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EXPLORING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PREPAREDNESS
FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

By

Mary T. Brauch Petersen

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Administration and Supervision

Under the Supervision of: Dr. Karen Hayes

and

Dr. Lana Danielson

Omaha, Nebraska

November, 2005

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DISSERTATION TITLE

Exploring Teachers' Perceptions of Their Preparedness
For Culturally Responsive Teaching

BY

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Exploring Teachers' Perceptions of Their Preparedness For
Culturally Responsive Teaching

Mary T. Brauch Petersen

University of Nebraska, 2005

Advisors: Dr. Karen Hayes and Dr. Lana Danielson

This study sought to examine how teachers perceived they were prepared for culturally responsive teaching (CRT). CRT refers to the ability of a teacher to use prior knowledge or experience to either teach children of diversity certain content topics or to teach all children in the classroom cultural topics. Culturally responsive teaching is demonstrated by teachers' possessing "(a) knowledge and sensitivity about cultural influences, (b) ability to provide a supportive learning context, (c) appropriate instruction and assessment, and (d) facilitation of parental involvement" (Daunic, Correa, & Reyes-Blanes, 2004, p. 106).

This study attempted to answer the following based on a review of the relevant literature:

1. How do teachers describe their preparation for culturally diverse teaching?

2. How is the preparation teachers receive for culturally responsive teaching integrated into their classroom practice?

This study was a qualitative analysis of 6 case studies, constructed from data gathered from personal interviews, field notes, and reflective journals of 6 secondary teachers from a Midwest, suburban school district of just over 3,000 students and 236 teachers, 80 who are in the high school. Findings showed that for this population no teachers in this study had any racially diverse childhood cultural experiences but all gained some awareness of other cultures in college. In addition, teachers received no education class/in-service experiences in CRT. These teachers experienced difficulty in communicating between home and school with their English language learner students (ELLs) and parents. Teachers found language learning, especially Spanish, an important CRT skill. Teachers suggested more CRT in-service opportunities, especially at the building level, important components of a district CRT policy. Teachers thought more time allowance for reflection and collaboration of CRT lesson planning would provide them with more opportunities to use CRT throughout the content areas.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

I hated that eye patch. It made me feel different. It made me feel that I stood out in a crowd and that everyone was staring at me. It made me sad. I had been born with an eye deformity known as "lazy eye." My right eye muscle did not work properly, and the left one turned in slightly. My ever-vigilant nurse-mother noticed this tiny defect when I was a baby. "Hardly noticeable, only when you are tired, dear," she often said to me. It meant I had to wear an eye patch to strengthen the muscle, which eventually led to surgery to bring partial function to that eye. Even today this experience is a constant reminder to me of what it means to have a disability, to stand out, to be different.

The eye patch was the worst. I remember one day in particular, when I was very young, perhaps four, and I was wearing it while shopping with my mother. People stared and pointed and looked at me that day. "What happened to that poor child's eye?" one unthinking woman blurted out as I was trying to hide the fact that I was wearing it by keeping my head down, focusing only on my shiny, black patent leather shoes. Later that day, I even went so far as to draw an eye on the patch, hoping that I could stop the

piercing stares by camouflaging that hideous patch. When I was older and had to wear it to school, I was continually laughed at and made fun of. I was thrilled when I no longer had to wear it.

I heard someone say that we all have handicaps. Some are on the outside, where everyone can see them. But others are on the inside, and only that person knows that they exist. These hidden handicaps can be much more painful than those on the outside. As I look back now, I am sure that this rather minor flaw helped me to be more tolerant of others who are "different." It also helped me to understand why others feel uncomfortable because they are different. In a rather roundabout way, my own personal experience led me to become interested in how those from different cultures must feel when they arrive in a new culture with different skin color and different ways of dressing and speaking. My physical failing was a catalyst for an interest in helping me to reach out to those who felt the pain of being singled out for ridicule. In the role of classroom teacher, I see many examples of how students are discriminated against, not only because of physical deformities but because of cultural differences as well.

Teaching today centers on classrooms of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teachers depend on their pre-service and in-service training and their own experiences to effectively reach their students, regardless of cultural background. This culturally responsive teaching affects all learners within a classroom. For example, Curran (2003) stated that many teachers felt lost when it comes to teaching their limited English proficiency students. She suggested that classroom teachers today face problems that are compounded by the fact that many students of diversity must learn a new language and a new culture. She further advised that a strong sense of community and an embracement of linguistic diversity are crucial to the success of a school's multicultural plan.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers perceived they were prepared for culturally responsive teaching. This study was an exploration of regular classroom teachers' understandings about and the effectiveness of their pre-service and in-service training regarding cultural diversity and best practices for assisting second language learners.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer these specific questions which were based on a review of the relevant literature:

1. How do teachers describe their preparation for culturally diverse teaching?

2. How is the preparation teachers receive for culturally responsive teaching integrated into their classroom practice?

Method

This study was a qualitative analysis of 6 case studies, constructed from data gathered from personal interviews, field notes, and email journals. According to Creswell (2003), in qualitative research "the researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data" (p. 18). Originally, 7 teachers agreed to participate in the study. But one of the teachers gave only pre- and debriefing interviews. Since the teacher offered no email journal observations, this participant was dropped from the study.

The case study was selected to structure this inquiry because through this method, "In private and personal ways, ideas are structured, highlighted, subordinated, connected,

embedded in contexts, embedded *with* illustration, laced with favor and doubt" (Stake as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 146). The interview was selected because "The interview is the raw material for the later process of meaning analysis" (Kvale, 1996, p. 144). Journal writing was utilized since, "The power the author has is the ability to develop a reflexive text. Such a text enables readers to understand the author a bit better. . . ." (Weitzman as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 315).

This study included the reflections of teachers from a Midwest, suburban school district of just over 3,000 students and 236 teachers, 80 who are in the high school. Participants were invited to take part in the study through a building newsletter sent via the Internet. The 6 teachers who responded were selected for the study. In order to protect their identities, these 6 teachers selected their own pseudo names for the study. The names of the students used by the participants in their email responses were changed by the researcher in order to protect their identities.

The entire study lasted 12 weeks. The first 2 weeks involved interviewing the teachers, recording the data, and then returning the data for member checks. During the next

8 weeks, the teachers reflected upon culturally responsive teaching experiences they encountered both within and outside of their classrooms and submitted their responses to the researcher by email. The next 2 weeks involved debriefing interviews.

The study was constructed around the following framework. First, scripted, audio-taped interviews with members of the study were undertaken in the spring of 2005. Email journal entries containing teachers' reactions to culturally responsive teaching within their classrooms for an 8-week period following their interview were collected via email. This time period was selected in order to obtain rich, meaningful data. According to Silverman, "Like many other qualitative approaches, textual analysis depends upon very detailed data analysis. To make such analysis effective, it is imperative that you have a limited body of data with which to work" (Silverman as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 353).

Interviews were conducted within individual classrooms of the study participants. Field notes were taken at all interviews, and all interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed for analysis. Additional notes were taken concerning the physical appearance of each classroom,

noting any multicultural presence in the room as an additional way to contextualize the participants' comments. This presence could be noted in bulletin boards, banners, flags, student work, statuary or other signs of the integration of diversity topics. Analysis of the data provided emerging themes which were validated by outside experts.

Definition of Terms

The following operational definitions of terms are used throughout this study. The definitions without citation indicate working definitions constructed by the researcher.

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT). Culturally responsive teaching refers to the ability of a teacher to use prior knowledge or experience to either teach children of diversity certain content topics or to teach all children in the classroom cultural topics. Culturally responsive teaching is demonstrated by teachers' possessing "(a) knowledge and sensitivity about cultural influences, (b) ability to provide a supportive learning context, (c) appropriate instruction and assessment, and (d) facilitation of parental involvement" (Daunic, Correa, & Reyes-Blanes, p. 106).

Culture. Banks (2002) defined culture as "the values, symbols, interpretations and perspectives that distinguish one people from another in modernized societies" (p. 53).

Ethnic-Specific. This term referred to "programs, curricula, and educational policies that focus on one designated ethnic group, such as Anglo-Americans or Asian-Americans, rather than on a range of ethnic and cultural groups" (Banks, 1994, p. 102).

Multicultural education. Multicultural education as defined by Gorski (2000) is a holistic movement based on social justice and equality in education and experience. He stated that schools are the tools that are instrumental in reaching the goal of equality for all within the larger society.

Banks (1994) maintained that multicultural education deals with race, class, gender, and their interaction. An important goal of multicultural education is not only to give students cognitive skills but also to give them the knowledge to think critically about and analyze the knowledge they have gained (Banks, 1996). Banks (2002) later stated that when people become a part of a range of ethnic experiences, they are more able to experience a greater pleasure in the whole human event. Torres-Guzman

and Carter (2000) suggested that not only is it the goal of multicultural education to recognize the differences in cultures and help maintain equality among them, but it is also inherent within these programs that changes take place in those areas that harbor prejudices and inequality.

Multiculturalism. Awareness of cultural diversity, coupled with a program to address this issue, is defined as multiculturalism (Torres-Guzman and Carter, 2000).

Students of Limited English Proficiency (LEPs) and English Language Learners (ELLs). The federal legislation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) defined LEPs as students

(a) being 3 to 21 years old, (b) enrolled in elementary or secondary school, (c) either not born in the United States or speaking a language other than English, and (d) owing to difficulty in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English, not meeting the state's proficient level of achievement to successfully achieve in English-only classrooms.

(Abedi, 2004, p. 5)

In this study, students in this category were referred to as either students of limited English proficiency or English Language Learners.

Delimitations

This study was based on a convenience sample of 6 volunteer teachers from one school. It is possible that the experiences and perceptions of these 6 people do not represent those of the larger number of teachers in the school. Also, the selection of participants in this study does not take into consideration the different subject areas or the content materials that might have prepared one teacher better than another to recognize and develop culturally responsive skills within their respective classrooms.

Limitations

A limitation to this study was its duration. This was a qualitative study, lasting approximately one semester. A longer period might produce different outcomes. Additionally, this study was potentially limited by the amount of time and effort that each teacher was willing to put into his/her personal email journal. Finally, the researcher brings to the study certain biases. Stake (2003) suggested that in the case of the collective case study, "Even when emphatic and respectful of each person's realities, the researcher decides what the case's own story

is, or at least what will be included in the report" (p. 144).

Assumptions

The underlying assumption of this study was that teachers would be able to reflect truthfully upon their perceptions of their preparedness for culturally responsive teaching within their classrooms through the use of pre and debriefing interviews and an email journal of classroom experiences over a period of eight weeks.

Significance of the Study

This study provided the participants with an opportunity to reflect upon their perceptions of how well prepared they felt they were to face the increasing cultural diversity within their classrooms. It also provided them with an occasion to challenge themselves to look at their own classrooms and discover opportunities for culturally responsive teaching. This study may provide both colleges and school administrators with ideas about teachers' perceptions of how they were prepared to teach in today's diverse classrooms. These insights can be applied not only to teacher preparation classes and staff development opportunities but also the findings might be transferable to other similar districts.

Finally this study might prompt other qualitative studies as a result of inquiry raised by this research.

In summary, Chapter 1 presented the problem and related background information. The research questions were listed, along with the significance of the problem. Definitions, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions were presented. Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant and significant research literature on pre-service multicultural education, practicing teacher research, foreign language teachers, multicultural issues in evaluation, and the role of university educators. The specific methodology employed in this study is explained in Chapter 3. The rationale for the selection of the qualitative research design, the research approach, the interview questions, the sample, and the data collection are also detailed. Chapter 4 contains the case studies. Chapter 5 describes the emerging themes and how they relate to the Review of Literature contained in Chapter 2. This chapter also gives implications and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

As school districts increasingly focus attention on state assessments and benchmarks, multicultural education appears to be in danger of being shelved as less important and less pressing (Bohn & Sleeter, 2000). Marshall (1996) addressed the fact that while this lack of interest in diversity training is developing, children from ethnic and racial minority cultures now make up the largest percentage of students for most large urban school districts. States, seeing increasing numbers of culturally diverse student populations, are providing guidelines and requirements concerning culturally responsive teaching. Regulations, requirements, and competency statements were reviewed by Miller, Strosnider, and Dooley (2000) showing that 41 states required ethnic training for all teachers.

University educators, who provide many of these training opportunities, feel challenged and anxious in the multicultural field. Gallavan (1998, 2000) found that the demands of such course work, which involved students who did not see the value of such classes, regular classroom teachers who believed they could not find a place for it in their content areas, and student resistance and anger

toward the topics of the course, led many instructors to seek out other teachers for support. Some even elected not to teach multicultural classes if offered an opportunity to teach something else.

This chapter presents a selected review of culturally responsive teaching for student teachers, veteran elementary and secondary teachers, content area teachers, and classroom teachers of English Language Learners. According to Gay (2000), culturally responsive teaching has the following characteristics:

- It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.
- It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities.
- It uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles.
- It teaches students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages.

- It incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (p. 29).

In addition, Irvine and Armento (2005) proposed four critical elements that support culturally responsive pedagogy:

1. Culture is a powerful variable that influences teaching and learning processes.
2. Effective teaching research is compatible with and supportive of the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy.
3. Teacher knowledge and reflection are important considerations when designing and implementing a culturally responsive lesson.
4. High standards and high expectations are important components of culturally responsive pedagogy (p. 4).

*Studies of Student Teachers in
Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Studies have identified pre-service teachers as unprepared for culturally responsive teaching (Bohn & Sleeter, 2000; Boyle-Baise, 1998; Pattnaik, 1997; Sparks & Butt, 2000; Weisman & Garza, 2002). Sparks and Butt (2000)

noted that student teachers developed a better sense of self and felt better able to respond to their culturally different students by first examining their own values while working toward treating all of their students as equals.

Many educators believe that pre-service teachers lack sufficient intercultural contact or knowledge about other cultures (Bohn & Sleeter, 2000). A study by Pattnaik (1997) suggested that students did indeed possess stereotyped beliefs at the onset of the class. However, after a period of self-reflection and inner dialogue, students tested at the end of the class were found to be less irrational, hateful, or insecure in their multicultural judgments.

Boyle-Baise (1998) examined the importance of a multicultural teacher education class based on experiences in community service learning and whether this encounter actually did raise pre-service teachers' consciousness and increase their knowledge about cultural diversity. Findings indicated this community experience was the first time the students had ever had real exposure to another race and culture and that the experience allowed them to form a general awareness and comfort with ethnic groups. Involvement with children from different ethnic groups,

church groups, or community organizations such as the Boys Club or the Girls Club or other culturally diverse groups also was encouraged (Gay, 1997).

Weisman and Garza (2002) questioned pre-service teachers who had enrolled in a required multicultural class designed to help students think more positively about diversity. Implications of this study suggested that many teachers have not been exposed to other culture groups. Therefore, when problems arose when working with students from subordinated groups in their teacher preparation, they tended not to understand the issues of power, bias, and privilege that affected teaching in diverse settings.

*Teaching Pre-service Teachers about
Culturally Responsive Evaluation Tools*

Ambrosio, Hogan, Miller and Sequin (2001), Ambrosio and Sequin (2002), and Daunic, et al. (2004) studied pre-service programs and their impact on culturally responsive evaluation methods. Ambrosio, et al. (2001) analyzed an assessment plan for evaluating multicultural/diversity learning outcomes covered by pre-service teachers during their final student teaching semester. These outcomes were written after the research director and project participants obtained ideas from practicing P-12 teachers

in the state, teachers from various university departments, community representatives, and outside evaluators. From this research, a series of assessments was used to evaluate their final lesson plans of the semester.

A 3-year longitudinal study was developed to investigate the mastery of multicultural content knowledge, attitudes, and performance. Results showed that over half the participants, who were over 90% white, fell below proficiency range on this criterion-referenced assessment. According to this study, student teachers "need more experience to perfect the skills necessary to serve diverse populations and build inclusive curriculum. As with most teacher-preparation programs, we are driven by state requirements for licensure and national guidelines for accreditation" (Ambrosio et al., 2001, p. 9).

Ambrosio and Sequin (2002) used vignettes as a tool to better prepare student teachers to succeed in recognizing cultural diversity in the classroom. In this study, "A vignette [short case study] involves a written description of a situation created for specific educational purposes, with possible solutions and conclusions omitted" (p. 2). The authors of this study advanced the idea that critical thinking and application of theory and practice have

benefits to student teachers in the classroom, especially in the area of evaluating LEPs. They stated that "The need for multiple measures and higher level perspectives is imperative if diversity assessment is to become more comprehensive, accurate, and fair" (p. 6).

In summary, most states required at least one course in multiculturalism, whether to obtain a teaching license or to renew one. Most pre-service teachers admitted to having certain stereotypes about different cultures because most of these student teachers did not have previous experience outside of their own culture group. The literature suggested that positioning student teachers in situations that helped them to experience different cultures provided valuable culturally responsive teaching experiences for them.

