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Walden University

College of Education

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Kimberly E. Hendricks

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Teacher Perceptions of Culturally Relevant Strategies to Promote Black Student Achievement

by

Kimberly E. Hendricks

MS, California Baptist University, 2000

BS, Georgia State University, 1988

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May 2021

Abstract

A long-standing, race-based academic achievement gap between Black and White students has existed in a local district in the southwest United States for more than 5 years. The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive case study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences related to the use of culturally relevant or responsive (CRR) teaching strategies. The study was guided by Hale's theory explaining how culture shapes a child's cognition and learning styles, indicating benefits when the teacher used the students' cultural assets during instruction. Research questions were written to address teachers' perceptions of, experiences with, and the value of using CRR teaching strategies. To meet the selection criteria, each participant had at least 3 years of K-12 teaching experience in the district and had taught multiple classes with at least two Black students. Six teachers chose to participate, and data were collected through interviews and a self-audit of how the teacher's environment, instruction, strategies, and assessment aligned with their use of research-based, culturally relevant teaching (CRT) approaches. The interview data were analyzed through inductive coding, resulting in the following emergent themes: culturally responsive perspectives, PD/training, and instructional strategies combined with content knowledge. The participants expressed the need for professional development (PD) in utilizing CRR strategies, so a PD module was developed as the project. The results may promote positive social change by helping teachers address race-based achievement issues and contributing to the body of scholarly research related to the use of culturally relevant pedagogy and teaching strategies.

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Dedication

This research study project is dedicated to my husband, Bill, my family, and all of the teachers in my life. My parents were my first teachers; they always taught me to be true to myself and believe in God's power. I know I am fortunate to have them. Mom, you always inspire me; you made me the woman I am today. Daddy, rest in peace; your guidance and love always encouraged me to be the change I want to see. I would also like to thank my little sister, Jill, who has always finished her education first. I usually start a program first, but she always completed the degree process before me. I love you and hope that We are an inspiration to our niece, Jasmine, nephews, Jordan, Jaden, Chandler, and your son, Chase. I could not have endured the time and effort required to complete my degree without my family. I also want to thank my relatives, friends, and colleagues for all their support and encouragement; they kept me grounded. I love you all!

Acknowledgments

I want to begin by thanking GOD, who allows me to believe in things I cannot see. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to my committee and especially my chair, Dr. Burgess, for her valuable contribution, encouragement, and feedback to this body of work. I am forever grateful to the local school district for encouraging me to conduct the study and explore ways to improve Black students' academic outcomes. Finally, thank you to the teachers who so graciously gave of their time, truth, and for agreeing to participate in this study. To the teachers who have culturally relevant classroom environments and those working toward a culturally relevant environment, I pray this project will encourage you to utilize strategies to support Black students who happen to be struggling the most academically in our schools.

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Section 1: The Problem

Culturally relevant strategies, which may also be referred to in the literature as culturally responsive strategies, are designed to support the ways in which teachers deliver instruction intending to improve Black students' academic achievement. Educating all students in an ethnically diverse school community is a challenging task. Teachers may have different expectations and perceptions of students' needs, academic strengths, and cultural understanding. These challenges are further complicated when the teacher is unsure of or unable to provide instruction that meets each student's unique learning needs in the classroom. Teachers in the local setting have not effectively used culturally relevant strategies to support Black students' academic achievement.

The Local Problem

I designed this descriptive case study to explore teachers' perceptions of and experiences related to culturally relevant strategies. Ineffective use of CRT strategies may have contributed to the long-standing academic achievement gap between Black and White students in English language arts (ELA) and math performance as well as in graduation rates. Black students have not performed at high academic levels and have not progressed at the same rate as their White peers. The results of this study may help teachers address race-based achievement and graduation gap issues while also adding to the body of scholarly research on the use of culturally relevant strategies to support academic achievement, specifically for Black students. Teachers' ineffective use of CRT strategies is the gap in practice addressed in this study. Previous studies have focused on issues related to teachers' use of CRR.

