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2023

ARE TEACHERS PREPARED TO EMPLOY CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING EFFECTIVELY WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS?

Karleen Adam-Comrie

ARE TEACHERS PREPARED TO EMPLOY CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

Karleen Adam-Comrie

Date Submitted <u>March 29, 2023</u>   Date Approved <u>March 29, 2023</u>

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Karleen Adam-Comrie   James W. Campbell, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

ARE TEACHERS PREPARED TO EMPLOY CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING EFFECTIVELY WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS?

Karleen Adam-Comrie

All teachers, regardless of their backgrounds, require appropriate preparation to address the necessities of all students. A significant challenge in preparing teachers is ensuring they are familiar with the unique characteristics of the different group of students in their classrooms. According to New York State of Education (NYSED), the breakdown of ethnic groups' enrollment is: 17% Black or African American, 27% Hispanic or Latino, 1% American Indian or Alaska native, 10% Asian or native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, 43% White and 2% multiracial (NYSED, 2019). As the number of diverse ethnicities continues to grow, it is left to educators to ensure that all students are given an equal opportunity to get an education (NYSED, 2019). Teacher training must be done in order to understand how to engage all students in the learning process. Teacher education programs throughout the nation have coupled their effort at reform with revised programs committed to social justice and equity (G. Ladson-Billings, 1995). According to the NYSED, the culturally responsive sustaining (CR-S) education framework helps educators create student-centered learning environments that: affirm racial, linguistic and cultural identities; prepare students for rigor and independent learning, develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; and empower students as agents of social change (NYSED, 2018). However, there are limited numbers of schools that provide the training

and support for culturally relevant teaching (CRT). This research sought to categorize the

preparation of teachers and practices that support CR-S education. The findings of this

study will guide teachers to understand the impact that culturally responsive teaching

(CRT) can have with teaching diverse groups of learners. It will also provide a better

understanding of why it is important to implement CRT effectively in the classroom.

School administrators must provide professional development, resources, and continuous

support in order for teachers to implement CR-S education effectively. Planning and

practice cannot happen without the right training and reinforcement from the

administration team.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my cousin, Chantal Avin, who passed away at 33 from cancer. She attended St. John's University and passed away the year she was to graduate with a master's degree. Although she could not be here to support me, I know she would be happy to see me obtain my doctorate degree. She was someone who believed in education and continued to push me to obtain the highest degree. I would also like to dedicate my research work to my Tante Yvette for giving me a chance in this life, and Grandmother Man Tiyette for always building me up to push through all the trials and tribulations that we so often deal with in life. I want to thank my husband, Rodney, for being supportive and patient during my research. I am also thankful for all the times my children, Nylah and Niara cheered me on; and my siblings, especially Maggie and Gerald, pushed me to continue when I wanted to give up. The genuine support from my dear friends, Dr. Miatheresa Pate, Dr. Tito Vives, Dr. Max Jean Paul, Edu Hermelyn, Pascale Pereira Benjamin, Lukia Naraine, and Phara Fils-Julien, during these past few years was another source of encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

North American classrooms continue to become increasingly linguistically diverse, particularly because of the current immigration patterns. The percentage of public-school students in the United States who were English language learners (ELLs) was higher in fall 2017 (10.1%, or 5.0 million students) than in fall 2000 (8.1%, or 3.8 million students) (NCES, 2020). Many teachers believe that teaching all children the same way regardless of their backgrounds is the most effective way to improve students academically. Some culturally interpret responsiveness "…as a cultural celebration instead of connecting culture and academic instruction together (Sleeter, 2012, p. 569). To address that teaching gap, the NYSED's Culturally Responsive Sustaining (CR-S) Education Framework helps educators create student-centered learning environments that:

- Affirm racial, linguistic and cultural identities

- Prepare students for rigor and independent learning

- Develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference, and

- Elevate historically marginalized voices; and empower students as agents of social change (NYSED, 2018).

It is crucial to emphasize that teachers need to receive proper training on how to effectively involve all students in their lessons in order to develop the pedagogy that reflects the CR-S Education Framework. While teacher education programs across the country have attempted to promote social justice and equity through revised curricula

(Ladson-Billings, 1995), only a few schools offer the necessary training and resources to implement the CR-S Education Framework.

Culturally relevant education (CRE), according to Aronson, & Laughter (2016), refers to the combination of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) with culturally responsive teaching (CRT). CRE refers to teachers who are knowledgeable of their student's backgrounds and incorporate their students' experience, culture, and ethnicity into the lessons being taught. Culturally responsive approaches give students the opportunity to discuss and or debate using their experiences, background, culture, ethnicity, and/or political, social aspect of their country. CRP focuses on the preparation of prospective teachers who will meet the needs of diverse students. In fact, for more than a decade, anthropologists have examined ways that teaching can better match the home and community cultures of students of color who have previously not had academic success in schools (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Therefore, culturally responsive teaching focuses on the pedagogical practice of teachers. It pertains to the cultural knowledge, prior experience, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them (Gay, 2010). Nonetheless, "…not everyone seems to have a desire to learn about culturally relevant practices or seems to believe that this is something they need to address" (Mette, Nieuwehhuizen, & Hvidston, 2016, p. 16).

The successful implementation of culturally relevant teaching requires the support of the principal, assistant principal, coaches, and colleagues to prepare teachers adequately. Additionally, supervisors should observe and promote inter-class visitations, which model effective practices to assist teachers in implementing CRT. Administrators

must also ensure that teachers are correctly applying the knowledge obtained from training in their classrooms and that their practices accommodate students' cultural backgrounds. This fosters a dynamic relationship between home, community, and school culture, as stated by Ladson-Billings (1995).

The CR-S Education framework developed by the New York State Education Department is designed to support the diversity of students in classrooms. Its aim is to create student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural identities, foster positive academic outcomes, develop the students' ability to connect across lines of difference, elevate historically marginalized voices, and empower students as agents of social change (NYSED, 2019). However, preparing teachers to support effective instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) remains a challenging goal for many education programs (Baecher, 2012).

Erickson and Mohatt (1982) suggest that culturally responsive teaching is a beginning step for bridging the gap between home and school. CRT integrates the cultural knowledge, prior experience, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them (Gay, 2010). When teachers understand the diverse students' backgrounds and cultures, it improves the practice of CRE. Teachers who adapt CRE to the curricula being taught while holding high expectations for all students motivate students, especially ELLs.

The knowledge and skills required to prepare classroom teachers to teach diverse students has become increasingly difficult. Research has shown that children whose home language is not English have greater difficulty with school achievement than do other

groups (Fry, 2008; Regalado, Goldenberg, & Appel, 2001). According to Gay (2018), too many students of color have not been achieving in school as well as they should (and can) for far too long. Culturally relevant pedagogy; the role of teachers' preparation in supporting all children of diverse backgrounds, development and learning is grave. When teachers make connections to students' prior knowledge, current and past experiences, especially for those who struggle, it is helpful with engaging students in the learning process.

Teachers are an intricate part of a student's social and academic growth during their time in school, especially in elementary schools. In order to give students a better opportunity it is necessary that teachers acquire specific knowledge and skills related to language and culture for the diverse groups they teach, which will help students acclimate better socially and academically.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' preparedness to employ culturally responsive teaching. There are more teachers coming into the teaching profession who lack experience, which may lead them to view "…diversity as a problem rather than a resource" (Smolcic & Arends, 2017, p. 51). Many teachers are unprepared and unaware of the importance of supporting their diverse students academically and socially in their classrooms. As the number of culturally diverse students increases, it is imperative that all educators, especially new teachers, become deeply attentive to ways to adapt their practice to meet all students' needs (Lew & Nelson, 2016). It is essential that teachers be trained to employ culturally relevant education to properly service and ensure equitable outcomes for the growing numbers of diverse students. Teaching requires a

wide variety of skills to be effective, "…such as the ability to scaffold instruction, make culturally relevant curricular decisions, employ knowledge of second language acquisition in their teaching, and encourage strong home-school partnerships with ELLs families" (Baecher, Knoll. Patti, 2013, p. 2). When culturally relevant education is used, teachers will be able to show how they can help students make connections between their community, national, and global identities (Ladson-Billings, 1995) with the learning in their classroom. In the culturally responsive classroom, teachers are the ones responsible for extracting knowledge out of the students and making the classroom represents all cultures. This study examined the teachers' preparation and effectiveness with employing CRE with diverse groups of children. Furthermore, this study explored what additional support is warranted from administration and possible coaches to implement it successfully.

Theoretical Framework

The theory ungirding this investigation is Ladson Billings' (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. Lev Vygotsky (1962), a Russian teacher and psychologist, he declared, as "disputable fact," that "thought development, is determined by language… and sociocultural experience of the child" (Vygotsky, 1962, p.51). CRE uses constructivist methods to develop bridges connecting students' cultural references to academic skills and concepts (Dover, 2013). Teachers who practice culturally relevant teaching work to develop relationships with students, because they understand the importance of it. It is through solid relationships that students interpret teachers' high expectations as an act of caring and respond to them in earnest (Adkins, 2012; Saunders, 2012). Ladson-Billings's (1995), research on CRP theory was formulated on three

criteria, academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 480).

According to Gay (2010), there is considerable intellectual ability and many other kinds of intelligences lying untapped within ethnically diverse students. If these are recognized and used in the instructional process, school achievement will improve radically (Gay, 2010). The teachers who practice culturally relevant teaching preclude the traditional fixed script lessons.

Inadequate preparation can create a cultural gap between teachers and students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009) that limits the ability of educators to choose effective instructional practices and curricular materials. When teachers are trained and supported properly, they can help all students with diverse cultures, ethnicity, and backgrounds in the classroom. Culturally relevant teaching method enhances the language development for learning and adapting to the various cultures within the classroom and school. With culturally relevant teaching strategies, students can grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Thus, teacher preparation is key to increasing the academic achievement of all students (Gay, 2010).

Culturally responsive teaching allows teachers to identify their own beliefs and biases, which is crucial in supporting students of various backgrounds along with creating an environment where students feel confident with achieving academically. It is important that teachers increase their awareness of their own identities as they proceed with culturally relevant teaching and acknowledge that all students can succeed.

Hammond & Jackson (2015) stated, "…we often talk about the problem of the achievement gap in terms of race-racial relations, issues of oppression and equity-while

ironically the solutions for closing students' learning gaps in the classroom lie in tapping into their culture." (p.21). According to Gay, (2013) "…since attitudes and beliefs about ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity shape instructional behaviors, they need to be more positive and constructive to produce better teaching and learning for culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse students" (p.67). It is essential for teachers to acquire detailed information about the cultural particularities to make school more accessible for all students.

Teachers must be provided the right resources and training to be well prepared to implement CRT into their lessons. When instruction integrates students' own culture and experiential filters, their academic achievement improves. It is imperative that teachers have explicit knowledge about cultural diversity to meet the requirements of all students. Culturally responsive teaching helps teachers access the higher potentials of ethnically diverse students by simultaneously cultivating their academic and psychosocial abilities (Gay, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) guiding this study represents what needs to happen for CRP to take place efficiently in classrooms. In the framework, teachers become knowledgeable about CRP by attending ongoing professional development and using resources provided. Teachers are to be provided with resources and training to acquire the knowledge of how to incorporate culturally relevant teaching into their curriculum as well as their lesson plan. Preparation is an important aspect of implementing CRE and understanding why it makes a difference to students overall.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework
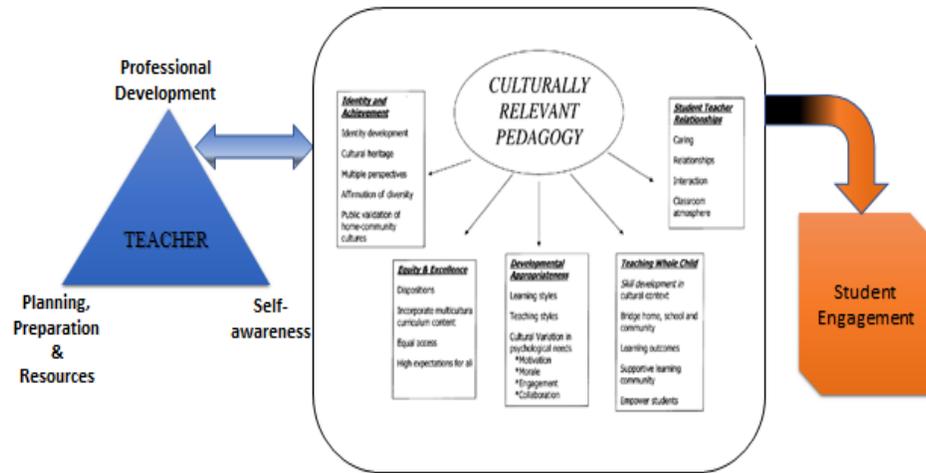
For educators to understand the positive effect of CRE, they must first self-reflect on their culture, backgrounds, beliefs, biases, and pedagogy. Educators who believe in meeting the needs of all diverse learners need to understand what their biases are and how that can have a negative impact on students' engagement in their classes. "Since attitudes and beliefs about ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity shape instructional behaviors, they need to be more positive and constructive to produce better teaching and learning for culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse students" (Gay, 2013 p.67).

Significance of the Study

Teachers trained and supported in cultural awareness, and who learn various approaches are essential stakeholders of students' academic and social growth. Teachers alone cannot support students: the administrator and other faculty members must also be trained in aligning the students' culture with that of the school building. Acknowledging and valuing diversity amongst all students will reinforce a positive school climate and

students' academic achievement. This study is significant because minimal research has been conducted on teachers who implement culturally responsive teaching, or how it affects students academically and socially. One crucial factor that can be provided is ongoing culturally relevant education workshops for teachers. It is vital for teachers to obtain ongoing professional development and training. Once teachers are employed in a school, they may receive limited professional development for culturally relevant education, which is crucial for the diverse group of students they will or are teaching. The study will show the importance of teachers being well prepared in order to implement culturally responsive education to all their students.