*Studies of Veteran Teachers in
Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Few districts are not affected by cultural and language multiplicity. Popkewitz (1999) suggested that the power of some groups typically excluded those of diversity in the decision making process, causing some districts to ignore their responsibility toward diversity training. However, a study by Rios and Montecinos (1999) showed

ethnically different participants believed that schools are more than just a place to teach and to learn academics. They believed that schools are the place in which to improve the *total* community through training in social justice.

Even those teachers who received culturally responsive teaching instruction do not always feel adept using strategies within the classroom. Teachers at all grade levels admitted a certain frustration at achieving a feeling of accomplishment in multicultural classrooms (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Gallavan, 1998, 2000; Marshall, 1996; Paccione, 2000; Phuntsog, 2001; Wilson, 2003).

Gallavan (1998) investigated why experienced teachers did not use effective multicultural education practices. Findings suggested that in order to provide worthwhile multicultural experiences, teachers, staff, and administrators must be given meaningful in-service training in the field by qualified facilitators that might also include present staff, students of color, parents, and community leaders.

In Gallvan's study, experienced teachers responded by sharing their concerns with current teachers who are unsure how to integrate multicultural materials into their

curriculum without a fear of decontextualizing the content of their classes. Some teachers simply were not interested in multicultural education because they did not feel a need for it in their classrooms or in society in general. Others believed multicultural education topics too "risky" and they felt uncomfortable in dealing with topics of prejudice, stereotyping, or intolerance. A direct correlation between teacher lack of enthusiasm for multicultural education and their fear of not being equipped to handle diversity in their classrooms was discovered in studies by Gallavan (2000) and Marshall (1996).

Veteran teachers agreed direct contact in community orientated programs is more helpful in raising their cultural awareness than only classroom experiences. Phuntsog (2001) studied what teachers perceived to be the best way to train for culturally responsive teaching. Ninety-six percent agreed that it is critical for teachers to create learning activities that recognize and acknowledge the diverse cultures within each classroom. These teachers recommended placing all student teachers in schools that are culturally diverse in order to expose them to the challenges of multicultural education. Educators

agreed that they need to have this experience to teach an appreciation of cultural similarities and differences. Research indicated that teachers are more committed to multicultural education when they experience cultural immersion experiences and specific course work in multicultural education (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Paccione, 2000).

Gallavan's (1998) research showed that content teachers who are interested in diversity issues and who have investigated their own biases are valuable assets in culturally responsive teaching. There is evidence that content teachers who used cultural adjustment, embellishment, integration, and analysis in their curricula felt success in their effort and saw a growth in their students' cultural awareness (Zahorik & Novak, 1996). Even educational materials used by culturally responsive teachers must be carefully examined before final selection. Somova (1999) found that students received stereotyped messages from classroom materials and cautioned teachers in their selection of texts, even those termed "multicultural."

Foreign language teachers appear to be excellent resources in schools to help both students and staff

develop cultural understanding. Research indicated that language teachers are not only perceived as being instrumental in giving students positive perceptions of culture but that they are also an effective means for presenting cultural experience and understanding in the classroom (Wright, 1999). This research suggested that foreign language teachers were perceived by secondary language students as being extremely influential in forming their positive attitudes toward a foreign culture. If the main objective of language teachers is to broaden and enliven the lives of students and society (Shanahan, 1997), it follows that one cannot learn another language without some cultural knowledge about the people who speak it (Rowan, 2001).

In summary, research by Gallavan (1998, 2000) and Marshall (1996) indicated classroom teachers acknowledged that they did not teach multicultural topics because they did not know how, did not see the need, and felt prejudices themselves. Marshall found many content teachers admitted that they feared adding diversity topics to their classroom presentations because doing so would take away from topics they felt important in their particular areas of specialization. Research suggested that teachers were more

committed to culturally responsive teaching when they experienced cultural immersion experiences and specific course work in multicultural education (Boyle-Baise 1998; Phuntsog, 2001).

Using Culturally Responsive Teaching in Evaluation

As teachers reach a higher level of culturally responsive teaching methods attained through university training, staff development, and classroom experience, recognizing successful instructional methods for linguistically diverse students can make evaluation tools more accurate and functional. Nieto (1999) saw teachers as the most important forces in addressing the problems facing multicultural issues in education and in the evaluation process saying, "When teachers understand the light in the eyes of their students as evidence that they are capable and worthy human beings, then schools can become places of hope and affirmation for students of all backgrounds" (p. 176).

Multicultural issues in evaluation are complex because they involve intricate communication skills. According to intercultural communication theorist Neuliep (2000), the world's 10,000 languages have many similarities: nouns, verbs, adjectives, negatives, and a system or pattern to

put them together so that those who speak a particular language can understand each other.

However, Neuliep (2000) suggested that children not only learn the vocabulary of their culture's language, but they also learn the unique way their particular language is put together, how specific sentences and phrases are formed, and the style in which their distinct communication patterns are produced, causing meaning and interpretations. Teachers who failed to recognize these differences in attempting to communicate with diverse students made final evaluations difficult and inaccurate. Cultures communicate meanings in different ways, making universal interpretations difficult (Delpit, 1995).

Research by Marshall (1996) and Clark (2002) has investigated teacher concern about fair evaluation of all students. Marshall (1996) studied the responses of experienced teachers who questioned their ability to fairly evaluate all students because of their lack of contact with different culture groups. Clark (2002) in her investigation of effective multicultural curriculum practices found that few university programs offer coursework on how to prepare teachers in the content areas from a multicultural perspective, allowing little, if any, guidelines for

evaluating students of diversity in these subjects. She stated that standardized tests, widely used in classrooms today, are biased to favor white, middle-class, male students, and they measure test-taking prowess, not content area knowledge.

Clark (2002) maintained that most teachers favor standardization over alternative methods of evaluation, such as oral reports, research assignments, portfolios, and field projects because of faster and less subjective grading. She found this standardization leads to unfair evaluation of culturally diverse students, who tend to do better on alternative methods of evaluation.

*Culturally Responsive Teaching
for English Language Learners*

Williams (2001) maintained language is the tool used to make sense of the environment and that it usually takes ELLs 2 to 3 years to develop proficiency in communicative language. This proficiency can be enhanced by activities that engage students in reading, talking, and listening that result in language acquisition. Jacobson (1996) argued that a new culture pushes students away from familiar meaning systems, causing them to be placed in situations where

familiar interpretation methods are no longer reliable.

Researchers studied the effects of culturally responsive teaching on ELL success (Alcala, 1992; David & Capraro, 2001; Egbert & Simich-Dudgeon, 2001; Gibbons, 2003; Pica, 2002; Scribner & Scribner, 1999; Short, 2000; Tindall & Nisbet, 2004). Short (2000) maintained that the success of ELLs depends on educating all regular classroom teachers to modify their courses to include English as a Second Language Standards. She cites these standards as being able to use English to participate in social interactions, achieve academically in all subject areas, and produce communication appropriate to audience. Alcala (1992) suggested that the assessment of these students should include cooperative activities, continuous observations by the teacher, both formal and informal, a variety of student work examples, and anecdotal descriptions of the student behaviors and accomplishments. He also stressed the importance of parental input and involvement in the assessment process. He maintained that the most success is reached when students are surrounded by a safe, open, and warm classroom environment. Dong (2004) urged classroom teachers to be prepared to introduce

discipline-specific language to ELLs to further student success:

They should also pay attention to the functional use of language in classroom discussions. Language in the classroom focuses on such elements as checking for understanding (as in "Do you follow?"), summarizing (as in "The main point here is. . ."), and defining (as in "What does this mean?"). A language learner who is unfamiliar with the functional use of language in classroom discussions or who has acquired a functional use of a different language in the classroom might have difficulty understanding, let alone participating in, the discussion (p. 2).

Scribner and Scribner (1999) studied schools which scored above average on standardized test scores on the Texas State Assessment System. They discovered that teachers in successful schools recognized the fact ELLs needed an adjustment period to avoid misplacement in special education classes. In addition, results showed that drawing parents and the larger Mexican-American community into the learning process brought about greater student learning.

Students in classrooms surrounded by an environment in which teachers were extremely caring and nurturing to their students performed better on tests than students who did not feel this empathy. Scribner and Scribner (1999) stated that these successful teachers also emphasized accountability in their classrooms and this accountability led to student success.

Gibbons (2003) and David and Capraro (2001) studied teachers using culturally responsive teaching methods, suggesting university training and classroom experiences provide successful instructional methods for linguistically diverse students and can make evaluation tools more accurate and functional. Gibbons investigated science inquiry students in the process of developing English-language proficiency and literacy. The evaluation instrument used in the study included linguistically and culturally sensitive instructional methods for field-dependent ELLs studying mathematics and science in linguistically diverse fifth-grade science classrooms.

Gibbons (2003) suggested that teachers act more as facilitators rather than as transmitters of information with new language learners in the difficult area of science inquiry. She also proposed that science teachers provide a

structured inquiry experience for English learners, particularly advanced organizers, modeled talk, real strategies, and visual scaffolding which all prove to be crucial to student success. More importantly, it would create a classroom community supportive of cultural diversity, a concept supported by the work of David and Capraro (2001).

Pica (2002) investigated ways English teachers used classroom discussions to help ELLs in thematic units on film and literature. Results indicated that while teacher led discussions were beneficial, content teachers needed to find additional opportunities to promote language leaning through the regular classroom curriculum. Egbert and Simich-Dudgeon (2001) suggested that social studies teachers incorporate personal narratives and story telling into the ELL's unit of study. The authors maintained that since many cultures have strong oral traditions, incorporating these stories into daily lesson plans proved beneficial to these learners. Tindall and Nisbet (2004) maintained that since ELLs are not a homogenous group, content teachers are faced with additional challenges when planning for their classroom success.

Banister and Maher (1998) found that teachers saw ELLs as resources within the school. These students provided insight and knowledge of culture that proved to be invaluable to both the classroom and the school community. Bruner (1996) endorsed student input into their own education. He stated that teaching takes place on many levels, with or without a teacher. It is the interaction, he suggested, that really brings about learning. He wrote that each classroom was "a sub-community of mutual learners, with the teacher orchestrating the proceedings" (p. 21-22).

In summary, the research suggested that classroom teachers lacked skills in properly evaluating students of diversity. Relying on evaluation of these students with only standardized tests prevented many students from demonstrating their knowledge of certain classroom topics. Research indicated that teachers need more information on evaluating students of diversity. Students of diversity offer opportunities to enrich and enliven the classrooms of today and offer other students expanded cultural experiences.

Best Practices for Culturally Responsive Teaching

Research by Gallavan (1998, 2000) suggested that if pre-service and current teachers are to grow in multicultural understanding, professors at the university level must be prepared to help pre-service and in-service teachers in their cultural growth by offering intensive training in diversity topics. These studies indicated that university teachers who teach in the content areas, especially on the secondary level, must be willing to combine their subject materials with culturally responsive teacher training techniques.

Students themselves seem open to learning about cultural responsiveness. Nieto (1999) suggested that students were very interested in studying more about cultural differences. Students also wanted their schools to put a greater emphasis on multicultural education because they found it interesting and because they realized that they would be faced with many different cultures throughout their lifetimes, causing them to be curious about their own belief systems and personal prejudices. Solomon (2002) discovered that companies search out a workforce that is sensitive to cultural diversity. The role of schools in developing a workforce rich in diversity is not just

politically correct; it reflects how American society has emerged.

Toll (2001) suggested that any school change today must recognize the postmodern idea that difference should be celebrated and recognized and suggested that it is necessary to look beyond the "whiteness" of those in power and see the areas or units in which minority individuals are underrepresented. Howard (1999) stated, "I cannot separate 'whiteness' from 'being white' from 'being of European ancestry.' Any attempt to do so is merely a word game" (p. 111). He goes on to say that the goal for white people in attaining racial identity development is not to "un-become" white but rather to transform the meaning of whiteness to include greater understanding of diversity.

Summary

The selected review of the literature suggested many educators believed pre-service teachers lacked sufficient intercultural contact or knowledge about other cultures. Placing student teachers in situations that helped them experience different cultures provided valuable culturally responsive teaching experience for them. The literature also suggested that experienced teachers admitted a certain frustration at achieving a feeling of accomplishment in

multicultural classrooms, especially with their ELL students.

The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers perceived they were prepared for culturally responsive teaching. This study was an exploration of regular classroom teachers' understandings about and effectiveness of their pre-service and in-service training regarding cultural diversity and best practices for assisting second language learners. These perceptions could provide better in-service training for teachers. Chapter 3 explains the methodology for collection and analysis of this data regarding teacher perceptions of how they were prepared for culturally responsive teaching.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Chapter 3 describes specific procedures employed in this study. The description includes the rationale for selecting a qualitative research design, descriptions of the population and sample selected, the data procedures, and the data analysis approach.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers perceived they were prepared for culturally responsive teaching. This study was an exploration of regular classroom teachers' understandings about and effectiveness of their pre-service and in-service training regarding cultural diversity and best practices for assisting English Language Learners.

Research Design

This study interviewed 6 teachers from a Midwest suburban high school in order to explore their perceptions of how well their pre-service and in-service opportunities have prepared them to assist students of diversity and to employ culturally responsive teaching within their classrooms.

This study was qualitative in approach and was based on obtaining data from personal interviews with member checks, observations of a multicultural presence in the individual classrooms of the participants, and the reflective journals written via the Internet. The data collected was presented first as individual case studies of the participants and then collapsed to present patterns of response across the cases.

The study was based on the phenomenology tradition of qualitative research which, according to Creswell (2003), is the study of shared human experience of a phenomenon conducted over a prolonged period using a small number of participants. A qualitative analysis was conducted using 6 case studies constructed with data gathered from personal interviews, member checks, field notes, and email journals over a 12-week period. The case study was selected to structure this inquiry because through this method, "In private and personal ways, ideas are structured, highlighted, subordinated, connected, embedded in contexts, embedded with illustration, laced with favor and doubt" (Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 146). The 6 participants in this study used their own words to describe their perceptions of culturally responsive teaching.

Researcher's Role

From 1971-1984, I served as a Spanish teacher, first in a small private school and then in a large metropolitan school. In 2000, I began a certification program for teaching English language learners. At that time, I began teaching ELL courses for a private company and for a local community college. Working with adults was a new experience for me. It was then that I discovered that those who had experienced little or no formal education in their native language struggled to learn a new language far more than those who had received a formal education.

This knowledge prompted me to begin volunteering at a local center for Spanish speaking women. The classes contained a wide range of Hispanic women, ranging in age from 18 to 70. For those women who were illiterate in Spanish, basic training in reading and writing in Spanish led to faster language acquisition in English.

I returned to teach Spanish in a small metropolitan school district in 2001. I also taught in the ELL department, working with students who were experiencing reading difficulties.

These experiences allowed me to bring unique ideas, values, and beliefs to the study. Every effort was made to

look at all data objectively. These attributes guided me in how I formed and shaped the study and collected and interpreted the data.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Permission to do this study has been obtained from the district central office. Authorization for research was sought from the Institutional Review Board in February of 2005 after committee approval. Documentation authorizing the study can be found in the Appendix.

Data Collection Procedures

The study was being carried out in a suburban school district. This district was made up of 236 teachers with 80 at the high school. This study was conducted with 6 of the high school teachers.

All teachers in the high school were invited to participate in this study through a building electronic newsletter containing the following message:

All High School Teachers: You are invited to participate in a study on culturally responsive teaching conducted by Mary Petersen. This study is in partial fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education through the University of Nebraska at Omaha. This study will be conducted here at the

high school and will involve ten high school teachers. The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers perceive they were prepared for culturally responsive teaching. The first ten teachers to respond will be selected for the study. Those selected will be notified by email. The participants will each undergo a private scripted interview in their respective classrooms during March 2005. Over an eight-week period participants will submit 6 reflections via email about the culturally responsive teaching which occurs in their classrooms. At the conclusion of the study, each of the ten participants will meet with the researcher to debrief about their insights.

The data were collected over a 12-week period. The participants each underwent a private, scripted interview in their respective classrooms during March. Notes were taken during each audio taped interview and then were transcribed and analyzed. Care was taken to ask each respondent the same questions, although participants were encouraged to interpret each question in their own way.

The interview protocol was selected as an important component in data collection since, "The interview is the raw material for the later process of meaning analysis. The

quality of the original interview is decisive for the quality of the later analysis, verification, and reporting of the interviews" (Kvale, 1996, p. 144). After the taped interview was transcribed, a member check was conducted by giving each participant a copy of his or her interview and the opportunity to verify or clarify his/her statements. Janesick (1994) proposed that it is the obligation of the researcher to allow participants to review the materials they have contributed to the research study. In addition, the physical appearance of each classroom at the time of the interview was noted for culturally responsive teaching. The researcher observed any artifacts or other memorabilia denoting a multicultural presence within each classroom. If a visual presence was noted, an additional interior question was asked to provide a context for understanding its significance. This was also done at the debriefing interview.

The variety of methods that were used for collecting data, including the interview protocol, member checks, journal entries, and field notes, provided a large amount of qualitative material that captured the personal experiences and interpretations of the participants. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) described this qualitative research as

being both innovative and creative, leading to a triangulation of the data. They asserted that since humans are complex, in order to fully understand this complexity, triangulation, or a composite use of several methods of data collection, allows for the most accurate results in qualitative research. Eisner (1998) referred to this use of multiple sources as structural corroboration, a necessary tool for the researcher to use in order to "substantiate the conclusions one wants to draw" (p. 55).

