 208 years of colonization we are left with a legacy of grief, dispossession, and struggle for survival. I believe that it is time we empowered ourselves to take back our education so that we can move with pride into our next 40,000 years. (p. 421)

For 40,000 years indigenous Australians educated their own through "cultural practices and maintenance, spirituality and social cohesion." That is an impressive record of success, one that includes "social" cohesion and surely warrants an attempt to recapture the process and replicate it in educational systems everywhere, not just Australia.

To summarize, colonization of indigenous people included foreign educational models that contributed to the degradation of Native values, norms, culture, and indigenous ways of knowing. For the most recent 50 years in America, Native people have been taking back control of the educational models schooling their members. This movement continues today. Montana's

Indian Education for All is the law. Educators in that state are continually receiving professional development in order to Teach Through Culture, and the resources available for classroom use are readily accessible. In Alaska today, 2018, through the statewide Alaska's Education Challenge, there exists a committee for Tribal and Community Ownership, so that indigenous ways of knowing has a permanent voice at the Alaska table for educational decision-making influencing Alaska Natives.

Western Ways of Teaching Compared With Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Freire refers to the western way of teaching as the "banking" model of education where teachers "deposit" information into the heads of students through lectures and talk. Madjidi, (Mundy, Bickmore, Hayhoe, Madden & Madjidi, 2008) when comparing indigenous ways of knowing and learning, would agree:

> …vast differences exist between Western models of schooling and Indigenous ways of knowing. Further, attempts to eradicate Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing and to assimilate them in Western systems have resulted largely in failure in those school systems and in severe negative impacts on those peoples. (p.97)

One way to explore Western ways of teaching-learning is by comparison with indigenous ways of teaching-learning. Chapter 4 by Madjidi and Restoule's *Comparative and International Education: Issues for Teachers* (Mundy et al., 2008) examines Western (mainstream) and indigenous (locally contextual) worldviews:

> Epistemology, from a Western standpoint, is the theory of knowledge, and pedagogy, the processes by which people come to learn or know. The essential conflict between Indigenous and imported educational systems arises, as Fandra Lea Masemann describes, "from a basic epistemological difference in the path to knowledge itself; that is, a basic

> disagreement about how people come to know what they know and why they believe it to be true…
>
> Western educational models…generally include formal school settings, age-graded classrooms, separation of learning into disciplines, belief in a linear and objective pursuit of truth, and a focus on literacy, numeracy, and science as primary areas for basic education. (p. 79)

When comparing Western and indigenous epistemologies, it is common to include binary classifications such as linear versus cyclical, objective versus subjective, secular versus spiritual, industrial versus nature, and context-based/fragmentary versus holistic. Yet a deeper examination of how knowledge is actually transmitted under each method may prove more revealing. Indigenous context, world-view, pedagogy, and even the role of the teacher vary from prevailing Western models. In contrast with Western teaching methods, indigenous ways of knowing emphasize connection to place; they deemphasize the role of man; and they rely more heavily on an oral tradition and experiential learning; and the teacher is rarely a formal authority figure, as is typical in Western models (Mundy et al., 2008).

For indigenous people, knowledge is firmly grounded in a particular sense of place. Indigenous education is about learning relationships in context with the importance of place as the basis for indigenous spirituality and knowledge. So, when indigenous people are confined in Western school buildings to learn, separate from their traditional land, this decontextualizes their learning and disconnects learners from their base of experience (Mundy et al., 2008). Think about this sense of place from the perspective of the Native student displaced from home and village, forced into a boarding school, and it is easy to grasp the challenges presented for learning. Place matters.

Western, monotheistic, and religious perspectives place “man” as dominant over all Creation. In contrast, many indigenous nations view humans as the last beings to be created, therefore, the most humble in relation to the natural world (Mundy et al., 2008). Western worldview differs greatly from indigenous worldview, resulting in contrasting approaches to education as well as challenges to indigenous learners. One’s worldview matters.

Another difference between indigenous and Western modes of education is primarily oral versus literate (written) values. Indigenous peoples place great emphasis on the oral transmission of knowledge through storytelling, while Western cultures often use storytelling as an activity to entertain young children (Mundy et al., 2008). Yup’ik Eskimo Elder Paul John (John, 2003) provides an example:

> Whenever a fellow Yup’ik did something noteworthy, just like the newspapers, they used to pass it on from one person to another, even though it was not written down. When one of these people finally got to another village, they would tell stories about what a person had done, and someone would relate the same story in another village over yonder, relating how they were full of wonder about what he did. That story went on and on without stopping. It would go up the Kuskokwim and down to Bristol Bay, and it went north through the Yukon and continued up north. This was in the old days when people did things to be proud of, when they hunted and did things to the point where other people were filled with marvel. (p. iii)

Storytelling is one indigenous way of teaching. Equally important to indigenous pedagogy are the various modes of experiential learning, such as modeling, observation, in-context learning, apprenticeships, and games as methods for learning by doing (Mundy et al., 2008).

There are some essentials for indigenous ways of knowing-teaching: Having context and connections for learning, language is central to cultural worldviews, cadence of speech translates to wait time, reflective thinking before talking as well as sacred cultural practices.

> Educational philosophy in contemporary [Western] education has focused on information to the masses, leading to standardized tests … and those who can extract information are called educated and intelligent. What this approach ignores is the knowledge that comes from introspection, reflection, meditation, prayer, and other kinds of self-directed learning. (Mundy et al., 2008, p. 87)

Strategies for teaching matter.

From whom do people learn in both models? The role of the teacher also varies. In Western educational models, the authority of those who confer knowledge is clearly established and these people are known as certified teachers. In an indigenous educational model the teacher is more layered. As indigenous knowledge is frequently grounded in the land, Mother Earth is often considered the supreme teacher. Equally important is the spirit world including all Creation and ancestors who have passed on, as well as all animate beings. In indigenous epistemology, the self is the ultimate teacher (Mundy et al., 2008), which aligns closely with Freire's problem-posed education model of reflection-question-action. Teachers matter.

Mundy also asked, how can indigenous and Western ways of knowing-learning be combined in ways that allow all students to learn? Mundy discusses teaching in ways that value every learning style in the medicine wheel: the spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental. For each topic, a teacher must find a way to intuit, feel, act, and think about it. Mundy et al., (2008) thus hinted at what TTC in the K–12 classroom might look like.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (at times referred to herein as culturally relevant) emerged in the early 1990s. Culturally Responsive/Relevant (CR) instruction teaches diverse student populations in ways that connect the content to the student in order for students to learn. A CR educator teaches through the culture, not merely about the culture, such as important holidays, and heroes (although history, holidays, and heroes can lend themselves to enriching the content). Ladson-Billings (2009) suggested that culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Hollie (2012) added, "Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy is not a curriculum and does not come in a box. It is an approach—a way of thinking about how to instruct and how to create an instructional experience for the students that validates, affirms, illuminates, inspires, and motivates" (p. 47). Gay (2010) posited that culturally responsive pedagogy validates, facilitates, liberates, and empowers ethnically diverse students by simultaneously cultivating their cultural integrity, individual abilities, and academic success. Culturally responsive pedagogical practices allow educators to incorporate indigenous ways of knowing. Culturally Responsive/Relevant pedagogy is not new, educators have been studying and researching using culture in education for decades. Culture matters.

Evolution of Cultural Models in Education in America

In chapter 1 of this study, four categories of cultural models in education were introduced. This literature review will now add detail to each of the four models: Deficit/ Deprivation, Difference, Asset, and a proposed new category of Value-Added.

Cultural Deficit/Deprivation Model

Up through the 1960s, students arriving at school from culturally different homes were considered deficient or lacking in the knowledge necessary to succeed in an American public classroom. The prevailing view of culture in the classroom was known as the *cultural-deficit-deprivation* model of thinking (Irizarry, 2009). Banks (2012) stated that cultural deprivation theories and researchers argue that students from low-income and marginalized cultures do not do well in school because of deficits within their home and community cultures. Pang (2005) suggested deficit theory is a belief that students from under-represented groups come with cultures and languages that place them at risk of failing in school; intellectual inferiority is often part of the belief linking cultural differences with cultural deficiency. For an indigenous student in the 1960s in a classroom, his or her background, funds of knowledge, and lack of English-speaking ability put him or her at an instant disadvantage under the deficit model of culture in not only the mind of your teacher but in the model of education. Such a climate captures the essence of the deficit model and expectations for learning would be very low.

Cultural *Difference* Model

In the 1970s and 1980s, pioneers such as Ramirez and Castaneda (1974), Edmonds (1986), and Boykin (1986) constructed the cultural difference paradigm to counter the cultural deficit or deprivation model. The focus became difference, not deficit. One cultural difference study (Carlone & Johnson, 2012) followed a student, Julio, over time. In 4th grade, one of Julio's teachers, teaching under the cultural *difference* paradigm, drew on and celebrated practices that were consistent with Latino cultural values, norms, and practices. Julio was successful. Later, when a *deficit* model teacher also taught Julio, he no longer excelled as he had in 4th grade science, instead Julio was now struggling to stay current in science. This illustrates a teacher's expectations for the student coming true; the student performed as the teacher expected. The collaborative teacher-as-learner perspective also contributed to the child's success in the shift from deficit to difference. In the difference model, teachers were learning from students while students were teaching, creating, a reciprocal learning environment mirroring indigenous ways of knowing.

Cultural Asset Model

One of the early theorists proposing a cultural asset model through culturally responsive (CR) teaching is Gloria Ladson-Billings, an African-American educator who conducted a study to determine why African-American students were performing less well than their White counterparts. Ladson-Billings coined the term "culturally-relevant," and her research is credited as creating the original asset model/pedagogy of using culture to teach. Since that time in the early 1990s, many research projects and educators through their own work have since produced evidence showing the importance of the Asset Model for using culture in the classroom. Moll et al. (2005) defined these assets as "Funds of Knowledge," and,

> challenged the status quo by asserting that local knowledge has a legitimate place in our educational institutions for both our students and our pedagogical knowledge as teachers. We also say that no matter what background our students have, there is knowledge in their homes that can be tapped into and used in the classroom. (p. 132)

Teaching through culture emerged alongside the asset model of culture. In TTC, teaching strategies and curricular multicultural resources become essential pieces. For example, *Beyond Heroes & Holidays* (Lee, Menkart, Okazawa-Rey, 1998) comes in handy. This text goes beyond having multicultural resources available, and provides resources that teach about different cultures, and explains how teachers need a much deeper understanding and mindset about TTC.

Using multicultural instructional strategies, activities, and resources is important, as is connecting student backgrounds and culture to the content, building individual relationships with students to build mutual respect, collaboration and reciprocity, as well as recognizing teacher as learner and student as teacher. Each of these elements, to list but a few, contributes to what it means to teach through culture, and each informs the responses to this study's primary research question.

Others who have contributed greatly to the asset model of TTC include Geneva Gay and James Banks. In the forward to Gay's *Culturally Responsive Teaching, Theory, Research, and Practice*, (2010) Banks stated:

> Scholars have constructed a theory of culturally responsive teaching (also called culturally *sensitive* pedagogy) that gives hope and guidance to educators who are trying to improve the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social-class groups. (p.ix)

Viewing culture as an asset to teach was conceived as a way for supporting and validating diverse student populations in their individual academic achievement as well as individual learning styles and to prepare these diverse learners for success in life. The prevailing view on culture has evolved from a deficit model where it was believed students of color lacked the necessary literacy skills and the intellect to learn, to a difference model which emphasized positive perspectives about differing cultures, and finally landing upon an asset model of looking at culture and diversity in educational models of instruction as a student strength.

Proposed Cultural *Value-Added* Model

Today's thinking and the findings from this study strongly suggest the use of culture in education is moving toward a new theory of practice called TTC. Evidenced by descriptions of classroom practices and views toward culture, educators are beginning to look through the lens and worldview of culture and diversity as value-added, where recognition of speaking multiple languages, experiencing indigenous ways of knowing, as well as being grounded in one's own culture are more than an asset and in fact are value-added attributes. The proposed paradigm resulting from this study strengthens the notion of using culture in education, making culture an integral piece of any educational model. Culture becomes an essential piece of quality classroom practices. Teachers learn from their students and as a result, students learn from their teachers.

Returning to Freire's (2005) early work on critical pedagogy as it influences equity and social justice, there appears to be support for the results of this study, and the emerging value-added TTC theory:

> [T]o the humility with which teachers perform and relate to their students another quality needs to be added: *lovingness*, without which their work would lose its meaning. And here I mean lovingness not only toward the students but also toward the very process of teaching. (p.40)

Valuing diversity, culture and indigenous ways of knowing matters.

From a culturally deficit-deprivation model of the 1960s, to the culturally difference paradigm of the 1970s-80s, to the culturally responsive theory of the1990s, each decade has moved closer to a more culturally value-added focus, keeping the learner at the center of the instruction, and returning closer and closer to original indigenous ways of knowing. Today, 2018, as educators across the United States attempt to articulate, describe, refine, and capture exactly what TTC looks like in the classroom, one purpose for this shift towards a value-added theory, identified both in the literature and by this study, is the role of equity and social justice. Equity and social justice, as this literature review showed earlier through Nixon and the acts of the Montana legislature, are frequently cited as reasons for embedding TTC into a nation's model of education. Freire's hopes and dreams for elevating the oppressed through critical thinking to achieve their highest potential and live in a society that is just and equitable is closer to realization because of culture and by teaching through culture. Culture matters.

Why It Is Important to Use Culture in Education

American education needs to incorporate indigenous ways of knowing in order to connect content and lessons to all learners. Just as Freire proposes in his critical pedagogy framework, people learn only if able to think critically, and culture can help to create safe environments and welcoming climates where thinking and learning can occur, making culture in education essential. Those safe thinking environments can then contribute to the establishment of equity and social justice, providing yet another reason for using culture in education. A third reason for using culture in education would be to teach content in ways that meet the unique needs presented by diversity in America—differentiation of instruction at its best. Using only a western perspective for educating our worldwide youth does not value diversity and unique background perspectives coming to America to learn. Respect and validation of the individual matter.

Critical Pedagogy

Freire's teachings have come to be known as critical pedagogy, the first response above for why it is important to use culture in education. Critical pedagogy is defined by Giroux (2011) as an educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect this knowledge as a foundation for taking constructive action (p. 21). When Freire (2000) wrote the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* he presented a critical literacy issue, that of getting students to think critically beyond their reading-writing literacy skills. Thinking critically throughout one's educational years is required for learning to occur. According to Freire, thinking, dialoguing, and taking action are required to bring about equity and social justice in one's life. Discovering how to foster environments and climates that support critical thinking might help answer the research question posed by this study. Teaching is much more than simply delivering content. To this end, Paul Freire, considered by many to be the Father of Critical Pedagogy, began his instruction from the starting point of his learners:

> [Freire] …foregrounds student understanding of the task they collaboratively engage in, and if he exhorts them to be critical of their reality, of the institutions and practices which shape it, it is always to enable them, as learners, to emerge from "the culture of silence." (Freire, 2005; Foreword to 2nd ed. by Margaret Meek, p.viii)

Freire wanted his students talking. Freire believed in meeting the student where s/he is and then guiding that student to ask questions, to critically challenge the lessons, and to not remain silent. For it is through the critical thinking and dialogue that the lower classes—the oppressed—can free their hands and grasp the world. Teaching from the starting point of student knowledge is key. Freire puts it this way (Freire & Macedo, 1987):

> The act of learning to read and write has to start from a very comprehensive understanding of the act of reading the world, something which human beings do before reading the words. Even historically, human beings first changed the world, secondly proclaimed the world, and then wrote the words. These are moments of history. Human beings did not start naming A? F? N? They started by freeing the hand, grasping the world. (p. xiii)

Freire believed he was as much a learner of his students as a teacher of literacy, and in this learning role it was his duty to begin instruction from a collaborative stance using all the knowledge brought to the table by the student. Supporting the student with dialogue and questions in the problem-posed model helped learners think critically, in ways that brought about change and improvement to their life's circumstances, transformative. Teaching the literacy skills of reading and writing the word, for Freire, became the vehicle for the oppressed (students) to become involved in their own destinies by thinking critically in order to influence and change their world and circumstances. Little Booker, in the first paragraph of this literature review, directed the question-and-answer process which took him from reading the world, that of mining salt with his father and brother, his first literacy, to reading the word, another type of literacy.

Another researcher subscribing to Freire's problem-posed educational model can be found in the *Funds of Knowledge* study where Moll (Moll et al., 2005) states:

> Further analysis of how information is transmitted to children in U.S.-Mexican households suggests that such knowledge is passed on through culturally constituted methods, that these methods have emotive implications for the self-esteem of children, and that they are possible sources of cultural conflict in the schools…
>
> Although adults may manifest specific portions of a fund, the organization of learning is in the hands of the children themselves. Children are expected to ask questions during the performance of household tasks. Thus, the question-and-answer process is directed by the child rather than by the adult. (p.61)

Moll supports the notion that world knowledge is a type of literacy, a literacy Moll has dubbed a household's (student's) funds of knowledge. And in gaining this funds-of-knowledge experience, students reflect, question, and take action, mimicking Freire's problem-posed educational model. In Mount-Cors et al., (2006) where Lopez articulates Moll's funds of knowledge as gaining a literacy of the world, a literacy such as Freire suggests, and one that does not necessarily mean reading and writing:

> *Funds of Knowledge* is used to refer to the historically accumulated and Culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being (Moll, 2001, p. 133). When teachers shed their role of teacher and expert and, instead, take on a new role as learner, they can come to know their students and the families of their students in new and distinct ways. With this new knowledge, they can begin to see that the households of their students contain rich cultural and cognitive resources and that these resources can and should be used in their classroom in order to provide culturally responsive and meaningful lessons that tap students' prior knowledge. Information that teachers learn about their students in this process is considered the students' funds of knowledge. (Lopez 2.1 online retrieval through Mount-Cors)

Drawing on Freire's critical pedagogy of supporting the oppressed to empower thinking that enables voices to be heard as a power within the world, together with Moll's funds of knowledge, an approach for moving closer to equity and social justice goals begins to take shape.

Equity and Social Justice

Equity and social justice goals in education inform many of the culturally responsive strategies and methods found to be vital for creating classroom climates where students learn. These overlapping goals are broad, aiming to target all categories of learners from the ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse to those of different genders and sexual orientation as well as all student populations with individualized education plans including the gifted and exceptional learner. This newest advancement of "student" responsive teaching practices includes culture as key yet looks beyond, including emotional learning and the affective side of the learner, as well as justice and equity for all. In the first edition of *Rethinking our Classrooms, Volume 1* (Au, Bigelow & Karp, 2007), the editors outline the characteristics of several interlocking educational components that together comprise what they call a social justice classroom. As one reads through the list, it is easy to note the similarities to what the literature has revealed about TTC. A social justice classroom contains certain educational characteristics: 1) Grounded in the lives of students, 2) Critical thinking skills, 3) Multicultural-anti-racist-pro-justice, 4) Participatory/ experiential, 5) Hopeful-joyful-kind-visionary, 6) Activist, 7) Academically rigorous, and 8) Culturally sensitive (p. xi).

Practitioners of equity and social justice educational strategies claim to embrace all characteristics and attributes of the whole child mindset, centering the instruction upon the diverse needs of all learners coming into the American classroom, needs which include addressing and valuing the many cultures from which these students come. Such educational strategies mirror those of TTC—a strong correlation of best practices in the classroom aligns equity and social justice classrooms with TTC classrooms. Kaur (2012), reviewed 130 of 300 articles from around the world looking for patterns and trends revealing how schools could be made to work effectively and equitably for all learners in ever more diverse classrooms. Based on Kaur's analysis, seven overlapping categories emerged: 1) Culturally responsive pedagogy, 2) multicultural education in practice, 3) anti-racist education/differential treatment, 4) inclusive education, 5) teacher beliefs/attitudes/conceptions, 6) overarching/macro perspectives, and 7) articles with explicit emphasis on social justice and or equity in their titles or key terms.

The teacher, too, is an essential piece of this teaching-through-culture paradigm. In nearly all of the 20+ articles cited, a common theme emerged: role of teacher—teacher self-reflection, teacher beliefs/attitudes/perceptions influence their work, teacher-student relationships, and teacher awareness of diversity issues. Teacher is key for all student learning. Furthermore, finding qualified teachers with the necessary background knowledge and experience is not always a simple thing to do (Gomez, 1994). "A significant finding from the studies taken together was that 'changing teachers' perspectives on diverse *Others* is a long and labor-intensive process" (p. 326). Kaur's findings underscore the importance of reviewing the literature on equity and social justice when it comes to America's educational practices and TTC. Kaur (2012) shared how cultural/racial difference between student and teacher was the most common theme found in his review of these 130 articles.

Quality teachers share a number of characteristics, as Milner's (2008) research revealed in *Teaching and Teacher Education*:

> Successful teachers in urban schools envision life beyond their present situations: come to know themselves culturally, linguistically, gendered, racially, economically, and socially in relation to others; speak possibility and not destruction both inside and outside of the classroom regarding their students; care and demonstrate that care; and change their negative, deficit, counterproductive thinking in order to change their actions in the classroom with students. (p.1574)

Knowing that cultural and racial differences present a site of discrimination and inequity, it becomes essential to examine such cultural and racial diversity within the borders of the United States. The most recent U.S. census, 2010, reveals the United States as one of the most diverse nations in the world today. Placing that diversity in context for this literature review is key for addressing equity and social justice. Alaska's Anchorage Public Schools lead the nation in diversity (Tunseth, 2015).

Connect Content to Diverse Learners

The two states participating in this research are Alaska and Montana. It is worth restating from chapter 1 how, as of 2010, Anchorage's Mountain View neighborhood is the most diverse census tract in the entire United States.

Montana Public School racial/ethnic demographics for school year 2011-12 (Juneau, 2014) reveals of the approximate 150,000 students attending public schools, nearly 81% are White, and a majority of the remaining 19% is American Indian, with less than half of the diversity student populations being made up on Asian, Hispanic, Black, Pacific Islander and those students marking “more than one race.” Diversity by many different indigenous students in Montana is not exceptionally high on the one hand, less than 20%, however knowing that nearly a fifth of Montana’s public student population is American Indian certainly showcases the need for indigenous considerations in the structure of education in that state.

This trend of higher numbers of diverse student populations is not unique to Alaska or Montana. This pattern of increasing minority students exists across America. The United States has seen a rise in immigration in recent years. If current trends continue, by 2050 nearly half the U.S. population will be composed of today’s ‘minority groups (Pai, Adler & Shadiow 2006).

Today, immigrants are entering America through every one of the 50 states and from everywhere on the globe speaking many languages: Arabic, Burmese, Hmong, Nepali, Samoan, Somali, and Tagalog to name a few. The Anchorage School District’s home page on its website includes a drop-down menu allowing for the selection and translation of much of the website into more than 100 languages, exemplifying the meeting of unique needs of diverse student learners by communicating in the first languages of the families. As an urban area designated as containing 29 of the 38 most diverse schools in our nation, Anchorage has much to offer by way of lessons learned when serving so many different cultures within its student population.

Americans' lack of global awareness and frequent ill-informed knowledge about these diverse groups lead Americans, including many educators, to group all immigrants under one category. The teaching force might be more homogenous, yet the student population is vastly diverse, coming from homes where language, culture, customs, and other social and economic markers define the spectrum of human difference (Shaklee & Bailey, 2012). It is essential for America's teaching force to be knowledgeable about the diversity in its student population.

> In 2007, 44 percent of students were children from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds with 10.8 million children coming from homes where a language other than English is spoken. In addition, 46 percent of all fourth-graders were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (Saifer, Edwards, Ellis, Ko & Stuczynski, 2011 (Planty et al., 2009a, 2009b,) p. vii-viii).

In 2008 the approximate number of long-term English learners (LT-ELs) was about 6 million, and in 2009 about 8 million (Calderon & Minaya-Rowe, 2011). And in 2010, the trend for increased diversity in the United States continued. All in all, minorities, now 37 percent of the U.S. population, are projected to comprise 57 percent of the population in 2060 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2012). From 44% diversity in the United States during 2007 to 57% projected for 2060, it is clear the United States educational model needs to address diversity when delivering instruction if there is to be critical thinking taking place alongside equity and social justice in the typical American classroom.

Academic performance by diverse populations. Diverse students' academic track record has historically trailed that of the predominant culture. Geneva Gay (2010) claimed that too many students of color have not been achieving in school as well as they should (and can) for far too long and she goes on to suggest that cultural diversity should be viewed as a strength —a persistent, vitalizing force in our personal and civic lives which should be used as a resource for improving educational effectiveness for all students. Looking at Anchorage's 29 most diverse high, middle, and elementary schools as one example of student achievement these 29 schools show limited English proficient students trailing in reading, writing, math, and science according to state-wide standards-based test results compiled by the U.A.A. Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (AEPR) in 2011 (Center for Alaska Education Policy Research, 2011).

While Anchorage may boast teaching today's national diverse student population, historically its public schools are failing those students speaking English as a second language. If this trend is to change, a closer examination of what works when teaching diverse populations needs to be explored. One starting point is to examine and review what the literature says does work when working with indigenous populations and see if those methods hold promise for the classroom teacher working with diverse student populations.

Ladson-Billings (2009) showed that what matters most is a teacher's efforts to work with the unique strengths a child brings to the classroom. Think "Teacher as Learner"; one might call these strengths, the child's funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2005). The teachers in Ladson-Billing's participatory study pushed students to make connections between students' in-school lives and their out-of-school experiences (p. xi). Connections by teachers to a student's funds of knowledge and individual cultures were essential for student learning to occur. Ladson-Billing's culturally-relevant terminology set the bar for others to follow, including Phuntsog's (1999) exploration of cultural instruction to improve academic achievement of diverse student populations.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) legislation further brought to light the achievement gap between students of color and their White classmates. Recent research confirms little changed academically among diverse populations as a result of NCLB (Reardon, Greenberg, Kalogrides, Shores & Valentino, 2013). Laws, mandates, and content standards, despite how well intended, have little impact if educators are not gaining the skills and knowledge for *how* to change their own classroom practices to better meet the needs of their increasingly diverse student populations and address the laws being passed.

This TTC movement is about using cultural assets and student backgrounds to improve instructional practices in the classroom, and teaching teachers how to use culture and students' funds of knowledge to connect content to student backgrounds. Educators must learn how to deliver classroom instruction and connect content to student backgrounds in ways that meet the unique needs of diverse student populations; what does that practice look like? TTC embodies helping students think, learn, and be successful in life in order to become good human beings.

Qualities of Educators Who Teach Through Culture

The literature, when brought together as a mixture of ideas, trends, findings, and recommendations, reveals at least eight factors that are key for educators to deliver quality instruction by TTC: 1) Building relationships, 2) Knowing your students, parents and community, 3) Creating a caring environment, 4) Validating and respecting the cultures and backgrounds of the students, 5) Using rigorous, place-based and culturally relevant curriculum, 6) Employing and knowing teaching strategies and activities proven to work with diverse student populations, 7) Having high expectations for all students, and 8) Becoming a life-long learner.

1. Building relationships. One of the teachers in the Ladson-Billings study often reversed teacher-student roles in her classroom. Her students are used to seeing the teacher in the role of student and themselves in the role of teacher and they seem comfortable with this role reversal; the teacher defines her relationship with the students as that of an extended family

(Ladson-Billings, 2009). All of the culturally responsive teachers from the Ladson-Billings study provide examples of relationship-building outside the boundaries of the classroom: Sunday School, Girl Scout, weekly meals with the teacher, and other innovative student-centered activities. All of the outside relationship-building activities foster family connections as well, as parent approval must be first obtained before the activities outside the classroom can take place.

2. Knowing your students, parents, and community. In order to address the diverse cultural needs of each student, a teacher must understand each student's parents, caregiver, and community. Moll's funds of knowledge research demonstrated how teachers came to understand the wealth of information and knowledge each student brought to school simply from living within an extended family lifestyle. The Anchorage School District facilitates its teachers' ability to know their families better by providing translation of its district website as well as making available translators for many of the nearly 100 languages found within that one school district.

3. Creating a caring environment. This can best be summarized by referring back to Freire's statement addressing lovingness—of student and profession. From lovingness comes a caring environment, a climate that ensures each student sees him/herself within the classroom, and classroom values that include this year's students' own value system. Collaboration is the norm, respect for one another is obvious, and everyone feels welcome and safe. This caring, safe environment is key for learning to occur, and requires thoughtful planning and preparation by the teacher when collaborating with diverse student populations. Caring matters.

4. Validating and respecting the cultures and background of all students. First, teachers must know their own culture. Learning about cultural diversity, according to Ginsberg, must address more than simply understanding different beliefs, customs, and orientations that operate in the classroom. *Knowing* should include an understanding of the ways one's own values and biases have been shaped and the ways one can provide meaningful opportunities for learning that are not simply the repackaging or disguising of dominant perspectives (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000). The *Guide to Implementing the Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators* provides a roadmap for individual teachers or groups of teachers to self-assess one's own cultural knowledge using these cultural standards (Alaska Native Stakeholders, 2012). Oscar Kawagley, in *Alaska Native Education, Views from Within*, (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2010) states:

> I recently watched a television program titled *You Own Alaska* … the more I thought about it the more it grated on my worldview. How could anyone "own" Alaska? According to my ancestral traditions, the land owns me! Thus, began my reflections on how my Yupiaq worldview differs from that of the dominant society. (p. 76)

Montana's Indian Education for All has made available to teachers thousands of K–12 lessons across all subject areas to assist teachers in becoming familiar with the Native population of that state. Collaboration and reflection are required. As Freire (2000), among others, has suggested, teachers must become learners and students must become teachers. Educators must reflect, first upon their own worldviews, and then upon the worldviews of their students. Through careful examination of Indigenous ways of knowing together with Western ways of knowing, educators can validate and respect the cultures/worldviews of all. Listening and learning matters.

5. Using rigorous, place-based and culturally relevant curriculum. Cajete (1994), a Tewa from New Mexico, stated:

> When teachers examine culture, they need to look at the affective elements—the subjective experience and observations, the communal relationships, the artistic and mythical dimensions, the ritual and ceremony, the sacred ecology, the psychological and

> spiritual orientations—that have characterized and formed indigenous education since time immortal. (p. 20)

This examination of culture complete with all affective elements needs then to be infused into and connected to the curriculum. Furthermore, Tolbert's (2015) research showed how Maori student engagement and participation in secondary science classrooms were significantly improved through the use of culturally responsive conversations and considerations that helped novice and veteran science teachers draw upon issues of culture in order to enhance opportunities in the curriculum for all students to learn.

Culturally responsive instruction (CRI) requires teachers to use the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more relevant and meaningful for those students (Gay, 2010). CRI includes a variety of strategies designed to validate and respect one's heritage, community values, and belief systems. Connecting the curriculum, lessons, and new content to students' background makes learning relevant and meaningful, and assessments authentic. CRI engages students in actively gaining the knowledge being presented by building on what students already know through their life's experiences, background, and culture. Keeping rigor while differentiating instruction through culture matters.

6. Employing and knowing teaching strategies and activities proven to work with diverse student populations. Many researchers have made similar discoveries about using strategies that work with diverse student populations—these proven strategies are key to student success in learning. The data analysis in Phuntsog, 2001, clearly indicated that over 96% of the respondents (teachers) considered culturally responsive teaching to be an important part of working with culturally diverse students so having teachers believe in culturally responsive teaching matters, a mindset—belief in the practice of TTC is a first step to transforming one's classroom practice to include culture. According to Shaklee & Baily (2012), a critical aspect of successful intercultural teaching is to have consistent guidance and scaffolding to promote an understanding and appreciation for differences while expanding one's worldviews. Worldviews, epistemology, knowing how students know and adjusting or differentiating instruction accordingly, with consistent support, are all essential when TTC. Teachers must be learners of their students in order to become culturally responsive instructors for these same students.

7. Having high expectations for all students. Students rise to the expectations of their teachers—low expectations can result in low performance; high expectations can result in high performance, as witnessed by Julio and his progress under a *deficit* teacher as compared to his progress working with a *difference* teacher (Carlone & Johnson, 2012). An anonymous 6-year-old is frequently quoted as having said: My teacher thought I was smarter than I was so I was (Dweck, 2006). This is but one of many examples shared by Dweck in her growth mindset research on the importance of having high expectations and a positive mindset. That statement is as true for teachers as it is for the student. Having high expectations matters.

8. Becoming a life-long learner. This eighth requirement for becoming a culturally responsive instructor should perhaps be listed first, as all else in the classroom results from teachers: exploration, study, climate, environment, and learning. This literature review consistently emphasizes how teachers matter. Greet each year's classroom anew, with new student names, backgrounds, and cultures to learn. Stay current with the literature, research, and findings for what works and does not work in best practices for classroom instruction. Maintain a positive mindset. Teaching is a cycle. Practice what you learn, reflect upon the lessons, then ask questions, and take action. Remember Freire's problem-posed educational model with an eye towards liberating the student by helping him/her to move closer to equity and social justice in your classroom, student's neighborhood, your school district, your community, our world. Become a learner and empower your students to become the teacher. Teachers matter.

Conclusion

The literature unequivocally supports the importance of developing critical thinkers in order to bring about equity and social justice in the United States. Teaching students to think, no matter their background, culture, or funds of knowledge, is key to helping students become good human beings. The findings outline one giant step educators can take to help move the learner towards a more equitable and just world—teach through culture. It becomes the work of culturally responsive teachers, educators who believe in the importance of culture in education, to teach through culture in order to connect new learning to student backgrounds and different cultures. When TTC is done appropriately, not only will students have improved opportunities for critical thinking, learning, growing, and moving ahead academically, but so will the teacher.

Diversity has blessed America with its richness, and it is time for America to seize this rich opportunity by honoring and validating that diversity through appropriate cultural instructional best practices. Every educator in America needs to be able to, first, answer the primary question of this research: 1) What does TTC look like in a typical K–12 classroom? and then come to better understand exactly 2) How does TTC contribute to student learning? Once answers are known to these questions, educators can begin to Teach Through Culture in the delivery of classroom instruction. As Freire states, we must each become a learner of our students as well as their teacher. The time has arrived for educators in America to learn how to teach through culture.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to gain knowledge about how TTC in K–12 classrooms occurs, what it looks like, as well as how TTC contributes to student learning. Self-reflecting by participants about the role culture plays in learning can inform this study. Having spent a decade living with my husband on his reservation in SE Montana, working in his tribe's K–12 Northern Cheyenne contract school with 100+ Northern Cheyenne students, as a non-Native I quickly learned that culture matters, mine and theirs. My own monolingual, White background and culture required immediate adjustments in order to successfully interact and communicate with indigenous members of this Native American community, many of whom were bilingual. Later, as a teacher working for 16 years in the most diverse community in our nation, Mt. View Anchorage, Alaska (Margolis, 2017), I quickly discovered firsthand about the need for knowing the backgrounds of each and every member of each year's student population. Currently, collaborating with more than 30 successful retired Alaska teachers, I have begun to explore the complexity of culture, its role in education, and the many perspectives with which educators today approach the use of culture in classroom instruction. Today in 2018, as a citizen of a nation now serving its most diverse population of students ever (Banks & Banks, 2004), it is essential that all teachers understand how to deliver instruction in ways that connect content to unique and differing individual cultures so that students can think critically and learn. Culture matters.

This exploratory sequential design uses Participatory Action Research as the procedural framework and includes two phases. In Phase 1, qualitative data were gathered to address what

K–12 classroom instruction looks like when TTC, and to use said responses to inform the creation of a CAC (Appendix D) to serve as a TTC Resource. Through the narratives of 20 educators accomplished in using culture in their teaching practice, Phase 1 explored exactly what K–12 classroom instruction looks like when TTC. These narratives were analyzed and coded using a Constructed Grounded Theory process. Next, using identified themes, trends, and patterns uncovered in those interviews, a CAC was created, designed to be used in Phase 2 by teachers new to the field of education. Said CAC and accompanying classroom lessons were read and used as a resource by K–12 ECTs in their delivery of classroom instruction over a 3-10-week period of time. Quantitative data were gathered in Phase 2 by using an identical pre- and post-tool titled Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI). Said tool contained 33 teaching strategies and actions, and was designed to test the findings from Phase 1 as well as provide an opportunity for ECTs to reflect about their own practices. Phase 2 quantitatively measured the usefulness of the newly created CAC by teachers learning what it means to teach through culture. One open-ended question was asked to clarify any new learnings post-use of the chapter, and responses were coded in a manner similar to that used in Phase 1.

Organization of Chapter

This chapter begins with restating the research question, followed by an overview of the research design. The researcher's role/positionality, site selection, description of participants, and overall procedure for the study is presented. Phase 1 and Phase 2 are detailed as embedded within the whole study, including: time line, data sources, collection techniques, management of data and analysis procedures, along with methods for verification and limitations for that phase. A summary of the methodology of this study recaps chapter 3.

Research Question

This study addresses one primary research question: 1) What does TTC look like in a typical K–12 classroom?

In addition, this study considers three related questions that emerged during the two phases: 1) How does state policy influence or inform TTC in the K–12 Classroom? 2) What do undergraduate study programs do to prepare teachers for delivering classroom instruction through culture? And, 3) How does TTC contribute to student learning?

Mixed Methods Research Design

A mixed-methods approach to answering the research question involved collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, and integrating the two data pieces in ways that provided a more complete understanding of the research question than could either type alone (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Exploring this theory—TTC—was best accomplished by gathering qualitative data in Phase 1 from experienced teachers. That data was used to create a resource to be used by inexperienced teachers in Phase 2. Measuring the usefulness of that resource was best done by gathering quantitative data, in this instance, gathered from inexperienced teachers. Thus, qualitative data was generated in Phase 1, and quantitative data was gathered in Phase 2. Using both types of data provided a more complete response to the research question and at the same time served to validate the findings from each phase. Together a mixed methods research design provided more insight and clarity than could have been reached by using only one type of data.

This mixed methods study included two phases:

1. Phase 1: Qualitative data collection through interviews, analysis of transcripts using a constructed grounded theory approach, and creation of a CAC using said qualitative findings. Phase 1 included interviewing 20 experienced teachers (XTs) known for

their success with TTC. After careful analysis, of the emerging patterns, trends, and lessons revealed by these XT interviews, a CAC was created to be used in Phase 2.

2. Phase 2: Quantitative data was collected through a pre/post Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI) containing TTC teaching strategies and actions. Phase 2 results were analyzed using descriptive statistics measuring usefulness of chapter as well as using constructed grounded theory to analyze responses to one open-ended question. Phase 2 put the CAC in the hands of eight early career teachers (ECTs) and one experienced teacher (XT) to use over a period of time. Data were then measured quantitatively and qualitatively to determine usefulness of CAC for gaining the skillset of TTC.

Interpretation of all data from both phases sheds light on the research question.

The reasons for choosing this mixed methods design are many. Specifically, this research is asking how is teaching through culture (TTC) accomplished, and a “how” question requires interviews and collaboration with others, including the analyzing of qualitative data. Thus, Phase 1 is focused on qualitative data. Then, to determine if TTC is value-added by using a newly created resource, that value is best measured and examined with some sort of tool, gathering quantitative data. Phase 2 is focused on quantitative data in order to measure the success and usefulness of the resource (CAC) pre- and post- its use. A mixed methods design was chosen because drawing upon both qualitative and quantitative data strengthens the study, minimizing the limitations of two approaches while capitalizing on the assets of both. Practically, mixed methods suited this study because an exploratory-sequential design allows for flexibility as the data come in, allowing for modification to the design, and the researcher can take advantage of the fact she has access to both qualitative and quantitative data.

Exploratory Sequential Design for Mixed Methods

At a sequential procedural level, a mixed methods design was a useful strategy, as it allowed in Phase 1 the exploration of an issue in order to collect and analyze the resulting qualitative data that next informed the creation of a resource to be put into practice and measured quantitatively for usefulness and value in the classroom during Phase 2 (Creswell, 2011). Breaking the research into two sequential pieces, exploratory and into practice, qualitative leading to quantitative strengthened the design.

Procedural Framework

This mixed methods, exploratory sequential study uses Participatory Action Research (PAR) as its procedural framework. This study seeks understanding and clarification of an educational pedagogy about culturally responsive instruction that will rely heavily upon participants' actions, experiences in the study, and views of what it means to teach through culture. This PAR study uses a qualitative research cyclic process of gathering and analyzing data in Phase 1. A cycle integrates the methods and techniques of observing, documenting, analyzing, and interpreting characteristics, patterns, attributes, and meanings of human phenomena under study (Gillis & Jackson, 2002; Leininger, 1985). Action Research is an iterative process including a cycle of planning, acting, analyzing and reflecting as illustrated by the following diagram (Riel & Rowell, 2016.

Such a cyclic PAR process often results in an evolving methodology, one which takes shape as the study progresses, which can be helpful in an exploratory study where the uncertainty of findings can require adjustments to the process. PAR is a cyclic and iterative process of Plan-Act-Analyze-Reflect, and repeat. A challenge for such a mixed methods study includes the timeintensive nature of analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as the complexity of two phases.

Using Riel's cycle for action research as shown in Figure 1, Table 3 offers a detailed outline of this research design's various cycles along with dates for each iteration. Key to this PAR process is the involvement by participants, especially as educators committed to the topic and willing to collaborate with and contribute to the study. Four experienced teachers in Phase 1 were reviewers, contributors, and involved members of the study from its inception to its end. Their perspectives, insights, and contributions to the study were essential.