Connection with Vincentian Mission in Education

The study of supporting diverse students lends itself to St. John's University, a Vincentian mission in education, which is to be supportive of all people. As stated, "We strive to provide an excellent education for all people, especially those lacking economic, physical or social advantages." All students have the right to an education and feel welcome, especially children entering the United States for the first time. Vincentian tradition states, "We seek to foster global harmony and development by creating an atmosphere in which all may imbibe and embody the spirit of compassionate concern for others so characteristic of Vincent." As students begin their education here in the United States public schools, it is vital for them to have positive interactions with others in the school and for teachers to try to understand something about their culture. Being a compassionate person helps students to become more accepting of the environment. If the environment is welcoming, it improves the ability of the student to interact with others. It can be seen through student teacher and student-to-student interactions.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' preparedness to employ culturally responsive teaching effectively with English Language Learners. The study included four participants from an urban school in Queens, New York. Teachers provided their perceptions of what culturally relevant teaching is and what support is provided by the administration. I sought to answer the following questions:

R:1 How are teachers preparing to support diverse learners through the lens of culturally relevant education?

R:2 How does the implementation of culturally responsive education improve student engagement?

R:3 How does culturally relevant education effectively meet the needs of diverse learners?

R:4 What are the barriers teachers face when implementing culturally responsive teaching?

Definition of Terms

Administrator

A person who provides direction and day-to-day management of day care centers, preschools, schools, and colleges and universities. They also oversee educational programs for other institutions such as museums, businesses, and job-training organizations.

Best Practices

The full range of individual activities, policies, and programmatic approaches to achieve positive changes in student attitudes or academic behaviors (Arendale, 2010).

Culturally Relevant Education

A conceptual framework that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural backgrounds, interests, and lived experiences in all aspects of teaching and learning within the classroom and across the school it focuses on academic skills concepts, critical reflection, cultural competence, and critical discourse of power (Aronson & Laughter, 2016).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/Teaching

As a "…theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frame of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them (Gay, 2000, 2010, 2018).

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELLs) are those who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak or understand a language other than English, and speak or understand little or no English and require support in order to become proficient in English and are identified pursuant to Section 154.3 of Commissioner's Regulations.

Knowledge

is a familiarity, awareness, or understanding of someone or something, such as facts, information, descriptions, or skills, which is acquired through experience or education by perceiving, discovering, or learning.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

Teachers are a primary source of information for most children. The United States is full of immigrants who have made it their home. Those with families are likely to enroll their children in public schools. The children who are from other countries may not speak English, but their cultures and backgrounds are very important to them. The study explored the preparation, practices and challenges of teachers using CRE.

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' preparedness to employ culturally responsive teaching effectively with English Language Learners. Teachers require a wide variety of skills to be effective, "…such as the ability to scaffold instruction, make culturally relevant curricular decisions, employ knowledge of second language acquisition in their teaching, and encourage strong home-school partnerships with families" (Baecher, 2013, p. 9). This study examined the relationship between teachers' preparation and their pedagogy, and support warranted by administration.

Teachers are expected to be prepared to meet all students' academic needs. It is unfortunate that some teachers were never trained or provided ongoing professional development on culturally responsive education. In culturally responsive teaching, relationships are as important as the curriculum that is being taught (Hammond & Jackson, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Ladson-Billings' (1995) study of CRP was formulated on three criteria: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (p. 480). Furthermore, (Ladson-Billings, 1995) "…theoretical model not only addresses student achievement but also

helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate." (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.469). The questions that lead to formulate this theoretical model of CRP are, *"What constitutes student success? How can academic success and cultural success complement each other in settings where student alienation and hostility characterize the school experience? How can pedagogy promote the kind of student success that engages larger social structural issues in a critical way? How do researchers recognize that pedagogy in action?* And *what are the implications for teacher preparation generated by this pedagogy?"* (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469).

The study consisted of eight teachers who were identified through a process of c*ommunity nomination* (Foster, 1991). They were African American mothers who attended the local churches suggesting who they thought were outstanding teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The names of those teachers were cross-referenced with the independent list of excellent teachers generated by the principals and some teaching colleagues. The principal's criteria for teaching excellence included excellent classroom management skills, student achievements as measured by standardized test scores and personal observations of teaching practice. The demographic makeup of the participants included five African American and three White. Their years of experiences ranged from 12 to 40 years.

The study comprised of four phases, which were ethnography interview, classroom observation, videotaping and teacher collaboration in watching each other's videotape together as research collective or collaborative to view segments of one another's videotaped chosen by the researcher. There were 10 series of two to three hour

meetings with the teachers participating in analysis and interpretation of their own and each other's practice. During this phase, the formulation of culturally relevant pedagogy emerged in the initial interviews confirmed by teaching practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 472). Three dimensions were formulated for culturally relevant pedagogy:

- Holding high academic expectations and offering appropriate support such as scaffolding.

- Acting on cultural competence by reshaping curriculum, building on students' funds of knowledge, and establishing relationships with students and their homes.

- Cultivating students' critical consciousness regarding power relations (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2000 and 2021).

While "…classroom arrangements may be designed to improve student achievement, culturally relevant teachers consciously create social interactions to help them meet the three previously mentioned criteria of academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness." (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 480).

The participants in the study: 1) maintained fluid student-teacher relationships; 2) demonstrated a connectedness with all of the students; 3) developed a community of learners; and 4) encouraged students to learn collaboratively, and be responsible for another (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Examples include consulting with a classmate before asking the teacher (turn and talk), maintaining equitable and reciprocal teacher and student relationships (student gets the opportunity to act as the teacher students working collaboratively in small group with student leading group discussion).

The third area of focus was conceptions of knowledge, which emerged from the study. The focus was on the perception of teachers on knowledge. For the participant it

was simply "about doing" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.481). An example of this was a student asking a teacher a question and the teacher asking the student it they were satisfied with the answer. The student replied "yes." The teacher replied, "You shouldn't be. Just because I'm the teacher doesn't mean I'm always right" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.481). This was done to help students understand the difference between an intellectual challenge and a challenge to the authority of a parent. Students were supported in role switching between school and home. The study concludes the beginning look at ways that teachers might systematically include the culture of the students in their classes as authorized or official knowledge based on experience and /or prior knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Culturally responsive education is one of the most effective means of meeting the learning needs of culturally different students (Gay, 2000, 2010; Ford, 2010; Harmon, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2010). CRE is a way of teaching that validates the values, prior experiences, and cultural knowledge of students, and the potential to transform students' lives. According to Gay, (2018) culturally responsive teaching, "…is a means for unleashing the higher learning potentials of ethnically diverse students by simultaneously cultivating their academic and psychological abilities" (Gay, 2018, p.21). Ladson-Billings, (2014) asserted pedagogy should be ever evolving to meet the needs of students and, "…any scholar who believes that she has arrived, and the work is finished does not understand the nature and meaning of scholarship" (Aaronson & Laughter, 2016, p.166). The school system continues to grow with diverse children being admitted every day. CRE needs to be incorporated within every school. In the face of current policies and practices that have the explicit goal of creating a monocultural and

monolingual society, research and practice, need equally explicit resistances that embrace cultural pluralism and cultural equality (Paris, 2012). Multicultural education seeks to develop instructional curricula and practice in school communities that meet the need of diverse student populations (Lew & Nelson, 2016). Reaching the diverse populations of students that are entering schools everyday requires having a better understanding of how to support these children; and giving them an opportunity to grow and be successful in their academic careers, which leads to a profession in the future. As the diversity of cultures in schools continue to grow, it is imperative that teachers learn about other cultures and understand their own biases in order to teach students fairly (Smolcic & Arends, 2017). Teachers are on the frontline of educating a diverse group of students. Giving them the opportunity to learn how to reach these children will improve students' engagement in the learning process. According to Bell (2007) and Dover (2013), the goal of "…CRE is to combat oppression by enabling all groups to have an equitable portion of society's resources" (Aaronson & Laughter, 2016 p. 168). Although in the classrooms teachers may have multiple students with different backgrounds, getting to know their cultures, communities and ethnicities, experiences will improve students' academic growth because they feel included and not forgotten. CRE is effective in the classroom, when teachers, "…develop a deep understanding of how the content impacts the culture of their students" (Brown, Boda, Lemmi & Monroe, 2018, p.799)

CRE is the process of using familiar cultural information and processes to scaffold learning. It is focused on relationships, cognitive scaffolding, and critical social awareness. Teachers can support diverse groups of students by building trust, rapport, affirmation, and validation of who the students are. When, "…educators understand the

importance of being in a relationship and having a social, emotional connection to the student helps to create a safe space for learning" (Hammond & Jackson, 2015, p. 15). Hammond stated that there are four core areas of culturally responsive teaching which are connected. They include the principles of brain-based learning, awareness, learning partnerships, information processing and community building (Hammond & Jackson, 2015). CRT helps children of color to improve academically when teachers learn about the student as an individual and using their background knowledge will further engage the student in the learning process. The goal of CRT is to "…build strength in diversity, rather than challenge the existing social order, but strength is gained by engaging representatives of that order" (Beckett, 2011, p.75), which are the children in the classrooms.

The Expectation of Teaching ELLs

Due to the increasing number of ELLs in the United States, many teachers should expect to have ELLs in their classrooms. Under federal law, ELLs must be provided appropriate English language development support services and are assessed annually until they meet a state's criteria for proficiency in English on specific language tests, so they are no longer considered an ELL (Samsom & Collins, 2012). ELLs pose unique challenges for educators because federal mandates under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA, the nation's primary education law, require that all students have access to the core curriculum and meet specific academic targets. Although schools face federal and state demands for improving student performance, these mandates are to be met with limited funding and inadequately prepared teachers. In the absence of increased teacher knowledge, skills, and support to address the necessities of ELLs, the

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results will continue to demonstrate a significant and widening achievement gap between ELLs and their peers (Samsom & Collins, 2012). New York State only requires teachers to take six units of coursework on general language acquisition and literacy development, which may not cover the specific demands of ELLs. Teachers, in general, do not receive a substantial amount of professional development or support to teach ELLs. However, the question remains if those who implement culturally responsive teaching perceive themselves as being well prepared to use it.

Review of Related Literature

The review of related research work covers three topics: the preparation of teachers' teaching, implementation of CRE, using CRE to support student engagement, and barriers teachers encounter when implementing CRE.

Professional Development

The studies reinforce the need for professional development and college preparedness courses for teachers to understand how they can better support diverse students. The teachers had no linguistic background nor the methodology to teach English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom. Reeves (2006) supported the needs for teachers to be trained with culturally diverse students. According to Craighead and Ramanathan (2007), professional development must identify theoretical base that general education teachers must possess about language learners to further support English language Learners. Oneal, Ringler & Rodriguez (2008) stated that all teachers regardless of their backgrounds require appropriate preparation to address the needs of English Language Learners.

"There are more teachers coming into the teaching profession who lack experience, which may lead them to view, 'diversity as a problem rather than a resource'" (Smolcic & Arends, 2017, p. 51). As the diversity of cultures in schools continues to grow, it is imperative that teachers learn about other cultures to teach students fairly. Furthermore, society is moving toward high-stake standardized testing. School privatization or a business management model does not align with the need of ongoing professional development and preservice teacher education for practicing teachers according to Sleeter (2011).

Through continuous professional development, this is a way where teachers get continuous training and practice for CRE. In a national survey, 890 teachers believed improving professional development would yield increased teacher effectiveness (Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011; Powers, Kaniuka, Phillips, & Cain, 2016). Teacher quality and student achievement are impacted by professional development (Powers et al., 2016; Reitzug, 2002), and is an important aspect to the improvement of teacher pedagogy. It also provides skills that teachers can use to help students confidence with improving academically. Lew's (2016), study found that some participants felt there were no specific professional development workshop offered in CRT and it was not discussed in their mentoring meetings nor staff meetings. Brown (2018) stated, "…extensive professional development projects of this nature are not always possible, which calls for educators to rethink our approach to research and training provision" (Brown, Boda, Lemmi & Monroe, 2018, p. 799).

These studies support this research work, which demonstrates the need for professional development in culturally responsive education for educators. If teachers do

not receive quality training and ongoing professional development in culturally responsive education, core academic teachers will not have the knowledge they require to support students of all cultures appropriately.

These studies used a qualitative method that included interviews and observations. These researchers support the philosophy of teachers needing ongoing professional development in order to combat "…institutionalized systems of oppression in schools, communities and universities, and commit to the exploration of the impacts of race on our social identities, interactions, and decisions" (Zion, Allen & Jean, 2015, p.931).

Identity/Awareness

Self-awareness is an important aspect of learning and improving. Self-reflecting teachers learn about their own biases and reflect on how that could negatively impact students. They need to first understand where those biases are rooted and work on not allowing that to treat or see students negatively. According, Gay (2010), positive relationship demonstrates caring, which is one of the pillars of culturally responsive teaching. In order for teachers to support CRE, teachers need to learn something about their own culture and be reflective about their beliefs.

Mette, Nieuwenhuizen, and Hvidston's (2016), study revealed that teachers commented on their, "…increased respect for diversity, the awareness of different cultural backgrounds and how this translated to building positive relationships and the ability to reflect on how a student from a different racial and/or socioeconomic background might perceive instruction within" (Mette, Nieuwenhuizen & Hvidston 2016, p. 14) schools. If teachers do not know how to support diverse students, that specific

population will continue to show limited growth improvement academically, socially and emotionally. Teacher's knowledge and attitudes about various cultures are crucial on all levels but are even more critical in elementary schools because it is necessary for students to acquire a strong academic and social foundation in elementary school. Hammond (2008) stated that "…teaching academic language is hard ...and teachers need the knowledge of how to incorporate the teaching of these aspects into their teaching of curriculum content" (Hammond, 2008, p.152). According to Freire & Valdez (2017), teachers with proper training of CRE recognize the value of students, families as valuable resources and partners in the classroom. Teachers are often from different backgrounds from their students because of "cultural dissonance." These teachers often do not understand the critical role that equity and social justice play in teaching with students' success and persistence in all content. CRE used appropriately allows educators to self-reflect on their own beliefs, biases, attitudes, disposition, and their posture. This will help teachers to see how they influence students in a positive and negative way. This is a very important aspect of improving one's pedagogical approaches (Freire & Valdez, 2017).