Initial Interview

This section included all of the questions used in the first interview held in March, 2005, along with the rationale for the questions. These questions were based upon the findings of the literature review to elicit opinions of the teacher participants and have been broken down to demonstrate how the scripted interview was constructed.

Interview Question #1

Tell me about the neighborhood in which you grew up.

Interview Question #2

Did your experiences change in college?

Interview Question #3

Did you have the opportunity to expand your knowledge of different cultures in college?

Interview Question #4

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) refers to the ability of a teacher to use prior knowledge or experience to either teach children of diversity certain content topics, or to teach all children in a classroom cultural topics. CRT teachers possess "(a) knowledge and sensitivity about cultural influences, (b) ability to provide a supportive learning context, (c) appropriate instruction and assessment, and (d) facilitation of parental involvement" (Daunic, et al., 2004, p. 106). In your teacher training program, what do you recall hearing about culturally responsive teaching?

Interview questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 were composed to document diversity experiences the participant had prior to actual classroom teaching. Work by Bohn and Sleeter (2000), Boyle-Baise (1998), Pattnaik (1997), Rios and Montecinos (1999), and Weisman and Garza (2002) suggested that most white teachers have had little or no contact with diverse groups prior to their teaching experiences, and most have

had little formal training, either in college or in staff development, in culturally responsive teaching.

Interview Question #5

How comfortable are you with presenting culturally responsive lessons within your content area?

Studies into teachers and their abilities to respond to students of diversity carried out by Marshall (1996), Gallavan (1998), and Zahorik and Novak (1996) suggested that experienced teachers feel a need to share their multicultural experiences with their students but feel unprepared and untrained in these areas.

Interview Question #6

What is your role as an ELL teacher within your classroom?

Interview Question #7

What types of accommodations do you make for ELL students?

According to Short (2000), regular classroom teachers are important components in the whole process of new language learning by ELLs. Early language acquisition leads to greater success in the total classroom situation. Scribner and Scribner (1999) found that ELL students scored better on standardized test scores when their teachers

recognized their language needs and allowed these students adjustment time in their classrooms, avoiding misplacement in special education classes.

Another component of importance in culturally responsive teaching is the process of evaluation of students of diversity. Calderon (1999), Hawkins (2004), Kenner (2004), and Moll, Saez, and Dworin (2001) found these students received the most success when receiving instruction in their own native languages while also receiving instruction in their new language. Alcala (1992) discovered that most students succeeded in classrooms that were warm, open and receptive to their new arrivals. He also suggested that a variety of formal and informal evaluation methods brought about greater student success, rather than the constant use of tests.

Question 7 goes to the heart of the study. It seeks to find the answer to how well prepared teachers feel in this area. Studies by Bohn and Sleeter (2000), Boyle-Baise (1998), Gallavan (1998, 2000), Pattnaik (1997), and Weisman and Garza (2002) indicated that teachers feel they have not had enough multicultural training or multicultural experiences and would like to feel more comfortable when they do attempt culturally relevant teaching approaches.

Interview Question #8

How do you go about communicating with parents of different cultures?

This question was aimed at investigating how well the participant felt he/she was prepared to communicate with parents of diversity students. Delpit (1995) and Neuliep (2000) suggested that this skill is one of the most important in ultimately reaching success with students of diversity.

Optional Interview Question #9

I notice that you have poster/bulletin board/artifact [denoting culturally responsive teaching.] Could you tell me about it?

The physical appearance of a classroom may contain some important examples of culturally responsive teaching. Boutte (1999) suggested that the use of cultural bulletin boards, puzzles, dolls, books, and displays can indicate that culturally responsive teaching is happening within a classroom. This question invited the teacher to talk about potential evidence of culturally responsive teaching.

Data Recording Procedures

The first round of the audio-taped interviews was conducted during March 2005. Creswell (2003) suggested

that qualitative research takes place in the natural setting, and the researcher should go to the site of the participant. This allowed for observation in detail of the environment of the individual participants. In the case of this study, both interviews took place in the participant's classroom. This allowed the opportunity to take note of the physical appearance of the room, observing any evidence of multicultural artifacts that are present.

Journal Instructions

After the initial interview, the participants were given the following instructions concerning their weekly email reflections to the researcher.

Please relay your thoughts and ideas concerning culturally responsive teaching (CRT) within your classroom during this semester. Culturally responsive teaching refers to the ability of a teacher to use prior knowledge, experience, and effective strategies to either teach children of diversity certain content topics, or to teach all children in the classroom cultural topics. Think about your role in the classroom, your ability to communicate with children of diversity as well as with their parents, your relationship with other teachers, especially the ELL

teacher, and your ability to teach in culturally responsive ways to provide experiences within your classroom that will promote learning. Think about those classes, experiences, and people which are part of your practices. Write about those times you felt you succeeded; write about those times you felt inadequate. Over the next eight-weeks, please write at least 6 entries. Thanks for participating in this study.

Weekly Reminder Email

Hello—I hope that your week is progressing well and that you have observed times within your classroom that have helped you think about culturally responsive teaching (CRT). Culturally responsive teaching refers to the ability of a teacher to use prior knowledge or experience to either teach children of diversity certain content topics or to teach all children in classroom cultural topics. Please write about an episode that occurred this week that could be addressed by culturally responsive teaching. Please describe this situation and your role in responding to it. Thanks for your participation in this study.

Debriefing Interview

At the end of the semester, the participants were interviewed in their rooms for a second time for the purpose of debriefing. Additional field notes were taken to document the visual evidence (e.g. bulletin boards, banners, flags, student work, statuary or other signs of culturally responsive teaching) of a multicultural presence in the classroom.

The interview asked the following questions, investigating the thoughts of the participants at the end of the study.

As you reflect on this past semester and your journal entries, I'd like you to answer the following questions.

Interview question #1. What did you learn by participating in this study?

Interview question #2. What would help you grow in your ability to present culturally responsive lessons?

Interview question #3. What would help you feel more confident in working with parents and children of diversity?

Optional interview question #4. I notice that you have poster/bulletin board/artifact [denoting culturally responsive teaching.] Could you tell me about it?

Data Recording Procedures—Final Interview

The data were compiled by transcribing the content of the initial audio taped interview and notes, collecting the data from the journals, comparing the pre and post observations of the classrooms of the participants, and transcribing the contents of the final audio-taped interviews and notes. Internet journal entries were read, copied, and color coded by themes at the end of the 12-week period. Data were organized by these emerging themes.

Data Analysis Procedures

The themes of the study were selected from a framework known as a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 54). Within this framework, participants and observer were able to look at the cultural experiences of childhood, compare them to cultural preparations in college and staff development opportunities, and suggest additional diversity professional learning experiences in the future.

Additionally, the data were organized into a series of case studies to reflect the individual perceptions of each participant. The study sought central themes as well as comparisons among participants, important because "Comparison is a grand epistemological strategy, a powerful

conceptual mechanism, fixing attention upon one or a few attributes" (Stake, 2003, p. 148). Patterns across case studies were identified and then analyzed in reference to existing research.

Verification Steps

Steps were taken in this study to ensure that the qualitative methodology of dependability, confirmability, and transferability was achieved. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) maintained that these qualitative terms replace "the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity" (p. 14). Triangulation ensures that these issues are addressed.

Eisner (1998) compared the data of a study to evidence in a good murder mystery, saying that both depend on good detective work. He called this "evidence" in qualitative research structural corroboration. He went on to say it is "a means through which multiple types of data are related to each other to support or contradict the interpretation and evaluation of a state of affairs" (p. 110). Stake validated the importance of triangulation by suggesting it is "considered a process of using multiple perception to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (2003, p. 148). Eisner

further suggested in qualitative research, "The use of multiple types of data is one way to foster credibility" (p. 110). In qualitative studies researchers seek believability and dependability rather than validity. This consistency was sought via transferability. Janesick (1994) proposed that one must use caution in generalizing the case study, since its value lies in its uniqueness. She stated that more value could be found in "the discussion of powerful statements from carefully done, rigorous long-term studies that uncover the meanings of events in individuals' lives" (p. 217). Table 1 summarizes triangulation of the data sets used in this study.

The researcher identified themes based on culturally responsive teaching characteristics reported by Gay (2000) and Irvine and Armento (2005). Using these themes, the researcher then assigned a proficiency level for the participants' demonstrated CRT characteristic using the following rating criteria: N = Non-use: User has taken no action; O = Orientation: User is taking the initiative to learn more; R = Routine: User has established a pattern of practice.

Two professionals, a college humanities professor and an educational consultant, were given the list of themes

Table 1. Triangulation of Data Sets

Interview 1	D	1	2
1. Tell me about the neighborhood in which you grew up.	X		
2. Did your experiences change in college?	X		
3. Did you have the opportunity to expand your knowledge of different cultures in college?	X		
4. In your teacher training program, what do you recall hearing about culturally diverse teaching?		X	
5. How comfortable are you with presenting culturally diverse lessons within your content area?		X	X
6. What is your role as an ELL teacher within your classroom?		X	X
7. What types of accommodations do you make for culturally diverse students?			X
8. How do you go about communicating with parents of different cultures?			X
9. Optional Interview. I notice that you have poster/bulletin board/artifact [denoting culturally responsive teacher.] Could you tell me about it?			X
Debriefing Interview Questions			
1. What did you learn by participating in this study?		X	X
2. What would help you grow in your ability to present culturally diverse lessons?		X	X
3. What would help you feel more comfortable in working with parents and children of diversity?		X	X

Table 1. Triangulation of Data Sets (continued)

Interview 1	D	1	2
4. Optional Interview. I notice that you have poster/bulletin board/artifact [denoting culturally responsive teaching.] Could you tell me about it?			X
Journal Entries Member Checks of Interviews		X	X
Classroom Visuals/Field Notes			X

Key:

D = Demographic/background

1 = Perceived Preparedness

2 = Perceived Applications in Teaching

that emerged from the data and the complete case studies.

They were asked to read the case studies and verify that the themes were present. The themes were considered to be verified when both examiners documented their presence in at least four cases studies. Then the readers were asked to rate each participant in terms of proficiency level for each theme. When at least 2 of the 3 raters (researcher, college humanities professor, and consultant) agreed on the proficiency level, it was considered to be a dominant pattern for the theme across the case studies.

Summary

The narrative for the study relied on using wording from the participants, scripting conversations, grouping

information on tables, and using participant quotations with author interpretations. The study was structured to include a variety of collection methods, ranging from personal interviews, field notes, member checks, observations of a multicultural presence in the individual classrooms of the participants, and the reflective journals written via the Internet. In addition, the data collected are presented first as individual case studies of the participants and then collapsed to present patterns of response across the cases. Chapter 4 presents the 6 case studies and the findings across them.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

This chapter begins with a review of the research problem and an explanation of how the data were collected. The findings regarding teachers' perceptions of their preparedness for culturally responsive teaching obtained through the initial interview are presented first. These findings are then followed by the results obtained from the weekly email journals (Table 2) and then the debriefing interview at the end of the study. Each of the case studies was then analyzed according to the use of culturally responsive teaching throughout the study. This analysis used the definition of CRT given by Irvine and Armento (2005) and Gay (2000). This study involved 6 teachers from the high school whose identities have been protected with the use of pseudonyms to maintain privacy and anonymity. The data from their insights and perceptions were collapsed and an analysis of patterns obtained from the case studies was conducted.

Table 2. Number of Responses by Week

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Bonnie	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X
Mr. L.	0	X	X	0	X	0	0	0
Tina	0	0	X	X	0	0	0	X
Ms. Nice	0	X	X	X	0	0	0	0
Martha	0	X	X	X	X	X	0	0
Ann	X	X	0	X	X	X	0	X

Key:

X symbolizes a response given for the week via email
 0 symbolizes no response given for the week via email

Review of the Research Problem

The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers perceive they were prepared for culturally responsive teaching. This study was an exploration of regular classroom teachers' understandings about and effectiveness of their pre-service and in-service training regarding cultural diversity and best practices for assisting second language learners.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer these specific questions, which were based on a review of the relevant literature:

1. How do teachers describe their preparation for culturally diverse teaching?

2. How is the preparation teachers receive for culturally responsive teaching integrated into their classroom practice?

Case Studies

This study was a qualitative analysis of 6 case studies, constructed from data gathered from personal interviews, field notes, and email journals. The entire study lasted 12 weeks. The first 2 weeks involved interviewing the teachers, recording the data, and then returning the data for member checks. Interviews were conducted within individual classrooms of the study participants. Field notes were taken at all interviews and all interviews were audio-taped, then transcribed for analysis, and finally returned to the participants for member checks. Additional notes were taken on the physical appearance of each classroom, noting any multicultural presence in the room, as an additional way to contextualize the participants' comments. This presence could be noted in bulletin boards, banners, flags, student work, statuary or other signs of the integration of diversity topics.

During the next 8 weeks, the teachers reflected upon culturally responsive teaching experiences they encountered both within and outside of their classrooms and their

responses to the researcher by email. Weekly reminders were sent to each participant. The next 2 weeks involved debriefing interviews conducted within individual classrooms.

The case studies follow. These studies describe the insights of the 6 teacher participants in the study.

Case Study One: "Tina," ELL Teacher

A veteran teacher of 22 years, Tina was eager to become a part of this study. She was the only ELL teacher in the high school and worked part-time between the high school and the district middle school. She had a heavy caseload of over 50 students between the two buildings. She worked within her self-contained classroom with the help of two paraprofessionals.

Tina was interviewed in her room, which was bright and cheerful, filled with numerous examples of diversity. Flags from every nation decorated a large wall map. Posters depicting Olympic heroes lined another wall, while books and puzzles of various countries were piled neatly on tables and desks throughout the room. The entire atmosphere was pleasant and welcoming, exciting and inviting.

Preparation for culturally responsive teaching. When asked about her childhood cultural experiences, she

replied, "I grew up in a small town, a lower middle-class town in West Virginia." Tina started college at a large university. When she found herself homesick and missing her family, she decided to transfer to a small college that was very close to home. While there, she decided to major in German.

Tina responded that in her undergraduate work, she received no special preparation for teaching cultural topics. Other than those topics presented in her German classes, she found few cultural experiences that differed from her previous hometown, middle-class experiences. Her fellow students were very much like Tina. They came from small, middle-class towns, and they shared backgrounds similar to Tina's.

Tina started her first teaching job in West Virginia. She spoke about her experiences teaching there, noting that they were her true introduction to cultural diversity:

When I first taught, that might be when I got my first true culturally responsive experience. I was working in a coal town. It didn't represent any country or cultural grouping, but it was more culturally different than anything I ever experienced. I had students who stayed home when babies were born. The

first day of hunting season, we had no school because these people needed to hunt for the food they ate.

This first teaching experience helped so much because in my role now, I offer support for students in the classroom as well as out of it. For example, I go to college and job interviews, driving tests, whatever it takes.

Tina felt very confident in her role as an ELL teacher within the school. She had traveled widely, due in part to her marriage to a dentist who enlisted in the military. She had lived in various parts of the world and had taught a variety of cultures and subjects. One of her daughters recently married a young man from India, and she and her family were able to attend the ceremony which was held in India. Even with all of these multicultural experiences, she credited her first year of teaching with helping her to truly realize cultural diversity.

Experiences of culturally responsive teaching in classroom practice. Tina frequently returned to the high school after teaching her afternoon classes at the middle school, "just to get caught up on paper work." She also made arrangements with her students to meet at that time in

order to give extra help on papers and long range assignments.

Tina's role as a classroom teacher was very different than that of the other participants. In her role as an ELL teacher, she offered services to the entire staff regarding modifications and in-class strategies. She was responsible for helping content teachers reach ELL students within their respective classrooms as well as offering individual lessons for the ELL students assigned to her room.

Tina admitted freely that, in spite of her large caseload, she loved her job and the challenges it gave her. She also viewed her distinctive role within the school with a sense of humor and commented in one of her emails, "I guess I'm unique since I am not trying to introduce culturally appropriate material into the context of a lesson. I'm trying to insert a lesson into the cultural chaos that is my class."

Her classroom group lessons were something to which Tina looked forward. These lessons provided opportunities for her students to compare and contrast their different cultures in a safe, non-threatening environment. In an email she described one of those experiences:

We had a very interesting discussion time about foods that people eat around the world, including dog, snake and monkey brains. It is difficult for students from some countries to accept the dietary interests of other cultures and not make value judgments. Starting with foods, we branched out to special occasions, traditional foods, availability of food in different countries, and food in the U.S.

Tina felt that no subject was off limits when she led discussions on the days students functioned as one large group. The different cultures represented within her classroom allowed for lively discussions of many divergent themes:

We also talked about what men in different countries do when they see a pretty girl. Apparently making kissing noises is very popular in Mexico and Vietnam, but in Togo they hiss at the girls. It's strange the tangents they take.