Researchers and practitioners have studied and observed classrooms and found that when teachers make cultural connections with Black students during the lesson, Black students accomplish the lesson goals more successfully (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017). Ladson-Billings (1994) and Kunjufu (2014) studied and observed classrooms to understand the value of using culturally relevant strategies. Teachers determine how to teach and engage students in the content standards, and their failure to use a cultural lens to make the content relevant to all students might be one factor relating to the gap in academic achievement between Black and White students.

Rationale

Black and White students' academic achievement scores provide long-standing evidence of the existence of the gap in practice concerning the ineffective use of CRT strategies California Department of Education (CDE Dataquest, n.d.; California School Dashboard Data, n.d.; English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, n.d.). Black students' academic struggles in the local setting, as evidenced by CDE Dataquest (2020), demonstrated that teachers have not effectively used culturally relevant strategies during instruction. According to state test scores, these figures help demonstrate disproportionality between Black and White students (California School Dashboard Data, 2020). Disproportionality occurred in other areas as well; however, the data are only available at the local level and are not public. This data provided evidence that teachers' ineffective use of CRT strategies affects student learning and may relate to racial gaps in other aspects of their educational experiences. Table 1 provides the results for Black and White students in California who

met or exceeded the Achievement Level Descriptor score on the test taken in 2019 Dept of Education, 2020). As indicated in Table 1, almost twice as high a percentage of White students met or exceeded the test's passing score as did Black students. The test data included in this table focused on the scores attained by California's Black and White students. The total (#) tested figures include Asian and Hispanic students who completed the test.

Table 1

2019 English Language Arts (ELA) Met or Exceeded by Race/Ethnicity – Black and White

	All Students' ELA passing % Total (#) Tested	Black Students' ELA passing % Total (#) Tested	White Students' ELA passing % Total (#) Tested
California	51.1 (3,165,580)	33.2 (167,750)	65.6 (714,122)
District	31.8 (16,825)	26.5 (2,210)	46.6 (1,072)

Note. Adapted from *CDE, Dataquest*, SY2018-2019 (https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dataquest.asp). In the public domain.

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to explore teachers' perceptions of, and experiences related to the use of CRT strategies to decrease the achievement gap between Black students and White students (see California School Dashboard Data, 2020). On average, all significant student groups in the district have made academic gains during the last 5 years. Black students continue to lag behind their White peers (ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, 2020). Table 2 shows the percentage of Black and White students proficient in ELA and math based on their California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)

assessment. These results indicated that the achievement gap continues to persist between Black and White students, which could indicate that teachers struggle to use CRT strategies effectively.

Table 2

Local District ELA and Math by Year % Proficient by Race - Black and White

School Year	State Assessment	ELA % Proficient/Advanced or On Grade Level/Above		Math % Proficient/Advanced or On Grade Level/Above	
		Black Students	White Students	Black Students	White Students
2014-15	CAASPP	22.0%	44.0%	10.0%	30.0%
2015-16	CAASPP	22.0%	45.0%	11.0%	31.0%
2016-17	CAASPP	22.1%	42.0%	12.5%	32.4%
2017-18	CAASPP	22.2%	43.0%	12.1%	33.6%
2018-19	CAASPP	26.5%	46.6%	15.4%	37.1%

Note. Adapted from *CDE, Dataquest*, SY2018-2019 (https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dataquest.asp). In the public domain.

As of September 2019, the local district's PD website specified that PD or training in the use of culturally relevant strategies had not been included in their plan for teachers in the district. After reviewing the student achievement data, the Strategic Planning Committee found it necessary to implement strategies to address the achievement gap. The SPC members recommended that "all students have equal access to culturally relevant, standards-aligned, differentiated instructional program".

