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Virginia Commonwealth University

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AN INVESTIGATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' CULTURALLY
RELEVANT TEACHING PRACTICES IN TWO CULTURES: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY IN CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

by

Alicia R. Thompson
Bachelor of Arts, Syracuse University, 1993
Master of Education, George Washington University, 2007

Director: Yaoying Xu, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Special Education

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
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DEDICATION

The work, passion and commitment poured into this dissertation are dedicated to Dr. Wanda Mitchell. Outside of her role as Vice President of Inclusive Excellence at Virginia Commonwealth University, Wanda was an active member of the community who I had the joy of working with on the Board of Side by Side (formerly known as ROSMY). She was always supportive of my endeavors, and I know she has been rooting me on from above.

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Abstract

Effective teaching is one of the most important factors in student achievement. Throughout the world, there are high expectations for teacher and student performance. Teachers and students need to navigate the demographic and cultural shifts occurring around the world. Teachers' cultural awareness and knowledge base of culturally relevant teaching practices is critical to their effectiveness. Based on the need to better understand the cultural responsiveness of teachers, this comparative study investigated elementary school teachers' culturally relevant teaching practices in China and the U.S. through the use of video-cued ethnography. The following findings were revealed from the study: (a) differences in frequency and application of practices; (b) communication of high expectations across cultures; (c) lack of family and community partnership; (d) emphasis on culturally mediated instruction in the U.S.; and (e) ample time for collaboration and reflection in China.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Effective teaching is one of the most important factors in student achievement. Throughout the world, there are high expectations for both teacher and student performance, and in particular, the importance of students developing 21st-century skills to enhance their ability to problem solve, think creatively, and collaborate on challenges that are yet to be determined. Along with these new expectations, teachers and students need to understand and navigate the demographic and cultural shifts occurring around the world and within their communities, including the ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity of the population.

Currently, over half of the world's population lives in cities, up from 30% in 1950. As the shift from agriculture to industrialization continues, the percentage is projected to increase to 60% by 2030 (United Nations, 2019). Increased urbanization is reflective of both rural-to-urban migration and the transformation of rural areas into cities. All regions will become more urbanized, and most will see declines in their rural populations. This will be especially true for less developed countries (Hayutin, 2007). In addition, many national boundaries have become more relaxed and fluid. This is in part because technology has shortened distances and made migration easier (Hayutin, 2007). Fertility and longevity rates also have an impact on the population. National and international migration patterns, along with changing age structures, are transforming the demographic makeup of each nation and will create opportunities and challenges.

Over the next century, addressing services for these shifts will be critical as leaders consider how to redesign social, economic, and political institutions. Schools will play a critical role in this transition as they will need to prepare students for the new landscape. Developing a critical mass of educational stakeholders who are passionate, committed, and prepared to lead efforts to eliminate disparities based on ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socioeconomic status will be essential to building healthy communities (Banks & McGee Banks, 2004, 2012; Cole, 2008).

Teacher preparation programs, where most new teachers get their training, traditionally provide content and opportunities for teacher candidates to practice on a body of knowledge about classroom management. There is, however, little consensus about which facets of classroom management should be taught and practiced. Linda Darling-Hammond (2006), one of the field's intellectual leaders, argues teachers should learn to "manage many kinds of learning and teaching, through effective means of organizing and presenting information, managing discussions, organizing cooperative learning strategies, and supporting individual and group inquiry." In 2014 the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) investigated to what extent traditional U.S. teacher preparation programs offered research-based strategies to assist educators in better managing their classrooms. Of the 122 teacher preparation programs reviewed, not a single program was found to address all research-based strategies, recognize classroom management as a priority, or strategically determine best practices on how it should be taught and practiced. Findings

show that the theme of instructional excellence alone is consistently promoted to maintain the order necessary for learning but gives little help in preparing teachers for challenges that may arise. Researchers recommended that additional themes that foster and promote active student participation and engagement, as well as opportunities for teachers to receive feedback and reflect on practices, are needed overall (Greenberg et al., 2014).

As globalization has become more prevalent, there is a strong need to recognize the challenges posed by diversity and examine the effectiveness of teachers' cultural competency and reflective practices. Utilizing comparative research across countries is certainly evident in areas like student achievement, curriculum, and evaluation. However, little work has focused on teacher preparation and effectiveness, specifically as they relate to multicultural education, culturally relevant teaching, and the use of adaptive expertise. The need for comparison of best practices in these areas is critical for professional development of educators and their impact on students' identity development and academic achievement around the world.

Statement of Problem

Today's world is increasingly more global and interconnected, with 54% of the world's population living in urban areas (United Nations, 2019). The decades to follow will bring further changes to the size and spatial distribution of the population. This ongoing urbanization and overall growth are estimated to add 2.5 billion people to cities by 2050, with almost 90% of the increase concentrated in Asia and Africa (United Nations, 2019). As well, the proportion of the world's

population inhabiting urban areas is expected to increase, reaching 66% by 2050.

Of course, levels of urbanization vary greatly across the world. In 2014, high levels of urbanization, at or above 80%, were documented in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Northern America (United Nations, 2019). In contrast, Africa and Asia still remained mostly rural, with 40% and 48% (respectively) of the population living in urban areas (United Nations, 2019). However, in the next few decades, rapid change is projected as Africa and Asia urbanize at record rates.

Urbanization in the U.S. and China

The pace of urbanization is happening much more quickly than during the Industrial Age. Over the past century, the population of the United States has nearly tripled. By 2025, the United States is looking at growth topping 10% that will bring its population to more than 350 million people (United Nations, 2019). Along with population growth, urbanization is also occurring. As of 2011, 82% of the U.S. population lived in “urbanized areas,” consisting of cities, or suburbs that are urbanizing (United Nations, 2019).

Many cities in the United States are experiencing a rebirth after decades of neglect. This rebirth often includes more access to higher-wage jobs and increased real estate values in urban settings. However, the benefits are not always evenly distributed. As city incomes have risen overall, poverty has moved into the suburban and rural areas. Economic disparity in the U.S. has also risen significantly in the last 30 years. Despite a decline in the 1990s, the population in

extreme poverty, where at least 40% live below the poverty line, has risen by a third from 2000 to 2009 (Parilla, Trujillo, & Berube, 2015).

While the United States has experienced much urban growth over the last several decades, and it still continues to climb, urbanization is happening at an even greater scale and a much more rapid pace in other parts of the world.

Between 2000-2015, China had a building boom that was unprecedented, producing 19 of the 20 fastest-growing cities in 2013 (Greenblatt, 2013). At that time, no society in human history had produced more urban matter than China had (Campanella, 2008). While India and Africa now grow at greater rates, Chinese cities continue to rapidly expand.

To put things into perspective, it is important to consider China's growth over the past several decades. In 1950, 13% of people in China lived in cities. By 2010, the Chinese urban population had grown to 45%, and is projected to reach 60% by 2030 (Parilla, Trujillo, & Berube, 2015). This projected growth shows that the urbanization process is still evolving and there is a great opportunity to understand the impact of such change. What we already know is that urbanization is driving economic development in China and throughout the world.

This shift will have a profound impact on the global economy. In 2014, metropolitan areas powered national economic growth. In fact, most registered faster gross domestic product (GDP) per capita or employment growth than their respective countries. According to the Brookings Institution, "In 2014, one-third of the world's 300 largest metropolitan economies were 'pockets of growth,' outpacing their national economies in both indicators. Developing Asia-Pacific led

this category with 29 metro areas, followed by North America (27) and Western Europe (17)” (Parilla, Trujillo, & Berube, 2015, p. 1).

Historically, the process of urbanization has been associated with other important economic and social developments that have brought greater geographic mobility, lower fertility rates, and longer life expectancy (Parilla, Trujillo, & Berube, 2015). Urban living is often associated with higher levels of literacy and education, better health, greater access to social services, and enhanced opportunities for cultural and political participation. China has made enormous investments in infrastructure to support this type of growth. Spending in areas like housing projects, universities, and airports is unparalleled (Angel et al., 2011).

Of course, just like in the United States, there are consequences too. Planning has not fully caught up with the rapid pace of growth in all of China’s cities. There are enormous disparities of wealth within and between different cosmopolitan regions. Government-provided social services are still inadequate for the challenges presented by such huge, rapid growth.

Urbanization and the Workforce

Since the 1970s, both the United States and China have been shifting from an economy based on manufacturing to one centered on services and information technology. This transition has had a wide range of impacts, including the availability of certain jobs, the wages individuals receive, and the skills and education the work requires. A 2012 study published in the *Journal of Economic Geography*, “Cities, Skills and Wages,” analyzes employment data to

better understand how job skills affect wages in cities of different sizes (Florida et al., 2012).

The study found that higher wages are positively correlated with both analytic and social intelligence skills. As well, jobs that require these skills tend to concentrate in larger, denser urban areas. Research also showed that over time, the proportion of jobs requiring a high level of physical skills have declined everywhere except in small cities (Florida et al., 2012). The need to nurture analytic and social intelligence, along with other 21st-century skills, will be imperative for the success of each nation.

Urbanization and Schools

Globalization has created the need to re-evaluate how the world prepares its students. In both the United States and China, there is a great need to understand the shifting demographics.

The United States is quickly changing with a steady increase of international citizens and immigrants. These shifts in the United States have influenced the education system by creating more racially and ethnically diverse classrooms. The U.S. has become less White Christian, while ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity continues to grow. Immigration has played a key role in increasing diversity.

From 1990 to 1997, the number of immigrant families grew by 47%, in contrast to only 7% for those with native-born parents. By 2000, one in every five children (20.1% or 14.6 million) was the child of an immigrant (Hernandez & Charney, 1998). Over the next three decades, the bulk of growth in the youth

population will be attributed to immigration and the births to current immigrants and their descendants.

Because the majority of immigrants are Hispanic or Asian, the proportion of children who are non-Hispanic White is projected to drop from 69% in 1990 to less than 50% by 2040, and children who are Hispanic, Black, Asian, or some other racial minority will comprise of more than half of all children in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Children of immigrant families are the fastest-growing constituency in the youth population in the United States, and the majority of growth is attributed to Hispanic and Asian immigrants. While the student population in public schools becomes more and more multiethnic, the percentage of minority teachers in the school system remains relatively static (Hodgkinson, 2002). Such disproportion can create a disconnect between immigrant students and families and the predominantly White, middle-class teachers in schools (Banks & McGee Banks, 2004 & 2012; Hertzog & Adams, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Sleeter, 2001).

Research has shown that when immigrant families face the challenges of acculturation, such as experiencing cultural marginalization due to language or cultural differences, their children often experience negative psychosocial effects, including increased problem behaviors (Dinh et al., 2002). However, research also has shown that strong relationships between teachers and students can have positive outcomes on the psychological well-being of children of immigrants, such as higher academic motivation and achievement (Green et al., 2008).

China is faced with educational challenges due to urbanization as well. While historically the quality of rural schools in China has lagged behind those in the cities, the Chinese government has made efforts to improve rural education. In 2006, the central government announced that it would provide the funding needed to implement the Compulsory Education Law of 1986, which mandated nine years of free and compulsory education. In recent years, officials have also strengthened the country's investment in teacher salaries, facilities management, and curriculum reform. While progress has been made, sustained effort is still needed to improve the experience of children's education in rural schools. However, there is another population that does not fit neatly into the rural or urban school systems in China.

The children of migrant workers have created a gap in the system. Migration has not always been sanctioned by the government. The *hukou* household registration system, implemented in 1958, produced a divide that still exists today.

The Communist Party implemented *hukou*, a system of residency permits, in order to minimize movement of people between rural and urban areas. Citizens were categorized as urban and rural based on their *hukou*; through this system, urban residents were given access to state-allocated jobs and a range of social services while the rural population was expected to be more self-sufficient. The disparity in the system forced many rural Chinese to migrate to cities, which led the government to create more barriers to migration. Laws required citizens to get approval by *hukou* authorities to move outside of their registered region,

but approval was rare. Since the 1980s, the government has rarely enforced the rules against migration, but residue from the system still remains (Chen et al., 2015).

Hukou has certainly had an impact on the education system and the changing dynamics of the labor force. Until recently there has been no institutionalized support to provide education to the growing numbers of migrant children in urban areas. Migrants and their families have had limited access to housing, healthcare, social security, legal advice, and education without an urban *hukou*.

The government, however, has gradually begun to pass laws and develop policies to protect the rights of migrants (Nielson et al., 2006). Migrant children are now eligible to attend urban schools in their local school districts and education in urban areas is supposed to be free.

Despite the change in government policies, access to education is hardly routine, and considerable barriers to enrollment remain (Chen et al., 2015). In light of the difficulties migrant children face to register in urban public schools, privately run migrant schools have emerged and struggle to fill the educational needs of students. Unlike urban and rural schools, migrant schools have high tuition and are inundated with needs for improved teaching, facilities, and curriculum.

Still, the number of children attending traditional urban and rural schools (meaning urban children going to urban schools and rural children going to rural schools) is dropping. The number of urban elementary school children was 17

million in 1995, and by 2006 it dropped to 16 million. This decrease occurred despite soaring urbanization rates, rising from 26.4% to 43.0% between 1990 and 2005 (China National Bureau of Statistics, 2008). At the same time, the number of rural students fell from 93 million to fewer than 67 million (Ministry of Education, 2007). The drop is attributed to declining birth rates, a trend that is expected to continue.

The rate of migration, however, is accelerating. There are currently more than 150 million laborers working and living away from home as migrants in urban areas (Zhang et al., 2008). Historically, migration in China was temporary and working in the city did not mean that one was living there, but this is changing quickly as urbanization accelerates. As well, more children are migrating with their families, creating an increased number of migrant children who need schooling in China's cities.

Students in migrant schools are highly mobile, which presents challenges to the school and has a great impact on students' educational experience. Because few schools require entrance exams, and there is a lack of school transfer certificates or transcripts to be shared, students' ages in a classroom often vary from three to five years, with many of the students being older than the typical age for each grade (Chen et al., 2015). UNICEF and the National Working Committee for Children and Women put out a joint report in 2004 which showed that 47% of 6-year-old migrant children had not yet started school and some 11- to 14-year-old children were in first or second grade classrooms (Nielson et al., 2006). Age and the social development ranges of students can present

challenges in the classroom. Also problematic is the lack of standards across migrant schools, especially when students transfer and have difficulty catching up on material not covered in their previous schools. Another educational challenge that migrant students often face is malnourishment, which can have serious implications for students' ability to learn and study effectively (Ma et al., 2008). Migrant schools typically cannot afford to provide nutritious lunches or dietary education, which children already lack at home. Regional differences, including language, can also add complexity and inhibit communication (Han, 2004; Yang, 2019).

Regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, citizenship or social class, students deserve opportunities to further develop their skills and knowledge with support of teachers who share that vision. Embracing a macro-level perspective of the world and enabling children to think critically about the world and their individual influences can help shape perspectives on communities, near and far. However, a failure to address these issues—minimal multicultural exposure, lack of language immersion courses, expectations for assimilation—will only further the disequilibrium of academic achievements between ethnic groups and social classes.

Urban education policies should serve and reflect diverse populations including girls, persons with disabilities, migrants, immigrants, the poor, and the marginalized. Providing education for all children is complex and requires effectively leveraging public services and collaborating with partners.

Ideally, schools should be institutions where connections are made between world issues and the local community, and that provide a space for students to acquire the skills to be active and responsible citizens. Cole (2008) suggests that the best educators build a climate that teaches children how to live productively together by (a) enabling children to be active participants in the world; (b) enhancing learning to create inclusive communities and cities; (c) expanding critical thinking skills; (d) developing learning in all its diverse forms; and (e) promoting lifelong learning opportunities.

In order to achieve this, teachers should be prepared to handle cultural differences within the classroom and have awareness of how dissonance may be exhibited by students through behaviors, actions, and achievement (Cole, 2008; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011).

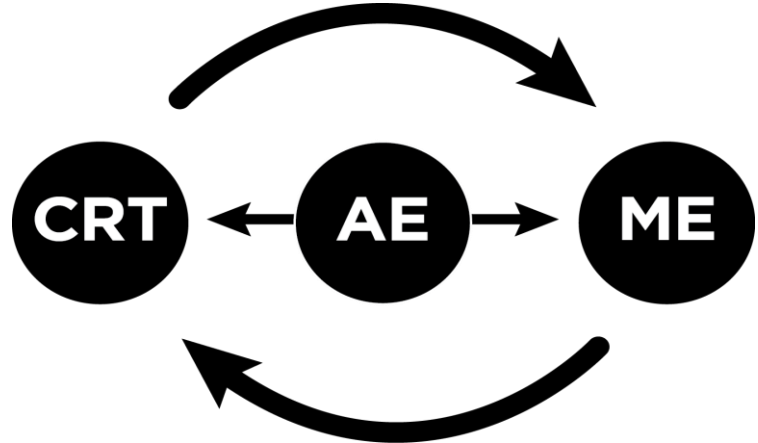
There is a need to better understand the cultural responsiveness of teachers and give educators the opportunity to reflect upon these and their own practices. Therefore, I launched a comparative study that investigates elementary school teachers' culturally relevant teaching practices in China and the United States.

Rationale

Approaching the education of children in schools, especially in urban areas, requires a theoretical framework of cultural pluralism; multicultural education and critical pedagogy are two such perspectives that provide educators a framework to guide them through the diverse cultures of students and families.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Culturally Relevant Teaching

The study integrates **Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT)**, **Adaptive Expertise (AE)** and **Multicultural Education (ME)** to establish a **Conceptual Framework**. While highlighting the importance of each theoretical perspective, it showcases the connective tissue between ME and CRT. As well, it acknowledges the influence of AE across both CRT and ME.



Ladson-Billings (1994) describes **Culturally Relevant Teaching** as a “pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”

CRT plays a significant role in the framework and this study by:

- Connecting to the larger body of knowledge on ME and helping culturally diverse students excel in education.
- Reflecting ME into pedagogy, outlining practitioner skills to complement the broader theory of ME
- Embedding AE into practice

Adaptive Expertise encompasses a range of cognitive, motivational and personality-related components as well as habits of mind. Problem solvers demonstrate AE when they can efficiently solve previously encountered tasks and generate new procedures for new tasks (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986).

In this framework AE acts as:

- A bridge across ME and CRT where students and teachers’ cultural knowledge can be leveraged and adapted.
- A skill for teachers to model for students, and an aspirational goal for them to achieve.

Banks and Banks (2001) define **Multicultural Education** as an educational reform movement intended to positively change educational institutions so that all students will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school.

Banks (2004) outlines five dimensions of ME, two of which support CRT and embed AE:

- Tailoring teaching methods to ensure success of students from all cultures (fourth dimension).
- Critically examining the institution or education for inequities to empower school culture (fifth dimension).

Banks and Banks (2001) define multicultural education as, “an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school” (p. 1). They further explain that, “the term multicultural education describes a wide variety of programs and practices related to educational equity, women, ethnic groups, language minorities, low-income groups, and people with disabilities” (p. 6).

Research on multicultural education has demonstrated its effectiveness in explicitly addressing identity development and perception among youth. As well, the practices of engaging youth in experiential learning and open dialogue have shown positive changes in students’ perceptions of others, academic achievement, and self-esteem (Gordon, 2005; Henderson & Wilcox, 1998). Hawley and Jackson (1995) found that racial attitudes and interracial behaviors can be improved through strategies that are a meaningful and significant part of the teacher’s curriculum. They concluded that educators play a fundamental role in multicultural education and true progress requires supplemental training for classroom teachers and the opportunity for them to reflect on their experiences.

Multicultural education has a strong connection to culturally relevant teaching (CRT) a term coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings. Before delving fully into CRT it is important to define culture. For the purpose of this study culture is “the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective

understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group” (Paesani, 2019). Ladson-Billings describes CRT as “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17-18). Utilizing culturally relevant teaching practices essentially means that teachers create a connection between students’ home and school lives, while still meeting the curricular requirements of their school system. Culturally relevant teaching leverages the backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences of students to inform the teacher’s lessons and methodological approach.

CRT, also known as critical pedagogy, has a symbiotic relationship with multicultural education. Multicultural education is about acknowledging racial, socioeconomic and ethnic differences instead of ignoring them. A multicultural perspective attempts to recognize and critically analyze differences rather than deny that differences exist. In order for multicultural education to work at the classroom level, teachers must employ effective teaching strategies (i.e., effective pedagogy). Such teaching practices are often referred to as culturally responsive or culturally relevant techniques. CRT uses cultural knowledge, reference to prior experiences, and adaptation to the performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students (Gay, 2010). By using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes, CRT acknowledges

the role of students' backgrounds in their ability to frame and absorb knowledge. The outcome of CRT can be seen in students who are empowered intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically (Ladson-Billings, 2005, 2014). The use of cultural references in teaching bridges and explains the mainstream culture, while also valuing and recognizing the students' own cultures.

Acknowledging different learning styles and frames of reference supports adaptive expertise and encourages students to leverage a variety of approaches in problem solving. Adaptive expertise, introduced by Hatano and Inagaki (1986), is a concept that incorporates a range of cognitive, motivational, and personality traits. A characteristic of adaptive expertise is the ability to apply knowledge effectively to new situations or unusual problems. Studies show that adaptive experts are able to demonstrate flexibility to invent new procedures that can result in better performance and technical troubleshooting (Carbonell et al., 2014; Holyoak, 1991). Hatano and Oura (2003) stated that school climates are often deficient in encouraging adaptive expertise and in promoting the sociocultural significance of content. They noted that while true adaptive expertise may not be a realistic goal for school learning, teaching toward the goal of adaptive expertise through the use of collaborative work, attempting to solve real-world problems, and presenting information to audiences will help to prepare for future competence (Hatano & Oura, 2003). Adaptive teaching expertise is a broad construct that encompasses a range of cognitive, motivational, and personality-related components (Crawford, Schlager, Toyama, Riel, & Vahey, 2005). It is a

blend of habits of mind and distinct dispositions that educators use in the classroom to balance the needs of highly complex environments.

Like a puzzle piece that completes a picture, adaptive expertise (AE) links to both multicultural education and CRT (see Figure 1). Educators who utilize AE effectively in their teaching practices better leverage reflection, action, and judgment skills to move from theory to real-time teaching. Adaptive experts are open to transformative change in their practice. This means that when they discover the need to change a practice or process, they perceive it “not as a failure but, instead, as a success and an inevitable, continuous aspect of effective teaching” (Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 363). Critical components of adaptive expertise in the classroom are the ability to reflect on student responses and to understand and respond accordingly to the realities of classroom culture, in ways that place student learning at the forefront. Adaptive teaching expertise encompasses a range of cognitive, motivational, and personality-related components (Crawford, Schlager, Toyama, Riel, & Vahey, 2005). It is a combination of habits of mind and dispositions that teachers use in their classrooms to balance the needs of a highly complex environment.

In *Exploring Effective Pedagogy in Primary Schools*, Siraj and Taggart (2014) found that teachers in schools deemed as “excellent” or “good” were more likely to personalize their students’ learning experiences. They did this by being sensitive to the individual needs of the children in their classrooms and by using learning materials that were rich and varied. This is in comparison to the schools that were rated “very low,” in which teacher detachment (distancing themselves

from their pupils by staying at their desks, not providing feedback, not noticing behaviors, etc.) was high. As well, teachers in “excellent” schools were sensitive to the needs of the children and provided learning materials specifically chosen and modified for their students.

Recognizing and capitalizing on student experience and prior knowledge is a shift from the traditional instructional practices of elementary school teachers that were reflective of authoritarian power structures that modeled other work environments (Sarason, 1990). For example, in Manke’s *Classroom Power Relations* chapter titled “Teacher’s Organization of Time and Space,” she explored how teachers arrange class time and space to control student behavior and promote learning. She described how the “authoritarian” fifth-grade teacher arranged her room in a way that discouraged students from moving. The exit was also “tightly controlled,” and three of the most difficult students sat in “isolated seats” chosen by the teacher. Manke also explored how teachers can use structured activities to control student behavior (p. 67). While power relationships can be enforced through setting and approach to pedagogy, it is important to note how they can also persist through identity and constructions of difference—and to understand how minority and/or majority group membership can play a significant role in those power dynamics (Delpit, 1988; Freire, 1970; McLaren, 1994).

Carl Jung’s statement “*Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakes*” supports the premise that teachers need time to practice and reflect upon their development and their execution of curricular and pedagogical

strategies to ensure the needs of students are met (Banks et al., 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2005; White-Clark, 2005). Increased awareness and self-reflection can expose one's own biases and be an essential first step toward establishing a culturally responsive learning environment and reducing cultural bias in teaching (Gay, 2010). Reflective practice, however, cannot be accomplished in a bubble. Feedback to and from others is critical to deepening one's worldview and cultural understanding (Hammerness et al., 2005). With limited comparative study in these reflective practices across cultures, and specifically in elementary schools, I saw a need for further examination.

Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate primary school teachers' culturally relevant teaching practices in two cultures (China and the U.S.) and to obtain an understanding of multicultural education in both countries, particularly as it relates to culturally responsive teaching practices and adaptive expertise. This research study is of interest in terms of realizing the similarities and dissimilarities of Chinese and American educational cultures, expectations, teacher training, and ongoing professional development programs. The information collected may help in understanding institutional dynamics in general and allow for the judgment of cultural contexts on Chinese and American teacher training.

In preparation for launching research on elementary school teachers' culturally relevant teaching practices, reflection on recent studies was needed.

Preschool in Three Cultures, along with the more recent *Preschool in Three*

Cultures Revisited (Tobin et al., 1989, 2009; Tobin, 2019), served as the foundation. To further align with this intended approach, I looked to find more empirical studies based in ethnography and critical theory. The work of Annette Lareau (*Unequal Childhoods*) and Mariana Souto-Manning (*Freire, Teaching, and Learning: Culture Circles Across Contexts*) helped to further develop the methodology as well as inform about teacher education, family engagement, reflective practice and considerations for a range of social identifiers. I also leveraged Cochran-Smith and Lytle's *Inquiry as Stance* with the intent of keeping practitioner experience as a central focus of the work and end product.

Literature

Schools, like the rest of society, have to deal with an ever-changing landscape including declining birth rates, urbanization, family work patterns, and the development of new technologies, to name a few challenges. Schools are socializing institutions where ideally children are able to develop intellectually, physically, and emotionally, and become contributing members of society. Along with addressing the needs of children and families, schools must also understand the larger societal changes that directly impact their communities and work overall. *Preschools in Three Cultures Revisited* (2009) explores these themes and provides a comparison of more current data to an earlier study of childhood education in China, Japan, and the U.S. (*Preschools in Three Cultures: Japan, China and the United States*, 1989).

Both of these studies suggest that in a world perceived to be rapidly changing, schools are leveraged as key sites for preserving core cultural beliefs.

However, it is important to note that schools are also cultural: they are sites that reflect beliefs and practices about education and care. Although Tobin et al. observed wide variation in each country, the *Preschools in Three Cultures* studies revealed that in each culture there are common practices and beliefs of teachers that are widely shared in one country but not the others (1989 & 2009). This widespread sharing is in large part due to implicit cultural beliefs and practices—implicit because generally these beliefs and practices are not directly taught, written down in textbooks, or mandated in policy documents. Instead, they reflect an “implicit cultural logic,” and are passed down through on-the-job learning from older to newer teachers and less directly through the reproduction of the larger cultures in which schools are located (Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009, p. 225).

Therefore, children do not enter indistinct schools. Instead they enter specific schools whose immediate contexts, histories, memories, and values shape the organizational practices of the place (Souto-Manning, 2010). There are hidden messages at each school that drive the culture and can make interactions difficult to navigate if unknown. If the educational system and curriculum are not culturally or politically neutral, then critical pedagogy is essential to honoring the humanity of all students and their cultural backgrounds, as well as those of their families. This is particularly important for the oppressed (Souto-Manning, 2010).