Tina had a classroom in which students worked on individual projects and assignments some days, and on other days the students gather together to discuss relevant content issues pertaining to the ELL curriculum:

This week we had two interesting discussions. One started when one of my students asked why the United States is always first in everything. The tone of his question was accusatory, so first we had to talk about what arenas we saw the U.S. as being "first" in. The primary idea was that the people in the U.S. have so many material blessings. After a nod to the fact that material things are not the only measure of happiness, we went on to address the reasons that the U.S. functions successfully. Some suggestions were: stable government, less corruption, no litter, women's contributions, immigrants, and capitalism. We had a pretty on-the-mark laundry list.

One of Tina's major responsibilities was administering the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA). This test occurred during the study, and Tina wrote the following:

Administering the ELDA test and meeting with students after school has kept me crazy busy. I had little time to be culturally sensitive while I was cracking a bull whip to keep their noses in the test booklets.

I do have a couple of things to say about the test. One of the reading passages was based on the

play *Othello*. To respond to a couple of the questions, a student had to be somewhat familiar with the play, which is a stretch for regular students but a giant leap for students who grow up in non-Western cultures (about 1/3 of my students). The idea behind the reading, writing, and listening sections of this test is that a student's acquisition of academic language will be measured. I felt this question relied too heavily on knowledge of the play rather than on the conventions of theater.

Tina also commented on the speaking portion of the test and the failures she sees in its administration:

The speaking portion of the ELDA was a great disappointment. I did not think it was nearly rigorous enough. In the past, oral responses have been measured on whether or not they responded appropriately to the stimulus and whether or not they responded in a grammatically correct fashion. Only the former is now measured. If the student is able to get across the idea, no matter how fractured the English, he or she receives the highest possible score. My students had high scores, but I did not feel this reflected their abilities to properly speak the language. I suspect

that current theory in ELL instruction is more in keeping with the test than with my attitude. I guess we'll have to exhibit the kind of enormous failure that whole language managed to produce before we can return to our senses.

This point was important to Tina because she consistently demanded high standards from her ELL students. She wrote often of the many classroom discussions held in her room in which she encouraged all her students to participate in order to share cultural points and to improve English speaking skills.

Even by today's standards, Tina's room contained an unusual mix of cultures seldom found in the average classroom. She determined that discussing culture helped her to focus on the fact that each student brings to the ELL classroom a unique manner of addressing crucial problems:

On a daily basis we discuss differences that we bring from our backgrounds. We have discussed gangs in different countries. Governmental corruption and religion lead to some spirited exchanges. My role in these discussions is to keep them non-judgmental and dispassionate. I make the effort to discuss cultural

differences as simply something we must see and accept. I want my students to understand that each of them reflects a different perspective because of all the elements in their lives. We talk about families and what parents do and think to highlight the similarities and differences we all have.

Tina also considered it her job to help her students understand the unique ways in which holidays and other celebrations are conducted here in the United States. She encouraged students to continue celebrating their own traditions, but she also persuaded students to look at the manner in which their new country commemorates these holidays: "Last week, we talked about Easter. It is probably the most confusing holiday because there seems to be so little connection between Jesus' resurrection and the Easter bunny. We talked about the idea of renewal that spring represents."

Tina only spoke English and some German. She felt the same frustrations as other teachers when speaking with parents who do not speak English. But she has studied the communication patterns of different cultures through her recent methods classes to obtain ELL certification and uses caution when first meeting parents:

Sometimes I use a translator, but more often I communicate directly with parents or use the student as a communicator. I usually start out in a non-business manner, "How are you?" or "You are looking well." Then I move gently into, "Your daughter is doing nothing in my class."

Tina's reflections. At the debriefing interview, Tina indicated that she was grateful that she participated in the study. She said that it allowed her to put her ELL room and its many cultures in perspective. As we talked, her room seemed as bright and lively as it had at our first visit, with a few more student projects dotting the area. The walls and tables were again covered with pictures, posters, and symbols of many different cultures, ranging from Near Eastern, African, Hispanic, as well as many others.

She was glad for the opportunity to reflect on her role in this classroom, saying, "I learned that I am not that culturally sensitive in doing my lessons because my whole life is this large mix of culture, and so I can't be sensitive to one culture exactly." She also stated that her reflection process led her to the conclusion that, "I tend

to be culturally neutral in a lot of my approaches. We have a lot of clashes of culture in my room."

She thought carefully about what would help her to become more culturally responsive and confident in CRT with parents and students. She responded by saying:

I need to study more. When I get a student from a new country, I sit down and read all I can about the country. I need to keep in touch with my South American countries. I just kind of mesh them together in my mind. I just need to learn Spanish and five more languages.

Summary of case study one. Tina described her room as being in "cultural chaos" at least some of the time and she felt overwhelmed by her lack of foreign languages skills, causing her to feel that she was limited in her responsiveness to her students and their parents. However, she demonstrated her CRT skills in her acknowledgment of cultural heritage, her communication links between home and school, her use of interest in the cultural heritage of each student, and her use of multicultural materials and resources within her room. She realized the power of cultural influence in learning through classroom discussions which often occurred in her classroom and which

she often referred to in her emails. She also wrote about the high standards and high expectations she had for her culturally diverse students and frequently wrote of her self reflection when preparing her lesson plans, all examples of CRT within her classroom.

Case Study Two: "Bonnie," English

Bonnie is a 22-year teaching veteran in the classroom. She described her childhood as being middle class. She was brought up in the Midwest and was one of the participants who came from a large metropolitan area.

Preparation for culturally responsive teaching. Bonnie was a product of a suburb of Minneapolis and considered herself and her friends to be middle class, "It was what I call 'white bread'--the total suburbia middle class. Everyone I went to school with was just like I was, in regard to looks, financial background, and so on."

Bonnie went to a small Nebraska college, and although she experienced some cultural change, she felt that she was pretty much still living in a white society:

I went to a small private college and that was still pretty "white bread." But I interacted with new people. In Minneapolis, my parents had some good friends who were a minority. When they drove to visit

us, the whole block stopped, so I think my attitude is influenced by my environment because I felt much more connected to people from different backgrounds. I think that was from my mom.

Her practicum and student teaching had a very profound effect on Bonnie. She student taught in a large, ethnically diverse high school. The staff and the students took pride in being as diverse as they could be, welcoming people from different backgrounds. She found that this experience really helped her to focus her attention on cultural areas she had not been aware of before.

This proved to be much more helpful than her other college preparation for CRT. She was especially critical of her preparation for teaching ELL students within her classroom. When asked about her college preparation in ELL, she indicated the following:

I would say absolutely nothing for teaching ELL. No preparation at all. The only thing that was specialized in teacher prep for me would have been my special education methods class, and that had nothing to do with ELL at that time, it was all about mildly moderate, nothing to do with ELL. So the teaching prep was nothing. And as far as dealing with cultural

topics, that has kind of been on the fly and [I'm] really now being able to take advantage of other cultures and kind of work into that. But as far as teacher prep, you know that was all pretty much before the multicultural movement, so NOTHING.

Bonnie stated that she felt unprepared to teach the increasing number of ELL students she finds within her classroom. She felt overwhelmed at times with the language barrier and with her lack of experience working with ELL students:

As far as working with ELL kids, I don't feel real comfortable with that. I enjoy having them, but I don't know that I service them as I should. As my schedule is right now, I don't have a lot, but if I did, I would feel very concerned. There are extra things, like working with ELL students, that are essential, and that is where I would be lacking.

Bonnie felt uncomfortable also with her lack of Spanish. She wanted to learn the language in the next few years because the demographics of the building led her to feel it necessary. As her classes grow in ELL students, she had made the following accommodations: "I always read, reread, paraphrase, whatever works for them; we always make

sure we know what the questions are, those kinds of things."

Experiences of culturally responsive teaching in classroom practice. Bonnie felt much more comfortable working with the culture topics of diverse students and often relied on these students to help teach the cultural aspect of the literature she was covering. She considered students of other cultures as resources in her room and welcomed their input into her subject matter: "I love to do the research and work with kids from other cultures, bring people in, and I feel fine with that."

Bonnie often prepared her lessons around certain cultural themes and mentioned that she tried to use students in her classroom as resources for these topics. She also pointed out that she had used students from other classes and other teachers when she was aware that they could give a certain cultural enrichment to her classes.

She confided that she did not like to rely on students to communicate with parents, because it made her feel uncomfortable and ineffective. When there were no interpreters available, she felt frustrated and wished she knew some basic conversational phrases in several languages.

Bonnie's room had several cultural posters displayed on the walls. She had some European photos and photos of famous writers from several different countries. She pointed to one, commenting:

A class that I teach is World Literature, which started as British Literature and then we expanded that years ago. My preparation in college was primarily in British literature, so I have tried to expand the selections we look at. I have even tried to tailor the short stories, or units, for the kids that I have. In class, I have a Korean boy and one from Germany. I spent some time on Russian literature when I had a student from there last year. I inherited some of these posters from my mom when she retired.

Bonnie liked to think of herself as a very organized person. She planned her units in semester blocks. However, she was flexible in that she sometimes allowed her classes to "drift" in the areas of student interests. She shared how CRT had recently influenced her lesson plans:

Students in World Literature were reading aloud (voluntarily) papers they had written that were inspired by our study of the romantic period in literature. They were to write about something in

nature that they "owned"-felt a strong connection to. One of the students shared her paper about her homeland, the Dominican Republic. In addition to the discussion it elicited and the cultural questions from the class it brought up, it got me thinking about including some short story selections in our Modern Age unit that correspond with countries from which I have current students.

So, I found a great short story by the Korean writer Hwang Sun-won and have a collection of short stories on its way from Barnes and Noble written by an up-and-coming young writer from the Dominican Republic. I plan to incorporate those this spring!

Bonnie seemed to take pleasure in presenting CRT experiences for her classes. It delighted her to report an experience that occurred one day in her class:

My freshmen were giving oral presentations on topics of their choosing that they had researched. Two students chose topics related to their culture. One girl from Colombia chose native dances and demonstrated steps!!! It was awesome and totally gutsy! Another girl, whose background is Afghani, presented on aspects of her homeland and brought in an

actual birka for girls to try on. AGAIN—AWESOME experience for the kids. I asked lots of questions to draw the more personal aspects of their background out. The class didn't seem as comfortable doing that on their own. I felt good and natural handling these culturally responsive situations.

As with other teachers in the study, Bonnie described situations in which she felt uneasy concerning students of diversity. In one email she described a lesson that had just taken place in her classroom:

I have a student who is Middle Eastern and a practicing Muslim. Over the course of the year, he has been very open and agreeable to sharing aspects of his culture and religion, even reciting some of the Koran for us when we were studying it in World Literature. One of his friends was teasing him openly about being a terrorist and calling him Aladdin. The boy in question had some joking names that he called him back, and even though this was very low key, intended good naturedly on both sides, and something they do frequently, I didn't like it.

I told the boy that although he may mean no offense, and perhaps Don isn't offended by it, it made

me very uncomfortable, even though I know both of them. I pointed out that many people (observers) might be very offended by it. He agreed and apologized.

I don't know if this was the right way to handle this or not. But I felt like my gut reaction of just being uncomfortable with it was the way to deal with it.

Bonnie also has felt frustrations both within and outside her classroom when responding to students' speaking a different language. She expressed confusion and ineptness at experiencing students' speaking a language she did not understand:

Wednesday or Thursday afternoon I came across 2 Hispanic girls arguing upstairs in the hallway. They were not fighting, just arguing, but they had been arguing in a language I didn't understand. I knew I should have been better able to assess the situation and determine whether or not I should intervene. I didn't know either of the girls, and I ended up just kind of standing there feeling stupid. They looked at me and went their separate ways. So I certainly felt frustrated due to my lack of expertise and inability to respond in a natural way.

Bonnie, as well as other teachers in the study, expressed concern in her feeling inept in these language situations in which students conversed with each other in a language other than English. She shared that she was hesitant to comment on students speaking in another language, since she did not want to offend her students nor appear to be culturally insensitive.

Bonnie's reflections on participating in the study.

During the final interview, Bonnie admitted that she dealt with CRT experiences more frequently than she realized. She never had considered herself culturally responsive, even though she frequently incorporated cultural topics within her classroom. When asked about what she perceived as being important for CRT growth, she responded:

Probably better knowledge and sensitivity to the culture that we have in our own building and added help from administration and counselors telling us about those cultures. I think personally that teachers bear some responsibility for finding out some of that information on their own. Unless we have a big influx of one group, I don't know that necessarily administrators bear the whole responsibility of inservicing, although I think that most of us could use

more information about Hispanic cultures and sensitivity to that group.

She thought that more in-service opportunities would help her feel less tentative in the classroom. Bonnie also felt that "some sort of training" for parents would help them to feel more confident when coming to talk to teachers.

Summary of case study two. Bonnie stated at the beginning of the study that what she had learned about teaching cultural topics "had been done on the fly." However, her email observations indicated that Bonnie was using CRT within her classroom. She used instructional strategies which allowed students of diversity to share their cultural experiences within her classroom. She also incorporated multicultural information within her English lessons. Bonnie often wrote about using multicultural topics frequently when designing her lesson plans. She often invited students to share their cultural heritage within the framework of these plans through oral reports, demonstrations, and projects. However, Bonnie frequently wrote of her frustrations with not being able to speak a foreign language, especially Spanish, which she felt would help her to offer more CRT to her students and develop

better communication skills with their parents. Upon reflection at the end of the study, she admitted that while she felt somewhat comfortable with her skills in teaching cultural topics, she still felt she lacked knowledge and skill in teaching ELL students.

Case Study Three: "Ms. Nice," English

At the beginning of the study, Ms. Nice had taught English for 22 years. She also taught photography and journalism. She considered herself, "middle class, small town Nebraska." She talked at length about her small town, and she mentioned how much she had enjoyed growing up there. She had recognized no other cultural experiences other than those of her family traditions. She also mentioned that her hometown was now very different and that many other cultures had come to work in community businesses. She spoke of her old neighborhood and how it had changed along with the community and that the town now supported new celebrations and holidays. Her old school was serving several new cultures and making educational adjustments in the curriculum. However, when she was growing up there, these other cultures were not apparent to her.

Preparation for culturally responsive teaching.

Ms. Nice's experiences changed when she went to college. There, she was introduced to a variety of new cultures and cultural experiences. She elaborated on her encounters in the dorm:

I went to the state university. It was a significant change in that I had not been really close to or even spoken to a Black person until I went to college. The RA on my dorm floor was really nice, Black law student. It was a really amazing experience for me.

Ms. Nice didn't remember taking any classes that helped her to become aware of CRT. However, she had experiences outside of the classroom that helped her to expand her cultural understanding:

I worked for a daily paper, all four years, and I ended up interviewing people of all ethnicities. I remember I interviewed a football player. I remember he came to the sorority house with this White female entourage. It was interesting.

Ms. Nice reflected back on her childhood and college preparation for CRT. She felt that while her outside activities in college helped her experience a greater appreciation for diversity, she still questioned whether

they were sufficient to use CRT effectively in her classroom now. She spoke of her frustration and indicated that she wanted more expertise in CRT because "I don't think that I have that skill."

Experiences of culturally responsive teaching in classroom practice. Ms. Nice thought about the different units she covered within her English classes. She revealed that she felt she lacked the ability to teach CRT lessons effectively through the literature that is included within the curriculum:

I don't think that I have that skill, just the notion of what I teach, we all teach different cultures in the literature we present to kids, and I don't make a particular effort to address that culture in that piece of literature.

She also thought about how she approached CRT opportunities within her classroom, and she observed the following when describing how she reached culturally diverse students:

I don't know that I do an exceedingly good job at it, and if I do, it is just by chance. I don't feel that I significantly pay attention doing what needs to be done, for let's say an Asian student. I have several

students who are just learning the English language. You can tell, they really look at you when you talk, they desperately need to see your mouth move, and they ask different kinds of questions, more probing questions than English speaking students do.

The ELL teacher has helped Ms. Nice provide opportunities and strategies for her non-native speakers if they experience difficulties. These students basically do the same work, but the work is tailored so they get a superficial understanding of what is going on. She made modifications recently for one ELL student who was struggling with vocabulary, "grasping the sentences and phrases was a little like hitting a brick wall for him because the contemporary literature I was having him read, even though easy reading, was just too much."

Ms. Nice had experienced difficulties communicating with parents who do not speak English. On several occasions, she felt uneasy with having students translate for their parents. She elaborated on one case:

I have had a student in my advisement whose mother did not speak English at all. I had to depend on that student to communicate with the mother, and I was not comfortable at all, because honestly, I wanted to

trust what he was telling his mother, but I didn't know. I honestly didn't know.

Ms. Nice discussed her experiences with her class which was reading *Huck Finn*. While studying the book, she revealed some insights that her students were having as they read:

One of the critics that we're reading as background to the book mentioned that *Huck Finn* wasn't intended to be read by individuals, but rather to be taught to individuals by a qualified teacher. My all-White students didn't quite understand this until we ran across another critic's conclusion that Twain is indeed sending an indirect message about the evils of slavery. Some of the cursory readers in the room seemed surprised, while others rolled their eyes in disgust regarding slavery.