> PAR seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it. At its heart is collective, self-reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves. The reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by understanding of history, culture, and local context and embedded in social relationships. (Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006, p. 854)

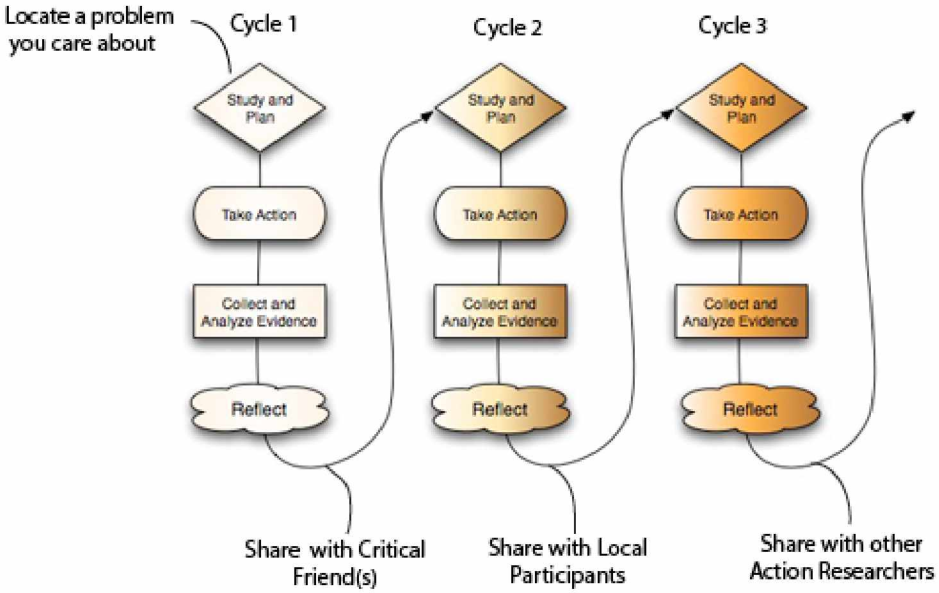

Locate a problem you care about
Cycle 1
Cycle 2
Cycle 3
Study and Plan
Take Action
Collect and Analyze Evidence
Reflect
Study and Plan
Take Action
Collect and Analyze Evidence
Reflect
Study and Plan
Take Action
Collect and Analyze Evidence
Reflect
Share with Critical Friend(s)
Share with Local Participants
Share with other Action Researchers

Figure 1. The iterative process of action research.

Table 3

Outline of Research Design's Cycles

	Phase 1		Phase 2		Future?
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Cycle 5
Study & Plan	Find experienced teacher (XT) participants who know how to teach through culture (TTC)	Literature Review; search for literature covering emerging themes from Phase 1 data;	Find early career teacher (ECT) participants willing to learn by using TTC chapter	Analyze short answers looking for follow-up potential with ECTs	Plan with XTs, ECTs, colleagues on where to share revised TTC chapter? More Research? More chapters?
	Fall 2013	2015	Summer 2016	Summer 2017	To be determined
Take Action	Interview XTs & Explore TTC strategies, methods	Create TTC chapter Resource from emerging themes	Direct ECTs on chapter (CAC) use, Give Pre-Checklist/Inventory (CCI); ECTs use CAC Lessons; Give Post-CCI; Ask open-ended Q	Follow-up with Select ECTs about value of TTC chapter;	Share TTC chapter with broader audience, design new research
	Spring-Fall 2014	Fall 2015 Spring 2016	Winter 2016–2017	Summer 2017	To be determined
Collect/ Analyze Data	Transcribe, Analyze & Code Transcripts	Get Feedback from XTs on TTC chapter/ Revise as necessary	Collect & Analyze Pre-Post Checklists Inventory; Code Short Responses	Analyze research, adjust CAC as needed;	
	2015	2016	Spring 2017	To be determined	
Reflect	←Reflect→				
Share	Share with XTs, Colleagues for Feedback→ 2015-2016		Share with XTs, Colleagues, ECTs → 2017 Share results with wider audience → 2018		

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a cooperative learning approach used by researcher and participants to improve targeted practices through inquiry and self-reflection. In this study, the practices requiring improvement and discovery are cultural educational strategies and methods used to deliver content to diverse K–12 student populations. This study, through the collaboration and participation of experienced teachers as well as ECTs, researches how to deliver K–12 content through culture. Action Research is an iterative cyclical process of reflecting on practice, taking an action, reflecting, and taking further action. Therefore, the research takes shape while it is being performed, which accurately reflects this study. Greater understanding from each cycle points the way to improved practice (Riel & Rowell, 2016) as well as to next steps in the research process.

PAR is considered a democratic, equitable, liberating, and life-enhancing qualitative inquiry that remains distinct from other qualitative methodologies (Koch, Selim & Kralik, 2002). This type of research is done collaboratively, with the very people whose life and actions are under study; in this case Phase 1 quality teachers with TTC experience and Phase 2 early career teachers without TTC experience. Action research is inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them. It is a reflective process that is deliberately and systematically undertaken, and generally requires that some form of evidence be presented to support assertions (Herr & Anderson, 2015). There have been several generations of Action Research (AR) since it first began in the 1930s with Lewin (1946), who claimed one cannot understand a system until one tries to change it. Several versions have evolved out of Lewin's original AR model, participatory being one offshoot. Three attributes set PAR apart from other conventional research: 1) shared ownership of research projects, 2) community-based analysis of social problems, and 3) an orientation toward community action (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

> In education, PAR has been used as a [qualitative] methodology to improve curriculum and professional development, educational programs, and system planning and policy development. PAR liberates research from conventional prescriptive methods and seeks to decentralize traditional research (p.23).

PAR is the proper choice of a research approach for this study, by putting the study into the hands of the practitioner-insider so said participants could explore an educational question whose response and findings could surely influence professional development, educational programs, and system planning and/or policy development within the K-12 classroom.

Key methodological elements that define Participatory Action Research help support this choice. Qualitative PAR methodology is grounded in a transformative worldview, a view that seeks to bring about change and improve existing classroom instructional practices. For example, in my study, marginalized student populations (Native populations from Alaska and Montana, as well as diverse students in urban populations in both states) today continue to experience an achievement gap for a variety of reasons, one reason being instructional practices lacking cultural connections, the problem being researched in this study. Research has shown that TTC is one way to help students improve academically. PAR provides a suitable way to help students improve academically (Ladson, 2009). PAR provides a suitable procedural framework to explore this issue. When reviewing PAR methodological elements, MacDonald (2012) states:

> PAR is *democratic*, thus enabling the participation of all people; *equitable*, as it acknowledges equity of people's worth; *liberating*, in that it provides freedom from oppressive, debilitating conditions; and *life-enhancing*, which enables the expression of people's full human potential. (p. 39)

Democratic. Equitable. Liberating. Life-Enhancing. Enabling the participation of all people helps balance the researcher positionality issues present in this study; all have a voice—participants and researcher. In addition, McTaggart & Kemmis (1989) outlined 16 tenets of PAR that strengthen the overall design by assuring the participant voice with researcher in a team effort. According to McTaggart, PAR:

1. Is an approach to improving social practice by changing it
2. Is contingent on authentic participation
3. Is collaborative
4. Establishes self-critical communities
5. Is a systematic learning process
6. Involves people in theorizing about their practices
7. Requires that people put their practices, ideas and assumptions about institutions to the test
8. Involves keeping records
9. Requires participants to objectify their own experiences
10. Is a political process
11. Involves making critical analyses
12. Starts small
13. Starts with small cycles
14. Starts with small groups
15. Allows and requires participants to build records
16. Allows and requires participants to give a reasoned justification of their social (educational) work to others (McDonald, 2012, p. 39 quoting McTaggart)

MacDonald continued to present seven PAR components as proposed by Selenger (1997):

> The *first* component acknowledged that the problem originates in the community itself and is defined, analyzed, and solved by the community. *Secondly*, the ultimate goal of PAR research is the radical transformation of social reality and improvement in the lives of the individuals involved; thus, community members are the primary beneficiaries of the research. *Thirdly*, PAR involves the full and active participation of the community at all levels of the entire research process. The *fourth* component of PAR encompasses a range of powerless groups of individuals: the exploited, the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized. Selenger (1997) cited the *fifth* component of PAR as the ability to create a greater awareness in individuals' own resources that can mobilize them for self-reliant development. PAR is *more than a scientific method*, in that community participation in the research process facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality. *Lastly*, PAR allows the researcher to be a committed participant, facilitator, and learner in the research process, which fosters militancy, rather than detachment. (McDonald, 2012, quoting Selenger, p. 39)

Combining the ideas of MacDonald, McTaggart, and Selenger, key methodological elements defining this research design and procedural framework include: PAR is a research approach aiming to improve social practices through change; PAR requires participation by others in the field who are interested in correcting the targeted practice, so it is collaborative in nature. There are communities of learners who continually reflect and self-analyze in a systematic learning process. Participants and researcher think about their practices, repeatedly analyzing them. Record keeping is key in PAR and participants/researcher, as a team, constantly endeavor to be objective about their own experiences, even though they admit to being subjective in the process.

PAR is cyclic, starting small and growing. PAR is flexible and allows for adjustments and modifications along the research journey.

Some effective methods for gathering data and conducting research in a PAR study include: Focus groups, participant observation and field notes, interviews, diary and personal logs, questionnaires, and surveys as effective methods of data generation employed in PAR (MacDonald, 2012). Streubert and Carpenter (1995) recommend that at least three selected methods be used to transcend the limitations of each individual one, so as to triangulate data generation and produce more effective problem solving (p. 4, MacDonald, 2012). Phase 1 of this study primarily used interviews, field notes, and focus groups to gather data, and limited observations whenever possible. Phase 2 used a checklist survey as well as one open-ended question. Field notes and personal logs were an ongoing part of the research as well. PAR is flexible and methods can be changed throughout the process, so this list of methods is not finite.

One attractive element of PAR is the emphasis on participation. Kesby (2000) stated:

> The term "participant" (rather than "informant" or "respondent"), is significant and signals a particular epistemology: first, participants are regarded as "knowers" and their knowledge and experiences are valued. Second, researchers temper their own "expert" status by participating and do not project a superior perspective. Third, the agency of participants is recognized, encouraged and the researcher and participant enter into a reciprocal relationship in the research process. Finally, the researcher becomes an "activist" by creating a research environment in which participants can take greater control, seeking solutions appropriate to their lived realities. (p. 424)

Positionality matters in research, and one's worldview and way of knowing influence the process. The researcher and research participants' background, value system, beliefs, spirituality, language, life's experiences, and lessons learned all contribute to the knowledge base that we each have, as well as how we learn. In the journal of *New Directions for Student Services,* Spring 2005, "Serving Native American Students" Cajete (2005) presented a chapter entitled *American Indian Epistemologies* as it relates to education:

> The characteristics of American Indian epistemologies reflect traits that indigenous cultures of the world share. They are really expressions of the ancestral tribal roots of all the families of humankind. In exploring the tribal foundations of American Indian education, we are really tracking the earliest sources of human teaching and learning. What these foundations have to teach us is that learning is ultimately a subjective experience tied to a place: environmentally, socially, and spiritually. Tribal teaching and learning was intertwined with the daily life of both teacher and learner. (p. 71)

What Cajete goes on to discuss is how the connection most indigenous people have with nature, the land, the spiritual world, and ancestors shapes the Native ways of knowing. An example of this connection in real life helps to add clarity to the influence of one's epistemology. Whenever my Native American husband walks up Bear Butte to pray, he takes with him the knowledge of those relatives who have walked before, his ancestors, his extended family, he leaves a little tobacco or prayer cloth, and he prays in his native language Cheyenne. His experience is very different from the non-Native folks 'hiking' the Butte to enjoy the view, although certainly my husband enjoys the view as well. My husband's Native way of knowing has influenced his every breath in life, his every step up that trail, his every lesson learned, as well as how he learned that lesson—observing, listening, trying, observing again. My western worldview, on the other hand, that of a non-Native farm girl whose roots are from the Pacific Northwest, is less grounded in nature and more grounded in place-based learning such as farming, community support, and small-town mentality. I come from a western European background, grain farmers, talkers, cattle-ranchers, pig and chicken owners, and while we, too, have a relationship with the land, our ways of knowing are more linear and scientific, as contrasted to the natural bond of my Native husband's 'reciprocal relationship' with Mother Earth. His and my individual epistemologies influence how we learn, what we know, what we believe, and how we interpret the world. We have also helped to inform one another's learning along the way. The first time I accompanied him up Bear Butte, with his assistance and my willingness to learn, I experienced the natural connection to that place by hearing Native drums beating as I ascended that most holy of places only to discover there were no drummers along the way or at the top of the mountain. Yet I clearly heard the beating, the music of my husband's ancestors. Key to a successful PAR research project dealing with cultural issues is first of all to listen and learn by showing respect at every turn of the process, and secondly, coming to understand the many ways of knowing based on an individual's epistemology, respecting the differences, and growing/learning together.

Some epistemological principles of PAR include having a researcher tempering his/her expert status, drawing instead upon a reciprocal relationship between participant and researcher, and researcher serving as activist with participant sharing control as both parties reflect and construct new learning after reviewing the data. These epistemological principles influence the stances and positionalities of both researcher and participants throughout this study. It is essential to be aware of and prepared for that sway in this procedural framework. Furthermore, PAR seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it through action. At its heart is collective, self-reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake together, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves. The reflective process is directly linked to action (Baum, 2006). This research hopes to affect the action of teachers by sharing "how" to teach through culture and thus transform classrooms.

One's epistemology shapes all life decisions, perspectives, choices, and worldview. Recognizing this foundational influence and force on one's course of action is essential when conducting research and determining an acceptable position in the study.

Researcher's Role/Positionality

Researcher and participants have well-defined and shared roles, that contribute to the design of a PAR approach and raise questions such as: Are they insiders, outsiders, or a combination of both? PAR promotes the sharing of knowledge between researcher and participant, giving both an opportunity to share and learn together. Recognizing these differing roles and responsibilities, and the relationships is essential to articulate at the beginning of the research. The roles and responsibilities of both researcher and participant were outlined in the PAR framework. The existing relationship between participants and researcher in both phases included being collaborative, respectful, listeners and learners, insiders with insiders, insiders and outsiders collaborating for a common cause. Whenever I asked the question: Who am I in relationship to my participants and setting? I looked to Thomson and Gunter (2011), two United Kingdom University professors studying this very issue of inside/outside positionality in research, in their article: "Inside, outside, upside down: The fluidity of academic researcher 'identity' in working with/in school."

Positionality within research can be complicated and fluid. In Action Research (AR) a continuum of positionality ranges from insider to outsider, and at times the researcher can appear at different locations on the continuum depending upon the stage of the research, the participant, and the setting. Herr and Anderson (2015) give special attention to positionality, setting forth six distinct possibilities for positionality, suggesting that the implications of this positionality are epistemological, methodological, and technological, depending upon the stage of the research.

1. Insider (the researcher studies and changes his/her own practice)
2. Insider in collaboration with other insiders
3. Insider(s) in collaboration with outsider(s)
4. Mutual collaboration (teams of insiders-outsiders)
5. Outsiders in collaboration with insider(s)
6. Outsider(s) studying insider(s)

In the field of education where practitioners continually attempt to better their practice, teachers, principals and superintendents, together with University faculty, as well as other interested educators, often take a more active role in PAR right alongside the researcher in order to improve classroom practices. This study specifically was designed to be collaborative. Participants and researcher worked together, respectfully, serving as both listeners and learners, as well as speakers and teachers, all collaborating for a common cause. Thus, it is important to continually look at the roles, responsibilities and positionality of the participants, as well as the researcher.

For Phase 1 of this study, Insider refers to experienced classroom teachers (XT) who have successfully 1) taught through culture, and are aware of several 2) underpinning educational theories associated with TTC: 1) critical pedagogy, 2) culturally-relevant-responsive theories, as well as 3) transformative learning. Outsiders will refer to those ECTs in Phase 2 who know very little, if anything, about TTC or the three foundational theories. These positionality delimitations vary by phase and its components. For instance, in Phase 2 of this study, ECTs, may be Outsiders when it comes to TTC and the theories, yet considered Insiders as classroom teachers.

Also, if an ECT happens to be experienced in TTC, s/he might think of self as an insider. It's fluid. When it comes to setting, rural teachers in Montana might be insiders to the researcher's outside urban Alaska position at that moment in time. Positionality can be complicated and fluid.

History records the Researcher, especially early academia research, usually as that of an outsider, a consultant *running* the research. Yet in the field of education where practitioners continually attempt to better their practice, it did not take long for teachers, principals and superintendents, together with University faculty, as well as other interested educators from clerical to college-level to take a more *active* role in PAR right alongside the Researcher, in order to improve classroom practices. With PAR and its collaborative design in research, it is important for each member (researcher/participant) to know the roles, responsibilities and positionality of the research *team*. When looking at the positionality continuum, you would have insider on one end, outsider on the other, with collaborators in between. This 2-phase study shares the fluidity of such a positionality continuum as it relates to TTC, the subject of this research.

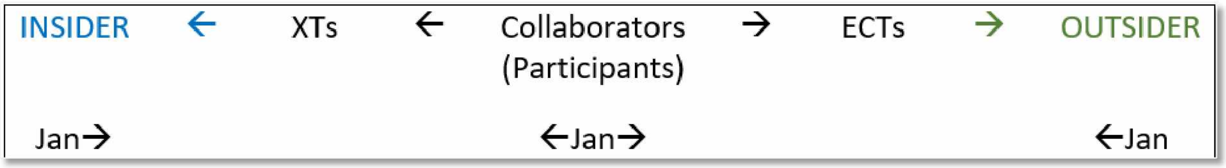


Figure 2. Insider–outsider continuum.

Depending upon the stage of the research, either Phase 1 or Phase 2, my role as researcher placed me in several positions on this insider-outsider continuum (see Figure 2). Overall, I am the Lead Researcher and timekeeper throughout the entire study.

Participants in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 were expected typically to be located close to the middle of the spectrum presented in Figure 2.

When moving into Phase 2, the roles and positionality of researcher and participants present differently. For example, in Phase 2 of this study the Participant early career teachers (ECTs) are those K–12 teachers newest to the profession of teaching in their first and second years. Rather than informing the study about what TTC looks like, their contribution will be more about the use and value of the TTC resource, the CAC, that was created using XTs contributions to the study. ECTs will try out the newly created CAC in order to discover for themselves what TTC looks like and thereafter begin to construct their own understanding of the importance of TTC when delivering classroom instruction. ECT involvement will serve as a measure of the value of the TTC chapter as well as the theory developed in Phase 1. An assumption is ECTs have limited knowledge and experience with TTC strategies, methods, and educational theories. In Phase 2, ECTs therefore are more of an Outsider regarding these theories, so their position might slide between the middle Collaborator and Outsider locations. Outsider input will help determine the value-added nature of CAC, as well as how that chapter may or may not contribute to their own knowledge base. In Phase 2 I am still the Lead Researcher, experienced with TTC, an Insider to the theoretical content, and those Phase 2 ECT participants will be more of Outsiders due to their entry level of teaching, with little to no TTC experience, novices in the theories, outsiders to the theoretical content, yet insiders as ECTs. They might also be insiders when it comes to setting as rural educators to my outside urban status. Seldom does a member ever operate from a single positionality—it is complicated, it is fluid.

Together, XTs and ECTs, the varying positions of participants strengthen the quality of this study by their differing perspectives, contributions, unique perspectives, ongoing quality checks, and collaborative team efforts to determine exactly what TTC looks like in the K–12 classroom.

Together, all participants from both Phases 1 and 2, XTs and ECTs, provided input, insight and contributed to this study through PAR. The collaborative work is analyzed in order to answer the overarching research question: What does TTC look like in a typical K–12 classroom? All Participants—XTs and ECTs—contributed to answering the research question, checking for accuracy, contributing to authenticity, and thereby strengthening the findings.

In Phase 1, I am in reciprocal collaboration (Herr, 2015) as an insider-outsider working in teams seeking to engage in learning [about TTC] and change practices. While in Phase 2 I am an Insider [I know TTC] teaming with Outsiders who do not know TTC. ECTs will use the CAC as a Study Group for a period of time. In both Phases, all participants and lead researcher are co-learning together, no matter status as Insider or Outsider or Collaborator.

To further clarify the participant-researcher relationship, I refer to Cornwall (1996) who has adapted a continuum of purposes of such PAR positionality and relationships into a table listing degrees of participation and collaboration when teaming in PAR. Both Phases of this study can be found within the *Co-learning*, 5th row, Mode of the Cornwall's continuum (see Table 4).

Table 4

Cornwall's PAR Purpose Continuum

Mode of Participation	Involvement of Local People	Relationship of Research and Action to Local People [Participants]
Co-option	Token…	On
Compliance	Tasks assigned…	For
Consultation	Local opinions asked…	for/with
Cooperation	Local people work together…	With
Co-learning	Local people [XTs] and outsiders [ECTs] share their knowledge to create new understanding and work together to form action plans, with outsider [Insider? Researcher?] facilitation	with/by [Cornwall's use of pronouns in this column is helpful in thinking through to what extent outsiders are doing research on, for, or with insiders, or whether the research is done largely by insiders.] (p. 50)
Collective Action	Local people set own agenda…	By

Positionality also relates to indigenous ways of knowing. While TTC is not an indigenous research question in and of itself, the question does connect with underlying indigenous issues. When looking at culturally-relevant/responsive theories and classroom practices that apply the cultural norms, belief systems, and traditions of indigenous people and indigenous ways of knowing, whether in Alaska, Montana or other worldwide locations, a researcher must be cautious. As a non-indigenous researcher working in very strong indigenous areas of the United States, studying issues that are closely related to the customs, traditions and histories of indigenous native people, it is essential for me to position myself in a place of respect, and true partnership with my indigenous participants and communities, as well as within the indigenous settings of rural Alaska classrooms and the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Montana. Unfortunately, historically "…the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research,' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (Smith, 2012, p. 1). I am not the Alpha researcher and it is key for all stakeholder/participants to know that. It has been essential for me to respectfully and carefully (a) conduct thoughtful interviews and focus groups using talking-circle and indigenous ways of communication; (b) recruit XTs and ECTs who understand the indigenous perspective; and (c) acquire an IRB from the Northern Cheyenne Tribe in addition to my University of Alaska Fairbanks IRB, as well as (d) seek Tribal Council permission for research within the reservation boundaries in ways that honor and respect the people, the land, and keepers of the knowledge being shared. This was accomplished by meeting with stakeholders, inviting input, sharing research design, purpose, and welcoming questions. My positionality within the indigenous communities of this study is another consideration, a position of respectful inquiry, humility, and partnership in learning through collaboration, allowing the indigenous worldviews to inform my decision-making throughout this research process. This final positionality step requires routine contact with indigenous stakeholders as needed, ongoing open communication, and a willingness to listen and to share findings throughout the research process.

Positionality is fluid, and can be complicated. My own positionalities include: Researcher, Educator-Teacher, Learner, Doctoral Candidate, Wife to Indigenous Man, Woman, Sister, Mother, Grandmother, Daughter, Supervisor, and Administrator, to mention a few.

Site Selection

Alaska and Montana are the two states where data were collected during both phases of the research. Experienced teachers who successfully taught through culture anywhere in Alaska (see Figure 3), and were knowledgeable about the educational theories were sought for participation in Phase 1. Teachers newest to the profession and working anywhere in Alaska were selected for Phase 2. Experienced Montana teachers who were successful in TTC and were knowledgeable about the educational theories were invited for interviews as long as they had a history of having taught successfully, using culture, for at least five years at or near the Northern Cheyenne reservation located in southeast Montana (see Figure 4).

Figure 4's Map of Montana identifies the seven federally-recognized reservations located within the boundaries of the State of Montana. A red arrow pointing to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation locates the targeted area of this study for the state of Montana. Experienced teachers participating in Phase 1 had to have taught on or near the Northern Cheyenne Reservation for a minimum of five years, and for Phase 2 early career teachers were invited who were teaching on or near the Northern Cheyenne reservation at the time of this study.

These two purposeful site selections—Alaska statewide and the geographic region of Northern Cheyenne reservation in southeast Montana—were chosen as a result of the researcher's own background and connections with known experienced teachers who teach through culture when delivering K–12 classroom instruction in these two locations.

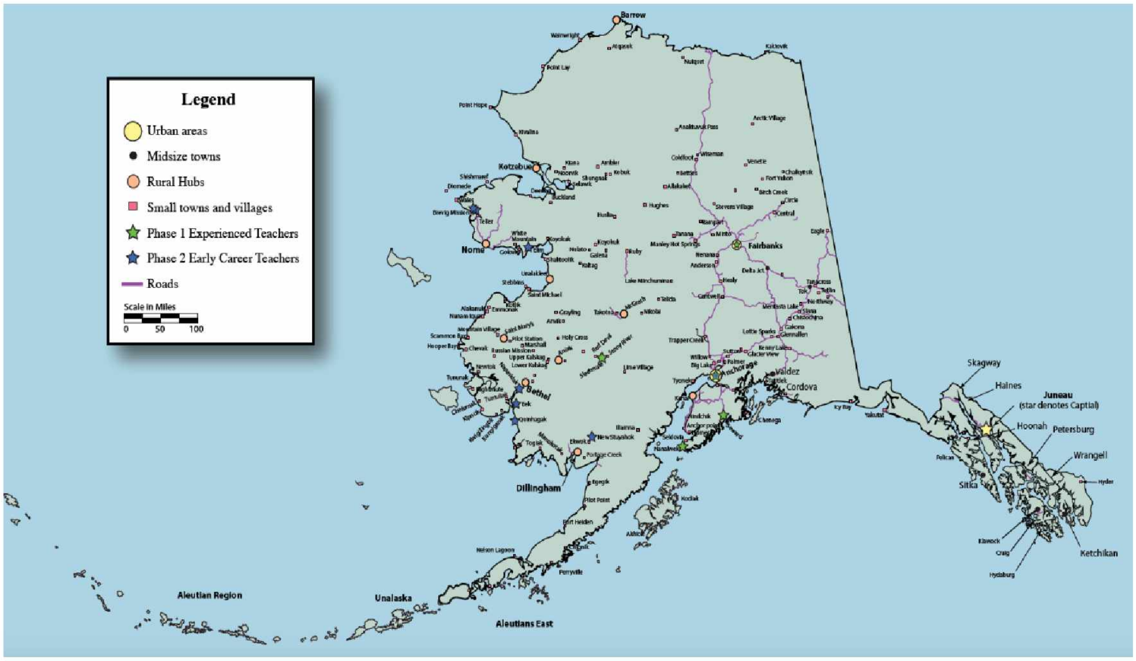

Legend
Urban areas
Midsize towns
Rural Hubs
Small towns and villages
Phase 1 Experienced Teachers
Phase 2 Early Career Teachers
Roads
Scale in Miles
0
50
100
Barrow
Kotzebue
Nome
Fairbanks
Bethel
Dillingham
Valdez
Cordova
Skagway
Haines
Juneau
(star denotes Captial)
Hoonah
Petersburg
Wrangell
Sitka
Ketchikan
Aleutian Region
Unalaska
Aleutians East

Figure 3. Map of Alaska.

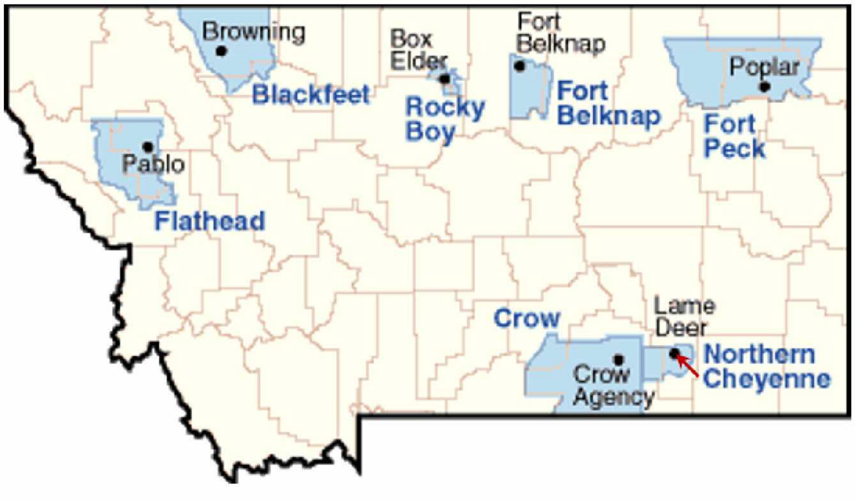

Browning
Blackfeet
Box Elder
Rocky Boy
Fort Belknap
Fort Belknap
Poplar
Fort Peck
Pablo
Flathead
Crow
Crow Agency
Lame Deer
Northern Cheyenne

Figure 4. Map of Montana. Map courtesy of Tribal National Resources Conservation Services (2018).

Alaska is the largest state in the United States based on land area, followed by Texas and then Montana. There are approximately 380 Native Villages and rural hubs in Alaska, with five urban areas: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and Mat-Su, with urban populations ranging from 33,000 to 280,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Montana has nearly an equal number of towns and cities, with the five largest cities being: Billings, Missoula, Great Falls, Bozeman and Butte, with urban populations ranging from 35,000 to 168,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Montana is the 8th least populated state in the union with just over one million people, and Alaska is the 4th least populated state with just over 700,000 people within its borders. Both states have more rural areas than urban. Today there are seven Native American reservations in Montana and one Native American reservation in Alaska, with hundreds of indigenous Alaskan villages. In Montana, there are towns and cities each located on some sort of a road system, whereas in Alaska there are villages, rural hubs, and cities with many villages and some rural hubs having no road system connection, accessible only by small plane, boat, or Alaska state Ferry on the marine highway. Commuting in Alaska can look very different from commuting in Montana, given the limited transportation options.

Data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), comparing/contrasting all 50 states, show Montana and Alaska more similar than different in many respects—population density, vehicle miles traveled, and health—yet in two areas they differ significantly: Montana does a much better job of graduating its high school students than does Alaska. Additionally, for close to a decade now, Alaska has been ranked #1 of the 50 states for population by *Multiple* Race and Ethnicity, while Montana dropped to #30 in 2010 compared to #11 four years earlier in 2006 (see Figures 5 and 6).

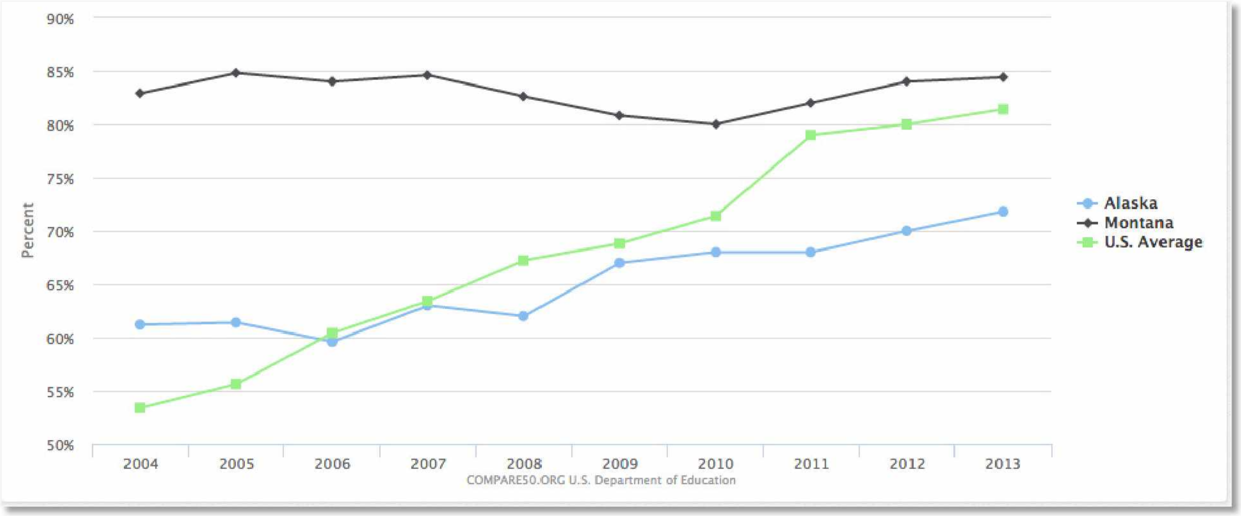


Figure 5. High school graduation rate, Alaska and Montana, 2004–2013.

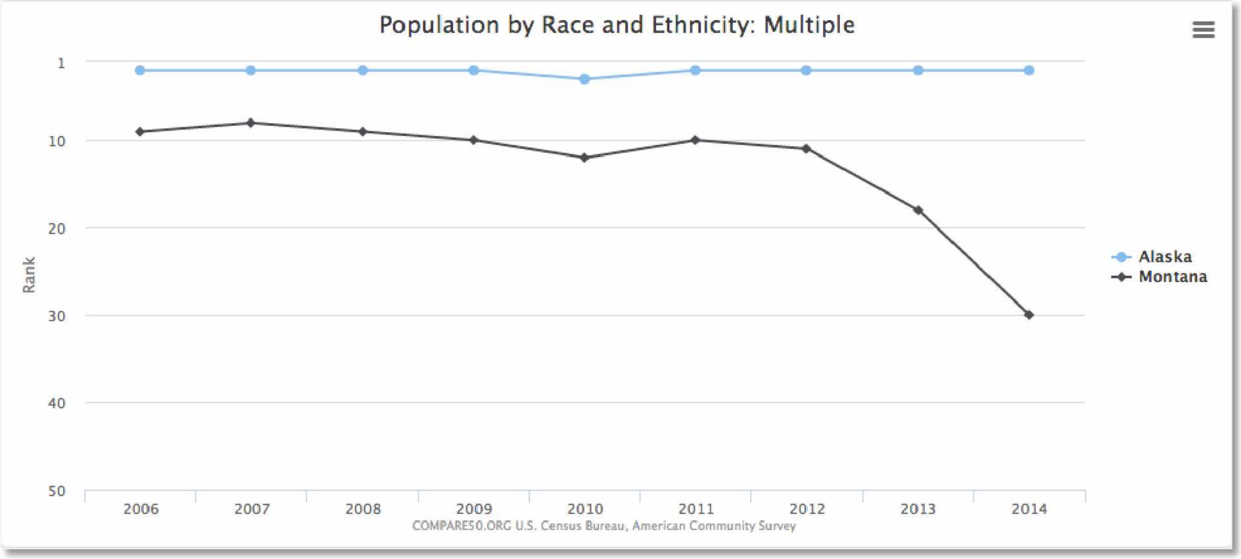


Figure 6. Rank of population described as multiple race and ethnicity, Alaska and Montana, 2006–2013.

Alaska statewide offers village, rural and urban opportunities for exploring and gathering data about TTC through its experienced teachers (XTs). In the village and rural areas, the indigenous cultures vary roughly by geographic location among several different groups of Alaska indigenous people: Inupiaq (northwest to mid coastal), Athabascan (interior), Yup'ik/Cup'ik (mid to southwest coastal), Tlingit/Haida/Eyak (southeast), Aleut/Sugpiaq/ Unangax (Kodiak, Aleutian Chain), as well as significant overlapping of cultures and indigenous peoples throughout the state in all geographic areas. Frequently rural Alaska villages are composed of one to three indigenous cultures, including a few non-indigenous cultures being represented usually from within the teaching profession folks who arrive from outside Alaska. In rural Alaska villages, there can be very limited choice for school attendance, and in fact some smaller villages must send their students away to boarding school for a high school education, as no secondary school exists in the home village. School choice for some rural students is extremely limited.

In the five urban areas of Alaska—Fairbanks, Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai and Juneau—demographics are remarkably different. Urban Alaska can be miniature microcosms of global populations, as has been detailed in earlier chapters, with Anchorage serving 29 of the 38 most diverse K–12 schools in our nation (Tunseth, 2015). With this much diversity in the city of Anchorage alone, it follows that Anchorage's urban classrooms can contain multiple cultures from around the world. This researcher's entire two-decade classroom teaching career was delivered totally within the diverse Mt. View neighborhood, Grades 3-8, where it was normal to have 6-8 different global cultures represented in a single classroom at any given time, placing me as an insider for positionality when teaching diverse student populations. And, for the record, in my Mt. View Anchorage classroom, the Alaska Native population was always well represented.

Montana teacher participants for both study phases were chosen specifically by their years of teaching experience—many or few—however, a qualification for this study included participants having taught close to a single specific tribe, the Northern Cheyenne, which is considered rural and identified as a community. The six XT Montana participants in Phase 1 are teaching or had taught for a minimum of five years in the southeast corner of the state, having lived either on or near the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. There is a high Native American population in this southeast Montana geographical rural area and many unique school choices exist. Three K–12 public schools send buses onto the reservation and daily transport students off reservation to schools in neighboring communities, one public K–12 city location 60 miles away in Hardin, while one public K–12 school exists within the reservation boundaries in Lame Deer, Montana. One tribal college is also located within the reservation boundaries in Lame Deer, as is one tribal K–12 Contract School located in Busby. A Catholic K–12 boarding school and another public K–12 school are located in Ashland, a community off the reservation adjacent to the reservation's eastern boundary. K–12 students on or near the Northern Cheyenne Reservation have six choices from which to choose for their K–12 education, plus one more option for higher education at the junior college level. Both phases of this study were focused on participants connected to this Northern Cheyenne geographical southeast area of Montana in their teaching experiences.

Table 5

School Choice Near Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Montana

City/town & proximity to reservation	RT miles	K–12 public	K–12 contract/private	Tribal Community College
Hardin (NW)	120	1) X		
Colstrip (N)	70	2) X		
Ashland (E)	70	3) X	5) K–12 St. Labre (Catholic Boarding)	
Lame Deer (on)	On the Rez	4) X		7) Chief Dull Knife College
Busby (on)			6) K–12 Northern Cheyenne Tribal School	

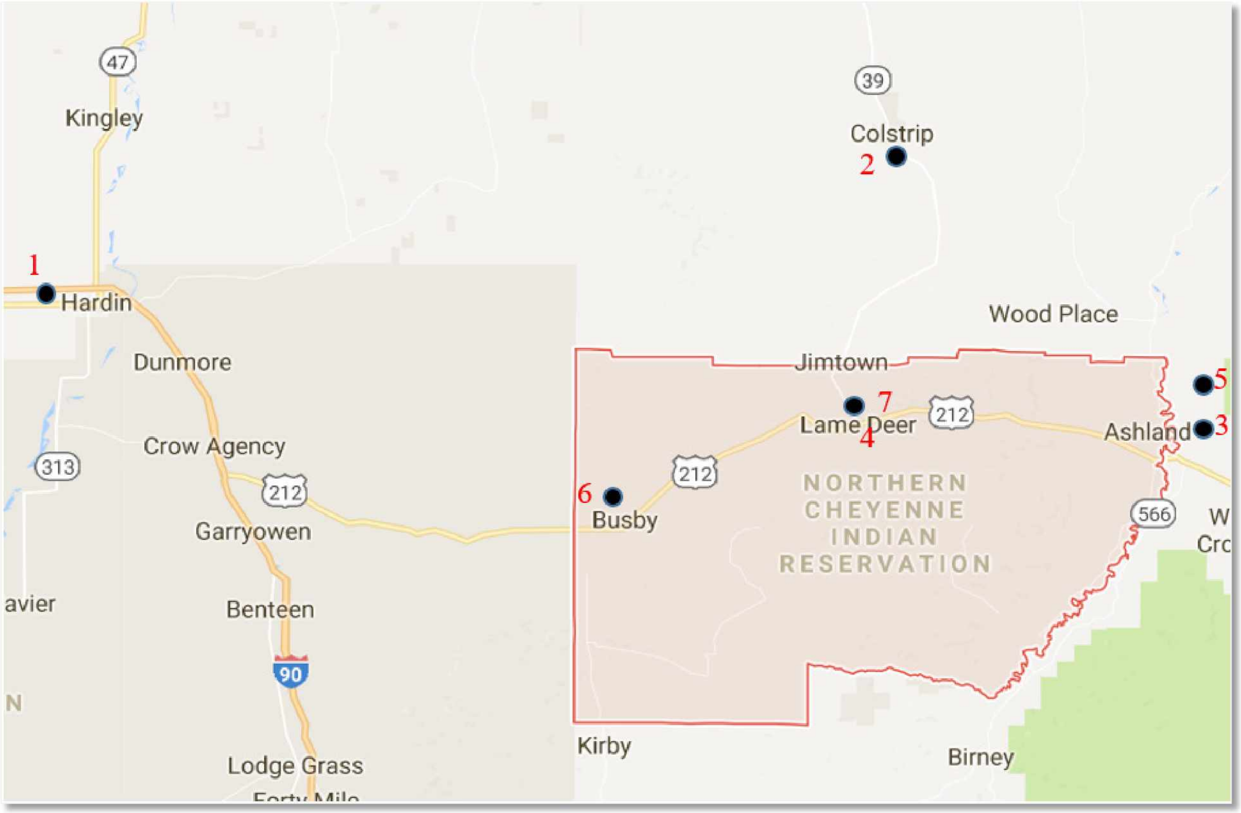

47
Kingley
39
Colstrip
2
1
Hardin
Dunmore
Wood Place
Jimtown
5
7
Lame Deer
4
212
Ashland
3
Crow Agency
313
212
6
Busby
212
NORTHERN CHEYENNE INDIAN RESERVATION
566
Garryowen
avier
Benteen
90
N
Lodge Grass
Kirby
Birney
Forty Mile

Figure 7. Google Map, as Modified by Researcher inserting numbers to correlate with Table 5.

Participants

During Phase 1, 20 K–12+ experienced teachers (XTs) with TTC were interviewed. In Alaska, six individuals, and eight more participants in two focus groups were selected statewide from urban, rural, and village sites. Montana's six individual participants while selected statewide, had to have taught for at least five years in a specific limited rural geographical location serving mostly Native American students who live on or near the Northern Cheyenne reservation located in the southeast portion of the state. Twenty XT participants served as the sample population in Phase 1 and provided 14 interviews: 6 individuals from Montana, 6 individuals from Alaska, and 8 educators in two separate Alaska focus groups. These 20 participants were purposefully chosen because of their outstanding reputations as teachers highly qualified and very effective in TTC at their K–12 grade levels. There were no formal criteria for selection of Phase 1 participants other than a proven record of successfully teaching diverse student populations. All are self-reported and publicly recognized as skilled in TTC while working with diverse student populations, engaging the learners, and all are leaders within their schools, districts and in some instances state. All have experience delivering instruction to multiple cultures. Some taught in rural areas, others in urban, many in remote villages/ communities, or in some instances all three. All had multiple years teaching experience in their respective states.