Intergroup perceptions and views can significantly shape the degree, quality, and consequences of interactions between children, their fellow students,

and their teachers, and the views children come to hold of themselves. The results for some students can be marginalization and social isolation (Souto-Manning, 2010). Understanding the socialization processes which support racial and cultural identity development may contribute to greater understanding of the cultural differences in the education of and interventions used with children in school settings (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2002; Sherrod, 1997; Stevenson, 1995).

In addition to schools, students' families and community are major factors contributing to their socialization. In *Unequal Childhoods* (2011), Lareau examined social stratification, the process of sorting ourselves by social/cultural/economic class, and how it is perpetuated in the United States. Lareau and her team spent a month closely following the daily life of 12 families, focusing primarily on the fourth-grader in the family. Through this research Lareau suggests that in the U.S. we practice one of two types of child-rearing: "concerted cultivation" or "the accomplishment of natural growth" (p. 5). She maintains that philosophical approaches to child-rearing lead to differential advantages for children.

The most striking difference noted between middle-class and working-class or poor subjects involved how language was used in the children's worlds. The team observed that for middle-class children, conversations with parents (and other adults) were usually shared dialogues, regularly speculative or playful in nature. In contrast, working-class or poor children experienced the speech of parents (or other adults) in the form of directives that anticipated no response

from the child other than compliance. Lareau observed middle-class children acquiring linguistic confidence and sophistication with adults at an early age, which would serve them well in adult life and give them a distinct advantage over individuals from working-class or poor backgrounds (2011). Lareau's team observed not only an ability to navigate linguistically, but also teacher/school expectations that middle-class families monitor their children's progress closely, and even intervene in the school's decisions when they disagree, providing additional advantage and partnership. An understanding of and reflection on such cultural bias and expectations is needed for educators to work with entire school populations and openly discuss challenging topics around socioeconomic and class structure that disrupt the dream of meritocracy. This dream feeds off the ideals of fair play and deserved outcomes, but Lareau's work shows that the system in the U.S. is neither fair nor neutral for our children.

Recognizing these differences and the tensions that can arise can be beneficial in helping children build friendships and increase engagement choices within school and other settings. If lacking cultural decoding skills, youth may not be able to fully connect and function in a variety of environments, including some school settings where they may experience being outside the dominant culture.

Teachers can be instrumental in helping students and families navigate the school setting overall. Increasing educators' knowledge of multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching practices is essential to reflecting on one's own biases and developing skill sets to best connect and relate to children and families of all backgrounds. For example, in *Freire, Teaching, and*

Learning: Culture Circles Across Contexts, Mariana Souto-Manning deconstructs the theory behind Paulo Freire's culture circles which were first designed by Freire as a means to promote adult literacy in Brazil. Souto-Manning states, "Culture circles are based on two basic tenets: the political nature of education (Freire, 1985) and dialogue in the process of educating" (p. 18). Culture circles are generated by dialogue and the themes that come from the participants in the process, thus empowering learners to engage and educators to value the existing knowledge that students enter the school with. Through ethnography, Souto-Manning not only illustrates how they work, but also how they can be used in practice to bring forth democratic education in a range of contexts. Through the documentation of struggles experienced by many of the participants of a culture circle and organizing those experiences in a generative themes (e.g., a case study, story, drawing, etc.), facilitators provide opportunities for students to name, problematize and deconstruct issues that are dominant in their lives (p. 31). Souto-Manning recognizes five phases in the critical cycle of culture circles:

- generative themes
- problem (or question) posing
- dialogue
- problem solving
- action (32)

While this cycle serves to disrupt hierarchies found in traditional classroom settings, additional features like circular seating also further the concept and promote dialogue.

Souto-Manning's goal is to make the process of implementing culture circles clearer and more applicable for educators and utilizes "theory-informed examples" of Freirian culture circles and problem-posing techniques in order to promote critical, transformational, and democratic education.

This goal of linking theory to practice is also evident in *Inquiry as Stance* in which Cochran-Smith and Lytle emphasize the need for "practitioner inquiry" as a lifelong habit of mind (2009). They promote practitioners' use of an inquiry lens to question any aspect of the educational system while keeping the goal of social justice and more equitable outcomes for students at the forefront.

The chapters by Cochran-Smith and Lytle convey a clear conceptual foundation for the practitioner narratives that follow. This foundation includes five themes:

- taking on issues of equity, engagement, and agency
- developing conceptual frameworks
- inventing and reinventing communities of inquiry
- shaping school reform and educational policy
- practitioner inquiry in research universities

To contextualize the work, Cochran-Smith and Lytle commissioned eight practitioner chapters. In each, a teacher or administrator questions an aspect of the educational system or tries to understand a student from a new perspective furthering thought on inquiry, critical theory, and culturally relevant pedagogy.

While these are strong examples of research and data collection from a qualitative perspective, there is not enough that sufficiently investigates

educational cultures, expectations, teacher training, and ongoing professional development programs that aim to improve teachers' abilities to meet the needs of a diverse population of students (Artiles et al., 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2005). There are even greater gaps in research that focuses on the use of reflective practices in CRT and AE and teacher effectiveness (Noyce, 2006). With this in mind, I wanted to add to the research by further investigating the following:

1. How do teachers leverage culturally relevant teaching practices while engaging their students and interacting in their classroom setting?
2. How do teachers leverage culturally relevant teaching practices differently in the U.S. and China?
3. How do teachers perceive other teachers' culturally responsive teaching practices?
4. How do teachers perceive culturally relevant teaching practices differently in the U.S. and China?

Methods

To address these questions, I leveraged local, national, and world planning reports on urbanization and globalization to inform on how regions in the U.S. and China have responded (and plan to respond) to these demographic changes in urban educational settings. As well, I used research on multicultural education, CRT, and adaptive expertise to better understand how these were applied in both countries' city schools, along with comparative studies on teacher training and development to gain insight into the background educators in the U.S. and China are provided and assessed on.

I used the constant comparative method to produce the data, drawing upon comparative research models used across cultures, including *Preschools in Three Cultures* (1989), *Preschools in Three Cultures Revisited* (2009), and *Bodies as Sites of Cultural Reflection in Early Childhood Education* (2015), all of which used the process of video-cued, multivocal diachronic ethnography to collect data. Using this method, typical days in elementary schools in each culture were videotaped and carefully edited down to 20- to 30-minute clips. The clips were shared using Freirian *culture circles*, where educators used their own ways of speaking to articulate their shared understanding of the videos and reflected on how to act to change their future practices (Souto-Manning, 2010). These videos served as the nonverbal interviewing prompts that stimulated reaction and encouraged reflection from teachers and administrators. What the stakeholders said and how they reflected about the video clips was audio recorded and transcribed as the actual data, not the original video.

The data collected from ethnographic observation and video was analyzed through a combination of the constant comparative method and critical discourse analysis. Discourse analysis was used because it is suitable for exploring verbal interaction and communication (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Significance

This research was designed to increase understanding of school climate and culture and to provide educators with a reflective opportunity to view other perspectives and vantage points. The research provided rich, qualitative data

that can be shared and reflected upon even beyond the initial study, providing further professional development opportunities for educational leaders.

Limitations

I facilitated and observed the reflection and culture circles. The potential for experimenter effect was considered and steps to counter that threat were taken. Although reflection was a facilitated interactive session—as opposed to a lecture—some variance between sessions was expected and solicited. However, a script ensured key information was covered in a consistent manner. These activities, coupled with my intentionally disclosing and modeling challenges about diversity that I have faced, were put in place to alleviate the potential of experimenter effect threat. Even so, these practices may not have been sufficient to encourage participants to fully share and explore their experiences. It is important to also note that these facilitated sessions provided case studies and phenomena to be further explored; they will not be representative of subgroups represented.

Prior experience in professional development sessions, particularly those linked to diversity, may have influenced participant engagement. Other significant experiences around diversity and inclusion work may also have skewed engagement. For instance, a recent encounter, such as being accused of racism by a student's parents, might create a heightened sensitivity that may affect engagement of the participant and even other members of the school community of influence, changing their typical response. In general, when discussing issues of multiculturalism and CRT, participants could have been compelled to, in a

sense, prove that they have an understanding of these issues so as not to be deemed a racist, sexist, an uninformed educator, etc. Concerns of that nature may have prompted responses that are perceived as more socially desirable.

Summary

Over the last decade, investigators have relied heavily upon qualitative methods to identify key factors that are associated with culturally competent pedagogy. Bergeron (2008) reported through narrative case study that interacting with supportive colleagues and participating in professional development opportunities were essential to a teacher's success in creating a culturally responsive classroom. Another study found that building relationships and establishing clear expectations of both behavior and success were crucial components to creating a culturally responsive classroom (Bondy, Ross, Gallinace, & Hambacher, 2007). Such investigations suggest that there are key factors associated with a teacher's success in diverse classrooms and each has implications for teacher education programs. Because debate exists regarding which approaches are most effective, and because multicultural education is thought to be political as well as pedagogical (Cochran-Smith, 2004), additional study is needed to deepen our understanding of which aspects of teacher education are most effective in developing cultural competence.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Multicultural Education and Culturally Relevant Teaching

In 1988, Emily Style wrote an article reflecting on the importance of self and the greater society from the lens of a multicultural educator. In this article, she suggests that true learning is built on personal experience. It does not take place in a vacuum, but is contextual. Therefore, students should learn through what she calls “windows and mirrors” (Style, 1998), the mirror being a symbol for learning about one’s self or others who come from similar cultures and environments. The window represents looking outside of one’s environment and learning about other people and their experiences. However, Style highlights the importance of recognizing those times when you can look out a window, at others, and still catch your own reflection (Style, 1998). In this, she expresses one of the main goals of multicultural education, which is “to help individuals gain greater self-understanding by viewing themselves from the perspectives of other cultures” (Banks, 2008, p. 2).

Historically, focus has been on mainstream groups who hold power and influence. Educational institutions have largely served as an extension of this system by focusing on the culture and experiences of the dominant groups (Banks, 2008). This focus has had harmful consequences on students. Multicultural education focuses on appreciating the contributions of all groups so that students may develop positive attitudes about themselves and about others who are different. This feeds into another major goal of multicultural education,

which is to “provide all students with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to function within their community cultures, within the mainstream culture, and across other ethnic cultures” (Banks, 2008, p. 2). Students should have both understanding of and appreciation for the uniqueness and richness of other cultures (Banks, 2008).

Multicultural education aims for anti-bias education. Its goal is also to reduce discrimination against members of some ethnic and racial groups, and the pain they experience because of their distinctive racial, physical, and cultural characteristics (Banks, 2008). Such discrimination can lead to the denial of ethnic identity or family in order to assimilate and participate more fully in mainstream society (Banks, 2008). This “self-alienation” and rejecting parts of their cultures and identity is an attempt to try to succeed in the greater society (Banks, 2008). Yet it comes at a high price by giving up a sense of self, family, and community experience, or “what Fordham calls a ‘pyrrhic victory’—a victory of pain and losses” (Banks, 2008, 3).

Another major goal is to reorganize schools so that all students obtain knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to participate in an ethnically and racially diverse world (Banks, 2008). Multicultural education seeks to provide educational equity for all members of the school community, and to facilitate their participation as critical and reflective citizens of the school, the community, the nation, and the world.

Multicultural education is basic education, and emphasizes those reading, writing, and math skills needed to function successfully in the global world

(Banks, 2008). Its goal is to use a range of multicultural content geared toward diverse learning styles so that every student can master these basic skills. Students are more likely to succeed when faced with content that deals with significant problems related to race, ethnicity, and social class within society (Banks, 2008). This meaningful and motivating subject matter assists with students' ability to learn and think critically, as well as to build the cultural competency skills needed to function in cultural communities (Banks, 2008).

Ladson-Billings (1984, 1995), Nieto (2001), Gay (2000), Howard (2003), and Banks and Banks (2004) have advocated that the underachievement of African Americans, Latinxs, and Asian Pacific Islanders in the United States stems from the lack of culturally relevant teaching, and argue that a key to learning is an understanding of culture. Howard Gardner (2010) suggests that culturally relevant teaching provides an educational framework that encourages all students to learn by building upon their experiences, knowledge, and skill sets.

Researchers have repeatedly recognized that teachers need to know more about the world of the students and families with whom they work. Such knowledge and understanding would strengthen opportunities for learning success (Graybill, 1997; Pransky & Bailey, 2003). One way to overcome the obstacle of underachievement for students is through the use of culturally responsive pedagogy, also referred to as culturally relevant teaching or CRT (Gay, 2000). CRT requires teachers to create a learning environment where all students feel a sense of belonging, where they are welcomed, supported, and

provided with the best opportunities to learn regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Barnes, 2006). CRT supports an environment that facilitates and supports the achievement of all students.

A leader in the field of multicultural education, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2001), states that teachers of diverse students need to be skillful at culturally relevant teaching practices. Ladson-Billings (1995) defined CRT as the pedagogy of opposition, similar to critical pedagogy but specifically dedicated to collective empowerment. She posits that teachers who are culturally responsive use “cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 32). Additionally, she suggests that culturally responsive teachers develop learning that is intellectual, social, emotional, and political based on three criteria:

- Students must experience academic success.
- Students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence.
- Students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Culturally responsive pedagogy has been described by a number of researchers as an effective means of addressing the academic and social needs of diverse students (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Shade, Kelly & Oberg, 1997). Culturally responsive pedagogy has the following characteristics: it is empowering and enables students to believe in themselves and their abilities to succeed; its transformative nature aids students’ development of knowledge, skills, and values which are vital to becoming social

critics adept at participating in important decision-making processes (Au, 1993; Erickson, 1987; Gordon, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Gay (2000) further defines culturally responsive pedagogy as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more relevant to and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of students. CRT is culturally “validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative and emancipatory” (p. 29). Thus, when teachers are armed with the knowledge about the way their students construct and process information, they will be more successful in identifying and focusing on students’ strengths to further their academic success (Delpit, 1995; Guion, 2005). Furthermore, teachers’ understanding of their students’ learning, cognitive styles, and communication skills also enable them to pursue and integrate materials and instructional strategies that align with their students’ needs.

Similar to Ladson-Billings, Gay (2000) describes culturally responsive teaching as having the following characteristics:

- It validates the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, from the legacies that affect students’ dispositions, attitudes, and learning styles and as content to be taught in the curriculum.
- It creates connections between home and school experiences and between academic constructs and sociocultural realities.
- It uses a wide range of teaching strategies that link to different learning styles.

- It teaches students to understand and appreciate their own and others' cultural heritages.
- It integrates multicultural resources and information in all subject areas and skill sets regularly taught in schools (p. 29).

Educators who practice CRT acknowledge the positive effect that the recognition of one's cultural identity and heritage has on academic achievement (Gay, 2000).

The Need for Multicultural Education

Diversity characterizes the population of the United States more and more each day. Between the increasing number of U.S.-born ethnic minorities and the influx of immigrants across the nation, public education has been and will continue to be significantly impacted (Daleiden, 1999). As the Black, Latinx, and Asian populations continue to climb, there will be implications for teaching and learning in classrooms and, more importantly, challenges for teachers who are teaching student populations whose culture differs from their own (Howard, 2003).

China is a multiethnic country, including 55 minority groups that represent approximately 110 million people (The Sixth National Population Census of the People's Republic of China, 2010). Han, the dominant group, comprises about 92% of the total population (Governance in China, 2005; Veek et al. 2007).

With the exception of the Hui and Manchu people who speak Mandarin Chinese, minority groups have their own dialects, totaling about 120 languages (Sun, 2014; Zuo, 2007). Three factors have significantly created unfavorable

positions for minority languages in China: the promotion of Mandarin Chinese as the national language in 1956 (Rohsenow, 2004; Zhou, 1999); the mandated use of Mandarin Chinese by Grade 3 in minority regions (Hu & Seifman, 1987; Zhou, 2004); and the popularity of Mandarin Chinese for globalization and trade relations with the world (Zhou & Ross, 2004). Both language and the uneven speed of development in urban and rural areas of China are roadblocks to children's educational access and educational achievements, and provide additional challenges for educators teaching them.

Considering the demographics of today's urban schools, an acknowledgment and understanding of the diverse ethnic, linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds of students and a desire to leverage their cultural experiences to enrich the classroom are arguably necessary traits of the effective modern educator. However, developing such traits and skills requires a basic knowledge of urban demographics, as well as an aptitude to think critically about potential stereotypes, attitudes, and behaviors that may affect teachers' ability to create culturally responsive classrooms (Gay, 2007). One suggested path for students to improve academic success and develop democracy in the classroom is through multicultural education (Gay, 2007).

Multiculturalists like Ladson-Billings (1994, 1996), Nieto (2002), Howard (2003), Banks (2004), and Gay (2004) suggest that CRT is a response with the potential to "narrow" the imbalance of educational outcomes between students and specifically for those from diverse ethnic, linguistic, economic, and cultural heritage outside the traditional mainstream hierarchies. Given the increasing

diversity in urban schools, teachers must be able to recognize how diverse experiences shape learning for many students (Howard, 2003). As well, teachers must be able to develop instructional practices that have relevance and meaning to students' social and cultural experiences. Leaders in the field of multicultural education have consistently advocated that the underachievement of minority groups stems from the absence of CRT and the lack of cultural understanding (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2001; Howard, 2003; and Banks & Banks, 2004). Researchers theorize that in order to meet the educational needs of all children, educators must first be able to understand the social, cultural and political experiences of each child and their family, however, in most traditional classrooms these go either absent or unnoticed (Murrell, 2002; Nieto, 2002).

While there is overall consensus about the aims and goals of multicultural education across leaders in the field, there is also a great divide between theory and actual practice (Gay, 1992). For example, many teachers understand the need to link students' lived experiences to the classroom and curriculum and also know that if they cannot make that connection, disengagement and lack of learning are likely to occur. However, good intentions do not equal positive outcomes; this is why more research is needed on how and why culturally responsive teaching and the growth of multicultural advocates is critical to student success (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The Need for Identifying Multicultural Advocate Practices and Skills

For far too long, cultural and economic differences have been disregarded in the classroom, while dominant mainstream groups have been idealized

(Schmidt, 2006). Students can, however, be provided with opportunities to expand their inquiry and critical thinking skills when educators begin to effectively address the similarities of the various groups of their students rather than just the differences (Siegler & Alibali, 2005). But how are such teachers identified? Or how do they become knowledgeable about/developed in culturally responsive teaching practices that meet the academic needs of their student body?

To begin to answer this, Schmidt and Ma (2006) developed 50 literacy strategies for culturally responsive teaching. Their work focuses on addressing all aspects of language arts, reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as integrating math, science, and social studies. Also included are approaches to include families and community members to further strengthen the strategic effectiveness. These strategies were organized around six major themes:

- classroom community
- home, community, and nation
- multicultural literature events
- critical media literacy
- global perspectives and literacy development
- inquiry learning and literacy learning

In order to test their theory of practice and application, Schmidt and Ma field-tested these strategies with K-8 teachers in urban, high-poverty classrooms where they observed the implementation of the strategies. Each strategy is described for use at beginning, intermediate, and advanced grade levels, and also assists teachers to individualize and accommodate special needs students.

They found that through the resources provided, teachers were able to change their classroom culture to one that placed a higher value on inclusion and where literacy became more meaningful and engaging. The researchers expressed concern about whether or not schools and districts would be able to replicate the same outcomes. Could the resources be appropriately provided and supported to ensure that the strategies would be transferred across classrooms, schools, and districts. Maybe other principals serving large populations of students of color who are low performing would be interested in exploring these practices further.

Souto-Manning's (2013) *Multicultural Teaching in the Early Childhood Classroom: Approaches, Strategies, and Tools, Preschool - 2nd Grade* helps move the reader beyond talk of social justice education and answer how to do multicultural education (Souto-Manning, 2013). While not a "how-to" guide, the book shares "critical and situated" (p. 8) methodologies, each of which "problematize dominant views of learning" (p. 8). The book offers primary educators with teachable-moment strategies for when inequity and injustice present themselves in the classroom community.

Souto-Manning (2013) opens by expounding on the multiple notions and misconceptions of multicultural education. To teach multiculturally, by her definition, is "to teach inclusively, to create spaces of possibility, to bring differences front and center in the life of the classroom" (p. 17). She debunks the myth that simply adding multicultural materials to a classroom creates an inclusive environment. Furthermore, she argues that resources do not

fundamentally change the learning or instructional practice, or the interactions or beliefs of students and teachers in the classroom. From a critical lens, multicultural education is rooted in the principles of social justice, educational equity, and a commitment to providing all students with educational opportunities that empower them to reach their full learning potential and become agents of change. The rest of the book is dedicated to documenting her exploration of a wide range of rich approaches, strategies, and tools for teaching multiculturally in early childhood. She does this by compiling samples of powerful preschool – second-grade pedagogical approaches which educators can use to inspire their own teaching and learning. For example, Mary Cowhey shares how she leveraged two multicultural practices of interviews and critical inquiry through an integrated, standards-aligned environment using authentic children’s literature, bringing experts in, and “doing philosophy with children” (p. 33). Another case highlights Dana Bently’s usage of culture circles (Giroux, 1985) as spaces where young children “name and change unfair practices and inequitable issues in our own classrooms and (pre)schools” (p. 56). The instance of a two-week-long culture circle in her class is used after a preschool boy declared that the color purple was for girls. Souto-Manning then classifies the host of tools and strategies detailed throughout each of the classroom examples, developing a resource for teachers as they develop.

Elementary and secondary educators who authored *A Critical Inquiry Framework for K-12 Teachers: Lessons and Resources from the U.N. Rights of the Child*, validate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

(ROC) as an invaluable tool for critical K-12 teachers (Allen & Alexander, 2013). Throughout the book, they engaged in their own method of inquiry where they discussed, applied, and evaluated critical pedagogy that “honors student voices and engages students in critical inquiry into social issues relevant to their lives such as race, social class, language, and other aspects of citizenship in a democracy still under construction” (p. 2). Each chapter is focused on exploring a specific article of ROC, and offers its readers an opportunity to reflect upon, connect with, and challenge the topics presented. The framework and projects outlined in the chapters can be modified to and/or easily applied in various classroom settings and educational contexts.

Several chapters focus on the elementary school classroom and highlight the application of CRT. For example, Chapter One describes a project in which first graders are invited to choose from books focused on themes of poverty, power, and action and asked to think about questions such as. “What do people of poverty look like?” and “How do the characters of the book treat them?” (p. 24). Chapters Two and Three solicit an exploration of rights, such as the *right to health and well-being* and the *rights of students with disabilities*, whereas Chapters Four and Five are designed to examine issues pertaining to the rights of immigrant students and families, including *respect for the values and culture of parents* and *protection from deportation and family separation*.

It is clear that there is a wide body of literature that emphasizes the transformational role of multicultural education and the importance of shifting focus beyond that of traditional, mainstream culture (Banks, 2008; Gay, 2000;

Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Gorski, 2010; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2002). As these texts have transitioned to the hands of educators around the world, teachers continue to raise new questions about what it means to put critical and multicultural pedagogy practices in today's classrooms. There is great need to further understand what cultural responsiveness looks like and how to instill and develop these skills in both teachers and students.

Culturally Relevant Teaching in the United States

The United States has faced significant demographic and cultural shifts over time. The population has surpassed 300 million, and 2020 projections predict that the nation will add approximately another 28 million people (Brookings Institution, 2010). Large metropolitan areas continue to account for the nation's continued growth. Between 2000 and 2009, these grew by a combined 10.5 percent, versus 5.8 percent growth in the rest of the country (Brookings Institution, 2010). As well, they continue to spread out, and their less developed outskirts have grown at more than three times that rate.

Today, the population of the United States is one-third nonwhite, and those groups accounted for 83 percent of national population growth from 2000 to 2008 (Brookings Institution, 2010). Immigration has played a critical role in this growth and now approximately one-quarter of children in the U.S. have at least one immigrant parent. In about 30 years, this young generation will propel our shift to a majority nonwhite nation. Large metropolitan areas will be the first to experience this transition, as their youth population reached majority nonwhite status back in 2008 (Brookings Institution, 2010).

These shifts make it increasingly important for political, social, educational, and economic reasons to acknowledge the country as a culturally diverse society (Hernandez, 2001). Diversity increasingly personifies the population of the United States. As the Black, Latinx and Asian populations increase, there will be long-lasting implications for teaching and learning in schools where students of color are dominant.

All of this demographic information indicates that schoolchildren in urban areas across the country are regularly socializing and interacting with students from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. Although these experiences are positive for many children, they may also lead to bullying among different racial groups. Researchers in the U.S., the Netherlands, Austria, and Greece have directly studied multiracial and immigrant issues as part of their investigations of bullying in schools (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2008; Spriggs et al., 2007; Strohmeier, Spiel & Gradinger, 2008; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). Findings show that students who have moved from one country to another report being frequently bullied by their peers in school. As well, students who were born in the country where they're living, but whose parents immigrated, have similar experiences with bullying (Scherr & Larson, 2010).

Theories on identity development and in-group formation reveal reasons why racial minority and immigrant children may be at greater risk of bullying. Children often form group affiliations based on race. In-groups develop when individuals perceive themselves as belonging to the same social classification and when they are able to compare and differentiate themselves from out-groups

(Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In-group biases based on race have been consistently observed in very young children (Doyle & Aboud, 1995; Nesdale et al., 2007) and may happen because of children's inability to see any similarities between themselves and someone of another race (Piaget & Weil, 1951). Ethnic identity research indicates that these biases may change over time as younger children develop and show more personal ethnic pride and out-group bias which may lead to increased bullying of racial minority youth in elementary schoolchildren. Older adolescents, however, may show more integration and out-group ethnic identity exploration (Marks et al., 2006) which leads to decreased bullying of these youth. Still, in the United States, children and adolescents from a variety of racial groups, specifically African American and Hispanic American, have all been found to be at an increased risk of being bullied compared to peers of European descent (Peskin, Tortolero, & Markham, 2006; Spriggs et al., 2007). As well, differences in language, dress, and religious practices may contribute to bullies' views of victims as strange or weak. Regardless of the differences, these situations can lead to students being less accepted by their peers, having fewer friends from other cultures, and feeling isolated and lonely.

With this knowledge, it is beneficial for individuals and society to explore the richness of diversity that exists among ethnic, racial, and other subcultures so that people learn to navigate conflicting norms and beliefs. Occasional conflicts between interest and values are certain to arise in society. Therefore, exposure to these differences and similarities plays a crucial role in understanding the

perspectives of others and in thinking about effective responses to conflict (Pai, 1990).

The school setting has been repeatedly identified as the primary social context in which bullying occurs (Olweus, 1993; Whitney, Nabuzoka, & Smith, 1992). School climate is defined as the beliefs, attitudes, and tenets that impact the exchanges of students and teachers within their school (Emmons, Comer, & Haynes, 1996). Ma (2002) found that students who reported a positive climate at school also reported less bullying. In addition to the climate provided in schools, the social relationships of racial minority students can also be affected by the racial diversity of those around them. This means that schools need to be responsive to the needs of all children. Multicultural education helps to create a climate that is for all students, and should be synonymous with educational innovation, effective teaching, and reform (Hernandez, 2001).

In the framework of multicultural education, it is important to recognize that historically, the educational system in the U.S. has not served all students equally well. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate an attitude of respect for and appreciation of the worth of cultural diversity, in order to promote belief in the worth of students (individually and collectively) and their competencies to facilitate educational equity (Pai, 1990). These attitudes of respect permeate schools and build a wealth of cultural knowledge and understanding that can make all people better partners and neighbors in society. Multicultural education asserts that the field of teaching includes cross-cultural encounters, which require educators to develop competencies for valuing, evaluating, and behaving

in a culturally pluralistic world (Hernandez, 2001). Promoting these types of learning environments can have a positive impact on student performance and the academic achievement gap.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the leading continuing assessment for students in the United States and provides both comparisons of student achievement across states and changes in student achievement over time within a state. In 2011, the U.S. The Department of Education released the NAEP results for fourth- and eighth-grade students tested nationwide in both reading and math. While results showed no significant difference from the average scores in reading for fourth graders from 2009 to 2011 (U.S. Department of Education, 2011), the results of the average score gaps told a different story. Fourth-grade African American and Latina/o students, compared to their White counterparts, scored 26-25 points lower on average. Eighth-grade reading had similar results, with the gap for African Americans at 25 points and for Hispanics, 22 points, compared to their White counterparts (2011).