Twain's message is misinterpreted and often ignored. I'd say that my entire unit on American realism in literature is an ongoing lesson in cultural responsibility. Immigrants, in general, are a maligned group. The interesting part of this is that my all-White AP English kids aren't really all that White. None of us are.

As Ms. Nice finished her unit, she wrote again about her students and their progress with class projects:

One of my AP English students based his *Huck Finn* paper on slavery as a societal norm. This student is White. I asked him to look for examples in the novel that involved "norms" that were mostly White issues. He had a hard time turning the tables and looking at the White characters. The Black character—especially Jim—was the only target. We ended up having an interesting discussion about Mark Twain's issue with White people as well as Black people.

The topic of one email from Ms. Nice described a situation in which she said she felt herself in a great deal of "cultural discomfort":

Yesterday in photojournalism, two of my students started speaking in Spanish while we were working the computer lab. I didn't know what they were saying, even though I've studied Spanish. I didn't interrupt or stop them—but certainly felt left out. I really like to know what is being said in my classroom. I'm not sure whether I handled that instance correctly. This is my first time with a language barrier such as this.

Ms Nice did not want to confront her students because she did not want to be culturally insensitive. However, she felt that students needed to speak English in her class, and she wanted to develop ways to get students to do this without challenging them in class.

Ms. Nice's reflections on participating in the study.

Ms. Nice commented at the end of the study that she discovered in dealing with cultural situations that, "I don't distinguish in the ways that I respond to situations in my job. I really don't." She also stated that she could present more CRT lessons if the curriculum would allow her to slow down, as everything seemed to move too fast and she did not feel she had the time to devote to CRT topics within each lesson.

She found communication with children of diversity to be her biggest challenge, brought about by the increasing numbers assigned to her English classes. She also saw the connection between a child's language and culture as being very important. For Ms. Nice, the greatest challenge was understanding different languages. She also mentioned that the relationship between language and culture was very important because, "The culture affects the way people

speak as well as what they communicate. It affects what they consider to be important and not important."

Summary of case study three. Ms. Nice did feel she lacked certain communication skills and wished that she had a firmer grasp of Spanish. She stated at the beginning of the study that she had little formal preparation for CRT, although she did describe her college experiences as being very helpful for her growing number of culturally diverse students. She realized that she used CRT in her lessons, although "I don't know that I do an exceedingly good job at it, and if I do, it is just by chance."

However, through her responses, it was apparent that, while she acknowledged she felt her CRT preparation was lacking in terms of course work, her lessons did contain examples of CRT. She taught praise of each others' cultural heritage, incorporated multicultural information in her subject, and realized culture was a powerful variable that influenced teaching and learning.

Case Study Four: "Martha," Special Education

Martha started her teaching career 20 years ago in physical education. After a few years, she took classes in special education, an area that she found growing with the

new ELL population. She was responsible for the behavioral disorder classroom.

Preparation for culturally responsive teaching. Martha grew up in North Dakota. Martha's father was the town baker, and she knew almost everyone there.

The town I grew up in was small and mostly white, about 750 people. People were either Catholic and Lutheran, and no minorities, except for the kids that came in from the reservation for classes, about 30 miles away.

When asked if she saw changes when she went to college, she responded, "Change? Oh yea! Absolutely. There were kids who were actually Black there. I sat next to the first Black person ever in my life. I was just infatuated with his curly hair; I sat and stared at him." Martha shared that she got to know many students of diversity from all of the activities she took part in. She was a college athlete, and she found herself getting to know other athletes, many of whom were of different cultures. Martha shared that this whole experience was valuable because it allowed her exposure to cultures she did not have as a child. Martha thought back to her college classes, trying

to remember if she had heard formally about CRT. After some time, she responded, "Little, actually, nothing."

Experiences of culturally responsive teaching in classroom practice. Martha considered the culture of the student when making current accommodations. She believed parents were important components in giving the message to ELL students. She recalled an incident from her first year of teaching:

My first teaching job was in North Dakota, and a quarter of the kids were Native-American high school children. I had one kid, he was part Native-American, and he flipped me off. So you know, it was on a Friday; we went to the bar after school. His father was there and I told him about it. He went home and talked to him about it. Talking with parents of a different culture isn't a problem with me, really. I try to look at them, their parents, as possibly being one of my brothers or sisters, and how would I want them to be treated or talked to.

Martha frequently wrote about two students she was working with, Lisa and Carlos. Lisa was a 14-year-old Black student and Carlos, an 18-year-old Hispanic student. Both were members of Martha's behavioral disorder class. Martha

decided to use her experiences with both students in her email responses.

Lisa is in foster care. Her goal is to reunite with her mom. The past week was pretty upsetting for her. Her teachers complained to me about a lot of talking back, verbal intimidation, and using Ebonics. She did little academic work, and she just didn't care. Even so, her schedule was re-arranged just so she could participate with the track team three times a week. The first day she was to participate, she quit.

She opened up to me today and confided that she decided her goal [reuniting with her mom] was probably not in her best interest and felt she would do better socially and academically by remaining in foster care. The week prior, the family's case worker met with Lisa and her mom at her mom's house—but the family refused to let them in. The home visit had to be conducted on the front porch.

Lisa's decision was not easy to arrive at. She indicated she wanted to break the cycle of early pregnancies, no education, and life in the human services system. I guess this is more of an attempt to jump from the culture of poverty than anything else. I

told her that I could not know what feelings she was experiencing, and so reiterated how difficult and painful arriving at this decision must have been.

Because she had only 8 students, Martha was able to work very closely with them and with their parents. She often commented on the conversations she was able to have with her students within her classroom while she was working with them. Martha felt fortunate to be able to know her students better because she had far fewer students than other teachers. In her next correspondence, Martha talked about Carlos, a student she had been working with for over four years:

We have had difficulty getting Carlos to attend school. He's in our independent study program. With that program, attendance is not mandatory, although it is suggested in order to complete the school work necessary for credit. He's eighteen and at this time, I think he's pretty much over school. He had a job and maintains that he still does. But reports from the job site indicate he's not working there anymore. I'm not sure of Carlos' home situation; I know his dad refuses to excuse his many absences. It's difficult to contact them about Carlos, as phone calls go unanswered.

When Carlos is in attendance, and since he rarely asks for help, I follow up with him on his understanding by asking questions from the material he's been studying. When he can tell me how the information is important and useful in his day-to-day activities, I know he's ready to move on to the next chapter.

In her next report, Martha again turned to problems with Lisa. Lisa had a bad week, and she was having difficulties working with other teachers. Martha described a situation between Lisa and another teacher, "Lisa was asked to leave her individualized class after she used profanities toward the teacher. Lisa's complaint was that the teacher expects more from a classmate than he is currently able to give academically." Martha went on to write that "Lisa's version is that when she tried to help the student, the teacher pointed her finger in Lisa's face and warned her to mind her own business." Martha also mentioned that the same teacher pointed an accusing finger at her when she tried to investigate the confrontation a day later.

In her position as a resource teacher, Martha had to diffuse the situation. She spoke with Lisa and described

the outcome:

After Lisa had calmed, we worked on developing an intervention plan so that she could return to the class. Lisa indicated her "trigger" [things that result in anger, frustration] is being accused of doing something she didn't do. In this case, she was accused of making fun of her peers and not minding her own business.

An area of difficulty was helping Lisa understand her role in the class versus the teacher's role. Her mother is disabled and Lisa not only assisted her mother but was also responsible for babysitting her nieces and nephews, sometimes for days at a time, resulting in excessive absences from school.

In her final email observation, Martha again selected an observation of Lisa. It pertained to a team meeting to discuss arising problems in Lisa's foster home.

The family therapist is set up to help Lisa's mom learn better parenting techniques and help Lisa learn better ways to interact with her mom. Right now, Lisa and her mom either argue or say nothing at all to each other. Family therapy is supposed to occur at the home, but Lisa's grandmother owns the house and is

selective as to who enters it. As of now, Grandma does not feel she should open her house to the family therapist because she [Grandma] does not think Lisa has changed and does not want Lisa in the house. Grandma feels there is not a need to focus attention on Lisa for two hours when there are other people [14 in total] in the house with needs. There is also an issue of space; apparently Lisa's mother does not have her own room.

Further in her response, Martha offered the following observation on Lisa:

A lot of the behaviors and attitudes Lisa displays are characteristic of people living in poverty, like laughing when being disciplined, arguing loudly, inability to follow directions, disorganized, and partial completion of tasks. I'm not sure if anyone at the meeting, including myself, viewed this family's situation as based out of poverty. We certainly have not approached it as such, despite numerous statements that mistrust [of the state, of the government] is present.

Martha frequently took her observations and relayed them to staff members who were working with her students in

the regular classroom. She wrote weekly email messages to staff concerning student progress. She admitted that she sometimes felt frustrated when students "acted out" in the classroom and looked to find reasons for these outbreaks. She admitted that her heavier case loads would benefit from more CRT training.

Martha's reflections. When asked what she learned from being a participant in the study, Martha responded, "I learned that my prior knowledge was very limited." She had mentioned in her initial interview that she saw her role in the special education department growing and that she saw more and more students of diversity needing her help. She went on to comment, "I need to learn more about the topic (CRT) and learn more about student knowledge, understandings, feelings, and learning skills in order to help accommodate the information and then be able to assimilate it into usable material."

She also wanted parents to feel more comfortable when they worked with her. Her work with Lisa and her family was painful for Martha because she felt she did not have the skills to make the family comfortable with her, "I don't like the feeling of them being on the outside and us on the

inside, and not understanding the norm within the family, understanding the particular expectations and concerns.”

Summary of case study four. Martha acknowledged the legitimacy of cultural heritages in the study. She wrote often of two of her students and the struggles they encountered because of the cultural differences they experienced. She also communicated between home and school and realized culture was a powerful variable that influenced teaching and learning.

Because of her role as a resource teacher, she developed few content lessons on her own. Rather, she served to help other teachers in the reinforcement of their units and topics. Additionally, Martha played a larger role in being a bridge between home and school for her students. She helped her students develop strategies for coping in situations that were culturally challenging to them. Thus, her perspective of the unique role that culture played with her students was insightful. She saw herself as becoming more involved with CRT as her job with the ELL department grew. Martha felt somewhat comfortable with teaching culturally responsive lessons, “as long as I know what I’m talking about before I talk.” She saw her role as an ELL teacher within her classroom growing as the ELL department

grew. She wanted more building and district in-service opportunities in order to help develop the skills she felt she needed to assist her students and their parents. She also felt this education a valuable tool in helping her to reach the content teachers who were working with her students. She indicated a knowledge of Spanish would be important to teachers in the years to come.

Case Study Five: "Ann," Science

Ann was a first year teacher, and she found the school year very challenging because of the large number of culturally diverse students that she had in her science classes. Ann stated that she was excited to become part of the study because previously she had little contact with other cultures.

Preparation for culturally responsive teaching. Ann was raised in the West. She considered herself to be middle class, "I grew up on a ranch in Colorado and then moved to a ranch in Wyoming. There were a couple of schools on the reservation in Wyoming, and the only contact I guess I had with other cultures was through sports."

Asked if she experienced change in college, she offered, "Barely. I went to North Dakota for college and there were [athletes] in basketball and football who were

African-American. Again, it was Native-Americans mostly, and a few classmates who were African-American."

For the most part, classes in CRT were not available to Ann, and she did not remember hearing anything about diversity in her content or her education classes. "The only class that I had was a class on Native-American Culture and History. Everyone in education had to take it—it was a requirement for a North Dakota teaching certificate."

When asked about how comfortable she was in presenting culturally responsive lessons within her classroom, she volunteered:

I teach science. I am not comfortable, because I probably can't even tell you what cultural responsive teaching would entail. I think with some help, I could do it, but right now, if you said, "Please teach a culturally responsive lesson," I wouldn't know what you were talking about.

Experiences of culturally responsive teaching in classroom practice. Ann responded often by email, giving many observations from her classroom. She found one class especially challenging:

I have one section of Integrated Science in which about 65% of my class is ELL. I am confused as to whether I am supposed to teach science to them first, or English usage first. And I find, of course, the two sometimes get intermingled. But I feel I have to teach English usage first, because science is another language itself.

Through trial and error, Ann had learned to make accommodations for her ELL students. She had several conversations with the ELL teacher and made modifications: "I always have modified tests, and then I give the extended time on assignments. And that sounds very generic, but I don't know what else to do." Ann went on to describe her emphasis on vocabulary for all students, especially for those in special education. She also stated that she had some students who were both special education and ELL and mentioned that they were struggling even with the modifications.

Ann had several cultures represented in her classes and she found her first parent conferences difficult although there was an interpreter available:

I thought my first parent conferences were rough—then there was an interpreter going around, I didn't see

many [parents] at conferences. So far, I have never had a problem that I felt I had to call home about. Most of the problems I have I talk to the ELL teacher about. She can usually tell me, "Oh, they are just being lazy," or "They just don't understand it." Most of my questions are, "Do they understand me, or are they playing me for a fool?" And I don't know, so I really was confused at first. I haven't contacted parents at home; I have only seen them at conferences. Out of that class, I probably only had 5 students out of 30 to show up.

Ann taught freshmen classes that contained many students of diversity. She related the following during the study:

I was writing a test the other day and on one part the students had to read examples and decide if it was a physical change or a chemical change. One of my examples was, "Cutting a 2 x 4 into several pieces." After I was correcting the tests, I felt like maybe not all of my students knew what a 2 x 4 was or had ever cut one into pieces. Also, I gave out a crossword puzzle to introduce some new vocabulary terms. I did not include any directions on the crossword puzzle; I

guess I just assumed that everyone had done one and that I didn't need to explain how it works. My three students from Togo were totally baffled, along with a few of my Hispanic students. I felt really inconsiderate after they had to raise their hand and ask me how it works. I explained it to them and I think they did okay after that.

Ann acknowledged during the study that she was learning a great deal about other cultures from her experiences with her students of diversity.

Some of the Hispanic students in my class are older than average. I have a student turning 21 soon. I have been overhearing a lot of talk about drinking and parties, etc. I confronted them and they basically were saying to me, "Our parents don't care what we do, so why should you?" I thought it was sad, but it also explains why when schoolwork needs to be completed at home, it just flat out doesn't get done. Regretfully, I have started giving them class time to do everything; I was just tired of the 0's in my grade book. My Hispanic students' grades have gone up since I did this, but I feel uneasy about the fact that I can't ask them to be responsible for homework.

Again, Ann wrote of her frustrations with her Hispanic students and their inability or desire to work with other students.

I find that my Hispanic students are very resistant to being partners with someone that is not Hispanic and they just "share" answers with their other Hispanic buddies anyway no matter who they are paired with. Should I not force them to be partners with someone outside of their culture?

On another occasion, Ann wrote of her frustrations with a Hispanic student who was classified as Special Education and ELL.

I have a student who is Special Education and I also thought he was ELL. We had an IEP with a translator for his guardian. This student is doing very poorly despite already receiving modifications. At the IEP meeting, I was trying to ask him if things were just too hard or if he was not giving his best effort. The resource teacher extended that question by asking him if the language barrier was the root of the problems. The student nodded.

I set up something special for him in class—he will have a laptop at his desk each day and access to

a free translating website. I figured that with that tool he could just type in the phrases or directions in English and read them in Spanish to improve his understanding.

We tried it for the first time yesterday; so I haven't had a chance to ask him if it helped at all. But, after school yesterday I found out from his resource teacher that he has been going to school here since kindergarten! Shouldn't he know English well enough by now? I just don't know now if I should offer him that extra tool now.

Although Ann had a great number of Hispanic students and wrote about them often, she also had students from other cultures. She expressed the following concerns:

My students from Togo seem to have a very hard time dealing with due dates and being on time to class. I try to explain that things have to be done on time but they truly don't understand the concept. They think that as long as they get it done they will get a grade for it. They never seem rushed or act like things are urgent—I have to remind them everyday that when the bell rings you have to get up right away and get to your next class. They are constantly hanging around

after the bell rings and then they ask me for a pass to their next class. Am I just being impatient? Have I not explained things well enough?

As the study progressed, Ann wrote of "some personal breakthroughs." One of her emails pertained to something she learned about her students and their culture:

I have always been curious about why my Hispanic students have so many first and last names. What they put on their homework and what I have on my class list is different. So I got up the courage to just come out and ask them on Monday! They were really cool about it. They explained that they have their mom's and dad's last name, and they choose what they go by. Anyway it was interesting, and I learned a lot. I felt relieved that I was able to talk to them about certain things.

Ann's final correspondence displayed some frustrations for her. While the week before she had been so proud of herself and her advancement with her Hispanic students, this message contained elements of dissatisfaction with herself and her students.

I had a very stereotypical feeling yesterday and today. I am very frustrated with some of my students

in class. There are many students who are gone on a regular basis and have trouble keeping appointments with me for make-up work. I have been fed up and after a make-up test becomes 2 and 3 weeks old, I decided to put a zero in there.

My stereotypical thoughts come into play when I notice that every single one of these students is Hispanic. How can I not let the actions of these students foreshadow my feelings of Hispanic students in the future?