According to Brown, Boda & Lemmi's (2018) study unveiled "…ideologically teachers had a tenuous awareness of CRE as a construct. Although when they were asked to explain they could not transfer CRE's theory into practices" (Brown, Boda & Lemmi, 2018 p.798). These studies discuss teachers' awareness, value, and biases as it pertains to cultural responsiveness. These studies support this research as it relates to the teachers having a better understanding of their core values, biases, and awareness of the various cultures, ethnicity of students and how they can affect them in a positive and negative way. When teachers are aware of their biases and where they stem from, it will make a

difference in their classroom. CRE helps identify self-awareness and values to help improve teaching the various children in the classroom. These qualitative studies were very useful in shaping the lens around this study.

Engagement

The relationship between a student and a teacher is key to the educational process. The teacher student relationship is secured in affirmation, mutual respect, and validation that equates to a firm belief that marginalizing students not only can but also will improve school achievement. Teachers are an important factor for students' social and emotional growth, culturally responsive teaching, and academic learning. Teachers must learn about the cultures of students they teach so that they can help some adjust to and learn the culture of Americans while preserving their own culture (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Major, 2006).

Research demonstrates that when teachers understand that diversity is a vital school characteristic; by building a trusting and culturally supportive school environment they can close the achievement gap. There are three major concepts that educators of diverse learners must understand and embrace with a positive attitude: 1) to be successful in culturally diverse schools, 2) to be able to learn to work across cultures; and 3) student cultural differences significantly contribute to the school's identity and ensure schools are enriched by the diversity of cultures within their walls (Billot et al., 2007).

Nykiel-Herbert (2010) stated "…one of the major reasons why minority students in general and immigrant newcomers in particular, perform poorly in schools is that their home culture, while being celebrated are not sufficiently utilized as a resource for their own learning" (Sleeter, 2011, p. 13). Teachers who develop the "…courage to confront

the realities of individual and institutionalized systems of oppression, in schools, communities, and universities and commit to the exploration of the impacts of race on social identities, interactions, and decisions," (Zion, Allen & Jean, 2015, p. 931) reflect on student engagement. Smolcic & Arends' (2017) study "…underscores the benefit of personal experience with cultural others, complemented by the critical mediation of conceptual and guided reflection, both which are necessary to the development of interculturality" (Smolcic & Arends, 2017, p. 69).

Educational processes and structures, especially those related to teaching or pedagogy, can make a difference in student achievement (Brown, Jeffrey & Cooper, 2011). Teachers learning about the students' background, ethnicity, experience, and community are set examples that increase student engagement. For viable teaching and learning to take place there must be connections between the home-community and school cultures. From a culturally relevant teaching point of view, teachers must develop an ability to nurture and support ELL's cultural competence by implementing a variety of strategies (Drucker 2003; Miller 2002; Park 2014)

These studies support the understanding of the relationship between CRE and student engagement. When teachers are trained properly, are aware of their biases and the root of it, this will help to support all ELL students to become more engaged in the lesson being taught. These qualitative studies included interviews and observations. Along with quantitative studies which included surveys that focused on CRE.

Barriers/Challenges

These studies support the challenges and barriers that are often encountered by teachers as they attempt to implement CRE. There are more teachers coming into the

teaching profession who lack experience, which may lead them to view "…diversity as a problem rather than a resource" (Smolcic & Arends, 2017 p. 51). Brown, Boda, Lemmi & Monroe (2018) stated, "…in our exploration of how to use CRE, we learned that although all teachers were familiar with the construct, few understood its pedagogical implications" (Brown, Boda, Lemmi & Monroe, 2018, p. 786). Craighead & Ramanathan's (2017) findings revealed that collectively the teachers expressed a common set of considerations for planning lessons, managing classes, and setting up daily practices. CRP requires policy makers to support the efforts and research being done on improving diverse children's academic success (Sleeter, 2012).

Kim (2011) stated there are "…many teachers education program who do not employ the theoretical framework of the major tenets of multiculturalism" (Kim, 2011, p. 214). This essential change and the first step are acknowledging that change is necessary to meet the needs of the diverse groups of learners in every school (Kim, 2011). Freire & Valdez's (2017) study found four themes that relate to barriers to the enactment of CRP: lack of time, lack of culturally relevant materials, lack of knowledge, and inappropriateness of social justice for children.

Brown, Boda, Lemmi & Monroe (2018) stated, "In our exploration of how to use CRE, we learned that although all teachers were familiar with the construct, few understood its pedagogical implications" (Brown, Boda, Lemmi & Monroe, 2018, p. 786). Teachers need to develop a rich understanding of how what they teach applies to the lives of their students. Teachers who lack the knowledge of CRE need support which includes professional development, ongoing support by administration, coaching, and time to plan and revise curriculum. With the increasing number of immigrants coming to

the United States, teachers do not always see how their various contents connect to diversity (Aaronson & Laughter, 2016).

Relationship Between Prior Research and the Present Study

While research is limited to the perception of teachers' preparedness to support English Language Learners using culturally responsive teaching, the number of students entering the United States public school continues to grow. There are state and city mandates to provide ELLs with the same standard of education as any other child in the United States. Teachers who are teaching ELLs cannot support them without proper training to promote positive attitudes through social-emotional learning, knowledge of culturally responsive teaching, and understanding the expectation of teaching ELLs. There are more than four million ELLs enrolled in public schools in kindergarten through twelfth grade (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2014). According to the study by Oneal, Ringler, Rodriguez (2008), "…teachers have not been prepared to teach ELLs in their preparation programs in the past and have received much of their information on ELLs through professional development" (Oneal, Ringler, Rodriguez, 2008, p. 11).

This study demonstrates the ongoing need for professional development for teachers. There are those who did not necessarily get any training at the colleges in CRE to support ELLs as they head out to the field of educating diverse children. The study supports this research study, as it pertains to proper training and support for teachers teaching ELLs. According to Reeves (2006) much work remains for research that explores teacher attitudes towards ELLs in the mainstream, as well as the instructional implications of those attitudes (p.139). The data revealed that teachers struggle with

making sense of teaching and learning in multilingual school environment (Reeves, 2006). The study is important, especially with the law requesting that ELLs get the same education as all other children. Educators must be trained accordingly to provide equal educational opportunities for ELLs as they do for our American born children. According to Gay (2000) culturally relevant pedagogy uses "the cultural knowledge, prior experience, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant to and effective [for students] … it teaches to and through strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming" (Gay, 2000, p.29) the need for teachers' to be trained in CRE.

Summary

Training teachers to employ culturally relevant education is limited. CRE teachers work to combat oppression and understand the student as a whole. Teachers use the student as a resource, educating themselves on the community students live in, and acknowledging the differences, which does not stop achievement from taking place. The literature on CRE training and lack of understanding is a key indicator of the teacher's unpreparedness to incorporate it into their classroom. It leaves us to speculate if it improves diverse students' engagement in the learning process. This study investigated the effectiveness of teachers' employment of CRE in the classroom and their preparation.

CHAPTER 3

Introduction

      The study took place in the urban district in Queens, New York. Data collection focused on four teachers from one elementary school that used culturally responsive teaching in their classes. The school was selected because it has a linguistically diverse student population. I reached out to the school principal to set up a meeting to discuss the research. I informed the principals that all information was confidential, and a fictitious name would be used for the school name and all participants. I discussed the study and the purpose of using teachers from their school as part of the study.

Methods and Procedures

Research Questions

      The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' preparedness to employ culturally responsive teaching effectively with ELLs; what culturally relevant teaching is and what support is provided by administration. I sought to answer the following questions:

      R:1 How are teachers preparing to support diverse learners through the lens of culturally relevant education?

      R:2 How does the implementation of culturally responsive education improve student engagement?

      R:3 How does culturally relevant education effectively meet the needs of diverse learners?

      R:4 What are the barriers teachers face when implementing culturally responsive teaching?

Research Design and Data Analysis

The research questions were addressed using a case study qualitative methodology and reviewed by experienced license ELL teachers who had more than 10 years of experience in the field. The teachers chosen must have had no less than five English Language Learner in their classes. According to Creswell (2014), case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. The question, *How are teachers preparing to support diverse learners through the lens of culturally relevant education?* is an important factor in determining if CRE is being used effectively and understanding what is required for teachers to effectively implement it in the classrooms.

Case studies are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period (Stake, 1995, Yin, 2009, 2012, 2014). For this research, multiple schools were considered; however, the principal of this school, being an advocate for CRE, agreed to allow the research to take place at his school. The criteria for choosing the school were that they must have a diverse student population and the teacher chosen must have had training in CRE. The teacher should have no less than three years' experience teaching in a public school. The principal chose the teachers that were trained in CRE from their school for the research. The teacher and I were introduced, and I explained what the study was about and why it was essential to a teacher's professional growth.

Data Collection

      I focused the interview on bracketing topics and questions. If a follow up interview was required, I set them up. When formulating the open-ended questions I defined, discussed, and clarified the intent of the investigation so it was clear. I used these strategies to formulate the questions for the interview and revised or added additional questions based on participants' responses. The interviews were digitally recorded and conducted in a face-to-face and/or via Zoom settings. The interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes with each participant, for a total of 5 interviews.

      The schedule and time frames of each participant were honored. All interviews were conducted at a time and location convenient for each participant. Before beginning any interviews, each participant was required to complete a consent form. The consent form delineated the purpose of the research and the participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time.

      Prior to analyzing the interview data, I transcribed all digitally recorded interviews, observations, documents (if any), journal entries, and field notes. By personally engaging in the transcription process, allowed me to better acquaint myself with the data and have "…an experience that usually generates emergent insights" (Patton, 2002, p. 441). All materials for each interview, observation, documents, and journal entries will be securely password protected in a Microsoft Word saved on my personal computer accessible only by me. Triangulation of data took place through multiple sources of data, which included interviews, observations and reviewing of transcription of recordings. It was also done by reviewing each participant's information

and examining evidence from the source to support the themes and credibility (Creswell, 2018).

Sample and Population

The study took take place at a K-5 elementary school in the urban area in Queens, New York. The school consisted of over 800 students, with over 200 ELL students and under 50 former ELLs. The participants must have had no less than three years' experience teaching and no less than five ELLs in their class. The participants for this study provided instruction to students from grade three to five. The teachers were chosen based on their experience and training of using CRE in their classroom. The school has no stake in the study, and they do not have any financial ties to this study. This study is to inform educators in NYS, the importance of incorporating CRE, to give diverse students more opportunity to engage in the learning.

Instruments

Interview Protocols

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the interview protocol for this study was developed for consistency of interviewing questions. The interview protocol was stated in simple terms so interviewees would have no trouble understanding. The interviews were conducted in person and/or via Zoom. The open-ended questions were semi-structured. They addressed how teachers are preparing to support diverse learners through the lens of culturally relevant education. The initial interview determined the best setting for the meetings. The participants were told that the interview may take up to an hour. The interview was audiotaped using a Voice Memo App and a battery operated handheld recorder along with handwritten notes. For further interviews that may have been

required, participants were given the choice of meeting in person or via Zoom personal account.

Observation Protocols

Classroom observations were utilized to compare the interviewee's responses to the actual implementation of CRE in the lesson being taught. A videotape authorization form for parents and teachers was distributed for garnering permission to videotape the teachers and students in class. I used Charlotte Danielson's Framework rubric, Domains 1 and 3 to evaluate specific aspects of the lesson. These were planning and preparation and instruction. This helped to determine if CRE was used the way that the teacher intended in order to support diverse students. The observation rubric was in the form of a Likert scale, rating from *developing* to *highly effective* with an area to write the evidence that support the rating. For the purpose of this investigation, Domains 1 & 3 were the focus area for observations of each teacher in this study. A fictitious name was used for teachers and students in the classrooms for the purpose of anonymity. The observation forms consisted of four domain topics that included specific components that address CRE as follows:

The Framework of Charlotte Danielson

1. **Planning and Preparation**

   1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

   1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

   1e: Designing Coherent Instruction

2. **The Classroom Environment**

   2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

2b: Establishing Culture for Learning

2d: Managing Student Behavior

3. **Instruction**

3b: Using Questioning and Discussion

3c: Engaging Students in Learning

3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

4. **Techniques**

Professional Responsibilities

4e: Growing and Developing Professionally

Treatment/Intervention

To ensure trustworthiness, Creswell (2018) defined the use of member checking as "…a process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account" (Cresswell, 2018, p. 267). Each participant was provided with a copy of his or her transcribed interview. Participants were asked to examine the description of their accounts for accuracy and completion. I also asked participants for any feedback either in written form or via email, to check for the accuracy of the transcription. The interviewing questions began with demographic questions, which included name, title, years of teaching, where they lived, and language(s) spoken. I created a separate email solely for the study. All correspondents to participants via email were encrypted for the purposes of confidentiality. All participants were given a pseudonym name to protect identity. Reflexivity generally refers to the researcher's examination or reflection of their own beliefs, biases, judgments, and assumptions during the research process and how these affect the research Creswell

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(2018). As the researcher, I used the reflexive approach by keeping a journal to monitor my biases throughout the fieldwork of interviewing, observing, note taking, transcribing and developing themes. In this way, I tended to my personal experiences during the study.

Procedures

I obtained IRB approval from St. John's University to conduct this study. A letter of permission to conduct this study in one school was obtained. I then contacted the principals to obtain written permission to use their school as part of the study. The Administrator introduced me to the teachers to discuss the research topic and ask for their permission to take part in the study. The interviews took place in an office in the participant's school for convenience. A letter was provided to all participants of the agreement to sign before the start of the interview. In addition, both teachers and parents of students in the class received a letter to sign for consent to videotape classroom lessons. I reviewed the agreement and reiterated that the interview would be recorded using a battery-operated recorder and transcribed by a transcriptionist. A copy of the transcript was encrypted and emailed to participant to review and add to it if they choose too. It communicated to participants that for the purpose of the study it was not necessary to correct any grammatical errors or remove anything; just to review what they stated during the interview. The methodological approach allows the researcher to formulate themes and to answer the research questions. It allows the researcher to observe and assess teachers' ability to support and engage ELLs in their class.