These “gaps” in achievement are described by the U.S. Department of Education (2011) as the difference in academic performance between different ethnic groups, and are often referred to as the “achievement gap”. The gap, defined as the disparity between academic performances of White students compared to other ethnic groups, as well as comparisons between ELL and native English speakers, socioeconomically disadvantaged and advantaged students, and students with and without disabilities (O’Connell, 2008). These disparities are viewed as one of the most persistent challenges that has plagued

the nation's educational system and its residue reveals itself in not only test scores, but school attendance, graduation rates, and college degree attainment (Ladson Billings, 2005; Noguero, 2000).

The National Center for Educational Statistics (2008-2009) report on national dropout rates for students further validates concerns about the gap. According to the data, the dropout rate for Caucasians was at 2.4%, compared to African Americans at 4.8% and Hispanics at 5.8% (NCES, 2011). National graduation rates, however, were reported at 93.8% for Caucasians; 87.1% for African Americans, and 76.8% for Hispanics (2011). This data shows significant differences in performance measures among African American, Hispanic, and Native American students who tended to fall at the lower end of the range of achievement, especially in contrast to their White and Asian counterparts (Noguero, 2000).

In terms of post-secondary schooling, more than one-third of U.S. adults held a degree in 2008, an increase of one-quarter since 1990, and thus aiding to boost the nation's economic growth. Today, younger adults are not registering the same high levels of degree attainment as their predecessors, especially in large metro areas. Additionally, the African American and Hispanic groups, projected to make up a large bulk of our future workforce, fall behind their White and Asian counterparts in large metro areas on bachelor's degree completion by more than 20 percentage points (Brookings Institution, 2010).

Of course, scholars and researchers strive to better understand the gap and advance current research. With that, there is consensus that CRT practices

hold keys to effective change in the U.S. so that teachers can better address the needs of individual students and families, address challenges around bullying and isolation, and create a sense of belonging for students to encourage trust, engagement, and achievement.

Culturally Relevant Teaching in China

China is the most populous country in the world. As of 2010, there were 1.339 billion people in mainland China, accounting for 20% of the world's population (National Bureau of Statistics of People's Republic of China, 2011). Mainland China consists of 31 provinces, independent regions, and municipalities. According to census data, 92 percent of the population is of the majority Han nationality and the remainder are made up of China's 55 ethnic minority groups (National Bureau of Statistics of People's Republic of China, 2011).

China is a multiethnic, multilingual, and multicultural country with more than 80 verbal languages and 30 written languages used. Mandarin Chinese is the common language spoken, used by the Han people and some ethnic minorities. Among ethnic minority groups, 53 have their own language and some branches within ethnic groups may have additional dialects. The diverse languages used by China's ethnic groups belong to five different departments of language: Sino-Tibetan, Altaic, Austronesian, Austro-Asiatic and Indo-European (National Bureau of Statistics of People's Republic of China, 2011). As migration surges throughout the country, there are greater interactions between the various cultures.

China has experienced massive internal migration over the past 30 years, mostly due to rural migrants moving to cities or to industrialized areas near cities in search of work. The outcome is that as of 2010, approximately 260 million people, about 20% of China's population, were living in places other than where they were registered (National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2011).

A major driving force behind the socioeconomic inequalities in China is the rural-urban divide (Wu and Treiman 2004; Wu and Treiman 2007). While institutional changes like relaxed migration restrictions and the decollectivization of farming have generated social and economic development in rural China over the past 30 years, the rural Chinese remain disadvantaged across all aspects of life in comparison to their urban counterparts (Whyte, 2010; Yuan, 2019). Ultimately, economic reforms have benefited rural and urban communities at much different levels, furthering socioeconomic inequalities (Meng, 2000; Yang 1999).

These labor migrants are often young and disproportionately male, but many are married and have children. Since most of the social benefits in China require local registration, things like permanent employment, housing, suitable child care and schooling, and healthcare are challenging for married migrants, and historically many would decide to leave their families behind. Consequently, the rural-urban gap in children's well-being remains quite large (Adams and Hannum 2005; Short, Xu and Liu 2013; Xu and Minca 2008). In recent years, however, increasing numbers of couples have migrated together and have taken

their children with them (Xu & Xie, 2013). As of 2005, 18 million children under the age of 15 had accompanied their migrant parents (Xu & Xie, 2013) and as of 2010, that number had increased to 38 million (Xu & Xie, 2013). Rural-to-urban migration is often temporary, circular, and difficult to track. Therefore, migrant children's school experiences tend to be fragmented.

China has a state-run and -funded system of public education which is led by the Ministry of Education. Their education system has developed and transformed itself since the Cultural Revolution, and today has one of the largest university systems in the world. China's literacy rate has increased over the last 60 years from 20% to 93.3%, and college attendance has risen from 40,200 students in 1977 to over 20 million in 2010 (National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2011). In 1986, the Ministry launched a nine-year compulsory education law, declaring that all citizens must attend school for at least nine years. Although aggregated statistics from the Ministry of Education show almost universal compliance with the nine-year compulsory education law, there are concerns that poor, rural areas in China suffer from high and maybe even rising dropout rates.

Two surveys conducted in the late 1990s found the rural junior high dropout rate was 13% (Knight and Song, 2000). A third survey was conducted a few years later by the Central Committee of China Association for Promoting Democracy. Those results were more startling and suggested that the rural junior high dropout rate was an average of 40% (Peng, 2004).

In response to these findings, China's government began revising the 1986 compulsory education law. To address attendance concerns and strive to eliminate illiteracy in rural regions, the government incorporated two exemptions and one subsidy in the system (*liang mian yi bu*). Under this system, the central government provides free textbooks, while assigning to various levels of the local government the responsibility of exempting poor students from school fees and subsidizing boarding fees when applicable. *Liang mian yi bu* officially became a national law in 2006. Since the policy was implemented, differing views on its success in actually reducing the dropout rate have arisen. Official statistics suggest that the policy is a success, with the government reporting that the dropout rate decreased from 8% before the policy to less than 2% in 2007 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2009). However, during that same timeframe, other studies reported higher dropout rates in China, specifically in poor rural areas (Jiang and Dai, 2005).

As interesting as the varied results are, much of the research available is based on limited, non-random samples, which did not identify why students had dropped out. Therefore, existing literature lacks more generalizable findings on dropout and its factors (Brown and Park, 2002; Connelly and Zheng, 2003). However, research has found that poverty-induced conditions like malnutrition and poor-quality schools also strongly affect dropout rates (Brown and Park, 2002; Zhao and Glewwe, 2010). While one of the main goals of *liang mian yi bu* was to reduce the direct costs of schooling to reduce dropout rates caused by family financial difficulties, there are concerns that this is not enough to overcome

poverty-induced dropout. One study suggested that dropout rates showed only marginal improvement after *liang mian yi bu* (Jiang and Dai, 2005). However, the authors depended on mostly anecdotal evidence to report their findings. Another study led by Yi et. al (2012) surveyed over 7,800 students in junior high from 46 randomly selected schools across two provinces to measure the dropout rate. They also used the survey data to study factors associated with dropping out. Findings show that dropout rates between grade seven and grade eight reached 5.7% and dropout rates between grade eight and grade nine reached 9.0%. Among the total number of students attending junior high school during the first month of grade 7, 14.2% left school by the first month of grade nine. Even higher were the dropout rates for students who were older, from poorer families, or those who had lower academic performance. Researchers report that while the government's policy of reducing tuition and fees for junior high students may be necessary, it is not enough to solve the overall dropout problem (Yi et al., 2012).

In addition to these challenges, China has a test-based school system, which may further impact dropout rates. Students in China are faced with highly competitive entrance exams in order to be promoted from junior high school to high school, and then again for college entrance (Liu et al., 2009). If students do not score high enough on these exams, they are unable to enroll in academic high schools or colleges. Yi (2012) reported that in rural areas of developed coastal provinces, less than half of the junior high school students are able to test into high schools. Few studies, however, have investigated whether these test

scores, leveraged as an indicator of poor academic performance, are actually correlated with dropping out (Yi, 2012).

Regardless, little of the research uncovered focuses on the stigma of poverty, migration, or even cultural differences that students may face. As well, these findings neglect to consider how teachers address student differences and even their own biases as they teach students and work with families from diverse backgrounds. There is a need to study and understand the cultural responsiveness in teacher training and professional development, and to specifically consider how such skills are leveraged in teaching practices.

Student Engagement and Motivation

Student engagement has consistently been considered a metric of successful teaching practices (Chapman, 2003; Schlecty, 1994; Willms, 2003), and many of the practices that mark success are also linked to multicultural education and CRT. Through a review of literature, engagement was grouped into one of three categories: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Appleton et al., 2008; Harris, 2008; Margolis & McCabe, 2006; Reschly, Huebner, Appleton, & Antaramian, 2008). Ladd and Dinella (2009) provided brief definitions for each category:

- *Behavioral engagement* is participation in, or resistance toward, the learning environment.
- *Emotional engagement* relates to a student's attitude, or receptiveness toward school.

- *Cognitive engagement* refers to the intellectual effort that students devote to accomplishing educational tasks.

Research suggests that cognitive engagement is the category most strongly associated with learning, though emotional and behavioral engagement may support this cognitive engagement (Harris, 2008). Assignment completion, success rates, extracurricular participation, attendance, and behavioral violations are indicators attributed to emotional and behavioral engagement (Reschly et al., 2008).

School improvement models have increasingly looked to engagement categories to strengthen programs, especially in the elementary school years. Much of the research suggests that student engagement in school significantly drops as children age (Anderman & Midgley, 1998). A lack of interest in schoolwork becomes increasingly apparent in more and more students as they reach middle school (Lumsden, 1994). There are many issues that impact students' interest level and engagement in learning which teachers have little control over (Lumsden, 1994). However, research suggests that teachers can influence student motivation by leveraging CRT practices that do work, like assigning schoolwork that is more collaborative and addresses the needs of students at all levels (Anderman & Midgley, 1998; Skinner & Belmont, 1991).

Aimed at improving both the academic performance of students and the teaching and learning environment, Yazzie-Mintz (2009), director of the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE), created a report to highlight key outcomes from data collected from a student engagement survey. The

survey was given for two consecutive years, 2007 and 2008, to 134,706 students in 104 schools across 30 states in the U.S.

Results from these surveys reinforce the idea that engaging instruction using CRT and adaptive expertise methods are critical to effective teaching and learning (Yazzie-Mintz, 2009). Four out of five students reported being bored in class and that the basis of their boredom was generally due to the lack of interesting material. One out of three students reported their boredom stemmed from limited to no interaction with their teacher. The students surveyed were also asked to respond to which types of instructional methods excited or engaged them. Results showed that methods which included them and their peers as active participants were the most stimulating, while students reported being least excited or engaged about instructional methods which did not permit them to play an active role, like “Teacher Lecture” (Yazzie-Mintz, 2009). Students are more engaged when they are fascinated by their work, persist regardless of challenges and hurdles, and exhibit a willingness and desire to both participate in and be successful in their own learning (Bomia et al., 1997).

Further, Yazzie-Mintz (2009) connects this research to the academic achievement gap in the U.S. noting that while the greatest focus is on the racial achievement gap between the scores on standardized assessments of students of different races (Ferguson, 2003, 2005). The data from the HSSSE suggests the presence of another gap: an *engagement gap*. Findings reveal that female students reported higher levels of engagement than their male counterparts. As

well, White and Asian students reported higher levels of engagement than students of other races and ethnicities.

Cunningham and Cunningham (1992) found that the term “engagement” was the most commonly used word when referring to the relationship between motivation and learning. Motivation is about energy and direction. It explains why we do what we do. Engagement describes energy in action and makes the connection between a person and an activity (Russell, Ainley, & Frydenberg, 2005). Therefore, engaged learners work in a motivated manner. Using effort, persistence, and an expectation toward success, they leverage the skills and strategies in their toolkit to learn and achieve (Cunningham & Cunningham, 1992). Self-confidence, also known as self-efficacy, is one of the most significant characteristics of motivation (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997).

Bandura (1986) asserts that self-efficacy is the belief that helps determine how much effort an individual will put forth, how long they will persevere through challenges, and how resilient they are in facing adversity. Bandura further suggests that self-efficacy is not just a matter of how capable a person is, but how capable they believe themselves to be. Therefore, performance and motivation can be impacted by the belief one has in one’s own self. Furthermore, motivation and engagement can be slowed by low expectations from external sources which reinforce self-doubt, known as stereotype threat.

Stereotype Threat

Stereotype threat occurs when a person is in a situation that evokes negative stereotypes about the group to which he or she belongs. The greatest

consequence of stereotype threat known is the reduced achievement on tests in conditions where the stereotype is significant. While most studies have focused on poorer performance on tests in educational settings, effects have also been validated in laboratory studies (Steele & Aronson, 1995), in classrooms (Good, Aronson, & Harder, 2008), and on statewide standardized tests (Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003). As well, stereotype threat has been examined outside of school and test settings and has been shown to decrease performance on other tasks. Effects have been found in tasks involving groups and fields as diverse as Whites and women in sports, women in driving, women in negotiation, and gay men in childcare.

Focusing on his previous research, along with numerous other studies, Steele (1997) synthesizes previous research with the intent to determine whether or not students (specifically African Americans and females) could experience the classroom so differently and significantly as to affect their performance and achievement. And if so, to then answer the question: *What in the experience of these groups might frustrate their identification with all or certain aspects of student achievement.*

In the first two studies, Steele hypothesized that the emotional stress of a negative stereotype about one's group regarding intellectual ability would lower performance on standardized tests like the SAT and General Records Examination (GRE). Consequently, the scores of such students on these exams would minimize their skills, and thereby exaggerate the gaps between groups.

In order to investigate this hypothesis, a series of tests was given. For these examinations, some test-takers were given instructions that primed the stereotype, while others were not. The priming consisted of describing the quiz as a measure of cognitive ability. In the first research study described, male and female sophomore students at Stanford University were used as participants. These students were chosen because they were both strong math students and identified as so. These individuals were given difficult math tests in which items had been taken from the advanced math GRE. The second research study tested Black and White Stanford University sophomores using a verbal reasoning test from the SAT.

The experimental outcomes suggested that when the stereotype was primed, both females and Blacks scored lower than the males and Whites with similar previous scores. When the stereotype was not primed, female and Black participant performance equaled that of the males and Whites. These results clearly support Steele's hypothesis.

This led Steele to launch, along with his colleagues Steven Spencer, Richard Nisbett, Mary Hummel, David Schoem, Kent Harber, and Ken Carter, a freshman-year program at the University of Michigan based on the "wise" interventions or feedback. The term wise was coined in the 1950s from gay culture and used to describe straight people who understood the full humanity of gay people despite the overwhelming homophobia of the period (Walton, 2014; Goffman, 1963). Steele (1997) adopted the term to promote "wise schooling"—schooling that is sensitive to the experiences of diverse students and acts as an

antidote to processes such as stereotype threat. Steele describes wise feedback as corrective feedback that: affirms the student's capacity to meet the goal or standard, tells the student honestly where they fell flat, provides actionable steps to improve learning, and helps the student monitor progress. The program was focused on the underachievement and low retention rates of African American students.

The program included roughly 250 freshmen each year. The participant population incorporated the ethnic range of the larger campus, but with an oversampling of about 20% Black students and 20% non-Black minority students. Program participants were randomly selected from the students admitted to the University, and then recruited by telephone.

The program was presented to recruits as a transition program with the goal of helping students maximize the advantages of university life. As well, students were told that they had survived a very competitive selection process and that this program was designed to help them maximize their strong potential. These practices represented the program as nonremedial and represented the university as having acknowledged the participant's academic potential. Having such high expectations would, therefore, signal the irrelevance of negative group stereotypes.

The inaugural program implemented "wise" strategies regularly, and messages were reinforced by offering "challenge" workshops to participants based on Treisman's models of real-world schooling where small cohorts of minority students focused on advanced college mathematics through workshop-

style discussions versus standard discussion sections that encourage students to work independently, then, in collaboration when problems are challenging. All the while forging lasting relationships and a support base (Gillman, 1990). The University of Michigan workshops were taken on a voluntary basis, but participants also participated in weekly discussion groups focused on brief readings. These weekly discussion groups also offered participants opportunities to reflect on relevant social and personal issues. Group activities allowed members to see that they were not the only ones concerned about adjusting to university life. Formal components lasted for the first 10 weeks of school, and all were voluntary activities. Approximately half of the students participated in one or both formats.

Evidence was then collected by averaging the first-semester grades over the first two years of this project. Steele felt these offered a reliable snapshot of the success of the program. What he and his team found was that:

- There was a modest tendency for White students in the program to outperform the White control students (those outside the program). However, this data was not found to be significant.
- Results for Black students in the program (who were not also in the campus minority program) were promising. That even with a small sample size ($n=27$), their scores were significantly higher than the Black control students. It is also important to note that this Black group showed almost no underperformance. They essentially had the same grades as White students.

- The results for Black students who participated in the large minority remediation program were just as important. Despite being given additional attention, they performed worse than the other groups at nearly every level.
- Finally, the difference between Black students in the minority program and Black students in no program at all becomes significant at 1.76 standard deviations below the mean for test performance. Also, by the beginning of their junior year, 25% of these students had failed to register. According to Steele, this suggests that the school's intentions for the minority remediation program may have backfired because it institutionalized the racial stereotype.

Steele seems to clearly state both conclusions and implications from his former studies on stereotype threat for females and African Americans in this article. However, conclusions from his work with colleagues at the University of Michigan are more ambiguous. This is most likely because it was a preliminary study. However, Steele still suggests that there is evidence of ways to treat, or combat, the cyclical nature of stereotype threat and its serious consequences on identity and achievement by utilizing the Treisman framework model.

Steele's social psychology research on group identity is further summarized in *Whistling Vivaldi* (2010). Steele has repeatedly found in his research that people's fears of confirming a negative stereotype cause stress, and that stress not only distracts them from the task at hand, but also from completing it to the best of their ability. Through a series of examples and

experiments, Steele documents the experience of living under the veil of stereotype threat and the role it plays in shaping lives.

Steele (2010) summarizes research findings that illustrate how the concerns students face because of these threats affect a range of educational outcomes. He describes the extra efforts required of students who try to dispel stereotypes and how this interferes with academic performance. The additional stress and anxiety, often operating without awareness, can lead to underperformance in school and on standardized tests. Steele emphasizes that stereotype threat can also undermine students' sense of belonging, competence, and ambition. The research also indicates how contextual cues, like being in a setting with few students or faculty of color or where the curriculum marginalizes the experiences of students of color, are enough to trigger stereotype threat and undermine performance.

Without undermining the importance of addressing larger institutional change, Steele (2010) encourages the use of interventions that can help to reduce performance gaps. Steele suggests that using these simple practices can counter the impact of triggering situations and create a more identity-conscious environment. He advocates that educators should:

- Make it clear that they value diversity.
- Increase the number of people in a social category in the educational setting so that a critical mass is met.
- Ensure that the learning experience includes intergroup conversations.

- Be transparent in the way critical feedback is provided. Ensure that messages of high standards include an expectation that the student will be able to eventually succeed.
- Foster self-affirmation in students.
- Encourage students to create a narrative about the setting that frames a conversation about their frustrations around stereotypes and promotes positive and ongoing engagement.

Overall, Steele's research reflects on the needs of stereotyped groups, reinforces the need for CRT, and provides a critical lens as to why further research on these topics is still needed.

Beliefs, Perceptions, and Knowledge Base of Culturally Responsive

Teachers

While stereotype threat is a consequence of a much larger societal and institutional system, teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and knowledge base have a huge impact on the effects of stereotypes for students. It is imperative that teachers' values and beliefs be further examined in order to better understand and advance the instructional practices they perform on a daily basis (Fang, 1996). Investigating educators' values and beliefs about what does and does not work opens the opportunity for teachers to share their knowledge about teaching (Schubert & Ayers, 1999). When teachers understand the inherent learning, cognitive, and communication styles among individuals of particular cultures, they can design more effective teaching practices that incorporate this

knowledge to assist diverse students' success and academic achievement (Perez, 2004).

Researchers have found that teaching and learning experiences that ignore cultural diversity inhibit students' ability to reach their potential (Au, 2006; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2007; Stoicovy, 2002; Thompson, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). In fact, studies by Banks (1996), Howard (2007), and Nieto (1999) illustrate that when educators understand that their students' ways of thinking, performing, behaving, and overall being are interwoven with identity factors like race, gender, culture, social class, language, etc., they are much more capable of navigating the obstacles that separate them from their students. Therefore, effective teachers understand the cultural demographics of their student population and ensure that their teaching strategies are reflective and responsive to their needs (Rothstein-Fisch).

Research investigating self-reflection and self-awareness about one's experiences and practices has included race-reflective journaling (Milner, 2003), autobiographical text, dialogue journals, and field experiences (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004). Sleeter (2005) stated the importance of examining how teachers make teaching decisions because ultimately, it guides what teachers do. The philosophies and biases that people develop are extracted from their lived experience, and are heavily influenced by institutions like the media, family, and school (Sleeter, 2005). Teachers shared that they were often challenged in building connections with their students and effectively teaching them when they have different cultural backgrounds. To some extent, this may be because

teachers continue to be unaware of their own beliefs and spend little time reflecting upon them (Irving, 2006).

Culturally responsive teachers use ongoing reflective practices in order to continuously examine their strategies, goals, interactions, routine procedures, and resources in relation to students' learning styles and cultures (Irvine & Armento, 2001). To further investigate this concept, Johal (2010) conducted a qualitative case study to gain better insight on the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of science teachers who embrace a multicultural approach to teaching and learning, as well as how they facilitated this approach. To conduct the research, Johal interviewed and observed four science teachers spanning grades 5-12.

Over a three-month time period, the researcher visited each classroom at least once per week with the purpose of observing and noting: (a) the way the teachers interacted with students; (b) evidence, if any, of multicultural themes in their science teaching practices; (c) how the teachers provided collaborative group work and discussion forums; (d) how the teachers taught science to their diverse student populations; (e) the types of resources employed to support the teachers' multicultural work; (f) the support provided to teachers from their administration; and (g) the challenges, if any, teachers faced during implementation of their multicultural approach to teaching science (Johal, 2010).

As a result, Johal discovered that all of the teachers involved believed that students from different cultures brought distinct life experiences, a range of beliefs and values, and multiple learning styles. They also believed that it is the teacher's responsibility to be aware of the cultural diversity existing in their

classroom so that they can better understand their students and how to facilitate their learning (Johal, 2010).

Through teacher interviews, the researcher uncovered that all teachers involved believed that cultural contributions made in science needed to be recognized so students could understand the value to theoretical and practical applications in science made across the world over time. The teachers also expressed a belief that it is not until science is taught through a multicultural lens and acknowledges the contributions of different cultural groups that students see this diversity reflected in the curriculum. Additionally, the data reinforced the need for more multicultural curricula and resources in science education that better meet the needs of teachers and students (Johal, 2010).

Culturally responsive teachers "...work toward a more equitable learning environment, provide classrooms that are more accessible, comprehensible, comfortable and successful places for learning for all students...no one loses and everyone gains" (Pransky & Bailey, 2003, p. 383).

Effective Practices in Culturally Responsive Teaching

Villegas and Lucas (2002) described the depth of self-awareness and skills it takes to be an effective culturally responsive teacher as: "not simply a matter of applying instructional techniques, nor is it primarily a matter of tailoring instruction to incorporate assumed traits or customs of particular cultural groups...culturally responsive teachers have a high degree of sociocultural consciousness, hold affirming views of students of diverse backgrounds, see themselves as agents of change, understand and embrace constructivist views of

learning and teaching, and know the students in their classes. It is the combination of all these dispositions, knowledge, and skills that enables them to design instruction that facilitates student learning” (p. 27).

Culturally relevant teaching has historically been described as an effective approach to facilitate the learning of African American students (Berliner, 1989; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994, 1995; Shulman, 1987). However, more current thinking argues that culturally relevant pedagogy strengthens all students’ learning (Winn & Johnson, 2011). Winn and Johnson (2011) describe how culturally relevant pedagogy has the ability to benefit all students through humanizing and respecting the histories, experiences, and viewpoints of all students as they relate to their academic success and cultural competence. Furthermore, they expand the definition to include how the spaces, practices, and curriculum can be “culturally relevant” and provide a framework to support implementation.

Teachers are charged with the responsibility of exposing students to specific content and ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive in their classroom setting. To create equitable environments for learning, educators must understand, recognize, and leverage students’ funds of knowledge to produce an atmosphere where all students can succeed (Moll et al., 1994). A culturally relevant pedagogy can impact student behavior and allow teachers to manage the classroom in more productive ways (Gay, 2010). Additionally, it can provide teachers with ways to engage students, about both content and behavior, using practices that connect with their lived experiences. Specifically, culturally

responsive teachers should establish norms, procedures, and structures in their classrooms (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Norms with “explicit assumptions, values, and purposes that are espoused by a learning group” (p. 34) help to create a learning environment with shared understandings and values of the class. These establish procedures and routines that are used in the classroom so students know what is expected of them.

Culturally responsive teachers need a well-developed knowledge base and a drive toward continuous learning in order to be effective. As well, culturally responsive teachers “employ differentiated instruction and integrate various learning materials which help to make learning more relevant, thereby increasing student success” (Irvine & Armento, 2001, p. 4). Adaptive Expertise (AE) is a concept embraced by culturally relevant teachers. Hatano first introduced the concept of AE in relation to abacus masters. He suggested that abacus masters should be designated routine experts (in contrast to adaptive experts) because they have developed a very high, yet extremely narrow, procedural proficiency with a specific set of resources. Hatano and Inagaki (1986) described aspects of AE that differentiate it from routine expertise. AE abilities include: (a) articulating the underlying principles of one’s skills; (b) considering both conventional and unconventional skills as appropriate; and (c) adapting or designing ideas according to constraints. Wineburg (1998) and Bransford & Schwartz (1999) furthered this list to include that adaptive experts are also more equipped to learn from new situations and circumvent the overuse of previous solutions (Hatano & Oura, 2003).

Hatano and Inagaki proposed that in stable settings, culture often provides adequate resources for learning and implementing routine expertise. People have multiple compartments of routine expertise in which they are highly effective without a deep knowledge of why that is. In order to develop adaptive expertise, people need to experience environments and situations with a sufficient degree of variability to provide opportunity for adaptation. This can occur naturally, or people can seek it out through active experimentation with their environments.

Overall, Hatano and his colleagues characterized AE as procedural fluency, complemented with conceptual understanding allowing for adaptation. The attainment of AE is nurtured by educational settings that support active exploration through tiers that highlight: (a) the variability inherent to the task environment; (b) the variability allowed in the students' procedural application; and (c) the variability of explanation accepted by the culture, so that different ideas can be shared and discussed openly (Hatano & Oura, 2003). Basically, when educators know their students' learning styles and provide learning environments which support the exchange of various perspectives and multiple solutions, they are better able to help them apply those skills and reimagine them for application to new challenges. Leveraging AE for teacher education and development is being more widely used.

Addleman et al. (2014) followed nine prospective teachers during a three-week cultural immersion program in educational environments where participants were not members of the majority culture. The immersion program was designed to increase teacher candidates' understanding of their future students' cultural,

ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. An ethnographic lens was applied to this qualitative study in order to examine the use of debriefing circles as a tool to facilitate self-reflection and construct a framework toward culturally responsive teaching. Candidate perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the debriefing-circle discussion were analyzed and discussed through a three-stage framework of transformative learning, including: (a) triggering experiences; (b) frame of reference examination; and (c) transformative change (Addleman, R. et al., 2014).