Ann's reflections. As a first-year teacher, Ann had been very eager to participate in the study. During the study, she offered many insights into her classroom and teaching methods. When asked what she learned from participating in the study, she offered:

It was self reflection and it forced me to sit down and think about what was happening. I think by verbalizing it and putting it into writing, it helped me to evaluate myself and how I felt, first of all about CRT and then what was lacking in my classroom. It helped me to recognize what my deficiencies are. I am glad I decided to do this. I want to be culturally

responsive as much as I can. I just don't have the experience.

Ann would like to learn more about other cultures and said that she needs education to do that, "I am not familiar with Hispanic or African-American culture. I need education. I find it hard to put myself in their shoes. I need reading, things I can get my hands on."

Ann admitted that she still felt uneasy when working with the parents of her children of diversity.

I felt the Hispanic parents could tell right away that I was a young, naïve, small town country girl and that maybe I could not relate well to their son or daughter. So I wish I could just look them right in the eye and say, "I do understand what they are going through." I don't want to lie and put up a false picture of what they did feel.

Summary of case study five. Ann was a first-year teacher who stated that she felt she lacked experience with CRT. Although she had no formal training in college in CRT, she did realize culture was an important variable that influenced teaching and learning, and used teacher knowledge and reflection when designing CRT. Throughout the study, Ann seemed to be aware of the cultural barriers that

were present in her room. She consciously made efforts to help her students learn, using a wide variety of instructional styles, although these efforts were not always successful. In the process, she stated that she learned some elements of her students' culture. She expressed a desire to learn Spanish and also to continue learning how to better serve her students through CRT training on the building and district level.

Case Study Six: "Mr. L.," English

At the time of the study, Mr. L. had been teaching English for 3 years. He was working on his doctorate. Previously, he lived in the metropolitan area and graduated from the high school where the study took place. Mr. L.'s room had some Haiku posters, some ethnic paintings, and references to women and Irish writers. When asked about them, he admitted that he enjoys having these diverse examples of literature to encourage his students to think about world literature.

Preparation for culturally responsive teaching. Mr. L. considered himself to be middle class and stressed that it was not upper nor lower, but middle, middle class. He had seen some changes in the school that he attended. There was

a much larger Hispanic population and the class sizes and classes offered were more varied.

As he thought about his college experiences in CRT, he reflected that they expanded his cultural knowledge. "Well, on a personal level, I lived with an African-American, a great guy. He was also older and had been to the Gulf War."

As Mr. L. thought about his college classes, he stated, "In my classes, there was a pretty varied crowd. I did activities, was an English major and a philosophy major, and I read all different kinds of things that had an impact on me." However, Mr. L. felt he had a minimal introduction into CRT in college classes:

The topic was mentioned, acknowledged as a priority, but we never went into methods or anything like that. As far as reading literature from other countries and other cultures, it was stressed. I took an African American Literature class and a women's literature class.

Experiences of culturally responsive teaching in classroom practice. Mr. L. explained that he liked to do culture-related topics when he has the opportunity, "I embrace them." He emailed an example, "Today during a discussion of our research essays in composition class, I

used an article regarding Muhammad Ali and his impact on African-American culture as an example. We discussed it in and of itself and then related it to the paper assignment."

However, he regretted that the "rigid English department curriculum" did not always give him the leverage that he wished to pursue these topics in depth. Even in the short amount of time he taught, he saw increasing numbers of culturally diverse students in class:

In composition class, I have had handfuls of non-native speakers. I feel comfortable with it. I do things, like I check for understanding more times, I think. But I also take it to the students. There are some students who are non-native speakers, but they are fluent and they are bilingual, so I treat them like native English speakers. But other kids I know struggle with it, and I don't really change my expectations in the classroom, but I try to address the issue.

When it came to making accommodations for these students, he did not change assignments. Rather, he elected to give these students longer periods of time to finish the class assignments:

I don't change the reading assignments; I might give them a couple of extra days. No one requires me to do that, but I might give them an extra day or two. Or I might have a student who I say, "Make sure I proof read your paper before you hand it in," and I specifically critique it for fluency, English conventions, subject-verb agreement, which is a problem for all students. Once in a while, I have emailed the ELL teacher; I don't actively plan on changing assignments.

Communication with parents of different cultures also became more challenging to Mr. L. In the past, he had relied on students to translate for him to their parents, "I feel comfortable with that. I have to trust the students. I have to."

During the initial interview, Mr. L. stated that he felt comfortable with students of diversity. However, he admitted in his email journal that there were times when he felt less at ease.

I broke up an argument in the hallway today between two female students who both spoke Spanish. I had lots of problems communicating with one of them because of the language, and not because of the situation (she

was cooperative). I had to escort them both down to the office.

In another journal entry, Mr. L. described a situation in which he had a problem with reaching students who were having language problems.

I realized something this week: I had to get some quiz information translated for an ELL student in my sophomore level English class. I realized that there was no formal protocol in place for doing such a thing! I didn't know who to go to or what to do. My only recourse was to ask a Spanish teacher friend, so that's what I did. I knew what I had to do to solve the problem, but I didn't have a clue as to how to go about doing it, getting assistance, etc.

Mr. L.'s reflections. Mr. L. responded that he was grateful for the opportunity to investigate his teaching practices during the study, "I became more sensitive to my interactions with my multicultural students. I didn't really learn anything content wise, but it was a good self-reflection." Like the others in the study, Mr. L. felt that instruction in CRT would help him to become more culturally aware: "Direct instruction about cultural lessons. I wish our district had a more specific philosophy (about CRT)."

Mr. L. was clear to point out that this instruction needed to be relevant and that it needed to be presented by people who were experts in the field. He stated:

[I need] people who understand the subject better than I do talking to me about the subject because I kind of make it up as I go along, and I think what I do is functional, but I don't know if it is right. Like I have coping strategies, but are they the right strategies. So I would like in-service and things like that.

Summary of case study six. Mr. L. was aware that CRT was an important component of teaching. He had experiences with ELL students and students of diversity within his classroom for the past three years. From his responses, it appeared that Mr. L. incorporated multicultural information about the subject. He also realized that teacher knowledge and reflection were important when designing CRT. Mr. L. did mention using a wide variety of instructional styles and did mention demanding high standards for CRT. He wrote of his frustration of not being able to speak nor understand Spanish, and he felt more CRT

training on the district level through workshops and in-service would be valuable.

Patterns Across Case Studies

The responses of the participants were collapsed, categorized, and summarized to identify patterns of response upon which generalizations about this population could be made. The remainder of Chapter 4 presents a synthesis of the data across the 6 case studies.

Evidence of Teacher Preparedness for CRT

The responses of the participants were analyzed in order to answer the research question: How do teachers describe their preparation for culturally diverse teaching? The responses of the participants in regard to their childhood, college, and teaching/in-service training experiences in preparation for CRT teaching were categorized as to the level of contact they encountered in each of the areas. The categories utilized were the following: NE = No experience for preparation in CRT (participant felt no CRT experiences); SA = Some awareness of preparation in CRT (participant was able to identify some awareness of preparation for CRT); TA = Total acquisition of skills in CRT (participant felt totally able to incorporate CRT principles in class on a regular basis.

Four of the participants were from small towns or rural areas, and two, Bonnie and Mr. L., from large Midwestern cities. Participants came from Nebraska, Colorado, West Virginia, and North Dakota. All described themselves as middle class and their childhood experiences as having no contact with other cultures. Bonnie summed it up best when she described her childhood: "It was what I call 'white bread.'" College provided all participants with a greater opportunity to interact with other cultures to which most had not earlier been exposed. Tina responded that her fellow students were very much like her. They came from small, middle-class towns, and they shared backgrounds similar to Tina's.

Ms. Nice contributed that her experiences changed when she went to college and was introduced to a variety of new cultures and cultural experiences, saying, "It was a really amazing experience for me." She felt that while her outside activities in college helped her experience a greater appreciation for diversity, she still questioned whether they were sufficient to use CRT effectively in her classroom now. Martha stated that she got to know many students of diversity from all of the activities in which she took part in college. She was an athlete, and she found

herself getting to know other athletes, many of whom were of different cultures. Ann and Mr. L. also shared that college activities expanded cultural awareness not experienced as children.

When asked to reflect upon their college classes and in-service training in CRT, four of the participants could not remember taking any classes in CRT. Only Ann took a class specifically devoted to diversity issues, a required class on Native-American Culture and History. She remembered hearing nothing about diversity in her content classes. Tina responded that in her undergraduate work, she received no special preparation for teaching cultural topics other than those covered in her German classes. Bonnie discovered her practicum and student teaching had a very profound effect on her. She student taught in a large, ethnically diverse high school. The staff and the students took pride in being as diverse as they could be, welcoming people from different backgrounds. She found that this experience really helped her to focus her attention on cultural areas of which she had not been aware before. She was especially critical of her preparation for teaching ELL students within her classroom. When asked about her college preparation in ELL, she indicated the following, "I would

say absolutely nothing for teaching ELL. No preparation at all. And as far as dealing with cultural topics, that has kind of been on the fly."

Ms. Nice didn't remember taking any classes that helped her to become aware of CRT. However, she had experiences outside of the classroom that helped her to expand her cultural understanding. These included working for a daily paper and interviewing people from different cultures. While she felt that her outside activities in college helped her experience a greater appreciation for diversity, she still questioned whether they were sufficient to use CRT effectively in her classroom now. "I don't know that I do an exceedingly good job at it, and if I do, it is just by chance."

Martha thought back to her college classes, trying to remember if she had heard formally about CRT. After some time, she responded, "Little, actually, nothing." Martha also determined that she received no formal training in CRT in college, but gained some insight from her first teaching job near a reservation. Mr. L. concurred when he thought about his college classes, stating that he had a minimal introduction into CRT, "The topic was mentioned, acknowledged as a priority, but we never went into methods

or anything like that." Table 3 summarizes the responses regarding teacher preparation to teach CRT based on childhood and college experiences.

Table 3: How Teachers Perceive They Were Prepared to Teach CRT through Childhood and College Experiences and Teaching/In-service Training

	Childhood	College	Teaching/In-service Training
Tina	NA	SA	SA
Bonnie	NA	SA	NA
Ms. Nice	NA	SA	NA
Martha	NA	SA	NA
Ann	NA	SA	SA
Mr. L	NA	SA	NA

Key:

NA = No awareness of experience in preparation for CRT

SA = Some experience in preparation for CRT

TA = Total acquisition of skills in CRT

Evidence of Culturally Responsive Teaching

The responses of the participants were then analyzed in order to answer the research question: How is the preparation teachers receive for culturally responsive teaching integrated into their classroom practice? The researcher identified themes based on culturally responsive teaching characteristics reported by Gay (2000) and Irvine

and Armento (2005). Using these themes, the researcher then assigned a proficiency level for the participants' demonstrated CRT characteristic using the following rating criteria: N = Non-use: User has taken no action; O = Orientation: User is taking the initiative to learn more; R = Routine: User has established a pattern of practice.

Two professionals, a college humanities professor and an educational consultant, were given the list of themes that emerged from the data, and they were also given the complete case studies. They were asked to read the case studies and verify the themes were present. The themes were considered to be verified when both examiners documented their presence in at least four cases studies. Then the readers were asked to rate each participant in terms of proficiency level for each theme. When at least 2 of the 3 raters (researcher, consultant, and college humanities professor) agreed on the proficiency level, it was considered to be a dominant pattern for the theme.

Each of the proficiency levels was confirmed by the examiners with their individual ratings in every category with the exception of: Incorporates multicultural information in subject. The consultant found 3 teachers at the R (Routine) level. This examiner went on to rate 2

teachers at the O (Orientation) level and 1 at the N (Non Use) level. Since a majority of the teachers were rated at the R level, this proficiency was selected for this CRT characteristic for the consultant. The analyses are displayed in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Theme 1. Acknowledges legitimacy of cultural heritages. Teachers in the study gave responses at the routine proficiency level that acknowledged the legitimacy of cultural heritages. Teachers routinely used this skill when planning lessons and leading class discussions. Tina recognized that the first culturally responsive experience for her was her first teaching job in a coal town. Bonnie also acknowledged this sentiment by expanding her world literature selections to include the cultures of students that she teaches each year. Bonnie often wrote of using her class members as resources when the class read selections from their countries.

Martha wrote of her acknowledgment of the legitimacy of cultural heritage. She described the inappropriate behavior of her student, Lisa, in the following way, "I guess this is more of an attempt to jump from the culture of poverty than anything else." Both Ann and Mr. L. also saw the importance of this concept. Ann showed her thrill

Table 4. Examples of CRT in Participants' Responses:
 Analysis by Researcher (adapted from Gay, (2000)
 and Irvine and Armento (2005).

	Tina	Bonnie	Ms. Nice	Martha	Ann	Mr. L
1. Acknowledges legitimacy of cultural heritages in classroom discussions and planning.	R	R	R	R	R	R
2. Communicates between home and school with ELL parents.	R	O	O	R	O	O
3. Uses various instructional styles with ELL students.	R	O	O	R	R	R
4. Teaches students to praise each other's cultural heritage.	R	R	R	R	N	R
5. Incorporates multicultural information in subject.	R	R	R	N	N	R
6. Realizes culture is powerful variable that influences teaching & learning.	R	R	R	R	R	R
7. Teacher designs CRT using prior knowledge and reflection.	R	R	R	R	R	R
8. Demands high standards for CRT with ELL students.	R	O	O	O	O	R

N = Non-use: User has taken no action; O = Orientation: User is taking the initiative to learn more; R = Routine: User has established a pattern of practice.

Table 5. Examples of CRT in Participants' Responses:
 Analysis by College Humanities' Professor (adapted
 from Gay, (2000) and Irvine and Armento (2005).

	Tina	Bonnie	Ms. Nice	Martha	Ann	Mr. L
1. Acknowledges legitimacy of cultural heritages in classroom discussions and planning.	R	R	R	R	O	R
2. Communicates between home and school with ELL parents.	R	O	O	R	O	O
3. Uses various instructional styles with ELL students.	R	R	O	R	R	R
4. Teaches students to praise each other's cultural heritage.	R	R	R	R	N	R
5. Incorporates multicultural information in subject.	R	R	R	O	N	R
6. Realizes culture is powerful variable that influences teaching & learning.	R	R	R	R	R	R
7. Teacher designs CRT using prior knowledge and reflection.	R	R	R	R	O	R
8. Demands high standards for CRT with ELL students.	R	O	O	O	O	R

N = Non-use: User has taken no action; O = Orientation: User is taking the initiative to learn more; R = Routine: User has established a pattern of practice.

Table 6. Examples of CRT in Participants' Responses:
Analysis by Educational Consultant (adapted from Gay,
(2000) and Irvine and Armento (2005)).

	Tina	Bonnie	Ms. Nice	Martha	Ann	Mr. L
1. Acknowledges legitimacy of cultural heritages in classroom discussions and planning.	R	R	R	R	R	R
2. Communicates between home and school with ELL parents.	O	O	O	R	O	O
3. Uses various instructional styles with ELL students.	O	O	O	O	R	O
4. Teaches students to praise each other's cultural heritage.	R	R	R	N	N	O
5. Incorporates multicultural information in subject.	R	R	N	O	N	O
6. Realizes culture is powerful variable that influences teaching & learning.	R	R	R	R	R	O
7. Teacher designs CRT using prior knowledge and reflection.	R	R	O	O	O	O
8. Demands high standards for CRT with ELL students.	R	R	R	R	O	R

N = Non-use: User has taken no action; O = Orientation: User is taking the initiative to learn more; R = Routine: User has established a pattern of practice

in learning more about the Hispanic culture and its customs when she wrote about her courage in asking her students about their use of multiple last names: "They were really cool about it. . . anyway it was interesting, and I learned a lot. I felt relieved that I was able to talk to them about certain things."

Theme 2. *Communicates between home and school with ELL parents.* Communication with parents of ELL students or students of diversity was a more difficult skill for the 6 teachers. The teachers were rated at the orientation level when communicating between home and school with ELL students. Tina, because of her ELL position, needed to communicate with a variety of cultures on a daily or weekly basis. "Sometimes I use a translator, but more often I communicate directly with parents or use the student as a communicator."

Martha, because much of her job as a behavior disorder teacher, also depended on weekly and sometimes daily communication with parents and was far more at ease with speaking to parents of all cultures. She admitted, "Talking with parents of a different culture isn't a problem with me, really. I try to look at them, their parents, as

possibly being one of my brothers or sisters, and how would I want them to be treated or talked to?"

Ms. Nice described her concern involving a student in her advisement class whose mother did not speak any English, "I had to depend on that student to communicate with the mother, and I was not comfortable at all, because honestly, I wanted to trust what that boy was telling his mother, but I didn't know. I honestly didn't know."

Communication with parents of different cultures also became more challenging to Mr. L. In the past, he had relied on students to translate for him to their parents. But unlike Ms. Nice, he said, "I feel comfortable with that. I have to trust the students. I have to."

Ann revealed her discomfort about parent communication, "I haven't contacted parents at home; I have only seen them at conferences." She added, "I thought my first parent conferences were rough—then there was an interpreter going around, I didn't see many [parents] at conferences. So far, I have never had a problem that I felt I had to call home about."