Research Ethics

This study required that I obtain permission from the degree granting institutions' IRB before any research was conducted. The requirement of the IRB assures that ethical challenges and issues that may arise are addressed before the start of a study. Once approval was received from the IRB, I recruited the teachers using an informed consent approach. Each participant was required to complete the consent form before the start of the interviews. The consent form provided a detailed explanation of the study. It also informed them that participation was voluntary and that withdrawal from the study at any time was permitted. All participants' identities were and will remain confidential. To ensure both confidentiality and privacy, all data will be kept in a secure location, and they will be designated a pseudonym name to represent them in the research. This research has no known risks to the participants.

Conclusion

This chapter described the qualitative research methodology for this study being used. This design has "…emerged in the field of qualitative research since it has matured in the social science since the early 1900's" (Creswell, 2018 p. 182). A qualitative research design includes data collection, analysis, and writing. As an introduction to the qualitative study, this chapter also echoed the research problem and questions guiding the research study.

The interview questions were open-ended questions and were semi-structured to address how teachers are preparing to support diverse learners through the lens of culturally relevant education. All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Each participant was provided with a copy of his or her transcribed interview for

trustworthiness. They were able to verify their transcribed data for accuracy and perspective. Triangulation of data occurred through the comparison of responses with follow-up questions to confirm responses and compare responses between interviewees. Triangulation occurred through the process of ensuring that as the researcher, I carefully reviewed each information source and found evidence to support themes, thus, ensuring credibility (Creswell, 2018). Chapter 4 will present the results of this case study and chapter 5 will examine the results in detail, provide the findings, limitations, recommendations for future practice and research, and include a conclusion of this study.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

   The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' preparedness to employ culturally responsive teaching effectively with English Language Learners; what culturally relevant teaching is and what support is needed by administration. This chapter provides a demographic summary of information about the participants that took part in the study. The following questions guided this study:

   R:1 How are teachers preparing to support diverse learners through the lens of culturally relevant education?

   R:2 How does the implementation of culturally responsive education improve student engagement?

   R:3 How does culturally relevant education effectively meet the needs of diverse learners?

   R:4 What are the barriers teachers face when implementing culturally responsive teaching?

Data Analysis Framework

   The study included four participants from an urban school in Queens, New York. Participants were teachers with a minimum of five years teaching experience. Participants also had to have a minimum of five ELLs in their class. Four teachers from the elementary schools participated in the study through a semi-structured open-ended interview, which lasted for an hour. For the purposes of confidentiality and trustworthiness, all participants were given a pseudonym. The participants were asked three demographic questions and thirteen probing questions as necessary. The interviews

were audio recorded, followed by literal transcription and analysis of each participant's interview. This data collection method provided the participants the opportunity to elaborate on their experience with CRE. Thematic analysis was used to identify emerging themes from the participant's responses to the interview questions. The participant's responses from the interviews were coded using line-by-line coding. The codes were then sorted into categories, which were then sorted into themes. The Microsoft Word document allowed for comparative analysis of each participant's response by comparing and contrasting his or her response to each other. The findings were organized into themes. The common themes from the participants' responses were identified by my manual analysis of the interview transcripts. The participants are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Participant	Gender	Years Teaching	Grade	Years Lived in NY	Other Language Spoken	Number of ELLs in Class
Althea Blanco	F	14	2	41	Spanish	9
Francisco Morales	M	9	3	32	Spanish	26
Ray Peacock	M	8	3	35	None	5
Kia Fearson	F	20	2	47	Spanish	25

Althea Blanco is a 41-year-old female, who had been teaching for 14 years. She is a general education teacher, whose primary language is English, and secondary language is Spanish. She is a second grade teacher, general education teacher. She has nine students who are ELLs in her class.

Francisco Morales is a 32-year-old male, who had been teaching for nine years with one year as a leave replacement. He is a bilingual teacher, whose primary language is Spanish and secondary language is English. He has 26 students who are ELLs in his bilingual class.

Ray Peacock is a 35-year-old male, who had been teaching for eight years. He is a general education teacher who teaches in an inclusion class (ICT). He does not speak any additional language but English. He has five ELLs in his class.

Kia Fearson is a 47-year-old year old female, who had been teaching for 20 years. She has always been a bilingual teacher. She has taught three years of ELLs self-contained class out of the 20 years. She is a bilingual teacher, whose primary language is Spanish and English is secondary. She has twenty-five ELLs in her class.

Results and Findings

Theme 1: Preparation and Implementation of CRE

Preparation. To prepare for the implementation of culturally responsive education in their school, participants have admitted to adopting various approaches and systems. These range from personal adjustments to systemic changes in the school.

Change of Attitude. Extensive introspection led to a change of attitudes and approaches by teachers towards their students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Openness. To oversee students appropriately and fairly, teachers have had to eliminate their biases and embrace an open mind. This is also taught to them during the CRE workshops and professional development sessions, "*...the lessons that we taught that always be open-minded of your community that you have in front of you, and what it looked like...*" The teachers can then share and discuss with students various emerging

cultural issues without discrimination, "*I feel much more comfortable being able to have conversation with my students and really talk about it and unpack my biases along with theirs…*"

Patience. Embracing values such as patience is important in handling students from disparate backgrounds. One of the respondents expressed their adoption of endurance as one of the major ways they have been able to understand and relate well with their students who come across as different from the rest. Some students may be slower than others or have erratic behavior due to their traumatic backgrounds. Hence, a teacher must be understanding and patient with them:

> *He's never gone to school before so I have to like, understand all that and I have to like step it down, I can't be like, he is in second grade. I have to see where they're coming from and help them from that level. So that they actually enjoy it and then you know they're not frustrated and they're not going to be happy in the classroom…*

Collaboration Among Teachers. Interacting with teachers who have already acquired CRE skills is another way that some teachers have equipped themselves to implement the same in their classrooms. This approach goes a long way in preparing teachers for a culturally diverse classroom. Creating lesson plans together as well as revising the curriculum as a team helps to keep teachers updated and competent in the application of CRE:

> *Well, we try, we meet once a week with our team on Tuesday and we try to help each other out with what's going on in the classroom we try to all do the same*

thing, the same skills or the same idea thing in the classroom and we just help

each other out with ideas of what to do in the classroom…

Connecting with other educators from different parts of the country during professional

development training such as CTE also helps in preparing teachers for multicultural

education. They get to share ideas and techniques for keeping the students engaged and

getting excellent learning outcomes out of them.

Critical Consciousness. Teachers receive training on critical consciousness

where they get to educate themselves on current cultural occurrences in the world and

give space for contrary opinions from other people without being indifferent to them.

They also get to understand their biases and learn how to counter discriminative attitudes:

Critical consciousness leads us in our work around social justice so knowing you

know our teachers and our children know what they don't have to shy away from

anything current and that relates to any of our people.

One of the respondents shared how they had to get rid of their biases and embraced an

open mindset to enable them to understand the injustices occurring against people from

different cultures:

…my husband is a white NYC Police Officer, so I had to unpack particularly in

2014, when many different instances of social injustice and police brutality were

taking place, it was really hard not to impersonalize it. So, I had to really unpack

that to have conversation with students – colleagues who highly represent to

really be mindful of the actual experiences that I really had to learn more about

because I wasn't experiencing them so I had to step out of the role of a police

officer's wife and know that those conversations were not being personalized or

attacks against me or my family but it was more against like the system…

Cultural Competence. Receiving training from master pedagogical theorists and teachers such as Ladson-Billings has equipped the teachers to embrace principles that enable them to be sensitive to cultural differences among their students:

…when I became acquainted with principles of culturally relevant teaching from

Ladson Billings of knowing about academic excellence and culturally competence

and critical consciousness knowing those components really helped me

understand that this is what I've always been trying to achieve but it was always

giving language.

Internalization. Internalizing the approach that culturally responsive education takes in a class setting is another way that some of the respondents have been able to deliver their lessons effectively while remaining sensitive to the students' different backgrounds. Understanding the CRE technique in depth and incorporating it appropriately and naturally into the lessons is critical for its successful implementation. One of the respondents explained:

I will say my first two years, was do it exactly how what's in the book teach the

lesson. Even though at the time I was saying, well, you know, a lot of these stories

don't make sense to children that are connecting with, but I just had a different

experience. We were a priority schools under the state. Everything had to be done

exactly how they gave it to us from the state. And then once I started finding

myself and connecting with CRE and I'm like, okay, I don't have to do this. But I

know I have to teach these skills…And once I started doing that, I thought I said,

how the students were able to actually obtain greater academic success, and

greater social success with me incorporating CRE into every lesson, and just how

we move within the classroom itself.

Introspection. Looking at one's beliefs in order to identify personal biases is another way teachers have been able to align themselves and prepare for the implementation of CRE. Finding ways to counter biases in order to be able to manage students from different cultural backgrounds is essential in this process:

…as I reflect on myself, every day, we're particularly twice a year, I sit down to

kind of really look at how I'm viewing things, and my bias. I've done a lot of work

in that regard. So, myself, trying to make sure that I am not biased, we all have

biases. But if that does come about try to make sure that I'm catching myself in

the moment of doing it, to kind of reformat it.

Lesson Planning. Preparing lessons that incorporate various cultures is essential in the execution of a culturally responsive lesson. The respondents admitted to having enough time to go over their lessons and revise their curriculum especially together with other teachers, *"In the team, we try to fix our lessons and revise them as best as we can, but like a whole school…"* The school administration grants the teachers enough time to prepare for these lessons.

On-Job Experience. The majority of the respondents received CRE knowledge and skills after their pre-service training. Most of them got acquainted with the approach through professional development and working with the culturally diverse students in their schools:

When I went to college we didn't really have like culture responsive classes, many years ago you know everything changes, everything evolves, they start adding all these awareness to the classroom so nope never really had it but I learned it working in the school with the students…

Administration Support. The school administrators have granted support to the teachers in various ways to enable them to implement culturally responsive education for their students.

Professional Development. The administration facilitates professional development for the teachers in various ways. One of the ways is by observing how the lessons are executed and providing them with feedback on their lessons. The feedback is done in a communal setting with the administration taking ideas from teachers and students and giving their own as well:

Observations are as you know professional development, right, so I frame all my observations as learning opportunities for everybody for the children, teachers and myself. We are all learning and all I am doing is giving feedback on what I've learned from the children and the teachers and that is another outcome from cultural relevant thinking…it's holistic…I may have to give you directive right that directive is important for you to execute right what over this for you before us right and it doesn't mean that you as an alleged subordinate won't give me insight on how to support me in a particular way.

Provision of Resources and Supplies. The school administration supports CRE by providing the resources that are needed to ensure its success such as multicultural books:

They also give us books what we need supplies and stuff. They help us out with it getting us what we need, and they try to get what they can for us. So Multicultural books, a couple of years ago we bought a whole bunch of multicultural books for our classroom. Whatever we need they would get it for us…

Room for Autonomy. Authenticity is supported by the administration, according to some of the respondents. They are given the space to structure their lessons without external interference. They base their lessons on the CRE standards provided by the school, but have the freedom to adopt learning approaches and techniques that will enable them to uphold cultural sensitivity:

Our administration gives us much autonomy to this work. We are not tied down to a pacing chart or to a curriculum and I think that's super important. We are not tied down to test scores. I think those are the main things that stop teachers from doing this work. It's because they don't see it, they don't see how it can be connected to testing, and to curriculum, and to a pacing, uhm but we are lucky to be able to have that support from our administration…

Supportive Supervision. The administration works hard to ensure that teachers have the required resources for a culturally diverse classroom. They ensure that these resources are put to use and that CRE is incorporated into all classes and lessons:

When they come into that room, they want to make sure they see the culture in your classroom and your texts in your books in your bulletin and everything that you have in your room resembling your, your students. Right. I think that's where I think they all looking for the look for that. Okay, let me see your library, your library has this, a little bit more diverse to the students that you have in front of

them? Are you, is your work being taught in the diversity in the sense where

you're incorporating into your math work, and you're covering math?

The Word Cloud (see Figure 2) shows words used by respondents to explain ways in which the administration supported them in the implementation of CRE.

Figure 2

Word Cloud for the Implementation of CRE

Theme 2: Learning Strategies Supporting Diversity

The teachers have adopted various learning techniques to help them deliver culturally responsive education to their diverse students. Figure 3 illustrates the strategies applied by teachers in the classroom to help incorporate CRE.

Figure 3

Project Map for Incorporating CRE in the Classroom.
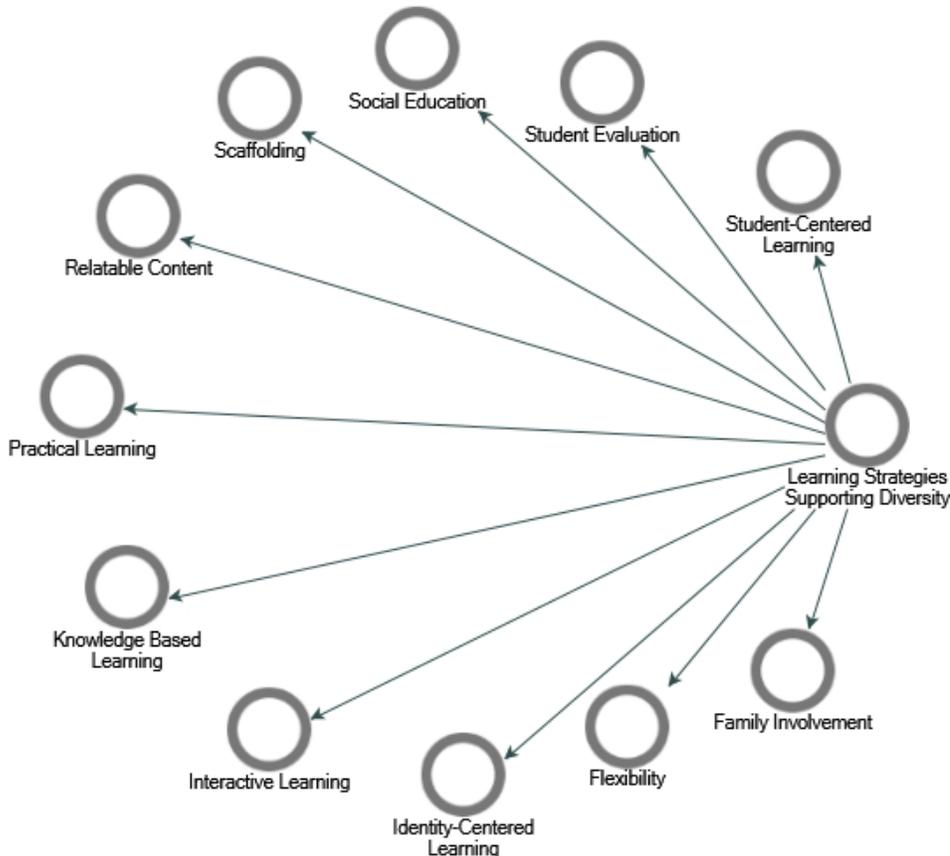
Practical Learning. Actively engaging students in the learning process is one of the ways that teachers are able to manage their diverse classrooms. Many activities such as reading out loud and repetition are done to enable the students to learn effectively. There are teachers who also incorporate visuals (such as pictures) and organize drama to help students engage and relate to the lesson content, *"…a lot of repetition, showing them different ways. The more I repeated, the more they're learning with the pictures…"*

Family Involvement. Building rapport with the students' families is an approach that teachers have found to be effective in the learning process. Families have a great influence on students, therefore, involving them in lesson activities is imperative. They

offer information on students' backgrounds which helps teachers in structuring lessons and engaging the students in ways that are relevant to them:

> *I really work from the beginning to build relationships with the families and my students and I think that once I build that relationship with them, their families are much more open to sharing themselves with me. The families are the geniuses in the classroom they bring so much of the classroom I always tell them that I am a learner with them…*

Flexibility. Teachers have allowed a level of flexibility for the students to learn in ways that are easier for them and that they can easily relate to. For instance, if a student is not proficient in English, then they are allowed to use their native language in their writing, *"…really making sure that they utilize their language, English and your native language at the same time."* The teachers understand that for an ELA student, the creation of English words is a bit harder.