Soslau (2012) found that directed and reflective supervision styles stimulated discussions of novice problems, as supervisors guided teacher candidates to discuss the unanticipated and contextual experiences of teaching beyond the routine elements. Findings also showed that the intentional use of critical discourse during supervisory sessions guided preservice teachers' reflective process and encouraged self-assessment of their instructional decisions, both indicators of adaptive expertise.

As well, Janssen et al. (2008) found that student teachers who focused and reflected upon positive experiences were more prone to using innovative techniques in future teaching and exhibited greater drive to act on resolutions compared to candidates prompted to reflect on difficult and problematic experiences. These outcomes illustrate how elements of program design can create potential for educators to practice AE skills and dispositions. Such practice may inspire and further the personal use of AE, skill sets particularly important to educators whose diverse students require individualized and innovative teaching

approaches (De Arment et al., 2013). It may also further encourage teachers' usage of AE beyond themselves and with their students.

Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teachers

Since the introduction of CRT, researchers have attempted to determine those characteristics that distinguish teachers who subscribe to the pedagogy of CRT from those teachers who do not. Banks and Banks (2004), Gay (2000), Ladson-Billings (1994), and Nieto (1999) utilize nine characteristics to describe culturally responsive teaching practices:

Culturally Responsive Teachers:

1. Acknowledge students' differences and similarities.
2. Validate students' cultural identity through their classroom practices and the instructional materials they use.
3. Educate their students about the diversity that exists in the world around them.
4. Foster a culture of equity and mutual respect among students.
5. Use valid assessment instruments to make judgments about students' ability and achievement.
6. Promote positive interrelationships among students, their families, the community and school.
7. Encourage their students to think critically.
8. Challenge students to strive for excellence as defined by their potential.

9. Help create within their students a sense of political and social consciousness.

CRT is designed to develop teachers to “build up and fill in the holes that emerge when students begin to use critical analysis as they attempt to make sense of the curriculum” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 32). Research has shown that teachers who have the ability to utilize culturally responsive pedagogies are able to make a significant change in the academic achievement of their students (Ladson-Billings, 2006). According to Ladson-Billings, “culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (p. 160). In identifying key characteristics of culturally responsive teachers, Ladson-Billings (1995) writes that “culturally responsive teachers have a high degree of sociocultural consciousness, hold affirming views of students of diverse backgrounds, see themselves as agents of change, understand and embrace constructivist views of learning and teaching, and know the students in their classes” (p. 28). Ladson-Billings (2006) found that teachers who are, for instance, most effective teaching African American students have awareness of the position of African Americans in society and how that position frames the expectations of students.

Also focusing on the establishment of characteristics that differentiate culturally responsive teachers from other educators, Villegas and Lucas (2002)

found six such characteristics. Culturally responsive teachers: (a) are socially conscious, recognizing that there are various perspectives from which individuals perceive reality, and that such perceptions are deeply influenced by culture and environment; (b) affirm diverse students, viewing them as an additional resource rather than as a burden to learning; (c) willingly assume the role of change agents in making schools responsive to all students; (d) have a thorough understanding of how learners construct knowledge and have the ability to inspire this process, (e) know and understand their students' lives, including their communities; and (f) integrate this understanding into the design and delivery of their instruction and environments.

To explore the effects of Culturally Responsive Standards Based Instruction (CRSBI) on African American student academic achievement, Jones (2008) conducted a mixed methodological study comparing the results of the California Standards Test of students in grades 2 through 8. Comparisons of English and mathematics scores of students in a single, urban California school in Englewood, California who received CRSBI were made to the scores of those in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) who did not. As well, semi-structured classroom and school-wide observations were conducted during one full day for qualitative measures. For this study, CRSBI was defined as incorporating caring, communication, curriculum, instruction (Gay, 2000) and a focus on the California content standards.

CRSBI teachers infused literature reflective of the African American culture that linked to the California standards across all subject areas. Students

worked in collaborative groups, and teachers conducted classes four days a week in open, caring settings (Jones, 2008). Staff collegiality and respect to and from students was evident to the researcher. Once a week, teachers received a full day of professional development and meetings to discuss and review curriculum, strategies, and individual student progress in order to meet the individualized needs of their students. On these days, students participated in self-selected activities like physical education, dance, theater, music, technology, art, and science laboratories.

Results showed that an African American student at the school that implements CRSBI effectively is 53% more likely to pass English language arts and 65% more likely to pass math than an African American student in the Los Angeles Unified School District (Jones, 2008). The data also suggested that the same student is 58% more likely to pass English language arts and 72% more likely to be proficient in math than an African American student in the state of California. While the qualitative data proved that effective implementation of CRSBI can be challenging to achieve, it has a positive impact on the academic achievement of African American students.

Culturally responsive teachers build learning communities that advocate for parental and family involvement to enrich students' learning. Research suggests that when families are invited to share their "funds of knowledge" with the school community it provides teachers with an insightful view of students' prior experiences, knowledge base, educational abilities, and preferred learning experiences (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). Culturally responsive

educators create learning communities that nurture positive interrelationships among students, their families, peers, teachers, administrators and other school personnel, as well as members of the larger community (Banks, 2004; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Nieto, 1999).

To determine how well the concepts of area and perimeter are learned and mastered by students while incorporating culturally responsive instruction, Civil and Khan (2001) conducted a qualitative study in an urban school district with high percentages of low-income Latinx English language learners. The researchers used a garden theme familiar to both students and parents as a connection for the mathematics curriculum. Civil and Khan (2001) defined culturally relevant teaching as “instruction that links home and school by building on experiences shared by most students in the class” (p. 400).

The students, alongside their families, planted geraniums in pots and soil donated by parents. Over a five-month period, the students and their teacher kept a journal of observations and growth measurements. Participation in the project immediately became personal and meaningful. The students nurtured their plants, kept garden journals, and brought information from home to share with classmates. As the students developed their gardens, their mathematical knowledge in the areas of measurement, volume, perimeter, area, and related mathematical concepts began to increase. As well, students learned how to use their observations, classroom assessments, journals and interviews to further facilitate their learning.

Civil and Khan (2001) determined that, as a result of this study, the mathematical understandings of students arose naturally. The garden further promoted connectivity between the children, their families, and the school and, in particular, with mathematics. Civil and Khan reported that when the teacher, the children, and their families collaborated to develop a curriculum that was grounded in their experience and knowledge, culturally relevant teaching was not only possible, but it actually led to a more rigorous mathematics lesson that helped students advance in their mathematics.

Ladson-Billings (1995) also found that culturally responsive teachers encourage their students toward cultural competence and academic success, and to be thinkers who challenge sociopolitical dogmas and practices. In a prior study, Ladson-Billings (1995) utilized teacher interviews, classroom observations, and group analysis of videotaped teaching segments to examine the characteristics of CRT. Results indicated common perceptions among teachers, including: (a) that all students are capable of achieving academic success; (b) that pedagogy is an art form in which they are in constant learning mode; (c) that they are members of the community and teaching is a way to invest in and give back to the community; and (d) that students have knowledge that should be recognized and resourced.

Finally, culturally responsive teachers strive to build compassionate classroom communities that are respectful and inclusive of all students, provide opportunities for students to develop new ideas and construct meaning from them, engage students in learning experiences that have personal connections

for them, set high expectations for all students, and value and respect the parents and communities of the students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Effective Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices in Elementary Instruction

Understanding how CRT is effectively practiced by teachers in the elementary or primary school setting is also important to consider. In a qualitative study, Toney (2008) explored how four elementary school teachers' beliefs were informed by their own backgrounds and experiences using culturally responsive teaching practices for African American students. Data was collected through individual interviews, classroom observations and focus group sessions with the four teachers. Three themes emerged among participants. Each teacher demonstrated: (a) cultural sensitivity that promoted student-centered instruction; (b) that high expectations are the standard; and (c) that self-reflection of one's background and experiences has an influence on current practices. Findings revealed that all of the teachers shared a common goal around the development and implementation of their instructional practices, which was to build on the existing knowledge of their students to ensure meaningful educational experiences. The instructional practices of the teachers engaged students in their learning process, increased opportunities for success, and limited chances for failure and academic underachievement. Based on these findings, Toney concluded that teachers' personal experiences and beliefs shaped their pedagogical practices in the classroom, leading to improved teaching and student achievement.

Honaker (2004) developed a qualitative study to investigate the personal experiences, beliefs, and instructional practices of effective White Title I teachers who worked primarily with African American students, utilizing the International Reading Association's (2000) criteria of excellent reading teachers. Detailed case studies of two teachers that included observations, interviews, and the collection of student artifacts over an eight-week period were conducted in two different school settings in the Ohio Public Schools (Honaker, 2004). Honaker found that both teachers: (a) had a belief system and daily practices that supported the ideal that "all children can learn to read and write" (p. 108); (b) used continuous assessments and related readings to the students' prior experiences; (c) were experienced and knowledgeable about a range of strategies to teach reading; (d) offered a variety of reading resources and texts based on authors and stories that looked like the students in their classrooms; (e) utilized flexible grouping and tailored the instruction to meet individual needs; and (f) motivated and encouraged their students that they were "good" at reading.

Walker (2009) investigated the impact of culturally relevant mathematics teaching practices and learning strategies during a six-week enrichment program with 55 third- through fifth-grade students deemed "at risk" based on their low mathematics performance in school and on the statewide assessment. For this quantitative study, Walker (2009) randomly assigned participants to one of two groups: an experimental (i.e., ethnocentric pedagogy) group or a control (traditional pedagogy) group. Participants in the ethnocentric group had exposure to culturally relevant experiences in the classroom through the use of

mathematics in their daily lives. Participants conversed about mathematics and mathematicians in both the African American and Hispanic communities. This group also used hands-on math, games, online tutorials, and had homework and class assignments tailored to the participants' interests. The participants learned collaboratively as a community instead of through competition. Participants in the traditional group experienced individualized learning and competition, as characterized by the mainstream culture in the U.S. Participants used textbooks to learn of the importance of mathematics in their daily lives; discussed famous European mathematicians and reviewed the benefits of working on mathematics. Homework and class assignments modeled skill and drill methods to reinforce application and conceptual knowledge. Data was collected from participants through a demographic questionnaire. As well, the *ALEKS (Assessment Learning in Knowledge Spaces)*, an online, web-based mathematics tutorial program; *OTAS (Online Tutoring Attitude Scale)*, a tool that measures students' attitudes towards computers and online learning; and a 6-item cultural identity scale, *CBIS (Children's Black Identity Scale)*, were used. Results revealed that there was a significant difference in the quality and amount of homework submitted by students in the ethnocentric group; however, there were no significant differences in their performance scores on the *ALEKS* tutorial program.

Conclusion

Culturally responsive teaching is not about a lesson on Martin Luther King, Jr., during Black History Month or about serving fajitas on Cinco de Mayo. It

extends *beyond heroes and holidays*, and is about teachers understanding their own histories, perspectives, beliefs, and values, as well as their students' home life, language, music, dress, behavior, ideas about success, and the role of religion and community (Lee et al., 2002).

Based on the need to better understand the cultural responsiveness of teachers, the study provided opportunities to view others' perspectives and vantage points on what culturally responsive teaching is and how it is (or is not) embedded in the everyday practice of teaching.

Chapter 3 - Method

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine teachers' knowledge of CRT practices in two teachers' classrooms, one in China and one in the U.S., to strengthen understanding of multicultural education as it relates to CRT and AE.

To provide focus and direction, the questions that guided this comparative study were:

1. How do teachers leverage culturally relevant teaching practices while engaging their students and interacting in their classroom setting?
2. How do teachers leverage culturally relevant teaching practices differently in the U.S. and China?
3. How do teachers perceive other teachers' culturally responsive teaching practices?
4. How do teachers perceive culturally relevant teaching practices differently in the U.S. and China?

This chapter outlines the methods, instrumentation, and procedures that the researcher used in this study.

Design

Research design and methodology are formed by the nature of the specific problem to be studied, by the questions it raises, and by the type of end product desired (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). In this case, I chose a qualitative design leveraging *video-cued multivocal ethnography* to address my research questions to examine and compare CRT practices in China and the

U.S. through two classrooms (Tobin et al., 1989, 2009; Tobin, 2019). By examining teachers' collective discourse and reflective responses about the videotaped teacher's thinking and instructional behaviors, this approach provides a way to capture and better understand each participant's personal and interpretive meanings and perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Erickson, 1986; Stake, 1994).

I used qualitative methods for data collection and analysis including interviews, focus groups, observations, and culture circles (Freire, 1970 & 1985; Souto-Manning, 2010). I used qualitative methodology because it is designed to "help researchers understand the attitudes and behaviors of people within their natural, social and cultural contexts" (Jacelon & O'Dell, 2005, as cited in Hill, 2013, p. 67; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). This context-sensitive approach suits the study because it promotes the use of the participants' environment, which has the potential to increase comfort level during initial meetings. With limited time at each school site, it was my hope that this approach would help alleviate any initial anxiety participants may have and strengthen my lens on each school setting and their culture.

Setting

There is a great difference in population and scale between China and the United States. However, putting scale aside, the district (China) and county (U.S.) chosen are part of mid-size city regions in their countries.

China

The city location chosen in China is famous for being one of the birthplaces of China's modern industry and commerce – it prides itself as being the solar technology hub in China, the manufacturing center for textiles, and home to eight new industrial parks.

According to the 2010 Census, the region has a population of 6,372,624, an increase of 1,192,777 from the 2000 census, giving it an annual population growth of 20.9% for the period 2000-2010. Of that, approximately 1.5 million are nonpermanent residents and are difficult to accurately track. In the greater province, China's National Bureau of Statistics reports that 99.6% of the population is from the Han ethnic group, 0.2% is Hui, and 0.2% is made up of the other 54 minority ethnic groups. However, exact ethnic numbers for immigrants in Wuxi and its schools are difficult to target. (China National Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

The region consists of five districts and the municipal district where the school is located is approximately 65.95 square kilometers. Its population is approximately 1.0147 million and the region boasts a literacy rate of 97.88% (China National Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

United States

For U.S. standards, the region is older and prides itself on its history. It is located in the Southeastern portion of the country. While inland, it is in close proximity to the ocean, large cities, and the mountains. Its economy is primarily driven by law, finance, and government.

The greater region is composed of thirteen counties with a population of 1,260,029 (U.S. Census, 2010). It has a literacy rate of approximately 91% (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). As of the 2010 Census, the county where observations will take place had a population of 306,395. Of that, approximately 37,394 were considered immigrant or foreign born. In the county, the 2010 U.S. Census reports that 59.2% of the population is White, 29.5% Black or African American, 6.5% Asian (including 1.0% Chinese), 0.3% American or Native Indian, and 4.5% is categorized as Other or from more than one race.

Schools

In an ideal world, the school settings and neighborhoods chosen would be fully integrated by racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups. However, in both cultures, children live in settings and attend schools that are often homogenous. The following two schools were chosen because they are both public primary schools situated in or around midsize cities. They both have a mix of families from middle-class, working-class, and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. To more closely follow the Preschool in Three Culture (PS3C) Model, I looked for good (as opposed to mediocre) schools with a range of socioeconomic statuses represented, but a larger percentage of middle class (as opposed to elite or impoverished) (Tobin et. al, 1989). I also looked to find schools with student populations that had a mix of racial/ethnic diversity, though more evident in the U.S.

As a researcher, I had to make some preliminary decisions about what I would videotape. In order to answer research questions around observed CRT

practices and teachers' perspectives on these, it was beneficial to choose settings that have a student population diverse in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, etc. While CRT can be leveraged in homogenous, privileged settings, as well as homogenous, underprivileged settings, teacher participants may be distracted by the lack of diversity and not see practices as clearly and instead stereotype schools and students. It is my belief that having a greater range of diversity by steering more to the middle has aided in focusing the culture circles on actual CRT practices.

Convenience was also a factor in choosing these sites. In order to ensure that research could be completed in a reasonable amount of time, I chose to leverage schools in two familiar regions. I have traveled to China twice already through grants from the VCU Global Education Office to investigate launching a joint PhD program with a university in China and VCU. During those visits, I was able to visit and observe in several public and private schools to consider potential partnerships. The trust and rapport established with the school leadership is key to gaining access for research, and with so much distance, it will save a great deal of time to leverage these relationships in China.

Because of the distance I needed to travel in China, I chose the convenience of observing in a school district in my region of the U.S. While my primary goal was to look for districts that had strongest comparisons across research goals to the school site selected in China, I knew that access to classrooms for videotaping could be a challenge. Therefore, I looked to districts where I had done previous research and consulting because of the strong ties to

leadership. I am grateful that my first choice of districts granted me access to do the research.

The primary school in China is located in an older neighborhood and lacks many of the amenities in more affluent neighborhoods. There are no libraries, museums, or play centers nearby, so children from wealthier families typically choose private schools over this local, public option. While migrant students attend the school, data is unclear due to families' transient nature and issues of covering this identity. While numbers are hard to predict and not always accurately depicted in statistical records, an attempt to calculate the number will be made with the host teacher throughout the research process. The data provided shows a typical student population of just over 1,000, with children ranging from 6-11 years of age. The student-teacher ratio is approximately 35/1.

The elementary school in the U.S. is located in a suburban county located just outside a midsize city. The neighborhood where the school is located has a substantial public park and a public library, but they are not in easy walking distance for the majority of the children and families. However, because of the difference in scale of the two cities, it is important to note that the scale of this region of the U.S. potentially affords more opportunity for children and families to take advantage of the larger county and metropolitan region's additional parks, museums, and libraries available if they have knowledge of these and the ability to travel to these sites. The total student population includes approximately 450 students ranging from about 5-12 years of age. The student-teacher ratio is 16/1.

The school is designated as a Title I School¹ and in recent years was named the National Title I Distinguished School of the Year for Closing the Achievement Gap Among Groups.

Informal networks to meet with school district administration were used to gain permission to leverage each school site for this study.

Site and Participant Access

I worked alongside both school divisions to determine school sites that fit the needs of the research and had the capacity to take on this project. I then worked with site school leadership to determine appropriate protocol for recruiting participants within the school; scheduled site visits, meetings, and observations; and secured locations for these meetings since all research was conducted on site at the two schools. With the exception of leveraging a videographer for filming, and an interpreter in China, I was the sole researcher conducting all activities. Table 1 outlines the activities and time required by each participant.

Table 1 – Time Required by Teacher Participants

Time Required	
Initial Meeting and Schedule Review	1.5 hours
Classroom Observations/Video	4 days (observations only)
	1 day (observations and video)
Video-Cued Interview Response	2 hours
Initial Meeting (Culture Circle)	1.5 hours
Video-Cued Culture Circle	3 hours

Participant Selection

The use of selective and purposeful sampling is proposed throughout this study. Since I visited site locations several times in advance of the research study, I was able to form trusting relationships. This familiarity, along with the need to address real time constraints, made the selection of participants from these sites practical.

School leadership was leveraged to recommend the two participating classrooms and lead teachers who were videotaped. Recommendations were based on the grade level taught, CRT practices observed, including the belief that “all children can learn,” and buy-in on the part of school leadership.

The school district in the U.S. where I conducted my research places value and significance on standardized testing. Because of this, I selected a teacher whose grade level would not face extensive testing throughout that school year. The Chinese schools were more open to giving access without stipulation. Therefore, I requested to observe a comparable age group to the grade level observed in the U.S.

Teachers new to the school setting were not chosen, as the district in the U.S. wanted to ensure that those teachers had more time to acclimate, develop and be observed before outside observations occur. Such criteria also eliminated teachers new to the profession from participating. Instead, we sought out teachers with at least three years’ experience teaching in their school. This allowed for school leadership to have a better pulse on who exhibits CRT practices through demonstrating a range of skills, like leveraging different

learning styles and frames of reference in their classrooms, and thus better ensured that those skills would be present in the videos for culture circle participants to observe and discuss. While the belief that “all children can learn” may be more difficult to physically observe, it is a key element to CRT and multicultural education practices. Teachers with three years or more of experience in the school should, at that point, have a reputation for having and showcasing this belief through their practices.

Culture circle participants faced some of the same criteria. I looked for educators with at least three years’ experience in schools. In the U.S., it is important to note that there is sensitivity around teachers observing one another and providing feedback or opinions on CRT practices. District leadership felt that asking faculty members to observe and collectively discuss videotaped lessons of teaching practices of a member of their school community may be considered a risk, as others in the room may not follow the confidentiality guidelines of the researcher. To minimize this, teacher coaches or specialists from the school, who already observe in teachers’ classrooms as part of their role, were asked to participate in the culture circle review of videos from the U.S. Utilizing coaches and specialists may impact findings because of their roles and the different perspectives they bring to the observations. Even though their roles are distanced from the everyday experience of classroom teachers, the majority of these participants were teachers at one point in time. Therefore, one U.S. selection goal was to utilize participants with classroom experience wherever possible. In China, I regularly saw teachers observing one another for extended

periods of time to learn from one another. Because teachers in China frequently learn from and coach one another, classroom teachers were leveraged in culture circles there.

While school leadership was involved in the selection of the culture circle participants, it is important to note that snowball sampling may have played a role in the selection process. This is because educators may have become interested in participating once they heard another colleague was approached or was participating.

Although not direct participants, the elementary students played a vital role in the study and warrant acknowledgment.

Each participant was given an informed consent form to sign before the research began. As well, parent information letters were sent to the families of the classrooms that will be videotaped (see Appendices A and B).

Confidentiality Protocol

Participants' names and other identifying information were not recorded. However, because video content was shared with culture circles in the two schools, confidentiality could not be guaranteed in those settings.

All information shared by participants in the study was handled confidentially. Information was assigned a code number. The list connecting names to these codes was kept in a locked file. Video recordings were kept in password-protected files. When the study was completed and the data were analyzed, all information collected (including video and audio recordings) was

deleted. Access to all data was limited to study personnel. Participant names were not used in any report.

Data Sources and Collection

Data collection (Table 2) began in the fall of 2016 and ran throughout that academic calendar year. Data collection was reflective of two contexts: (a) individual classroom teacher video-cued sessions, and (b) culture circles video-cued sessions. High-quality research relies on multiple sources of evidence to provide depth and reliability (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 1994). Therefore, four primary forms of data collection techniques were used: (a) two individual video-cued reflections with teacher candidates, (b) four culture circle video-cued sessions, two at each site, with culture circle participants, (c) field notes of researcher observations, and (d) written transcriptions of audio recordings of culture circles.

To maintain naturalistic language, message consistency, and refine the translation result, the process of back-translation was used throughout the data collection process to convert forms, questions/prompts, audio recordings, and video subtitles. This meant “taking the translation and rendering it back into the source language, then comparing the two source-language versions” (Pym, 2010, p. 30). Translations occurred in three waves: (1) preparing protocol, consent forms, and prompts prior to conducting data collection, (2) converting Parish County audio into video subtitles to be used in China, and (3) converting Chinese audio into video subtitles to be used in Parish County (see Table 3). An educational researcher fluent in both English and Chinese was used for this

process. As well, an educational researcher fluent in both languages was leveraged as an interpreter for meetings, observations, and interviews in China.

Table 2 – Data Sources and Analyses Addressing Research Questions

Research Question	Data Source	Data Analysis Techniques
How do teachers leverage culturally relevant teaching practices while engaging their students and interacting in their classroom setting?	Teachers' video-cued responses to own practices - Audio-taped culture circle interview responses - Audio-taped	- Critical discourse analysis - Constant comparative method of analysis
How do teachers leverage culturally relevant teaching practices differently in the U.S. and China	- Teachers' video-cued responses to own practices - Audio-taped culture circle interview responses - Audio-taped	- Critical discourse analysis - Constant comparative method of analysis
How do teachers perceive other teachers' culturally relevant teaching practices?	-Culture circle interview responses -Audio-taped culture circle observations - Field notes	- Critical discourse analysis - Constant comparative method of analysis
How do teachers perceive culturally relevant teaching practices differently in the U.S. and China?	-Culture circle interview responses -Audio-taped culture circle -Observations -Field notes	- Critical discourse analysis - Constant comparative method of analysis

Table 3 – Timeline of Data Collection, Transcription, and Translation

Activity	Location	Timeframe
Translation of Documents	China	September 2016
Initial Meeting & Schedule Review	U.S.	October 2016
Classroom Observations/Video	U.S.	March 2017
Video-Cued Interview Response (Teacher)	U.S.	March 2017
Audio Content Transcribed	U.S.	March/April 2017
Translation of Parish County Data	U.S.	Summer 2017
Initial Meeting & Schedule Review	China	December 2017
Classroom Observations/Video	China	December 2017

Video-Cued Interview Response (Teacher)	China	December 2017
Initial Meeting (Culture Circle Participants)	China	December 2017
Video-Cued Culture Circle	China	December 2017
Audio Content Transcribed	China	February 2018
Translation of Chinese Data	China	February 2018
Initial Meeting (Culture Circle Participants)	U.S.	Spring 2018
Video-Cued Culture Circle	U.S.	Spring 2018
Dissertation Defense	Richmond, VA	November 2020

Classroom Teacher Data

To investigate how teachers leverage CRT practices, I hosted initial meetings and scheduled reviews with the two teachers whose classrooms were going to be videotaped. During those meetings, I gathered information to better plan and organize for the classroom observations and videotaping sessions.

I also decided to observe the individual teachers' classrooms over a one-week period to better understand the general flow of the school day and to ensure students were used to my presence in the room. The final day included a full day of observation and video recording. Throughout the week, I took notes to better organize for the observation date.

Once videotaping was completed, the videographer and I edited each day's video down to 20-30 minutes and showed the edited tape to the teacher whose classroom was filmed. Using a series of prompts, I asked the teacher to share insights on how and why they had specific interaction with students. I collected this data through notes and audio recordings.

Culture Circle Data

To explore educators' perceptions of other teachers' CRT practices and to compare these in the U.S. and China, I held an initial meeting with culture circle groups made up of teachers from the two schools in both countries to build rapport and review the process for the video-cued multivocal process. During these meetings, I captured notes to better familiarize myself with the participants present in preparation for the culture circles.

At their next meeting, I asked participants to view a series of videos showing the teacher in their school community and one from another school. These acted as prompts to generate responses and encourage reflection from teachers and administrators. Initial questions or prompts to begin the discussion were used; the generative themes that arose from participants then guided the conversation. Responses were audio recorded and field notes were taken during the process to document context and researcher observations.

It is impossible to detach the data in each culture circle, or from each classroom teacher, from the context of each school community (Yin, 1994). The holistic nature of this design demands a thorough understanding of the contexts in which data were collected.

Video

While video was taken of each classroom, it was not used as actual data, but instead as a prompt for discussion in culture circles. However, choices needed to be made about taping and editing that would impact what the culture

circles viewed. An educational researcher with experience in video production was leveraged for taping and editing in both the U.S. and China.

Because one goal of the video was to promote dialogue, emotional and/or dramatic interactions were prioritized in taping. Since another goal was to provide comparability across the two cultures, I attempted to record similar situations and placed precedence on those types of interactions as filming took place, particularly in the second school videotaped. In editing the video clips, I looked for interactions with the teacher that validated a range of cultural heritages, family structures, and learning styles that integrated multicultural resources and promoted adaptive expertise.

Video-Cued Prompted Sessions

Video-cued sessions were conducted with the two teachers whose classes were videotaped. These sessions allowed the teacher to view their own classroom engagement (edited version) and provided insight into the typicality of the situation and the thought process behind the engagement. These sessions were audio-taped and used during the culture circles' video-cued sessions. Field notes were taken during the process to document context and observations.