Theme 3. Uses various instructional styles with ELL students. Teachers were rated at the orientation level by the examiners for this characteristic. All 6 teachers

mentioned at least one modification for ELL students within the classroom. Tina, in her position as ELL teacher, used a variety of styles within her room and helped other teachers modify their class materials. Ann routinely used different styles within her classroom, "I always have modified tests, and then I give the extended time on assignments." She wrote of one instance in which she was working with a student in special education and who Ann thought was also ELL. She set up a system in which the student could use a laptop during class and have access to a translating website.

The ELL teacher had helped Ms. Nice provide opportunities and strategies for her non-native speakers if they experienced difficulties. These students basically did the same work, but the work was tailored so they got a superficial understanding of its content. She made modifications recently for one ELL student who was struggling with vocabulary, "Grasping the sentences and phrases was a little like hitting a brick wall for him."

Bonnie and Mr. L. also mentioned that they used some modifications within their classrooms. Although Bonnie planned her units in semester blocks, she was flexible in that she sometimes allowed her classes to "drift" in the

areas of student interests. Although she stated that she had no training working with ELL, she did state that, "I always read, reread, paraphrase, whatever works for them; we always make sure we know what the questions are, those kinds of things." Mr. L. stated that in his composition classes he has ". . . had handfuls of non-native speakers. I feel comfortable with it. I do things, like I check for understanding more times, I think."

Theme 4. *Teaches students to praise each other's cultural heritage.* Routine was the dominant proficiency level demonstrated by Tina, Bonnie, Ms. Nice, Martha, and Mr. L. for teaching students to praise each other's cultural heritage. Tina offered that, "On a daily basis we discuss differences that we bring from our backgrounds. . . My role in these discussions is to keep them non-judgmental and dispassionate."

Bonnie was excited about how her freshmen, one from Columbia and one from Afghani, selected topics related to their culture for their oral projects, describing it as an, "AWESOME experience for the kids. I felt good and natural handling these culturally responsive situations." Ms. Nice also shared the experience with her class studying Mark Twain, stating, "I'd say that my entire unit on American

realism in literature is an ongoing lesson in cultural responsibility."

Ann, while recognizing the importance of cultural heritage, had not yet begun to teach about them in her science classes. She stated at the start of the study, "I teach science. I am not comfortable, because I probably can't even tell you what cultural responsive teaching would entail." As the study progressed, Ann felt comfortable enough to ask her Hispanic students about their use of long last names.

Theme 5. Incorporates multicultural information in subject. Teachers responded in a manner that suggested routine incorporation of multicultural information in their subject matter. Tina offered, "I guess I'm unique since I am not trying to introduce culturally appropriate material into the context of a lesson. I'm trying to insert a lesson into the cultural chaos that is my class."

Ms. Nice, who often based her CRT lessons on a book or article her class was reading, also tried to help students look deeper into CRT issues. In a discussion arising from the work of Mark Twain, "My all White students didn't quite understand this [prejudice] until we ran across another

critic's conclusion that Twain is indeed sending an indirect message about the evils of slavery."

Mr. L. explained that he liked to do culture-related topics when he has the opportunity, "I embrace them." He described his use of cultural articles in his composition class as leading to especially rich writing by his students, "I used an article regarding Muhammad Ali and his impact on African-American culture as an example. We discussed it in and of itself and then related it to the paper assignment."

Theme 6. Realizes culture is powerful variable that influences teaching and learning. Teachers responded at the routine level of proficiency that they saw culture as being a powerful variable that influenced teaching and learning. Tina stated that ". . . my whole life is this large mix of culture, and so I can't be sensitive to one culture exactly." Bonnie admitted, "I love to do the research and work with kids from other cultures, bring people in, and I feel fine with that." She referred often to her use of students from other classes and other teachers when she is aware that they can give a certain cultural enrichment to her classes.

Ms. Nice saw the connection between a child's language and culture as being very important. For Ms. Nice, the greatest challenge was understanding different languages. She also mentioned that the relationship between language and culture was very important because, "The culture affects the way people speak as well as what they communicate. It affects what they consider to be important and not important."

Martha realized that some of her students, especially Lisa, struggled with a culture of poverty. She wrote often of how this culture affected behavior. "A lot of the behaviors and attitudes Lisa displays are characteristic of people living in poverty, like laughing when being disciplined, arguing loudly, inability to follow directions, disorganized, and partial completion of tasks."

Ann realized that her students, even though living now in the culture of the United States, still displayed some of the characteristics of the culture in which they were raised, "My students from Togo seem to have a very hard time dealing with due dates and being on time to class. I try to explain that things have to be done on time but they truly don't understand the concept. . . ."

Theme 7. Teacher designs CRT using prior knowledge and reflection. Teachers demonstrated the routine proficiency level when admitting knowledge and reflection were important attributes for designing CRT lessons. Tina attributed her expertise in this area to her first teaching experience in West Virginia, "This first teaching experience helped so much because in my role now, I offer support for students in the classroom as well as out of it." She also stated that in her job of designing valuable CRT experiences, "I need to study more. When I get a student from a new country, I sit down and read all I can about the country."

Bonnie also spent a large amount of time preparing her classes in CRT. "I have tried to expand the selections we look at. I have even tried to tailor the short stories, or units, for the kids that I have." She wrote of using students from other cultures as resources and directing readings to their interests, "In class, I have a Korean boy and one from Germany. I spent some time on Russian literature when I had a student from there last year."

Bonnie spent a great amount of time reflecting and selecting the materials for her class. As her class members changed, Bonnie was ready to adapt her curriculum to the

students in her room: "I found a great short story by the Korean writer Hwang Sun-won and have a collection of short stories on its way from Barnes and Noble written by an up-and-coming young writer from the Dominican Republic."

Theme 8. Demands high standards for CRT with ELL.

Teachers were found to be at the orientation proficiency level when demanding high standards for CRT with ELL students. Only Tina and Mr. L. demanded high standards for culturally responsive teaching when working with ELL students. Tina stated that the ELDA test did not challenge her students enough, adding, "My students had high scores, but I did not feel this reflected their abilities to properly speak the language."

Mr. L. also stated that he had high expectations for ELL students, "But I also take it to the students. There are some students who are non-native speakers, but they are fluent and they are bilingual, so I treat them like native English speakers." Further, he suggested to ELL students, "Make sure I proofread your paper . . . and I specifically critique it for fluency, English conventions, subject-verb agreement, which is a problem for all students. I don't actively plan on changing assignments."

Table 7 summarizes the analysis of the case studies by the researcher, the college humanities professor, and the educational consultant. When at least 2 of the 3 raters agreed on the proficiency level, it was considered to be a dominant pattern for the theme across the case studies.

Table 7. Summary of Data Analysis by Researcher, Professor, and Consultant (adapted from Gay, (2000) and Irvine and Armento (2005).

	Researcher	Professor	Consultant	Dominant Trait
1. Acknowledges legitimacy of cultural heritages in classroom discussions and planning	R	R	R	R
2. Communicates between home & school with ELL parents.	O	O	O	O
3. Uses various instructional styles with ELL students.	O	R	O	O
4. Teaches students to praise each other's cultural heritage.	R	R	R	R
5. Incorporates multicultural information in subject.	R	R	R	R

6. Realizes culture is powerful variable that influences teaching & learning.	R	R	R	R
	Researcher	Professor	Consultant	Dominant Trait
7. Teacher designs CRT using prior knowledge and reflection.	R	R	O	R
8. Demands high standards for CRT with ELL students.	O	O	R	O

N = Non-use: User has taken no action; O = Orientation: User is taking the initiative to learn more; R = Routine: User has established a pattern of practice.

Limitations of CRT in Classroom Practice

All 6 teachers expressed some experiences of limitations in their confidence regarding the integration of CRT in classroom practice. For Tina, the ELDA test did not challenge her ELL students enough. Tina also expressed that, because of the nature of her job as ELL teacher, "I tend to be culturally neutral in a lot of my approaches. We have a lot of clashes of culture in my room."

From the beginning of the study, Bonnie expressed her

Concern that she did not possess the skills to properly attend to her ELL students: "As far as working with ELL kids, I don't feel real comfortable with that. I enjoy having them, but I don't know that I service them as I should." She also confided that she does not like to rely on students to communicate with parents, since it makes her feel uncomfortable and ineffective. When there were no interpreters available, she felt frustrated and wished she knew some basic conversational phrases in several languages.

Bonnie, in her description of the situation in her room in which a Middle Eastern student was teased about being a terrorist and was called "Aladdin" by a friend, admitted "even though this was very low key, intended good naturedly on both sides, and something they do frequently, I didn't like it." After describing the fact that she ended the joking between the two boys in class, she stated, "I don't know if this was the right way to handle this or not. But I felt like my gut reaction of just being uncomfortable with it was the way to deal with it."

More than one teacher commented on feeling uncomfortable when encountering language problems between students. Bonnie talked about coming across two Hispanic

girls in the hall who were arguing in Spanish, "I ended up just kind of standing there feeling stupid. They looked at me and went their separate ways. So I certainly felt frustrated due to my lack of expertise and inability to respond in a natural way."

Both Ms. Nice and Mr. L. described similar situations. Ms. Nice wrote of her photojournalism class in which two students spoke Spanish while the whole class worked in the computer lab: "I didn't interrupt or stop them, but certainly felt left out. I really like to know what is being said in my classroom." Ms. Nice also questioned her CRT expertise in general, saying, "I don't know that I do an exceedingly good job at it [CRT], and if I do, it is just by chance"

Mr. L. described a situation in which he also came upon two female students who both spoke Spanish. He admitted that he had difficulty communicating with the students, and eventually "I had to escort them both down to the office." On another occasion, Mr. L. wrote that the language barrier again was difficult for him when he realized he had to get some quiz information translated for an ELL student. He admitted, "I didn't have a clue as to how to go about doing it, getting assistance, etc."

Martha's job as a behavior disorder teacher involved working very closely with a few students. She saw firsthand the differences in cultural expectations and was often left to help other teachers realize how culture influenced behavior. In a description of a meeting concerning her student, Lisa, she commented, "I'm not sure if anyone at the meeting, including myself, viewed this family's situation as based out of poverty. We certainly have not approached it as such."

Martha expressed a need to learn more skills in CRT, since she saw her job growing, especially with ELL students, "I need to learn more about the topic [CRT] and learn more about student knowledge, understandings, feelings, and learning skills in order to help accommodate the information and then be able to assimilate it into usable material."

Ann was frustrated with her CRT knowledge, or lack of it. She said at the beginning of the study, "I am not comfortable, because I probably can't even tell you what cultural responsive teaching would entail . . . if you said, "Please teach a culturally responsive lesson," I wouldn't know what you were talking about."

Ann's frustrations with a lack of ELL preparation were apparent when she said, ". . .about 65% of my class is ELL. I am confused as to whether I am supposed to teach science to them first or English usage first . . . but I feel I have to teach English usage first."

Ann described her first parent conferences, ". . . as rough--then there was an interpreter going around, I didn't see many [parents] at conferences. So far, I have never had a problem that I felt I had to call home about." She questioned the motive of some of her ELL students, "Do they understand me, or are they playing me for a fool?" When confronting her Hispanic students about drinking and parties, Ann was shocked at their response, "Our parents don't care what we do, so why should you?"

When Ann gave these students time in class to do homework instead of assigning outside work that was never completed, she again confessed, "My Hispanic students' grades have gone up since I did this, but I feel uneasy about the fact that I can't ask them to be responsible for homework." These same students were resistant to working with class members from other cultures. She asked herself, "Should I not force them to be partners with someone outside of their culture?"

Summary of Themes

The following themes emerged from the data:

1. None of the teachers in this study had childhood experiences in CRT.
2. All 6 teachers admitted to some CRT awareness in college.
3. Four teachers did not recall having education class/in-service experiences in CRT.
4. Teachers demonstrated a routine proficiency level when acknowledging the legitimacy of cultural heritages.
5. Teachers were at the orientation level of proficiency when communicating between home and school with their ELL students and parents but were taking the initiative to learn more.
6. Teachers were at the orientation level of proficiency in using a wide range of learning styles to reach ELL students.
7. Teachers taught praise of each other's cultural heritage at the routine proficiency level.
8. Teachers in the study demonstrated a routine proficiency level with the incorporation of multicultural information in content areas.
9. Teachers were at the routine proficiency when realizing

the power of culture on teaching and learning.

10. Teachers showed a routine proficiency designing CRT using prior knowledge and reflection.
11. Teachers in the study were in the orientation level of proficiency in demanding high CRT standards for the ELL students.
12. All 6 teachers believed language learning, especially Spanish, an important CRT skill.
13. All 6 teachers suggested more CRT in-service opportunities, especially at the building level, to be an important component of a district CRT policy.
14. All 6 teachers wanted more strategies for communicating with ELL parents and students.
15. All 6 teachers thought more time for reflection and collaboration of CRT lesson planning would provide them with more opportunities to use CRT throughout the content areas.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers perceived they were prepared for culturally responsive teaching. This chapter provided the findings and analyses of interviews and Internet journals. Common patterns and trends were then synthesized across cases.

Chapter 5 will provide conclusions and offer recommendations. It will end with implications for classroom implementation and further research.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter 4 presented the findings and themes from the interviews and Internet journals concerning how teachers judged they were prepared for culturally responsive teaching. Chapter 5 draws conclusions from the discussion and synthesizes findings obtained from the cross case analyses in relation to previous research.

The following questions were addressed in the study:

1. How do teachers describe their preparation for culturally diverse teaching?
2. How is the preparation teachers receive for culturally responsive teaching integrated into their classroom practice?

*Conclusions and Recommendations**Related to Research Questions*

This section is organized so that each research question is featured in a subheading. Research based cross case themes are presented. Implications for further action and recommendations for additional research are also given.

How Teachers Describe CRT Preparation

Theme 1. Teachers in this study indicated that they had no racially diverse childhood cultural experiences

while growing up. Teachers also admitted that as children they were unaware of diversity. This lack of contact with other cultures by classroom teachers has been documented by studies of, Boyle-Baise (1998), Gallavan (1998, 2000), Marshall (1996), Paccione (2000), Phuntsog (2001), and Wilson (2003). In these studies teachers at all grade levels admitted a certain frustration in multicultural classrooms. Teachers in this study also recognized that their lack of contact with other cultures during childhood made CRT more difficult for them, both in teaching all children certain cultural topics and in teaching ELL children certain content topics.

Theme 2. Teachers in this study indicated that while they had some limited contact with other cultures in college through various classes and activities, they were not exposed to course work that would help them in their CRT preparation. The findings in this study paralleled those by Bohn and Sleeter (2000), Boyle-Baise (1998), Pattnaik (1997), Sparks and Butt (2000) and Weisman and Garza (2002) who have all identified pre-service teachers as generally unprepared for culturally responsive teaching. Their research further suggested that most classroom teachers have had little or no contact with diverse groups

prior to their teaching experiences. Research suggested that teachers were more committed to culturally responsive teaching when they experience cultural immersion experiences and specific course work in multicultural education (Boyle-Baise 1998; Phuntsog, 2001). Most teachers have had little formal training, either in college or in staff development, in culturally responsive teaching, which was also reported by teachers in this study.

Theme 3. Teachers in this study, who indicated that they had no formal training in CRT in college, followed a pattern studied by Gallavan (1998, 2000). According to Gallavan, university educators responsible for offering CRT training opportunities often felt challenged and anxious in the multicultural field because of their own lack of CRT training and experiences. Some of these university educators elected not to teach multicultural classes if offered an opportunity to teach other topics. This lack of multicultural themes in college classes was affirmed by the teachers in this study.

Integration of CRT into Classroom

In order to obtain the themes of this study, characteristics of CRT were identified. According to Gay

(2000), culturally responsive teaching has the following characteristics:

- It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.
- It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities.
- It uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles.
- It teaches students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages.
- It incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (p. 29).

In addition, Irvine and Armento (2005) proposed four critical elements that support culturally responsive pedagogy:

1. Culture is a powerful variable that influences teaching and learning processes.

2. Effective teaching research is compatible with and supportive of the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy.
3. Teacher knowledge and reflection are important considerations when designing and implementing a culturally responsive lesson.
4. High standards and high expectations are important components of culturally responsive pedagogy (p. 4).

Theme 4. Acknowledges legitimacy of cultural heritages. Teachers in the study gave responses that demonstrated a routine acknowledgment of the legitimacy of cultural heritages. However, teachers admitted that they did not always feel adequate in their CRT teaching skills. This feeling of inadequacy by classroom teachers was verified in the studies of Boyle-Baise, (1998), Gallavan (1998, 2000), Marshall (1996), Paccione (2000), Phuntsog (2001), and Wilson (2003). These studies found that teachers at all grade levels admitted a certain frustration at achieving a feeling of accomplishment in multicultural classrooms.

Theme 5. Communicates between home and school with ELL parents. Communication with parents of ELL students or

students of diversity themselves was a more difficult skill for the 6 teachers in this study. The dominant trait for the CRT characteristic was at the orientation level. Only two of the teachers demonstrated a routine communication pattern between home and school with ELL parents. However, all teachers expressed knowledge of the powerful force of culture on language and the interpretation of meaning placed on learning by culture.