Identity Centered Learning. The resources used in the classrooms are a representation of the diverse cultures of the students within them. For example, the books utilized have both the English language and other languages. The pictures and characters in the books are a representation of the diverse cultures represented in the classes, *"…I don't want them to see themselves in books, but then the ones that are writing about them are not like them."* To ensure all students feel comfortable in class in spite of their languages, bilingual books have become essential. Items in the classroom other than books are also set up to represent students from various backgrounds,

...my setup of my classroom. As the year goes on to find out who's here, I have

flags from all the countries, and even students that are not here, because we all

have to be represented. So that's what we do in my room.

Teachers strive to make the learning process relatable and attempt to modify characters in books to resemble the students in the classroom:

What I do is always, take the person's name out of it, I add one of theirs, right, or

this person again, I'll add something else to it says, I'm going to go to, I don't

know the city, I'll say I'm going to the Pueblo and then it'll always change it up

for them, it will resemble them in my room. That's what I do. So, it has helped me

in that sense of always like, just to take what's given and just modify to what's in

front of you.

The school also ensures that students learn about cultures other than their own by acknowledging various holidays and events representing disparate cultures:

In terms of cultural competence makes the idea of being a student who's aware of

the study of at least one culture other than your own um that goes with all of this

you know how we look at the various months, Hispanic heritage month, black

history month, woman's heritage month.

Interactive Learning. Students are involved actively in the learning process and are given the opportunity to share their ideas and opinions. Teachers discuss with students to find out their beliefs and opinions on various cultural topics and in this way, both teachers and students learn together:

...when I started doing and that has been incorporated into the conversation,

especially my newcomers, you know, I learned from them as much as they learned

from me all the time. And especially when we talk about indigenous people, indigenous…

Students also share among themselves and teach one another about their own culture:

…I have one of my students who came from Guatemala recently this year, and we took on a different dialect, it's not always Spanish. And she said yes, and she would someone speaks...So, I can let them teach also not enough component where we do most of them…So sharing is not an issue here. They love to talk once they break that barrier of being shyness, especially my newcomers…

Knowledge-Based Learning. The teachers also incorporate learning approaches that encourage the development of critical thinking among their students, *"I'm also thinking about their intellect, I'm trying to help them to develop criticality within the lessons straight through. So those are really like the real major angles that I look at when I am incorporating CRE."* So cultural education is done in a manner that students can think through concepts critically.

Practical Learning. The teachers have embraced a more real-life approach to learning, they accomplish this through the use of pictures and charts for example, to help students interact with the topics more and understand concepts better, *"I have a lot of picture cues and anchor charts to help them while were learning a certain the topic that week or couple of weeks so you will see chart papers, what we're learning."*

Also, the use of manipulatives during lessons is a technique that helps students understand better depending on their cultural and educational backgrounds,

When I do a lesson and they're not interested, I will ask them what do you like? "I

am a queen", so I would do some things with queens in it like puzzles with things

he could do after we do the lesson…

There are teachers who have also incorporated drama in their lessons to help students

relate and understand better, *"…some teachers who actually will do like a little show, I*

won't say a performance yeah we do, we try to put things together."

Relatable Content. The teachers attempt to make the content relatable to students

and try to incorporate the students in the learning process and ensure that their culture is

integrated. Students are included in the literature, writing and speaking activities in the

classroom, to ensure they are well-represented in the lessons:

I had a student from Haitian Creole, one year. So again, we incorporated him,

and I said, you know, you could just as well, you know, there was days and be

like, right, because the Haitian word of the day, I'll give you the Spanish word of

the day. So, we will always compare words and see how it sounded. So, it was

cool.

The resources used in classrooms are those that students can engage with to enhance their

understanding of various concepts introduced during lessons:

…we make sure that it's engaging, and that makes sure that they're gonna engage

in by engaging, meaning that they're gonna understand what we're reading. It's

not, we're not going to pick up a book that we're going to read that there is going

to be over their head, they don't, they never been there, they never get exposed to

that world.

Scaffolding. Teachers offer a lot of guidance and support to the students during lessons. This is done by giving the students a chance to share knowledge previously acquired and tying that into the lesson and building it up. Students are given opportunities to think critically with a little guidance from their teachers:

I tried to scaffold the best that I can, once we get, they get the scaffold we tried to challenge them. Instead of giving them the picture cues, I'll give them the words without the picture cue…. Stuff like that. We start off easy and then we turn off a little hard hopefully…

Social Education. Teachers also ensure that their students feel welcome and comfortable in their classrooms in spite of their backgrounds. There are students who have had difficult experiences and backgrounds, and teachers strive to ensure these students are able to settle in class and relate with other students who may not resemble them. So, the focus is not just on books but that these students are able to be part of a new society and relate with everyone comfortably:

…that's what I look at as education as well, so social education are considered, not just in books and pens and books…because I have to have that kids feel comfortable, who has come through a journey walking, you know, dealing with things that I've never tried to imagine. And so, I have to make you feel comfortable about it, and be able to be part of the classroom. And I think that's why I think that's how we I like to do it every year.

Student Evaluation. There are teachers who assess their students at the beginning in order to understand their ethnic backgrounds to facilitate them in offering the most appropriate learning techniques to them. Each student is evaluated

independently and not grouped with others from similar backgrounds to avoid

stereotypes. Every student is unique, hence should not be grouped together with others

and conclusions drawn:

> *I tend to just meet the child first, do my own evaluation on them personally, and*
>
> *then, okay, okay. Now let's help instead of saying, oh, I had another kid from*
>
> *here. And, you know, I did that for two years. Maybe my first year when I started*
>
> *teaching, like, oh, my second year, like, Oh, why is every kid that comes from this*
>
> *country is always this is the deficiency, they don't care for school, they don't, you*
>
> *know, and that's not the case. It wasn't about that they didn't learn; they just*
>
> *didn't value education.*

Sometimes the teachers achieve this by creating rapport with the students' families to

enable them to understand their students better and find out what their interests are:

> *When she focused is always about gymnastics. Her Hispanic heritage person was*
>
> *Laurie Hernandez I totally, it's such a big part of her, but I would not have known*
>
> *that had I not ask the family at the beginning of the year…*

Student-Centered Learning. A student-centered learning approach is where

students are put at the center of the lessons and are given the chance to steer the direction

of their learning. The teacher finds out where their interests are and uses that as the base

of their classroom activities:

> *…it really depends on what the kids decide to talk about. For example: in October*
>
> *the math pacing calendar was double digit addition, but they were really into*
>
> *time, like they wanted to learn about time and wanted to tell time because they*
>
> *wanted to know when lunch was. I spent two weeks not part of the curriculum but*

teaching them the clock and teaching them the time so that they knew when lunch

was and being able to read the clock.

The students are also given the freedom to be resourceful when it comes to learning.
They are given opportunities to use their own data in poetry for instance:

…they were also able to do was find their own citation and their own quotes and

fuse and then own poetry. So, they had an opportunity to learn text and authors

that informed their work. And so, it was through Phillis Wheatley um and their

own peer and finding their own data sets to inform their own poetry. And so that

was an example just this week that one of the things that I observed that showed

how practical it is and allows the children to be resourceful and independent.

Theme 3: CRE Influence on Student Engagement

There are various culturally responsive approaches that have been adopted by
teachers that encourage student engagement during lessons.

Appreciation of Different Cultures. The teachers and the school administration
have embraced the diverse cultures within the school. One of the ways they accomplish
this is through celebration of holidays representing different cultures among the learners,
"…we celebrate holidays, we celebrate them and we welcome those things in the
classroom, in our classroom community, in our classroom families." Students are given
the freedom to celebrate events and holidays that they deem important to them without
any interference from those who do not esteem the same:

I try to let everybody celebrate whatever holiday they want to celebrate. Even

though for example, like I don't celebrate Christmas, you know, things like that, if

they want, that's what they want to celebrate, did we do that in the classroom,

because you want to make sure that we represent everyone and let everyone have

their moment to shine. So that's one of the practices that I make sure that I can

continuously instill.

Openness to Sharing. The students are allowed to speak and share their stories, beliefs, opinions and ideas during classes. This goes a long way in ensuring that different cultures are appreciated, and making every student feel included. This enhances their participation during lessons and shy students gain more confidence:

...now some students are now opening up in the classroom because I have a lot of

girls who are very shy and now, they see if they make a mistake, it's okay. No one

is going to get mad or make fun of them so now they're opening more now...

Through sharing, trust is established, and better relationships are created between teachers and students and among students themselves.

Patience with Students. Compassion and patience towards students, considering their cultural backgrounds, is another approach that some teachers have adopted to improve engagement with their students. Understanding the fact that students have different abilities helps teachers guide them better and as a result, good learning outcomes are achieved:

Some students are in need of extra help, and I will help them with extra

manipulatives or extra charts and just try to teach them as best as I can nicely,

that has helped me a lot. Not like yelling at them or you need to get it this way.

But I just keep repeating it and working with them until they understand it...

Rapport with Students. Creating a relationship with students is a major part of CRE. In order to be able to appreciate other cultures, relationship building must be

adhered to, *"...I think that not using CRE is not building relationship with your students just coming to work every day and doing the job and leaving. I don't think that's an effective teacher."* Teachers have made an effort to create rapport with the students and their families as well as to enhance relationships:

> *...then always have always wanted to know them more and have not just a teacher and student relationship. It's more again, like almost a family oriented like extension of his family has helped me understand other things and do things differently academically? Yes.*

Making these connections improve understanding of other cultures and sharing of one's own culture with others as well,

> *...it's made me open my eyes more and understanding more of everybody's culture including my own because it made me go into deeper into my culture to find out more information to share with them so that we can relate in a lot of ways...*

As a result, there is better engagement among students and between teachers and students.

Relevant Content. Engagement is enhanced in the classroom when content is relevant. If students are able to relate with the subjects and topics being taught, then they will participate more and teachers will be able to engage with them better. Teachers strive to make the content enjoyable for instance, by using literature that resembles the students' stories and backgrounds. Another way is by using bilingual books so that students are able to relate to information in their own languages,

> *...I have some that are really, really, really fluent in their native language and then I have some that are not as comfortable, and they feel like well I could write*

it in English. So in my room that's how it is, you know, my lessons are taught both ways you know, you know I have to repeat everything twice. I will but it doesn't bother me so it's you know English and Spanish, English and Spanish in my classroom resembles them…

When the content is relevant, students will be more interested in it and as a result, engagement is enhanced.

Responsive Classroom. In order to foster trust with the students, the school has adopted a responsive classroom technique where learning is a student-centered and evidence-based method of learning. It also helps in the development of social skills among students, *"…one thing that we had done throughout the years we always had morning meeting informed by responsive classrooms."*

Sensitivity to Student Needs. Culturally responsive education has helped teachers to be more aware of their students' needs and culture. They have integrated this knowledge into their lesson plans and classroom activities to keep students interested and engaged:

…it makes me more aware of their culture more sensitive to them. And me being more sensitive to their needs and understanding where they're coming from and actually knowing their culture it helps a lot. It's integrated it into the classroom and they feel proud of learning about their culture and us talking about it, displaying it, and celebrating it. So, yes it has helped me a lot within the classroom.

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Theme 4: Barriers to CRE Implementation

There are factors that have been mentioned by the respondents as inhibitors to the implementation of culturally responsive education. Figure 4 shows the factors that hinder the implementation of CRE according to the respondents.

Figure 4

Factors that Hinder the Implementation of CRE.