Video-cued sessions were also conducted with the two culture circles. Here, the participants were asked to view videos produced of a teacher in their school and one from another school and country. These videos acted as a prompt for participant response and reflection. While initial prompts may have been used to trigger the discussion, generative themes from participants guided the conversation. As well, after the original reflection, responses from the teacher

in the video were shared to provide their context and thought process. These comments may have prompted additional reflection and even a shift in understanding or perception from the culture circle. Responses were audio-recorded and field notes were taken during the process to document context and researcher observations. Potential prompts were developed to use in these sessions and protocol was established based on descriptions of the PS3C model (see Appendices F and G).

Field Notes

Field notes are written interpretations of what a researcher observes during data collection sessions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Field notes reinforce research by making it possible to report on events in real time and incorporating details of the event in a contextualized form (Yin, 1994). Brief statements of both a descriptive and reflective nature were planned to be recorded in observations during interviews, focus groups, and culture circle sessions (Creswell, 1998). These brief statements were developed into more detailed, descriptive accounts of observations made during those sessions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Rich field notes that comprise descriptions and dialogue applicable to what occurred in the setting are important because they may help provide valuable data for future coding and interpretive analysis.

Audio Recordings

Digital voice recorders were used to record both culture circle sessions. Audio recordings of the two culture circles have provided me with the opportunity

to revisit these sessions and aided in bringing to my attention anything that may have been missed.

Although I anticipated writing field notes during culture circle sessions, active engagement in questioning and the number of participants speaking limited my ability to fully capture detailed notes. Erickson (1986) believed that audio recorders are less obtrusive in these smaller settings, and allow for a more thorough report of events than could be represented through field notes alone, and I decided to do the same.

Data Analysis

The process of video-cued, multivocal diachronic ethnography was used to collect data (Tobin et al., 1989, 2009, 2019). In this method, based on *Preschools in Three Cultures*, I: (a) videotaped a day in a primary school classroom in each of the two cultures, (b) edited each day's video down to 20-30 minutes, (c) showed the edited tape to the teacher whose classroom was filmed, (d) showed it to Freirian culture circles made up of primary school teachers at the same school, and (e) showed it to Freirian culture circles made up of primary school teachers at the other country's primary school. This process provided a setting where teachers could articulate their understanding of the videos and reflect on how practices observed in both the U.S. and China may (or may not) illustrate CRT (Souto-Manning, 2010). The videos produced acted as a prompt to generate responses and encouraged reflection from teachers and administrators. These responses and reflections were recorded and transcribed as the actual

data. Using the CAQDAS program Dedoose, I analyzed collected data employing elements of constant comparative analysis and critical discourse analysis.

The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998b) was used as the primary analytic approach. This method requires the researcher to take one piece of data (e.g., one interview, one statement, etc.) and compare it to other data to look at what makes it different or similar. A collection of instances from the data is examined through the processes of categorizing, tabulating, and combining the evidence. Constant comparison is used to create and continually refine patterns which emerge through the stages of open coding. The constant comparative approach is used until there is a saturation of categories, or until new data does not provide further insight into any specific category (Glaser & Strauss, 1999).

The constant comparative process continues through open coding to selective coding and involves three types of comparison:

1. Incidents are compared to one another to establish the underlying uniformity and varying conditions of concepts and hypotheses generated.
2. Developing concepts are compared to more incidents, to generate new theoretical properties of the concepts, and to more hypotheses, in order to determine theoretical elaboration, saturation, and densification of concepts.

3. The concepts that emerge are compared with the intention of establishing the best fit between potential concepts and a set of indicators (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 53).

Dedoose was utilized for the selective coding process, where hypotheses-related codes are created for independent variable domains, dependent variable domains and controlled lines of analysis. For example, one might hypothesize that teachers in a culture/school community (independent variable) are more likely to identify CRT practices in their own school setting (dependent variable). In contrast is the hypothesis that teachers in one culture/school community are less likely to identify CRT practices in other school settings. Controlled factors include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language identity. Selective coding was used to integrate, refine, and build connections between categories (Creswell, 1998). Glaser and Strauss (1999) state that selective coding reduces data from many sources into concepts and relational statements.

I also leveraged axial coding, which relates broad categories to subcategories (Creswell, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Axial coding specifies dimensions of selective codes. These sub-codes assign properties based on response patterns observed. Axial codes can have dichotomous values (for example, “yes” or “no”); ordinal values (“high,” “moderate,” or “low”); or nominal/categorical values (“male” or “female”). It is not uncommon for data segments that are axially coded to have overlapping codes.

Axial coding helps expose processes and captures the dynamic and evolving nature of events. Note that it is important to understand that the purpose

of axial coding is not to establish a cause-effect relationship, but to look for repeated patterns, events, or actions which represent what teacher candidates did or said in particular contexts (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). A qualitative tool in Dedoose, the co-occurrence table, allowed me to effectively pinpoint CRT and AE discourse themes and reflections shared by participants.

I utilized discourse analysis alongside the constant comparative method to address the initial questions of the study because it is suitable for exploring verbal interaction and communication (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Discourse analysis is based on the understanding that more than the transfer of information is going on when people communicate. It is not an effort to capture literal meanings, but instead involves examining how language is used to interpret the characteristics of the situation at a particular time and place (Gee, 2005). Additionally, discourse analysis pursues the discovery of a given theme or point supported by the data (Gee, 2005). Leveraging discourse analysis in China presented challenges for me as I do not speak the language or have deep cultural insight into nonverbal or tonality cues, though it should be noted that these can vary from person to person across cultures. The use of a native educational researcher to assist in the interpretation, translation, and observation helped alleviate some of those challenges. As well, I talked through findings with the researcher to ensure I was not making unwarranted conclusions.

Because the research took place in two school settings, a situated viewpoint was implemented to develop contextualized perspectives on meaning. According to Gee, situated meaning is “grounded in actual practices and

experiences” (p. 53). Specifically, it is important to scrutinize any patterns or changes which may emerge in participants’ discourse during video observation and culture circle discussions.

The process of analysis began with having all audio recordings transcribed by a professional transcriber, with no names or identifying information. Chinese transcriptions were also converted to English using back-translation. I listened to all English recordings and read and reviewed the transcripts to verify the transcriptions’ accuracy. The translator did the same for all Chinese recordings and transcripts. As well, the reading and rereading through of all collected information, including observational field notes and transcripts, provided a sense of the overall data before breaking it into parts (Creswell, 1998). Finalized content was stored in word processing files on password-protected computers.

The next phase in analysis was structural—or open—coding. Codes and subsequent sets were created in a separate file from the data. Structural codes were linked with responses to specific video clips, prompts, or general themes of the research questions. The goal was to create a basic organization of data. For example, all responses to video clips from the U.S. that referenced elements of culturally responsive teaching practices might be structurally coded as “CRT practices in the U.S.” Codes were then linked to appropriate excerpts of text. While this phase of coding was important to the overall analysis, it was focused on making general sense of data.

Throughout the data review process, reflective memos (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) were created to represent personal comments, ideas, and overall impressions I had of the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). These memos were theoretical notes about the data and conceptual connections between categories. This continuous process was run in parallel with the coding and analysis process to document my ideas and analysis as they emerged. As well, these memos helped me recognize the subjective component in the analysis process, and confirmed how thinking evolved (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Memos also guided next steps in data collection, coding, and analysis. They presented hypotheses about connections and helped integrate these connections with other categories to generate a theory and test these theories as I progressed. Because the basic goal of reflective memos is to develop ideas, memos were saved and later sorted to enable the incorporation of the overall theory.

Role of Researcher

As the researcher, I assumed the role of both a participant observer and a facilitator. According to Merriam (1998), the participation observation role requires the researcher to establish an identity with the teacher participants, yet stay sufficiently detached to observe and analyze. During classroom observation I was an outside observer and remained as inconspicuous as possible so as not to distract focused candidates or their students, but close enough to observe various aspects of the instructional setting.

During the culture circle discussions, my role as a facilitator was as a more active participant. My active participation in community discussions was

intended to foster a stronger relationship with teacher candidates. Active participation benefited the culture circles and the study by allowing me to record information as it occurred (Creswell, 1994) and by promoting insights into interpersonal behaviors and motives (Yin, 1994).

Limitations

The research focused on culturally relevant teaching comparisons in two countries. Since I am not fluent in Chinese, I relied upon translators and interpreters while collecting data in China. To address this challenge, back translation was used to convert language in the data collected. Additionally, an educational researcher fluent in both English and Chinese was employed for meetings, observations, and interviews in China.

A qualitative researcher is also a resource for extracting qualitative data, especially when interviews are utilized as is the case in this study. Because the researcher is a part of the construction of the process, their knowledge and expertise is both a benefit and a liability. Through the use of reflective notes, visiting the data numerous times over a period of time to yield and differentiate perspectives, I have attempted to alleviate bias.

Personal identifiers and specialized perspectives could also be viewed as introducing bias. Therefore, my positionality as an insider, a perceived part of the community within which I conducted the research, or even an outsider of the group could be a limitation. It is important to recognize that within the research project, the researcher may move between facets of insiderness and outsiderhood as the project evolves or the researchers' own life experiences

change (Berger, 2013; Hellowell, 2006). There are many facets of one's identity (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity, professional field, experiences, hometown, etc.) and no group is homogeneous within all facets of identity (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Thus, many continuums on which to fluctuate between being an insider or an outsider (Hellowell, 2006). Ultimately, it is up to the participant or the group to determine insider or outsider status, and by which facets of identity this will be judged (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). To address this issue, reflection was employed as a method of addressing and managing researcher positionality (Berger, 2013; Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Hellowell, 2006). Reflection allows for the researcher to bracket potential beliefs and biases, to help manage the risks of insider research, but also allow outsider research to be more authentic and representative (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). It is through such authenticity that the researcher can give justice to their participants' voices (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

Prior experience or bias, particularly those linked to diversity, may have influenced participant engagement. Other significant experiences around diversity and inclusion work may also have skewed engagement. When discussing issues of multiculturalism and CRT, participants may have felt compelled to, in a sense, prove that they had an understanding of these issues so as not to be deemed a racist, sexist, or an uninformed educator. Concerns of that nature might have prompted responses that were perceived as more socially desirable.

Chapter 4 – Research Findings

The findings presented in this chapter are the results of the collection and examination of data from two primary school classrooms in two cultures. The data were analyzed to develop conceptually grounded responses to four research questions about teachers' use and perceptions of CRT practices.

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section reviews the purpose of the study. The second summarizes the descriptions of the school sites and classrooms that were observed. The third section provides the data analysis addressing the four research questions. The fourth section presents the summary of the findings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comparative study was to investigate primary school teachers' CRT practices in two teachers' classrooms, one in China and one in the U.S., to strengthen understanding of multicultural education as it relates to CRT and AE. I determined that by studying teachers' thinking and actions related to CRT practices and reporting findings, I could establish an empirical body of literature that is underrepresented in educational leadership scholarship. The data collected and analyzed in this study included responses from semi-structured interviews with the observed classroom teachers from both schools. These data were triangulated with findings gathered from interviews with designated culture circles (groups of educators at each school experienced at observing within their home schools) and a week of classroom observations at each school. Each of these data sources informed the findings presented in this

chapter. The data were collected over the course of two school years, from the spring of 2017 through the spring of 2018.

This chapter presents the results of the study in a manner that establishes evidence to answer each of the research questions. Both schools were explored separately and information from both sites was collectively analyzed to strengthen the summation of findings. To fully understand the impact of both settings on the findings, it is important to understand the context of each school site.

Summary of Study Context

This comparative study consisted of two primary schools (Anna Whitehead Bodeker Elementary School and Qi Baishi Primary School) located in mid-sized urban regions of the U.S. and China. To protect the anonymity of subjects, I fictionalized the names of the city in China, the county in the U.S., the names of each school, and the teachers who participated.

Jiangsu Province

Jiangsu is the fifth-largest province in China with a population of over 80.4 million people. It consists of 13 prefecture-level cities and sits on the eastern-central coast of China. Jiangsu is considered one of the most developed provinces in the country, with the second-highest total gross domestic product (GDP). While prosperous, there has been uneven economic growth between the flourishing south and the poorer northern regions. Nonetheless, its urban-rural income gap is small in comparison to most Chinese provinces.

Jiangsu has the largest number of institutions of higher education of all provinces, totaling 137. As the nation's fourth-largest school system, Jiangsu has vigorously implemented education reform pilot experiments and built the national pilot experiment zone for education modernization – including the Provincial Preschool Education Reform and Development and the Equitable Education Reform for which results show they are leading the nation. Overall, the province is piloting a total of 24 reform pilot programs (OECD, 2014).

City of Fangzhi

The prefecture-level city of Fangzhi sits within the Jiangsu Province. Its name translates into *textile* or *to spin and weave*, which seems appropriate since the region touts itself as the manufacturing center for textiles. Fangzhi also boasts being one of the origins of China's modern industry and commerce.

Fangzhi's population is estimated at over 6.3 million, with 99.6% of its population from the Han ethnic group and 0.2% being Hui. The remaining 0.2% is made up of the other 54 minority ethnic groups, although exact ethnic numbers for immigrants (for the region and its schools) are difficult to calculate (China National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). The city includes five municipal districts and two county-level cities. While the schools in the region report to the local District Education Bureau, they are ultimately governed by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China along with Universities and Colleges.

The municipal district where Qi Baishi Primary School is located is approximately 327 square kilometers. Its population is approximately just over

one million and the region boasts a literacy rate of 97.88% (China National Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

School Site Description of Qi Baishi Primary School

Qi Baishi Primary School (QBPS) is named after a Chinese painter famous for his whimsical watercolor works. Fittingly, the school is well-known for its art programs and has won many local, regional and national awards. The school's slogan translates to *Prosperous, Harmonious and Civilized*, which aligns with goals of the Communist Party of China (CPC). For reference, Guo Yezhou, deputy head of the CPC International Department, remarked "...after 2020, we will use 15 years, to build our country into a modern and strong socialist country that is prosperous, democratic, civilized, harmonious and beautiful" (Xiaokun, 2017).

QBPS sits in the northernmost district of Fangzhi. At the time of our visit, the student population was 1,183 students and data about the student population was difficult to retrieve. However, in conversations with the principal she revealed that reporting on social identifiers was heavily reliant on parents who were often wary of sharing details that might stigmatize their children, specifically around ability or socio-economic status. She shared that just over 50 students, approximately 0.04% of families reported needing assistance with school meals for their children. However, teacher insights and regional estimates suggest the number is closer to 10-15% of the student population. She was not aware of any migrant children in the student population, and had no data to report ethnic minority groups.

The school campus consisted of two sites which the students were almost evenly distributed across. The two sites were about one mile apart—a 15-minute walk for the principal. One site houses its preschool through grade one students, and the second site where observations took place holds grades two through six.

The campus I visited consisted of several buildings. The larger L-shaped structure sits on the perimeter of two sides of the campus. In the center are two buildings, four stories high. The buildings are surrounded by large concrete pads where assemblies and calisthenics take place. There is a small garden at the front of the school, but besides that there are few green spaces. The campus is fenced in with a gated entry at the front of school and a small structure that houses the security team.

Buildings are constructed of cinder blocks and are one room deep. External walkways and staircases were built for foot traffic from room to room and building to building. Each classroom I visited was rectangular with windows on each of the external walls.

Academic departments and program: Students participate in a range of academic courses including three major core subjects (Chinese, English, and mathematics) and three specialty content areas (drawing, music, and physical education). Most students at the school also participate in the Young Pioneers (often referred to as Little Cadres), a youth leadership organization for children ages six to 14 in China run by the Communist Youth League.

School leadership consists of a principal and two vice principals, one for each site. As well, many teachers hold leadership positions. Each department

has a teacher leader that serves as a department chair, and each class has a lead teacher who reviews all lesson plans and ensures content connectivity across the disciplines.

School culture: QBPS proudly boasts a welcoming and disciplined professional and academic environment. My team and I were greeted cordially and treated respectfully by security when we entered through the gates, and throughout the course of data collection, I consistently witnessed similar greetings and friendly collegial exchanges between coworkers.

I observed that QBPS students remain in their home classroom throughout the day, except when they travel to specialty classes, assemblies, and recess/calisthenics. Different from most U.S. elementary schools, core teachers for each class cycle in and out of the room to teach their lessons each day.

Through observations of and conversations with the school's faculty, it became evident that professionalism, collaboration and growth mindset were of great importance to both the faculty and leadership of QBPS. Core subject teachers typically teach three 50-minute classes per day on the same grade level along with any lead teacher responsibilities, while specialty teachers typically teach two grade levels two to three times per week. Teachers are given significant time during the school day to collaborate with other teachers between classes, often half of their day. Teachers teach only about 12-15 hours per week to allow for this collaborative time. Developing professionally through observation is a key cultural aspect of QBPS and an expectation of the Ministry of Education.

Informally, teachers regularly observe one another (at minimum twice per week) in order to either learn from those with more experience or effectiveness, or to serve in a mentorship capacity for a new or struggling teacher. Teachers also meet in regularly scheduled (often weekly) groups based on subject and level to share best practices, give advice and support, and collaborate on common lesson plans and themes for the upcoming week. On occasion, teachers would give demonstration lessons which serve either as a way of sharing best practices with other teachers or as a means of feedback and critique to the teacher giving the lesson. Sometimes these school-based groups meet with groups from other schools to be trained, to plan programs, or to share ideas. In fact, the classroom teacher I observed at QBPS had just returned from Beijing for this type of development the week prior to observations.

Classroom description: The classroom observed was rectangular in shape with cinder block walls. The front wall of the room was covered in a long chalkboard with a screen that could be rolled down to project on during lessons. The front of the room also included a large desk for teachers to use which was a step up from the rest of the floor. The two side walls had three large, sliding windows and the one to the students' right (when facing forward) had a row of windows flanked by doors. These doors led to the external floating walkways. The back of the room, where I sat, included a storage cabinet, a long bench for observations, and a bulletin board that displayed student work. The room was filled with desks set up in rows to accommodate the 40 students (23 boys and 17

girls). Besides for the back of the room, there was very little decoration or student work displayed.

I noted that the room was cold and the majority of students and teachers wore coats and boots throughout the day. Through conversations with the teacher and principal, I learned that none of the classrooms had heating or air conditioning, a norm for the region and throughout China.

Students were curious about my presence the first day, but quickly shifted their focus to their teacher and schoolwork and seemed to maintain their focus throughout the week. They appeared familiar with and comfortable in their classroom and the routines set. When interviewed, the head teacher shared that all students eat lunch in the classroom at their desks. She also shared that there were no students with behavioral or learning disabilities reported, zero migrant students identified, and that the entire class spoke Mandarin which suggested they had no minority students either. However, culture circle participants later discussed a student in the class that had special needs.

Professional profile of classroom teacher: At the time of observation, Ms. Chen, who is of Han descent, worked as a teacher for approximately two and a half years. She has been at QBPS teaching grade two Chinese language and culture for her entire career. Ms. Chen was named the head teacher that year, meaning she was responsible for leading team collaborations and lesson plan reviews for the class of 40 students that the researcher observed.

Ms. Chen had just returned from a week of professional development in Beijing. This time was spent observing and collaborating with other teachers,

including presenting some of her lessons for discussion and critique. In our discussion, it was evident that this was a regular occurrence and expectation as she, and other teachers, regularly traveled and observed schools and teachers as part of their growth and development.

Ms. Chen is a native of Fangzhi who comes from an upper-middle-class environment. She credits her mother for becoming a teacher, stating:

....My mother thinks it is a good profession for girls. (Interview, Winter 2017)

Culture circle participants: Four teachers made up the culture circle at QBPS – Mrs. Xu, Mr. Li, Ms. Huang, and Ms. Zhou. Each came from different content areas with various years of experience, but all had experience observing teachers within their subject matter.

- Mrs. Xu led the English department and taught grades 3 and 4 (formal English classes begin in grade 3). She has over 25 years of experience in education.
- Mr. Li has 25 years of experience teaching physical education. He taught grades 2, 3 and 4 several times each week, typically leading full grade classes.
- Ms. Huang is a music teacher with eight years of experience. She taught grade 2 and 4 twice per week.
- Ms. Zhou is a third year art teacher. She taught grades 2 and 4 twice per week.

Commonwealth of Virginia

Virginia, known officially as the Commonwealth of Virginia, is a state in the Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic regions of the United States. The state is divided into 95 counties and 38 independent cities that are considered county-equivalents for census data. Virginia was ranked as the 12th of the 50 states in terms of population according to the 2010 census and has an estimated population of over 8.5 million as of 2018. Virginia's GDP was just over \$435 billion in 2016, representing 2.66% of the U.S., making it the 12th-largest state economy in the nation (Cao & Yoon, 2017). Virginia's economy is well balanced with diverse sources of income, including shipbuilding, farming and tobacco-growing, seafood harvesting, government, and technology. While flourishing, Virginia also experiences economic gaps among its people. Like the Jiangsu province, however, it is smaller in comparison to other states.

The 2010 Quality Counts report ranked Virginia's K-12 education as fourth best in the country. The state's 2018 graduation rate was 86.9%, but disparities persist as the graduation rates for Asian and Pacific Islanders and White students continue to outpace those of Hispanic, Black, Native American and Alaska Native students (Education Week, 2019).

Parish County, VA

Parish County sits in central Virginia and, along with several other counties, surrounds one of the state's independent cities. The county is approximately 245 square miles. Its population was estimated around 300,000 in

2010 and was more recently estimated at 330,000 in 2018, though the greater region has approximately 1.3 million Virginians or around 15% of the Commonwealth's population (U.S. Census Bureau). About 5% of families and 6% of the population in Parish County live below the poverty line, including 8% of those under the age 18 (U.S. Census Bureau).

The racial makeup of the county at the time of this study was approximately 61% White, 22% Black or African American, 0.35% Native American, 8% Asian, 0.03% Pacific Islander, 1.5% from two or more races and 1% from other races. About 6.0% of the population was Hispanic or Latinx of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Parish County Public Schools (PCPS) is the sixth largest public school division in the Commonwealth, consisting of 72 schools and program centers serving more than 50,000 students.

School Site Description of Anna Whitehead Bodeker Elementary School

Anna Whitehead Bodeker Elementary School (AWBES) is named after an American feminist who led the earliest attempt to organize for women's suffrage in Virginia. The school sits on the southwestern edge of the county, just bordering the city limits. At the time of our visit, the student population was about 615, in a building that was meant to hold 528 at full capacity (Interview, Fall 2018). The racial identities of the student body were approximately 31% Hispanic, 29% African American, 28% White, 6% Asian, 4% two or more races and 0.05% Native American (Interview, Fall 2018).

At the time of my visits, the campus consisted of one main building and six trailers in the rear that housed individual classrooms for grades 2-4). Since then, PCPS has announced a new addition to the school. The two-story, 73,000-square-foot addition is expected to include 30 new classrooms, support areas, new play areas and a new bus loop to address current space restraints and new zoning laws that will likely increase the student population.

The current structure has a large front entry with a bus loop. To one side is a teacher and visitor parking lot that includes instructional signage for carpool drop-off and pickup. On the other side of the building is a gated playground. While clean, the equipment appears old and dated and the chain-link fence surrounding play areas is brown and warped in places. Behind the trailers is a graveled track with two field goals and a large grass area, much of which will be leveraged for the addition.

The main building is a one-story brick structure. External walkways are concrete sidewalks, though there are no sidewalks leading to the school from the neighborhood. There are bike racks outside of the main entrance, suggesting that some students or faculty may ride to school, though I saw no further evidence of this.

Academic departments and program: Students partake in a range of academic courses, including the creative arts (art and music), English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and physical education (PE). The school also participates in the *Leader in Me* program. Through this program, AWBES joined over 1,000 schools worldwide that are dedicated to purposefully

teaching leadership principles to children through Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

The school administration consists of a principal, an associate principal, a lead resource teacher, and a guidance counselor. Many classroom teachers also hold leadership positions by acting as grade level leads who ensure some content consistency across classroom lessons and represent the grade in school meetings. Classroom teachers are responsible for teaching all core subject areas to their class like language arts and reading, mathematics, social studies, and science. This can be in a grade level or an exceptional education class. There are also specialty teachers for subjects taught outside the primary classroom and those who provide resources for students who may need additional support (art, music, ESL, resource, speech, gifted, and so forth). I regularly observed the school staff (cafeteria, custodial, maintenance, office, and security) and noted that they were ever-present, key members of the school community, and many had strong relationships with students.

School culture: The AWBES faculty and staff consistently shared their pride in working at the school. Visitors were observed being treated respectfully and greeted intently from the moment of entering the camera-controlled building and signing in at the office. During each visit throughout the course of data collection, I witnessed friendly exchanges among coworkers. There were consistently clear displays of engagement and evidence that the faculty and staff treated each other and students kindly.

AWBES students spent the majority of time in the classroom with their primary teacher, but traveled to specialty classes, the library, assemblies, recess and resource classes. Different from China, core teachers were responsible for the instruction of four subjects (reading and language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science) and the management of their class.

School administration and staff regularly shared with me the importance of collaboration and professionalism, but their messages were often conflicting. While clearly proud of how they worked together, teachers also spoke of feeling siloed and stuck in their classrooms, tethered to their students most of the day. It became clear to me that planning time, especially alongside colleagues, was limited. Grade level teachers spent up to four hours per day teaching, but spent additional time monitoring their students during morning announcements, recess, at assemblies, and escorting them to lunch and specialty classes. While teachers were given designated planning time, those blocks were typically 20-30 minutes long and between lessons. Teachers often reported using this time to set up for the next lesson, manage parent communications, grade papers, or take breaks. Once per week at the end of the school day, teachers did have a collaborative work block where they met with one another to provide support and partner on common lesson plans and themes for the upcoming week. While those were clearly viewed as beneficial, teachers openly admitted that they wished they had more dedicated time together. Teachers also expressed interest in learning more from one another through observations. Unless making observations was a requirement – for continuing education or as a part of someone's role as an

administrator or resource teacher – it was not reported as being done. This also seemed to create a stigma around being observed. Instead of being a regular part of their professional environment, the process was reported as feeling somewhat intrusive and potentially punitive to educators, as it felt connected to evaluation and performance.

Classroom description: The classroom observed was a narrow, rectangular trailer located at the back of the school. It sat in a series of six trailers with ramped decking that served as a walkway leading up to its entrance. The classroom space was organized in a way so that it was fully utilized. The wall used for the bulk of instruction had a long dry-erase board that was used throughout the day. Each wall of the trailer was filled with student work, instructions or processes on how to approach work, schedules, and messages of empowerment. Most evident to me was the floor plan the teacher created. Instead of using traditional desks and chairs to designate personal space, the teacher arranged the room into learning spaces designated more by the placement of furniture and a change in floor covering and/or messaging on the wall. While there were a few traditional desks and chairs set up throughout the room, “alternative” seating such as floor rockers, beanbags, pillows, exercise balls, and area rugs were used. Bins were placed around the room with different resources – clipboards for writing, calculators, manipulatives, etc. The classroom seemed “kid-friendly,” allowing for children to make choices around how and where they would like to do the work. This classroom accommodated 19 students (11 boys and 8 girls).

I noted that the sound quality in the room was poor due to a loud fan/vent, and needed to prepare the videographer so they could best capture sound during taping. When asked about the noise, the teacher shared that the trailer's heating and air conditioning unit was responsible. She admitted it was hard, at times, to work around and she found herself talking much louder than normal.

Students were excited and curious about my presence the first day, but quickly shifted their focus to their teacher and schoolwork. While they seemed to maintain their focus throughout the week, several students would bring endearing notes and drawings for the videographer and me each day.

Overall, the class of students appeared familiar with and comfortable in their classroom and the routines set. The students worked cohesively together and seemed to enjoy one another and the tasks ahead of them. Students came from a range of backgrounds and experiences (racial, ethnic, gender, religious, socio-economic, and language), and seemed to celebrate and navigate these well. Several students were identified as using English as a second language (ESL) and also attended resource classes, but no students were identified as having behavioral challenges or learning disabilities. No students were deemed as migrants.