During Phase 2, early career teachers (ECTs) newest to the profession, used the newly created TTC CAC, along with a couple of videos and multiple provided lessons, to gain insights into how to use culture to deliver classroom instruction; each ECT taught at least two lessons from the nearly two dozen provided. In Phase 2, more than 50 Alaska and 20 Montana ECTs were invited to participate in this study. Nine teachers did participate in Phase 2 and complete all work required by the researcher. Eight ECTs were from Alaska with an average of two years teaching experience. A single experienced teacher from Montana heard of the study and wanted to participate. Her 26 years of classroom teaching experience is NOT included in the total average years of experience captured in Table 6 below. The researcher met with five Montana superintendents in one fall 2016 meeting to present this opportunity for learning about TTC, as well as three follow-up meetings individually by request of the Superintendents. All administrators displayed an interest in the study and felt teachers would jump at the chance to participate. This assumption was not true, as only one Montana teacher came forward. While she had more experience than the study called for, rather than have no one from Montana participate, she was allowed to participate.

An overview of the participant sample population in both phases is captured in the following table and will be detailed later in this chapter.

Table 6

Participant Sample Population

	Phase 1: 20 XTs		Phase 2: 8 ECTs +1 XT	
	Alaska	Montana	Alaska	Montana
# of participants	14	6	8	1
Average age	54		26	49
Average experience	22		2	26
Indigenous/non-indigenous	5/9	1/5	0/8	0/1
1–2 cultures taught	7[a]		6	
3–4 cultures taught	7[a]		2	
5–6 cultures taught	2[a]		0	
7+ cultures taught	7[a]		1	
Grades taught	K–12+		K–12	
Male/female	3/17		3/5	0/1
Urban/city	15[a]		1	0
Town/rural	14[a]		0	1
Community/village	14[a]		7	0

[a] Selection of Multiple Responses resulted in numbers higher than 20 XTs

Phase 1

Constructed Grounded Theory Approach

Phase 1 used a constructed grounded theory approach in order to best analyze the emerging data of this phase.

Constructed grounded theory is a systematic, qualitative research methodology in the social sciences involving the construction of theory through the analysis of data. Thus, researchers construct a new theory 'grounded' in their emerging data (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded Theory (GT) is a research design of inquiry from which Constructed Grounded Theory evolved. While Strauss and Corbin (1994), define Grounded Theory as a general methodology, a way of thinking about and conceptualizing data, GT actually began with Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s, three decades earlier. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), set forth a systematic, qualitative research methodology. Glaser and Strauss questioned the assumed *superiority* of quantitative research methodologies, especially in the social sciences, by producing an approach to qualitative research based on an inductive method that built theories instead of tested hypotheses. While staying true to the inductive approach of GT, Glaser and Strauss eventually diverged in their own thinking when it came to coding and theorizing. According to Kelle (2005):

> the controversy between Glaser and Strauss boils down to the question of whether the researcher uses a well-defined "coding paradigm" and always looks systematically for "causal conditions," "phenomena/context, intervening conditions, action strategies" and "consequences" in the data, or whether theoretical codes are employed as they emerge in the same way as substantive codes emerge, but drawing on a huge fund of "coding families." (p. 20)

Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) research follows a similar approach to classic GT by collecting and analyzing data to construct theories from the data themselves (Charmaz, 2014). Like classic GT, CGT is a cyclic process of data collection, coding, memo-writing and theory building through the emergence [inductive] of categories in the data. GT theorists may differ on foundational assumptions shaping the later study, yet they all begin with inductive logic, subject the data to rigorous comparative analysis, aim to develop theoretical analyses, and value grounded theory studies for informing policy and practice (Charmaz, p. 14). While early grounded theorists like Glaser and Strauss sought to discover patterns of behavior in the data, and conceptualize their properties through abstraction, Constructivist Grounded Theorists such as Charmaz sought to understand differences and variations among research participants, and wanted to co-construct meaning with them (Charmaz, 2014; O'Connor, 2001), which is a cyclic process very much in line with the collaboration of participants in PAR. In other words, they created a method (GT) that aims to construct theory rather than to test pre-conceived notions (Birks, Chapman & Francis, 2008). According to Charmaz (2014) CGT like classic GT before it "uses strategies such as coding, memo-writing, and sampling for theory development with comparative methods" (p. 12). Constructed Grounded Theory adds a layer of interpretation, according to Charmaz (2014), that states, "We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices" (p. 17). This focus on one's past, present involvements and interactions with people, and individual perspectives, is an essential subjective piece of Constructed Grounded Theory, and again a piece that is in perfect alignment with PAR methodologies. Charmaz asserts that "what constitutes a main concern depends on one's point of view" (p. 322), so it is easy to see that individual perspective, including one's subjectivity and bias, is a part of CGT. Constructed Grounded

Theory, therefore, is another logical choice for this research: Inductive. Discovery. Qualitative. Co-researchers. Emerging. Subjective. Theory-generating. Phase 1, PAR and CGT together, as cyclic research designed to work with XT participants sharing knowledge and expertise about TTC, is the perfect data source for answering the research question: What does TTC look like in a typical K–12 classroom?

Qualitative CGT methodology is grounded in constructivism. The key methodological elements of CGT are cyclic, starting by identifying an issue to study (plan), then collecting (gather) and analyzing (analyze) data in order to identify patterns and trends through reflection that can lead to clarity about the issue, as well as perhaps generate a new theory about the issue being studied. Plan. Gather Data. Analyze Data. Reflect. CGT is a cycle very much like that of PAR, the two processes working together strengthen Phase 1 of this study. Ongoing memo-writing and constant comparative methods occur during the research process. CGT forms understanding about an issue from multiple perspectives. Key components of a CGT qualitative methodology include: Identifying the problem and creating a research question; recruiting and sampling participants; collecting data from multiple sources; analyzing (often by a series of coding steps); generating a theory. These components served as the research framework for Phase 1 of this study.

CGT methods, those tools for gathering data in order to study one's research question, can include: interviews, documents, literature reviews, field notes, memos, historical documents, participation, observation, personal experience, videos, and audio recordings. Ensuring that all data being gathered are purposeful and address the problem being studied is crucial. In addition, Charmaz (2014) states it is important in CGT to remember that "Data do not provide a window on reality. Rather the 'discovered' reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts" (p. 524). A CGT allows for the flexibility required to include additional methods if the data suggests that would be helpful, just as in a PAR research design.

Once again, research is influenced by one's own theory of knowledge, and belief system so it was essential to explore how CGT and PAR, in this study, could accommodate one's own epistemology. CGT includes an inter-subjective epistemology, where understandings are co-constructed by the researcher and the participant(s) and can assume many possible realities. "Corbin (2009, pp. 36-37) states that a methodology is a living thing and changes occur over the years among methods and to researchers"; (Charmaz, 2014, p. 235). Methodologies evolve over time. Epistemological principles for CGT have definitely changed over time. Glaser and Strauss's methods manual attests to a clear epistemological orientation that assumes that reality can be discovered, explored, and understood (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the underpinnings for the rise of GT. Today, principles of CGT can include a cycle of working with participants, reflective processes, role of the researcher as collaborator at times, concepts of data and induction, with the generation of theory—a very flexible process. CGT, according to Charmaz (2014), assumes that "both data and analysis are social [co]-constructions that reflect the conditions of their production" (p. 240).

There is a range of perspectives about the process itself, and the subjectivity of the researcher. Differing views arise from the creators of GT, the grounded theorists themselves: Strauss, Glaser, Corbin, and Charmaz, which on the one hand reaffirm the flexibility of the model, and on the other shows how the approach allows for significant differences. The process is malleable. All GTs believe in inductive, cyclic, participant-centered, qualitative focus, and fluidity in design, including reflective practices. Different stances, however, have arisen about single realities and whether or not the process and methods for coding is/should be subjective.

Constructed GTs (CGT) present themselves as being subjective with certain biases, interested in co-learning alongside participants, recognizing data as being filtered through the experiential lenses of the analyzer and participant. Whereas, Classic/Traditional Objective GTs (OGTs) are more about removing all interpretation of data, no subjectivity. OGTs seem to *explain* whereas CGTs seem to *discover* differences.

Table 7 by Charmaz (2014, p. 236) captures this contrasting view: The OGT side does not appear to support the social context from which data emerge. OGT theorists try to remain distant from their participants. The opposite is true for CGT, the participants in CGT—as in this study—co-construct data, even interpret, and participant voice is integral to the CGT process.

Table 7

Grounded Theory Compare/Contrast Constructed Versus Objective Table

OGT		CGT
External reality, discovery of data, concepts emerge from data analysis, data unproblematic; neutral, passive, observer has authority	Foundational Assumption	Multiple realities, mutual construction of data, constructs categories, data problematic, observer subjective
Context-free generalizations; abstract conceptualizations; create theory that fits and is modifiable (Glaser)	Objectives	Generalizations partial/conditional; interpretive understanding; specifics range of variation; create theory that has credibility is original and useful
Vivian Martin (Glaser) defines theory in this tradition as 'an integrated series of concepts integrated by a core concept' (p. 126) (Charmaz, p. 235)	Theory Defined	Strauss/Corbin defines theory as a 'set of well-developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena' (p. 15). (Charmaz, p. 234)
Objective process; emergent categories form analysis; reflexivity one data source; priority to researcher's categories/voice;	Implications for Data Analysis	Subjective process; co-constructed data; reflexivity throughout the process; participants' views/voices integral to analysis

Having chosen to blend PAR as the procedural framework and CGT as the analysis approach in Phase 1 of this research, it seems prudent to present a comparison in order to underscore the strength and similarities of the two methods working in concert together, as well as their compatibility.

Table 8

PAR and CGT Comparison

Differences	Similarities	Differences
PAR procedural framework	Cyclic-iterative	**CGT analysis approach**
Transformative	Participant centered	Constructivist
Mixed methodology	Change	Qualitative or mixed methodology
Action	Flexible	Generate Theory
Political	Recursive	Interpretive
Liberating	Multiple realities	
Critical pedagogy	Fluid	
Gradual release to participant	Approach modifiable	
Social justice/equity issues (Freire)	Naturalistic	
Natural setting	Reflective	
	Informs policy & practice	
	Ongoing data analysis	
	Co-learning	
	Inductive	

Table 8 shows how the procedural framework of PAR and the analysis approach of CGT hold much in common and together strengthen the Research Design. CGT is inductive, involves co-learning with participants, and together the end result is the creation of a new theory to inform practices. PAR is inductive, involves working alongside participants interested in social change, and whose end results calls for action to inform practice and bring about social justice and/or equity to community areas of concern.

Two more rather simplistic diagrams visually show the compatibility of the two cyclic approaches to research, showing a similar process for gathering data, conducting the research, and analyzing the data. The word "reflect" could easily run across both of these cycles, as reflection is a key element in both theories.

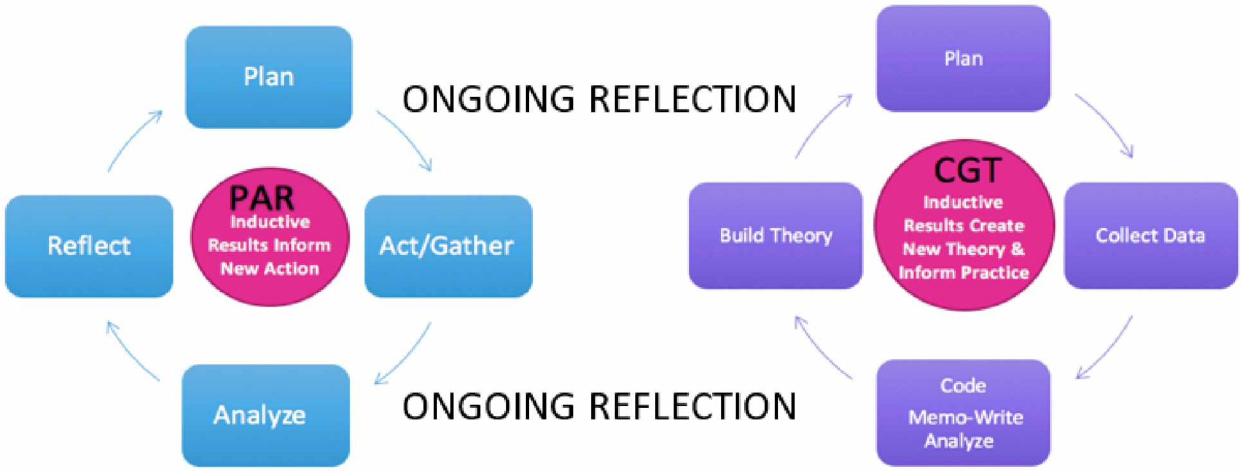

Plan
ONGOING REFLECTION
Plan
PAR
Inductive
Results Inform
New Action
Reflect
Act/Gather
CGT
Inductive
Results Create
New Theory &
Inform Practice
Build Theory
Collect Data
Analyze
ONGOING REFLECTION
Code
Memo-Write
Analyze

Figure 8. Visual comparison of PAR and CGT cycle.

For this research, PAR is an action research framework, while CGT is a qualitative analysis process. Each has a socially-constructed multiple reality, not a single objective reality. PAR is committed to social justice and equity. CGT is committed to improving practices in multiple settings, as is PAR. PAR draws upon Freire's Critical Pedagogy and presents a Transformative agenda requiring an action for change, and CGT seeks to do the same thing by constructing and generating new theories that will guide future practices, actions, and researchers. Phase 1 uses both PAR and CGT within the exploratory portion of this mixed methods research design, and the two research components complement one another well as they have much in common, strengthening the design overall. It's as if they are two sides to one research coin—Theory and Practice.

For Phase 1 my constructivist worldview guided me to a Qualitative methodology from which I chose a Constructed Grounded Theory analysis approach for answering this study's primary question. My life's experiences have also brought me to this choice as I am committed to bringing awareness to the educational community about the benefits for student learning when teaching through culture.

PAR contains a strong collaborative component involving participants as researchers to inform the content of the study. CGT presents a structured, proven procedural framework for the Phase 1 analysis process. The two complement one another as illustrated above by the table and cycles showing their similarities. Phase 1 was designed to secure the data necessary to answer the primary research question: What does TTC look like in a typical K–12 classroom? Using PAR and CGT together is a stronger approach to answering this question than choosing one over the other on its own.

Timeline

Phase 1 represented the majority of time for this 4-year-research study: one year, 2014, for gathering data through interviews, transcripts, field notes, collaboration, and observations; and close to another year, 2015, for analyzing data through initial and focused coding; and well into a third year for creating the CAC. Upon completion of the coding of data, trends, patterns, and themes emerged providing the basis for the construction of a new theory of practice for TTC. This proposed value-added theory of practice was the foundation for the creation of a CAC in 2016, at which time Phase 1 was completed.

Interviews were conducted from March 2014 to November 2014 and included nine questions for individual interviews and two questions for focus groups (See Appendix G). Responses were transcribed as each interview was finished, resulting in a total of 650 pages, all of which were first read to uncover shared common language and phrases to be used in initial coding. Coding using constructed grounded theory analysis took place over an extended period of time in 2015. The TTC Chapter Resource was completed the summer of 2016, ending Phase 1 of this study.

Participants for Phase 1

Of the 20 total participants, there were six indigenous participants, 5 Alaska Natives and one Northern Cheyenne participant. One focus group was made up of 6 teachers working in an Alaska urban Native Charter School, and a second focus group had two retired teachers who were active mentors in the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project at the time of the interview, one having worked in remote villages, rural, and urban Alaska; the other having worked in urban Anchorage with multiple cultures in her middle school classroom. There were three males, two from Alaska and one from Montana. K–12 was represented by the 20 XTs as were all secondary content areas and two current junior college instructors. (While Phase 1 participants are described as XTs for simplicity, it should be noted one participant was a parent, not a teacher.) Together the 20 participants have over 400 years of teaching experience in K–12 and college-level coursework. Individual experience ranged from a low of eight years to a high of 36 years, with an average of 22 years for the 20 XTs (see Table 9). Each participant was given an iTunes gift certificate at close of interview for their participation in this study.

These 20 XTs shared a stated commitment to using culture in classroom instruction and building relationships with students. Each agreed to assist in the research as needed, including being interviewed, reviewing proposed pre/post instruments for Phase 2, discussing emerging themes from interviews, reviewing draft of TTC CAC, and providing additional feedback as needed. All expressed strong interest in the question, what does TTC look like in the K–12

Classroom? And all wanted to be made aware of the results of the research. Each shared a belief in and commitment to the importance of using student culture to build relationships in order to improve student learning. Table 10 summarizes the timeline and location of Phase 1 interviews.

Table 9

Phase 1 Experienced Teachers

Alaska			Montana		
Individuals (pseudonyms)					
1	Gary	Nanwalek	1	Statia	Busby
2	Barbara	Anchorage	2	Susan	Forsyth
3	Frannie	Anchorage	3	David	Colstrip
4	Anita	Sleetmute	4	Delores	Helena
5	Ellen	Fairbanks	5	Patrice	Colstrip
6	Diana	Seward	6	Tamara	Colstrip
Alaska Focus Group 1					
7	Isabella	Anchorage			
8	Vanessa	Anchorage			
Alaska Focus Group 2 Alaska Native Cultural Charter School					
9	Cheryl	Anchorage			
10	Micky (Parent)	Anchorage			
11	Carol	Anchorage			
12	Maureen	Anchorage			
13	Brenda	Anchorage			
14	Susan	Anchorage			

Note. 20 participants.

Table 10

Interview Date and State of XTs

# Assigned participant	Date of interview 2014	Native	STATE of residence	Individual or focus group
785	3/11		AK	Individual
319	4/11		AK	Individual
342	4/12		AK	Individual
731	4/23	×	AK	Individual
615	5/4		MT	Individual
973	5/7	×	MT	Individual
646	5/7		MT	Individual
417	5/7		MT	Individual
111	5/8		MT	Individual
813	5/8		MT	Individual
210	7/14		AK	Individual
537	7/31		AK	Focus group 1
428	7/31		AK	
120	9/29		AK	Individual
864	11/8	×	AK	Focus group 2
912	11/8 (Parent)	×	AK	
714	11/8	×	AK	
516	11/8		AK	
318	11/8	×	AK	
219	11/8		AK	

Data Sources

The source of all data for Phase 1 is transcripts of 14 interview sessions with 20 participants, 19 teachers and one parent, over the course of 10 months in 2014. The two first individual interviews were piloted in the spring to secure feedback from those two participants as to interview questions, process for interview, as well as the actual content transcribed from interview session. As a result, one procedural adjustment was made, and that was to not conduct interviews in public places if at all possible. The remaining 12 interviews followed a similar protocol for consistency: Arrange a time and place, meet, put questions in hand of interviewee and let each person respond to written questions while being recorded, asking for clarification as needed.

Data Collection Techniques

The first two interviews were held in public places, at two coffee shops, with a recorder and hard copy of questions in hand. The researcher asked questions, one by one, working through the nine questions (Appendix G) of the interview protocol. Interviewees responded, asking for clarification as needed. The remaining 12 interview sessions of 18 participants were conducted in either classrooms, researcher's home, or a mutually agreed upon office within a school district. One Montana interview was again held in a public place, but space was provided for a private setting. All interviews were simultaneously recorded by two methods, a separate recording machine using ribbon tapes as well as a digital backup on the researcher's computer. The researcher also took handwritten notes for all 14 interview sessions.

Managing and Recording Data

All taped records were given, one by one, to an Alaska state certified court reporter to transcribe. Digital copies resulting from researcher computer backup were placed in a file on researcher's computer entitled Interviews, and maintained on computer as well as backup hard drive. The court reporter certified the content of transcripts, returned ribbon tapes, and provided another digital copy on a jump drive, as well as a printed hard copy transcript for each of 14 interview sessions to researcher. All 650 pages of the original hard copy transcripts—plus two digital copies of the same interviews—are currently kept in office of researcher.

Data Analysis Procedures

The process for coding all transcripts followed constructed grounded theory coding practices. Transcripts were read as soon as transcribed, and a list of shared common language among transcripts was made to guide researcher in the initial coding process. Next an initial coding was accomplished with the assistance of software and the 1st Read List. Finally, a secondary, more focused coding was compiled by combining initial codes into emerging themes. Three readings were done in all.

To assist in this coding process, Atlas.ti software was used. All digital transcripts were uploaded into the Atlas.ti software for analysis, coding, and record-keeping. Each page was read by the researcher and initial coding was done by looking for actions in the data (Charmaz, 2014), by looking for words that reflect actions, as well as letting those actions lead to themes. This initial coding would begin to unify ideas analytically among all transcripts in a way that led to focused coding as a next step.

The final step in the analysis employed focused coding to help sort the initial codes. This sorting was designed to organize the data gathered in the first read and initial coding in ways that would reveal patterns, trends, and groupings that could naturally be moved together into focused topics because of a shared theoretical theme or idea.

Methods for Verification or Trustworthiness

Findings were substantiated through ongoing collaboration with XTs to verify findings based upon experience in the field. The researcher performed a re-reading of culturally responsive literature to compare strategies, activities, and methods proven to be successful in the literature to responses and themes emerging within the transcripts. Upon completion of Phase 2, emerging themes from responses to the one open-ended question in Phase 2 were compared with the five emerging themes of Phase 1 to verify and check for trustworthiness of findings in both phases. Once a new Theory of Practice for how to teach through culture was constructed, all transcripts from Phase 1 were re-read (a 4th reading) to check new theory's applicability to original testimony of the XTs.

Limitations

Limitations include gathering data from only two of the 50 states, interviewing only 20 participants with no focus groups in Montana, and having the researcher select all interviewees based upon own networking and/or referrals by trusted fellow teachers. There were no criteria for participating in Phase 1, other than Researcher's invitation based upon known teaching experiences. Assumptions made about XTs' knowledge of critical pedagogy, culturally responsive/relevant theories, and transformative theory were not verified in any way prior to interviews. Only four of the 20 Phase 1 participants continued to collaborate with Researcher throughout remainder of study.

Creation of Chapter and Lessons

Once themes were identified, a CAC was created building on those themes. Focusing on one of the emerging themes, lessons were designed, videos were selected for viewing in preparation of delivery of lessons, and all pieces of the CAC portion of this research were put together in a package for use by ECTs in Phase 2. The creation of CAC, related lessons and selection of videos, in addition to preparation of directions for use of these resources in the next phase, marked the end of Phase 1.

Phase 2

Descriptive Statistics Approach

A quantitative 33-line item tool/checklist inventory of teacher classroom practices was used to check early career teacher knowledge of best practices of culturally responsive K-12 classroom instruction. This instrument was first used in a Canadian study designed to inform culturally responsive teaching in a Yukon First Nations Community (Lewthwaite, Owen, Doiron, Renaud & McMillan, 2014). Permission was granted by one of its authors, Lewthwaite, for use of this tool in this study. Phase 2 was designed to administer this Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI) as soon as participants were on board for the study, as a reflection piece about TTC as well as a pre-measure, then deliver the CAC and accompanying lessons and videos, after which the identical CCI would be administered a second time to see if any changes in classroom practice had occurred. One additional open-ended question was added to the CCI to gain insights, awareness of shortcomings, or desired changes in lessons or CAC. The instrument was chosen because of its purpose in informing what it means to deliver culturally responsive instruction, and further because its 33 questions were supportive of and well aligned with the five themes that emerged in Phase 1 of the study.

All nine Phase 2 participants in the study completed all steps required by the researcher. Each participant was given directions for the study (Appendix F) including how to use the newly created CAC to gain insights into how to use culture to deliver classroom instruction. Each of nine Phase 2 participating teachers—eight ECTs and one experienced—took the *pre*-Classroom Inventory Checklist [Appendix E], watched two videos, read the newly created CAC, chose and delivered two lessons of those included with the Chapter, took a *post*-Classroom Inventory Checklist [Appendix E], and answered one open-ended question [Appendix G] following delivery of two selected lessons. Each Phase 2 participant was given a $25 iTune certificate upon completion of the final step, and all names were entered into a hat for a drawing of 30,000 Alaska Air Miles—a winner from each state. This entire research study collaborated with participating teachers from opposite ends of a continuum of teachers TTC—20 experienced teachers in Phase 1 and eight inexperienced ECTs, plus one experienced teacher XT in Phase 2.

Timeline for Phase 2

The TTC CAC was completed at the close of Phase 1, in the summer of 2016, after which a set of directions was designed for use by ECTs in the implementation of this resource (Appendix F). ECTs had to be located in Montana and Alaska and agree to participate, completing all steps in the delivery of lessons. The search for Phase 2 participants occurred the summer and fall of 2016 by researcher enlisting the help of co-worker mentors within the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project, giving researcher access to a potential pool of more than 300 ECTs. Montana solicitation for teachers included researcher meeting with five superintendents and a college president from immediate region of Northern Cheyenne reservation and those schools serving students who reside on that reservation. Research was shared, assurances were made about the IRB secured through Chief Dull Knife College of the Northern Cheyenne, and invitations to participate were extended to ECTs through these administrators. The actual timeline for completion of data gathering began by invitation to all names provided of more than 50 ECTs the first of November 2016. Initially more than 20 ECTs responded they would like to participate, and Step One, completion of demographics was sent to all 20 volunteers. In the end, nine participants completed all steps required for Phase 2 as shown in Table 11, breaking down the timeline for their participation.

Table 11

Timeline for Phase 2

# Assigned participant	Urban, village, or town	Pre-checklist 2016	Lessons delivered 2016-17	Post-checklist 2016-2017	Weeks
A43	Village	11/14	December	12/28	6
A34	Village	11/14	December-January	1/26	10
A67	Village	11/17	December-January	1/20	8
A98	Village	11/17	December-January	1/22	8
A22	Village	11/17	December-January	1/31	10
A74	Village	12/5	December-January	2/1	8
M64	Town	12/7	January-February	2/6	8
A65	Urban	1/16	January-February	2/6	4
A53	Village	1/26	January-February	2/10	3

Phase 2 began with the search for ECT participants in late summer-fall 2016, and concluded with the final checklist being submitted February 10, 2017. The single experienced teacher from Montana, M64, who asked to be involved, was tracked through the process, and because numbers were so small, said data were included in analysis.

Participants

Phase 2 participants were chosen because of their newness to the career of teaching. In Alaska, names of potential ECT participants were given to the researcher by Alaska mentor colleagues working statewide with those newest to the profession, and approximately 30 Alaska ECTs were invited to participate, of which 20 responded favorably, and eight actually followed through with all steps required for Phase 2 of this study. In Montana the researcher worked through administration for six schools close to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, in an attempt to secure names of ECTs willing to participate. Invitations were extended, through school administrators, to approximately 20 potential ECTs and none were willing to participate. One experienced teacher heard of the study and asked to be a participant in Phase 2 and she was included. Her age and years of teaching experience were not part of the averages included for the Phase 2 presentation. Her contributions, participation, and data were included in all averages and descriptive analysis of findings. Table 12 summarizes the demographics of Phase 2 ECT participants, including combined teaching experience and average age.

Seven of the eight teachers in Alaska were currently teaching in remote villages, with the eighth teaching in the largest city in Alaska, urban Anchorage (see Figure 3). The average age for the Alaska ECTs was 26, and their average teaching experience was two years. Only one of the nine participants, A65 in Anchorage, taught more than seven cultures in her current caseload, with the other eight teaching between one and four cultures at any given time. There were no indigenous ECTs participating in Phase 2. The one XT from Montana taught in a rural community located 20 miles from the targeted Northern Cheyenne reservation.

Table 12

Phase 2 Early Career Teachers

Alaska			Montana		
Early career teachers			Experienced		
1	A98	Elim	9	M64	Colstrip
2	A74	Napaskiak			
3	A22	Brevig Mission			
4	A34	Eek			
5	A43	Quinhagak			
6	A67	New Stuyahok			
7	A65	Anchorage			
8	A53	Brevig Mission			

Note. 9 participants.

Data Sources

The source of all data for Phase 2 is the pre- and post-Checklist of Classroom Inventory (Lewthwaite et al., 2014) (Appendix E), as well as typed answers to one open-ended question.

Said data was submitted over a 3-10-week period of time during the winter of 2016-17. Said Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI) contained 33 classroom practices common to teachers TTC. This CCI tool was found in a study conducted in Canada where the community and educational leaders were trying to improve the quality of instruction by adding strategies and activities that taught through culture. The 33 items found in this instrument aligned with the five themes that emerged in Phase 1 of this study, and permission for its use was secured from one of the original authors of the instrument. One open-ended question was added to the checklist at the close of ECTs' use of the CAC to gather any insights, concerns, or additional learnings.

Data Collection Techniques

A research assistant experienced in the use of Survey Monkey was employed by researcher to help manage the gathering of data in Phase 2. Researcher and assistant have a long-standing work relationship and assistant managed the Survey Monkey for the study, verifying at each step of the process, by every single participant, that the steps were completed as stated. The assistant helped with the management of the data while at the same time serving as a quality control for participant claims to having completed each step. The assistant and researcher shared a Google Excel sheets document so each could see in real time the progress of each participant. Communication with each participant as steps were completed was conducted through email between participant and researcher. Pre- and post-completion of Checklist of Classroom Inventory was managed by assistant through the use of Survey Monkey. Initially directions were sent through email to all participants by researcher (Appendix F). As soon as consent forms were signed and returned, the pre-CCI checklist was delivered through Survey Monkey by assistant. Each subsequent step was then delivered, through email—one by one—by Researcher until each participant eventually notified researcher of delivery of provided TTC lessons, the final classroom delivery step. Once Survey Monkey indicated completion of the post-CCI with one open-ended question, participants received a $25 iTune gift certificate and their names were entered into a drawing for 30,000 Alaska Airlines air miles. When complete, participant notified researcher through email, and research assistant confirmed through Survey Monkey that data was complete, and gift certificate was sent. A drawing for air miles was made once final participant completed post-CCI, and those air miles were awarded.

Managing and Recording Data

The researcher and assistant shared Survey Monkey usage as a team to track all data. A set of directions was provided to each participant, and tracked through emails and Survey Monkey step-by-step. When consent form and demographics were returned, pre-CCI checklist (Appendix E) was sent. When pre-CCI was complete as verified by assistant through Survey Monkey, the directions for use of TTC CAC were sent, along with the first two video titles to be watched. Once videos were watched, participant notified researcher, and researcher sent the TTC CAC, along with accompany 21 classroom lessons. When lessons were delivered and participant notified researcher, post-CCI checklist was sent using Survey Monkey, along with one open-ended question about the entire process of Phase 2. Said open-ended question invited any additional information participant might be willing to share. As each step was completed, dates were recorded on a Google Excel sheets document shared between researcher and assistant, and next steps were sent. The invitations to participants were extended first of November, and as soon as demographics were completed and returned, the checklist instrument was sent. All dates of sending and receiving were maintained on a Google Excel sheets document between Researcher and research assistant. Completion of all steps varied from a low of three weeks to a high of ten weeks to finish all steps (see Table 11). Weekly verbal communication, as well as shared Google Excel sheets document, between Researcher and research assistant also occurred to assure an up-to-date accounting of the nine participants.

Data Analysis Procedures

The CCI tool was used in its original form, with one additional open-ended question attached at the bottom. The 33 checklist questions were arranged, once all post-responses were received, into the five Phase 1 themes, and those themes were then analyzed using descriptive statistics and compared pre/post responses. Those numbers were then analyzed to address the value-added nature of the CAC for informing ECTs about what it means to teach through culture.

In addition, the single open-ended qualitative responses by all nine participants were read, initially coded, and focus coded using the same constructed grounded theory approach as was used in Phase 1 of this research.

Methods for Verification or Trustworthiness

Methods for verification or trustworthiness of results included ongoing collaboration with XTs to verify findings, based upon their experience in the field. A comparison of Phase 2 findings was made with Phase 1 themes to compare findings from both Phases in order to check for trustworthiness. Ongoing dialogue with several XTs from Phase 1 was held throughout analysis of Phase 2 data to seek trustworthiness of Phase 2 findings.

Limitations

Limitations include gathering data from only two of 50 states, working with only nine participants, having only one teacher from Montana who did not fit the profile of an ECT as called for by the research design. There were no indigenous ECTs, only non-Native participants. Further limitations include the statistical analysis of Phase 2 data, it was limited to a simple comparison of the averages of nine participants and their answers to 33 questions. A limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size used in Phase 2. Nine teachers, with one not being an ECT, affects the generalizability of the study to other ECTs. Length of the use of the TTC Chapter Resource, delivering only two lessons over a 3-10-week time period may be too little time to substantiate the use of the CAC. One assumption in this research is that ECTs have limited knowledge and experience with critical pedagogy, culturally relevant theory, or transformative learning theory.

Summary of Methodology

This Two-Phase, mixed methods exploratory sequential Participatory Action Research study was conducted over a multi-year time frame 2014-2017, involving 29 participants. Phase 1 gathered qualitative data from 20 experienced teachers located in two states, and was analyzed using a constructed grounded theory approach. Results of analyzing transcripts, along with Literature Review, were the foundation for creation of a CAC resource, which concluded Phase 1.

Phase 2 gathered quantitative data from eight Alaska ECTs and one Montana XT, using a Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI) tool that was analyzed by averaging the pre/post scores and comparing the differences before and after use of the CAC. In addition, one open-ended question at the close of use of CAC provided additional qualitative data about the usability and value of the CAC as well as the process of implementing the lessons. Next, Chapter 4 of this research presents the details of the data gathered along with the findings.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

The results of this research are presented in Chapter 4 in two phases. First to be shared are the Phase 1 results of analyzing 650 pages of transcripts gathered from 20 veteran educator participants in 14 interviews located in Alaska and Montana. Included in the results of this analysis is a new value-added theory of practice about TTC. Next, the CAC created using the results of interview analysis is presented. Creation of the CAC concludes Phase 1 of this study.

Directions provided to ECTs for their completion of Phase 2 of the study included:

1. Complete a demographics form and return to researcher (10 mins)
2. Complete a pre-checklist on your classroom practices (10 mins)
3. View a 30-minute video (30 mins) [*note*: one additional video was added]
4. Read a DRAFT Chapter on TTC (15-20 mins)
5. Deliver two lessons from those provided TTC lessons (2-3 hrs.)
6. Complete a post-checklist on your classroom practices (10 mins)
7. Complete one written short response. (15 mins)

The goal of the CAC was to support ECTs in their gaining of knowledge about TTC, especially through the five thematic patterns and trends that emerged in Phase 1 of this research. The CAC was designed to focus on Relationships, yet the video support and accompanying lessons did include all five of the emerging themes. Results for the Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI), as a measure of the value of the CAC, are shared.

Phase 2 presents results of data gathered from participants through the CCI tool administered during a 3- to 10-week period in the winter of 2016–2017, before and after each participant used the newly created CAC. In addition, said participants provided responses to one open-ended question and the analyzed results of those responses are shared, providing insight into lessons learned by ECTs having used the CAC in this research.

Organization of Chapter 4

To begin Chapter 4, the primary research question explored in this study is once again presented followed by the Phase 1 results of analyzing the interview transcripts of experienced teachers skilled in delivering instruction through culture. Steps used in Phase 1 coding using a constructed grounded theory analysis approach are shared in detail, from which a new theory on what it means to teach through culture is presented. The resulting CAC, created based upon Phase 1 findings, will be shared next, along with attached lessons (Appendix D^1 and D^2), concluding Phase 1.

The pre/post quantitative results of the Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI) are presented, as well as the results from analysis of the responses to one open-ended question provided after the post-CCI checklist. The chapter concludes with a summary about the results.

Research Question

This study's primary research question is:

RQ 1 What does teaching through culture (TTC) look like in a typical K–12 classroom?

In addition, this study considers three related questions that emerged during the research: 1) How does state policy influence or inform TTC in the K–12 Classroom? 2) What do undergraduate study programs do to prepare teachers for delivering classroom instruction through culture? And, 3) How does TTC contribute to student learning?

Phase 1 Results

A five-step process was used in the coding of transcripts, which included a thorough first reading of all 650 pages, line by line, to identify common shared educational terms, followed by two formal coding levels: Initial Coding and Focused coding. Once both coding levels were complete, a thorough analysis of the sorting and coding was conducted leading to the creation of a new theory of practice about TTC. Finally, all transcripts were re-read through the lens of the new value-added theory of practice to validate accuracy of new theory of practice. That five-step process is captured in Table 13.

Table 13

5-Step Coding Process

Step	Details
1	Thorough Reading of 14 Interview Transcripts, noting common shared educational terms Identification of over 288 common educational terms (Appendix J)
2	Initial Coding of Transcripts Identification of 133 areas of TTC common practices, strategies & activities. (Appendix K)
3	Focused Coding of Transcripts Categorization and combining of initial codes, terms, findings into five themes. (Appendix L)
4	Data Analysis and Report of Findings New Value-Added Theory & Creation of Chapter About Culture (Appendices D^1, D^2.)
5	Final Review of 14 Interview Transcripts to Check validity of new theory TTC Theory of Practice (Appendix C)

Coding of 14 Interview Transcripts

As detailed in chapter 3, interviews occurred over an eight-month period of time. As each of the 14 interview sessions was completed, a transcript was archived digitally by two methods, as well as filed in a folder online and a hard copy placed in a filing drawer located in Researcher's office. The online Word documents were then read by researcher (Step 1), line by line, and 14 lists of terms were generated to identify common, shared language to guide the Initial Coding of data. At the close of gathering the final transcript, a spreadsheet was created capturing 14 separate lists (Appendix J). These terms guided the identification of codes chosen during the Initial Coding stage. Three sample first readings of interviews follow.

Step 1. Step One involved a thorough Reading of 14 Interview Transcripts, noting common shared educational terms and identification of nearly 300 common educational terms (Appendix J). Table 14 shows the details of a first read of transcripts.

Step 2. Per the process outlined by Charmaz (2014), once all transcripts were digitally uploaded into Atlas.ti, transcripts were again read line-by-line and sections of transcripts (segments of data) were highlighted and coded using those terms and phrases chosen during the first read of transcripts to guide identification of initial codes. Table 15 provides a sample of said process. In total, 133 categories (Appendix K) were generated in this manner, through the initial coding process, with the 14 most frequent initial codes shown in Figure 9.

Table 14

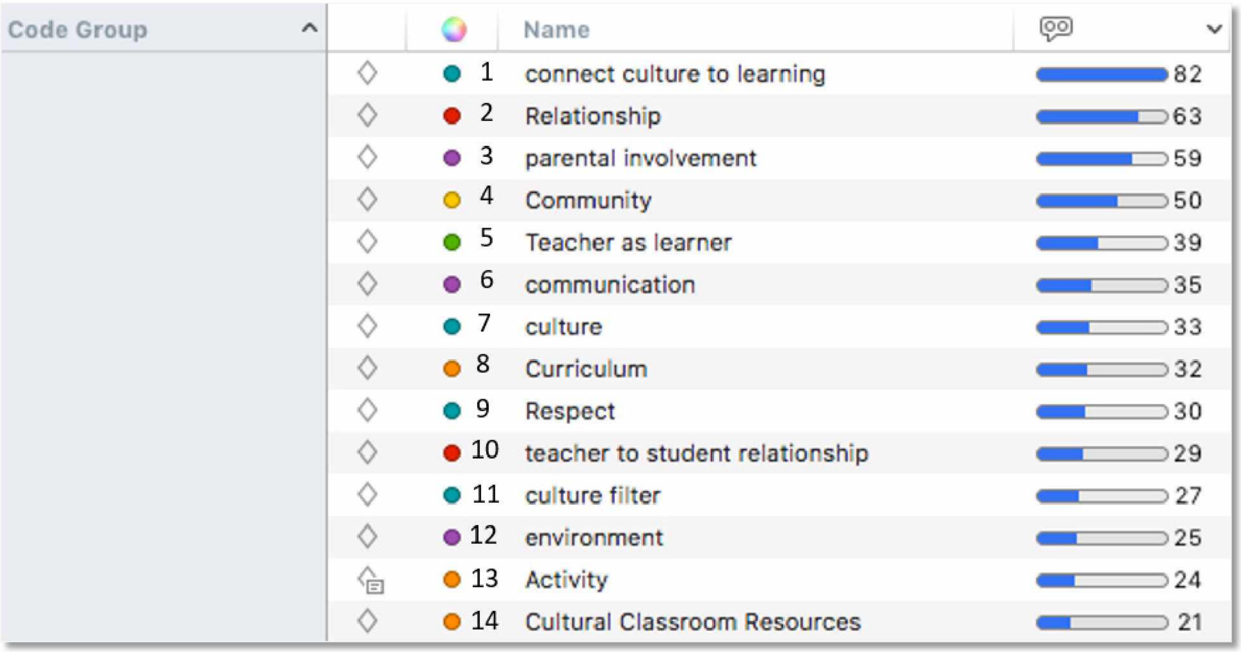
Step 1: First Read of Transcripts

AK Urban 4/12	MT N. C. Reservation 5/8	AK Rural/Urban (Focus) 7/31	
342	111	537	428
Accessible Classroom	Ask questions	Academic Language Important	
Background knowledge KWL	Communicate: Facebook I/M	Classroom Climate	
Caring	Connect to community	Connect Curriculum to Culture	
Circle Grouping	Cultural Protocol/Invites	Culture defined for all	
Communication Routine	Family surroundings in Class	Establish Norms in Classroom	
Community Involvement	Humor	Family adopt a teacher	
Connections	Interested in students	Grouping	
Culture is key	Know culture	Honor/Respect Student	
Immerse self in culture	Know your students	Know each student	
Emotions Important	Learn from students	Know own culture first	
Giving back to School	Listen to students	Language[1] Powerful	
Grouping	Open invitation to Parents	Know learning styles	
Home, Caring Classroom	Place-based lessons	Partner with Parents	
Interactive	Positive Attitude	Positive before Negative	
Letters to Parents	Technology	Relationship building	
Listening		SEL helps with resiliency	
Nature baskets		Story Telling	
Oral Tradition		Support systems for teachers	
Parent as Role Model		Take time to know students	
Parent Presenters/Teachers		Thematic curriculum connect to culture	
Parent Student 1st Teacher			
Peace Corner, not time out			
Personal Connections			
Positive about Child			
Positive relationships even when challenged			
Raised Eyebrows			
Relationships foundational			
Role models			
Space for students			
Speaking at Funerals			
Story Telling			
Visit Students Outside School			

Table 15

Sample Initial Coding Process

Participant #	Grounded Theory	Initial Coding
111	I listen to my students. That's how I build relationships with them. I watch them. I use culture in my teaching style by trying to learn from my students how best to work. I look at culture as an opportunity for me to learn and, by learning from the students, I can relate back to them, giving them the opportunity to teach me opens doors so that it's more of a give and take. Trading information rather than me cramming information into your brain. I get to know my students by paying attention.	Listen, Build Relationships, Learn, Students Teach, Trading Information, Pay Attention;
210	…need to understand that the successful builders in own community, regardless of educational background, can apply theorem without being able to state it… you'll see collapsed roofs from people who don't understand. So Pythagorus wrote it down but, actually, you know, Jimmy John knows it too. He [Jimmy] knows the ratio of the rise and the run needs to be a certain amount for the roof to be able to slough off snow…need to understand that here's a guy that -- you know, they may think that academia doesn't appreciate but, in fact, I have a great appreciation for the fact that his roof never collapses. He had an intuitive sense of this theorem. A culturally responsive educator is one that responds from own cultural viewpoint to connect a culture of the kids with what's going on in the classroom.	Connect content to community, to student background, place-based connections, connect to culture; use cultural filter, aware of own cultural biases;
428	So honor and respect, but build opportunities for future success by expanding that vocabulary.	Honor, respect, expand vocabulary;
120	…those small interactions away from school are huge; You are not in your cultural setting, you're in somebody else's cultural setting so you need to make the effort as part of teaching to be culturally responsive, and that's our job is to be responsive to the kids' needs in any multitude of ways but when you're in a -- a very different cultural setting, find out what the culture is, bring it in as much as you can…	Interactive outside school; culturally respond to kids', make effort, needs, learn culture, connect to content
864	The art we bring is the infusion of culture in whatever we teach and it should be the lens through which we filter our lessons.	Infuse culture, lens to filter lessons;
219	…interesting to look at what teachers need to do to be culturally responsive in a bush school versus a city school here. I feel like when teaching in the bush, you're always trying to explain the outside world to your students in a way that they'll understand it…whereas I feel like here at our school [city], I'm trying to teach them the missing parts of their own culture.	Setting matters, place-based, connect outside culture to inside, and vice-versa, balance the two.