The SPC reviewed research supporting how to increase Black students' achievement and recommended that the district promote Black students' academic achievement. These recommendations demonstrate the importance the district placed on addressing the instructional approaches teachers use with Black students.

As indicated in multiple research studies, teachers' overall negative perceptions of and experiences with the use of culturally relevant strategies may cause Black students' low performance. The achievement gap between Black and White students has been studied for more than 3 decades (Collopy et al., 2012; Delpit, 1986; Kunjufu, 1986). Collopy et al. (2012) stated that though the education system purports to offer high-quality educational opportunities for all students, significant disparities exist in educational achievement by socioeconomic class, race, and ethnicity in the United States compared to the rest of the world. Noguera (2015) asserted that race continues to be a factor that divides the U.S. student population. Viadero (2006) explained that because former President Johnson was concerned with the lack of equitable educational opportunities in public institutions for racial minority students, he commissioned research that resulted in the 1966 publication of the Coleman Report (Coleman, 1966), which documented the existence of an achievement gap between Black and White students. The achievement gap remains a concern today, with many researchers investigating this topic in recent years (Bohrnstedt et al., 2015; Hansen et al., 2018). Recent research confirms that the Black/White achievement gap identified in the Coleman Report has continued in the United States (Hansen et al., 2018; Potter, 2013).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP; 2020) is the most extensive national assessment used to measure what U.S. students know and can do in various subject areas (McFarland et al., 2019). A review of this test data indicated that Black and White students' achievement gap, documented for more than 40 years, remains today. Hemphill and Vanneman (2011) analyzed NAEP data from 1971 to 2004 and

found that Black students as early as age 9 scored 26 percentage points lower than their White peers did in reading achievement. Although this gap narrowed to 22 percentage points by age 13, the gap increased again to 29 percentage points in high school (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011). According to the U.S. Department of Education (n.d.), the 2019 NAEP reading results showed there continues to be a 26 percentage-point gap between fourth grade Black and White students' scale scores. Table 3 shows that Black and White students' reading achievement gap has persisted every year since the NAEP test began in 1992.

Table 3

NAEP Average Scale Scores for Reading, Grade 4

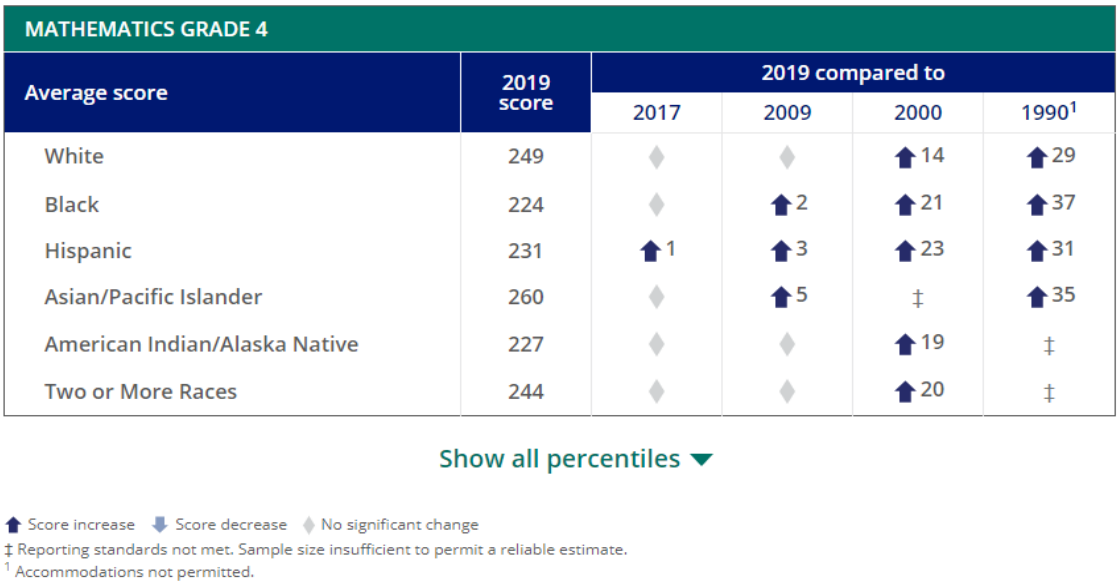
Year	White	Black	Hispanic
2019	230	204	209
2017	232	206	209
2015	232	206	208
2013	232	206	207
2011	231	205	206
2009	230	205	205
2007	231	203	205
2005	229	200	203
2003	229	200	200
2002	229	198	201
2000	224	190	190
1998	226	193	193
1994	224	185	188
1992	224	192	197