This concept was addressed by intercultural communication theorist Neuliep (2000) who suggested that children not only learn the vocabulary of their culture's language, but they also learn the unique way their particular language is put together, how specific sentences and phrases are formed, and the style in which their distinct communication patterns are produced, causing meaning and interpretations.

Delpit (1995) suggested cultures communicate meanings in different ways, making universal interpretations difficult. Both advised that teachers who failed to recognize these differences in attempting to communicate with diverse students and their parents made interaction difficult. Although teachers in the study were open to providing a safe and open environment for their ELL

students, these teachers admitted a frustration to both openly communicating on a regular basis with ELL parents and a frustration in knowing what types of activities would be most beneficial to these students. Teachers in this study realized that language was influenced by culture and that at times it was difficult to communicate with ELL parents and students.

Theme 6. Uses various instructional styles with ELL students. All 6 of the teachers mentioned at least one modification for ELL students within the classroom. However, teachers also spoke of frustration in their attempts to offer more help to their ELL students. This paralleled the work of Williams (2001) who maintained it usually takes ELLs 2 to 3 years to develop proficiency in communicative language. This proficiency can be enhanced by activities that engage students in reading, talking, and listening that result in language acquisition if teachers are aware how to use them. The teachers in the study did not feel they possessed the skills to accurately develop these activities for their ELL students and functioned at the orientation level of proficiency on this CRT trait.

This lack of expertise in developing relevant ELL class activities was addressed by several researchers who

studied the effects of culturally responsive teaching on ELL success (Alcala, 1992; David & Capraro, 2001; Egbert & Simich-Dudgeon, 2001; Gibbons, 2003; Pica, 2002; Scribner & Scribner, 1999; Short, 2000; and Tindall & Nisbet, 2004). They maintained that the success of ELLs depended on educating all regular classroom teachers to modify their courses. Short (2000) further suggested that classroom teachers be aware of and include English as a Second Language Standards. Short cited these Standards as being able to use English to participate in social interactions, achieve academically in all subject areas, and produce communication appropriate to audience.

Alcala (1992) suggested that the assessment of ELL students should include cooperative activities, continuous observations by the teacher, both formal and informal, a variety of student work examples, and anecdotal descriptions of the student behaviors and accomplishments. He also stressed the importance of parental input and involvement in the assessment process. He maintained that the most success is reached when students are surrounded by a safe, open, and warm classroom environment.

Gibbons (2003) and David and Capraro (2001) studied teachers using culturally responsive teaching methods,

suggesting university training and classroom experiences provide successful instructional methods for linguistically diverse students and could make evaluation tools more accurate and functional.

Studies from the Literature Review in Chapter 2 offered other ways the teachers in this study could improve ELL classroom success. Pica (2002) suggested content teachers needed to find additional opportunities to promote language learning through the regular classroom curriculum. Egbert and Simich-Dudgeon (2001) suggested that social studies teachers incorporate personal narratives and story telling into the ELL learner's unit of study. The authors maintained that since many cultures have strong oral traditions, incorporating these stories into daily lesson plans proved beneficial to these learners. Tindall and Nisbet (2004) maintained that since ELLs are not a homogenous group, content teachers are faced with additional challenges when planning for their classroom success. The teachers in this study were aware of this challenge and often addressed their lack of knowledge in preparing lessons for ELL students.

Teachers in this study regularly used standardization as the means of evaluation for ELL students. Clark (2002)

maintained that most teachers favor standardization over alternative methods of evaluation, such as oral reports, research assignments, portfolios, and field projects because of faster and less subjective grading. She found this standardization lead to unfair evaluation of culturally diverse students, who tend to do better on alternative methods of evaluation.

Theme 7. Teaches praise of each other's cultural heritage. Teachers in the study directly taught students to praise each other's cultural heritage at a routine proficiency level. Teachers also used ELL students as resources within their classroom on a regular basis. This parallels the work of Banister and Maher (1998) who found that teachers who saw ELL students as resources within the school provided invaluable opportunities to both the classroom and the school community.

Theme 8. Incorporates multicultural information in subject. Routine was the dominant proficiency level for this trait. Four teachers responded in a manner that suggested regular incorporation of multicultural information in their subject matter. However, the teachers in the study were not always comfortable with this inclusion of this material, which parallels the findings of

Gallavan (1998). In the study, some teachers were unsure of how to integrate multicultural materials into their curriculum without a fear of decontextualizing the content of their classes, some teachers simply were not interested in multicultural education because they did not feel a need for it in their classrooms or in society in general, and some believed multicultural education topics too "risky," and they felt uncomfortable in dealing with topics of prejudice, stereotyping, or intolerance. In addition, a direct correlation between teacher lack of enthusiasm for multicultural education and their fear of not being equipped to handle diversity in their classrooms was discovered in studies by Gallavan (2000) and Marshall (1996).

Gallavan's (1998) research showed that content teachers who were interested in diversity issues and who had investigated their own biases were valuable assets in culturally responsive teaching. There was evidence that content teachers who used cultural adjustment, embellishment, integration, and analysis in their curricula felt success in their effort and saw a growth in their students' cultural awareness (Zahorik & Novak, 1996). At times, teachers in this study who used CRT successfully

also felt this success. All 6 teachers were eager to learn more CRT skills within their content areas.

Theme 9. Realizes culture is a powerful variable that influences teaching and learning. Teachers responded that they saw culture as being a powerful variable that influenced teaching and learning and functioned at the routine proficiency level. Teachers in the study realized that a new culture pushes students away from familiar meaning systems, causing them to be placed in situations where familiar interpretation methods are no longer reliable, a concept noted by Jacobson (1996).

The teachers in this study, although aware of the influence of culture on teaching and learning, often felt that they did not possess the skills to adequately present lessons and activities for their ELL students because they did not receive college or in-service training in CRT. This follows the research by Gallavan (1998, 2000) that suggested that if pre-service and current teachers are to grow in multicultural understanding, professors at the university level must be prepared to help pre-service and in-service teachers in their cultural growth by offering intensive training in diversity topics. These studies indicated that university teachers who teach in the content

areas, especially on the secondary level, must be willing to combine their subject materials with culturally responsive teacher training techniques.

Teachers in this study noted that in their university experiences, they did not encounter this diversity training. However, through their classroom experiences, and their growing numbers of ELL students, these teachers did realize the important role of culture on teaching and learning.

Theme 10. Teacher designs CRT using prior knowledge and reflection. Participants responded that teacher knowledge and reflection were important attributes when designing CRT lessons and were functioning at the routine proficiency level in this CRT characteristic. Teachers in this study requested more time to reflect on CRT and use this reflection time in planning their lessons. This follows the research of Gallavan (1998) that suggested content teachers who are interested in diversity issues and who have investigated their own biases are valuable assets in culturally responsive teaching. There is evidence that content teachers who used cultural adjustment, embellishment, integration, and analysis in their curricula felt success in their effort and saw a growth in their

students' cultural awareness (Zahorik & Novak, 1996). Teachers in this study often expressed an interest in pursuing further CRT opportunities to better serve their students.

Theme 11. Demands high standards for CRT with ELL students. Only Tina and Mr. L. claimed to demand high standards for culturally responsive teaching when working with ELL students. Teachers in this study functioned at the orientation proficiency level for this characteristic. They stated that they had not held these high standards for ELL students. Only Tina and Mr. L. demanded high standards for culturally responsive teaching when working with ELL students. The literature stated, however, that this skill offered more success to ELL students. Scribner and Scribner (1999) stated that successful culturally responsive teachers emphasized accountability in their classrooms and this accountability led to student success.

Clark (2002) in her investigation of effective multicultural curriculum practices found that few university programs offer coursework on how to prepare teachers in the content areas from a multicultural perspective, allowing little, if any, guidelines for

evaluating students of diversity in these subjects. She stated standardized tests, widely used in classrooms today, are biased to favor white, middle-class, male students, and that they measure test-taking prowess, not content area knowledge.

Teachers in the study agreed with Curran (2003) who stated that many teachers felt lost when it comes to teaching their limited English proficiency students. She suggested that classroom teachers today face problems that are compounded by the fact that many students of diversity must learn a new language and a new culture. She further advised that a strong sense of community and an embracement of linguistic diversity are crucial to the success of a school's multicultural plan.

Theme 12: Language learning, an important CRT skill.

Teachers in this study also indicated that an intensive training in language, especially Spanish, would prove beneficial to them in their classroom experiences with new arrivals. Teachers suggested that this basic language training would help them within their classrooms and also with parent communication. This supports the work of Wright (1999) who stated foreign language teachers appear to be excellent resources in schools to help both students and

staff develop cultural understanding. Research indicated that language teachers are not only perceived as being instrumental in giving students positive perceptions of culture but that they are also an effective means for presenting cultural experience and understanding in the classroom. This research suggested that foreign language teachers were perceived by secondary language students as being extremely influential in forming their positive attitudes toward a foreign culture. The relationship between culture and language was recognized by teachers in this study. If the main objective of language teachers is to broaden and enliven the lives of students and society (Shanahan, 1997), it follows that one cannot learn another language without some cultural knowledge about the people who speak it (Rowan, 2001).

Theme 13: More CRT in-service opportunities needed.

Teachers in this study followed the analysis of Weisman and Garza (2002) who suggested that many teachers have not been exposed to other culture groups in childhood or college. Therefore, when problems arose when working with students from subordinated groups in their teacher preparation, they tended not to understand the issues of power, bias, and privilege that affect teaching in diverse settings.

Gallavan (1998) investigated why experienced teachers do not use effective multicultural education practices. Findings again suggested that in order to provide worthwhile multicultural experiences, teachers, staff, and administrators must be given meaningful in-service training in the field by qualified facilitators who might also include present staff, students of color, parents, and community leaders as well as others recognized as leaders in CRT.

Theme 14. Teachers wanted more strategies for communicating. Teachers in this study often felt uncomfortable when they needed to communicate with ELL parents. Peregoy and Boyle (2001) stressed the use of translators in the home language in order to engage parents of ELL students in becoming involved in the education of their children. They further suggested making parental involvement a school wide goal by providing parents opportunities to see their children performing plays, songs, or dances. The authors also recommended literacy development by providing take-home activities for parental involvement.

Because of the size of this school district, and because of the many different languages represented among

the ELL students, it is suggested that the district make arrangements with larger districts to share translators when necessary. These translators should be made available for school conferences and for teachers for home communication during the school year as suggested by Peregoy and Boyle (2001).

This idea was also proposed by Alcala (1992) who stressed the importance of parental input and involvement in the assessment process. Adger and Peyton (1999) suggested regularly scheduled meeting with educators from other schools in a community can not only benefit ELL students, but also can offer more opportunities for professional development. The authors further suggested that training workshops given by outside experts became more feasible when costs were shared by more than one district. In addition, teachers gained more expertise in teaching ELL students when they were allowed informal meetings with other teachers from other districts with similar student populations.

Theme 15. More time for reflection and collaboration of CRT lesson planning. Teachers in this study recommended more time to allow teachers to plan CRT lessons within their individual classrooms. They also saw a need for more

time to plan with other teachers from their departments and with the entire school staff to make CRT an important component of the district. This finding corresponds with Phuntsog (2001) who found teachers agreed that a critical component of culturally responsive teaching consisted of making time to plan together learning activities which recognized and acknowledged the diverse cultures within each classroom. According to teachers within this study, this component needs to be a part of in-service planning at the building and district levels.

Implications for Further Action

This study indicated that the availability of CRT training and staff development is still unsatisfactory in this district. Teachers indicated a need for comprehensive initial and advanced CRT training. This training should include strategies that would improve ELL instruction. This parallels studies of Boyle-Baise(1998), Gallavan (1998, 2000), Marshall (1996), Paccione (2000), Phuntsog (2001), and Wilson (2003), in which teachers at all grade levels admitted a certain frustration about achieving a feeling of accomplishment in multicultural classrooms because of lack of experience in CRT.

Teachers in this study reported challenges in school curriculum due to the rapid change to a more culturally diverse student population within the building. Teachers noted that they were not always comfortable with CRT in classroom instruction. To assist educators in a rapidly-changing student population, building and district in-service programs should address CRT opportunities.

According to research done by Miller, Strosnider, and Dooley (2000), most states required at least one course in multiculturalism, whether to obtain a teaching license or to renew one. Only one teacher in the study mentioned taking such a class either in pre-service or in-service training. Studies have suggested pre-service teachers are unprepared for culturally responsive teaching (Bohn & Sleeter, 2000; Boyle-Baise, 1998; Pattnaik, 1997; Sparks & Butt, 2000; Weisman & Garza, 2002), suggesting that colleges and universities are not adequately preparing teachers for CRT. Furthermore, even those teachers who receive culturally responsive teaching instruction do not always feel adept using strategies within the classroom. Teachers at all grade levels admit a certain frustration at achieving a feeling of accomplishment in multicultural classrooms

(Boyle-Baise, 1998; Gallavan, 1998, 2000; Marshall, 1996; Paccione, 2000; Phuntsog, 2001; Wilson, 2003).

This frustration is due to a lack of training and experience with other cultures which causes some teachers, also indicated in this study, to produce ethnic specific lessons instead of continually linking all cultures throughout the curriculum. Banks (2002) stated that when people become a part of a range of ethnic experiences, they are more able to sense a greater pleasure in the whole human event.

This investigation indicated that these teachers wanted more CRT training and that teachers were willing to make CRT a part of their lesson planning. Teachers in this study also admitted little previous contact with those of other cultures or classroom instruction in CRT, corresponding to studies by Boyle-Baise (1998); Gallavan, (1998, 2000); Marshall, (1996); Paccione, (2000); Phuntsog, (2001); Wilson, (2003).

Recommendations for Further Research

It is suggested that further research in CRT methods and use in the classroom be conducted to add to the newly-emerging documentation of the effect of CRT on curriculum, instruction, student learning, and professional activities

of teachers. This study suggested that teachers felt inadequate and frustrated with their lack of preparation for culturally responsive teaching. Research into CRT instruction offered by colleges and universities would provide information beneficial to all educators.

This study demonstrated the use of ethnic specific materials in classroom lessons rather than the holistic approach to multicultural education as defined by Gorski (2000). Banks (1994) maintained that multicultural education deals with race, class, gender, and their interaction. An important goal of multicultural education is not only to give students cognitive skills but also to give them the knowledge to think critically about and analyze the knowledge they have gained (Banks, 1996).

It is suggested that further research focus on the narrower aspects of this study, for example, the communication between home and school with ELL parents or the use of various instructional styles with ELL students. It is further suggested that CRT studies be undertaken with both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Further, it is suggested that teachers be exposed directly to community experiences with diverse cultures as part of their in-service training within the district.

Educators agreed that they needed to have this experience to teach an appreciation of cultural similarities and differences. This research indicated that teachers were more committed to multicultural education when they experienced cultural immersion experiences and specific course work in multicultural education (Boyle-Baise, 1998, Paccione, 2000).

Comparative studies should then be conducted to document differences in learning between similar schools with and without CRT training. Studies might be conducted to determine the effective/motivational outcome of CRT from the point of view of students, who were not directly included in this investigation. Additionally, future research should be conducted regarding the suggestion of Banks (2002) that all school children be given CRT experiences on a daily basis, rather than on special occasions and in special units of study.

Community experience as indicated by Boyle-Baise (1998) and Gay (1997) would offer teachers a real exposure to another race and culture and the experience would allow teachers to form a general awareness and comfort with ethnic groups. Educators agreed that they needed to have this experience to teach an appreciation of cultural

similarities and differences. Research indicated that teachers were more committed to multicultural education when they experienced cultural immersion experiences and specific course work in multicultural education (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Paccione, 2000).

In the growing diversity of the district in which this study was conducted, such experiences could certainly become a part of the in-service opportunities. Community involvement, coupled with a sharing of the experiences of all teachers within the district, as well as professionals involved with CRT skills and knowledge, would provide educational opportunities for all within the school system. In the words of Irvine and Armento (2005), "Armed with the beliefs and tools of the culturally responsive educator, we can more effectively address the goals of equity and excellence in the education of all" (p. 215).

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Appendix
Institutional Review Board (IRB)



NEBRASKA'S HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA)

February 25, 2005

Mary Petersen
EDAD-Kayser Hall 414
UNO - VIA COURIERIRB#: 049-05-EX**TITLE OF PROTOCOL: Exploring Teachers' Perceptions of Their Preparedness for Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Dear Ms. Petersen:

The IRB has reviewed your Exemption Form for *Exempt Educational, Behavioral, and Social Science Research* on the above-titled research project. According to the information provided, this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46:101b, category 2. You are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines. It is also understood that the IRB will be immediately notified of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project.

Please be advised that the IRB has a maximum protocol approval period of three years from the original date of approval and release. If this study continues beyond the three year approval period, the project must be resubmitted in order to maintain an active approval status.

Sincerely,

*Ernest Prentice, PhD/MDK*Ernest D. Prentice, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, IRB

EDP/gdk

Academic and Research Services Building 3000 / 987R30 Nebraska Medical Center / Omaha, NE 68198-7830