Professional profile of classroom teacher: At the time of observation, Ms. Green, who identified as a White female, had worked as a teacher for approximately five years. She had been at AWBES teaching second grade throughout her career. A native of the region, she expressed feeling comfortable and well-situated in the district. Having come from an upper-middle-class

environment and in a school that was predominantly White, Ms. Green acknowledged that many of her students' experiences were vastly different from hers. She spent a great deal of time thinking about how to create normalized structures and processes so her students could collectively build their own sense of community in the classroom.

Culture circle participants: Three educators made up the culture circle at AWBES – Mrs. Shelton, Ms. Doolin and Mr. Trierweiler. Each came from different areas with various years of experience, but all had regular experience observing teachers as a requirement of their role.

- Mrs. Shelton is the school's principal. She was originally in investment banking and started volunteering at her daughter's school. The work inspired her, and she decided to go back to school for education. Before becoming principal, she taught first grade. Overall, she has been working in the field of education for more than 20 years.
- Ms. Doolin shared that she always wanted to be a teacher and frequently played "teacher" as a child. Somehow she decided to pursue a role as a physical therapist in college. It was not a good fit for her and she changed her major to criminal justice to chart a clear path to law school. Midway she recognized her passion for education and changed her major again. She started her teaching career in kindergarten and then moved to the first grade where she

stayed for 13 years. Since then, she became a math specialist and has been in that role for the past five years.

- Mr. Trierweiler is a career switcher. He was initially a corporate manager of amusement parks and a national chain restaurant where he focused on employee learning and development. He found he loved teaching so much that it inspired him to pursue a career in education. His first teaching role was in kindergarten, where he taught for three years. He then moved up to teach fourth grade and later third grade. He is now a reading specialist for the school and infuses his love of science and history into this role.

Organization of Findings Reported by Research Question

To clearly and systematically answer the inquiries posed in this study, the findings are presented in response to each of the four research questions. The nature of CRT practices investigated in response to each research question are detailed using the pedagogy characteristics.

The data revealed the nature of CRT practices that recognize the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning. Educators at Bodeker Elementary School and Qi Baishi Primary School: were recognized practicing the following approaches with evidence: (a) fostered positive perspectives on parents and families; (b) messaged high expectations; (c) promoted learning within the context of culture; (d) used student-centered instruction; (e) leveraged culturally mediated instruction; (f) reshaped the curriculum; and (g) practiced using teacher as facilitator (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Although all of the practices were supported by some form of data collected, only CRT practices that are outlined in the current section are those that were saliently evidenced upon thorough data analysis. Tables 4 and 5 detail the evidence that was used to support each assertion.

Research Question One Findings: Teachers Leveraging CRT Practices

Instructional practices representative of CRT were utilized by teachers in both classroom settings. These were either observed directly (some even captured on video) or reflected upon by teachers during interviews.

High Expectations

Assertion two: Teachers messaged high expectations to their students in ways by: (a) communicating clear expectations; and (b) creating an environment in which there is genuine respect for students and belief in their capabilities.

The practices described in this domain are reflective of the belief that all students can learn and achieve. Both teachers created an ethos of respect and high expectations exhibiting their dedication to bolster all students within their classrooms.

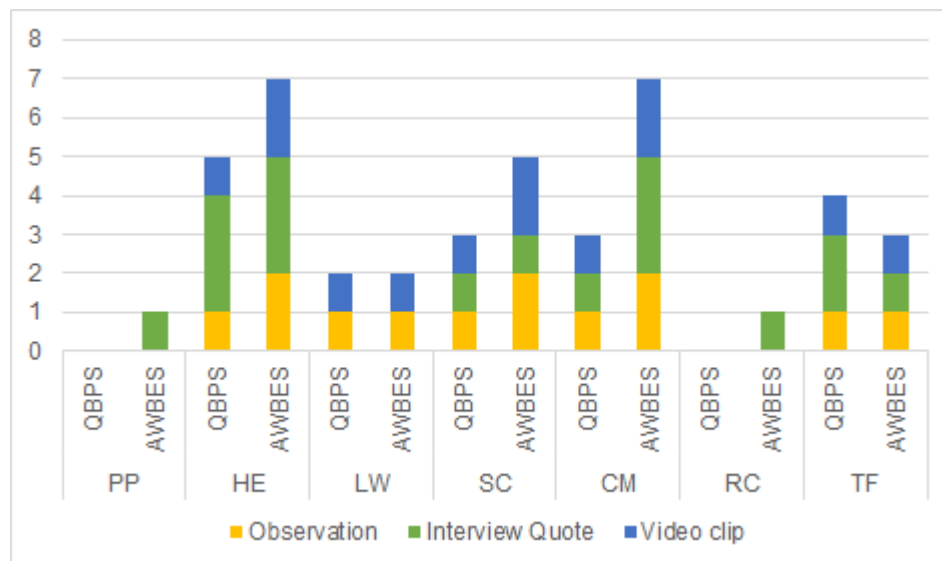
The two classrooms under study were directed by teachers who set clear expectations. From morning routines and through carefully designed lesson plans, students seemed prepared for and comfortable navigating guidelines.

Table 4 - Supporting Evidence

Research Question 1								
Assertion	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
1. PP	No evidence witnessed							
2. HE	QBPS	QBPS	QBPS	AWBES	AWBES	AWBES		
3. LW	QBPS	QBPS	AWBES	AWBES				
4. SC	QBPS	QBPS	AWBES	AWBES				
5. CM	QBPS	QBPS	QBPS	AWBES	AWBES	AWBES		
6. RC	No evidence witnessed							
7. TF	QBPS	QBPS	AWBES	AWBES	AWBES			
Research Question 2								
Assertion	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
1. PP	AWBES							
2. HE	No evidence witnessed							
3. LW	AWBES	AWBES						
4. SC	AWBES	AWBES	AWBES					
5. CM	AWBES	AWBES	AWBES					
6. RC	No evidence witnessed							
7. TF	No evidence witnessed							
Research Question 3								
Assertion	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
1. PP	No evidence witnessed							
2. HE	QBPS	AWBES						
3. LW	No evidence witnessed							
4. SC	No evidence witnessed							
5. CM	No evidence witnessed							
6. RC	No evidence witnessed							
7. TF	QBPS							
Research Question 4								
Assertion	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
1. PP	No evidence witnessed							
2. HE	QBPS	AWBES						
3. LW	No evidence witnessed							
4. SC	QBPS	AWBES						
5. CM	AWBES							
6. RC	QBPS							
7. TF	QBPS							

Observation	QBPS – Qi Baishi Primary School
Interview Quote	AWBES – Anna Whitehead Bodeker Elementary School
Video Clip	

Key	Domain
PP	Positive perspectives on parent and families
HE	Communication of high expectations
LW	Learning within the context of culture
SC	Student-centered instruction
CM	Culturally mediated instruction
RC	Reshaping the curriculum
TF	Teacher as facilitator

Table 5 - Supporting Evidence

While only in her third year of teaching, Ms. Chen had established a clear direction for her students and classroom to collectively achieve. Expectations were set at the start of each task and the beginning of each day, such as:

Usually there will be a pre-class preparation. We will have the children put away their pencils and books, and cultivate good habits for listening in class. Then because before class there will be two bells, the first is the warning bell, usually at this time we will recite poetry, have them start to focus in. Then when they start class, they learn about the type of poetry. Then after this, we have the students practice recitation, then usually we will have them write down poetry, then write in their books about what that poetry means. (Interview, Winter 2017)

This was also evident in how students performed tasks throughout the day. Routines had been established, reviewed at the start of lessons (even posted on smartboards) and students appeared successful in managing the day's schedule.

Though the classroom environment was strikingly different, Ms.

Green also charted a clear path for her students. I observed that each learning center in the classroom had defined rituals for the students to follow, even when not directly monitored by the teacher. Children were able to traverse these small group centers and transition to a new station with relative ease. Managing the classroom in this way took a good deal of planning and practice as Ms. Green described when asked about her reading group rotations:

It happens every day. We do this from 10am until 11am, so they know. Like Monday, they get to know their rotation and they get faster as they go. They have a reading group with me, and then the other stations. Some of their rotations are read to self, read to someone, word-work and writing. (Interview, Spring 2017)

When asked about how they became so independent, Ms. Green shared:

...reading groups are pretty hard at the beginning of the year, so I have to train them. Of course, each teacher does it differently, so I share my rotation schedule and teach them how to read it. Then they have to know which activities to do and what I expect. We discuss those activities and expectations each week as I introduce new concepts. (Interview, Spring 2017)

Not only were directions given verbally, visual displays across the classroom walls and instructions embedded in each station reinforced procedures and high expectations. I did observe the teacher giving a few quick reminders to encourage students to remain on task during my visit. For these few instances, students quickly responded to the cue and maintained focus thereafter.

Both Ms. Chen and Ms. Green voiced a strong belief in their students' ability to achieve at high levels. All the while, I observed atmospheres where students showcased genuine respect for their teachers and one another. Each

teacher was observed celebrating and praising their students communally and individually appearing to further embolden their confidence and participation in classroom activities.

At QBPS and in Ms. Chen's classroom, I observed consistent displays of respect for the school environment and for teachers. Field notes taken described students' treatment of their schooling as appearing ritualistic and sacred-like (Winter 2017). This was not a surprise because research points to teachers in China having the highest levels of public respect compared to 21 other countries (Dolton et. al., 2018).

Ms. Green's classroom was described in field notes as "collegial and relaxed," and followed more of a relational respect model compared to Ms. Chen's. Relational respect is displayed in the types of social discourse that take place across school communities. Such exchanges are marked by active listening and by genuinely taking others' views into account both in words and actions. Even when there is disagreement, individuals still feel valued and respected for their viewpoints and ideas (Comer et. al, 1996). In Ms. Green's class, these actions were evident throughout my observations, and specifically during one interview when she spoke of the choices she offered to her students which she saw as increasing their motivation and self-esteem.

Typically, I like to build up their confidence in everything, so in the way I am interacting with them, I try to encourage them. At the same time giving them some choices. Not just like – Do this! (Interview, Spring 2017)

Students in both classrooms received consistent messages that they were expected to attain high standards in their schoolwork and in their treatment of

one another directly from their teacher. These expectations were also communicated in written messages displayed throughout each school, as well as through school-wide established protocols. Consistent messaging of high expectations aids students in developing healthy self-concepts and also provides structure for intrinsic motivation fostering an environment where students can thrive (Rist, 1971).

Learning Within the Context of Culture

Assertion three: Teachers promoted learning within the context of culture by varying teaching strategies: (a) using cooperative learning especially for material new to students; and (b) assigning independent work after students are familiar with the concept.

Throughout the course of my observations, two of the practices set forth in promoting learning within the context of culture were evident in both classrooms through direct observation and video footage captured.

On multiple occasions, I witnessed Ms. Chen and Ms. Green introducing new content, modeling expectations, and providing students time to learn from them, collaborate with their peers, and practice self-reflection and independent work.

At QBPS Ms. Chen used collaborative learning through share-pair activities on multiple occasions, including when she introduced new content, e.g., a poetry lesson.

To support the introduction of new concepts and all classroom learning, Ms. Green leveraged collaborative methods as a main component of student

learning, heavily influencing how she set up her classroom, packaged materials and framed lesson plans. I observed regular use of learning stations throughout the room where students independently and collaboratively practiced concepts introduced. In field notes, I commented on the routine nature of students' ability to navigate these stations, suggesting this was clearly a classroom norm.

Both teachers were observed varying teaching techniques to address different learning styles and provide greater social-emotional connection points for students.

Student-Centered Instruction

Assertion four: Teachers used student-centered instruction in classroom practices by: (a) sharing the responsibility of instruction and (b) encouraging a community of learners.

Teachers in both settings demonstrated student-centered instruction throughout my observation period.

Though to varying degrees, Ms. Chen and Ms. Green initiated cooperative learning groups in their instruction, providing students an opportunity to showcase ownership and responsibility for their own and one another's learning (Padron, Waxman & Rivera, 2002).

In Ms. Chen's classroom, I witnessed students leading the day's opening recitation exercises. Students showcased knowledge of the classroom procedures, maintained a high level of engagement, and modeled leadership skills – sometimes even when the teacher was not present.

Students in Ms. Chen's class were also asked to work in pairs to practice, reinforce, and sometimes reteach concepts to one another as they worked together on assigned tasks.

As mentioned earlier, Ms. Green used a highly collaborative classroom model that provided her students with more small group and individual teacher-led time and rotating student-led stations where students could work together throughout the day to engage in discussion groups, complete practice work and provide time to spiral back and reinforce concepts that had been introduced that week and even earlier in the school year.

By sharing the responsibility of instruction, both teachers encouraged a community of learners where students actively participated in learning and inquiry each day. This was evident through the integration of student-directed sharing time, literature discussion circles and collaborative learning strategies (Brisk & Harrington, 2000; Daniels, 2002).

Culturally Mediated Instruction

Assertion five: Teachers leveraged culturally mediated instruction by creating an environment that encourages and embraces culture.

Both teachers successfully employed patterns of management that were familiar to students, creating predictability in expectations and a sense of safety as new materials were presented. These were evident across observations in both schools and further validated through interviews conducted with each teacher.

I first noted these management patterns during morning arrival times. Each classroom had a clear routine. In Ms. Chen's room, I noticed right away that students sometimes arrived before the teacher. When I asked about arrival and the routine, she shared:

The rules have children arriving at school at 7:40am, but they often come earlier. Every class will have 1-2 leaders who lead the children in the morning readings first. These readings last until school starts, though other classes may do it differently – students write from memory or maybe do some homework. This is the usual morning activity led by the class monitors/managers. Along with leading the morning ritual, they are also responsible for managing discipline. Children are chosen to act in this capacity for one term and then it rotates. This leadership role is based on their usual grades and abilities (Interview, Winter 2017).

In Ms. Chen's classroom, students not only understood the routines, but also translated those expectations into their leadership roles, further encouraging and embracing the cultural aspects of the ethos created.

Ms. Green's morning routine had similar attributes which we discussed in her interview after she watched a video (U.S. Morning Announcements) of her teaching.

Every morning, students come in and they have an activity to do which is what they are doing in their seats. Then we have announcements, which include any announcement for teachers and students. After which they get back to their morning work (Interview, Spring 2017).

Along with morning routines, I also observed, videotaped and interviewed teachers on management patterns that embrace the broader cultural aspects of each country. It was clear that such practices and expectations had been embedded within the schools over time. In China, our visit overlapped with the anniversary of the Nanking Massacre, and students not only understood the

solemn nature of the day, they were also able to collectively move into assembly formation as a whole school almost effortlessly. From the view above, we videotaped students standing attentively and respectfully in precise rows throughout the 20-minute ceremony.

Yesterday was our national Memorial Day so we must teach children to never forget our national humiliation and emphasize patriotic education. It was a special day, because it was the 80th anniversary of the Nanking Massacre, or the Nanking Rape. (Interview, Winter 2017)

This assembly took the place of what is typically the students' group exercise program, which we viewed earlier in the week. These classes are similarly orchestrated with precision and clear expectations. Students seem to work together as one to meet the goals set forth by their teacher and the institutional culture.

Memorial Day took the place of our usual group exercise or calisthenics. In the winter, they typically just jog outside as a kind of exercise, but yesterday was special. (Interview, Winter 2017)

In the U.S., Ms. Green's classroom participates in the Pledge of Allegiance each week as part of the school ritual.

On Tuesdays, every class (in turn) has two students introduce themselves and lead the flag raising ceremony over the loudspeaker. They introduce the week's news, current events and might talk about people and things that were good that week. (Interview, Spring 2017)

This is reinforced through Ms. Green's daily leading of the Pledge of Allegiance with her class. Allowing them to learn about its history, to practice its norms, and to build confidence as they prepare to present in front of the entire school.

Such practices are not reserved for the start of the day or to ritualize expressions of patriotism. I noticed them used throughout the day. Ms. Green used them to help prepare children for student-led and inquiry-based work, like her reading group rotations.

It happens every day. We do it from 10 until 11am, so they get to know their rotation and they get faster and better as they go. So, they have a reading group with me, which is what's in the video, and then the other ones that you saw were in rotations. In some rotations they read to themselves, read to someone else or they completed word-work and writing independently. This is typical. It took time to get to where we are. In the beginning other students would come up to me and stuff while I was working on small group reading. (Interview, Spring 2017)

Ms. Green spoke of the practice her teaching model takes at the start of the year, but also spoke of the resources she provided her students to support the management of their independence and culture she expects.

Reading groups are, in general, pretty hard in the beginning of the year. So yes, I have to train them and each teacher does it differently. I give them each a schedule and show them how to read it so they know which activities to do. Over time, they know what to expect and what is expected. (Interview, Spring 2017)

Ms. Chen spoke to the time commitment for some of her management practices which stress the expectation and importance of collective recitation as they learn about classical Chinese texts.

At the end of every day, students collectively recite homework readings that they were asked to memorize. So it happened that this week they are learning ancient poems Confucious' Analects or short classical texts which are linked to their poetry lesson later that day...Such texts require about one class (forty minutes) to learn or, if longer, two class periods. They require continuous repetition in the teaching process. (Interview, Winter 2017)

It was evident throughout my observations that students in both settings clearly understood how the classroom was managed. This familiarity allowed them more opportunity to take advantage of collaborative learning opportunities where they could share their knowledge, and learn from and challenge one another.

Teacher as Facilitator

Assertion seven: Teachers acted as facilitators by: (a) sharing the responsibility of instruction; (b) varying approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles; and (c) encouraging a community of learners

The use of well-managed collaborative learning models better enabled Ms. Chen and Ms. Green to act as facilitators in the classroom. In this role, both teachers were absolutely necessary to provide learning resources and media that were suitable for each learning activity, but did not make themselves the only source of learning.

I observed Ms. Chen leveraging share pair and small group activities, and also having students self-check their work before comparing and contrasting responses with others. This modeled trust in the students' ability to work independently and take ownership in their learning and assessments. It also gave them time to work together, iterate and form new or different solutions.

Ms. Chen also used varied approaches to accommodate the learning styles of her students, often incorporating movement. One instance was when they were working on handwriting Chinese characters. After modeling the formation of a character, her students were asked to stand and write in the air. It

was a well-received and needed change, allowing students to be outwardly expressive as they worked. Ms. Chen was also observed using “face yoga.” Here she led a quiet activity to have students “reset.” She felt by focusing on their breath and the face movements, they would be able to relax and stretch the mind and body. Such deep breathing and focus would promote better blood circulation and inner strength. (Interview, Winter 2017)

Ms. Green regularly assessed students to ensure they were at similar levels in their cooperative learning groups. For reading, this allowed for some students to practice literature circles with her while other groups worked on activities that reinforced their reading. For these, she leveraged various resources that gave ownership to students, but also helped her manage note-taking and students’ questions and ideas.

The kids all love to talk when they are in their reading circle with me. So having them write on a sticky note is kind of helpful with that. This allows them to write down their thoughts so we can share it later. I’m going to try to do even more of this first – peer sharing of ideas, predictions and what they already know. I also want to get the other students involved in researching answers. They could also help in monitoring their peers to get them back on track or using more notes to capture thoughts to share at the right time. (Interview, Spring 2017)

Such differentiation of instruction and management was also observed and discussed in other content areas. Ms. Green spoke with me about her use of student-directed discussion groups as she reflected on her approach in mathematics.

We did a math screening at the beginning of the year, so I put them kind of together by their working number. When we do activities, in addition or subtraction, they can have a person who is working on their level with them. I also try to group them so each group initially had a leader and they

would know what to do after I gave them directions. I did notice while watching the video, that doing rotations and having my students work independently in a group without me watching over them is kind of a challenge. Just watching it, I was like – Oh. That was not what they were supposed to be doing. So I want to make sure they are better on task during that time. (Interview, Spring 2017)

Reflection is a critical part of metacognition and improving the way we learn. If learners passively receive information through their teachers via lectures, and aren't given time to reflect both independently and collaboratively, then they are much less likely to retain and use the information (Ash & Clayton, 2009). During this interview, Ms. Green had just finished observing her classroom video and was reflecting on her own teaching processes, further modeling CRT practices.

Collaborative learning is bolstered by the concept that learning is a naturally social act, and that learning occurs through talking, attempting to solve problems, and seeking to understand the world around us (Gerlach, 1994; Cooper & Robinson, 1998). By facilitating learning in these examples, Ms. Chen and Ms. Green empowered their students through active learning.

Research Question Two Findings: Leveraging CRT Practices Differently

Throughout my observations and interviews, it was apparent that both classroom teachers utilized CRT practices. While there were clearly similarities in the teachers' practices, there were also differences. In this section, I have outlined differences that were witnessed and articulated in interviews.

Throughout, I have documented a difference between the two settings based on observation or discussion in one classroom that highlights the usage of CRT

practices that I have not witnessed in the other. In this case, all differences noted came from Ms. Green's classroom at AWBES.

Positive Perspectives on Families

Assertion one: Teachers exhibited positive perspectives on parents and families by: (a) seeking to understand parents' hopes, concerns and suggestions; and (b) keeping parents apprised of services offered by the school.

Through my interactions with Ms. Green and the classroom artifacts I observed, it was clear that engagement with students' families was an aspect of her overall interaction model and seemed to strengthen her relationship with students. Even before visiting the classroom, I spoke with Ms. Green to thank her for her willingness to participate in the study and share the next steps leading up to the observations. I mentioned a parent notification form that would need to go home and she immediately advocated for the form to be presented in multiple languages for her parents, including English and Spanish. She also shared that she often had to work with the district to have other forms and newsletters translated, and that this was now an easier task since one of her students, whose family spoke Arabic, had moved. The proactive nature of her response and willingness to assist if needed, in the best interest of the families, suggested that she was aware of the families' needs and was invested in creating clear and open communication. In contrast, when this letter was shared with Ms. Chen, she politely accepted it and followed the protocol. In follow up discussion, she saw little need to share as observations were a regular part of their school day.

Ms. Green also referenced communicating with families in her classrooms. On several occasions, she told students she could walk out with them at the end of the day to talk to their parents. She had knowledge of which parents would be available to do so, and which she needed to call. In learning groups, Ms. Green repeatedly used prompts about students' families, further evidencing regular communication. Furthermore, students felt very comfortable sharing with Ms. Green about siblings, parents and grandparents both verbally, visually, and through their writing. Even school-wide announcements highlighted parent involvement in a recent fundraiser. In comparison, I saw little evidence of family engagement and communication in Ms. Chen's classroom. There were two brief instances to note; a parent swiftly dropping off a forgotten coat with no dialogue one morning and a discussion we had about incomplete work. In this discussion, Ms. Chen acknowledged that when students had incomplete assignments or needed additional support they would stay after school; however, parents were not necessarily communicated that information in advance. This seemed to be a consistent and common approach, though I saw no students remain after school during our observation period. These two instances, along with conversation about the notification form and very few sightings of family members on campus, signaled a distance between the classroom and the students' families. The contrast was noticeable.

Nieto (1996) reflected on the importance of positive teacher engagement with students' families, "Whether it's an informal chat as the parent brings the child to school, or in phone conversation or home visits, or through newsletters

sent home, teachers can begin a dialogue with family members that can result in learning about each of the families through genuine communication.” Ms.

Green’s relationships mirrored many of these characteristics.

Learning within the Context of Culture

Assertion three: Teachers promoted learning within the context of culture by varying teaching strategies by providing various options for completing assignments

While teachers in both countries utilized learning models that provided opportunities for collaborative and individual learning, Ms. Green also provided various options for completing assignments in her classroom which differed from Ms. Chen’s practices.

Through the use of learning centers or stations, Ms. Green’s classroom was staged to appeal to multiple learning styles. Instead of simply being given information, students had access to hands-on activities that allowed them to learn by doing. While students were expected to visit each station throughout the day and complete a certain number of assignments each week, they had options as to which they wanted to do on any particular day. Benefits of this approach include development of higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills (Brisk & Harrington, 2000). Ms. Chen’s classroom layout and approach were strikingly different. Students’ seats were arranged in tight rows that limited movement. Oftentimes the class worked in synchrony, even engaging in rote skills like dictation and choral reading further differentiating it from the U.S. Ms. Chen was only observed using whole-class

instruction, while Ms. Green spent a good deal of her time working with small groups. Ms. Green's use of learning stations and promotion of small group teacher instruction are evidence of CRT and linked to increased student retention, self-esteem, and responsibility (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Brisk & Harrington, 2000).

Student-Centered Instruction

Assertion four: Teacher used student-centered instruction by practicing an inquiry-based and discovery-oriented curriculum.

Through observations and interviews in Ms. Green's classroom, I learned that students were encouraged to work with other students on research and community projects that were culturally or socially relevant to them. This was evident in two school-wide initiatives that were highlighted during my observations. The first was announced during a morning assembly broadcasted in the classroom celebrating Pi Day. During the broadcast, a teacher took a whipped-cream pie in the face as a way to celebrate students reaching a monetary drive to support the local Children's Hospital by the Pi Day deadline.

For this we collected change for the Children's Hospital. Part of the Student Council Association (SCA) is creating a goal for the school, so each class (first grade through fifth) has an SCA representative. They meet once a month, set the goal for the school and work to deliver on it. For this, the teacher agreed that if they reached their goal then she would put a pie in her face. Each time the SCA sets a goal, it is reinforced in the classroom through the *Seven Habits* (Interview, Spring 2017).

Ms. Green shared that her students earned money for chores to contribute and a few families with personal connections to the hospital donated as well. Her students were clearly proud of the school's accomplishments when the

announcement was made and were excited to see one of their teachers take a pie to the face in good fun. It was clearly a highly anticipated and celebratory event that we were able to catch on video.

After sharing about the Pi Day celebration in her interview, Ms. Green also shared with me other ways her students have participated in the greater community through clubs. Over the years, she has had many students participate and even acted as an advisor to some.

We also have student clubs across the school. This is our fourth year doing it. So last year we did it all based on volunteering. We had groups that supported the SPCA and the homeless, as well as military and police appreciation groups. Each club has something that they are collecting. This year, they met four times a year. It could be a volunteer or interest-based club. I did one on synergizing, so it highlighted educational games and stuff like that. Other teachers did different things and kids get to make choices based on their interests. (Interview, Spring 2017)

This further illustrates how Ms. Green's students were encouraged to engage and learn about the broader community and work with others (across their classroom, grade and school) to research and complete projects of interest to them. These types of interactions allow students to experiment with new ideas, receive feedback and be a part of a broader community of learners (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Culturally Mediated Instruction

Assertion five: Teacher leveraged culturally mediated instruction by devising different ways for students to be successful

At AWBES, Ms. Green incorporated culturally mediated practices in her instruction by setting realistic goals for students that were balanced with high

expectations. During a small group math session, Ms. Green was recorded providing additional time for a student to respond when he struggled to answer a question. In her approach, she simply asked him to take some more time to think through what he wanted to share. After hearing from another student, she circled back, providing him a second opportunity to share, and this time he was ready.

Upon viewing the recording, Ms. Green shared:

I typically like to give them additional time if needed. At this time, they were learning money, a relatively new skill, and I wanted to build their confidence. Show that they can do it independently and there is more than one way to make change. Just giving them time to process it before they ask for help. (Interview, Spring 2017)

In fact, I observed several times when Ms. Green provided her students time to process their responses. In this instance, she also introduced a new concept that allowed for multiple solutions to the problem giving opportunities for the students in the group to impart knowledge on how they solved.

In viewing the same video clip, Ms. Green also commented on how she modeled and taught students to share their ideas and question approaches, beliefs and actions and challenge students' beliefs and actions further showcasing culturally mediated instruction.

When they tell me an answer, especially in math, I always say why. Because there are a lot of different ways to solve the same problem and I am like, when they explained it and made it, and maybe one of the classmates was like – Oh. I have never thought about that before. So that particular student actually does that a lot. He would give me an answer and get excited a lot about it and when I say why, he kind of clamps up like that. So just making him more comfortable explaining it to me and explaining it to their classmates is a big goal I have. I do this a lot of times during the day. Just by asking why, explaining it, or telling a friend allows some kids to be more open about sharing their ideas and reasons. I have found that a lot of my kids are pretty confident in giving their answers and

can explain it. That's kind of my goal for that. Even if they are wrong, they can explain what they are doing so that we can, you know, figure out what is going on and learn new ideas (Interview, Spring 2017).