Code Group

		Name	
●	1	connect culture to learning	82
●	2	Relationship	63
●	3	parental involvement	59
●	4	Community	50
●	5	Teacher as learner	39
●	6	communication	35
●	7	culture	33
●	8	Curriculum	32
●	9	Respect	30
●	10	teacher to student relationship	29
●	11	culture filter	27
●	12	environment	25
●	13	Activity	24
●	14	Cultural Classroom Resources	21

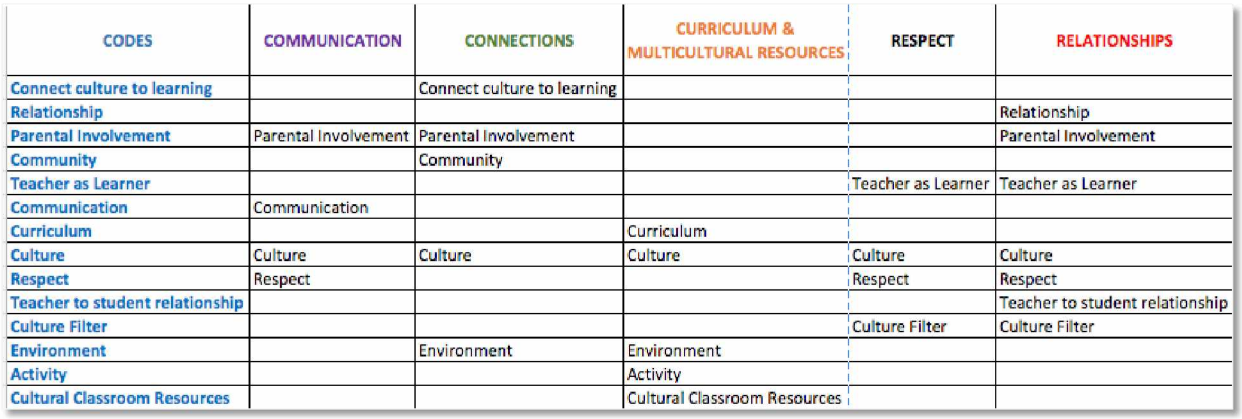
Figure 9. Step 2: Sample initial coding.

Step 3. Focus coding of the initial codes was accomplished using color-coding options, as well as manual selections to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize those larger amounts of data (133 initial codes) in Atlas.ti. For example, four initial codes of 1) observing, 2) pacing, 3) place-based curriculum, and 4) planning lessons were each placed into one color-coded category labeled first as Cultural Classroom Resources, and later renamed Multicultural Resources. In this way, the 133 initial codes covering large data were collapsed into a fewer number of focus codes. In the final grouping, there were five focus group themes that surfaced from all sorting, five themes that captured lessons learned from the 20 interview participants in Phase 1. Those five themes include: 1) Communication, 2) Connections, 3) Multicultural Resources, 4) Respect, and 5) Relationships. (Appendix L)

One way to look at this final sorting of categories into focus codes resulting in five themes is to imagine the first four themes—Communication, Connections, Multicultural Resources, and Respect—as the four corner pieces to a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle about TTC where the puzzle box picture reveals a detailed networking schema of educational Relationships—the 5th theme—from teacher to student, student to student, teacher to teacher, teacher to parent, teacher to community, community to administration and so on through and including a variety of educational relationships. A key finding in this research has been that building relationships with students and educational stakeholders is an essential piece of the TTC puzzle.

In the final analysis, these five themes embraced all TTC categories, strategies, activities, and methods identified, whether from the first reading, the initial coding or the final focus coding, as well as lessons gained from the 20 XT participants in Phase 1. The five themes include: 1) Communication, 2) Connections, 3) Multicultural Resources, 4) Respect, and 5) Relationships.

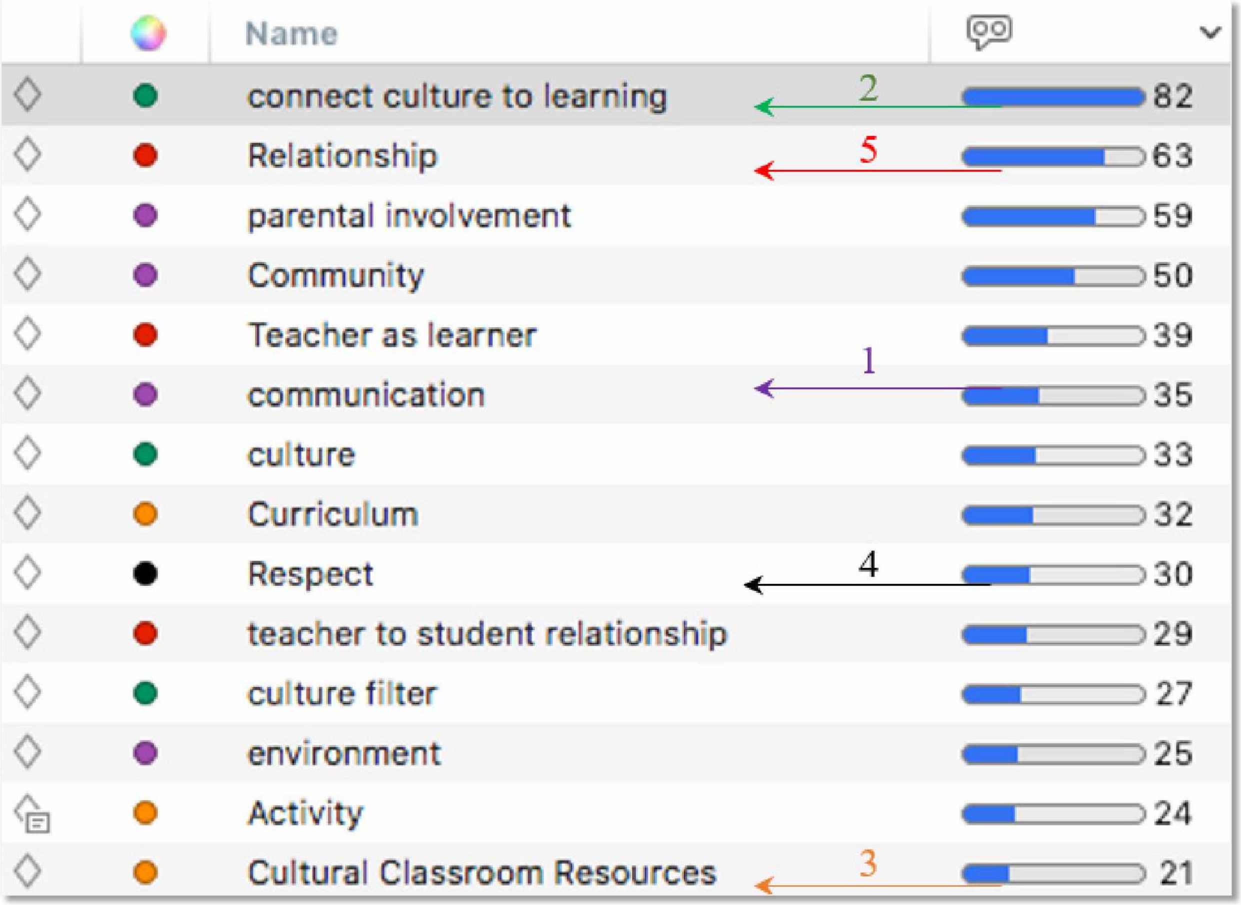
Figure 10 uses the top 14 codes as a sample illustration for how categories were sorted into five themes.



CODES	COMMUNICATION	CONNECTIONS	CURRICULUM & MULTICULTURAL RESOURCES	RESPECT	RELATIONSHIPS
Connect culture to learning		Connect culture to learning			
Relationship					Relationship
Parental Involvement	Parental Involvement	Parental Involvement			Parental Involvement
Community		Community			
Teacher as Learner				Teacher as Learner	Teacher as Learner
Communication	Communication				
Curriculum			Curriculum		
Culture	Culture	Culture	Culture	Culture	Culture
Respect	Respect			Respect	Respect
Teacher to student relationship					Teacher to student relationship
Culture Filter				Culture Filter	Culture Filter
Environment		Environment	Environment		
Activity			Activity		
Cultural Classroom Resources			Cultural Classroom Resources		

Figure 10. Step 3: Sample focus coding.

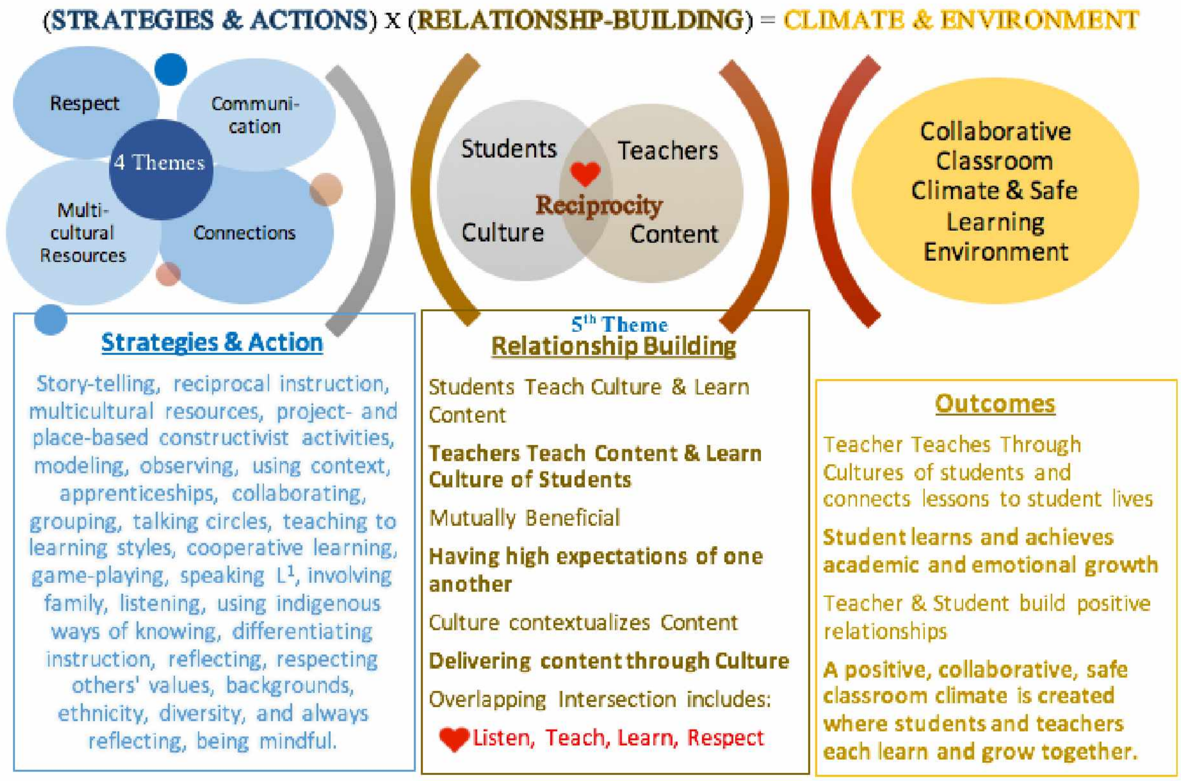
The identification of these five emerging themes was further supported by fact they were among the top 14 focus codes identified (Figure 11). The remaining nine categories in the top 14 did not lend themselves to a thematic grouping, and instead could best be placed in one of the five emerging themes. For example, parental involvement and community, at first glance seem to warrant their own thematic category. Upon further analysis, though, each fits quite nicely under one or more of the existing five: parental involvement under Respect, Communication, Connections, and/or Connect culture to learning. The same can be said of Community fitting under Connections, Respect, and or Communication. And both parental involvement and community are more foundational than thematic in the schema of the bigger ecological picture of the entire ecosystem. Important yes, one could even say essential. Yet thematic for purposes of this study, not necessarily. And each does fit within one or more of the emerging themes. The five themes led to the construction of a grounded theory of practice for TTC.



	Name	
●	connect culture to learning	82
●	Relationship	63
●	parental involvement	59
●	Community	50
●	Teacher as learner	39
●	communication	35
●	culture	33
●	Curriculum	32
●	Respect	30
●	teacher to student relationship	29
●	culture filter	27
●	environment	25
●	Activity	24
●	Cultural Classroom Resources	21

Figure 11. Step 3: Five themes emerge.

Step 4. Using the five emerging themes identified by the 20 participants in Phase 1, a theory of practice for TTC was constructed and is attached as Appendix C. This theory of practice is the guiding framework for the creation of a CAC designed to help introduce ECTs to what it means to teach through culture, with a focus on one of the five developing themes: Relationships. The following graphic represents this theory of practice for Teaching Through Culture.


(STRATEGIES & ACTIONS) x (RELATIONSHP-BUILDING) = CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT
Respect
Communi-cation
4 Themes
Multi-cultural Resources
Connections
Students
Teachers
Reciprocity
Culture
Content
Collaborative Classroom Climate & Safe Learning Environment

Strategies & Action

Story-telling, reciprocal instruction, multicultural resources, project- and place-based constructivist activities, modeling, observing, using context, apprenticeships, collaborating, grouping, talking circles, teaching to learning styles, cooperative learning, game-playing, speaking L^1, involving family, listening, using indigenous ways of knowing, differentiating instruction, reflecting, respecting others' values, backgrounds, ethnicity, diversity, and always reflecting, being mindful.

5th Theme

Relationship Building

Students Teach Culture & Learn Content

Teachers Teach Content & Learn Culture of Students

Mutually Beneficial

Having high expectations of one another

Culture contextualizes Content

Delivering content through Culture

Overlapping Intersection includes:

❤Listen, Teach, Learn, Respect

Outcomes

Teacher Teaches Through Cultures of students and connects lessons to student lives

Student learns and achieves academic and emotional growth

Teacher & Student build positive relationships

A positive, collaborative, safe classroom climate is created where students and teachers each learn and grow together.

Figure 12. Theory of practice for teaching through culture.

Once each teacher agreed to participate in Phase 2, signed consent was obtained from all participants and a letter (Appendix F) was sent outlining directions for the approximate 10-hour requirement for taking part in the study, at which time Phase 2 research was begun.

Teaching through culture, a theory of practice, draws upon select teacher strategies and actions that advance student learning. These strategies and actions, fall within four of five themes embraced by quality TTC educators, including: Story-telling, reciprocal instruction, multicultural resources, project- and place-based constructivist activities, modeling, observing, using context, apprenticeships, collaborating, teaching to learning styles, cooperative learning, game-playing, speaking L^1, involving family, listening, using indigenous ways of knowing, differentiating, respecting values, backgrounds, ethnicity, diversity, and always reflecting, being mindful while at the same time building purposeful relationships, the fifth theme. Key to the success of any classroom strategy and/or action, for a TTC educator, is the relationship with the student. Building relationships with students is the lifeblood of TTC.

First and foremost, TTC teachers know themselves culturally, and recognize own biases. TTC teachers build relationships with each student each year. TTC Teachers listen to students in order to learn about student heritage, culture, and background knowledge. TTC teachers are learners. Teacher learning is essential for teaching and delivering content. Students in a TTC classroom are teachers. Reciprocal relationships exist between teacher-student and between culture-content that contribute to the professional growth of teacher and the academic growth of student. At the heart of the dyad between student and teacher is the relationship where teacher supports the student academically and emotionally while using knowledge of student and indigenous ways of knowing to deliver instruction. Students learn. Drawing from professional development, personal teaching experience, district support, mutual respect for all, TTC cohorts/goals, and student relationships, TTC connects instruction, resources, and meaningful content to student, leading to understanding. Together teachers and students, problem-solve, and learn. TTC results in a collaborative classroom climate where both teacher and student teach, learn, and grow together in a safe learning environment.

Step 5. The researcher reread all 650 pages for the purpose of matching new theory of TTC with all responses given by all 20 participants. Said theory was also shared with at least five of the XT participants for feedback, input, and suggestions, a process called member checking. A few minor adjustments in language were made and the new value-added theory of TTC was accepted as accurately reflecting what the XTs had shared, as well as what the literature revealed by those in members checking and by researcher. The final step in Phase 1 included writing a CAC in order to share with ECTs what TTC looks like in the K–12 classroom according to the newly created Theory of Practice.

TTC Chapter Resource

The TTC CAC (Appendix D^1) used the theory of practice created in Phase 1 to provide for ECTs a brief introduction to what it means to build Relationships between teacher and students and students and students. Included with the Chapter were two must-view videos and a few optional videos, a collection of lessons (Appendix D^2) from which two were to be selected and taught, as well as directions for the use of the resources being provided to ECTs (Appendix F). Before finalizing CAC, it was shared with two of the XT Phase 1 participants for their input, review, and suggestions. A few words were changed, lessons added and modified, and minor revisions made.

Phase 2 Results

Pre–Post Averages

The first graph results shown in Figure 13 compare CIC pre/post thematic averages; while the second graph (Figure 14) results look at one question from each theme. In each graph the two top responses Often/Always were combined for one total and contrasted with the two low responses of Never/Sometimes for a second total. Those totals will be shared following the graphs.

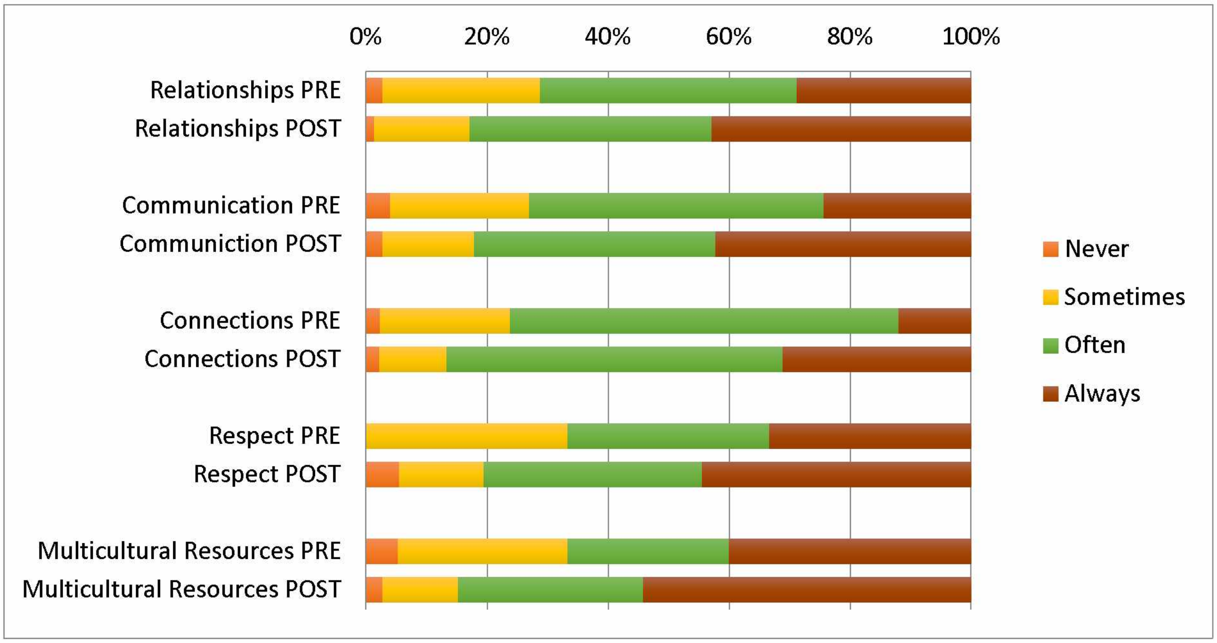


Figure 13. Checklist final pre–post averages.

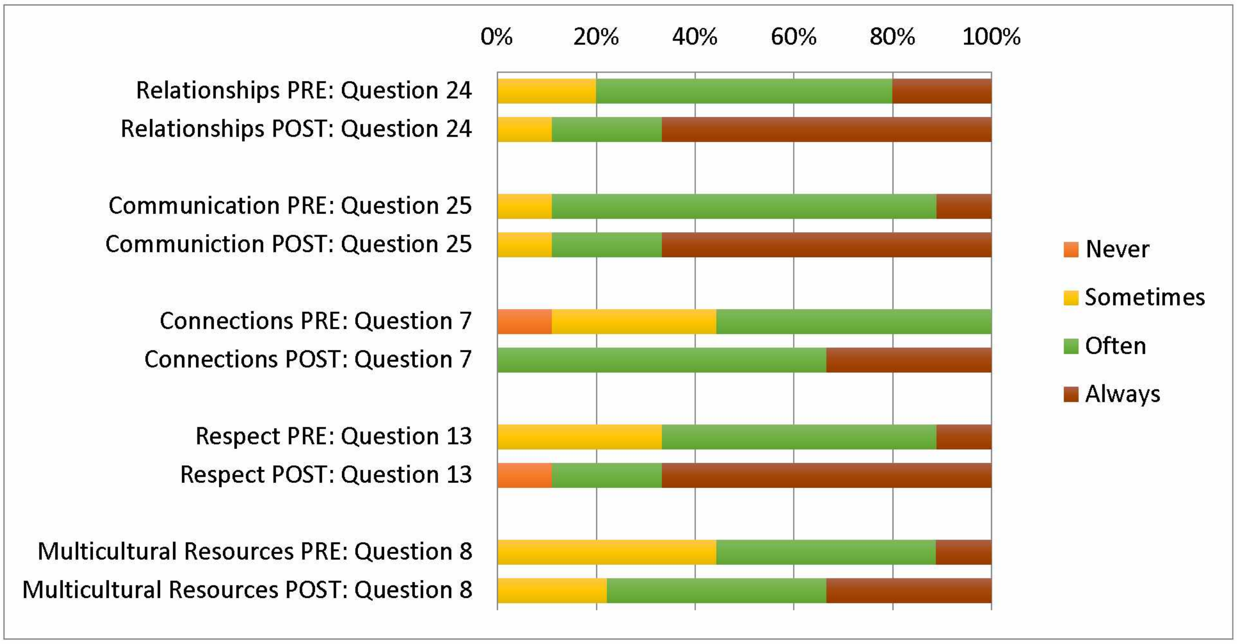


Figure 14. By question pre–post responses.

As the results above show, averages to averages, following use of the CAC, growth was made in all five thematic areas of what it means to TTC. Theme of Relationships was the focus of the CAC, and when comparing Often/Always totals with Never/Sometime totals, scores in Relationships improved by 12 percentage points. In Communication, the growth was 7 percentage points; Connections, 15 percentage points, Respect 14 percentage points, and Multicultural Resources 18 percentage points.

Examining one question for each theme provides another perspective for looking at the individual responses to theme questions. Again, combining Often/Always together and comparing those totals with combined Never/Sometimes totals reveals the following changes from pre- to post on these five separate questions. Q24-*Relationships*: “Students are encouraged to seek assistance from others,” showed a slight upward change of four percentage points; Q25-*Communication*: “Feedback is provided as students work on tasks,” had zero change overall although several of the “often” responses improved to “always,” showing upward movement from one to the other top choice. Q7-*Connections*: “Stories are shared that are relevant to students,” had the greatest upward movement with 44 percentage points improved, and 100% of the nine participants checking Often or Always when responding to this question in the post-Checklist. Q13-*Respect*: “The tasks carried out in class encourage perseverance,” showed upwards movement at 22 percentage points. And, finally, Q8-*Multicultural Resources*: “Hands-on experiences are used to provide concrete examples” also showed improvement from pre- to post- of 22 percentage points.

Open-Ended Question

The open-ended question (Appendix G) included on the post-Checklist asked, “What would you like to add about anything learned while using this resource when it comes to TTC in your classroom practice?" Results for this final question were reached through a similar five-step process of constructed grounded theory coding as was used in Phase 1 with the XT participant transcripts. First, all responses were read and common language was noted. Next an initial coding was accomplished, and this time the five themes from Phase 1, along with first read shared language, guided the coding for the initial step. Next, 48 initial codes were identified. Third, a focused coding was done where it was determined that all 48 responses did fit within the five Phase 1 emerging themes, and so they were grouped by color into each of the five. Of the 48 initial codes, nine fell within Relationships, four within Communication, 14 into Connections, eight into Respect, and 13 fell within Multicultural Resources. Steps four and five from Phase 1 were grouped together in Phase 2 as a single step as the responses were read for one final time with an eye towards seeing how the newly created TTC theory of practice applied as well as reviewing ECTs identification of the key five themes.

Table 16

Phase 2 Coding of ECT Responses

Theme	48 initial codes
Relationships	9
Communication	4
Connections	14
Respect	8
Multicultural RESOURCES	13

Another way to present the results to this final open-ended question of Phase 2 is to examine a few sample responses from the total Phase 2 Responses, which sample is shown in Table 17. All responses (Appendix N) confirm that providing a brief introduction on one theme, Relationships, brought thoughtful reflections about the TTC topic, helped ECTs focus on TTC, seemed to validate the theory that when using proven classroom strategies that blend content with culture, while building relationships, students find themselves in environments where they want to learn. The nine participants shared very different experiences and insights through their responses to the open-ended question, which seemed to reveal as much about them and their teaching as the lessons gained through this research. Responses were not similar across themes. A closer look at individual ECT responses showed that nine out of nine participants grew in at least six of the 33 checklist questions, to as many as 23.

Table 17

Sample Responses from Phase 2 Open-Ended Question

Theme	Example
Relationships	I have done my best to integrate into the community, engage with students and families and really learn about their culture and through all of that I now know that I will never know it all. That is not to say I am discouraged, just that I know to focus on one part, and continue to be a "life-long learner."
Communication	Many of the strategies can relate to these students of course, but now I want (as is my job to do) to seek out more information specific to the culture on what the community/parents expect from those students and from their teachers.
Connections	In this experience, the term "teaching through culture" offered a slightly different perspective that I found valuable. It was a much more all-encompassing idea. Instead of merely thinking of "how do I teach students of a different culture," I was challenged to think "how can I teach students of a different culture USING their culture/within their culture." When approaching new content, I now think "where in the culture/community do I already see this" as a means of planning the instruction.
Respect	I also learned that being culturally sensitive to all issues is an important part of being a good teacher.
Multicultural Resources	This research has taught me that my students really love to learn through their culture. It makes them feel valued and brings them closer together. Students ran around trying to find classmates to sign their boxes and I heard so many stories and conversations about several of the items on the list. It was such an engaging experience for my students!

Summary of Chapter 4

Results from Phase 1 provided the framework for which a theory of practice about TTC was proposed. That theory served as the foundation for the creation of a CAC. The nine teachers who used the chapter in Phase 2 claim to have grown in their own classroom practice because of their having participated in this research, and the data appears to support such a claim. Final responses by these nine teachers, although small in numbers, provided evidence that much learning occurred during the use of the CAC, the viewing of the videos, and participant commitment to the topic. Chapter 5 explores implications from this research for potential next steps.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This study was conducted in two phases to explore and discover exactly what classroom strategies and activities are used by educators who teach through culture. This research first explored how culture is used in delivering K–12 classroom instruction by interviewing 20 quality experienced teachers (XTs) known to deliver culturally responsive instruction. Through the use of nine questions in the interview protocol (Appendix G) XTs were asked about their classroom practices. Responses were gathered to shed light upon the main research question of what TTC looks like in the K–12 classroom. Another three interdisciplinary questions emerged throughout the study: 1) How does state policy influence or inform TTC in the K–12 Classroom? 2) What do undergraduate study programs do to prepare teachers for delivering classroom instruction through culture? And, 3) How does TTC contribute to student learning? Results from the Phase 1 exploration led to the construction of a new theory of practice, a value-added theory, for what TTC means. Said theory was then used as the foundation for the creation of a CAC, which brought Phase 1 to a close.

Participants in Phase 2 included eight Alaska ECTs and one Montana experienced teacher. After completing the required paperwork for participating in research, all nine were first asked to reflect upon their own classroom practices by completing a pre-Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI), after which they watched a couple of videos, read the CAC, and delivered two lessons of the nearly two dozen provided. Said lessons targeted building relationships using strategies and activities known to embed culture into instruction. Upon completion of use of the

CAC and delivery of lessons, ECTs completed a post-CCI. Finally, Phase 2 participants shared their thoughts about participating in this study as well as the usefulness of the CAC in their current classroom practice as they responded to a single open-ended question.

Statement of the Problem

Today's American student population requires teachers skilled in creating climates and environments for diverse learners, in a variety of classroom settings that connect content to differing unique backgrounds so that all students can think critically, learn, and grow. The availability of quality teachers skilled in TTC is key to meeting this challenge. Experienced teachers who have successfully used diversity and student culture to create engaging environments where all students can learn have much to teach us. This research explores teaching through culture, what does that look like in an American K–12 classroom?

Review of the Methodology

As outlined in chapter 3, this exploratory sequential design used Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the procedural framework and included two phases. Phase 1 gathered qualitative data through the interviews of 20 experienced teachers (XTs) from two states in order to discover how student cultures are used in classroom instruction and delivery of lessons. Phase 1 data were analyzed using a constructed grounded theory process. Findings from Phase 1 led to the construction of a new value-added theory of practice for TTC. Said theory provided the guidance and support for the creation of a CAC.

Phase 2 gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. Eight ECTs and one experienced teacher first reflected upon their own classroom practices about using culture to deliver instruction. Said reflection tool was administered as a pre-Checklist of Classroom Inventory (CCI), before participants used the newly created CAC over a 3-10-week period of time. Once a minimum of two videos were viewed, the CAC was read, and two of the many lessons accompanying the CAC were delivered, then an identical checklist was administered as a post-CCI, along with one open-ended question. Pre- and Post-checklist data were analyzed by comparing average percentages before and after use of the CAC resource. Open-ended responses were analyzed using a Constructed Grounded Theory multi-step process similar to that used in Phase 1.

In this review of methodology, it is worth revisiting three attributes that set PAR apart from other conventional research, according to Kemmis & McTaggart (2000), as this study affirmed the use of these three attributes: 1) shared ownership of research projects, 2) community-based analysis of social problems, and 3) an orientation toward community action. At every step of this research—both phases—there existed a core group of participants from Phase 1, four individuals to be specific, who shared in the work, the review, the analysis and the reflection about findings. These participants share ownership of this research.

When reflecting upon community-based analysis, participants in both phases were continually providing insight into their individual communities, the uniqueness of those locations, and related social issues, and participants would discuss with me how their communities influenced decisions made in individual classrooms. Using the community lens to address educational issues was extremely useful in this study—the community presence was a constant in the delivery of lessons and thoughtful reflections for next steps.

Finally, it was the Phase 2 participants who were most enthusiastic towards transforming their classroom practices and making decisions that could benefit the community. This final point of PAR, according to Kemmis, might not qualify as "community" action in the study at hand, as the action was being proposed by ECTs—who of course belong to the community, yet their teacher action could bring about changes within the community through transformative classroom practices that begin to include TTC.

Summary of the Results

Phase 1 Results

As Chapter 4 outlined, findings in Phase 1 revealed five common themes used by experienced teachers when delivering instruction through culture: Relationships, Communication, Connections, Respect and Multicultural Resources. The three layers of coding (first read, initial coding, and focus coding) led to a natural sorting of strategies, activities, and commonly shared experiences, making it an obvious choice to cluster like-categories and codes into the emerging five themes. A key piece of this sorting process was to continually seek counsel with Phase 1 XT participants for additional reflection and discussion about emerging themes in order to gain consensus, as well as a final review by researcher of all transcripts to "test" the newly constructed theory of practice with the content of the XTs' testimony before creating a CAC.

Theory of practice. The Phase 1 five themes led to construction of a new value-added theory of practice (Appendix C) for TTC, which theory provided the foundation for creation of a CAC. This theory of practice reasons if an educator is to deliver instruction through culture, s/he understands the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy, culturally responsive and relevant theories, transformative learning, as well as indigenous ways of knowing. Such a teacher purposefully chooses those strategies and activities known to address diverse student learning styles, while at the same time teacher is constantly learning about each student and building relationships between students and self, as well as among students and educational stakeholders in the community. Such teachers become learners while students become teachers, and there exists a reciprocal relationship between the two. There also exists a relationship between culture and curriculum, which cannot be ignored. Placed-based lessons, reciprocity in nature as well as people relationships, knowing each student individually, and understanding indigenous ways of knowing are essential pieces in this newly constructed theory of practice for TTC. This TTC theory is built upon the premise that one's culture is value-added to the school setting, partially by informing the many educational stakeholders as well as classmates and peers of the rich history, background, and underpinnings of one's culture and partially by creating climates and environments where students can engage and learn.

Diverse student populations arriving at schools bring value to the American classroom through unique backgrounds, experiences, and individual cultural heritage— per this TTC theory, American educators should value this contribution in ways that help the student learn. The TTC Theory (Appendix C) suggests that when choosing appropriate strategies and activities known for engaging diverse learners and multiplying those choices by purposeful relationship-building, the end result is a collaborative classroom climate and safe environment where students learn: (Strategies/Activities) x (Relationships) = Climate/Environment where students learn. Value-added brings a new level of respect and efficacy to the history of culture in American education, as outlined in chapter 1, Evolution of Culture in Education.

Chapter about Culture. Using the theory of practice for TTC as a guide for creating a CAC (Appendix D^1, D^2), a decision was made to focus on Relationships, one of the five emerging themes. Completion of the writing of the CAC, along with nearly two dozen lessons using culture to build relationships, was the final step in Phase 1 of this research.

Phase 2 Results

Quantitative results of ECT pre- and post-checklists revealed growth in all five thematic areas identified in Phase 1, with improved percentages in Relationships of 12 points, in Communication of seven points; in Connections of 15 percentage points, in Respect, 14 percentage points, and in Multicultural Resources, 18 percentage points on average. And, finally, the coded qualitative written responses in Phase 2 revealed a strong awareness for the importance of connecting learning to culture, building relationships, respect for families, and, in fact, all 48 initial codes of Phase 2 responses were easily grouped into the same five Phase 1 themes through a second layer of focused coding. Reading through the responses by teachers new to TTC was enlightening, as many seemed to understand for the first time how important it is to really get to know their students. ECT written responses further supported the five themes discovered in Phase 1, and growth was made in all five themes as evidenced by the pre/post checklist.

Discussion of the Results

This discussion will include 1) researcher's insights, 2) theoretical implications of the study, 3) explanation of unanticipated findings, 4) interpretation of findings, 5) relationships of this study to previous research, 6) recommendation for educators, and 7) suggestions for additional research.

Researcher's Insights

On the basis of this study alone, even with its limited participant numbers, it is encouraging to note that answers to the main question this study sought to discover are out there. Many educators today understand the methods for reaching a diverse student population, and are making great strides in doing just that. Much research has occurred in recent decades to articulate why it is important to use student background and culture in the classroom. (Banks, 2012;

Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2011; Delpit, 1995) Many, if not all of the cultural theorists cited in this study, have provided strong evidence of why it is important to know the student, and teach through culture. What this study has accomplished, through the newly constructed theory of practice for TTC, is to combine all past lessons learned into a single, value-added theory of practice for TTC that can serve as a guide for what TTC looks like in the K–12 classroom, as well as the "how" for accomplishing TTC. All educators, and especially those newest to the profession, can use the Theory to transform their own classroom practices and begin to experience firsthand what it means to teach through culture.

Furthermore, ECTs, as evidenced in this study, appeared to be extremely receptive to learning how best to reach all students. Culture does matter and experienced teachers alongside ECTs all seem to agree that it is important to respect, acknowledge, and learn more about the students they are teaching today. The research confirmed that experienced teachers did, in fact, often know how to deliver instruction using culture, while those newest to the profession understood its importance and not necessarily the "how" of making TTC happen. While results in this study are promising, they are also limited because of the small number of participants in Phase 2 and the fact all research occurred in just two states. Diversity also varied depending upon isolated, rural, and urban school settings. What the study has revealed, however, is that research about using culture in the classroom can help improve classroom instruction by choosing appropriate strategies and activities leading to the creation of a safe and cooperative classroom climate, a climate that invites engagement and learning, and that teachers willing to learn can transform their classroom instructional practices to better meet the needs of our diverse student populations of 2018.

Theoretical Implications of the Study

As was shared in Table 2 in chapter 1, several theories of culture in education have evolved over time, moving from deficit-deprivation of the 1960s, to difference paradigm models in the 1970s-80s, to asset thinking as recently as the 1990s-2000s. In fact, it was in the early-to-mid 2000s that Moll et al., (2005), Ladson-Billings (2009), and Gay (2002), among others, took culture in education a step further and together constructed the culturally responsive theory, (sometimes called relevant) focusing on the assets of diverse cultures. It would seem the time is right as we approach 2020, another decade, for a new, value-added theory, as reflected by the proposed theory of practice for TTC constructed in this research.

Explanation of Unanticipated Findings

Since the sample size of nine in Phase 2 was too small to conduct any deep analyses, the gains made in Phase 2 are considered at a descriptive level only with no method of determining statistical significance. It had been anticipated that at least 50 ECT participants could be found to take part in the study. Also limiting the study to two states, as representative of American public classrooms, presents limitations when it comes to generalizing these findings to other states or nationwide. An unanticipated finding included several Phase 2 ECTs believing they had not received adequate preparation in their undergraduate schooling for working with diverse populations, leading to an additional interdisciplinary question: What do undergraduate study programs do to prepare teachers for delivering classroom instruction through culture? Relatedly, at least one of the Phase 2 ECTs said attending a summer culture camp had been very helpful in preparing for teaching in rural Alaska.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study addresses one primary research question: 1) What does TTC look like in a typical K–12 classroom? This study has clearly discovered a great deal about what TTC looks like in a typical K–12 classroom in Montana and Alaska, as presented in detail in Chapter 4. There were many similarities among findings of the 20 participating experienced teachers—state location did not seem to matter. Teachers who use culture are respectful of the diversity within the classroom, they not only respect indigenous ways of knowing, they go out of their way to factor in indigenous types of learning opportunities such as constructivist place-based and hands-on activities, into their day-to-day instruction using strategies and activities that they have learned successfully engage learners, especially diverse learners, such as observation, role-playing, place-based learning, talking circles, team building, game-playing, puppetry, story knives, story-telling, listening, reciprocal instruction, and behaving with and encouraging respect, to name a few. Choosing engaging strategies, activities, and methods while always being cognizant of indigenous ways of knowing is a piece of the puzzle. Knowing your students is a significant other.

Both Alaska and Montana teachers interviewed in Phase 1 claimed that building relationships with their students was essential to TTC. In fact, such a statement about building relationships with students usually surfaced within the first 5-10 minutes of each and every one of the 14 interview sessions, and was the most frequently coded category during the focus coding step. Relationship-building is key to TTC for all teachers regardless of student population. The reciprocal relationship between teacher as learner and student as teacher was another must-do shared by these experienced teachers. Getting to know one’s students cannot be overemphasized. And this includes getting to know the parents and community as well. Relationships matter.