Note. The scale ranges from 0 to 500. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0–500. NAEP Scores for Reading, Grade 4, by Race/Ethnicity to Report Trends, Year, and Jurisdiction: 2015, 2013, 2011, 2009, 2007, 2005, 2003, 2002, 2000, 1998, 1994, and 1992. Adapted from the *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics* (n.d.). In the public domain.

A difference in achievement continued to exist in the 2019 NAEP. Figure 1 shows the 2019 NAEP trends for the average scores and scores gaps by race/ethnicity of fourth-grade students in mathematics.

Figure 1

Trend in Fourth-Grade NAPE Math Average Scores by Race/Ethnicity



MATHEMATICS GRADE 4

Average score	2019 score	2019 compared to			
		2017	2009	2000	1990[1]
White	249	♦	♦	↑ 14	↑ 29
Black	224	♦	↑ 2	↑ 21	↑ 37
Hispanic	231	↑ 1	↑ 3	↑ 23	↑ 31
Asian/Pacific Islander	260	♦	↑ 5	‡	↑ 35
American Indian/Alaska Native	227	♦	♦	↑ 19	‡
Two or More Races	244	♦	♦	↑ 20	‡

Show all percentiles

↑ Score increase ↓ Score decrease ♦ No significant change
‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.
[1] Accommodations not permitted.

Note. NAEP mathematics and reading scales range from 0–500. Results are not shown in data points with insufficient sample sizes to permit reliable estimates. Black includes African Americans. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. The score gaps are calculated based on the difference between unrounded average scores. *Source: (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.).* In the public domain.

The NAEP Math results, illustrated in Figure 1, indicated a significant difference in achievement between Black and White students, which has been evident in NAEP results for the past 25 years. The gap continued to be evident in 2017 (Hansen et al., 2018). More recent studies, including Lee (2014), Palardy (2015), Camera (2016), and

Hanushek et al. (2019), indicated that the racial achievement gap continues to exist in education.

Evidence that teachers are not consistently using culturally relevant strategies effectively can be found in previous research studies. Railton (2015) explored students' culturally related learning experiences in the classroom, charting 10 students' experiences of studying literature together. In the study, Railton examined the effectiveness of purchased and adopted texts versus allowing students to share their culture through storytelling. The researcher concluded that the storytelling strategy allowed for increased student participation and enabled students to explore their traditions and other students' cultures. Dray and Wisneski (2011) stated that cultural differences might be interpreted as a disability by teachers; the teacher must be able to reflect on their own beliefs before they can accept and embrace diversity in the classroom. The researchers maintained that life experiences usually guide individuals' interactions with others. Griner and Stewart (2013) found that teachers' use of culturally responsive teaching practices promoted students' academic success. In the current study, I explored teachers' perceptions and experiences related to the use of CRT strategies.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are essential to the study and are defined in this subsection:

Antibias: According to Derman-Sparks (1989), this term indicated the challenges related to the "isms," including prejudice, stereotyping, and bias. Derman-Sparks et al. (2015) also claimed that antibias practices are more than an event; teachers must actively use practices to eliminate bias.