Allowing students to set their own goals was another example of how Ms. Green used culturally mediated instruction in her classroom. She enthusiastically shared how students set individual and classroom leadership goals based on the Seven Habits.

It is a continuous thing that we talk about. More so at the beginning of the year for us because we set goals that have to do with the seven habits. Just incorporating them into our language so that they know that they are in charge of themselves and what they need to do to become a leader. So we talk about it, pretty typically in the morning as both a school and as a class, and then throughout the day we use some of the language to help deepen understanding. (Interview, Spring 2017)

These examples of culturally mediated instruction further illustrate the personal connections that Ms. Green had with her students and how she was able to make personal and meaningful connections to their learning.

Research Question Three Findings: Perception of Teachers' CRT Practices

During culture circle interviews, I was able to hear from participants some of their perspectives on similarities of CRT practices used by both the educators in the U.S. and China.

High Expectations

Assertion two: Teachers messaged high expectations to their students in ways by communicating clear expectations

_____ After reviewing the videos, culture circles in both the U.S. and China shared their perceptions of how both classroom teachers had communicated

high expectations with their students. This seemed most evident to them in how well-managed both classrooms were. Both culture circles commented on how this is often reflective of creating a daily schedule and classroom structure to ensure students know what to expect, allowing them to better grasp and respect the routines and protocols set.

Of Ms. Chen's classroom in China, I heard the following:

The class was run very smoothly, a well-oiled process, right. Students also worked well with the teacher. They were quite serious. (Chinese Culture Circle Interview, Winter 2017).

She wasn't interrupted by other children in the classroom. They all knew what they're supposed to do. They all went and did it, and she would have seen it if somebody was really off task (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

And a similar perspective was shared about the predictability and knowledge of routines in Ms. Green's classroom:

I would say that the students seem to be well versed in routine because while the announcements were going on, nobody was making a ruckus. She didn't have to – I didn't hear a single reminder during the entire announcement period, uh, except for when the Pi Day announcement came on. (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

Darling-Hammond (2018) reflected on the importance of clear expectations for students, "Productive settings provide routines and activities, along with affirmative and supportive interactions, that build the brain's architecture in important ways." Culture circle participants recognized this as well, acknowledging how critical setting clear and high expectations is and how this was a strength for each teacher.

Teacher as Facilitator

Assertion seven: Teachers acted as facilitators by: (a) sharing the responsibility of instruction; and (b) varying approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles

Culture circle participants shared perceptions on where they saw teachers acting as facilitators in their classrooms. In China, there were more questions on how Ms. Green was able to provide small group instruction the way she did, allowing students to lead and even facilitate their own learning at stations, noting that the *Little Cadres* offered a somewhat similar approach in providing student-led opportunities, thus sharing the responsibility of instruction.

They were very disciplined under the leadership of the little cadres, everyone began to first put away their little backpacks, then take out their homework books and begin the day's morning reading. (Chinese Culture Circle Interview, Winter 2017)

Culture circles in both countries also noted how students would lead morning routines and patriotic rituals regularly, further showcasing student leadership.

Varying teaching approaches was also perceived as a similarity across the two classrooms. Mrs. Xu shared her perspective:

I noticed in the reading teaching, they had students read with questions in mind, this is the same as teaching language arts in China. And then in the teaching process, she is also combining pictures and text, having students look at the images and articles and combine them to understand them well and hear their true thoughts. And when understanding the thoughts, the students are studying the article, are also studying many adjectives and learning exclamatory statements are expressed with exclamation points. In this process, they are acquiring relevant language knowledge. This is quite similar to our China. (Chinese Culture Circle Interview, Winter 2017)

Mrs. Xu observed in the video how Ms. Green varied her approach to accommodate diverse learning styles and noted similar approaches used in Ms. Chen's classroom as well as it aligns with a general approach to pedagogy in China.

Research Question Four Findings: Differing Perceptions of Teachers' CRT Practices

Culture circle interview sessions provided insight on the differing perceptions of teachers' CRT practices used in the two classrooms.

High Expectations

Assertion two: Teachers messaged high expectations differently with their students in through (a) communicating clear expectations and (b) creating an environment in which there is a genuine respect for students and a belief in their capability

While both classroom teachers were seen as communicating clear expectations, there were some differences noted in their approach by culture circle participants.

As a PE teacher, Mr. Li shared concerns on differing expectations on physical composure of students in Ms. Green's classroom.

One kid was shaking his legs, one kid's sitting position was not correct enough. In our China, starting with lower-level students, cultivating behavior and habits, until they can follow rules, this kind of method of understanding the behavior – it's managed more strictly. There is a proper way to sit and a proper way to stand. This is our Chinese saying: *Sit well, stand well.* (Chinese Culture Circle Interview, Winter 2017)

In this comment, Mr. Li explains that this is a practiced behavior, and that the expectation is that students start early and teachers continue to emphasize it as they advance through the grades in China. In observing Ms. Chen's classroom video, Mr. Trierweiler comments on what he perceives as practiced behaviors in China and how it differs from expectations in the U.S.

These students look like they like that they are expected to have the same kind of classroom management, and the teachers look like they had the same classroom management year after year. So, it becomes instinct – instinctual for them to follow specific behaviors. Whereas I think, you know here (U.S.), teachers battle sometimes year after year in order to get that same level of, um, what – behavior level that they are looking for in them. (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

Mr. Trierweiler continues to consider the perceived benefits of teachers having similar expectations across classrooms and the school like they do in the videos from China he observed.

Well for here (U.S.) I think because management can be, um, subjective to the teacher, even within a day, you know, you're going from what is in the classroom, to what is in the cafeteria, to what is in your resource class. That's three different management expectations that could be confusing to a student. Whereas I would imagine there, having seen an assembly, having seen a classroom, the management techniques are in place at all times, and the expectation is not – it's not wavered in any way because it's the same everywhere. (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

Ms. Doolin agreed with Mr. Trierweiler in the circle, adding on another example from what she observed in the Chinese classroom videos:

The morning when these children are unpacking or coming in and setting up, there is no one telling them what to do. Like it has been drilled and it's very, um, methodical and then to sit down and begin reading. And again, there's no prompting from the teacher whatsoever. That's just – yeah, it's very different from what we're used to here in America, I believe. (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

Both sets of culture circles perceived that Ms. Chen, through the support of the broader school ethos, had provided much clearer and consistent expectations around how students should comport themselves at school.

In conjunction with clear expectations, there was a perceived difference from culture circle participants on how students were encouraged to meet expectations to deliver on tasks in China versus the U.S. Mrs. Xu shared:

In China we emphasize 'cultivating excellence and helping the poor performers catch up,' right. And this helps them catch up, and this work is going on every day. So sometimes, after class is over, we'll hold back a few individuals who didn't finish their studies, the 'late progressers' we call them here, and they have to stay back to have individual tutoring before they can go home. If it gets really too late, we will send them home to come back the next day and do it. (Chinese Culture Circle, Winter 2017)

Mr. Trierweiler noticed that students in China were reflecting on homework in their classroom, further suggesting to him that students were expected to deliver on tasks given during school, but also on tasks assigned outside of the school day.

I liked that she (Ms. Chen) provided some background knowledge or she had the kids provide background knowledge. She incorporated the kids through homework, which was a nice touch, and I wish it could be more accomplished here to be honest. That students actually came prepared or at least some came prepared and had the background knowledge that normally the teacher would have. So, it was nice to see that the students drove some of the instruction. (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

A part of creating a classroom environment of respect is offering praise when high standards are met. While both classrooms' teachers reflected on evidence of this, culture circle participants noted some differences in their approach. In China, I heard Ms. Green portrayed in this way:

The teacher is very kind, when students make mistakes she doesn't say 'you are wrong' directly. But in China, we teachers are strict and we say it directly when you make mistakes. (Chinese Culture Circle Interview, Winter 2017)

While in the U.S., Ms. Chen's approach was perceived this way by Ms.

Shelton:

The other thing that stood out to me was how she had to correct someone, and she was really on him or her and didn't let it go. Like what the expectations were to cover your box so it doesn't fall on the floor and make a mess and those who didn't do homework what the consequences are going to be. So, and it's very like without emotion – not emotion, yeah, straightforward. This is the way it is. (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

Mr. Trierweiler wanted to understand more, while still reflecting on some differences he perceived about the classroom and overall cultures. He began to correlate some of the culture change in the U.S. as a potential opportunity, linking the importance of relationships with teachers as an important consideration.

I would be curious to know what consequences/discipline would it look like in that culture (China), other than the verbal reprimand in front of your peers. I think there though; they lose that connectivity, you know, if you have one student who doesn't thrive in that setting, they're never going to thrive in that setting because everybody does the same thing. Whereas here, students do find an alliance with a teacher who they can see themselves working for and building that positive relationship. (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

Mr. Trierweiler added onto his comments and links expectations more broadly to other institutions.

Versus our culture, you know, at home the adult is always right. Even if the adult is wrong, the adult is always right. And I think here you can see it in our culture, on our news. Authority itself does not hold a place of importance for a lot of reasons. You know, authority has usurped that power, you know, there's a lot with, you know, police officers nowadays

being, you know, not 100 percent credible sometimes in what they do. And I think that leads towards a mistrust of authority. And I think in regard to education, I think teachers also sometimes relinquish their place as authority to be friends with students sometimes. And I think that relationship, you-you sacrifice some things in order to gain some things. And there it seems that there's that-that wall and no, this is the adult. You are the student. You will not call me by my name. You will call me a teacher; I will call you a student unless I need to call you specifically. And I think that is probably something that starts at home with parents. You know, there's – I know it's a terrible stereotype, but, you know, the tiger mom, uh, you know, the woman that is constantly driving her children to be the best they can be. And I also think that embarrassment, like I can see in this classroom, embarrassment of one student leads to embarrassment of all the students, which becomes an embarrassment because of the teacher not controlling the student, which then becomes an embarrassment to the family. And I don't think that matriculates through our culture as much because sometimes parents are not on the same side as the teachers or the administration. And I feel like there's a bond there between teachers and parents and administration there that holds the children accountable, even if the child wasn't exactly in the wrong. (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

The culture circles spent a good deal of time contemplating some of the broader institutional norms of each culture that may impact the school setting. Even some of the language might suggest the perceived differences. For instance, the Chinese circles continued to refer to China as “our China,” emphasizing a more common goal versus individualistic ones, which could have implications on how expectations are shared and classroom learning happens.

Student-Centered Instruction

Assertion four: Teachers were perceived as using student-centered instruction differently in how they (a) promoted student engagement; (b) shared responsibility for instruction; and (c) encouraged a community of learners.

Culture circle participants shared perspectives on some of the different approaches each classroom teacher utilized that impacted cooperative, collaborative and community-oriented learning.

Several participants spoke about how classroom teachers shared the responsibility for instruction and how that differed. Mrs. Xu recognized an approach used by Ms. Green in her math lesson that sparked a dialogue in the circle.

Mrs. Wu: In China we might take the several methods of counting coins and the teacher would count them and give them to the students – and then have the students practice counting in the way the teacher taught. But this teacher (U.S.) has students come up with it on their own. This way they might remember better and have more methods. They also explain their process of coming up with their conclusion and have the other students listen.

Ms. Huang: Here, teachers teach – there, students explore and then the teacher teaches.

Mr. Li: The students' process, this process of learning – we avoid it in our China.

Mrs. Wu: The reason for this coming to be is that we have a lot of students in our classes. There's not that much time for each of them to speak. (Chinese Culture Circle Interview, Winter 2017)

While Mrs. Wu shifted the conversation to reflect on barriers for the approach, the conversation shifted back to what they liked about Ms. Green's approach to teaching.

Ms. Huang: The environment is very open and easy, students probably like this kind of class.

Mrs. Wu: After we saw it we were just talking about having our teachers send their daughters abroad to study, it's more relaxed, a better environment.

Ms. Huang: We hope all kids can be in this kind of environment. It's happier.

Creating structured opportunities for students to teach and learn from others, and to hypothesize, discover and invent, supports children's confidence and ability to predict, reason and develop self-agency (Immordino-Yang, Darling Hammond & Krone, 2018).

The U.S. culture circle also saw a difference as they reflected on Ms. Chen's teaching strategy and classroom overall.

Mr. Trierweiler: But even looking in her classroom, her classroom it's not ornate, it looked like it was very sterile. Um, nothing really seemed to be on the walls from the little bit that I could see. Um, it was nice to see that she had the Promethean, or smartboard and was using that. Um, whereas I think we have splash personality, um, in our classrooms and, you know, and-and-and that's teacher driven, absolutely...And, you know, one of our biggest jobs is student display of work and didn't seem to be there, but it's also, you know, it's a lot of oral communication there versus in our school. I think our drive is to have oral communication but with student discussion among students rather than the whole group towards the teacher.

Ms. Doolin: I think of the individuality. If you looked at our videos our approach can sometimes lead to, um, mixed messages. Some students may get more or different than other students. So, I guess in their opinion (China), if everyone's getting the same thing, then no one is without. Whereas I think our opinion (U.S) is that each student needs something different. Therefore, you need to give them what they need and meet them, you know, where they need to be rather than, you know, here's the line, but people are starting at different places around that line.

Mr. Trierweiler: Well, there was no giggling, laughing, there was no interaction again with the students so I couldn't tell what the emotion of the student was.

Ms. Shelton: There was no touching. There's no pulling up a ponytail. There's no-no nonsense going on.

Ms. Doolin: So, then no interruption of instructions, this was a plus for them.

Ms. Shelton: Right. So, it works for that.

The concept of individual versus collective continued to come up in both culture circle discussions. Some judgments and generalizations (particularly around the socio-political norms of each country) also arose as they discussed approaches. Interestingly enough, no member of a culture circle completely advocated for a both/and approach.

Culturally Mediated Instruction

Assertion five: Teachers leveraged culturally mediated instruction by creating an environment that encourages and embraces culture

CRT starts with the premise that social identifiers matter, and that teachers need to be aware of their own biases, work deeply to understand their individual students, find ways to bring students' experiences and connections into the classroom, and hold all students to a high academic standard (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

As the U.S. culture circle met and discussed Ms. Green's videotaped lesson, they felt they saw a difference in her ability to connect with students in comparison to what they viewed of Ms. Chen.

Ms. Shelton: Because they differentiate based on ability (teachers at AWBES), and the best way to do that is in small groups. It's harder for the teacher because they got to come up with more lesson plans to meet the kids where they are, but it's the best way to teach kids.

Ms. Doolin: And that's where training is really important for them to be able to work independently at their stations or with a small group as a huge part of their September, um, just getting their students in that routine.

Ms. Shelton: Yes. And we saw that here. She (Ms. Green) gave the children a lot of chances to talk. Um, she wanted to bring in their life experiences, which are so important so they can make, you know, connections. The more connections she makes with their lives the more interested they're going to be on task. And, um, she did a lot of give and take. (U.S. Culture Circle Interview, Fall 2018)

Ms. Shelton, the school's principal, clearly emphasized the importance of culturally mediated instruction for students. She could articulate the importance of understanding the everyday lived experiences of the students, and building those cultural connections in the classroom instead of having teachers pull solely from their own experiences.

Reshaping the Curriculum

Assertion six: Teachers reshaped the curriculum by developing learning activities that are more reflective of the students' backgrounds

The concept of reshaping the curriculum was identified in a conversation about Ms. Green's approach. Culture participants in China reflected a second time on the counting money math lesson.

Mrs. Wu: In our China, for example, you're going to teach this counting. For counting money, teachers will lead the children in counting together, counting methods. As I saw in the U.S. video, the teacher will first make the mission clear, then teach them how to recognize four kinds of currency. Then, the teacher will lead one group of five students in how to count currency. Then other small groups will work together on currency. I saw that there were paper and coin currency, and that there were also little cards, I think probably related to money. They seemed to be getting methods from their group practice. But in our China, it's a collective acquisition of the methods leading everyone to understand the methods before having them practice...so I discovered this was different.

Mr. Li: If U.S. techniques were brought to China, you can imagine the result.

Ms. Huang: There's a lot of us. There are a lot of students in our classroom. Things could really get chaotic. One teacher and forty kids, right? You can imagine...

Mr. Li: There are too many of us and we are stubborn in our response. There is no atmosphere like this. (Chinese Culture Circle Interview, Winter 2017)

The perceived differences in approach and atmosphere between the classrooms is clearly articulated in their comments, as are the themes of the collective. Ms. Green's utilization of cooperative learning strategies which permitted and exposed students to work in small groups, independent exploration and the sharing of alternate viewpoints and ways to solve problems were more evidence of her CRT practices that differentiated her approach from Ms. Chen's. When asked to further expound on any other perceived differences, Ms. Huang responded:

I observed that our Chinese classroom teaching is different from those abroad. The foreign ones I saw in the video are all in small groups with the teacher leading and the other small groups have their own study requirements. In our China, it's an overall, a collective. Abroad, maybe they place emphasis on individual praise, or guiding individually more. But in the video, we can see that. We can see that some students answer very well, we also have collective applause to praise them. This kind of way of doing things is also done in our classrooms. (Chinese Culture Circle Interview, Winter 2017)

Teacher as Facilitator

Assertion seven: Teachers acted as facilitators by: (a) learning about students' cultures; (b) sharing the responsibility of instruction; and (c) varying approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles

As I spoke to the culture circle in China, some concepts around teacher as facilitator were clearly differentiated for them in the U.S. classroom, particularly

as it related to learning about the experiences and cultures of students. Mrs.

Huang commented:

In China, children's teachers may pour knowledge into them, but in the U.S., according to the cognition levels and their life experiences, teachers have them explore. In China, students don't have much opportunity to study by themselves. In the US, students are daring to speak up, say their own thoughts – they participate a lot. (Chinese Culture Circle Interview, Winter 2017)

Ms. Huang seems to connect participation with students' ability to share and explore individually. This sense of relationship and ability to be oneself more freely came up again.

At one point during the culture circle interview, the group began laughing quite a bit about some comments made in Mandarin. When I asked them to share their conversation, they acknowledged that they were reflecting on what they had observed in the U.S. videos. Their response to me is captured here:

Mr. Li: It's because in our China you'll see in the classrooms the teacher is the one speaking the most. 'Sit like this!' 'Listen to the teacher!' But the video we saw from the U.S. on Monday, the students were really free. The teacher wasn't, you know, fixed on emphasizing how to sit, listen carefully and this teacher of ours, comparatively speaking, is on the stricter side. On her face, you didn't see...a smile. But not all teachers are like this.

Mrs. Wu: ...and then I imagined if the students also...put a cake onto our teacher's face, then the result would definitely be different. So we felt that the foreign classrooms, the relationship between teachers and students was like that between friends. And in our classrooms it's very clear that the teacher is the teacher and the students are students. There might be that friendship relationship after class. It is a clear difference.

Mr. Li: Basically we'll have some interaction with students, especially in PE class. I often become friends with students, and there are some similarities with America. We can be friends with them and everyone will have more interest. And in China, I know in the lower grades, we place an emphasis on cultivating intelligence, and in America, the emphasis is on creativity and movement.

Mr. Li: I saw the contrast between the two video clips. As a Chinese teacher, I am also envious of the American students' relaxed environment, free environment for studying, their spacious classroom and endearing set up. I envy these. But as a Chinese teacher, my view of how in their classroom – where they can move about however they wish, we can't endure this.

Mrs. Wu: "Right, so we emphasize that they must sit straight correctly. They'll move later.

Mr. Li: Also, our Chinese education emphasizes and re-emphasizes this.

The culture circles were a rich source of information and insight, and the participants in China had been active participants throughout, but this interaction in our third meeting felt significant to me. The collegiality they had with one another and the sense of humor that genuinely surfaced seemed to allow them to let down their guard even more and what followed was greater back and forth conversation on their observations, critique and even interest in learning more.

Participants explored the differences they perceived in classroom culture for students, imagining (with humor) how a similar approach would (or would not) work in their school. They seemed interested in enhancing student-teacher connections, but also emphasized the differences in class size and culture that seemed to deter their belief in fully being able to leverage CRT practices. That being said, the culture circle in China, as well as in the U.S., expressed greater interest in learning more about pedagogy in other countries.

Summary of Findings

The findings presented in this chapter provided insight into the use and approaches to CRT practices of two schoolteachers, as well as the perception of those teachers' practices by culture circle participants. The seven assertions presented reflect a comprehensive analysis of data gathered from participant interviews (both individual teacher and culture circle), video- and audio-taped recordings, and site observations. I synthesized the data and opined on the array of assertions of the work that is done to develop a classroom reflective of CRT.

Research Question One: How do teachers leverage culturally relevant teaching practices while engaging their students and interacting in their classroom setting?

Assertion two: Teachers messaged high expectations to their students in ways by: (a) communicating clear expectations; and (b) creating an environment in which there is genuine respect for students and belief in their capabilities.

Assertion three: Teachers promoted learning within the context of culture by varying teaching strategies: (a) using cooperative learning especially for material new to students; and (b) assigning independent work after students are familiar with the concept.

Assertion four: Teachers used student-centered instruction in classroom practices by: (a) sharing the responsibility of instruction and (b) encouraging a community of learners.

Assertion five: Teachers leveraged culturally mediated instruction by creating an environment that encourages and embraces culture.

Assertion seven: Teachers acted as facilitators by: (a) sharing the responsibility of instruction; (b) varying approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles; and (c) encouraging a community of learners

Research Question Two: How do teachers leverage culturally relevant teaching practices differently in the U.S. and China?

Assertion one: Teachers exhibited positive perspectives on parents and families by: (a) seeking to understand parents' hopes, concerns and suggestions; and (b) keeping parents apprised of services offered by the school.

Assertion three: Teacher promoted learning within the context of culture by varying teaching strategies by providing various options for completing assignments

Assertion four: Teacher used student-centered instruction by practicing inquiry based and discovery oriented curriculum.

Assertion five: Teacher leveraged culturally mediated instruction by devising different ways for students to be successful

Research Question Three: How do teachers perceive other teachers' culturally responsive teaching practices?

Assertion two: Teachers messaged high expectations to their students in ways by communicating clear expectations

Assertion seven: Teachers acted as facilitators by: (a) sharing the responsibility of instruction; and (b) varying approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles.

Research Question Four: How do teachers perceive culturally relevant teaching practices differently in the U.S. and China?

Assertion two: Teachers messaged high expectations differently with their students in through (a) communicating clear expectations and (b) creating an environment in which there is a genuine respect for students and a belief in their capability

Assertion four: Teachers were perceived as using student-centered instruction differently in how they (a) promoted student engagement; (b) shared responsibility for instruction; and (c) encouraged a community of learners.

Assertion five: Teachers leveraged culturally mediated instruction by creating an environment that encourages and embraces culture

Assertion six: Teachers reshaped the curriculum by developing learning activities that are more reflective of the students' backgrounds

Assertion seven: Teachers acted as facilitators by: (a) learning about students' cultures; (b) sharing the responsibility of instruction; and (c) varying approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles

Chapter 5 - Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine teachers' knowledge of CRT practices. This would be accomplished by studying two elementary classrooms, one in China and one in the U.S., using a conceptual framework (see Figure 1) featuring the interplay of culturally relevant teaching (CRT) and adaptive expertise (AE). In particular, the research investigated teachers' practices, perceptions and thinking in the context of CRT, as well as the perceptions of culture circles in each setting.

This chapter includes a discussion of major findings as related to the literature on multicultural education, adaptive expertise, and culturally relevant teaching. Then, the chapter presents the implications in a way that advances them in educational scholarship. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research in an attempt to call scholars and practitioners to action.

My research examined four questions related to identifying and investigating teachers' practices, perceptions and thinking in the context of CRT. Research on the qualities of a culturally relevant teacher is fairly consistent. Culturally relevant teaching centers students' culture in teaching practice through multiple approaches: *positive perspectives on parents, high expectations, promoting cultural competence, student-centered instruction, culturally mediated instruction, curriculum reshaping, and teacher as facilitator* (Dickson, Chun, & Fernandez, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008; Culturally Responsive Teaching, 2016). Earlier research has shown how culturally responsive teaching is the most effective method for reaching students

in classroom settings, and past explorations have also identified the ways that teachers purposefully facilitate partnerships with the community, weave in family experiences and leverage student knowledge into their teaching approach to nurture authentic learning.

Discussion and Implications

To ascertain the extent of teachers' practices, perceptions and thinking in the context of CRT, three types of data were collected and analyzed. The data provided a rich source of perspectives on two teachers' classroom environments and teaching methods. Overall, there is a need to better understand the interplay and connective tissue for Multicultural Education, AE and CRT.

Multicultural Education

This study's findings add depth to the research found in the broader context of multicultural education. As diverse representation increases in urban schools, teachers must be able to recognize how diverse experiences shape learning for many students and develop instructional practices that are both meaningful and applicable to students' social and cultural experiences (Banks et. al, 2004; Howard, 2003; Yuan 2019). Developing cultural competence and honing adaptive skills requires an aptitude for thinking critically about potential biases, attitudes, and behaviors that need to be navigated and addressed in classrooms (Gay, 2007; Wang & Gou, 2012; Yuan, 2019).

The two teachers observed in this study demonstrated an ability to reflect on the experiences of their students and often adapt instructional practices to make them more relevant to those they were teaching, connecting CRT, AE and

ME. For example, Ms. Green shared her practice of using sticky notes with her reading group after seeing their excitement to communicate, providing them an opportunity to capture and manage their ideas. Ms. Chen, having limited space and students who needed movement, employed air writing.

While teachers showcased their abilities to reflect and adapt, neither reflected on or discussed the experiences of race or ethnicity in interviews. Instead, when discussing social identifiers, they tended to focus on gender, socio-economic status, language (U.S.), family structure (U.S.) and ability status. Gender was a commonly discussed topic in both rooms as it pertained to describing authors and characters. It was even a point of discussion as Ms. Chen reflected on her reasons for joining the teaching profession. Ms. Green spoke quite a bit about language, from communication with parents to thinking about how best to support students who were still mastering English. This was similar in culture circle discussions as well. Limited time was spent discussing race and ethnicity in the U.S. setting, and it was not a topic addressed at all in China. In the U.S., they looked for gender balance in small group interactions and discussed discipline rates. In China, there was discussion about a student with special needs in Ms. Chen's class, and support that might be needed.

Culture circle participants also spent a good deal of time and focus on how the theme of the collective (China) versus the individual (U.S.) impacted the classroom setting and teacher practice. Participants from both countries opined about the benefits of consistent expectations for students in China, and the power of meeting students' individual needs in the U.S. They saw challenges too,

acknowledging that the U.S. approach could lead to mixed and unclear messages for students as they navigate the individual expectations of teachers from class to class, and questioned whether or not students in China were getting the support they needed. Reflection and dialogue on the topic were ongoing in both settings.

Adaptive Expertise

The current study further elevates research that acknowledges AE practices as effective in CRT (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999; Irving & Armento, 2001; Wineburg, 1998). Adaptive experts are open to transformative change in their practice, meaning that when they discover the need to alter a practice or process, they accept it as an unavoidable and successful endeavor in learning and effective teaching versus failure (Hammerness et al., 2005). The attainment of AE is strengthened by educational settings that reinforce active exploration so that different ideas can be shared and discussed openly (Hatano & Oura, 2003). Basically, educators who know their students' learning styles and create environments which support the exchange of multiple perspectives and solutions are better able to help them apply those skills and reimagine applications for different challenges. While the current research findings show both teachers exuded passion and knowledge about their students' learning styles and built opportunities for collaboration and ideation through the use of share pairs (compare-and-contrast activities and peer reviews), it was Ms. Green's classroom design and management that allowed for greater exchange of students' ideas and reinforcement of AE practices. This was evident through Ms.