A finding brought to the research by the ECTs in Phase 2 was the importance of first becoming aware of one's own culture before trying to understand another's culture, akin to constantly being aware of one's positionality in any given situation. This, too, was key to TTC, as self-reflection and self-awareness are a driving force in decisions made about learning styles, norms, and classroom communities. First, teachers must know themselves, their own biases, personal lens, and worldview. Only then, is building relationships with others possible.

Two videos (Appendix F) were required viewing by Phase 2 participants before the CAC was provided for use, and each of those viewings helped to set the stage for what it means to teach through culture. ECTs shared with me personally how watching these videos could have enriched their teacher preparation for working with indigenous peoples. Several ECTs shared they got more from the CAC, videos, and delivery of lessons provided for this research, than they had learned during their college prep for working with diverse student populations. One video included coverage of Indigenous Teacher Preparation programs from around the world, including "A Story of Epistemology, Power, & Identity" (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). A second video, "The Loon Story – An Alaska Native Tanaina Tale" as told by Bill Vaudrin (Anchorage School District, 2012) modeled a lesson to show what TTC could look like. Hearing from ECTs about the importance of this viewing groundwork in preparation for their own CAC review in this research was evidence of the need for learning more about indigenous ways of knowing, and gaining insights into the history of culture in education from the perspective of indigenous peoples, especially those Natives residing in the areas of the schools. Several participants also said that having a traditional Native tale, The Loon Story, modeled for them through a role-playing, hands-on project using authentic indigenous tales was very helpful to imagining the possibilities within their own classrooms. Q7, "Stories are shared that are relevant to students," of the Connections theme on the CCI showed the greatest overall improvement of 44% with 100% of the nine participants checking Often or Always when responding to this question in the post-Checklist. Evidence that one video, and a little cultural awareness on TTC, can be very effective in bringing awareness to ECTs about best classroom practices when valuing a student's culture. A story about a loon, modeling, role-playing, story-telling, and traditional stories, are all excellent activities for TTC.

To begin to address the primary research question, the new theory of practice (Appendix C) for TTC is a good starting place. This value-added notion of culture being more than an asset to teaching is long overdue. Drawing upon the pieces of the theory: (strategies/activities) x (relationships) = (climate/environment) provides all educators need to know to be able to teach through culture in the K–12 classroom. Everything under strategies and activities, the first piece of the theory, reveals a richness of ideas for how to teach through culture, and of course the flexibility of teaching allows for additions and deletions to this list. The list provided is not meant to be all-inclusive, instead a collection of some of the strategies and activities that surfaced in Phase 1.

The second part of the equation—relationships—is perhaps the most important piece of the theory for informing what it means to teach through culture, and this applies to all teachers. In TTC, relationships between student and teacher are reciprocal, requiring all parties to listen, all parties to teach, and all parties to learn. This relationship piece also includes the connections between place and curriculum, and between culture and curriculum. This is the intersection where the western science traditional banking (Freire, 2000) educational models can meet indigenous ways of knowing in order to connect learning to diverse learners. Curriculum can be delivered and lessons designed to connect content to the backgrounds of the student population.

The TTC theory is not a silver bullet, nor a one-size-fits all solution to classroom instruction. Yet, the theory does address the main question of this research, what does TTC look like in the K–12 classroom? Teaching through culture in the K–12 Classroom looks like reciprocal teaching between student and teacher with each teaching and learning. In a TTC classroom, respect is the norm, and strategies and activities are chosen based upon indigenous ways of knowing, including story-telling, talking circles, and hands-on, place-based activities that have been proven to engage students by delivering instruction that meets a variety of learning styles. When an educator uses the appropriate strategies, activities and methods to purposefully deliver lessons to the students with whom he or she has a relationship, opportunities increase for both students and teachers to become engaged and learn. As a result of these conscious TTC choices, a collaborative classroom environment is created where students feel safe, and can therefore become engaged with the lessons, and learn. This is how TTC contributes to student learning, making this theory value-added.

This value-added perspective strengthens the new theory, a theory that embraces all positive iterations of culture in education over the years, and suggests that continual reflection, respect, reciprocal teaching, and relationship-building can bring about transformative classroom instruction which leads to the creation of climates where students feel safe, engaged, and eager to learn. It is a dynamic theory, a value-added paradigm that requires continual reflection, revision, and adjustment.

In addition, this study has addressed three interdisciplinary questions that came to light during the research: 1) How does state policy influence or inform TTC in the K–12 Classroom? 2) What do undergraduate study programs do to prepare teachers for delivering classroom instruction through culture? 3) How does TTC contribute to student learning?

The state policy question came to light during the research when both Phase 1 and Phase 2 participants discussed the respective state requirements when it came to delivering instruction in each state. State policy influences and informs TTC in the K–12 classroom. Alaska and Montana each have state laws influencing and directing the use of culture in the K–12 classroom. These two states are leaders in the nation in such legislation. Participants in both Phases 1 and 2 of this study were aware of their state's laws and policies addressing culture in their work. Montana's Indian Education for All (McCulloch, 2000), and the Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators (Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, 2012) influence teacher decisions and the classroom instruction in each state. Montana teachers shared how the convenience of access to accurate information has helped a great deal in the availability of lessons and resources for classroom use. Alaska teachers shared that knowing their teacher evaluations must reflect four of Alaska's five cultural standards had influenced many classroom instructional decisions. State legislation holds teachers accountable for TTC whether teachers know how to do so or not. Having state legislation does influence selection of materials, reflection of practices, collaboration with communities, discussions among educators at all levels, and in some instances, such as the Alaska classroom, administrator-teacher evaluations.

Montana's breadth and depth of Native American resources for the classroom provide a treasure trove of material that is authentic and accurate, primarily originating from Montana-based tribes themselves. Alaska's *Guide to Implementing the Alaska Cultural Standards* (Alaska Native Stakeholders, 2012), as well as the *Culture in the Classroom* (SERRC, 2015) are both extremely helpful for the classroom teacher in implementing the cultural standards. The Guide was designed for school-wide use through professional learning communities, and is a ready-made resource for facilitating rich discussions surrounding the importance of culture in education. Examples of what a teacher can do to be culturally responsive and teach through culture are provided for the four standards that are a part of the teacher evaluation system in Alaska, which not only helps teachers use culture but also guides administrators in evaluating a teacher's use of culture. The *Culture in the Classroom* booklet was designed for use in any classroom across the nation, so its applicability extends outside Alaska and is readily accessible on Amazon.com. Having political leadership that provides guidance, along with legislation, has helped these two states lead the way for TTC.

A second interdisciplinary question, what do undergraduate study programs do to prepare teachers for delivering classroom instruction through culture, arose in the research not so much from evidence of what these undergraduate study programs do as much as what they do not do. The findings in this research do not provide much evidence of what undergraduate study programs did to prepare Phase 2 ECTs for TTC. It would be more appropriate to share what teacher participants in Phase 2 said undergraduate programs did not do. Some ECTs shared with the researcher how the CAC provided them with more background knowledge about indigenous ways of knowing than they had received during undergraduate work. Two of the Phase 2 participants shared how attending a cultural camp for a week or two prior to teaching was extremely helpful, and that was made possible by the district hiring the teacher, not by the undergraduate institution. Several commented that the undergraduate cultural work consisted of a class or two on multicultural educational practices dealing with food, music, and customs, the surface culture frequently used in educational courses, rather than a deep look into one's epistemology, and the influence of one's worldview. One Phase 2 participant had worked in Alaska villages, had a family upbringing that exposed him to many opportunities to interact with different cultures in Alaska and because of these experiences, he felt very prepared for his work in village Alaska. That one experience could inform undergraduate education program decision-makers, perhaps, in the placement of student teachers. If any of the Phase 2 teachers received coursework at their undergraduate schooling that discussed worldview or exploring the theory of knowledge as gained through one's epistemology, that was not shared in this research. This question about undergraduate preparedness requires more evidence than this study was able to generate under its research design, and yet the question itself provides a great opportunity for further research. This study and its findings do provide, however, a wealth of information that could inform teacher prep schools and undergraduate coursework for structuring future coursework and experiences that could better prepare our teacher program candidates.

The final interdisciplinary question that emerged in this study asked, how does TTC contribute to student learning? This question arose from the very focused coding that led to the construction of a new theory; and the outcome of that theory gives us a glimpse into a possible answer to the question. Teaching through culture creates a collaborative classroom climate and safe environment that has the potential to engage students so that learning takes place.

Four of the Phase 1 participants, at varying times in discussions with the researcher, had been working with the codes, verifying their placement, themes, and acting as a reviewer of the proposed new theory. They read drafts of the CAC. They conferred at coding stages. They reviewed the underpinnings for the Theory of Practice, and reviewed the graphic, and discussed at length the importance of all pieces of the equation. Intuitively we all knew TTC was key to successfully engaging students in learning, we had experienced it. Yet this was research and we needed a factual basis for this idea, not intuition. We knew teachers who didn't teach through culture and we watched those teachers struggle with student relationships. Frequently, this team of researcher participants, four participants and the lead researcher, asked this very question:

How does all of this work we do in order to teach through culture actually contribute to student learning?

Together we came to the realization that TTC works because those purposeful choices made about strategies and activities and methods, and the strong relationships that had been built to gain knowledge about students, those are the components that create a collaborative climate of learning, a safe classroom environment where students want to learn, where students can be engaged and feel value and respected. This shared discovery became the third piece to the theory, the product and outcome of the equation of the newly constructed and value-added theory of practice for TTC: (strategies/activities) x (relationships) = (climate/environment).

Participants in this research were not alone in our thinking, and our conclusion about the importance of creating a caring climate and safe environment for learning was more than intuition. Today's researchers and experts in the field have much to add that appears to validate the findings in this study. The New Teacher Center (NTC), of Santa Cruz, CA, has been in the mentoring business for nearly three decades, and only recently have they added a new tool to their toolkit for mentoring those newest to the profession. This tool is called the Optimal Learning Environment (OLE) (Appendix M) tool and it includes many of the same components to this research's TTC theory of practice. The OLE consists of three domains: Domain 1—Create Emotionally, Intellectually, and Physically Safe Environments; Domain 2—Provide Equitable, Culturally Responsive, and Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction; and Domain 3—Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners. In its online research summary and glossary (New Teacher Center, 2017), it states, "NTC has identified Optimal Learning Environments (OLE) as the foundational framework for its work with mentors, coaches, and school leaders" (p. 1). The links to TTC are evident:

> Awareness of the central role that culture plays in learning will help teachers build inclusive learning communities that acknowledge and celebrate student experiences and backgrounds. Culturally responsive teaching contextualizes instruction by connecting it to students' experience, values, knowledge, and needs. (p. 3)

Another researcher, Carol Tomlinson's (2015) finding, seems to validate the reciprocal findings within this study.

> Caring for the students we teach means adapting our thinking and planning to their needs rather than expecting them to adapt to us. It also means pursuing the personal and professional skills we need to grow continually, to keep improving how well we face the responsibility inherent in teaching. (p. 90)

Researchers and theorists of the past had provided the essential foundation and groundwork for this new theory (equation), this value-added theory, to emerge. Experienced teachers who teach through culture are grounded in indigenous ways of knowing, familiar with constructivist educational practices, critical pedagogy, transformative and cultural educational pedagogy, and XTs know how important it is to value, respect, and honor all people. Teachers practicing TTC are the best of reflective practitioners, always striving to reach their students in ways that engage the learner. They take action and reflect, learn, and take more action. That cycle and process for teaching has led them to build the relationships, choose the appropriate strategies and activities, which result in a classroom environment where students learn.

This research built on all past theorists/researchers/culturally responsive and relevant practitioners by combining their findings and recommendations and putting them together into a simple graphic/equation that captures the essence of what it means to teach through culture as revealed by those who do it well. This new Theory of Practice for TTC can provide a roadmap for ECTs just learning about the value of infusing culture into classroom instruction, as well as affirm for veteran teachers that their past work in this area has added value to their instruction and created the collaborative climate and safe student environment that makes learning possible.

Relationship of This Study to Previous Research

Previous authors and researchers (Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1990) have documented the importance of acknowledging the culture of students in the classroom, and for building upon student knowledge when connecting lessons to real life examples. Phase 1 of this study affirmed those findings as evidenced by a strong showing of the connecting-culture-to- learning category from the 20 experienced teachers interviewed. In fact, at one point early in the analysis of Phase 1 data, a Wordle word cloud was created from the Atlas.ti data just for the fun of it and to share with participants engaged in discussions with the researcher about the coding process. "Connect culture to learning" was the largest phrase at that moment of coding, having been spoken the most frequent number of times by the interviewees. Size and frequency of phrase alone did not determine themes. Community and parental involvement were mentioned many times yet were not deemed to be thematic. Certainly, their Wordle size warranted recognition, however their place in the schema of culture and education are better situated in the global ecosystem as a foundation for the theory and the embedding of culture in education. Besides, each phrase could easily fit within one or more of the five-designated themes, for instance Connections, Communication, Respect, and Relationships. The Wordle itself simply gave one more point of reference for the coding of data in Phase 1.

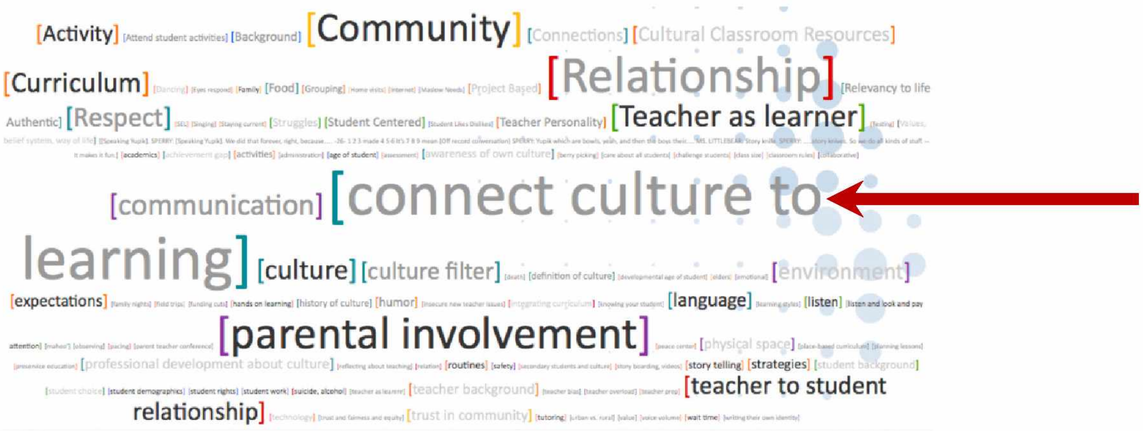

[Activity]
[Attend student activities]
[Background]
[Community]
[Connections]
[Cultural Classroom Resources]
[Curriculum]
[Dancing]
[Eyes respond]
[Family]
[Food]
[Grouping]
[Home visits]
[Internet]
[Maslow Needs]
[Project Based]
[Relationship]
[Relevancy to life Authentic]
[Respect]
[SEL]
[Singing]
[Staying current]
[Struggles]
[Student Centered]
[Student Likes Dislikes]
[Teacher Personality]
[Teacher as learner]
[Testing]
[Values, belief system, way of life]
[academics]
[achievement gap]
[activities]
[administration]
[age of student]
[assessment]
[awareness of own culture]
[berry picking]
[care about all students]
[challenge students]
[class size]
[classroom rules]
[collaborative]
[communication]
[connect culture to learning]
[culture]
[culture filter]
[death]
[definition of culture]
[developmental age of student]
[elders]
[emotional]
[environment]
[expectations]
[family nights]
[field trips]
[funding cuts]
[hands on learning]
[history of culture]
[humor]
[insecure new teacher issues]
[integrating curriculum]
[knowing your student]
[language]
[learning styles]
[listen]
[listen and look and pay attention]
[maheo']
[observing]
[pacing]
[parent teacher conference]
[parental involvement]
[peace center]
[physical space]
[place-based curriculum]
[planning lessons]
[preservice education]
[professional development about culture]
[reflecting about teaching]
[relation]
[routines]
[safety]
[secondary students and culture]
[story boarding, videos]
[story telling]
[strategies]
[student background]
[student choice]
[student demographics]
[student rights]
[student work]
[suicide, alcohol]
[teacher as learner]
[teacher background]
[teacher bias]
[teacher overload]
[teacher prep]
[teacher to student relationship]
[technology]
[trust and fairness and equity]
[trust in community]
[tutoring]
[urban vs. rural]
[value]
[voice volume]
[wait time]
[writing their own identity]

Figure 15. Phase 1 data: Wordle word cloud.

Furthermore, Moll et al., (Moll, 2005) revealed just how rich a student's culture and background knowledge are and how key it is for teachers to know the student in order to teach the student. Again, this study confirmed those findings by experienced teachers repeatedly stating how essential it was for teachers to understand student background and where that student was in his/her learning before instruction begins.

Knowing the student has been highlighted by many a researcher (Delpit, 1995, Ladson-Billings, 2009; Gay, 2010; Bell et al., 2010; Lee et al., 1998; Au et al., 2007;), and all ECT participants in Phase 2 commented either in their written response, a follow-up email, or in person their realization of the importance to truly know their students in order to build the relationship which they now recognized was key to their classroom instruction. Several chose to use the "I Am From" lesson and advised me that it was a very revealing lesson, allowing for many individual discoveries about students under their care. Per one participant, "The 'I Am From' poems helped me learn about their childhood and we got to compare our childhoods to see what was similar and what was very different. It was fun to have my students learn about me like this, as well as me learning about them like this." Appendix N illustrates the knowing-the-student nature of the activity as well as the reciprocal nature of teacher and student teaching-learning together. Such indigenous-ways-of-knowing activities engage students, contribute to safe environments for learning, and result in cooperative, collaborative classroom climates.

One more finding stands out by researchers over time that was also addressed by participants in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this study, and that is the importance of indigenous ways of knowing, one's epistemology. (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Lewthwaite et al., 2014; Hammond, 2015) Phase 1 participants discussed indigenous ways of knowing at length in their interviews, sharing examples of why place-based activities were so important when TTC. Phase 1 teachers understood the concept indigenous ways of knowing, and knew of its importance when TTC. Phase 2 participants gained insight through this research to the importance of indigenous ways of knowing by watching a video in preparation for receipt of the CAC, as well as the CAC itself. As one ECT stated in post responses (Appendix N): "When approaching new content, I now think 'where in the culture/community do I already see this as a means of planning the instruction.'" And, "Instead of merely thinking of 'How do I teach students of a different culture?' I was challenged to think 'How can I teach students of a different culture USING their culture as a tool within the classroom and not just a challenge." At first glance, this could appear to be but a small change, yet truly this is a first step to transformative thinking by teachers in their classroom instruction. Knowing and understanding begin with self-awareness and Phase 2 of this research has strong evidence showing progress was made in self-awareness of indigenous ways of knowing as well as preparation for TTC.

This researcher's contribution to the field of culture in education includes the combining of previous lessons learned over time together with the results of this study, including a new value-added theory of practice for TTC. We now know a great deal more about what TTC looks like in the classroom of a K-12 teacher, and the how for using such best cultural teaching practices is clear. It is now time for our diverse student population, an essential piece of our nation, to be recognized as a value-added component to an American education.

Recommendation for Educators

Little evidence was forthcoming in this research to answer the interdisciplinary question that arose about what do undergraduate study programs do to prepare teachers for delivering classroom instruction through culture. However, it was clear from comments made by Phase 2 participants that more needs to happen at this level of becoming a teacher. A first step, according to experienced teachers in Phase 1, as well as the many authors (Ladson-Billings, 1990; Banks & Banks, 2004; Cajete, 2005; Gay, 2010; Hammond, 2015; Lewthwaite et al., 2014; Alaska Native Stakeholders, 2012; to name a few) cited throughout this study, suggest that self-reflection and self-awareness should occur first. Teacher/educators need to begin with acknowledging their own personal worldview and ways of knowing in order to better understand the epistemologies of other cultures. First comes self-awareness of one's own background and culture. At least one of the Phase 2 participants did not know, until this research, that s/he had a culture.

Another good step could be attending cultural camps, where pre-service teachers are immersed in the culture. Such an experience can be beneficial to a teacher's first job at a site where the cultural norms are quite different from the teacher's, and many Alaska villages offer such an opportunity. Universities in both Alaska and Montana, with teaching undergraduate programs, could partner with districts hosting populations of either high diversity or high Native American/Alaskan populations and place pre-service teachers in those village or reservation schools for their student-teaching work.

More in-depth undergraduate coursework about the importance of indigenous ways of knowing, as well as a thorough study of epistemology by undergraduate students wanting to teach could shed light on the importance of TTC.

Partnering experienced teachers, known for their success in TTC, with ECTs just starting a career could lead to rich conversations, collaboration at its best, transformative teaching practices, and said teacher partnering has the potential to result in classroom environments where students are engaged, feel safe, and able to learn.

Entire school/districts could host professional learning communities where the focus for the year is TTC, and certified staff could share lessons gained and any learning about what does and does not work. Classified staff, especially those very experienced Native paraprofessionals, could have a regular time for teaching certified staff some of the important cultural background knowledge of the region. A group effort by a school staff has the potential to benefit the entire community. Of course, this includes administrators at all levels of school districts, so that everyone is supporting the focus of study and theory of practice for TTC.

Professional Development needs to be created that builds on this new theory of practice for TTC and should include any state-mandated cultural standards, objectives, and/or laws. For instance, there exists in Alaska a *Guide to Implementing the Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators*, (Alaska Native Stakeholders, 2012), which was designed specifically for school-wide professional learning community facilitation of delivering instruction through cultural standards. This Guide could be a regular agenda item at all staff meetings. Other resources are in existence for such professional development, as well as drawing from those experienced teachers and veteran Native paraprofessionals who could share their expertise.

And, finally, attention should be given to the newly constructed theory of practice for TTC, as it provides the necessary roadmap for guiding all educators about what TTC in the K–12 classroom looks like. Together staff can support one another, share lessons learned, and the end result can be students working in collaborative classroom climates where it is safe to learn and grow together.

Suggestions for Additional Research

Putting this value-added theory of practice for TTC into the hands of a new study is a good idea, and in this case a second study that replicates the Phase 2 work, tapping into a larger number of participants, as well as branching out to other states. Hawaii would be a worthwhile state to include, as it has a successful educational model that includes TTC that warrants further exploration.

There may also be an opportunity to add another theme in addition to Relationship-building in the CAC. This researcher has heard from several participants from Phase 2 in this study about how the start-up to this year (a year later) went more smoothly because of some front-end loading of relationship-building activities that was accomplished. Maybe a study that puts lessons building on each of the five themes into the hands of all teachers, not just ECTs, and then a follow-up focus group by all participants for lessons learned in the field following use of those lessons could benefit the educational field.

It could be most beneficial to research exactly what undergraduate programs include in their “diversity” or “cultural” studies to prepare teachers for work in America today. Select several colleges from a region, or from all over the United States, to examine how many credits, courses, topics, each college requires, as well as how do indigenous ways of knowing and epistemology fit into this undergraduate work. Effectiveness of undergraduate training could be validated through a longitudinal study that follows graduates from the differing schools into the field and tracks their successes, or lack thereof, in working with diverse student populations.

Conclusion

I am an educator who thinks globally.

—Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

As I conclude this dissertation, I will return to the story of Booker T. Washington introduced in chapter 2 and revisit Freire's thinking. Booker, more than anything else, wanted to learn to read, and so he engaged in a reflection-question-action cycle of learning, referred to as the problem-posed constructivist education model by Freire (2000). Booker's action eventually led to his becoming a reader.

For a decade, I lived with my husband on his reservation where I worked in the school as a classified employee. I was new to this setting and had much to learn about culture, Northern Cheyenne norms, respect, and indigenous ways of knowing. I became a teacher. As an educator, I had a problem: What does TTC look like in the typical American classroom? For 16 years, I reflected upon this issue, I asked questions of colleagues and co-workers who appeared to be successful when working with diverse student populations in their own classrooms. I tried new things. For three more years, as I traveled the state of Alaska mentoring teachers new to the profession, teachers from outside Alaska now located in isolated villages in Alaska without a road system, as well as periodically returning to my husband's reservation in Montana and the college he presided over. Five years on the road within and without the United States visiting K-12 classrooms. I witnessed teachers successful with working with a diverse classroom and I witnessed teachers struggling with working with a diverse classroom population. I read everything I could find, books, journals, research articles, and findings about culturally responsive teaching from around the world. With each new learning, I took action, trying the latest strategy or activity to see if I could reach more students. I followed Booker's cyclic path (Freire's problem-posed constructivist education model) of reflecting, asking questions, and taking action.

According to Freire (2000), such a cycle requires critical thinking that comes about from dialogue based upon problems posed, questions asked, and students acting as teachers while teachers act as students, and together, collaboratively, learning occurs by both teacher and student. Indigenous ways of knowing and learning, seemed like the solution to my problem. I would design participatory action research that allowed for dialogue with participants based upon the shared problem of discovering what TTC looked like in the classroom. I would ask questions of experienced teachers as well as ECTs alike, and each of these educators would also ask questions, we would each be both teacher and student, and together, collaboratively, we all could learn answers to this problem of determining what TTC looked like.

It's hard to imagine one could take five years of research and capture it in a simple table, yet for ease in closing chapter 5 here are the major steps taken in the problem-posed education model seeking a solution to this question: What does TTC look like in the K–12 Classroom?

Table 18

Reflect/Plan/Question/Take Action/Repeat

Year	Steps taken
2013	Research/Design/Plan
2014	Find XTs, Explore TTC through Interviews, Transcribe
2015	Analyze by Code, Categorize, Sort, Discover; Dialogue with Participants;
2015	Construct new Theory of Practice; Create Chapter About Culture (CAC)
2016	Find ECTs, Give Directions for use of CAC, Administer Pre/Post-Checklist to measure success of CAC: Was it value-added?
2017	Analyze Data; Solve Problem; Dialogue with Participants;
2018	Share Findings

Progress towards describing what TTC looks like has been made. Be purposeful and selective in choosing strategies and activities for teaching, choose methods that respect, honor, and value the students under your care. Build relationships with students and engage in a reciprocal teaching model where the teacher becomes the student and students become the teachers. Listen. Learn. Connect curriculum with the culture, community, and place where one teaches. Together these actions will help to create a collaborative classroom climate where students feel safe, and will hopefully be eager to engage in learning. These are some of the essentials pieces for how to teach through culture.

--o0o--

"I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back." —Maya Angelou

CATCH!

References

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. (2012). *The Alaska cultural standards for educators*. Juneau, AK: Author.

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. (2013). *Schools meeting annual yearly progress (AYP) for the 2011–2012* year. Retrieved from Alaska Department of Education and Early Development website: http://www.eed.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/ayp/2012/List_of_Schools_Meeting_by_District.pdf

Alaska Native Knowledge Network. (1998). Lessons taught, lessons learned, vol. I, "Community Participation in Rural Education"—remarks by George Olanna. Retrieved from http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/CXCS/Lessons1/participation.html

Alaska Native Stakeholders. (2012). *Guide to implementing the Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators*. Juneau, AK: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.

Anchorage School District. (2012). The loon story: An Alaska native Tanaina tale. In B. Vaudrin (Ed.), *Story from Tanaina tales from Alaska*. Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press.

Au, K., & Kawakami, A. (1994). Cultural congruence in instruction. In E. Hollins, J. King, & W. Hayman (Eds.), *Teaching diverse populations: Formulating knowledge base* (pp. 5–23). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Au, W., Bigelow, B., & Karp, S. (Eds.). (2007). *Rethinking our classrooms teaching for equity and justice*, *volume 1*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Banks, J. (Ed.). (2012). *Encyclopedia of diversity in education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. E. (2004). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Barnhardt, R. (1990). *Teaching/learning across cultures: Strategies for success*. Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. O. (2005). Indigenous knowledge systems/Alaska Native ways of knowing. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 36(1), 8–23. Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. O. (Eds.). (2010). *Alaska Native education: Views from within*. Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. O. (Eds.). (2011). *Sharing our pathways: Native perspectives on education in Alaska*. Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Baum, F., MacDougall, C., & Smith, D. (2006). Participatory action research. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. 60*(*10), 854–857.

Bell, N., E. Conroy, K. Wheatley, B. Michaud, C. Maracle, J. Pelletier, . . . Johnson, B. (2010). *The ways of knowing guide*. Retrieved from Toronto Zoo Ways of Knowing Partnership Turtle Island Conservation Programme website: http://www.torontozoo.com/pdfs/tic /Stewardship_Guide.pdf

Birks, M., Chapman, Y., & Francis, K. (2008). Memoing in qualitative research: Probing data and processes. *Journal of Research in Nursing, 13*(1), 68–75.

Boykin, A. W. (1986). Task variability and the performance of Black and White children: Vervistic explorations. *Journal of Black Studies, 12*(4), 469–485.

Bradby, M. (1995). *More than anything else*. New York, NY: Barton Press.

Brady, W. (1992). *Indigenous Australian education and globalisation: Indigenous control of aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research*. Unpublished manuscript. University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia.

Brayboy, B. M. J., & Maughan, E. (2009). Indigenous knowledges and the story of the bean. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(1), 1–21.

Cajete, G. A. (1994). *Look to the mountain*. Skyland, NC: Kivaki Press.

Cajete, G. A. (2005). American Indian Epistemologies. *Serving Native American students: New Directions for Student Services, 109*, 1–104.

Calderon, M. E., & Minaya-Rowe, L. (2011). *Preventing long-terms ELS transforming schools to meet core standards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Carjuzaa, J. (2010). Montana's Indian education for all: Applying multicultural education theory. *Multicultural Perspectives, 12*(4), 192–198.

Carlone, H., & Johnson, A. (2012). Unpacking "culture" in cultural studies of science education: Cultural difference versus cultural production. *Ethnography and Education, 7*(2), 151–173.

Cates, K. (2015, May 14). The myths and truths of Montana's Common Core Standards. *Great Falls Tribune*. Retrieved from http://www.greatfallstribune.com/story/news/local/2015 /03/14/myths-truths-montanas-common-core-standards/24768409/

Center for Alaska Education Policy Research. (2011). *Student academic outcomes in the Anchorage School District, November 2011*. Anchorage, AK: Author.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Corbin, J. M. (2009). Taking an analytic journey. In J. M. Morse, P. N. Stern, J. Corbin, B. Bowers, K. Charmaz, and A. E. Clark, *Developing grounded theory: The second generation*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Cornwall, A. (1996). Towards participatory practice: Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and the participatory process. In K. Koning & M. Martin (Eds.), *Participatory research in health: Issues and experience* (pp. 94–107). London, England: Zed Books.

Creswell, J., & Clark, V. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: New Press.

Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset the new psychology of success how we can learn to fulfill our potential*. New York, NY: Ballatine Books.

Edmonds, R. (1986). Characteristics of effective schools. In U. Neisser (Ed.), *The school achievement of minority children: New perspectives* (pp. 93–104). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Education Trust. (2013). *The state of education for Native students* [Fact sheet]. Washington, DC: Author.

Erickson, F. (1987). Transformation and school success: The politics and culture of educational achievement. *Anthropology and Educational Quarterly, 18*, 335–356.

Freire, P., Macedo, D., (1987). *Literacy reading the word and the world.* Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (D. Macedo, Trans., 30th anniversary ed., 2014). New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Freire, P. (2005). *Teachers as cultural workers letters to those who dare teach* (Expanded ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 106–116. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching, theory, research, and practice.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Gillis, A., & Jackson, W. (2002). *Research methods for nurses: Methods and interpretation.* Philadelphia, PA: Davis.

Ginsberg, M. B., & Wlodkowski, R. J. (2000). *Creating Highly Motivating Classrooms for All Students: A Schoolwide Approach to Powerful Teaching with Diverse Learners. The Jossey-Bass Education Series.*

Giroux, H. A. (2011). *On critical pedagogy (Critical pedagogy today*) (1st ed.). New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: Adline.

Goldberg, M. F. (2010). Balanced optimism: An interview with Linda Darling-Hammond. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(9), 687–690.

Gomez, M. L. (1994). Teacher education reform and prospective teachers' perspectives on teaching "other people's" children, *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, 10(3), 319-334.

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Google Map, as Modified by researcher. Retrieved July 2017 from https://www.google.com/maps SW Montana

Griner, A. C., Stewart, M. L., (2012). Addressing the achievement gap and disproportionality through the use of culturally responsive teaching practices. *Urban Education*, *48*, 585–621. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gurung, R. A. R., & Prieto, L. R. (2009). *Getting culture: Incorporating diversity across the curriculum*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally Responsive teaching and the brain promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Henson, K. (2003). Foundations for learner-centered education: A Knowledge Base. *Education*, *124*(1), 5–16.

Herr, K., & Anderson, G. L. (2015). *The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hollie, S. (2012). *Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning*. Huntington Beach, CA: Shell.

Indian Education for All Act of 1999. Mont. Code Ann. Ttl20, ch.1, pt. 5, § 1. Montana Const. art. X, § 1.

Irizarry, J. (2009). *Cultural deficit model*. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale.

Jacob, E., & Jordan, C. (1987). Moving to dialogue. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, *18*, 259–261.

John, P. (2003). Qulirat Qanemcit-Llu Kinguvarcimalriit—Stories for future generations: The oratory of Yup'ik Eskimo elder Paul John. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Juneau, D. (2014). Graduation and dropout report 2014. Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction.

Kaur, B. (2012). Equity and social justice in teaching and teacher education (S. Shield, Trans.). *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies, 28*(4), 485–492.

Kelle, U. (2005). “Emergence” vs. “forcing” of empirical data? A crucial problem of “grounded theory” reconsidered. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, *6*(2), art. 27.

Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory action research communicative action and the public sphere. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 567–605). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kesby, M. (2000). Participatory diagramming: Deploying qualitative methods through an action research epistemology. A revised manuscript covering a Pilot Study in Zimbabwe. *Social Science and Medicine*, *50*(12), 423–435.

Koch, T., Selim, P., & Kralik, D. (2002). Enhancing lives through the development of a community-based participatory action research program. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, *11*, 109–117.

Krashen, S. (2003). *Explorations in language acquisition and use: The Taipei lectures*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1990). Culturally relevant teaching: Effective instruction for black students. *The College Board Review*, *7*(15), 20–25.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dream-keepers: Successful teachers of African American children.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lee, E., Menkart, D., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (Eds.). (1998). *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to anti-racist, multicultural education and staff development*. Marlboro, MD: McArdle.

Leininger, M. M. (1985). *Qualitative research methods in nursing*. Orlando, FL: Grune and Stratton.

Lewin, K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues*, *2*, 34–46.

Lewthwaite, B., Owen, T., Doiron, A., Renaud, R., McMillan, B. (2014). Culturally responsive teaching in Yukon First Nation settings: What does it look like and what is its influence? *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 55, 1–34.

MacDonald, C. (2012). Understanding participatory action research: A qualitative research methodology option. *Canadian Journal of Action Research*, Issue #155, *13*(2), 34–50.

Madjidi, K., & Restoule, J. (2008). “Comparative indigenous ways of knowing and learning.” Chapter 4 in K. Mundy, K. Bickmore, R. Hayhoe, M. Madden, & K. Madjidi (Eds.), *Comparative and International Education: Issues for Teachers* (pp. 77–106). New York, NY: College Press.

Margolis, J. (2017, October 10). Guess which state has America’s most diverse neighborhood? Hint: It’s not California, New York or Florida. *Public Radio International.* Retrieved from https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-10-10/guess-which-state-has-america-s-most-diverse-neighborhood-hint-it-s-not

McCoy, K. (2013, April 6). Hometown U: Data show Mountain View is most diverse neighborhood in America. *Anchorage Daily News.* Retrieved from https://www.adn.com /our-alaska/article/hometown-u-data-show-mountain-view-most-diverse-neighborhood-america/2013/04/07/

McCulloch, L. (2000). Indian Education for All MCA 20-1-501. Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction.

McTaggart, R., & Kemmis, S. (1989). 16 tenets of participatory action research. In *The action research planner* (3rd ed.). Victoria, Australia: Deakin University. Retrieved from http://www.caledonia.org.uk/par.htm

Milner, H. R. IV (2008). Disrupting deficit notions of difference: Counter-narratives of teachers and community in urban education. *Teaching and teacher education: An international journal of research and studies*, *28*(4), 1573-1598.

Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (2005). *Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms.* In N. Gonzalez, L. Moll, & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 71–88). New York, NY: Routledge.

Mount-Cors, M. F., Cortina, R., Corredor, M., Madson, K. D., Fitchett, P., Gleaves, D., Lopez, J. K. Whytock, J. (2006). *Bridging Spanish language barriers in Southern schools.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina School of Education. 2.1 Retrieved from Learn NC website: https://www.oercommons.org/courses/bridging-spanish-language-barriers-in-southern-schools/view

Mundy, K., Bickmore, K., Hayhoe, R., Madden, M., & Madjidi, K. (2008). *Comparative and international education, issues for teachers.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

National Governors Association. (2010). *Reaching higher the common core state standards validation committee*. Washington, DC: NGA and CCSSO.

New Teacher Center. (2017). Optimal learning environment: Research summary and glossary. Retrieved from http://www.newteachercenter.org

Nixon, R. (1970). *Special message to the Congress on Indian Affairs, July 8, 1970*. Retrieved from The American Presidency Project website: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2573

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C.A. § 6301 et seq.

Office of Public Instruction. (1999). *Montana Indians: Their history and location*. Retrieved from Division of Indian Education, Montana Office of Public Instruction website: http://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Indian%20Education%20101/Montana%20Indians%20Their%20History%20and%20Location.pdf

Office of Public Instruction. (2015). *2014–15 AYP district determination data*. Helena, MT: Office of Public Instruction.

Pai, Y., Adler, S. A., & Shadiow, L. K. (2006). *Cultural foundations of education* (4th ed.). Columbus, OH: Pearson.

Pang, V. O. (2005). *Multicultural education: A caring-centered, reflective approach* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, *41*(3), 93–97.

Phuntsog, N. (1999, Summer). The magic of culturally responsive pedagogy: In search of the genie's lamp in multicultural education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 97–111.

Phuntsog, N. (2001). Culturally responsive teaching: What do selected United States elementary school teachers think? *Intercultural Education*, *12*(1), 51–64.

Planty, M., Hussar, W., Snyder, T., Kena, G., Kewal Ramani, A., Kemp, J., . . . Dinkes, R. (2009a). Indicator 7: Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools. In *The condition of education 2009* (NCES 2009-081). Retrieved from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics website: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2009/pdf/7_2009.pdf

Planty, M., Hussar, W., Snyder, T., Kena, G., Kewal Ramani, A., Kemp, J., . . . Dinkes, R. (2009b). Indicator 8: Language minority school-age children. In *The condition of education 2009* (NCES 2009-081). Retrieved from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics website: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2009/pdf/8_2009.pdf

Ramirez, M., & Castaneda, A. (1974). *Cultural democracy, bicognitive development, and education.* New York, NY: Academic Press.

Reardon, S. F., Greenberg, E. H., Kalogrides, D., Shores, K., & Valentino, R. A. (2013). *Left behind? The effect of No Child Left Behind on academic achievement gaps*. Retrieved from Stanford University Department of Education website: http://cepa.stanford.edu/content/left-behind-effect-no-child-left-behind-academic-achievement-gaps

Riel, M., & Rowell, L. (2016). Action research and the development of expertise: Rethinking teacher education. In L. Rowell, C. Bruce, J. Shosh, & M. Riel (Eds.), *Palgrave interactional handbook of action research*. Retrieved from Pepperdine University website: http://www.cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/define.html

Saifer, S., Edwards, K., Ellis, D., Ko, L., & Stuczynski, A. (2011). *Culturally responsive standards-based teaching classroom to community and back*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Selenger, D. (1997). *Participatory action research and social change*. New York, NY: Cornell University.

SERRC. (2015). *Culture in the classroom.* Southeast Regional Resource Center, Project CREATE: Juneau, AK.

Shaklee, B. D., & Baily, S. (Eds.). (2012). *Internationalizing teacher education in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies*: *Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Spindler, G. (1996). Comments from Exploring Culture Institute, San Francisco, CA. In R. C. Henze & M. E. Hauser (Eds.), *Personalizing culture through anthropological and educational perspectives* (Educational Practitioner Report No. 4). Retrieved from Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence website: http://www.crede.ucsc.edu /products/pring/eprs/epr4.html

Storti, C. (1989). *The art of crossing cultures.* Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Strauss, A, & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In A. Strauss, A. J. Corbin, N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp 273–285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Streubert, H. J., & Carpenter, D. R. (1995). *Qualitative research in nursing: Advancing the humanistic imperative*. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott.

Thomson, P., & Gunter, H. (2011). Inside, outside, upside down: The fluidity of academic researcher "identity" in working with/in School. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, *34*(1), 17–30.

Tolbert, S. (2015). Because they want to teach you about their culture: Analyzing effective mentoring conversations between culturally responsible mentors and secondary science teachers of indigenous students in mainstream schools. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *52*(10), 1325–1361.

Tomlinson, C. (2015). One to grow on/The caring teacher's manifesto. *Educational Leadership*, *72*(6), 89–90.

Tribal National Resources Conservation Service. (2018). Tribal assistance. Retrieved from https://www.nrcs.usda.gov

Tunseth, M. (2015, May 23). Anchorage public schools lead nation in diversity. *Anchorage Daily News*. Retrieved from http://www.adn.com/article/20150523/anchorage-public-schools-lead-nation-diversity

U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *Alaska 2010: Population and housing unit counts*. Retrieved from U.S. Census website: https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/cph-2-3.pdf

U.S. Department of Commerce. (2012, December 12). *U.S. Census Bureau projections show a slower growing, older, more diverse nation a half century from now* [Population articles]. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

Vinlove, A., (2012). *Learning to teach where you are: Preparation for context-responsive teaching in Alaska's Teacher Certification Programs* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Alaska Fairbanks). Retrieved from http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/PhD_Projects /AmyVinlove/Vinlove.pdf

Appendix A

Alaska Cultural Standards and Elements for Educators

Table A1

Alaska Cultural Standards and Elements for Educators

Standard A: Culturally Responsive Educators Incorporate Local Ways of Knowing and Teaching in Their Work

1. Recognize the validity and integrity of the traditional knowledge systems.
2. Utilize the Elders' expertise in multiple ways in their teaching.
3. Provide opportunities and time for students to learn in settings where local cultural knowledge and skills are naturally relevant.
4. Provide opportunities for students to learn through observation and hands-on demonstration of cultural knowledge and skills.
5. Adhere to the cultural and intellectual property rights that pertain to all aspects of the local knowledge they are addressing.
6. Continually involve themselves in learning about the local culture.