BARRIER
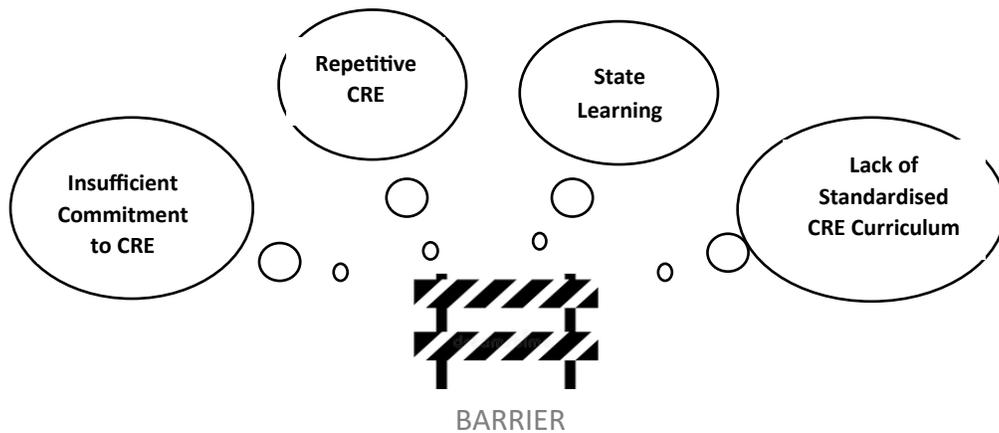
Insufficient Commitment to Culturally Responsive Education. Proper implementation of CRE relies on the commitment of teachers as well as the administration. However, there are teachers who do the bare minimum and only seek to meet the basic requirements of the school concerning CRE, *"Only two of us are really committed to this work. Everyone else only does it to meet whatever is asked of them it's very surface level. And even then, it's pushing them to actually get the work done."*

Lack of Standardized CRE Curriculum. Having a more standardized CRE curriculum readily available to teachers will enhance its uptake and implementation. However, the school relies on teachers to create their own curriculum based on CRE requirements and this stops some teachers from embracing the approach, *"We don't get*

time for that, and I would love to have an opportunity to do that. So that, it would be

more accessible to teachers. I think that's what stops a lot of us from doing this work, is

not having it."

Repetitive CRE Training. School administrators have made attempts to provide

professional development opportunities on CRE for their teachers. However, there are

teachers who have experience in implementing the same PD in their classrooms,

therefore, feel that there is no need for repetition of the same training. Having the same

training over and over again becomes redundant according to one of the respondents:

I feel like I'm doing it, right, and my administration thinks I'm doing it right, that

and there's another PD, let's say, the third one in the year, why would you make

me go to that, again, maybe go to something different?

Providing the same training hinders teachers from gaining new knowledge and as a result

develops a negative attitude towards CRE training.

State Learning Standards. There are schools where teachers have faced

challenges with incorporating proper CRE into their lessons due to state requirements.

Teachers are required to teach students strictly according to the provided guidelines

which may not necessarily relate well with the students:

I will say my first two years, was do it exactly how what's in the book teach the

lesson. Even though at the time I was saying, well, you know, a lot of these stories

don't make sense to children that are connecting with, but I just had a different

experience. We were a priority schools under the state. Everything had to be done

exactly how they gave it to us from the state…

Theme 5: CRE Recommendations

The following are recommendations given by respondents to help in the implementation of culturally responsive education. Figure 5 shows the recommendations given by respondents to help improve the implementation of CRE in schools.

Figure 5

Mind Map of Implementation of CRE in Schools.

Active Learning. It is important to have the CRE workshop participate in some way, especially by doing presentations and sharing their ideas with others. This will help encourage active learning by including the participants in the training and learning process:

> *I think my response to that would have been more say is that? I think when we're doing those types of presentations that they have to be, um there has to be work done for the participant that they have to present instead of just going and listening to something.*

Master Teachers' Support. It is imperative that we have teachers who have more experience using CRE and that they help their counterparts in incorporating those practices into their lessons. Master teachers can come together and create tools for CRE and connect them to the standards already in place:

...having master teachers coming together and put something like that together something in place. We understand standards are in place. I mean, we should really have something that connects to the standards.

They can also guide the more inexperienced teachers on how to use the approach for better culturally responsive learning outcomes, *"I always love what I do but then I walked into other classroom and I get blown away of what I see and I would love an opportunity to sit and talk to those teachers how they do it."*

New CRE Knowledge. We need to find the teachers who need the CRE training and provide it to them. Professional development sessions should not be made compulsory to all teachers since there are those who are already implementing CRE, and they might not need the same training over and over again. Unless there is new information being offered on CRE, the training should only be limited to teachers who are having difficulties in implementing it or those who have no prior knowledge of it:

...do a survey, find out who wants it, tell them to be truthful, because then if you come into the room, and it's not being done, then you go, you know what, I still think you need some training, and then send them back. I think it should be done in that in that manner, not a forceful manner, because then it's not going to be appealing, you're going to go in there with a bad taste, you're not going to want to do it. And again, I as I speak to some of my colleagues who are probably out there are doing it, because I know they are. They're the ones that always question why do we have to go? It's like, I don't want to, but I get I get both sides. So maybe we'll learn something new. And then when we sit there is the same thing,

just worded differently. And then they're like, what did we learn today? Nothing

the same thing we're doing yesterday.

There should be knowledge provided to teachers who are already using CRE, to help

them sustain it and apply it even outside classroom settings, *"I am more interested on*

learning how to sustain it and how to grow it just not inside my classroom, grow outside

any classroom and how to reach other teachers…" A different respondent also

commented on the same:

I don't think there's enough to support where I'm at. I think they're a lot more for

educators that are beginning this process or at the beginning of understanding

phases of learning CRE but not to where I am at now, I want to do more…

Frequent Workshop Training. The respondents came to a consensus that CRE

workshops ought to be done frequently. Some respondents recommended it to be done

weekly, some also suggested after every three months, *"I think they should be offered*

every three months throughout the year just to get us on track and help us get new ideas

and help to get ideas on how to be culturally responsive…" and others suggested twice a

year. There were propositions made for the workshops to be held during the summer to

avoid pulling teachers out of classrooms and disrupting learning, *"As much as we love to*

go into workshops, I think that being taken away from the classroom during instructional

time is not really always the best practice you know…" Having the training frequently

will help in refreshing the knowledge of teachers.

Classroom Observations

Table 2

Observation of Teachers using Charlotte Danielson Framework

Participant	Domain 1A	Domain 1E	Domain 3A	Domain 3C	Domain 3D
Althea Blanco	Effective	Effective	Effective	Highly Effective	Effective
Francisco Morales	Highly Effective	Highly Effective	Effective	Highly Effective	Effective
Ray Peacock	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective
Kia Fearson	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective

Althea Blanco was teaching English to the class. The students were to think of words that described themselves. She had on display various books of different ethnicities and topics for students to choose from that helps to come up with words to describe themselves. Ms. Blanco modeled for the students, what she wanted them to do. Afterwards she had the class do one with her. Students within their groups went up to choose the book that spoke to them. Students assisted each other and shared what they wrote to one another, then shared it with the class. The students were all participating in the assignment and were not afraid to ask for help or articulate that they were not sure what to do. Student had choices of books that they could use for the assignment. They lead discussions within the group.

Mr. Morales was teaching math in both Spanish and English when I observed him. Students volunteered to show how they solved the word problem. They identified

key words, which they underlined on the board. Some students explained in Spanish and some in English. Throughout the observation Mr. Morales moved around the room consistently to in with each group while supporting another group. He scaffolded for those who needed it and used student's name in the math problems. The questions incorporated names of local stores in the neighborhood as well. While observing the class, there was another teacher with a group of 10 students; the reading teacher who was working with the higher-level ELLs in English. At some point they would switch the students.

Mr. Peacock started his class with children forming a circle, and every child in the class shared what they did that weekend and how they were feeling that day. Mr. Peacock said *let us get started* and one student lead the discussion. Mr. Peacock noticed one student who had not shared out and called on them. The student stated they did not do anything this weekend except stay home. Mr. Peacock asked the student what they did at home, to which the student responded watching TV stayed in bed. One student said it is okay sometimes to do that when you are tired or just one to rest yourself. Everyone clapped and students went to their desks and wrote in their journals what they did that weekend and how they felt. The students were very engaged, and no one was left out from sharing. Mr. Peacock had the students answer a question that was displayed on the board. Students had a choice of a-b-c-d-e-f and based on their choice they had to stand in the designated corners of the room. This strategy helped formulate the teams working together on the lesson. The English language Learners in the class participated and the children in their group supported one another. As students worked on the English lesson, Mr. Peacock walked around to

assess students at work. The ELLs were provided with graphic organizers. Mr. Peacock read aloud the passages and provided the students with definitions to words that may have been unfamiliar to the students.

In Kia Fearson's class, as I walked in, the students were in stations around the room. Some students were sitting on the beanbags reading in Spanish or English. Students had in their notebooks a sheet to answer questions. Some students were on the iPad with headphones working on vocabulary. One group was sitting with Ms. Fearson, engaged in a read aloud in Spanish. She asked the students questions in Spanish to assess their understanding. After about 15 minutes, one student said it's time to move and they rotated. Ms. Fearson reminded the group sitting on the beanbags that today was an English day for them, which meant they had to do the assignment in English. She checked in periodically on the students and provided support for those in need.

Research Question 1

How are teachers preparing to support diverse learners through the lens of culturally relevant education?

Theme 1: Preparation and Implementation of CRE. Preparation and implementation of CRE emerged as several participants expressed, to prepare for the implementation of CRE in their schools, they had to adopt various approaches and systems. These ranged from personal adjustments to systemic changes in the school. The subgroups that emerged were change of attitude, openness, patience, collaborations among teachers, critical consciousness, cultural competence, internalization, introspection, lesson planning, and on-job experience, administrative support, and

professional development, provision of resources and supplies, room autonomy and supportive supervision. These sub themes supported preparation and implementation of CRE and connects to the conceptual framework planning and preparation & resources. Cultural competence and room autonomy was the sub-group that participant celebrated along with the support given by administration. These are also part of theoretical framework and conceptual framework that supports the preparation and implementation of CRE.

Research Question 2

How does the implementation of culturally responsive education improve student engagement?

Theme 2: Learning Strategies Supporting Diversity. The teachers have adopted various learning techniques to help them deliver culturally responsive education to their diverse students. The subgroups that emerged from these themes were practical learning family involvement, flexibility identity centered learning, interactive learning, knowledge-based learning, practical learning, relatable content scaffolding, social education student evaluation, and student-centered learning. Teachers scaffold when it is necessary and use relatable content to students' experience. Knowledge is being flexible to engage diverse students into the learning. There are multiple strategies that teachers can use the idea is there is a toolbox of resources that teachers must first be trained in order for it to be effective for diverse students.

Research Question 3

How does culturally relevant education effectively meet the needs of diverse learners?

Theme 3: CRE Influence on Student Engagement. Teachers that encourage student engagement during lessons have adopted various culturally responsive approaches. Sub themes included appreciation of different cultures, openness to sharing, patience with students, and rapport with students, content are relevant, responsive classroom, and sensitivity to student needs. The overall staff embracing the diverse culture in the school and promoting academic activities that incorporates the various culture, experience, community and families is relevant to the work of teaching and engaging students especially ELLs.

Research Question 4

What are the barriers teachers face when implementing culturally responsive teaching?

Theme 4: Barriers to CRE Implementation. There are factors that have been mentioned by the respondents that inhibit the implementation of culturally responsive education. These were *insufficient commitment to CRE, repetitive CRE training, state learning standards and lack of standardized CRE curriculum.* The barriers mentioned are echoed in the previous research. Proper implementation of CRE relies on the commitment of teachers as well as administration. However, there are teachers who believe in doing the bare minimum and seek to meet the basic requirement of the school as it reference to CRE. There are readily standards that refer to CRE, therefore the schools rely on them to create their own curriculum based on the implementation of CRE. The barrier that results in teachers lacking the ability to embrace the approach.

Theme 5: CRE Recommendations. The fifth theme that emerged from the study was CRE recommendations. Teachers also made recommendations to help in the implementation of CRE, which are active learning, it is important to have CRE workshop

in some way, especially by doing presentations, and sharing their ideas with others. This will help encourage active learning by including the participants in the training and learning process. Master teachers' support with teachers who have more experience using CRE and helping their counterparts with lessons was imperative. Master teachers can come together, create tools for CRE, and connect them to the standards already in place. They can also guide the more inexperienced teachers on how to use the approaches for better culturally responsive learning outcomes, *"I always love what I do but then I walked into other classroom, and I get blown away of what I see, and I would love an opportunity to sit and talk to those teachers how they do it."* Regarding new CRE knowledge: they need to find teachers who need the CRE training and provide it to them. The professional development sessions should not be made compulsory to all teachers since there are those who are already implementing CRE and might not need the same training repeatedly. Unless there is new information being offered on CRE, the training should only be limited to teachers who are having difficulties in implementing it or those who have no prior knowledge of it. There should be knowledge provided to teachers who are already using CRE, to help them sustain it and apply it even outside classroom settings. Regarding frequent workshop training: the respondents came to a consensus that CRE workshops ought to be done frequently. Some respondents recommended it to be done weekly; some also suggested doing it every three months. There were propositions made for the workshops to be held during the summer to avoid pulling teachers out of classrooms and disrupting learning. Having the training frequently will help in refreshing the knowledge of teachers.

Summary

Chapter Four introduced the data analysis framework that supported the research of this qualitative study. It captured the participants' responses to the interview questions, which formulated themes and subgroup themes. Four categories and five themes emerged from the interview data about CRE from participants. Specific quotes from each participant were included to provide a rich description of CRE for each of the four research questions. Reaching diverse learners entering schools everyday requires understanding how to support and give opportunities for them to grow and be successful academically. Multicultural education seeks to develop instructional curricula and practice in school communities that meets the needs of diverse student populations (Lew & Nelson, 2016). According, Gay (2010) positive relationship demonstrates caring, which is one of the pillars of culturally responsive teaching. The themes support the theoretical framework of CRE and the conceptual framework of CRE.

Chapter Five is a discussion and interpretation of the findings of this study, and includes implications and recommendations for future research, as well as a conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' preparedness to employ culturally responsive teaching effectively with English Language Learners; what culturally relevant teaching is and what support is needed by administration. The study included four classroom teachers who teach in an urban school classroom in Queens, New York. I sought to answer the following questions:

R:1 How are teachers preparing to support diverse learners through the lens of culturally relevant education?

R:2 How does the implementation of culturally responsive education improve Student engagement?

R:3 How does culturally relevant education effectively meet the needs of diverse learners?

R:4 What are the barriers teachers face when implementing culturally responsive teaching?

Four participants from an urban school in Queens, New York took part in the qualitative case study. Teachers provided their perception of preparedness to employ culturally responsive teaching with English Language Learners, what culturally relevant teaching means and the support needed from administration.