Green's development and use of small group instruction and student-led rotating workstations where students took ownership of their learning and were encouraged to try different tactics to reach goals. The importance of learning environments is continuously addressed across the literature and warrants further investigation of their interplay with AE across both cultures.

Culturally Relevant Teaching

Historically, CRT was designed to improve the performance of African American students who were underachieving in an education system, known for its inequity, to better understand their needs and define a set of teaching practices (Berliner, 1989; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994, 1995; Shulman, 1987). The definition has since broadened to include how settings, practices, and curriculum can be "culturally relevant" and provide a framework for application (Byrd, 2016; Winn & Johnson, 2011). Practitioners of CRT often emphasize its benefits for all students by humanizing and respecting multiple perspectives and experiences as they relate to academic success and cultural competence, and this is where the current study adds to this body of literature. For instance, in the U.S., Ms. Green employed multiple tactics to ensure her class heard from a range of voices about their experiences, including collaborative, student-led workstations; teacher-led small group instruction; and even the capture of ideas on sticky notes. Culture circle participants took note, having discussions and sharing ideas about the implementation of these practices, further modeling CRT themselves. However, true CRT practitioners also shed light on the inequity in our systems, and help students build the skills,

the knowledge and the constitution to change injustice (Ladson-Billings, 2001). There were no findings in the current research that explicitly aligned to these goals in either setting, suggesting a real need for future investigation examining social justice education in CRT across cultures. As well, this signifies a need for teacher development to deepen understanding of the processes, systems, and institutions that students and families need to navigate or leverage for success.

Interpretation of the current study's findings does offer useful insight into the use of CRT in classrooms. Previous scholarship highlights how CRT is effectively practiced in the primary school environment. Through qualitative research, Honaker (2004) and Toney (2008) studied how elementary school teachers' beliefs were informed by their backgrounds and experiences to leverage culturally responsive teaching practices. Findings revealed that teachers shared a common goal around the development and execution of their instructional practices: to leverage students' funds of knowledge in order to engage them in their learning process, increase opportunities for success, and limit chances for failure and underachievement. Analogously, in the current study of classrooms at Anna Bodeker Whitehead Elementary and Qi Baishi Primary, teachers' goals aligned with these findings, indicating the advantage of teachers engaging in self-reflection to enhance CRT practices. My study advances the previous research by affirming that teachers' personal experiences and beliefs shape their pedagogical practices in the classroom, leading to improved teaching and student engagement. Further connecting these findings to student

achievement in a mixed-method approach across cultures could expand knowledge on CRT significantly.

Findings from this study's culture circles reveal that teachers identified clear similarities and differences in how CRT is utilized in the U.S. and China. One distinct discovery is participants' perceptions of classroom teachers' use of evidence-based and proactive classroom management practices; more specifically, the use of clear and high expectations which is associated with higher student engagement and achievement (Dunlap et al., 2010; Simonsen, et. al., 2008). Both sets of culture circle participants were impressed at how students clearly understood and managed expected routines without prompting from the teacher. Participants were also struck by how differently the two teachers managed each setting yet produced similar results. Ms. Green managed multiple lessons through small group workstations and was perceived as amicable and casual in her approach. Ms. Chen primarily used whole group instruction and was viewed as traditional and strict. While this data certainly adds to the literature, it is the culture circle's critical thinking and dialogue that presents the richest opportunities for policy implementation. Here participants modeled CRT as they questioned, interpreted, and applied multiple viewpoints in responses to the video.

Previous research on CRT cited the need for further examination of educators' values, beliefs, and communication styles in order to advance understanding and design better instructional practices (Fang, 1996; Perez, 2004; Schubert & Ayers, 1999; Yuan, 2019). The current study addressed this

need, building on prior investigations. Sleeter (2005) stated the importance of examining how teachers make teaching decisions because ultimately, it guides what they do. Study on self-reflection and self-awareness about personal experiences and practices has included forms of journaling, autobiographical text, and field experiences (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Johal, 2010; Milner, 2003). This study affirms the value of reflection. Additionally, this study strengthens the exploration approach in the following ways: extending reflection beyond the individual to incorporate group reflective practices; utilizing video-cued multivocal ethnography as a tool for reflection, further advancing knowledge of this method; and expanding research comparisons globally.

This study expounds upon teachers' use of outlined CRT practices by specifying which actions were enacted while engaging with students. While findings revealed that many of the same CRT practices were leveraged, they were often presented quite differently across the two settings. Culturally relevant classrooms are places where students are able to engage with others, be responsible for their learning, and feel comfortable and confident in navigating differences of opinions. This is accomplished through the ways teachers accommodate various learning styles and encourage a classroom community of learners, such as providing multiple avenues for completing assignments (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Being explicit in planning and communication further showcases that intent. The current research discovered that these practices were distributed with more frequency, and perceived to be communicated more intentionally, in the U.S. classroom. It is important to acknowledge, however, that

there was minimal evidence overall to support positive perspectives on parents and families (assertion one) and reshaping the curriculum (assertion two).

Empirical research has catalogued and identified CRT practices, and subsequently how teachers and school leaders should enact CRT to support students in a variety of settings. As well, some research exists that compares educational systems, schools, and teachers across cultures. However, there is no evidence in the existing literature that compares teachers' use and perceptions of CRT practices across cultures. By purposefully examining and comparing teachers' CRT practices and perceptions, this study provides findings that expose how teachers think about these practices and the perceived positive implications for students across both cultures. Additionally, findings suggest that when teachers reflect on CRT practices, they are emboldened to investigate and leverage these practices further. While literature exists that articulates the importance of CRT reflection and the need for its use in teacher development (Byrd, 2016; Yuan, 2019), there is little that compares its application globally across classrooms.

Recommendations for Scholarship

Deepen Research in Multicultural Education

Findings recognized a gap in teachers' discussion around identifiers linked to race and ethnicity in both the U.S. and China. ME advocates for teachers who are culturally competent and believe that students, and their life histories and experiences, should be placed at the center of teaching and learning. Therefore, future research on ME should be launched in both settings with an emphasis on

race and ethnicity. It will be imperative that participant samples include racial and ethnic diversity.

Effective multicultural education must consider the broader socio-political factors that impact students' success or failure in the classroom (Nieto, 1999). This study revealed that culture circle participants in both settings repeatedly reflected and discussed the differences observed in the socio-political aspects of each culture (i.e., the collective versus the individual). Collectivism and individualism are known to deeply permeate cultures, including classroom settings, and the attention given to the topic warrants additional examination around its potential impact on teaching practices and student achievement in both countries. One difference was discerned between the two culture circle conversations that should also be examined. In China, the discourse on the topic appeared to be from a place of inquiry, whereas participants in the U.S. were perceived by the researcher as coming from a place of judgment, then moving to curiosity. Because of this phenomenon, two new questions for comparative research emerged: (1) How do teachers balance socio-political knowledge and counter personal bias in their practice?; and (2) Does time in the field increase teacher inquiry and ability to mitigate bias?

Research on Critical Reflective Practice Through the Use of Culture Circles

Findings from the culture circle sessions suggest that dedicated time for group discussion allows teachers to reflect on and improve practices, deepen understanding of the curriculum, explore phenomena and build camaraderie. To better understand culture circles potential use as a professional development

resource for teachers, an initial exploratory study on culture circles is recommended in both countries.

It is recommended that this research should include comparisons in perceived quality of learning, dedication of time, and cost-effectiveness.

Research on Critical Reflective Practice Using Video-Cued Ethnography

Effective culturally responsive teachers continually reflect on and improve their practices. Findings from interviews and culture circle discussions uncovered interest and enthusiasm around the use of video for similar reflection and learning, specifically as it relates to self-reflection and cross-cultural study.

After the U.S. teacher observed herself and students on video, she immediately began to reflect on her approach and with no prompting, verbalized alternative tactics. Further research on the use of video reflection for teacher development is recommended.

Culture circle participants in both settings were fully engaged watching the video prompts. After footage ended, they immediately began engaging and asking questions, even asking why we don't film classroom settings more. The classroom teachers asked if they could view the classroom videos from the other country. Video is a powerful tool for reflection and intervention, and its use is becoming more prevalent especially as advances in technology bring about more accessible and cost-efficient tools for recording. Additional research on the use of video-cued ethnography and collaborative video-cued narrative for reflective practice should be pursued and is recommended for comparative research across cultures. Further study and advancement of these methods would aid in

demonstrating its broad potential for teachers' reflective practice and development.

Recommendations for Policy

Investment in Professional Growth & Development

To improve teachers' use and perceptions of CRT practices, multiple investments should be made in school systems' professional development programs. The recommendations that follow will focus on the two countries in this study: China and the U.S.

While results confirmed that teachers in both settings used and had knowledge of CRT practices, there was limited evidence in both countries that teachers made meaningful connections with families and students around their cultures and experiences. It is recommended that school systems in both countries develop a sustainable strategy to identify, fund, and deliver meaningful training for pre-service and in-service teachers on how to teach in multicultural settings while developing and modeling effective AE and CRT practices. Ideally, this training should be supported by an educational system that empowers teachers, families, and students to challenge inequity and advocate for change in their systems. Therefore, in parallel, school systems should employ educational consultants with expertise in ME, CRT, and AE to review their current processes and culture for bias, in partnership with community stakeholders and practitioners. A schedule for regular review and revision should be developed to ensure progress and transparent communication.

Critical reflection means regularly identifying and exploring our own thoughts, experiences, and ideas to improve practices and promote growth. Participants from both countries in the current study used reflection as part of their development process, however, time and approach varied greatly. In China, teachers shared that they have dedicated blocks of time daily for observation, personal development, and collaboration which provide rich opportunity for self and group reflection. However, teachers in the U.S. reported a lack of time for such development, even expressing a sense of isolation in their classrooms. At best, they met with their colleagues weekly if schedules permitted. Strengthening requirements and prioritizing time for teacher collaboration and reflection in the U.S. is highly recommended. Based on Chinese teachers' expressed interest and curiosity about teaching practices around the world, school leaders in China should consider virtual options for expanding collaboration and observation with international schools. Ultimately, school systems should prioritize professional development. For that reason, commitments should be embedded into strategic planning, funded, and articulated widely throughout the lifespan of the programs to ensure high visibility and buy-in from local leaders.

Recommendations for Practice

Practitioner Reflection and Inquiry

Culture circle participants in both countries expressed enthusiasm about the culture circle model, the dialogue it promoted, and the camaraderie they experienced. As well, U.S. teachers conveyed a need for greater connection with their colleagues to further develop as practitioners. Based on these findings, I

recommend teachers implement culture circles with colleagues in their schools. Culture circles create space in which individuals can question current realities and leverage their existing knowledge as valued contributors. Culture circles are generated by the dialogue and themes that come from the participants, so they make a powerful tool for reflection, ideation, and empowerment. Because collaborative time is limited in the U.S., culture circles should be tested at a smaller scale using classroom artifacts as prompts for discussion. In China, where more time is allotted for reflection and collaboration, this model could be broadened more deeply. Newly formed culture circles should strive to include teachers from across grade levels and subject areas. Practitioner culture circles can serve as a pilot for educators. As comfort increases, teachers in both settings can adapt the model for their classrooms, further building upon CRT practices.

Throughout this current study, all teacher participants in the U.S. expressed interest in observing their colleagues more and showed concern about their ability to prioritize the time. Based on the need to further increase opportunities for reflection in the U.S., teachers should adopt some of the practices used in China including: (a) inviting others in to observe their classrooms on a regular basis, requesting constructive feedback for reflection; (b) promoting a growth mindset by asking to informally observe others in and across subjects and grades; and (c) applying learnings to the classroom, then testing, adapting, and iterating on new practices and models.

CRT-Related Professional Development

Teaching methods that connect with students' experiences and promote understanding of other cultures are associated with better academic outcomes. Additionally, encouraging students' knowledge and understanding of their own culture is connected to increased engagement and positive self-esteem. Study findings from both the U.S. and China showed little evidence supporting teachers' use of CRT practices in relation to positive perspectives on parents and families, valuing students' lived experiences, and reshaping the curriculum. Not only did educators in both settings lack racial and ethnic diversity, but there was no evidence of discussion about race, ethnicity, or systemic inequities throughout observations, interviews, and culture circle sessions. To better leverage these practices effectively, and address the identified gaps, teachers in both countries need to increase their knowledge of ME and CRT so they can mitigate bias, develop stronger skill sets to connect and relate to students and families of all backgrounds, and reflect on the curriculum. Teachers in the U.S. and China should: (a) connect with their students, learn about their cultural backgrounds, and personalize instruction; (b) teach about cultural diversity even when the class is not diverse (this should be prioritized in China); (c) acknowledge and openly discuss and reflect on systemic inequities; and (d) advocate for professional growth and development in CRT.

Limitations

The research conducted in this comparative study sought to thoroughly investigate teachers' practices and perceptions of CRT the U.S. and China.

There are limitations related to the bias that can be present in qualitative work. The opinions of teacher participants may be influenced by the school climate, the context of the study, or other participants.

The study was also limited by the sample of participants which lacked racial and ethnic diversity in the teacher population in both the U.S. and China. There was also an imbalance of culture circle participants. In the U.S. the school principal was assigned by the district as a participant, however, in China the principal was unable to participate. there was also a lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the student population in China.

There are several limitations associated with this type of qualitative study. While small sample sizes enable investigation of research problems in a comprehensive and in-depth manner, the findings are not generalizable to every educational setting. While the results do offer insight into the practices and perceptions of the teachers who were studied, it is not reasonable to assume the same is true for all elementary school teachers. The assertions that were made do not justify making any causal claims about contexts or practices that are comparable. Finally, due to the nature of qualitative research and the complexity of the current study, it would be difficult to fully replicate.

Conclusion

Culturally relevant teaching is a powerful method that permeates the classroom environment increasing student connectedness, engagement, and achievement. When students experience a sense of belonging, it has the transformative capacity to increase self-esteem and strengthen self-identity. This

research study demonstrated how teachers leverage and perceive CRT practices in their schools.

The findings provide support for the effectiveness of culturally relevant teaching in everyday classrooms. Despite the diverse challenges faced by countries in different parts of a changing world. Taken together, these findings demonstrate and compare the ways in which elementary school teachers in China and the U.S. practice and perceive CRT. As the study was grounded in a framework linking adaptive expertise, multicultural education and CRT, the resulting assertions can influence adoption and differentiation of teaching strategies that better leverage reflection, inquiry, action, and judgment skills to move from theory to real-time teaching. The following findings were revealed from the study: (a) differences in frequency and application of practices; (b) communication of high expectations across cultures; (c) lack of family and community partnership; (d) emphasis on culturally mediated instruction in the U.S.; and (e) ample time for collaboration and reflection in China.

The world continues to transform at a rapid pace. With globalization and the growth of diverse populations, there is an even greater need to continue the examination of teachers' cultural competency and reflective practices.

Utilizing comparative research across countries is certainly evident in areas like student achievement, curriculum, and evaluation. However, little emphasis has been placed on teacher preparation and effectiveness, particularly as it relates to multicultural education, culturally relevant teaching, and adaptive expertise. The need for comparison of research, policy, and best practices in

these areas is critical for professional development of educators and their impact on students' identity development and academic achievement around the world.

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Footnotes

¹ Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

Appendix A

Informed Consent Agreement – Classroom Teacher

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to increase understanding of school climate and culture and designed to provide opportunities for educators to reflect upon other perspectives and vantage points. The research proposed would provide rich, qualitative data that can be shared and reflected upon even beyond the initial study.

What you will do in the study: For this study, you will be asked to participate in the following:

Initial Meeting & Schedule Review – The researcher will set up a meeting time with you to review the class schedule and gain insight to how a typical day flows in your class. The researcher will take notes to better plan and organize for the classroom observations and videotaping sessions.

Classroom Observations/Video – The researcher plans to observe your classroom over a one-week period to better understand the general flow of the school day and also to ensure students are used to the researcher's presence in the room. The final day will include a full day of observation that will be video recorded. Throughout the week, the researcher will take notes.

Video-Cued Interview Response - The process of video-cued, multivocal diachronic ethnography will be used to collect data. In this method, based on *Preschool in Three Cultures*, the researcher will: (a) videotape a day in your classroom, (b) edit the video down to 20-30 minutes, (c) show the edited tape to you and ask you to share your thought process to teaching and engaging with students in the video, (d) show it to Freirian *culture circles* made up of primary school teachers at the same school, and (e) show it to Freirian *culture circles* made up of primary school teachers at the school in China.

Time required: The study will require 4 partial days and one full day of classroom observation and about 3.5 hours of individual time with the teacher, outside of instructional time. Please see table below for anticipated time required:

Time Required	
Initial Meeting and Schedule Review	1.5 hours
Classroom Observations/Video	4 days (observations only)

	1 day (observations and video)
Video-Cued Interview Response	2 hours

Risks: Asking other faculty members to observe videotaped lessons of one's teaching practices may be considered a risk. To minimize this, teacher specialists from the school who, as part of their role, already observe in teacher's classrooms may be asked to participate in the culture circle review of videos from the U.S. and China.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study, however, may help the field of education to better understand how culturally relevant teaching is practiced and perceived in two cultures.

Confidentiality. Please know that your name or any other materials that will identify you will not be recorded. However, because video content will be shared with "culture circles" in your school and the school in China, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in those settings. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a locked file. Video recordings will be kept in password protected files. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, all information collected (including video and audio recordings) will be deleted upon completion of the research *{insert projected date}*. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. Your name will not be used in any report.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact:

Office of Research
Virginia Commonwealth University
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 3000
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, V. 23298
Telephone: (804) 827-2157

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, any video recordings of your participation will be destroyed.

How to withdraw from the study: If you want to withdraw from the study, please tell the researcher at that time or ask for the interview to end. There is no penalty for withdrawing. If you would like to withdraw after your materials have been submitted, please contact the researcher, Alicia Thompson, at 804.690.4637 or thompsona3@vcu.edu

Payment: You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

Questions or concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact me or my advisor at:

Alicia Thompson
Thompsona3@vcu.edu
804.690.4637

Dr. Yaoying Xu
yxu2@vcu.edu
804.828.5298

Sincerely,

Alicia R. Thompson

Agreement: I agree to participate in the research study described above.

Signature: _____ **Date.** _____

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Agreement – Culture Circle Participant

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to increase understanding of school climate and culture and designed to provide opportunities for educators to reflect upon other perspectives and vantage points. The research proposed would provide rich, qualitative data that can be shared and reflected upon even beyond the initial study.

What you will do in the study: For this study, you will be asked to participate, alongside other educators from your school, in the following:

Initial Meeting – Participants will be asked to participate in an initial meeting to meet the researcher and other participants in order to establish rapport, as well as to review the process for the video-cued culture circle. Notes may be taken to help familiarize the researcher with participants present to be best prepared for the culture circle.

Video-Cued Culture Circle – Participants will be asked to view a series of videos produced by the researcher of a teacher in their school community and one from another school. These will act as a stimulus to generate responses and encourage reflection from teachers and administrators. While the researcher may pose some initial questions or prompts to begin the discussion, the generative themes that arise from participants will guide the conversation. Responses will be audio recorded and the researcher will take notes during the process.

Time required: The study will require about 4.5 hours of individual time from you, outside of instructional time. Please see table below for anticipated time required:

Time Required	
Initial Meeting	1.5 hours
Video-Cued Culture Circle	3 hours

Risks: Asking faculty members to observe and collectively discuss videotaped lessons of teaching practices of a member of their school community may be considered a risk as others in the room may not follow confidentiality guidelines of the researcher. To minimize this, teacher specialists from the school who, as part of their role, already observe in teacher's classrooms have been asked to participate in the culture circle review of videos from the U.S. and China.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study, however, may help the field of education to better understand how culturally relevant teaching is practiced and perceived in two cultures.

Confidentiality. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, all information collected (including video and audio recordings) will be deleted upon completion of the research *{insert projected date}*. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. Your name will not be used in any report.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, any video recordings of your participation will be destroyed.

How to withdraw from the study: If you want to withdraw from the study, please tell the researcher at that time or ask for the interview to end. There is no penalty for withdrawing. If you would like to withdraw after your materials have been submitted, please contact the researcher, Alicia Thompson, at 804.690.4637 or thompsona3@vcu.edu

Payment: You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

Questions or concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact me or my advisor at:

Alicia Thompson
Thompsona3@vcu.edu
 804.690.4637

Dr. Yaoying Xu
yxu2@vcu.edu
 804.828.5298

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact:

Office of Research
Virginia Commonwealth University
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 3000
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, V. 23298
Telephone: (804) 827-2157

Sincerely,

Alicia R. Thompson

Agreement: I agree to participate in the research study described above.

Signature: _____ **Date.** _____

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Appendix C

Parent Notification Letter

Dear Parent,

My name is Alicia Thompson and I am conducting a research study in your child's class for my dissertation requirement as part of my Educational Leadership program at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). I am interested in studying teachers' knowledge of Culturally Relevant Teaching practices in two different cultures (the U.S. and China).

I will be in your child's class for the week of {insert time period}. For the majority of the week, the visits will be for a few hours in length so I may observe the general flow of the schedule and take notes. On the last day, I will video the classroom to better understand the teacher's instruction methods. Please know that your child's name or any other materials that will identify you/your child will not be recorded. You/your child will not be asked to do anything outside of his/her/your normal classroom activities and there is no risk to you/your child. Your child's participation will not affect their grade in any way.

All information collected will be identified by ID numbers and pseudonyms and stored separately from video data. Video recordings will be kept in password protected files and these files will be deleted upon completion of the research {insert projected date}. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact me at:

Alicia Thompson
Thompsona3@vcu.edu
804.690.4637

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact:

Office of Research
Virginia Commonwealth University
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 3000
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, V. 23298
Telephone: (804) 827-2157

Sincerely,
Alicia R. Thompson

Appendix D

Classroom Observation Protocol

Pre-Observation data

In order to address the needs of the Host Teacher, it is important to engage in a pre-observation discussion so that the teacher and the observer are prepared for the visit.

Welcome and Purpose (5 minutes)

- Introductions & Thanks
- Purpose. The purpose of the study is to increase understanding of school climate and culture and designed to provide opportunities for educators to reflect upon other perspectives and vantage points. The research proposed would provide rich, qualitative data that can be shared and reflected upon even beyond the initial study. Pre-observations are being used to familiarize the researcher with the school setting, the classroom culture, and the flow of each day to better understand which aspects we will want to focus on during videotaping.

Overview from Teacher to be Observed (10 minutes)

- The host teacher should be asked to provide participants with:
 - Their name, grade level, and subjects taught
 - Number of years teaching overall
 - Number of years teaching at this school
 - Number of years teaching grade level
 - Background on student population and demographics
 - Daily schedule (specifically for day of videotaping) including breaks that the teacher has throughout the day.
 - Best times to ask follow-up questions (in between lessons, during breaks, at the end of the day).

Norms for observation:

- Share with the host teacher that much of my time will be spent sitting and observing the classroom, while taking notes to prepare for the video session. However, there may be times when I move around the classroom to get a better feel for the lessons, interactions, lighting and locations to shoot from.
- Photographs of the room may be taken to prepare the videographer for the layout of the classroom and to sketch out a floor plan. Once sketches and videotaping are completed, the photos will be deleted.
- On the day of the video shoot, additional movement will likely occur because of the videotaping. While zoom features may be leveraged,

things like lighting and location may cause the need for the videographer to move as they document the day.

Appendix E

Observation Protocol

Use the following prompts to assist in capturing specific items throughout the observation, however, field notes should not be limited to these.

Teacher _____ Date _____
School _____ Grade/Level _____
Observer _____ Subject _____

Use the following prompts to assist in capturing specific items throughout the observation:

Time of Day:

Classroom setting/floor plan observed:

First Activity/Task: Content; nature of activity, what students are doing, what teacher is doing; interactions. Are introductions to lessons used? If so, how?

Student Grouping _____ Duration _____

Second Activity/Task: Content; nature of activity, what students are doing, what teacher is doing; interactions. Are introductions to lessons used? If so, how?

Student Grouping _____ Duration _____

Third Activity/Task: Content; nature of activity, what students are doing, what teacher is doing; interactions. Are introductions to lessons used? If so, how?

Student Grouping _____ Duration _____

*Note. State whether activities are sequential or are different activities/tasks done at the same time:

Time not devoted to teaching and nature of non-academic or procedural activity (e.g., management, announcements, discipline); description of non instructional event :

STUDENT DATA

(Fill this out during/after the classroom observation.)

1 - Number and gender of students; number of minorities/majority, number of languages, etc.:

Student Behaviors observed

Group dynamics overall (students typically on task, off task)

- Do group dynamics change throughout the time of day?
- Do group dynamics change during certain subjects?

Individual students that appear to require additional attention (note time of day)

- Quieter, introverted students (student description, seat location, behavior(s) observed, and subject matter taught)
- Louder, extroverted students (student description, seat location, behavior(s) observed, and subject matter taught)

Appendix F

Video-Cued Response – Culture Circle Prompts

Protocol

Researchers should provide an introduction and welcome participants. Once settled in, the following protocol should be shared:

- **Remind participants of the purpose of the research study:** The purpose of the study is to increase understanding of school climate and culture and designed to provide opportunities for educators to reflect upon other perspectives and vantage points. The hope is that the research proposed will provide rich, qualitative data that can be shared and reflected upon even beyond the initial study.
- **Share confidentiality practices.** The information that you give in this interview study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, all information collected will be deleted upon completion of the research. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. Your name will not be used in any report.
- **About today's session.** The purpose of today's session is to investigate your perceptions of the teaching practices observed in the video clips presented. One set of clips will be from a teacher in your school. The second set will be from a teacher in another school. After each clip is reviewed, I will share a prompt or two but will really be looking for a conversation to take place amongst the group on your observations, perceptions, questions, problem solving, etc.

Please know that I will take notes and an audio record this session. Do you have any questions for me? Let's begin.

Potential prompts for video clips:

1. What stands out in this clip? What did you observe? What occurred/happened in this clip? Is this something that typically occurs in your school?
2. What is the challenge? What problems exist here? What challenges were posed for you? What challenges were posed for the student? What questions emerge for you?

3. How frequent is this type of occurrence? Is this a typical interaction with this student/students in your classroom? Would this response be used with all children? Why might this response be used for this child?
4. What resonated for you? What did you observe? What thoughts did you have?
- 5.
6. What would you do in this situation? How might you handle this differently. Why? Would it be handled differently at your school?

*Note. Prompts will be adapted to conform with video clip content.

Appendix G

Video-Cued Response - Participant Prompts

Protocol

Researchers should welcome and introduce themselves to participants. Once settled in, the following protocol should be shared:

- **Remind participants of the purpose of the research study:** The purpose of the study is to increase understanding of school climate and culture and designed to provide opportunities for educators to reflect upon other perspectives and vantage points. The hope is that the research proposed will provide rich, qualitative data that can be shared and reflected upon even beyond the initial study.
- **Share confidentiality practices.** The information that you give in this interview study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, all information collected will be deleted upon completion of the research. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. Your name will not be used in any report.
- **About today's session.** The purpose of today's session is to investigate the thoughts behind your teaching practices and interactions on one specific day. Since we do not have the capacity to review the whole day, the video you are about to see showcases approximately 30 minutes of a day in your classroom. The video has been broken into several clips. After each clip is reviewed, I will provide a prompt(s) to begin the reflection. Notes and an audio recording will be taken on responses during this session.

Do you have any questions for me? Let's begin.

Potential prompts for video clips:

1. Explain what occurred in the clip.
2. How frequent is this type of occurrence? Is this a typical interaction with the student/students in your classroom?
3. What challenges were posed for you? What challenges were posed for the student. What were your thoughts in responding?
4. Is this a typical response? If given more time to reflect, would you change your response. How. Why?
5. Would this response be used with all children? Why use this response for this child?

*Note. Prompts will be adapted to conform with video clip content.