Standard B: Culturally Responsive Educators Use the Local Environment and Community Resources on a Regular Basis to Link What They are Teaching to the Everyday Lives of the Students.

1. Regularly engage students in appropriate projects and experiential learning activities in the surrounding environment.
2. Utilize traditional settings such as camps as learning environments for transmitting both cultural and academic knowledge and skills.
3. Provide integrated learning activities organized around themes of local significance and across subject areas.
4. Are knowledgeable in all the areas of local history and cultural tradition that may have bearing on their work as a teacher, including the appropriate times for certain knowledge to be taught.
5. Seek to ground all teaching in a constructive process built on a local cultural foundation.

Standard C: Culturally Responsive Educators Participate in Community Events and Activities in Appropriate and Supportive Ways.

1. Become active members of the community in which they teach and make positive and culturally-appropriate contributions to the well-being of that community.
2. Exercise professional responsibilities in the context of local cultural traditions and expectations.
3. Maintain a close working relationship with and make appropriate use of the cultural and professional expertise of their co-workers from the local community.

Standard D: Culturally Responsive Educators Work Closely with Parents to Achieve a High Level of Complementary Educational Expectations Between Home and School.

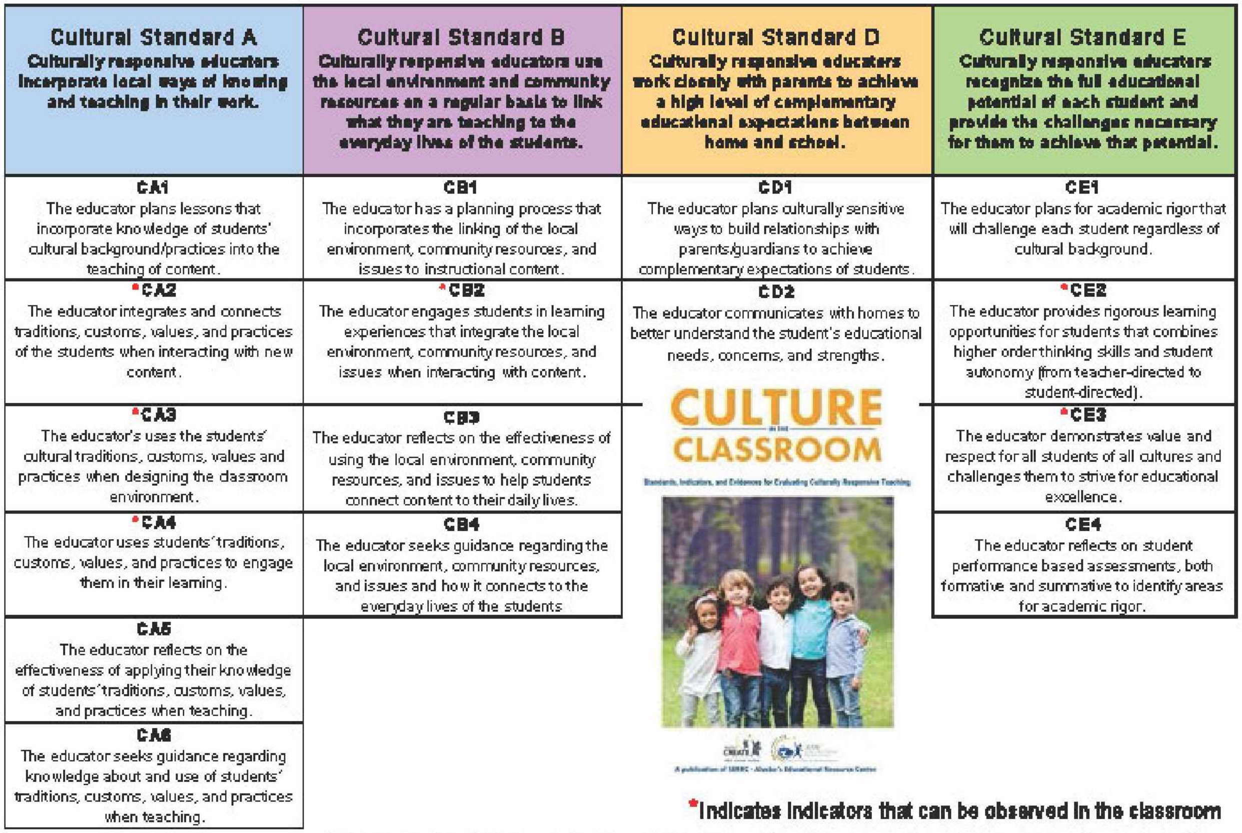
1. Promote extensive community and parental interaction and involvement in their children's education.
2. Involve Elders, parents, and local leaders in all aspects of instructional planning and implementation.
3. Seek to continually learn about and build upon the cultural knowledge that students bring with them from their homes and communities.
4. Seek to learn the local heritage language and promote its use in their teaching.

Standard E: Culturally Responsive Educators Recognize the Full Educational Potential of Each Student and Provide the Challenges Necessary for Each of Them to Achieve That Potential.

1. Recognize cultural differences as positive attributes around which to build appropriate educational experiences.
2. Provide learning opportunities that help students recognize the integrity of the knowledge they bring with them and use that knowledge as a springboard to new understanding.
3. Reinforce the student's sense of cultural identity and place in the world.
4. Acquaint students with the world beyond their home community in ways that expand their horizons while strengthening their own identities.
5. Recognize the need for all people to understand the importance of learning about other cultures and appreciating what each has to offer.

Appendix B

Alaska Cultural Standards and Indicators for Teacher Evaluation



Cultural Standard A **Culturally responsive educators incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work.**	**Cultural Standard B** **Culturally responsive educators use the local environment and community resources on a regular basis to link what they are teaching to the everyday lives of the students.**	**Cultural Standard D** **Culturally responsive educators work closely with parents to achieve a high level of complementary educational expectations between home and school.**	**Cultural Standard E** **Culturally responsive educators recognize the full educational potential of each student and provide the challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential.**
CA1 The educator plans lessons that incorporate knowledge of students' cultural background/practices into the teaching of content.	**CB1** The educator has a planning process that incorporates the linking of the local environment, community resources, and issues to instructional content.	**CD1** The educator plans culturally sensitive ways to build relationships with parents/guardians to achieve complementary expectations of students.	**CE1** The educator plans for academic rigor that will challenge each student regardless of cultural background.
***CA2** The educator integrates and connects traditions, customs, values, and practices of the students when interacting with new content.	***CB2** The educator engages students in learning experiences that integrate the local environment, community resources, and issues when interacting with content.	**CD2** The educator communicates with homes to better understand the student's educational needs, concerns, and strengths.	***CE2** The educator provides rigorous learning opportunities for students that combines higher order thinking skills and student autonomy (from teacher-directed to student-directed).
***CA3** The educator's uses the students' cultural traditions, customs, values and practices when designing the classroom environment.	**CB3** The educator reflects on the effectiveness of using the local environment, community resources, and issues to help students connect content to their daily lives.		***CE3** The educator demonstrates value and respect for all students of all cultures and challenges them to strive for educational excellence.
***CA4** The educator uses students' traditions, customs, values, and practices to engage them in their learning.	**CB4** The educator seeks guidance regarding the local environment, community resources, and issues and how it connects to the everyday lives of the students		**CE4** The educator reflects on student performance based assessments, both formative and summative to identify areas for academic rigor.
CA5 The educator reflects on the effectiveness of applying their knowledge of students' traditions, customs, values, and practices when teaching.			
CA6 The educator seeks guidance regarding knowledge about and use of students' traditions, customs, values, and practices when teaching.			

***Indicates indicators that can be observed in the classroom**

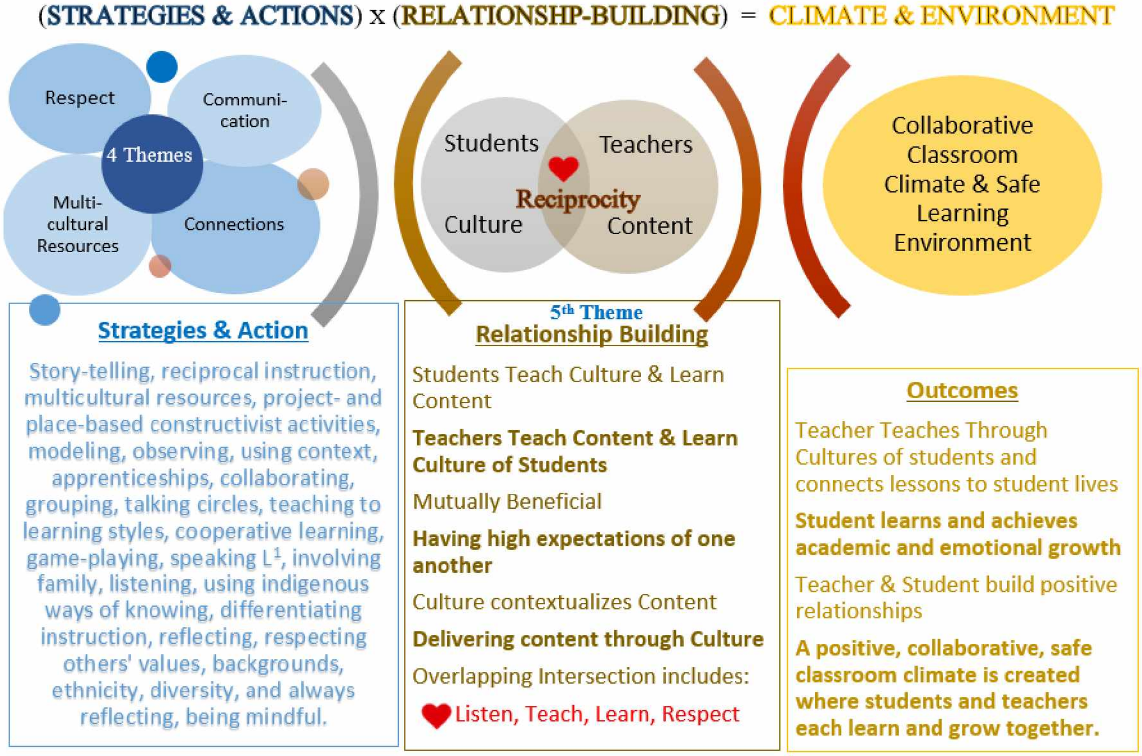
https://www.amazon.com/Culture-Classroom-Indicators-Evaluating-Culturally/dp/0692715053/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1515027907&sr=8-5&keywords=culture+in+the+classroom

Figure B1. Alaska cultural standards and indicators for teacher evaluation.

Appendix C

Teaching through culture: Theory of Practice

Teaching through culture (TTC), a Theory of Practice, draws upon select teacher strategies and actions that advance student learning. These strategies and actions embrace **four** of five themes revealed by quality TTC educators and are grounded in indigenous ways of knowing, constructivist, transformative, and cultural educational pedagogies. A start to a list of types of TTC strategies and actions is provided in the graphic below. TTC educators constantly build purposeful relationships, the **fifth** theme, with their students. Key to the success of any classroom strategy and/or action, for a TTC educator, is the *relationship* with the student. **Building relationships with students is the lifeblood of Teaching through culture**. First and foremost, TTC teachers know themselves culturally, and recognize own biases. TTC teachers build relationships with each student each year. TTC Teachers listen to students to learn about student heritage, culture, and student's background knowledge. TTC teachers are learners. Teacher *learning* is essential for delivering content. Students in a TTC classroom are teachers. Reciprocal relationships exist between teacher-student and between culture-content. Said reciprocity contributes to the professional growth of teacher and the academic growth of student. At the heart of the dyad between student and teacher is the relationship where teacher supports the student academically and emotionally while using knowledge of student and indigenous ways of knowing to deliver instruction. Students learn. TTC is informed by: students, professional development, personal teaching experience, district support, mutual respect, cohorts, shared goals, and student relationships. TTC connects instruction, resources, and meaningful content to student, and said connection leads to understanding. Together, teacher and student problem-solve and learn. Teaching through culture creates a collaborative classroom climate where both teacher and student teach, learn, and grow together in a safe learning environment.



(STRATEGIES & ACTIONS) x (RELATIONSHP-BUILDING) = CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT
Respect
Communi-cation
4 Themes
Multi-cultural Resources
Connections
Students
Teachers
Reciprocity
Culture
Content
Collaborative Classroom Climate & Safe Learning Environment

Strategies & Action

Story-telling, reciprocal instruction, multicultural resources, project- and place-based constructivist activities, modeling, observing, using context, apprenticeships, collaborating, grouping, talking circles, teaching to learning styles, cooperative learning, game-playing, speaking L^1, involving family, listening, using indigenous ways of knowing, differentiating instruction, reflecting, respecting others' values, backgrounds, ethnicity, diversity, and always reflecting, being mindful.

5th Theme
Relationship Building

Students Teach Culture & Learn Content

Teachers Teach Content & Learn Culture of Students

Mutually Beneficial

Having high expectations of one another

Culture contextualizes Content

Delivering content through Culture

Overlapping Intersection includes:

❤ Listen, Teach, Learn, Respect

Outcomes

Teacher Teaches Through Cultures of students and connects lessons to student lives

Student learns and achieves academic and emotional growth

Teacher & Student build positive relationships

A positive, collaborative, safe classroom climate is created where students and teachers each learn and grow together.

Figure C1. Teaching through culture: Theory of practice.

Appendix D

Chapter About Culture and Lessons With CAC

> "Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning."
>
> ~ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*

Introduction

Hello, Jan Littlebear here. Permit me to introduce myself.

I am the daughter of farmers from the eastern side of Washington state. My parents went to high school together in a small community of 500 fellow farmers where their parents had lived for a great deal of their adult lives. My parents were married young, stayed married for 60 years, and worked hard all of their lives. I have five siblings, all hard workers, following the work ethic of our farming parents. We each graduated from the same high school, have our high school senior pictures hanging in the hall of our school alongside those graduating photos of our parents. Interestingly, my Northern Cheyenne husband also graduated from this same high school and his high school graduating photo is included in the halls of the Lind High School. I am the first in my family to earn a college degree and I did so at a late age, 45. At age 70 I am pursuing my doctorate degree (apparently, I do everything late). Education is important to me personally. In the early 1980s I worked on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in their single contract K-12 school located at Busby, Montana. I was non-certified and worked for the superintendent and school board as a secretary. Even in that capacity, a clerk at the front office, I learned a lot about teaching through culture. A decade later, I taught for 16 years grades 3-8

Anchorage, Alaska, Mt. View community, in what was the most diverse community in our *nation*, (McCoy, 2013), where it was normal to have 6-8 different cultures and languages in my single classroom at any given time each year. I next mentored K-12 teachers all across Alaska for three years, in urban, rural, and remote Alaska settings. Most of these teachers came from outside Alaska, and needed all sorts of guidance and support about Alaska's student population and regions. Next, I traveled the United States and several countries delivering 6+1 Trait writing workshops for five years, returning in 2012 to the University of Alaska to once again work with the mentor program while I earn my doctorate degree. When our 16-year-old granddaughter was recently asked, "Why is your grandma working on her doctorate degree, she's so old?" Isabella responded, "I guess Grandma just likes to learn!" She is right. I confess. I like to learn.

This chapter is designed to introduce you to a topic near and dear to my heart—Teaching through culture. Successful teachers create communities of learners (Hooks, 2010), where all voices matter. Creating a community of learners requires understanding what it means to teach critical thinking skills in order for all people to achieve freedom within education. That is a *heavy* sentence, one worth repeating: *Creating a community of learners requires understanding what it means to teach critical thinking skills in order for all people to achieve freedom within education.* That goal begins with creating a community of learners—which is what I hope this chapter will do. That sentence captures the essence of my life's work in education. I have now spent four years exploring the requirements for creating such a *community of learners*, along with more than 30 years of experiencing and exploring what it takes to create such a community. What I want to share with you in this research chapter is "one" piece of the requirements for creating such a community—teaching through culture by building relationships.

To discover exactly what teaching through culture (TTC) looks like, I decided to pursue a doctorate. My research is being conducted in two phases: Phase 1 included interviewing 20 Alaska and Montana teachers skilled in teaching through culture to discover exactly what that looks like. Six Montana individual educators and six Alaska individual educators and two Alaska focus groups with eight more teachers resulted in 650 pages of transcripts. Through those pages I have discovered and at the same time ‘confirmed’ certain things we must do, as teachers, to connect student culture to curriculum in order for students to learn within a community of learners. These discoveries include an essential first step of “Building Relationships” with our students. In order to 1) build these relationships, we teachers need to 2) become learners, 3) recognize students as teachers, and perhaps most important, we teachers need to 4) listen. Building relationships results in the creation of community of learners. Teachers as Learners. Students as Teachers. Listen.

Phase 2 is where you come in, ECT participants to this research, educators in your first, second, or third year into the educational profession. You are going to take a pre-survey and a pre-checklist. Then you will view a couple of videos (or more as an option), read this chapter and deliver two of the several lessons I’ve included. All lessons included are about building relationships. Finally, you will take the post-survey (with one additional open-ended question), and a post checklist identical to the pre-checklist. Also, you will be required to fill out a demographics form which will be used to aggregate data, yet your own personal information will be kept in total confidence. For participating in this research, upon completion of all steps you will receive a $25 gift certificate AND your name will go into a hat where one lucky winner in each state, Alaska and Montana, will receive 30K free Alaska Air miles.

Finally, I just want to give you a heartfelt thank you before we even begin with the lessons. Your involvement and participation with this Participatory Action Research (PAR), my study, will contribute to a revised chapter on teaching through culture and that revised chapter will be included as part of a booklet being created by the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project to be given to teachers newest to the profession. Educators are in the profession of teaching because we love working with children, and enjoy contributing to the future. Thank you for being a part of this study.

Who are Culturally Diverse Learners?

> "They are the homeless children, the migrant children, and the immigrant children learning English. They are children dealing with gender issues and those with learning disabilities. They are special needs children, as well as **children from diverse cultures**— students perhaps not previously included or successful in our classrooms. To provide these learners with culturally responsive instruction, we must **build relationships** and **hold high expectations**, provide **rigorous content knowledge** while making explicit the hidden rules of learning, and **teach students how to learn** as well as what to learn." (Davis, 2012) [**Emphasis** added]

This chapter deals with ONE piece of this diversity definition: *children from diverse cultures*. However, ALL diverse student categories can benefit from a teacher choosing to build relationships.

Teaching Through Culture

Transcripts from 20 teachers who are experienced at using culture to connect learning to student background provided insight into exactly what it means to teach through culture. Embedded within the 650 pages of their testimony were four key findings for Teaching Through

Culture (TTC). When it comes to each year's new cadre of students, teachers must: 1) build new relationships, 2) learn from the students, 3) recognize their student learners as teachers, and 4) above all listen. This chapter is designed to help teachers, especially ECTs, gain skills, lessons, strategies and especially understanding for incorporating these four key findings into their own classroom practice by building relationships. All lessons included for your use are about building relationships.

First, we must examine what we mean when we say *culture*. So, what do we mean when we say culture? Are we talking globally, nationally, statewide, locally, or simply within one's own family? Are we discussing gender, classroom environment, or adolescent culture? The word culture has saturated our world today, coming to mean many things (refer above to "Who are culturally diverse learners?") The quick answer to what is culture would be "All of the above." The meaning of culture, *as used in this study*, requires clarification in order for you and I to share a common language and shared understanding of the issues presented in this research. So, I will begin at the beginning by defining *culture* as it will be used in this mixed-methods, exploratory study about what it means to Teach Through Culture.

In 2016 the conversation about culture's influence in education is not uncommon. Nearly two decades ago Phuntsog (1999) shared how researchers had already contributed to the cultural *differences* concept of improving academic achievement of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. With each new author, another phrase or term about culture emerges: culturally *compatible* (Jordan, 1987), culturally *responsive* (Erickson, 1987), culturally *congruent* (Au & Kawakami, 1991), and culturally *relevant* (Ladson-Billings, 1990), (Phuntsog, p.98) as well as Teaching Through Culture, (Barnhardt, 1990), to name a few. More recently Paris (2012) added to the conversation with her research suggesting that "*culturally sustaining pedagogy* be an alternative that embodies some of the best research and practice in the resource pedagogy tradition and as a term that supports the value of our multiethnic and multilingual present and future" (p.1). In the midst of all of the nomenclature, Gay (2002) and Banks (2004) also weighed in using the phrase: *Multi*-cultural Education. Which term to use? Sustaining? Multi? Relevant? Responsive? Compatible? Congruent? Diverse? The best way to clarify these many suggested terms and come away with a single shared understanding, is to explore the one word common to all: *Culture*.

Table D1

List of Culture Nomenclature

Year	Term	Author
1987	**Cultur**ally Compatible **Cultur**ally Responsive	Jordan Erickson
1990	Teaching Through **Culture**	Barnhardt
1990	**Cultur**ally Relevant	Ladson-Billings
1991	**Cultur**ally Congruent	Au & Kawakami
1999	**Cultur**ally Diverse	Phuntsog
2003 2004	Multi**cultur**al Education	Gay Banks
2005	**Cultural**ly Sensitive	Gonzalez
2012	**Cultural**ly Sustaining	Paris

Culture, the word, comes with as many definitions as there are contributors to this field of culture in education. Over the years, fresh definitions are created to reflect the current thinking about culture, just as the above table shows. Defining culture can be a tricky process. When considering a definition to capture the essence of *this* research, my exploratory sequential study, it is helpful to look through the lens of yet one more researcher, one of the authors of *Funds of Knowledge*, Norma Gonzalez, (Moll, 2005) as she presents a history of the evolution of the *concept* of culture:

> As educators, we are urged to be aware of cultural issues and try to incorporate culturally **sensitive** pedagogy. Yet, once we start to peel back the layers of this common usage, we find a complex history, a variety of definitions, and wide disparity in theories of culture. (p.29) [emphasis added]

Gonzalez explains that "culture" has its early start through the work of Franz Boas, a natural scientist and anthropologist, who shared his ideas about culture as being the "genius of a people" (Moll, p.30). Gonzalez suggests culture moves from the ideas of Boas and scientific racism, to a laundry list of cultural traits (Spindler, 1996), back into anthropology and educational circles, including some hybrids, postmodernism and poststructuralism, and finally into *implications for educators* (Spindler, p.38). It is at this historical point in time, culture as implications for educators, that I wish to define culture, **the word,** for this study.

Funds of Knowledge (Moll, 2005), in a qualitative study conducted by an anthropologist (Gonzalez), a researcher (Moll), and a teacher (Amanti), attempted "to coordinate three interrelated activities: the ethnographic analysis of household dynamics, the examination of classroom practices, and the development of after-school study groups with teachers" (p.72). Through the first activity of ethnographic analysis of household dynamics *Funds* arose "representing a positive (and, we argue, realistic) view of households as containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great potential utility for classroom instruction" (p. 75). One's "funds of knowledge" therefore include the cultural background of ethnicity, heritage, values and norms of a select group of people (which is the definition familiar to most), and also the cognitive knowledge gained within households through extended family interaction, shared living and collaborative familial experiences. These "funds," **together with** heritage background including values and norms provide many opportunities for educators to connect the content of new learning to student backgrounds. Others support a similar way of thinking: "Tapping into students' prior cultural knowledge can help to establish dynamic mental models that network to the learners' existing schema, adding meaning to the new knowledge for the learner" (Griner, 2012). My own personal *funds of knowledge*, as an elementary and secondary high school student from the 1950s and '60s, included: how to milk a cow, shuck peas, pull rye from a wheat field, weed a garden, drive a wheat truck while combine empties its grain into bed of truck, ride and care for a horse, participate in a yearly butchering assembly line of chickens, care for siblings, share household duties for a family of nine, collaborate, and manage school academics and activities. Think about your own funds of knowledge as a youngster; what would your list look like? In fact, if you stop reading right now and make a list of your *funds of knowledge* gathered as a youngster from Kindergarten to a senior in high school, that list and process of learning are going to help you with this *building relationships* strategy for teaching through culture. Stop. Make your list. Then continue reading.

(Once list is made, continue reading.)

Culture according to Gurung (2009) offers "Culture has many dimensions. Culture can be broadly defined as a dynamic yet stable set of goals, beliefs, and attitudes shared by a group of people. Culture is dynamic because some of the beliefs held by members in a culture can change with time" (p.12). And, finally, as one Virginia Department of Education staffer said, "Ethnic groups have cultures. Businesses have cultures. Neighborhoods have cultures. Culture is dynamic and changes over time. There is diversity within cultures. Each person is a member of many cultures!" (Stith-Williams, 2009) This discussion of culture obviously makes the concept of "culture" a moving target when it comes to trying to pin down a single definition. Finally, after more than a dozen other definitions by folks over the years, plus you generating your own list of personal funds of knowledge, let me share what I would like for you to think of as culture in this study.

Culture, according to Littlebear and for purposes of this research, includes one's background knowledge and cognitive *Funds of Knowledge* gained since birth, **together with** Gurung's suggested dynamic, ever-changing ethnic "set of goals, beliefs, and attitudes shared by a group of people" (p.12) which originate from the values and norms of one's heritage. Culture.

In addition, the cultural phrase I choose to use throughout this study is **Teaching Through Culture** (TTC), as TTC captures the essence of best practices in classroom instruction and is the heart of this study which hopes to provide guidance for how to create a community of learners: Teaching "through" not *about* culture. Teaching "through" is more than being *relevant* or *responsive*. If educators come to understand and embrace the pedagogy of TTC, they will understand as a learner and a listener, that TTC includes **all** other cultural terms—being culturally responsive, relevant, sustaining, and congruent while addressing multiple cultures. This means the teacher will commit to doing whatever is necessary to learn from the student in order to Teach Through that student's Culture and connect the content to the student's existing *funds of knowledge* and familial history as shaped by cultural heritage. Truly the phrase Teaching *Through* (not *about*) Culture defines the purpose of this study: What does TTC look like?

A set of more than 20 lessons is attached for your use (13 Lessons to be taught have an asterisk alongside the number on following chart, e.g., *2, *5; whereas additional lessons provided as a resource for you and not to be taught to your students are highlighted in yellow.) All lessons are about building relationships, the foundation for TTC. For this study, it is expected you will teach at least two of these *'d lessons during the next two months' time (from whatever date you are reading this chapter), more if you like. A proposed sample *cycle* of instruction follows, feel free to adjust this cycle as you deem necessary for your own specific needs. You are not expected to follow the cycle; it is offered only as a suggested timetable to begin the transition to being a school that is culturally responsive. For this study, the single expectation is that you will first read all of the attached lessons in their entirety, including the suggested cycle, then *deliver at least two of the *'d lessons*—the cycle is for your information only for future reference and to be used as a resource. (*'d numbers are the 1-page lessons from which you will choose two; resource lessons are also included to guide you in the future, yet resource lessons are not designed for delivery to students but more of a 'lesson' for teachers. Resource lessons will be highlighted in yellow.)

All lessons--*'d and resource—are designed to *build relationships* with your students, provide opportunities for you to *listen to your students* while *students teach you* about their lives, and ultimately *for you to learn* about your students in order to better meet their needs. Relationship-building among your students and you as the teacher is the objective for these lessons to be delivered, as relationship-building is the foundation for Teaching Through Culture, and as a result you should be closer to creating a community of learners. Good luck.

Table D2

Lessons Attached to Chapter About Culture

No.	**What**	**Why**
	ALASKA → https://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/cultural/cultural_standards.pdf	
	MONTANA → http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/curric.html http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/IndianEd/Resources/MTIndiansHistorylocation.pdf	
1	Process *TTC* as a Team	To Share a Common Language about Teaching Through Culture
*2	Opening Connector "Where I'm From"→	Build Community/Know own Culture→ Self-Awareness http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html
*3	Establishing Classroom Norms-- Yearly Startup	Get to know backgrounds/culture of each student every year; involve families (Elders) AK Standard A + others; create Values poster yearly for classroom; establish visitor's corner; spider web map;
4	Teaming PLCs	Have a school-wide Professional Learning Community for gaining Teaching Through Culture skills; Make it expectation for school; take minutes, build online archive of resources. Share learning.
*5	Map Activity	Gather information about where students come from.
*6	P is for Passport	Gather information about students, background, and global geography; A worldly Picture Book that sets the scene for traveling the world with your students;
*7	Travel the World with your Students	Expectations is for delivering only ONE of these 9-18 lessons; it is a year-long study of worldly virtual travel.
*8	Positive Beginnings with Parents	Establish Parental Positive Relationship
*9	Clarifying Expectations	Establish routines, roles in the classroom, clarify structure
*10	Venn Diagram Introductions	Use compare/contrast to help students learn about one another and you about them
*11	Snowball Exchange in (month)	Get acquainted with one another; have fun.
*12	Student Survey (with Sample)	Gathering information and teaching how to survey
*13	Going on a Scavenger Hunt	Getting to know you activity helps students identify interests as they relate to multiple intelligences
14	Positive Communication	Research shows ratio of positive interactions pays off, while negative interactions do irreparable damage
*15	Student of the Day (Early Literacy Project)	Getting to know while doing shared writing – designed more for *primary* students
*16	How My Parents Learned to Eat	Global Awareness

Table D2 continued

17	Travel the world with your Students	Building bonds while learning mapping; celebrating homelands of students, in virtual around-the-world field trip.
18	Create School-wide Family Groups & Celebrate Routinely	Build school wide relationships within and among students, as well as community.
19	Archive Lessons by Standards	Begin to save lessons that work, identifying Standard, Element, and activity in a place online where all District (State?) teachers have access; leave room for feedback and revisions (similar to Wikipedia)
20	Reflection	It's a cycle, always reflect, individually and as a group; record your thinking; start over; share thinking; team.
21	Identify Strengths/Weaknesses	Use data gathered to use strengths to build on weaknesses; it's a cycle→ plan, act, analyze, reflect, start over.
22	Professional Development	Team across the state for yearly culturally relevant work sessions created, delivered, and attended by teachers; have a central archive location (Wikipedia-like online portal?)
23	School Wide Family Groups	Something to consider as a way to build community across grade levels, within schools, and districts
24	Getting to Know…	Helps you learn about a community if new to the area
25	Guidelines for respecting…	Making sure culture is used in respectful ways
26	Join in!	Making your presence known in community
27	Invite Parent Input	Have parents write you a letter about their child
28	Labeling the Room	From Early Literacy to older students—labeling can help
29	Listen	Simply reiterates importance of listening.

As one Alaska Native Elder put it, “The schools are more concerned about preparing our children to make a living than they are in preparing them to make a life for themselves” (Barnhardt, 2011). When you ask many of our Native Alaska elders and parents: What is it they want more than anything else for their child? They often reply simply, “I want my child to be a good human being.” Teaching Through Culture is a value-added paradigm, whose time has come, to significantly improve quality instruction in all classrooms in ways that help teachers connect with individual students by validating, reaffirming, and respecting that child’s funds of knowledge and unique cultural background. Now is the time to follow this indigenous way of knowing and help all children to become good human beings.

Glossary

Cultural Competency: The integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes.

Cultural Proficiency: Knowing how to learn and teach about different groups in ways that acknowledge and honor all people and the groups they represent.

Culture According to Littlebear: Culture includes one's background knowledge and cognitive *Funds of Knowledge* gained since birth, **together with** Gurung's suggested dynamic, ever-changing ethnic "set of goals, beliefs, and attitudes shared by a group of people" (p.12) which originate from the values and norms of one's heritage. Culture.

Ethnicity: Groups in which members share a cultural heritage from one generation to another; one's geographical origin, group image and a sense of identity derived from contemporary cultural patterns and a sense of history. Many people are of multiple ethnicities.

Race: A classification system based on physical characteristics and generalized conceptions of skin color. A political and social construct that is most often important in societies with a history of oppressing specific groups.

Racial identity: One's sense of group identity or affiliation and association with others who possess the same racial heritage.

Teaching Through Culture (TTC): Teaching Through Culture occurs when teachers 1) build relationships with students by 2) listening and 3) learning from 4) students who are also teaching.

References for Chapter About Culture (CAC)

Au, K., & Kawakami, A. (1994). Cultural congruence in instruction. In E. Hollins, J. King & W. Hayman (Eds.). *Teaching diverse populations: Formulating knowledge base* (pp.5-23). Albany: State university of New York Press.

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. E. (2004). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Banks, J. (Ed.). (2012). *Encyclopedia of diversity in education.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Barnhardt, R. (1990) *Teaching/learning across cultures: Strategies for success.* Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. O. (Eds.). (2011). *Sharing our pathways native perspectives on education in Alaska.* Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. O. (Eds.) (2012) *Alaska native education views from within.* Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Davis, B. (2012). *How to teach students who don't look like you, culturally responsive teaching strategies.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Erickson, F. (1987). Transformation and school success: The politics and culture of educational achievement. *Anthropology & Educational Quarterly, 18*, 335-356.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (2005). *Literacy reading the word and the world.* London, England: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching, theory, research, and practice.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

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

Griner, A. C., & Stewart, M. L. (2012). Addressing the achievement gap and disproportionality through the use of culturally responsive teaching practices. *Urban Education, 48*, 585–621.

Gurung, R. A. R., & Prieto, L. R. (2009). *Getting culture, incorporating diversity across the curriculum.* Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Hooks, B. (2010). *Teaching critical thinking, practical wisdom.* New York, NY: Routlege.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1990). Culturally relevant teaching: Effective instruction for Black students. *College Board Review, 7*(15), 20–25.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dream-keepers.* San Francisco, CA: Wiley and Sons.

McCoy, K. (2013, April 6). Hometown U: Data show Mountain View is most diverse neighborhood in America. *Anchorage Daily News*. Retrieved from https://www.adn.com /our-alaska/article/hometown-u-data-show-mountain-view-most-diverse-neighborhood-america/2013/04/07/

Moll, L. C., Gonzalez, N., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Office of Public Instruction. (2000). *Montana Indians: their history and location.* Helena, MT: Division of Indian Education, Montana Office of Public Instruction. http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/IndianEd/Resources/MTIndiansHistorylocation.pdf

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy a needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, *41*(3), 93–97.

Phuntsog, N. (1999, Summer). The magic of culturally responsive pedagogy: In search of the genie's lamp in multicultural education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 97–111.

SERRC. (2015). *Culture in the classroom.* Southeast Regional Resource Center, Project CREATE: Juneau, AK.

Spindler, G. (1996). Comments from Exploring Culture Institute, San Francisco, CA. In R. C. Henze & M. E. Hauser (Eds.), *Personalizing culture through anthropological and educational perspectives* (Educational Practitioner Report #4). Retrieved from Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence website: http://www.crede.ucsc.edu /products/pring/eprs/epr4.html

Stith-Williams, V. (2009). *The significance of cultural competence and culturally responsive practices in education* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from Virginia Department of Education website: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/tech_asst_prof_dev/self _assessment/disproportionality/cultural_competency.ppt

*Where I’m From – Learning About Individuals in Classroom

☐K-2 Primary	☑ 3-5 Elementary	☑ 6-8 Middle School	☑ 9-12 High School	☐K-12

OPENING CONNECTOR

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to craft a piece of poetry based on their own unique background knowledge, culture, and language. Word Choice and Conventions of English could be two targeted content objectives. (Use your own District’s content standards for identifying additional targeted objectives.) (Relationship Building with Students/Parents) Teachers will gain much information and background knowledge about this year’s group of students. This lesson also meets many objectives for Social Emotional Learning. (K-2 Primary ‘can’ do this with lots and lots and lots of parental/staff support.)

STEPS:

1. Ask students to make a list of things they identify with from their childhood and life up until now. Places, events, holidays, relatives, celebrations and so on will work; just use words and phrases; sentences are not necessary.
2. Partner students and have them share their lists.
3. Read (*or use her recording) the “Where I’m From” poem by George Ella Lyon.
4. Post the poem on an overhead/whiteboard and talk about it. What can the reader learn personally about George Ella Lyon by reading her poem?
5. Hand out a copy of the poem to each student. Pull apart the poem line by line and create Ms. Lyon’s list: clothespins, Clorox, dirt under the back porch, fudge and eyeglasses…and so on.
6. If doing a Conventions lesson, talk about the punctuation, formatting (poetry is different), and parts of speech.
7. If doing a Word Choice lesson, talk about the word choices made that create pictures in your mind, strong imagery.
8. Now ‘box in’ the “I am from” and “from” words. This now becomes a template for student use in crafting own “Where I’m From” piece.
9. Using student list generated earlier, students create their own “Where I’m From” poem; this is an excellent place for use of several words from first language if student happens to be an English Language Learner and literate in L^1.
10. Partner share poems, then whole group share.

EXTENSIONS:

- ✓ Hold a poetry bash for all students to share;
- ✓ Have students read poetry aloud at Open House, or Parent-Teacher conferences;
- ✓ Allow students more time to build a PowerPoint with graphics to match poem;
- ✓ Take a line from each student’s poem, have student read it aloud as you video-tape them, and create a CLASS “Where I’m From” video for sharing;

Everything you need for this poem, including *author reading poem, can be found at: http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html Use attached cc of author’s *Where I’m From* Poem AND template to build own poem as handouts or resources for student use.

"Where I'm From"

by George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening,
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush
the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
and the pass-it-ons,
from Perk up! and Pipe down!
I'm from He restoreth my soul
with a cottonball lamb
and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost
to the auger,
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures,
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments—
snapped before I budded –
leaf-fall from the family tree.

“TEMPLATE” for completing a “Where I’m From” poem

“Where I'm From”
by _______(Student Name)____________

I am from ________________
from ___________________________
I am from ____________________________
(____________________
_____________________.)
I am from __________________
the _________________
____
________________________.
I'm from __________ and ____________,
from ___________ and __________.
I'm from ____________________
_____________________,
from ___________and ______________!
I'm from ______________________
____
_________________________.

I'm from ___________and __________________
_________________ and ______________.
From __________________________
_________________________,
_______________________________.

(Preposition?) ____________________
____
____
_____________________.
I am from ___________________
____
_______________________.

*ESTABLISHING CLASSROOM NORMS – YEARLY STARTUP				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	√ K-12

Objective: Validate norms of multiple students' backgrounds; Build guides and create classroom poster for yearly student behavior expectations (Classroom rules). (Relationship Building with Students/Parents)

Materials Needed: Sample classroom norms posters from previous years. List of values commonly shared by student population. (Assign as homework, having students question parents about familial norms, guides, rules.)

Steps:

1. Invite group discussions about individual family norms, values, and customs for behavior.
2. Talk about how some of these norms, values, customs are similar to other cultures.
3. Which of these norms, values, customs could we use to help learning happen in our own classrooms?
4. Record norms and expectations for behavior on chart paper for a guide throughout the year.
5. Have K-5 students sign the poster in agreement; take photo of class in front of poster, post in school newsletter.
6. Send home picture of poster to parents of all K-5 students for their information.
7. Post 6-12 yearly norms in 6-12 classrooms as well as make available to parents/community through routine newsletter for secondary students' parent information.
8. Secondary students design the poster for the classroom – include photography of some sort related to either class or diversity of classroom or families for this year's students.

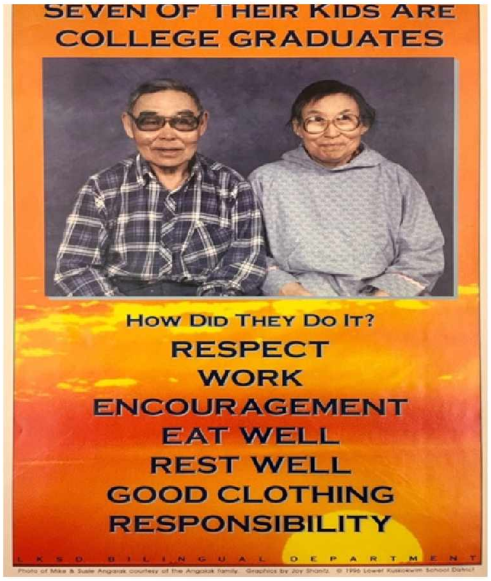


Photo of Mike & Susie Angaiak courtesy of the Angaiak family. Graphics by Joy Shantz. © 1996 Lower Kuskokwim School District

*MAP ACTIVITY – NEIGHBORHOOD TO GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	☑ K-12

Objective: Build community, get to know neighborhood and classmates. Set the scene for exploring the world. Get to know one another and surroundings.

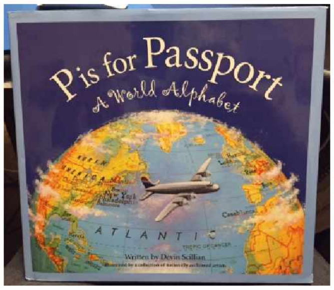
Materials Needed: Local maps, map of the state, county, city, neighborhood, world. MAPS.

Explain that it is important to know where we live, what types of vegetation, grasses, trees, animals we have surrounding us on a day to day basis. So we will take a field trip exploring our neighborhood (maybe a 2-4 block radius of school? Whatever works for you, your area, weather and circumstances.)