Implication of Findings

Ladson-Billings (1995) CRP was formulated on three criteria: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (p. 480). The "…theoretical model not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their

cultural identity, while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate…" this pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.469). The questions that led to formulate this theoretical model of CRP are,

> What constitutes student success? How can academic success and cultural success complement each other in settings where student alienation and hostility characterize the school experience? How can pedagogy promote the kind of student success that engages larger social structural issues in a critical way? How do researchers recognize that pedagogy in action? And, what are the implications for teacher preparation generated by this pedagogy? (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469).

In the framework, teachers become knowledgeable about CRP by attending ongoing professional development and using resources provided. Teachers are to be provided with resources and training to acquire the knowledge of how to incorporate culturally relevant teaching into their curriculum as well as their lesson plan. Preparation is an important aspect of implementing CRE and understanding why it makes a difference to students overall.

For educators to understand the positive effect of CRE, they must first self-reflect on their culture, backgrounds, beliefs, biases, and pedagogy. Educators who believe in meeting the needs of all diverse learners need to understand what their biases are and how that can have a negative impact on students' engagement in their classes. "Since attitudes and beliefs about ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity shape instructional behaviors, they need to be more positive and constructive to produce better teaching

and learning for culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse students" (Gay, 2013 p.67).

Findings for this study indicated that CRE is in alignment with the research about CRE being an effective means of meeting the learning needs of culturally different students. The use of CRE teachers consciously create social interactions to help meet academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. As illustrated in the conceptual framework (Figure 1), professional development, planning and preparation, resources and self-awareness are critical components of the CRE theory. Preparation and Implementation of CRE. The subgroups of this theme express the characteristics that are similarly found in Figure 1.

Relationship to Prior Research

Nykiel-Herbert (2010) stated "…one of the major reasons why minority students in general and immigrant newcomers in particular, perform poorly in schools is that their home culture, while being celebrated are not sufficiently utilized as a resource for their own learning" (Sleeter, 2011, p. 13). Samson (2012) stated that "most, if not all teachers have or can expect to have ELL students in their classroom and therefore must be prepared to best support these children" (Samson, Collins, 2012, p. 1-2). According to Craighead and Ramanathan (2007), professional development given must identify theoretical base that general education teachers must possess to further support English language Learners. "There are more teachers coming into the teaching profession who lack experience, which may lead them to view, "diversity as a problem rather than a resource" (Smolcic & Arends, 2017, p. 51). Brown (2018) stated, "…extensive professional development projects of this nature are not always possible, which calls for

educators to rethink our approach to research and training provision" (Brown, Boda, Lemmi & Monroe, 2018, p. 799).

Self-reflected teachers learn about their own biases and reflect on how that could negatively impact students. They need to first understand where the bias is rooted and work on not allowing that to treat or see students negatively. From a culturally relevant teaching point of view, teachers must develop an ability to nurture and support ELLs cultural competence by implementing a variety of strategies (Drucker 2003; Miller 2002; Park 2014). According, Gay (2010) a positive relationship demonstrates caring, which is one of the pillars of culturally responsive teaching. They must be reflective about their beliefs. According to Freire and Valdez (2017), teachers with proper training of CRE recognize the value of students, and families as valuable resources and partners in the classroom. Teachers are often from different backgrounds from their students. Because of cultural dissonance, these teachers often do not understand the critical role that equity and social justice play in teaching with students' success and persistence in all content area. Teachers must learn about the cultures of students they teach so that they can help some adjust to and learn the culture of Americans, while preserving their own culture (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Major, 2006). There is benefit in being trained in CRE. We contribute to a better understanding of self, students, families and people in general. Education is deemed to prepare students for the future and teachers are at the frontline of doing just that. However, understanding one's culture allows the educator to better understand the child as a whole and his or her culture, experience, community, and knowledge.

In this study, and in the past and present study, professional development is necessary and is seen in the result of this study. The recommendation is that it is done at various levels, including for example beginner, intermediate and advanced professional development. It is also echoed in prior research that there is a need to understand what CRE is and how to implement it into the curriculum being taught. Without the proper training, teachers cannot effectively roll out these approaches.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to this case study. The first limitation was the inability to observe teachers more frequently due to the pandemic. The ability to observe teachers more frequently would have allowed me to see if the practice is continuously used. The second limitation was not having an opportunity to see the state exams, assessment, and/or report card results of the ELLs in the participants classes. This would have allowed me to determine if improved engagement as a result of CRE is also evident in academic achievement of students: which is one of the criteria in the theoretical framework of CRE. The opportunity to interview ELLs would also have allowed me to ask about the impact the approach used by the teacher is it supporting his/her learning.

Implications for Future Research

Future research is warranted on how post-secondary schools are preparing preservice teachers in CRE. There are no studies on higher education's implementing CRE or offering any coursework to prepare pre-service teachers. Prior research states preservice teachers were never taught anything about cultural relevant education or cultural diversity. Veteran teachers stated they have never had any course work on CRE in post-secondary schooling and only through the professional development offered at the

school level, were they exposed to CRE. This research indicates the need for post-secondary schools to review their curriculum.

Implications for Future Practice

The future practices of leveling professional development of CRE are beneficial for all teachers and administrators. Professional development based on where they are with the understanding and implementation of CRE and those who are at mastery levels can become coaches. These coaches would provide modeling of CRE strategies, and support and meet one on one with teachers at beginners' level to collaborate. They would also provide professional development needed for specific levels. Finally, they would also visit other schools and meet with mastery teachers to further enhance their own pedagogy of CRE by sharing best practices.

Conclusion

Teachers' effectiveness to employ CRE with the participants in the study was evident in the observation practices of each teacher. There is no denying that CRE can be successfully implemented to improve students' engagement in the learning process. This case study's contribution is of the experience of four teachers' approaches to teaching English Language Learners, while infusing CRE approaches into their classroom. In the novice participant's classroom on display were multiple books exhibiting multiple cultures. Students could identify a book that represented them or that of a culture they might be interested in learning about.

The number of ELLs is increasing, as public schools are growing. The more teachers learn about CRE, the more successful they will be with reaching those diverse, underserved, forgotten student in the classroom. ELLs may have limited English skills,

but it does not mean they are unable to learn. From a culturally relevant teaching point of view, teachers must develop an ability to nurture and support ELL cultural competence by implementing a variety of strategies (Drucker 2003; Miller 2002; Park 2014).

I end with this quote by C. Jordan: "Educational practices must match with the children's culture in ways which ensure the generation of academically important behaviors" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.467).

Appendix A
IRB Approval Memo

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Jan 18, 2022 9:22:50 AM EST

PI: Karleen Adam-Comrie

CO-PI: James Campbell

Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - IRB-FY2021-457 ARE TEACHERS PREPARED TO EMPLOY CULTURALLY

RESPONSIVE TEACHING EFFECTIVELY WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS?

Dear Karleen Adam-Comrie:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for ARE TEACHERS

PREPARED TO EMPLOY CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING EFFECTIVELY WITH ENGLISH

LANGUAGE LEARNERS? The approval is effective from January 12, 2022 through January 10, 2023.

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to,

research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and

social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors

evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP

Chair, Institutional Review Board

Professor of Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.

IRB Coordinator

Appendix B

Consent Form to Participate in Study

School: _____

Teacher's Name: _____Classroom: _____

I hereby consent to the participation in the study, which will include interviewing and audiotaping the interviews. I also grant to Karleen Adam-Comrie, the right to use the videotape and audiotaping for the sole purpose of research work approved by St. John's University. I also hereby release Karleen Adam-Comrie and school employees from all claims, demands, and liabilities whatsoever in connection with the above.

Signature of Teacher: _____Date: _____

Address or Email Address:

_____

Appendix C

Consent form to Videotape/Audiotape for Research

School: _____

Name: _____ Classroom: _____

I hereby consent to the participation in videotaping of the student named above by

Karleen Adam-Comrie. I also grant to Karleen Adam-Comrie, the right to use the

videotape for the sole purpose of research work approved by St. John's University. I

also hereby release Karleen Adam-Comrie and school employees from all claims,

demands, and liabilities whatsoever in connection with the above.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____Date: _____

Address of Parent/Guardian: _____

_____

Appendix D

Opening/Demographic Questions

What is your name and title?

How long have you been teaching in a public school?

How long have you lived in New York?

Content Questions including Probes:

1. How does culturally relevant education effectively meet the needs of diverse learners?	1.1 What are some culturally relevant education strategies you use to support students academically? Tell me about the ones that are more effective in your teaching. How confident are you in your approach with supporting diverse learners? Tell me about how that would look in your classroom.
2. How are teachers preparing to support diverse learners through the lens of culturally relevant education?	2.1 What CRE workshops have you attended during this past three years? Can you explain what resonated with you the most? As a teacher who uses CRE, have you reflected on your own biases? If so, has it helped you to improve the way you perceive the diverse students in your class and how? If you can change the frequency of CRE workshops, how often would you want them offered and why? Would you consider presenting about your pedagogy of CRE? During your studies to become a teacher, how often did you receive explicit instructions in culturally relevant education? If not, where did you obtain training and what did it intel? Can you explain?
3. How does the implementation of culturally responsive education improve student engagement?	3.1 Using CRE, has it improved your understanding of your diverse students in your class? How? Do you have a better relationship with the students as a result?

	How do you incorporate CRE into your lessons in order to meet the needs of your diverse group of students? In comparison to the way you taught before, has CRE helped to improve your planning and delivery of the lesson? Are your lessons more engaging with CRE? Can you explain how it has improved or not improve engagement?
4. What are the barriers teachers face when implementing culturally responsive teaching?	Are there enough professional development opportunities provided to support your knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy in your school and/or district? If so, how? If not, what would you recommend? How are administrators supporting the implementation of CRE? What does that look like, please explain or if not, what you would like administrators to support you with? How much time is allotted to prepare and revise curriculum and lesson using CRE? Is this something you and your colleague do often? If so, how often? If not, what would you recommend?

Interview Teacher Questions

What is your name and title?

How long have you been teaching in a public school?

How long have you lived in New York?

What are some culturally relevant education strategies you use to support students academically? Tell me about the ones that are more effective in your teaching.

How confident are you in your approach with supporting diverse learners? Tell me about how that would look in your classroom.

What CRE workshops have you attended during this past three years? Can you explain what resonated with you the most?

As a teacher who uses CRE, have you reflected on your own biases? If so, has it helped you to improve the way you perceive the diverse students in your class and how?

If you can change the frequency of CRE workshops, how often would you want them offered and why? Would you consider presenting about your pedagogy of CRE?

During your studies to become a teacher, how often did you receive explicit instructions in culturally relevant education? If not, where did you obtain training and what did it entail? Can you explain?

Using CRE, has it improved your understanding of your diverse students in your class? How? Do you have a better relationship with the students as a result?

How do you incorporate CRE into your lessons in order to meet the needs of your diverse group of students?

In comparison to the way you taught before, has CRE helped to improve your planning and delivery of the lesson?

Are your lessons more engaging with CRE? Can you explain how it has improved or not improve engagement?

Are there enough professional development provided to support your knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy in your school and/or district? If so, how? If not, what would you recommend?

How are administrators supporting the implementation of CRE? What does that look like, please explain or if not, what you would like administrators to support you with?

How much time is allotted to prepare and revise curriculum and lesson using CRE? Is this something you and your colleague do often? If so, how often? If not, what would you recommend?

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me, as a reminder our interview is confidential. After the interview has taken place and it has been transcribed, a copy will be sent for your review. Please make any corrections to the responses; it is not necessary to make grammatical corrections. In addition, the result of this project I will send you an abstract of the final study.

Appendix F

Danielson Rubric Ratings Information

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation		
1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy		
Rating	**Description**	**Critical Attributes**
Ineffective	In planning and practice, the teacher makes content errors or does not correct errors made by students. The teacher displays little understanding of prerequisite knowledge important to student learning of the content. The teacher displays little or no understanding of the range of pedagogical approaches suitable to student learning of the content.	• The teacher makes content errors. • The teacher does not consider prerequisite relationships when planning. • The teacher's plans use inappropriate strategies for the discipline.
Developing	The teacher is familiar with the important concepts in the discipline but displays a lack of awareness of how these concepts relate to one another. The teacher indicates some awareness of prerequisite learning, although such knowledge may be inaccurate or incomplete. The teacher's plans and practice reflect a limited range of pedagogical approaches to the discipline or to the students.	• The teacher's understanding of the discipline is rudimentary. • The teacher's knowledge of prerequisite relationships is inaccurate or incomplete. • Lesson and unit plans use limited instructional strategies, and some are not suitable to the content.
Effective	The teacher displays solid knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how these relate to one another. The teacher demonstrates accurate understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics. The teacher's plans and practice reflect familiarity with a wide range of effective pedagogical approaches in the subject.	• The teacher can identify important concepts of the discipline and their relationships to one another. • The teacher provides clear explanations of the content. • The teacher answers students' questions accurately and provides feedback that furthers their learning. • Instructional strategies in unit and lesson plans are entirely suitable to the content.
Highly Effective	The teacher displays extensive knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how these relate both to one another and to other disciplines. The teacher demonstrates understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts and understands the link to necessary cognitive structures that ensure student understanding. The teacher's plans and practice reflect familiarity with a wide range of effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline and the ability to anticipate student misconceptions.	• The teacher cites intra- and interdisciplinary content relationships. • The teacher's plans demonstrate awareness of possible student misconceptions and how they can be addressed. • The teacher's plans reflect recent developments in content-related pedagogy.
1e: Designing Coherent Instruction		
Ineffective	Learning activities are poorly aligned with the instructional outcomes, do not follow an organized progression, are not designed to engage students in active intellectual activity, and have unrealistic time allocations. Instructional groups are not suitable to the activities and offer no variety.	• Learning activities are boring and/or not well aligned to the instructional goals. • Materials are not engaging or do not meet instructional outcomes. • Instructional groups do not support learning.