CRT: According to Ladson-Billings (1994), CRT is based on three components: students' academic success, students' becoming and remaining culturally competent, and students' ability to critically and consciously navigate the social status quo. Ladson-Billings defined CRT as "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 20).

Culturally responsive environment: A classroom where the teacher creates an environment of success and resilience for students who have historically underachieved in school (Bondy et al., 2007).

Culturally responsive teachers: Teachers that are also sensitive to students' linguistic and behavioral skill gaps (Krasnoff, 2016).

Culturally responsive teaching: The use of ethnically and culturally diverse material that addresses socio-emotional needs (Banks, 2014; Gay, 2018). According to Hammond (2014), culturally responsive teaching builds the learning capacity of the individual student. Hammond added the easiest way to determine if the instruction is culturally responsive is to analyze the diverse students' academic outcomes. The terms "culturally relevant" and "culturally responsive" are sometimes used interchangeably in research, and both terms were frequently used in the literature I reviewed for this study.

Disproportionality: An overrepresentation of a group of people within a group or system, and a disparity that exists with the people within the group (Cokley et al., 2012, p. 54).

Explicit bias: Unlike implicit bias, explicit biases are consciously known (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). An individual may have the attitudes and beliefs about a person or group that are conscious and sometimes may cause conflict.

Implicit Bias: An unconscious positive or negative mental attitude towards a person, thing, or group. The individual does not consciously recognize the bias. Rudd (2014) defined implicit bias as "the mental process that causes us to have negative feelings and attitudes about people based on characteristics like race, ethnicity, age, and appearance" (p. 3).

Significance of the Study

There has been an academic achievement gap between the Black and White student populations for more than 5 years in the local setting. Teachers have not been effectively utilizing culturally relevant strategies to improve academic outcomes for Black students. In this study, I explored teachers' perceptions and beliefs related to the use of culturally relevant strategies. An investigation could reveal gaps in teacher knowledge and practice concerning how to incorporate CRT practices and strategies effectively. Identifying these gaps could lead to the creation of PD and other administrative supports that could help increase the student achievement of Black students. Thomas and Green (2015) found that teachers need to be aware of each student's instructional needs and decide on the most appropriate strategy to meet their needs. The effective use of culturally relevant strategies could also improve Black students' quality of life and lead to more successful educational experiences, promoting positive social change.

Research Questions

In this descriptive case study, I explored teacher perceptions of, and experiences related to the use of CRT strategies. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are teachers' perspectives of the value of incorporating culturally relevant strategies for students in their classroom?

RQ2: What experiences do teachers have with the use of culturally relevant strategies and approaches?

RQ3: How do teachers incorporate CRT strategies in their instructional practices?

Review of the Literature

In this literature review, I describe the need for teachers to utilize the students' culture as an asset. Understanding and applying culturally relevant strategies may impact Black student's outcomes. I provide a critical review of current (i.e., published between 2012 and 2020), peer-reviewed research on the factors that may contribute to the long-standing academic achievement gap. The literature reviewed for this study was focused on how students' culture could support and increase their academic outcomes. According to Gay (2013), using the student's culture as a strategy helps all students acquire knowledge about other cultures' contributions and experiences.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Hale's (1982) work, specifically the postulation that Black children learn differently than White children and that Black culture influences Black students' understanding and may affect their intellectual development. Other researchers have supported Hale's framework by

explaining how strategies related to a student's culture affect academic achievement. Ladson-Billings (1994) asserted that a teacher's expectations, race, and experience using culturally relevant strategies help shape Black students' learning outcomes. Banks and Banks (2019) maintained that Black students have different learning styles than middle-class Anglo-American students. Gorski (2016) suggested that many of the frameworks surrounding culturally responsive teaching are rooted in equity and justice principles. Paris and Alim (2017) asserted that Black students' culture includes an expression of their identities, which allows them to engage in the school process. Banks and Banks concluded that teachers who want to facilitate academic achievement for all students should use teaching styles that support the different learning styles of the students they teach. Similarly, Kunjufu (2002) found that Black males learned differently from students of other races and recommended that teachers utilize strategies that match the students' learning styles. Kunjufu (2011) asserted that utilizing these different strategies may help Black students reach their full potential.