Steps:

1. Do field trip prep, go for a walk, observing and taking notes (Science-Writing)
2. Do this with a partner for talking while writing about all observations: vegetation, wildlife, houses, buildings, businesses, sidewalks, no sidewalks – all things discovered within the area of the field trip
3. Return to class and build a map with your partner of all things noticed. Depending upon age of student, make map to scale, or just with hand-drawn notations, illustrations, graphics.
4. Pair partnerships to expand the knowledge and revise the maps.
5. Build a hallway or room display with an authentic store-bought map of the city/area, and surround it with student maps showing variety of observed items. Talk about why some felt 'x' was important, while others bypassed it completely.
6. Take account of where students originated.
7. Hang one more map up, a WORLD map and have students place a small dot (stickie, post-it) on place of their origin (or) – depending upon how much background you want – the place of their ancestor's origin. In this way you show students where they have cultural influences, while YOU learn about individual student background. Chances are if in a small village school, there will be many 'local clusters' of stickers on the world map, and if in an urban, larger school you are likely to have dots from across the world.

*P is For Passport, a World Alphabet				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	√ K-12



Objective: Build community, get to know the geography of the world. Set the scene for exploring the world and learning about cultural differences/norms. Get to know one another's background, culture influences, and places of origin. Speaking, Writing, Researching & Geography are topics for this lesson about building world-wide relationships.

Materials Needed: P is for Passport, a World Alphabet, by Devin Scillian.

Steps:

1. Read aloud the book to all students. Be sure to do a little vocabulary prep depending upon age of child. (Very advanced for primary K-2 students, but doable.) Sides of each page give nonfiction data about the content of each page.
2. Put the letters of the English alphabet into a jar, draw one out for every two students (this is a cooperative activity to be accomplished in pairs).
3. Assign ONE page (a letter from alphabet) from the book to each partnership (13 partnerships). Partnerships then become 'experts' on that one page, and create a poster/brochure sharing the contents of that single page. Older students turn the page into a travel brochure for their content. Caution, some pages are about transportation, such as a train, so now the travel brochure becomes an advertisement for traveling by rail.
4. Celebration of posters are done through public speaking where partnerships present their poster at a travel agency conference, convincing folks they should come to their "country," travel by their mode of transportation "train," or become a "baker" in a certain country, or know the "currency" of several countries, "or…" the Sky's the limit depending upon the page chosen. Students enjoy choice, let them decide how to share back the knowledge from their page.
5. To make this assignment very understandable with clear expectations, create a rubric of what a perfect presentation/paper would look like and share that with students before assigning the pages. The web gives many examples of rubrics: http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=NewRubric
6. Film the presentation and run it as a PowerPoint or Video on YouTube during parent-teacher conference night. Build Relationships.

NOTE: This lesson is designed for a year's worth of lessons; if you choose to do teach this lesson for the research, only one lesson will be necessary to complete.

*TRAVEL THE WORLD WITH YOUR STUDENTS						
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School		High School (Could be adjusted for HS depending upon curriculum being taught; more difficult with secondary.)		K-12

Objective: Expose students to the world and global relationships through a year-long virtual field trip.
Materials Needed: World Map displayed where it can be accessed all year long, and already pinned or dotted by students as to their places of origin (or their ancestors' place of origin).
Purpose? To build community among students while teaching about actual community where everyone attends school.

Steps:

1. Explain that throughout the year we will 'travel virtually' to every corner of the world, circumventing it by year's end. We will begin at home, with a map of our city (or in younger students, perhaps a field trip of certain radius from school). Said map of the city will then be discussed, charted where students' homes are located, and activities done to make that map as familiar as possible. Then (depending upon time left in year), map out time required to 'travel' the world, creating at least one stop per continent, more whenever able and if year-long calendar allows. Also—**and this is very essential**—depending on this year's students, be sure to travel to the homes of origin for your immigrants, and students new to America. In that way whenever you reach 'their' homeland, they can bring in parents, history, expertise to share their funds of knowledge. Create a path that takes your students around the world using a couple of hours every other week.
2. Create a list of categories: Religion, Food, Climate, Vegetation, Latitude/Longitude, Clothing, Education, Politics, Housing, Economy, Allies/Enemies,
3. Each of these next two steps (a & b) are then repeated until world has been traveled and all stops reached:

a. Create a passport for all stops to be visited, and have a person/committee responsible for stamping each passport throughout the year.
b. Travel to first destination by finding it on a map, marking it with map pins and string, charting the way to arrive (plane, train, car, walk, snow machine), record distances, time of year, climate, animals, vegetation, people. Learn about food, spirituality, clothes, homes, schools, how long it would take, what important things occurred at this region? If a time is set aside every other week, or every three weeks, a trip around the world can be accomplished. It's helpful to have certain categories (#2 above) on slips of paper, draw them from jar and assign to partnership for research. Return identical slips to jar for next destination.

POSITIVE BEGINNINGS WITH PARENTS				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	√ K-12

Objective: Establish positive relationships with parents from Day 1. Relationship-building among students.

Materials Needed: Post cards, postage, note cards, photographs, telephone.

Steps:
1. Create a spreadsheet with names of students in first column, and number of weeks (36?) across top, numbering weeks of school.
2. Set a goal to make a 5-minute phone call to one family a night to relay a positive comment about their child; start the first week of school.
3. In the first three weeks of school make it a point to write a postcard, call on the phone, or visit each parent to introduce yourself and invite that parent to the classroom.
4. If possible, gather information from parents (during that initial visit) about their own strengths in life to see if they won't be willing to tell a story to the class one day and teach about their career, history, or some item they would be comfortable sharing. Telling a story is much easier to accept than 'teaching a lesson.'
5. Ask the parent about their dreams for their child, and then be sure to make notes for your own information throughout rest of year.

*CLARIFYING EXPECTATIONS				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	√ K-12

POST

Expectations in the Classroom:

- ✓ Determine the expectations for each class, as teacher you start the process and invite student input.
- ✓ Record specific expectations before greeting students—make transparent what you expect.
- ✓ Print and present the expectations to the parents, making yourself available to discuss and clarify.

What Parents Can Expect:

- ✓ Determine teacher responsibilities for each class, as teacher you start the process and invite parent input.
- ✓ Record what parents can expect from the teacher.
- ✓ Print and present expectations and discuss for clarification during first family gathering.

Resource: *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do,* National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, 1999. [A guide to help with parental engagement and involvement.]

Sample list of expectations follows:

Sample Expectations

1. Seating - Students decide where to sit unless directed to a seat by a teacher
2. Entering a Classroom – Quiet visiting is allowed until the signal to begin class
3. Leaving a Classroom – Leave only when dismissed by a teacher
4. Drinks of water – Use the drinking fountain in the classroom when no one is presenting a lesson or addressing the class directly. Self-managers are encouraged to carry water bottles for use during class.
5. Restroom – Use the restroom before school, during lunch and recess and when necessary. Sign the destination sheet stating where and when. Sign back in with the time returned. One person should use the restroom at a time during class. Keep the restroom clean.
6. Nurse – Ask a teacher for a nurse's pass. Go directly to the nurse's office.
7. Sharpening pencils – Sharpen pencils before the beginning of class. Pencils may be sharpened during class when no one is addressing the class.
8. Supplies – Students are responsible for all their own supplies. If you are missing any supplies, ask a teacher. Emergency pencils and paper will be given to you. Remember to bring your own the next day and return borrowed supplies to the teacher.
9. Tardy – Stop at the front office to obtain an admittance slip if arriving to school after the morning bell.
10. …try to have less than a dozen rule/expectations delivered in this way….

*VENN DIAGRAM INTRODUCTIONS				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	√ K-12

Objective: Introduce students to each other (even if they've been in school many years together). Find commonalities and differences. Share presentation responsibilities. Learn what Venn Diagrams are. Build relationships.

Materials Needed: Large blank Venn Diagram (1 Poster per pair of students); markers

Steps:

1. Model the introduction process with another willing staff member or parent
2. Label each circle with the name of one student
3. Talk together and fill in diagrams with similarities and differences. (Show how similarities fit in the middle circle…have one prepared as an exemplar, or create one as you and partner model introductions).
4. Present shared Venn diagram back to audience as a pair. One person may read the similarities in the middle, and the other can read the differences. Or each person may tell one similarity and one difference. NOTE FOR SECONDARY: They have fun turning this into a rap presentation where each 'raps' his/her own differences, and together they 'rap' the similarities. When working with secondary, the presentation can be the more appropriate piece of this activity.
5. Maybe before sharing with audience as a whole, have two sets of partnerships get together and practice their presentation first, before delivering to whole class.
6. Post the diagrams up somewhere for easy access and help in remembering one another's names, background, etc. Teacher should take a picture for future reference.

Resource: Santa, Carol, Havens, Lynn, Valdes, Bonnie, Project CRISS—Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies, Kendall/Hunt Publications, 2004, pp. 96-100.

*SNOWBALL EXCHANGE IN (AUGUST…?)				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	√ K-12

This is fun, but watch out – it can be chaotic – used to be called Snowball FIGHT in August! Objective: Introduce students to each other, build relationships. This get-acquainted activity can be used at any grade level. It has even been used with adults in workshops, it can be fun. It's quick, fun, and a terrific way to get to know your classmates or colleagues.

Materials Needed: Sheets of white paper and markers (the age of student determines kind of markers to be used)

Steps:

1. Pass out sheets of white paper, one sheet to each student
2. Ask students to make a list on paper: PRINT clearly, others will be reading this list. Name, favorite food, subject they love, last book read (or whatever information you want to gather). No more than two or three statements. Primary students might have only one or two and drawings would work.
3. Students wad up their sheet of paper to make a 'snowball'
4. Spend about two minutes throwing snowballs around room (have protocols), keep picking up snowballs and re-tossing them into the designated area.
5. Call stop
6. Student then picks up snowball closest to him/her.
7. Each student opens the snowball, smooths it out, and introduces the person whose name is on the snowball.
8. Teacher collects the wrinkled paper to make any notes about information that might be useful to you and planning for future work.

***STUDENT SURVEY (WITH SAMPLE)**				
Primary	Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	K-12

Objective: Gather data on students for future planning; build relationships

Materials Needed: Surveys

Background:
What better way to gather valuable information from students than to have them complete a survey? The most ideal way to learn about students is through dialogue—so talking might be best. However, having a document to refer back to may help with making decisions about differentiating instruction. Or, some items on a survey may be more comfortable for students to respond to through writing, rather than talk. Other survey items can be compiled on a class list, such as how many students have access to computers outside of school, which might help you to decide to sign up for the computer lab.

The sample survey which will be included here is specific to Language arts/English classes in an urban setting. Make your survey fit your circumstances. The general information fits for all classes. Rural teachers might want to include a question about whether a student speaks another language. Rural students might not have 'paying' jobs after school but you may want to learn how busy they are with family responsibilities which affect homework time. More specific, content area questions may be substituted to meet your unique needs. For example, a science teacher might want to ask students about their level of awareness for safe lab procedures. Social studies teachers might want to probe for attitudes about studying history. Math teachers might want to ask which math concepts have caused a student to struggle the most.

A few pointers when asking students to complete the survey:

1. Always stress the information will be confidential (and be true to your word)
2. Explain why you want the information and how it can help you be a better teacher
3. Provide students plenty of time, have another activity for students who finish quickly
4. Go over the survey with the class, answer student questions and concerns
5. Clearly state short answers are not acceptable for the more involved questions
6. Make a BIG DEAL about wanting students to complete the survey thoughtfully
7. Offer full points for a reasonable degree of effort, it's a nice motivational carrot

Before collecting:

- ✓ Circulate through the room, be positive and encouraging
- ✓ Double check that names, addresses and phone numbers are filled in.

A sample student survey (English content) follows on the next page:

SAMPLE STUDENT SURVEY (Secondary)

In order to gain a clearer picture of the varied backgrounds and school experiences of the students in my classes, I want you to answer this survey thoughtfully and with as much detail as possible. Your answers will help me to become more informed about you so as to be a more effective teacher. (Get out a separate piece of paper and write as much as necessary to answer the questions completely.)

Name:
Age: Birthdate:
Parents/Guardians (If you live in more than one household, please list both.)

Primary Residence:	Secondary Residence
Name/Relation	Name/Relation
Phone Number (Home and work)	Phone Number (Home and work)
Address	Address

Where were you born:

How long have you lived in Alaska/Montana? Where else have you lived?

What extracurricular activities are you involved in?

Do you have a job?

Does your family own or do you have access to a computer?

What other classes do you have that require writing? (Not just English classes>)

What kind of writing have you done (journals, poetry, essays), either in school or on your own time?

Do you like writing? Why or why not? Please answer this question as completely as possible.

What topics are you interested in writing about? Your own interests, as well as social interests?

Do you like to read? If so, what type of books or magazines, which authors? What kinds of literature do you consider to be challenging?

How comfortable do you feel when working within small groups of students?

Have you done library or community research? Describe the research projects you have worked on?

Is there anything else you would like me to know about you which will help me be a more effective teacher?

*COMMUNITY BUILDING - GOING ON A SCAVENGER HUNT				
Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	K-12

Objective: Gather data on students for future planning; build relationships; relate to what we know about multiple intelligences

Materials Needed: Scavenger Hunt Grid (see next page)

Steps:

1. Photocopy the Multiple Intelligence Scavenger Hunt master (next page) or create your own to best fit your students, school, community, and environment. Give a copy to each student. Tell class that each student is to interview all other students in the class, asking them to initial or sign their name to every item that relates to them.

2. When class is ready, discuss what they have discovered about each other. You might represent the different interests or strengths using graphs, charts, or a simple 'stand up if' activity.

3. Collect the scavenger-hunt sheets when activity is finished. The information collected will help you discover the strengths of all of your students.

Resources: Forsten, C., Grant, J. & Hollas, B (2002). Differentiated instruction: Different strategies for different leaders (p. 27 & 114). Peterborough, NH: Crystal Spring Books.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES SCAVENGER HUNT: Find someone who…

…reads every night
…keeps a journal
…has been to another state
…has been to another country – name the country.
…fixes things
…sings in the shower
…can whistle
…can finish this sequence: 1,1, 2, 3, 5, 8…
…loves to cook
…will recite a short poem
…plays a sport
…can dance
…plays an instrument (what instrument?)
…loves to make people laugh
…can juggle
…makes art
…enjoys doing things outdoors
…likes to take things apart
…speaks a language other than English
…knows own culture and can share facts about own culture
…has both brothers and sisters
…is an only child
…has lived in the same house since birth
…has a pet (cat, dog, fish, bird, ???...name the pet)

POSITIVE COMMUNICATION (More of a resource than a lesson)				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	√ K-12

Objective: Build relationships; deliver positive feedback at a 4:1 ratio compared with negative.

> "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."
> ― **Maya Angelou**

Materials Needed: Spreadsheet to track interactions with students; perhaps invite administrator in to observe for this targeted reason—positive and negative feedback—giving them your tracking sheet.

Background: Always communicate with students (families) in a positive way. What is said and how it is said can have a major impact on how a student learns. Always use kind words and a gentle manner to direct, guide, and correct students. Negative messages are counterproductive and affect the way the brain processes and stores information.

Caution: Make a conscious effort to avoid any messages that might be perceived by students as threatening.

Classroom threats include:

1. Embarrassing students
2. Giving unrealistic deadlines
3. Insensitivity to students who English is limited
4. Bullying/harassing
5. Calling on students who don't know the answer
6. A suppressive classroom culture (Students not free to express selves)
7. Punitive discipline
8. Unfair comparisons of student to student
9. Reading aloud (expectation for struggling reader)
10. Sarcasm can be misunderstood or misinterpreted and can therefore be perceived as a threat also.

Resources: Forsten, C., Grant, J. & Hollas, B (2002). Differentiated instruction: Different strategies for different leaders (p. 27 & 114). Peterborough, NH: Crystal Spring Books.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">*STUDENT OF THE DAY (Early Literacy Project)</th></tr>
<tr><td>√ Primary</td><td>☑ Intermediate</td><td>☑ Middle School</td><td>☑ High School</td><td>☑ K-12</td></tr>
</table>

This beginning of the year, shared-writing activity for Kindergarten and first grade helps students learn about each other as well as teaches them the names of letters and sounds and concepts about print. Also good for building relationships among students and with teacher.

Select a student to be Student of the Day by drawing a name for a class list put in a jar.

1. In advance, write the chosen name on a long strip of paper. Staple it at the ends to form a crown that will be worn by the student of the day.
2. On a tag board strip, slowly write the student's name while saying the letters aloud. Tape this to chart paper.
3. Lead the whole group to count the letters in the name.
4. Repeat the name. Chant the letters while clapping to each letter
5. Discuss the use of the capital letter.
6. Write the name on the chart paper, have students chant the spelling as you write.
7. Remove the tag board name and cut the letters apart. Mix the letters up in the pocket chart.
8. Invite several students to take turns rearranging the letters to form the correct spelling of the name.
9. Have the class chant the letters. Slide your finger under each letter to help guide the chanting. Check if spelling is correct.
10. Focus on concepts of print (e.g., how the name begins and ends, first and last letters, long or short sounds, letters that are the same or different, etc.).
11. Write a short chart story about the student. Model and think aloud about the mechanics of writing.
12. Later, the students can draw a picture for the student of the day.
13. Have 4-5 students share their writing and drawing with the class.
14. Compile students' writing into a book about the student of the day. Send the book home with the student of the day.
15. Display the name chart story for students to read.

Resource: Wag staff, J. (1994). Phonics that work! New strategies for the reading/writing classroom. Scholastic.

*MULTICULTURE – READ ALOUD – CREATING OWN CLASSROOM LIBRARY OF BOOKS (or) SCRAPBOOK OF PICTURES/PHOTOGRAPHS

Primary	Intermediate	Middle School	High School	☑ K-12

(Grade level requires careful, purposeful choice of book to be used for this read-aloud activity)

Objective: Students learn about different foods from the region and perhaps from around the world. Different eating utensils are explored, discussed, and used. (Building relationships among students and with teacher and learning about student backgrounds.) If other books used instead of food, could be clothes, furniture, houses, bread…etc. lots of choices out there.

Materials Needed: Book of your choice: Some suggestions: *How My Parents Learned to Eat* (Primary-Intermediate)*; Bread, Bread, Bread,* Around the World Series; *What we Wear-Dressing up Around the World; Houses & Homes Around the World; Material World, a Global Family Portrait—(*Secondary students), (there are MANY books that work for this activity). Book chosen varies depending upon grade level for this lesson.

Steps:

1. Read Aloud the story (using How My Parents Learned to Eat) …Primary/Intermediate.
2. Teacher tells story of her/his own upbringing and types of food eaten, as well as utensils used.
3. Students Partner share stories. Have students partner talk how they eat (Think-Pair-Share/Kagan Cooperative Activity) and what kinds of food is their favorite. Use this opportunity to ask higher-order thinking questions. (Do you know where this meal originated in your family history? How could you find out? What is geography like where your ancestors were first located? What kinds of food were there?)
4. Whole group share-out: What did you learn about food or eating utensils?
5. Using a Large piece of Art Paper (11x17) students draw a place setting, complete with dinner plate, drinking glass, and eating utensils.
6. Somewhere on the picture, list the food and utensils used. (Best if you have an example to show.) Write a story about the plate of food.
7. If possible, students bring in ONE food item to share during a potluck with parents, and author's chair is used to share stories, either 'telling' or reading stories written.

Extension/Enrichment: If using the *Material World, a Global Family Portrait* with **secondary** students (middle or high school), having students create their own classroom book using photographs of their bedrooms or homes can be a fun activity. This requires exploring the *Material* book itself first using a document camera for all to see, identifying different worldly locations, types of furniture, geography, terrain, and needs. Opens up rich discussion about climate dictating contents of homes.

GETTING TO KNOW A RURAL COMMUNITY – OR NEW LOCATION				
Primary	Intermediate	Middle School	High School	☑ K-12

Objective: Building Relationships with students, parents, community

Materials Needed: Helpful resource: Volume 4, Issue 2 March/April 1999 on-line at http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/sop/SOPv4i2.html#3lders This online link has MANY resources that, while designed for AK villages/teachers, are very appropriate in many other rural areas.

Background: Whenever a teacher moves to a new area, it is the teacher's responsibility to get out and learn about the new environment/setting.

Steps (no particular order, just a variety of things to do):

1. Get out and walk around. Shop at the local store. Use the post office. Find the airline agents. (AK) Talk to the kids. Introduce yourself around.
2. If someone invites you to try something, do it even if it is something you wouldn't usually do, even if you are afraid that it is an opportunity for others to laugh at you. You will be considered a good sport even if you are no good at whatever it is.
3. Learn about the culture. Read, listen, and research.
4. Find out about the community governing structure, including the influential elders and families.
5. Go to community functions, but stay quiet and listen. Sit by an elder.
6. Consider going to church, even if it is not your religion, for the fellowship opportunity.
7. The community members that work in the school "walk in both worlds" and will be valuable community interpreters. Ask them for explanations and check with them about etiquette and protocol.
8. Find opportunities for students to work within community members, especially elders. Be sure to use the guidelines to help the experience be positive.
9. Keep negative opinions to yourself. You are the newcomer, and a guest in the community.
10. Communicate with parents about their children. Be honest and respectful.
11. Respect the confidentiality of the school; avoid gossip about school policies, staff or students.
12. Respect the local liquor options and state laws.
13. Ask for permission and buy a license before you fish or hunt on Native lands.
14. Partying (i.e. drinking), while legal for teachers over 21 in 'wet or damp communities, can often lead to misunderstandings, such as negative role modeling, choosing factions in the community, or lack of discretion. If possible, party somewhere else. 'Dry' villages/reservations make it illegal to consume alcohol within its borders.
15. Find wisdom and humor in your new world. Have a positive attitude!

GUIDELINES FOR RESPECTING CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE				
Primary	Intermediate	Middle School	High School	☑ K-12

Objective: Relationship building. “Classroom teachers are responsible for drawing upon Elders and other cultural experts in the surrounding community to make sure all resource materials and learning activities are culturally accurate and appropriate.” –From the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN) website: www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/knowledge.html

Materials Needed: Refer to site just copied in above paragraph.

Background: Respecting one another’s culture is a given. Here are some ideas of how to make that happen.

Steps: These ideas listed below are an abbreviated version of the guidelines on the ANKN website:

1. Learn how to use local ways of knowing and teaching to link the knowledge base of the school to that of the community.
2. Make effective use of local expertise, especially Elders, as co-teachers whenever local cultural knowledge is being addressed in the curriculum.
3. Recognize and validate all aspects of the knowledge students bring with them. (Funds of knowledge).
4. Observe and listen carefully to acquit an understanding of the knowledge system indigenous to the local community and apply that understanding in teaching practice.
5. Review all curriculum materials to insure cultural accuracy and appropriateness.
6. Utilize locally-relevant curriculum materials (Indian Education for All) with which students can readily identify, including materials prepared by Native authors.
7. Provide flexibility in scheduling Elder participation so they are able to fully share what they know with minimal interference by the clock, and provide enough advance notice for them to make the necessary preparations.
8. Align all subject matter with the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools (AK) and develop curriculum models that are based on the local cultural and environmental experiences of the students.
9. Recognize the importance of cultural and intellectual property rights in teaching practice.

The website listed above is a terrific resource for guidelines, information, and sample units. While designed in AK for AK villages, it is easily adaptable to any Native location and circumstance. Use your Native co-workers and parents as resources as well. Ask them for the names of elders who have the expertise you are looking for and who would enjoy sharing their knowledge and time with students.

JOIN IN!				
Primary	Intermediate	Middle School	High School	☑ K-12

Objective: Relationship building.

Materials Needed:

Background: Community activities revolve around the schools in any rural area. There are many more activities besides those that are planned by the school staff that will take place in what is often the only facility large enough for the whole town or village to gather—the school. This means that you should be prepared for community feasts and celebrations and important meetings and gatherings of large numbers of people to occur in your school building.

Regardless of whether or not the school staff is involved in the activity directly, many communities expect teachers to participate if possible. Even if you are new to the town or village, your relationship with the community can be greatly enhanced, or negatively impacted, by the choices you make about participation. Don't be overly concerned about whether you know everything about what is going on. The fact that you took time to be there will have tremendous results.

If you are new to a village or community where a native language is spoken, it is highly unlikely you will find/make the time or have the ability to learn the language to a level of fluency. However, if you take the time to learn a few greetings or phrases in the language, it will pay dividends.

Learn a few greetings or phrases and spend time in the community. It's better to listen rather than do all the talking. Listen and relax within the community. Getting to know people can help build positive impressions within the community as to who you are and what you care about.

INVITE PARENT INPUT				
Primary	Intermediate	Middle School	High School	☑ K-12

Objective: Relationship building with parents; getting to know students; goal-setting

Materials Needed: Invitations to parents. Ask all parents for information about their child at the beginning of the year. Stress that the format or formality of the information is not important. The importance is in the information freely given by parents.

Background: Parents appreciate the opportunity to share and have appreciated receiving the letters back years and years later.

Steps:

1. Send a homework assignment to parents: "Please take time within the next week to write me a letter about your child. It can be any length. Please tell me things I need to know to help your student learn. Tell me things you think are important about your child. Tell me things it might take me too long to discover for myself. Please tell me things you think my knowing would help me better teach your child this year. What does your child like, dislike? What is your older child wanting to do in life, and how can I help make that happen?
2. Use these letters to plan your lessons for the year; file the letter away for five years, complete with the return address.
3. In five years' time return the letter to the parents asking them to share how their child has done over the years.

Parents love receiving these letters back years later, and it is a great way to document the stages of a child over time.

LABELING THE ROOM				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	☑ K-12

Objective: Helping students learn to read; honoring 2nd Language Learners; Meeting diverse needs within the classroom.

Materials Needed: Dictionaries in the language of your 2nd language learners; translators of the language of your 2nd language learners. Chart Paper; Markers.

Background: Diverse student populations are often very visual when it comes to learning another language; labeling items in your room in 2 or more language helps ALL students come to understand the struggles, celebrations, and strengths of being able to speak two languages. This is one way to honor that diversity.

Steps: (Some steps are designed for early literacy, yet don't hurt all learners to see.)

1. Names are an important tool in early literacy. Children can benefit greatly by seeing their names as well as names of their classmates in written form.
2. As children are developing oral and written language skills, labeling classroom objects such as desks, tables, chairs, white boards, tables, bookshelf, helps students connect oral language to written.
3. If there are dual languages involved, it is important to honor both languages by labeling objects in both languages.
4. Try to learn the 'other' language yourself to affirm and validate that language.
5. Give extra credit whenever oral or written language uses the 'other' language.
6. Routinely allow native speakers to group together rand speak their own language while discussing issues.
7. Enlist the help of literate 2nd language learner parents for translating and writing labels for posting in room.

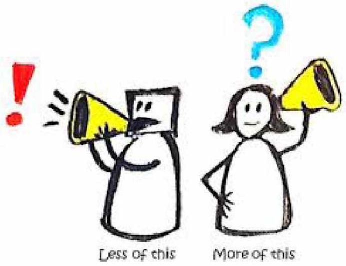
LISTEN				
Primary	Intermediate	Middle School	High School	☑ K-12

Objective: Relationship building and honoring the speaker.

Materials Needed: The University of Alaska Anchorage college staff conducted a workshop during the summer run by indigenous Alaska educators. It is titled *Stop Talking*, and is available online free: http://www.difficultdialoguesuaa.org/images/uploads/Stop_talking_final.pdf This is an excellent book for coming to understand indigenous ways of knowing. It would make a fine 'book study' for staff.

Background: One of the four findings from my research shows that Listening is essential if one is to teach through culture. So this lesson by a retired Alaska Statewide Mentor is simply sound advice to all educators working with indigenous populations. It is shared here as one educator's lesson to another.

As the 2004 Alaska Statewide Mentor Project Director, Lorrie Scoles, shared with mentors on many occasions, there is a very good reason we have two ears and only one mouth.



Simply said, as mentors we need to listen, listen, listen. I suggest we can say that for teachers as well. We need to listen, listen, listen.

When it comes to being successful at a new school and in interactions with students, parents, administrators, and new community members, this 'listening' strategy can serve beginning teachers well. Each of us needs to hear what others have to say—students, community members, parents, classified staff, school personnel, supervisors, local workers, administrators, and colleagues. We each need to listen.

Many students, parents, and community members have seen teachers come and go for years. We can't expect to automatically receive respect; we need to earn it, and perhaps "listening" is the single-most effective way to do that. After all, remember, it is the community and parents who are the first teachers of our students, their children. If we listen, perhaps we will gain the knowledge we need to be successful teachers in our respective communities and that success, in turn, just might earn us the respect we hope to gain in our new communities.

In real estate they say it's location, location, location,
In teaching, we say it's listen, listen, listen.

CREATE SCHOOL-WIDE FAMILY GROUPS & CELEBRATE ROUTINELY				
☑ Primary	☑ Intermediate	☑ Middle School	☑ High School	☑ K-12

This activity is being suggested as a school-wide activity that requires a commitment over time, yet when organized and implemented it does a great deal to improve school climate and relationship building not only among like grade levels, but across grade levels within a school. It can be done with a 6-8 middle school, a K-3 primary school, a 3-5 intermediate elementary school or a K-6 (my favorite) school. It is a way to have the school build relationships within and across all grade levels of a school. The bond created by such family groups has immeasurable benefits on the recess ground, cafeteria, after and before school activities, as well as shared bus rides. It was originally designed for teachers to serve as 'counselors' for students while attending the school. For example, a kindergartner would go to Ms. X's family group as a kindergartner and remain with Ms. X until leaving the school after Grade 6.

Objective: Building relationships with students, among students, among staff, with staff school wide.

Materials Needed: A calendar of a year's Family Group Dates, and each teacher responsible for own supplies for own family group. Individual family lists of students across grade levels to be a family for the years attending this school.

Background: Some Anchorage schools have what they call Family Groups, where students are placed into a group consisting of students from all grade levels. These families then meet once a month and host an activity, field trip, or some gathering where they connect, share, and work together. In a K-6 school, groups usually total around 15 and include K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-graders. Certified staff throughout the school each have a group of students, and a room assigned. So Special Ed, PE, Music, Computer, and all 'certified' staff have a group and a designated group for their monthly get together.

The purpose is to create a school-wide climate of friendliness, family, and familiarity. Kindergartners interact with 6th graders, and 6th graders look out for primary kiddos. It's a win-win. It requires three major steps.

Steps:

1. A team of teachers, with the help of the Administrative Assistant, break down the entire school population into family groups, each individual group to be led by ONE certified teacher. These groups stay intact for the length of the child's attending this school. (Rarely a mismatch occurs and adjustment are made.) So two or three kindergartners join two or three students from each of the other grade level to a max of 15-16 students. These students are a family for the rest of their school career at this school site.
2. A calendar is then set where staff agree to a monthly date (3rd Wed of every month) to host a 2-hour activity at close of day. Each family group then meets as a class and does some 'fun-filled' activity based upon their choices offered at each annual 'first' get-together. At the first yearly meeting families determine their activities for rest of year.

3. On the 2-hour get together family groups meet and carry out any number of things: picnic, field trip, art activity, sports completion with another family group, read aloud, movie/popcorn, sing to the elderly, fill Christmas socks for servicemen or foster care, gather gift packs for the homeless, any number of community-service plans…something fun designed by the family itself.

TESTIMONY TO SUCCESS OF THIS TTC ACTIVITY: A school I taught at conducted monthly family groups for three years. Negative referrals were reduced, positive student interactions were increased, teachers were more knowledgeable about all students, and student interactions across grade level greatly improved. A side-bar learning that occurred which no one expected was a better understanding of different cultures. It was a win-win situation in the best of ways.

Appendix E

Checklist of Classroom Inventory

Pre/Post Checklist of Classroom Inventory –Phase 2

(adapted from Lewthwaite article, "Culturally Responsive Teaching in Yukon First Nation Settings: What does it Look Like and What is its influence?" 2014)

Grade: ______ Content: ________________Date: ________

There are 33 items in this questionnaire pertaining to strategies and actions commonly used by teachers. These are statements to be considered in the context of the class you teach. Think about how well the statements describe your teaching in this class.

Indicate your answer on the score sheet by circling:

N	if you NEVER use this strategy in your teaching;
S	if you SOMETIMES use this strategy in your teaching;
O	if you OFTEN use this strategy in your teaching;
A	if you ALMOST ALAYS use this strategy in your teaching;

		N	S	O	A
1	What is taught is connected to students' lives.				
2	Students show their learning in various ways, not just in written form.				
3	High expectations for student performance are communicated to ALL.				
4	As a class, we identify common learning goals.				
5	Instructions and explanations are abbreviated.				
6	Visual images are used to communicate ideas.				
7	Stories are shared that are relevant to students.				
8	Hands-on experiences are used to provide concrete examples.				
9	Time is given for students to respond to questions or during discussion.				
10	I converse with individual students about things that interest them.				
11	Students are encouraged as they work towards learning goals.				
12	There are expected routines associated with student and teacher behavior.				
13	The tasks carried out in class encourage perseverance.				
14	Students are given time to think things through in their own mind.				
15	A variety of ways are used to get across ideas.				
16	Local examples including people are used in teaching.				
17	Connections are made between new learning and previous learning.				
18	What is to be learned is clearly communicated.				

19	Students are provided with many opportunities to master skills.				
20	Students work together on tasks.				
21	Students show their learning by sharing with a partner or a group.				
22	Students are asked to volunteer answers rather than being asked directly.				
23	I check to see if students grasp ideas before moving on to the next topic.				
24	Students are encouraged to seek assistance from others.				
25	Feedback is provided as students work on tasks.				
26	We celebrate our successes as learners				
27	Students are given repeated opportunity to master skills.				
28	I give students lots of examples to help assist students in their learning				
29	I get students to work together and help others on activities & problems.				
30	Students are assisted with their work as they request assistance.				
31	Students receive feedback about their performance as they complete tasks.				
32	Tasks carried out encourage student creativity and independent thinking.				
33	Lessons are paced to allow students time for task completion.				

(Lewthwaite, B., 2014 as modified by Researcher)

POST: One Open-Ended Question included with POST Checklist:

Q – What would you like to add about anything learned while using this resource when it comes to teaching through culture in your classroom practice?

Appendix F

Directions for Phase 2 Participants, With Videos

Hello teachers, Jan Littlebear here.

Your name has been given to me by educators/administrators in Alaska/Montana who thought you 'might' be willing to help me in the second phase of my research about teaching through culture. (I am a great grandma working on her doctorate :-))

Basically I spent two years gathering data about what does it mean to teach through culture (TTC), what does TTC look like? And now I want to provide a chapter on teaching through culture (compiled from data gathered in first phase) to teachers early in their career to try out some TTC lessons. In exchange for your participation, upon completion of your part in this research, you will receive a $25 gift certificate AND a chance to win 30,000 AK Air miles. Once the final post-survey has been turned in, I will enter all names into a hat, and have my grandson pull one out! I will let everyone know who won the miles.

If you are still willing to help me, I anticipate this will take a total of less than 10 hours of your time over a 2-month period. Here's what you will be agreeing to do.

1. Complete a demographics form and return to me (10 mins)
2. Complete a pre checklist on your classroom (10 mins)
3. Complete a pre survey on culture in the classroom (10 mins)
4. View a 30-minute video (30 mins) (NOTE: later added a 14-minute video as well)
5. Read a DRAFT chapter on teaching through culture (15-20 mins)
6. Deliver 2 lessons from 10-15 provided TTC lessons (2-3 hrs.)
7. Complete a post checklist on your classroom (10 mins)
8. Complete a post survey on culture in the classroom, PLUS one written short response. (15 mins)

As you complete each step (sending me the surveys, checklists, demographics, etc.) I will provide you with data for the next step.

So our first step is this: Are you willing to help? If so, send me a yes or no (so I know to include you or quit bugging you :-)), and I will send you the demographic form next week (November 7-11), and we will officially begin.

Thank you in advance, from the bottom of my heart, for agreeing to help me with my research. I sincerely appreciate you for helping out.
Respectfully,
Jan

(PS, please always put TTC in the subject line...of all correspondence, as that will help me sort my emails later on. Thanks.)

REQUIRED:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEHmfAOoFko 30 minutes
Indigenous Teacher Education: A Story of Epistemology, Power & Identity

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBa6P4m1rCc&t=2s 14 minutes
The Loon Story – An Alaska Native Tanaina Tale

(Be sure to watch following closure when kids take off their masks)

OPTIONAL
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmJJi1iBdzc 10 minutes
Manu Aluli Meyer on Epistemology

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gta7XXgome0 60 minutes
Father Michael Oleksa about Dropout Prevention for Native and Tribal Communities

Appendix G

Questions: Individual and Focus Group

PHASE 1

Phase 1 Questions asked during the Individual interview:
(12 individual interviews; 6 in AK, 6 in MT)

1) How does culture fit within your teaching style?

2) How do you build relationships with your students?

3) What considerations do you have when creating your physical space at the beginning of each school year?

4) How do you involve parents in the education of their child?

5) What kind of a communication system do you have with the homes of your students?

6) How do you participate in community events and activities that connect to your school?

7) How do you use one's culture to connect learning to student background knowledge?

8) What does the term 'culturally responsive educator' mean to you?

9) Is there anything else you would like to add?

Phase 1 Questions asked during Focus Groups Fall 2014
(2 Focus Groups; 1 pair, and one with 6 participants)

What does it mean to be a culturally responsive teacher, and what do you do in the classroom to be culturally responsible?

PHASE 2

Phase 2 Question asked following completion of post-Checklist after using Chapter Resource and Delivering Lessons — Winter 2016-2017.

Q – What would you like to add about anything learned while using this resource when it comes to teaching through culture in your classroom practice?

Appendix H

Consent Form for Both Phases

Informed Consent Form

Pilot Interviews for Student Success in Online Courses

IRB #: 583312-1 Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices
Date Approved: March 10, 2014

Description of the Study: My name is Janice Littlebear. I am a Lead Mentor-Curriculum Developer with University of Alaska Statewide, K-12 Outreach. I'm also taking classes, working toward a Ph.D. The research study I will be conducting for my degree is about culturally responsive teaching practices. The goal of this study is to learn more about the practices used by teachers who use culture to successfully build relationships with students and parents while using culture to also connect learning with cultural backgrounds. You are being asked to take part in this study because you come highly recommended as a teacher who uses culture to connect students to learning or you teach in a school that values culturally responsive teaching practices. You are invited to ask any questions you may have now or at any time during your participation.

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to join me as either a 1) member of a focus group discussion, or 2) for a face-to-face interview, a classroom observation, and a follow-up interview in the fall so that you can review a tool I am creating for Early Career Teachers. The interview/focus group will be scheduled at a time that's convenient for you and should last between one and two hours.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study: The risks to you if you take part in this study are minimal. You will invest an hour or two of your time talking with me online this spring, and "perhaps" another hour in the fall. If you ever feel uncomfortable during the interview or focus group process, just let me know and I will stop the interview.

The benefit to you for taking part in this study is an opportunity to speak with me candidly about how cultural connections do or do not work in your teaching practice. You may find that talking aloud about your success helps you to identify the things that work best for you as a teacher. I cannot, however, guarantee that you will benefit from participating in the interview or focus group.

Compensation: I will give you an iTunes gift card to thank you for taking time to complete the paperwork and talk with me, as well as treat you to a coffee if joining me for focus groups.

Confidentiality: If you decide to participate, I will record our focus group/interview to ensure that I capture everything you say accurately. Afterward, I will type everything said and then delete the recording. I will protect your confidentiality by coding your demographic information with a number so no one can trace your answers to your name.

The data derived from this study may be used in reports, presentations, publications, or my dissertation, but you will not be individually identified.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary. You are free to choose whether or not to take part in the study. If you decide to take part in the study you can stop at any time or change your mind and ask to be removed from the study. Whether or not you choose to participate will not affect your current or future grades or any services you receive from UAF.

Contacts and Questions: If you have questions, feel free to ask me. You may contact me by phone: 907-444-6500 or by work email: jjlittlebear@alaska.edu . My personal email is jlittlebearster@gmail.com. You may also contact my faculty sponsor, Ute Kaden, ukaden@alaska.edu . [Note: Later changed sponsor to Barbara Adams, badams@alaska.edu]

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the UAF Office of Research Integrity at 474-7800 (Fairbanks area) or 1-866-876-7800 (toll-free outside the Fairbanks area) or uar-irb@alaska.edu.

Statement of Consent: I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I am 18 years old or older. I have been provided a copy of this form.

Signature of Participant & Date

Appendix I

Demographics: Phases 1 and 2

Today's Date: ____

1. Name: ____
2. Grade Level(s) Teaching this year: ______________________
3. Grade Level(s) Taught in your career: ____________________
4. Total Years Teaching: ______________________________
5. Good email for next five years: ________________________
6. Name of College for Teaching Degree: ___________________
7. Current Address: __________________________________
8. How long in State of AK or MT? _________________________
9. Address where I can always find you: ___________________
   __________________TELEPHONE: _________________
10. School and District: _______________________________
11. How long with this District: __________________________
12. Where have you taught? ___________________________
13. Where have you found support/guidance for culturally-relevant teaching practices?____
14. Cultural diversity of students within classroom today: **CIRCLE ONE**

    (1-2 cultures) (3-4 cultures) (5-6 cultures)
    (7-8 cultures) (9-10 cultures)

15. Classroom demographics for this year's class (estimates will do)?
    a. Age range: _________________________________
    b. Gender percentage: MALE: ______FEMALE_____
    c. Free & Reduced lunch percentage: ________________
    d. Percentage of English Language Learners: ____________
    e. Percentage Alaska Native ________________________
    f. Percentage Special Ed with an IEP _____________

16. What race or ethnicity are you: ___________________________
    (Optional…Helpful for research, not necessary if you prefer not to answer.)