		• Lesson plans are not structured or sequenced and are unrealistic in their expectations.
Developing	Some of the learning activities and materials are aligned with the instructional outcomes and represent moderate cognitive challenge, but with no differentiation for different students. Instructional groups partially support the activities, with some variety. The lesson or unit has a recognizable structure; but the progression of activities is uneven, with only some reasonable time allocations	• Learning activities are moderately challenging. • Learning resources are suitable, but there is limited variety. • Instructional groups are random, or they only partially support objectives. • Lesson structure is uneven or may be unrealistic about time expectations.
Effective	Most of the learning activities are aligned with the instructional outcomes and follow an organized progression suitable to groups of students. The learning activities have reasonable time allocations; they represent significant cognitive challenge, with some differentiation for different groups of students and varied use of instructional groups.	• Learning activities are matched to instructional outcomes. • Activities provide opportunity for higher-level thinking. • The teacher provides a variety of appropriately challenging materials and resources. • Instructional student groups are organized thoughtfully to maximize learning and build on students' strengths. • The plan for the lesson or unit is well structured, with reasonable time allocations.
Highly Effective	The sequence of learning activities follows a coherent sequence, is aligned to instructional goals, and is designed to engage students in high-level cognitive activity. These are appropriately differentiated for individual learners. Instructional groups are varied appropriately, with some opportunity for student choice	• Activities permit student choice. • Learning experiences connect to other disciplines. • The teacher provides a variety of appropriately challenging resources that are differentiated for students in the class. • Lesson plans differentiate for individual student needs.
Domain 2 Classroom Environment		
2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Support		
Ineffective	Patterns of classroom interactions, both between teacher and students and among students, are mostly negative, inappropriate, or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels. Student interactions are characterized by sarcasm, put-downs, or conflict. The teacher does not deal with disrespectful behavior.	• The teacher is disrespectful toward students or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels. • Students' body language indicates feelings of hurt, discomfort, or insecurity. • The teacher displays no familiarity with, or caring about, individual students. • The teacher disregards disrespectful interactions among students.
Developing	Patterns of classroom interactions, both between teacher and students and among students, are generally appropriate but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, and disregard for students' ages, cultures, and developmental levels. Students rarely demonstrate disrespect for one another. The teacher attempts to	• The quality of interactions between teacher and students, or among students, is uneven, with

	respond to disrespectful behavior, with uneven results. The net result of the interactions is neutral, conveying neither warmth nor conflict.	occasional disrespect or insensitivity. • The teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior among students, with uneven results. • The teacher attempts to make connections with individual students, but student reactions indicate that these attempts are not entirely successful.
Effective	Teacher-student interactions are friendly and demonstrate general caring and respect. Such interactions are appropriate to the ages, cultures, and developmental levels of the students. Interactions among students are generally polite and respectful, and students exhibit respect for the teacher. The teacher responds successfully to disrespectful behavior among students. The net result of the interactions is polite, respectful, and business-like, though students may be somewhat cautious about taking intellectual risks.	• Talk between the teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful. • The teacher successfully responds to disrespectful behavior among students. • Students participate willingly but may be somewhat hesitant to offer their ideas in front of classmates. • The teacher makes general connections with individual students. • Students exhibit respect for the teacher.
Highly Effective	Classroom interactions between the teacher and students and among students are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth, caring, and sensitivity to students as individuals. Students exhibit respect for the teacher and contribute to high levels of civility among all members of the class. The net result is an environment where all students feel valued and are comfortable taking intellectual risks.	• The teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about individual students' lives beyond the class and school. • There is no disrespectful behavior among students. • When necessary, students respectfully correct one another. • Students participate without fear of put-downs or ridicule from either the teacher or other students. • The teacher respects and encourages students' efforts.
2d. Managing Student Behavior		
Ineffective	There appear to be no established standards of conduct, or students challenge them. There is little or no teacher monitoring of student behavior, and response to students' misbehavior is repressive or disrespectful of student dignity.	• The classroom environment is chaotic, with no standards of conduct evident. • The teacher does not monitor student behavior. • Some students disrupt the classroom, without apparent teacher awareness or with an ineffective response.
Developing	Standards of conduct appear to have been established, but their implementation is inconsistent. The teacher tries, with uneven results, to monitor student behavior and respond to student misbehavior.	• The teacher attempts to maintain order in the classroom, referring to classroom rules, but with uneven success. • The teacher attempts to keep track of student behavior, but with no apparent system. • The teacher's response to student misbehavior is inconsistent:

		sometimes harsh, other times lenient.
Effective	Student behavior is generally appropriate. The teacher monitors student behavior against established standards of conduct. Teacher response to student misbehavior is consistent, proportionate, and respectful to students and is effective.	• Standards of conduct appear to have been established and implemented successfully. • Overall, student behavior is generally appropriate. • The teacher frequently monitors student behavior. • The teacher's response to student misbehavior is effective.
Highly Effective	Student behavior is entirely appropriate. Students take an active role in monitoring their own behavior and/or that of other students against standards of conduct. Teacher monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive. The teacher's response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs and respects students' dignity.	• Student behavior is entirely appropriate; any student misbehavior is very minor and swiftly handled. • The teacher silently and subtly monitors student behavior. • When necessary, students respectfully correct one another. • Students respectfully intervene with classmates at appropriate moments to ensure compliance with standards of conduct.

Domain 3 Instruction

3b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

Ineffective	The teacher's questions are of low cognitive challenge, with single correct responses, and are asked in rapid succession. Interaction between the teacher and students is predominantly recitation style, with the teacher mediating all questions and answers; the teacher accepts all contributions without asking students to explain their reasoning. Only a few students participate in the discussion.	• Questions are rapid-fire and convergent, with a single correct answer. • Questions do not invite student thinking. • All discussion is between the teacher and students; students are not invited to speak directly to one another. • The teacher does not ask students to explain their thinking. • Only a few students dominate the discussion.
Developing	The teacher's questions lead students through a single path of inquiry, with answers seemingly determined in advance. Alternatively, the teacher attempts to ask some questions designed to engage students in thinking, but only a few students are involved. The teacher attempts to engage all students in the discussion, to encourage them to respond to one another, and to explain their thinking, with uneven results.	• The teacher frames some questions designed to promote student thinking, but many have a single correct answer, and the teacher calls on students quickly. • The teacher invites students to respond directly to one another's ideas, but few students respond. • The teacher calls on many students, but only a small number actually participate in the discussion. • The teacher asks students to explain their reasoning, but only some students attempt to do so.
Effective	While the teacher may use some low-level questions, he poses questions designed to promote student thinking and understanding. The teacher creates a genuine discussion among students,	• The teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting students to

	providing adequate time for students to respond and stepping aside when doing so is appropriate. The teacher challenges students to justify their thinking and successfully engages most students in the discussion, employing a range of strategies to ensure that most students are heard.	- think and/or offer multiple possible answers. - The teacher makes effective use of wait time. - Discussions enable students to talk to one another without ongoing mediation by teacher. - The teacher calls on most students, even those who don't initially volunteer. - Many students actively engage in the discussion. - The teacher asks students to justify their reasoning, and most attempt to do so.
Highly Effective	The teacher uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high-level thinking and discourse, and promote metacognition. Students formulate many questions, initiate topics, challenge one another's thinking, and make unsolicited contributions. Students themselves ensure that all voices are heard in the discussion.	- Students initiate higher-order questions. - The teacher builds on and uses student responses to questions in order to deepen student understanding. - Students extend the discussion, enriching it. - Students invite comments from their classmates during a discussion and challenge one another's thinking. - Virtually all students are engaged in the discussion.
3c. Engaging Students in Learning		
Ineffective	The learning tasks/activities, materials, and resources are poorly aligned with the instructional outcomes, or require only rote responses, with only one approach possible. The groupings of students are unsuitable to the activities. The lesson has no clearly defined structure, or the pace of the lesson is too slow or rushed.	- Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson. - Learning tasks/activities and materials require only recall or have a single correct response or method. - Instructional materials used are unsuitable to the lesson and/or the students. - The lesson drags or is rushed. - Only one type of instructional group is used (whole group, small groups) when variety would promote more student engagement.
Developing	The learning tasks and activities are partially aligned with the instructional outcomes but require only minimal thinking by students and little opportunity for them to explain their thinking, allowing most students to be passive or merely compliant. The groupings of students are moderately suitable to the activities. The lesson has a recognizable structure; however, the pacing of the lesson may not provide students the time needed to be intellectually engaged or may be so slow that many students have a considerable amount of "downtime."	- Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson. - Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and those requiring recall. - Student engagement with the content is largely passive; the learning consists primarily of facts or procedures. - The materials and resources are partially aligned to the lesson objectives. - Few of the materials and resources require student

		• thinking or ask students to explain their thinking. • The pacing of the lesson is uneven—suitable in parts but rushed or dragging in others. • The instructional groupings used are partially appropriate to the activities.
Effective	The learning tasks and activities are fully aligned with the instructional outcomes and are designed to challenge student thinking, inviting students to make their thinking visible. This technique results in active intellectual engagement by most students with important and challenging content, and with teacher scaffolding to support that engagement. The groupings of students are suitable to the activities. The lesson has a clearly defined structure, and the pacing of the lesson is appropriate, providing most students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.	• Most students are intellectually engaged in the lesson. • Most learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or encourage higher-order thinking. • Students are invited to explain their thinking as part of completing tasks. • Materials and resources support the learning goals and require intellectual engagement, as appropriate. • The pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed to be intellectually engaged. • The teacher uses groupings that are suitable to the lesson activities.
Highly Effective	Virtually all students are intellectually engaged in challenging content through well-designed learning tasks and activities that require complex thinking by students. The teacher provides suitable scaffolding and challenges students to explain their thinking. There is evidence of some student initiation of inquiry and student contributions to the exploration of important content; students may serve as resources for one another. The lesson has a clearly defined structure, and the pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed not only to intellectually engage with and reflect upon their learning but also to consolidate their understanding.	• Virtually all students are intellectually engaged in the lesson. • Lesson activities require high-level student thinking and explanations of their thinking. • Students extend the discussion, enriching it. • Students take initiative to improve the lesson by (1) modifying a learning task to make it more meaningful or relevant to their needs, (2) suggesting modifications to the grouping patterns used, and/or (3) suggesting modifications or additions to the materials being used. • Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.
3d. Using Assessment in Instruction		
Ineffective	Students do not appear to be aware of the assessment criteria, and there is little or no monitoring of student learning; feedback is absent or of poor quality. Students do not engage in self- or peer assessment.	• The teacher gives no indication of what high-quality work looks like. • The teacher makes no effort to determine whether students understand the lesson. • Students receive no feedback, or feedback is global or directed to only one student.

		• The teacher does not ask students to evaluate their own or classmates' work.
Developing	Students appear to be only partially aware of the assessment criteria, and the teacher monitors student learning for the class as a whole. Questions and assessments are rarely used to diagnose evidence of learning. Feedback to students is general, and few students assess their own work.	• There is little evidence that the students understand how their work will be evaluated. • The teacher monitors understanding through a single method, or without eliciting evidence of understanding from students. • Feedback to students is vague and not oriented toward future improvement of work. • The teacher makes only minor attempts to engage students in self- or peer assessment.
Effective	Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria, and the teacher monitors student learning for groups of students. Questions and assessments are regularly used to diagnose evidence of learning. Teacher feedback to groups of students is accurate and specific; some students engage in self-assessment.	• The teacher makes the standards of high-quality work clear to students. • The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding. • Students are invited to assess their own work and make improvements; most of them do so. • Feedback includes specific and timely guidance, at least for groups of students.
Highly Effective	Assessment is fully integrated into instruction, through extensive use of formative assessment. Students appear to be aware of, and there is some evidence that they have contributed to, the assessment criteria. Questions and assessments are used regularly to diagnose evidence of learning by individual students. A variety of forms of feedback, from both teacher and peers, is accurate and specific and advances learning. Students self-assess and monitor their own progress. The teacher successfully differentiates instruction to address individual students' misunderstandings.	• Students indicate that they clearly understand the characteristics of high-quality work, and there is evidence that students have helped establish the evaluation criteria. • The teacher is constantly "taking the pulse" of the class; monitoring of student understanding is sophisticated and continuous and makes use of strategies to elicit information about individual student understanding. • Students monitor their own understanding, either on their own initiative or as a result of tasks set by the teacher. • High-quality feedback comes from many sources, including students; it is specific and focused on improvement.
Domain 4 Professional Responsibilities		
4e: Growing and Developing Professionally		
Ineffective	Teacher engages in no professional development activities to enhance knowledge or skill. The teacher resists feedback on teaching performance from either supervisors or more experienced colleagues. The teacher makes no effort to share knowledge with others or to assume professional responsibilities.	• The teacher is not involved in any activity that might enhance knowledge or skill. • The teacher purposefully resists discussing performance with supervisors or colleagues.

		• The teacher ignores invitations to join professional organizations or attend conferences.
Developing	Teacher participates to a limited extent in professional activities when they are convenient. The teacher engages in a limited way with colleagues and supervisors in professional conversation about practice, including some feedback on teaching performance. The teacher finds limited ways to assist other teachers and contribute to the profession.	• The teacher participates in professional activities when they are required or provided by the district. • The teacher reluctantly accepts feedback from supervisors and colleagues. • The teacher contributes in a limited fashion to professional organizations.
Effective	Teacher seeks out opportunities for professional development to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skill. Teacher actively engages with colleagues and supervisors in professional conversation about practice, including feedback about practice. The teacher participates actively in assisting other educators and looks for ways to contribute to the profession.	• The teacher seeks regular opportunities for continued professional development. • The teacher welcomes colleagues and supervisors into the classroom for the purpose of gaining insight from their feedback. • The teacher actively participates in organizations designed to contribute to the profession.
Highly Effective	Teacher seeks out opportunities for professional development and makes a systematic effort to conduct action research. The teacher solicits feedback on practice from both supervisors and colleagues. The teacher initiates important activities to contribute to the profession.	• The teacher seeks regular opportunities for continued professional development, including initiating action research. • The teacher actively seeks feedback from supervisors and colleagues. • The teacher takes an active leadership role in professional organizations in order to contribute to the profession.

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Vita

Name	Karleen Adam-Comrie
Baccalaureate Degree	Bachelor of Arts, State University of New York at New Paltz, New Paltz Major: Psychology
Date	December, 1990
Other Degrees and Certificates	Master of Science, Cambridge College, Cambridge Major: Integrated Studies of Education January,2001
	School Administration and Supervisory Certification, New York State Education Department, New York September, 2005