Hale (1982) maintained that a student's culture should be viewed as an asset that may contribute to classroom success. Many other researchers have concluded that culturally specific teaching styles and cultural connections contribute to Black students' academic success (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Hammond, 2014; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016). Boykin and Noguera (2011) concluded that teachers should infuse their students' culture into teaching and learning, thereby teaching them how they learn best. According to Ward (1973), instructional materials should be adapted based on cultural differences. Ward found six levels of adaptation needed for students to be successful:

- Level 1 – language translation
- Level 2 – vocabulary adjustments
- Level 3 – ensuring that the visuals refer to local experiences
- Level 4 – restructuring of the instructional procedures to accommodate the expectations of the learners
- Level 5 – changing the content to reflect current life views
- Level 6 – accommodating the learners' cognitive styles

There are distinctive learning patterns within cultural groups, and teachers need to know their students' cultures (Guild, 1994). Hammond (2014) cited neuroscience research, which indicated a correlation between the use of culturally responsive teaching and the brain's development. Hammond explained how learning relationships are affected by the way the brain processes data. Hammond also asserted that teachers should be aware of different cultures, be knowledgeable about how their culture may create inequitable outcomes and provide content that connects to students' lives. Ladson-Billings (1994) stated that use of a culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically. Ladson-Billings added that CRP provides students with the opportunity to explain and show their knowledge, gives students the tools to navigate their home and school culture, and provides a lens for students to see inequities and help them know what to do to make a change.

Hale (1982) postulated that educators must understand their own ethnic culture because it can shape their attitudes, and Lynch (2011) further explained that teachers must understand their own cultural biases and proposed that as culturally responsive

teachers prepare to teach, there are three general categories they need to consider: Culturally responsive teachers need to know their own culture, learn about other cultures, and learn about their students' culture. Lynch asserted that one of the biggest obstacles in diverse schools is that the majority of teachers hail from a middle-class background and that utilizing CCR strategies requires these teachers to understand their own cultural biases. Lynch's conclusions are relevant to the current study focused on analyzing how teachers view the connection between students' cultural backgrounds and their experiences and attitudes related to academics.

Hannigan and Hannigan (2019) reviewed and identified six behavior evidence-based initiatives:

- positive behavior intervention and supports
- character education
- restorative justice
- trauma-informed practices
- social and emotional learning
- culturally responsive teaching (CRT)

These six behavior initiatives are based on the diverse needs of the student. Hannigan and Hannigan described CRT as a structure that allows the teacher to empower students by helping them learn within the context of their culture. According to Hannigan and Hannigan, this context allows the teacher to respect their students' culture, language, and racial identity.

Hattie (2003) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of findings from multiple studies and concluded that the student, the home, the curricula, the teacher, and the teacher's choices when deciding how they will present a lesson all contribute to the effectiveness and quality of the student's learning experience. Hattie found that collective teacher efficacy has the most significant effect on student outcomes. Because the teacher has the greatest impact on learning, understanding the students' cultures is essential. According to Hogan-Chapman et al. (2017), culture plays a significant role in shaping a child's experiences and opportunities at home. The researchers purported that the classroom and home cultures might be different, and to be effective, the teacher needs to be aware of their own culture and the culture of students they teach. Therefore, the researchers opined that teachers must know and understand their students to plan effective learning experiences. The purpose of their study was to prepare teacher candidates to be culturally relevant educators, and the results indicated that preservice teachers benefited from obtaining cultural competence and learning the importance of being culturally responsive (i.e., how the teacher utilizes aspects of the student's culture when teaching lessons that may support the students' academic outcomes).