Appendix J

Step 1: Coding First Read

Table J1

Sample Coding First Read Alaska

Date 2014	**3/11**	**4/11**	**4/12**	**4/23**
Site?	**AK Village**	**AK Urban**	**AK Urban**	**AK Village**
Interviewee	**785 Angela 3/11**	**319 Scott 4/11**	**342 Cheryl 4/12**	**731 Sperry 4/23**
		Academically Challenging		
		Art		
		Assessment/Testing	Accessible Classroom	Attend Church
	background knowledge	background knowledge	background knowledge KWL	background knowledge
	building relationships	Budget cuts hurt	Caring	challenge students
		class size	Circle Grouping	
		Classroom Environment		
		Communication Routine	Communication Routine	Communication
		Community Live in it	Community Involvement	Community involvement
	connections	connections	Connections	connect content to background knowledge
	norms for learning (timing)	Cooperative Learning		
	open classroom	Current/Stay current	culture key	Connections
	outside classroom	Curriculum limited	Immerse self in culture	Exhausting Career
	outsider/insider	Deaths (Student)	Emotions Important	Family
	parent involvement	Differences Challenge	Giving back to School	Family Night
	respect	Display Kid Work	Grouping	have fun
	role model	Grouping	Home, Caring Classroom	Know your Students Whole child
	sense of adventure	High Expectations	Interactive	KWL background knowledge
	suicide/alcohol/challenges	Home Visits	Letters to Parents	Language Important
	welcome	Humor	Listening	Legends/Myths/Yup'ik stories

Table J1 continued

Date 2014	3/11	4/11	4/12	4/23
Site?	AK Village	AK Urban	AK Urban	AK Village
Interviewee	785 Angela 3/11	319 Scott 4/11	342 Cheryl 4/12	731 Sperry 4/23
		Outside Class Work	Nature baskets	Move in Classroom
		Parent Apathy	Oral Tradition	NCLB bad
		Parent conferences	Parent as Role Model	Newsletters
		Place-based field trips	Parent Presenters/Teachers	Nice to Students/community
		project-based I am	Parent Student 1st Teacher	Parent Conferences
			Peace Corner, not time out	place based
			Personal Connections	Rapport
			Positive about Child	
			Positive relationships even when challenged	
		relationships	Raised Eyebrows	Relationships
		Technology	relationships foundational	respect/honor parents
		Unknown cultures	role models	structure in day
			Space for students	Thank Parents
			Speaking at Funerals	traditional ways hunting
			Story Telling	Trust
			Visit Students Outside School	Trust
				two-way communication: teacher/others
				urban/village
				Vocabulary
				Work ethic

Table J2

Sample Coding First Read Montana

5/4	5/7	5/7	5/7	5/8	5/8
MT Northern Cheyenne Reservation					
615 Penny 5/4	**973 Alvera 5/7**	**646 Jill 5/7**	**417 Joette 5/7**	**111 Mary 5/8**	**813 Gary 5/8**
Assessment Individualized	Assessment thru Nature	After & outside school	After School Support	Ask questions	Accepting of all
Assessment/Vocabulary		background knowledge, prior knowledge	authentic lessons	Communicate: Facebook I/M	Comfortable safe, relaxing physical environment
Attend functions outside school		Be available	Be a learner		
Background Knowledge		be Personal & TLC	Collaboration		
Be positive about Natives		Being Open -- Listening			
Care about Students		bring culture into curriculum			
		Communicate w/parents in a variety of ways			
connect learning to bk	connect learning to bk				
Cultural Backgrounds	connect to history	Community involvement			
Diverse Families too	Encourage students	Connect to what they know	connect with bk	connect to community	community relationship
Family Nights/Dinners	Integrated Curriculum	connections to bk	cultural projects	cultural protocol/invites?	Grouping of desks
Get Involved	Know community	cooperative learning	Elders as guests	Famial surroundings in classroom	Know students
Get to know students	Know students	Elders -- Invite in	high expectations	Humor	
Grouping	myths/stories	Flexible with space	Home School Coordinator	Interested in students	
Home Visits	place based field trips	group work	integrate culture w curriculum	Know culture	
Humor	Speak L1	High expectations		Know your students	

Table J2 continued

5/4	5/7	5/7	5/7	5/8	5/8
MT Northern Cheyenne Reservation					
615 Penny 5/4	**973 Alvera 5/7**	**646 Jill 5/7**	**417 Joette 5/7**	**111 Mary 5/8**	**813 Gary 5/8**
Invite Parents to Share	Teach through Nature	kid friendly room	Language Posters	Learn from students	Learn from students
Kids taught, I learned	technology or chokecherries?	Language 1st Language	learning styles	Listen to students	Life-long learner
Know students		Learn about Culture	multiculture walls	Open invitation to Parents	Parents: letters, newsletters, invitations, emails
Learning Styles		Learner	Open door with parents		
Mentors help teach		learning styles -- visual/oral	Partnering Schools		
Multicultural Artwork		Listen	place-based	Place-based lessons	place-based (teepees)
Native Languages		Listen	Preschool	Positive Attitude	Relationship with students
Not above others; equal		Multiculture resources	project based	Technology	relationships with parents
Oral Traditional Stories		mutual respect	relationships		small community parents
Positive home contacts		notes/newsletter to parents	respect the culture		Teachers need to get involved
		Powows, give-aways, etc.	respectful/mindful		week of culture
		Prior Knowledge	SEL whole child		
		project based learning	Speaker Database		
relationships		Students as teachers	story telling		
role model good behavior		Voice Volume - Soft	Understand the culture		
SEL needed + Academics					

Table J3

First Read, Focus Group 1

7/14	#1 Focus Group 7/31		9/29
AK all	**AK urban**	**AK all**	**AK rural**
210 Pat 7/14	**537 Marcie 428 Carol**		**120 Kirstie**
Assess what students know/do not know			
			Be open
			Comfortable with all communication styles
collaborative not competitive			
Community events -- attend whether invited or not			Culture as community; community as culture
Connect lessons to what students already know	classroom climate controlled by teacher/students		Dare to be different
Culture Filter (Comprehensible Input)	Connect curriculum to culture		Elder Involvement
Developmentally appropriate	Culture defined for all		Firm, Fair, Consistent in Classroom Environment
Get out into the village	Family adopt a teacher		Go into community; get involved
Grouping Fix room accordingly	Grouping		Grouping - purposeful
Humor	Honor/Respect Student background knowledge		Invite Student Voice
Learn about Culture of Students	Know each student		Learn -- learn rhythm of communication- informal
learn from students	Know own culture first		Learner; students and community teaches, teacher learns
Listen/Participant	Language is powerful in community AND Academic Language		Listen
Parents need to be comfortable in the school	Learning styles		Listen, Look and pay attention
	Norms in classroom for communicating/expectations		Listening
place-based lessons	Partnerships with Parents		Parental voluntters; invited;
Reflecting on all that you do	Positive before negative when sharing with parents		Parents - reach out
Respect - Mutual	Relationship building		place based lessons
SEL connections important	resiliency SEL		Question others & Listen
Student-created walls			SEL - caring - WHOLE child
Telephone, email, text, newsletters, public calendar, monthly contacts to parents			small interactions away from school are huge
			Trust
			Trust in Relationship building
	Story telling		Zones in Classroom; Centers by Content Area
	support systems for teachers		
	Take necessary time to know student individually		
	Thematic connected to students		

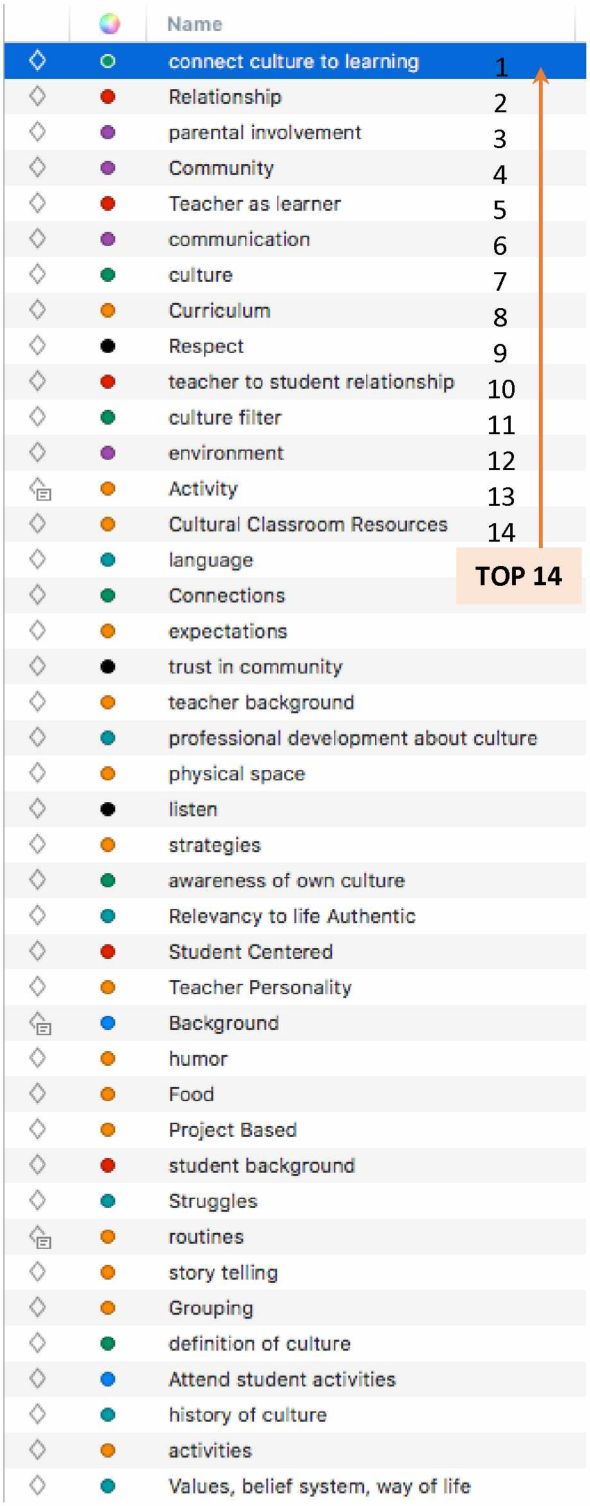
Table J4

First Read, Focus Group 2

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">#2 Focus Group 11/8</th><th rowspan="2">ACTIVITIES</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">AK Native Charter School - Anchorage</th></tr>
<tr><th>864
Martha</th><th>912
Mikan</th><th>714
Denise</th><th>516
Danielle</th><th>318
Kathleen</th><th>219
Staci</th><td rowspan="2">Project-Based,</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">#2 Focus Group 11/8</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Body Language (eyes, volume, …)</td><td>Place-Based Field Trips</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Build relationships -- with parents and students</td><td>Talking Circle</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Care for your students</td><td>Story Telling</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Connect content to culture through comparisons;</td><td>Team building Activities</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Connect content to student background</td><td>Journaling/Interactive</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Gather student background</td><td>KWL</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">High expectations</td><td>Visualizing</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Honoring other cultures/making comparisons among cultures</td><td>Shadow Puppets</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Know your own culture, and the biases found within your culture</td><td>Role Playing</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Know your students, who you are teaching.</td><td>Story Knives</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">KNOW your students;</td><td>Dance/Food/Music</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Language of students, respect, learn, and use whenever possible</td><td>myths & stories</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Learn about other cultures</td><td>I am Projects</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Learning styles</td><td>2x10 (two minutes 10 times to get to know a kid</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Multicultural resources--field trips, camps for teachers; teacher as learners</td><td>Mouse food hunting</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Parents expect teachers to have high expectations</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Practice Asking Questions -- Role Play</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Relationship that matters</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Role Model to all</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Safety in classroom</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Sharing stories of successful role models;</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Speech patterns including speed, volume, translating back and forth; proximity</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Story Telling</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Story telling through literacy to teach elements of literature</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Student Background Knowledge</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Student of the culture while teacher of the content</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">students teach, teachers learn</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Trauma in families -- know the student</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Trust</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Value culture</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

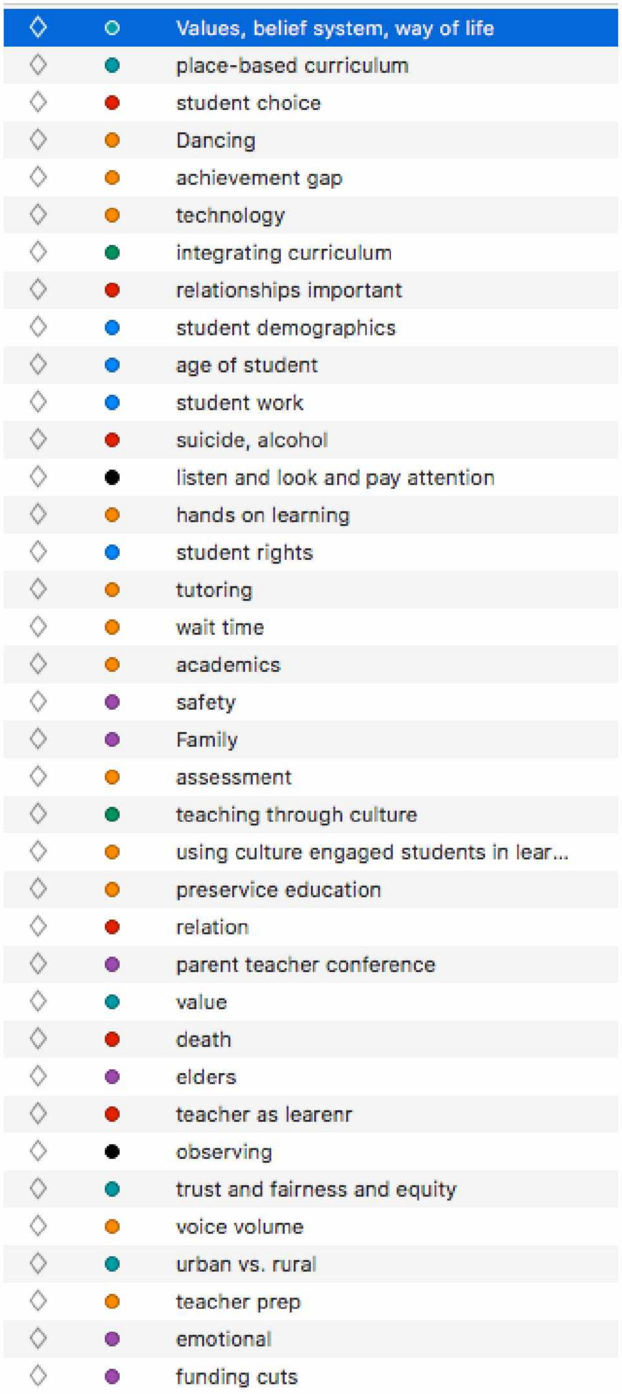
Appendix K

Initial Coding Categories

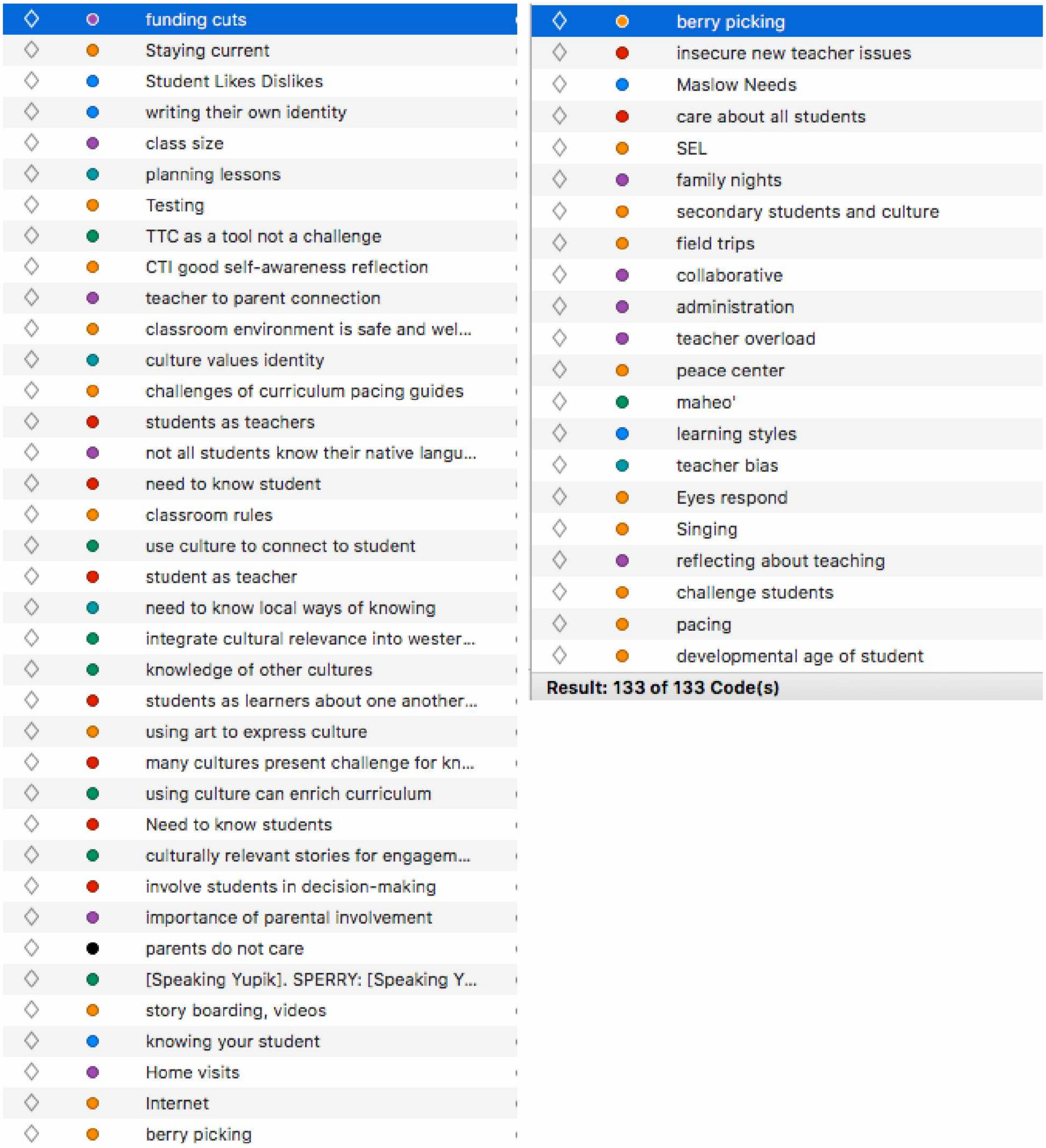


Name	
connect culture to learning	1
Relationship	2
parental involvement	3
Community	4
Teacher as learner	5
communication	6
culture	7
Curriculum	8
Respect	9
teacher to student relationship	10
culture filter	11
environment	12
Activity	13
Cultural Classroom Resources	14
language	
Connections	
expectations	
trust in community	
teacher background	
professional development about culture	
physical space	
listen	
strategies	
awareness of own culture	
Relevancy to life Authentic	
Student Centered	
Teacher Personality	
Background	
humor	
Food	
Project Based	
student background	
Struggles	
routines	
story telling	
Grouping	
definition of culture	
Attend student activities	
history of culture	
activities	
Values, belief system, way of life	

TOP 14



- Values, belief system, way of life
- place-based curriculum
- student choice
- Dancing
- achievement gap
- technology
- integrating curriculum
- relationships important
- student demographics
- age of student
- student work
- suicide, alcohol
- listen and look and pay attention
- hands on learning
- student rights
- tutoring
- wait time
- academics
- safety
- Family
- assessment
- teaching through culture
- using culture engaged students in lear...
- preservice education
- relation
- parent teacher conference
- value
- death
- elders
- teacher as learenr
- observing
- trust and fairness and equity
- voice volume
- urban vs. rural
- teacher prep
- emotional
- funding cuts



funding cuts
Staying current
Student Likes Dislikes
writing their own identity
class size
planning lessons
Testing
TTC as a tool not a challenge
CTI good self-awareness reflection
teacher to parent connection
classroom environment is safe and wel…
culture values identity
challenges of curriculum pacing guides
students as teachers
not all students know their native langu…
need to know student
classroom rules
use culture to connect to student
student as teacher
need to know local ways of knowing
integrate cultural relevance into wester…
knowledge of other cultures
students as learners about one another…
using art to express culture
many cultures present challenge for kn…
using culture can enrich curriculum
Need to know students
culturally relevant stories for engagem…
involve students in decision-making
importance of parental involvement
parents do not care
[Speaking Yupik]. SPERRY: [Speaking Y…
story boarding, videos
knowing your student
Home visits
Internet
berry picking

berry picking
insecure new teacher issues
Maslow Needs
care about all students
SEL
family nights
secondary students and culture
field trips
collaborative
administration
teacher overload
peace center
maheo'
learning styles
teacher bias
Eyes respond
Singing
reflecting about teaching
challenge students
pacing
developmental age of student
Result: 133 of 133 Code(s)

Figure K1. Initial coding categories.

Appendix L

Initial Coding Categories

Table L1

Initial Coding Categories

CODES	RESPECT	COMMUNICATION	CONNECTIONS	CURRICULUM & MULTICULTURAL RESOURCES	RELATIONSHIPS
Connect culture to learning			Connect culture to learning		
Relationship					Relationship
Parental Involvement		Parental Involvement	Parental Involvement		Parental Involvement
Community			Community		
Teacher as Learner	Teacher as Learner				Teacher as Learner
Communication		Communication			
Curriculum				Curriculum	
Culture	Culture	Culture	Culture	Culture	Culture
Respect	Respect	Respect			Respect
Teacher to student relationship					Teacher to student relationship
Culture Filter	Culture Filter				Culture Filter
Environment			Environment	Environment	
Activity				Activity	
Cultural Classroom Resources				Cultural Classroom Resources	
Language	Language	Language		Language	
Connections			Connections		Connections
Expectations		Expectations		Expectations	
Trust in Community			Trust in Community		Trust in Community
Teacher Background	Teacher Background	Teacher Background	Teacher Background		Teacher Background
Professional Development about culture	Professional Development about culture			Professional Development about culture	Professional Development about culture
Physical space	Physical space			Physical space	Physical space
strategies	strategies	strategies		strategies	strategies
listen	listen	listen			listen
teacher personality	teacher personality		teacher personality		teacher personality
student centered			student centered	student centered	student centered

Table L1 continued

CODES	RESPECT	COMMUNICATION	CONNECTIONS	CURRICULUM & MULTICULTURAL RESOURCES	RELATIONSHIPS
relevancy to life authentic			relevancy to life authentic		
background					background
humor		humor	humor		humor
food	food		food		
project based				project based	
struggles	struggles				struggles
student background			student background		student background
awareness of own culture			awareness of own culture	awareness of own culture	awareness of own culture
routines				routines	
story telling				story telling	
grouping				grouping	
activities				activities	
history of culture			history of culture		
definition of culture			definition of culture	definition of culture	
attend student activities			attend student activities	attend student activities	
technology				technology	
dancing			dancing	dancing	
student choice	student choice			student choice	student choice
values, belief system, way of life	values, belief system, way of life			values, belief system, way of life	values, belief system, way of life
achievement gap				achievement gap	
integrating curriculum				integrating curriculum	
academics				academics	
wait time				wait time	
hands on learning			tutoring	hands on learning	tutoring
tutoring					
family	family	family	family	family	family
listen and look and pay attention	listen and look and pay attention				listen and look and pay attention
age of student			age of student	age of student	
student demographics			student demographics	student demographics	
student rights	student rights		student rights		
student work				student work	
safety	safety			safety	
suicide, alcohol			suicide, alcohol		
teacher prep	teacher prep				teacher prep
preservice education			preservice education	preservice education	preservice education
voice volume	voice volume			voice volume	voice volume
staying current			staying current	staying current	staying current

Table L1 continued

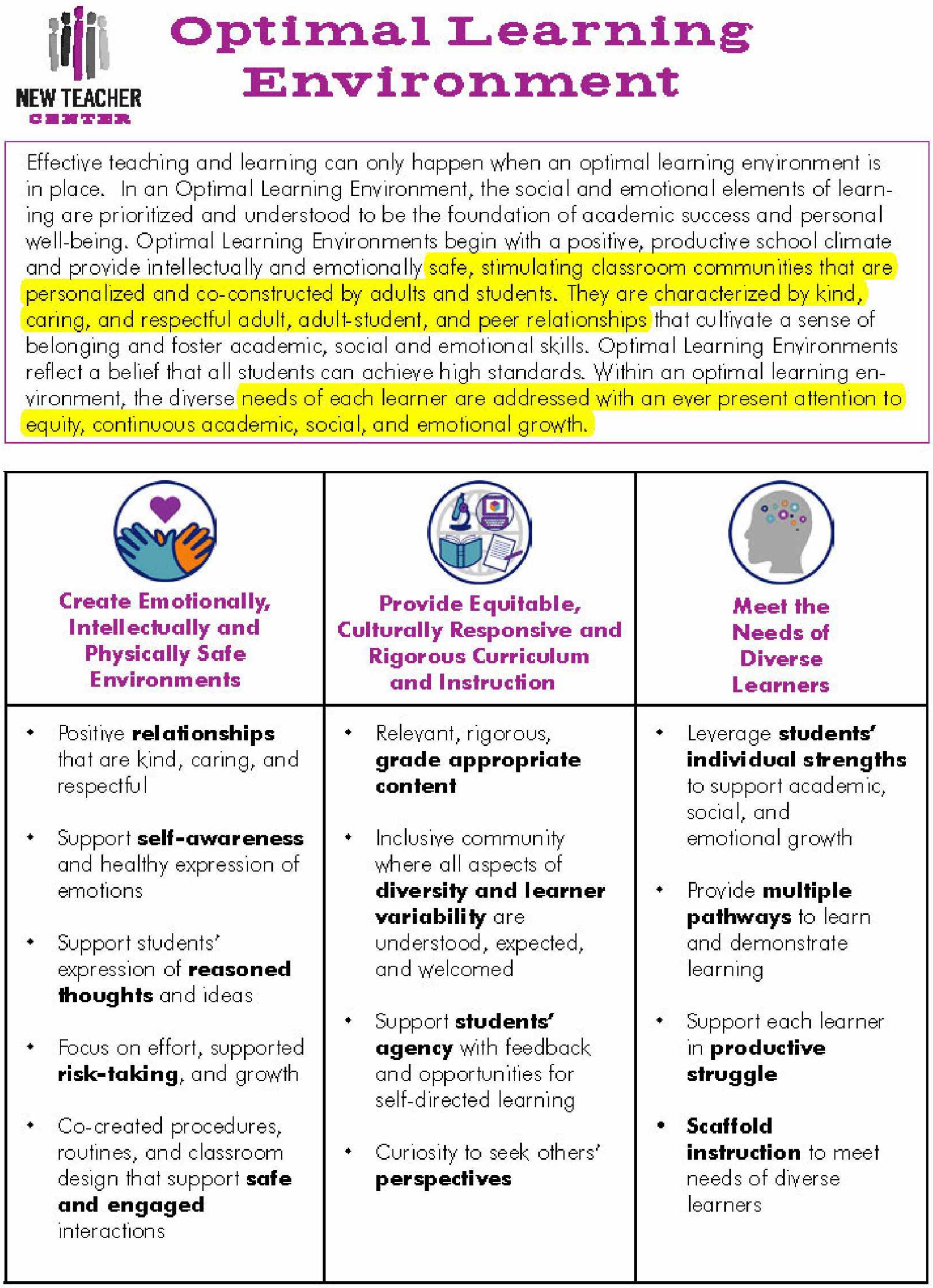
CODES	RESPECT	COMMUNICATION	CONNECTIONS	CURRICULUM & MULTICULTURAL RESOURCES	RELATIONSHIPS
assessment		assessment	assessment	assessment	
elders	elders	elders	elders	elders	elders
values, belief system, way of life	values, belief system, way of life			values, belief system, way of life	values, belief system, way of life
trust and fairness and equity	trust and fairness and equity			trust and fairness and equity	trust and fairness and equity
observing				observing	observing
urban vs. rural				urban vs. rural	
death	death		death		death
place-based curriculum			place-based curriculum	place-based curriculum	
student likes dislikes			student likes dislikes	student likes dislikes	student likes dislikes
funding cuts				funding cuts	
emotional	emotional	emotional	emotional		emotional
parent teacher conference		parent teacher conference		parent teacher conference	
relationship					relationship
speaking L1	speaking L1	speaking L1	speaking L1	speaking L1	speaking L1
SEL		SEL		SEL	SEL
classroom rules		classroom rules	classroom rules	classroom rules	
challenge students			challenge students	challenge students	challenge students
pacing				pacing	
peace center				peace center	
eyes respond				eyes respond	
singing				singing	
secondary students and culture	secondary students and culture		secondary students and culture		secondary students and culture
internet				internet	
developmental age of student			developmental age of student		developmental age of student
testing			testing	testing	
story boarding, videos				story boarding, videos	
field trips				field trips	
berry picking			berry picking	berry picking	
home visits	home visits	home visits	home visits		home visits
teacher as learner					teacher as learner
planning lessons				planning lessons	
care about all students	care about all students				care about all students
teacher bias	teacher bias				teacher bias
maheo'	maheo'				maheo'
learning styles				learning styles	
maslow needs				maslow needs	maslow needs
knowing your student					knowing your student

Table L1 continued

CODES	RESPECT	COMMUNICATION	CONNECTIONS	CURRICULUM & MULTICULTURAL RESOURCES	RELATIONSHIPS
writing their own identity	writing their own identity	writing their own identity		writing their own identity	
family nights	family nights	family nights	family nights		family nights
teacher overload					teacher overload
administration					administration
class size				class size	
collaborative	collaborative	collaborative		collaborative	collaborative
reflecting about teaching		reflecting about teaching			reflecting about teaching
insecure new teacher issues					insecure n ew teacher issues

Appendix M

Optimal Learning Environment Framework



NEW TEACHER CENTER

Optimal Learning Environment

Effective teaching and learning can only happen when an optimal learning environment is in place. In an Optimal Learning Environment, the social and emotional elements of learning are prioritized and understood to be the foundation of academic success and personal well-being. Optimal Learning Environments begin with a positive, productive school climate and provide intellectually and emotionally safe, stimulating classroom communities that are personalized and co-constructed by adults and students. They are characterized by kind, caring, and respectful adult, adult-student, and peer relationships that cultivate a sense of belonging and foster academic, social and emotional skills. Optimal Learning Environments reflect a belief that all students can achieve high standards. Within an optimal learning environment, the diverse needs of each learner are addressed with an ever present attention to equity, continuous academic, social, and emotional growth.

Create Emotionally, Intellectually and Physically Safe Environments	**Provide Equitable, Culturally Responsive and Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction**	**Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners**
• Positive **relationships** that are kind, caring, and respectful • Support **self-awareness** and healthy expression of emotions • Support students' expression of **reasoned thoughts** and ideas • Focus on effort, supported **risk-taking**, and growth • Co-created procedures, routines, and classroom design that support **safe and engaged** interactions	• Relevant, rigorous, **grade appropriate content** • Inclusive community where all aspects of **diversity and learner variability** are understood, expected, and welcomed • Support **students' agency** with feedback and opportunities for self-directed learning • Curiosity to seek others' **perspectives**	• Leverage **students' individual strengths** to support academic, social, and emotional growth • Provide **multiple pathways** to learn and demonstrate learning • Support each learner in **productive struggle** • **Scaffold instruction** to meet needs of diverse learners

Appendix N

Phase 2 Responses to Questions

I knew life was different in the village of Quinhagak compared to my life/culture in Pennsylvania, but you are not always ready for all the differences. I knew I had to be culturally sensitive to my new students and I was but maybe not in all the ways. Through the videos, chapters, and lessons, I learned that you must tie your teachings to the culture of your students. Through the one lesson that I taught about "Getting to know your neighbors," I learned the importance of what surrounds the communities and making do with what they have. This activity also allowed my students to see the bigger picture and think about traveling and expanding their horizons. Some new things that I learned was that culturally diverse learners are not just students of different cultures but of different social, and learning classes. I also learned that being culturally sensitive to all issues is an important part of being a good teacher.

In my college experience I took several classes that revolved around teaching "cross-culturally." In this experience, the term "teaching through culture" offered a slightly different perspective that I found valuable. It was a much more all-encompassing idea. Instead of merely thinking of "how do I teach students of a different culture" I was challenged to think "how can I teach student of a different culture USING their culture/within their culture." Through this experience I came to thinking about culture as a tool within the classroom and not just a challenge. When approaching new content, I now think "where in the culture/community do I already see this" as a means of planning the instruction. I do this instead of "how can I present this in a way my students will understand?" The other useful piece was also the checklist at the beginning and end of the project. The checklist itself made me stop and think about how I am teaching and what strategies I am or could be using. It forced me to be a bit more aware of my strategies in regard to culture in my classroom. What I would still like to know is how all of this plays out specifically with students who may have IEP's or students who are in the RTI process. Many of the strategies can relate to these students of course, but now I want (as is my job to do) seek out more information specific to the culture on what the community/parents expect from those students and from their teachers.

Teaching through culture has been something I am continuously worked toward every day of my teaching career. I graduated college and started my first teaching job in [redacted], Alaska. I have been teaching there for two years and I am always trying new strategies and different activities to help teach through the culture of my students. This, as many educators know is easier said than done. I have reached out to many community members, my paraprofessionals, and other teachers with experience teaching in our village for suggestions and knowledge about local culture. I have learned so much by reaching out to others and talking/ learning with my students, and I continue to learn every day! That being said, at the beginning of these past two years I have had a combined class of fourth and fifth grade students who all know each other. They have been in the same class with the same kids for their entire elementary education up to this point. I was terrified because all I could think of was they all know each other but they don't know me. I kept thinking I could not play the normal let's introduce ourselves to everyone games because that seemed silly, so I had to get creative. I made some name tags, we sang some silly songs with our names, danced, and played some really great team building games. It all turned out great! I believe that building strong student relationships is most important. I always strive to let my students know that I care about them and my classroom is a safe environment where they know they are always welcome. We also introduce the year in my classroom learning about different cultures, participating in local traditions (and some from around the world)! It is such an amazing learning experience because each students brings something different to our discussions and activities. It is a really great way to help us learn about one another and experience some really cool things from our cultures. My students are always teaching me new things every day! One of the lessons I chose to do with my students was the student survey. I re-created a survey with large boxes on a piece of paper and handed them out to each student. Once I explained the activity my students were so anxious to get started. I even made the teachers participate as well, so we could all learn some more about each other. Students ran around trying to find classmates to sign their boxes and I heard so many stories and conversations about several of the items on the list. It was such an engaging experience for my students! We talked about it afterwards and made a large chart to show what everyone loved to do. I was so excited that I found another way to get to know more about my students, and they got to learn more about each other. This research has taught me that my students really love to learn through their culture. It makes them feel valued and brings them closer together. In our village it has been brought up by several elders, parents, and community members that we should be teaching our students how to survive, live off the land, etc. I would really like to incorporate some aspects of their subsistence lifestyle into my teaching, but it is so difficult having two grade levels in one room, continuous testing, and the fight to keep up with the pacing guides for our curriculum. How are some ways that you have incorporated aspects of culture like this into your everyday teaching? Thank you for this opportunity! I really enjoyed the lessons and your chapter! Please let me know if you have any questions, or if you would like things explained in more depth.

I could tell that the students really liked incorporating their culture into my lessons. They were MUCH more engaged than normal. So many students were chomping at the bit to share stories with me and to share experiences they have had. In the lesson on labeling the classroom with yugtun words, the students became the teacher and I became the student. It went so well, I wish all my classes could have this. I did notice that my older students really wanted to do the activity, but my younger students did not want to participate as readily. I also felt that many of them wanted to keep their Yup'ik name a secret. I'm not sure why. Through this, I learned that although many students were born and raised here, they may not necessarily be fluent in Yugtun as I expected. I learned this when they kept having to ask our staff members for the words and spellings of simple words like "door" and "window." I learned some great new words, lots about the culture (like the old ways), and that I need to really be attentive to each individual student. I would still like to know so much about the language and the culture, I don't even know where to begin.

I think that these lessons really helped me to understand my students on more of a 'culture' level. I taught the 'I Am From' Poem lesson and the 'Travel the World' lesson. The 'I Am From' poems helped me learn about their childhood and we got to compare our childhoods to see what was similar and what was very different. It was fun to have my students learn about me like this, as well as me learning about them like this. The chapter really helped me understand that no matter where you are, there is culture. I had a culture at home but I didn't even realize it. I came to Alaska because I grew up in a very white dominate area and even went to college at a white dominant school. I wanted to have a different culture experience, I wanted to feel culture shock and feel what it is like to be the minority for once. I see now that I had a culture back home (different from here) but it took me coming here to realize that. I'm so happy that I took this leap to come here. I have had such a great time exploring a new culture and way of life. I thought the videos were great too, especially The Legend of the Loon because it gave me a story and a lesson that I could talk about and the students would know. They don't know my childhood stories that taught me lesson, so I needed a way to reach them through their own ways and stories. I learned that reaching out and showing your students that you care about their culture, they really respond. They like that you are interested and they like to be the teacher for once! I really enjoyed participating in this research, I don't know that I learned anything new (besides the loon story) but it was a nice refresher and a boost to know that I am doing my job right.

Coming into this project, I had some background knowledge in regards to the implementation of local cultures within the classroom already. The videos were a refresher for me in that sense. I was not shocked to see that many of the lesson plans reflected ideas that had been stressed to me during my Master's in teaching program. The two lessons I chose to implement were Teaching Expectations and the Multiple Intelligence Scavenger Hunt. I asked my students what they thought were the most important expectations for classroom procedures and behavior and, although they do not always behave appropriately, they all agreed on a classroom etiquette which conformed to my own. I believe the Multiple Intelligence Scavenger Hunt might work better in a larger setting (the village I live in has a population of ~400), where all of the students have not grown up with each other since they were infants, and where there is more cultural diversity (besides the teaching staff, this is a homogeneous group). In a large town where there were students from all walks of life I believe this activity would be more beneficial for building community. For the most part, I would say that this research was review, but a lot of why it was review comes from my unique background. My mother was an Indian Ed/ Johnson O'Malley tutor, so I was around a handful of Alaskan indigenous groups from a very young age. When I was in my undergraduate program, I traveled to little villages throughout the state doing construction work, and was further familiarized with the local ways of life. For my graduate program, I did my student teaching in a village. I believe this is valuable information for people who are new to working with cultures which differ from their own. What I would like to know more about is how to integrate more culturally relevance into my western-based curriculum.

My favorite activity was the "I am From" writing activity. I learned so much about and from my students. I was brave and shared my own writing with them as an example and it paid off in dividends. Many of the papers I got back were from the heart. I plan on using this activity every year in the future. I have already shared one paper with the principal to help him build his relationship with one of our 8th graders who is struggling at home. He was so touched by her writing he wants to have her fix a couple of grammatical errors and then get it framed! I am going to share the papers with the Language Arts teacher, so I am taking this a step further. She cannot wait to read them. The counselor heard about them and she is bugging me to read the papers. Look what you started, way down here in [redacted], Montana! I also did the Scavenger Hunt with my 7th graders. Some of my shy students were reluctant to ask their peers about themselves but I encouraged them to go around the room. They learned about who read every night and who lived in the same house since birth! (And I learned that Geography is not our strong point since many kids who have been to Wyoming thought they have been out of the Country! LOL) I am still going to label major parts of the classroom in Spanish and Northern Cheyenne. I think that will be lots of fun. This activity brought back memories of my childhood that I shared with my students, and positive encouragement because I came from a low income background like many of them, but I am doing ok now.

I chose to do a classmate "Scavenger Hunt" and a Venn Diagram with one of the second grade classes that I teach. The students absolutely LOVED the opportunity to learn about one another and share aspects of their own identity. As a result of these activities, I feel like I have a much better relationship with my students and an increased understanding of their very diverse backgrounds. I attended the Alaska Humanities Forum's Educator Cross-Cultural Immersion program when I first moved to Alaska three years ago and have travelled/studied abroad extensively, and so teaching through culture is not new to me. I am also currently seeking a graduate level certificate in English Language Learner Education. Plus, being an art teacher gives me the unique experience of letting students express their culture/identity within the pieces that they create in my class. One thing that I do struggle with still is the number of cultures that I come in contact with. I feel as if I could live/teach in [redacted] the rest of my life and still have so much more to learn about the values, mindsets, and traditions that exist here.

I enjoyed the videos and how they set the stage for what was to come with the lessons and the readings. It was good to see the way that some other teachers and classrooms used culture to enrich their academic programs and increase student effort and participation. * The first lesson I chose was the one of creating a poem about where students are from. I have a difficult bunch of students who balk at most writing tasks and assignments, but the way this lesson was broken down made it easier to engage them and get them to participate at least on a small level. The students all participated to some extent and even though they did not all complete their poems they still all did something, which with this group is a positive. * The second lesson I chose was the student survey questionnaire. I have done something similar to this in the past, but this one was more about student's backgrounds and I liked that. Students, like most adults enjoy talking or telling about themselves if they are comfortable. After I had assured them that the results were not being shared with anyone they were more willing to open up and complete the questionnaire. I really like this idea and will certainly continue to use this in the future and attempt to adapt it to my classroom and students in the future. * Teaching Through Culture has been something that has interested me since I started subbing in inner city Syracuse in 2009, and saw that 90% or more of the teachers were white and female and 90% of the students were African American or Hispanic. This huge difference in culture was evident in the day to day interactions and of course the actual course content that was being pushed on these students. Now here teaching in Rural Alaska I am teaching to a completely different population but still find myself, as the teacher, an outsider looking in. I have done my best to integrate into the community, engage with students and families and really learn about their culture and through all of that I now know that I will never know it all. This is not to say I am discouraged, just that I know to focus on one part, and continue to be a "life long learner". There will always be more to learn and this is exciting for me because it means my job will never be dull and I can always find something new to incorporate in. * Going forward from here I want to learn more about literacy, and how I can find and use culturally relevant stories to increase student engagement and participation. Going forward I plan on continuing to integrate culture into my classroom and appreciate any leads on Native stories that I could use. I have enjoyed this process, and although it went by in a whirlwind, I still feel I got a lot out of it.