Review of the Broader Problem

In the broader review of the study problem, I focused on determining a reason for the consistent gaps in achievement between the Black and White student populations. Therefore, the achievement gap is one of the categories presented in this subsection.

The sources cited in the literature included studies on the achievement gap and instructional strategies as well as other sources related to culture. I used databases

accessible through the Walden University Library to locate current peer-reviewed articles and published dissertations. The following databases were primarily used: Education Source, Education Research Complete, ProQuest Central, Walden Dissertation and Theses, and Sage Research Methods. I also searched Google Scholar to obtain peer-reviewed research and studies related to teachers' perceptions of strategies they use in their classrooms with Black students. The following keyword search terms and phrases were used: *achievement gap, Black–White student achievement gap, culture, culturally relevant strategies, culturally responsive strategies, instructional strategies,* and *the self-fulfilling prophecy*. To locate the most current research, I changed the date range when searching for articles. As I continued to search in each of the databases, including Google Scholar, and was unable to locate new research, I concluded that I had reached saturation. The following themes emerged and a discussion of each follows: the achievement gap, teacher expectations and perceptions about students, and the effects of CRP.

The Achievement Gap

The achievement gap between Black and White students has been evident throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. While legislators have passed laws at the local, state, and federal levels in creating equal opportunities for all, the racial achievement gap has persisted. In the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (Kelley, 2010), the Court stated that Blacks should be separate but equal (Hill, 2004). The Supreme Court decision indicated that racial segregation was constitutionality acceptable. According to Okoye-Johnson (2011), the *Plessy v. Ferguson* doctrine of "separate but equal…Denied educational opportunities for Black children" (p. 2). This law opened the

door for a disparity in the quality of education that Black students and their White peers received (Okoye-Johnson, 2011). The disparity in academic achievement has come to be known as the achievement gap by many scholars (Collopy et al., 2012).

Blackford and Khojasteh (2013) evaluated the achievement gap between proficient and nonproficient Black students in mathematics to determine whether the difference between those groups closed in the 10 years of No Child Left Behind legislation. The researchers analyzed Black students scaled scores and found that as this group of students progressed through Grades 6, 7, and 8, their overall proficiency scale scores in math continued to decline. The researchers recommended that teachers utilize targeted interventions for Black students to improve the students' academic outcomes.

In this same study, Blackford and Khojasteh (2013) provided evidence that an achievement gap persisted between Black and White students, and instead of explaining why Black and White students' achievement is different, the researchers identified areas in which proficient and nonproficient Black students showed a difference. Blackford and Khojasteh utilized repeated measures of variance to determine whether the achievement gap between proficient and nonproficient Black students was closing. The researchers analyzed 3 years of Arkansas academic performance data and found no evidence that the achievement gap had decreased during that period. Bowman et al. (2018) claimed that the achievement gap should be viewed as an issue of concern for the entire country, not just African American students. The authors opined that the lack of knowledge about and appreciation for Black culture contributes to a divide between Black and White students.

Teacher Expectations and Perceptions About Students

Teacher expectations have an impact on student outcomes. According to Hattie (2012), teachers have the most significant impact on student success. Parsley and Corcoran (2003) found that student outcomes are shaped by how the teacher develops an environment conducive to high or low expectations. Scheffler (2011) asserted that effective teachers prepare diverse learners, and highly effective teachers challenge all students and provide the environment for them to be successful. Jussim and Harber (2005) opined that the expectations a teacher holds about their students might be based on prior experience with a student or group of students. As a result, a teacher's expectations can lead to a student's academic success or failure.

Garcia and Chun (2016) examined the relationship between higher levels of teacher expectations, the use of CRT, and Latino students' academic performance and self-efficacy levels. The participants in their study were from three middle schools near the United States and Mexico border. The researchers found that high teacher expectations and frequent CRT use were both associated with higher levels of academic success and self-efficacy. According to Garcia and Chun, students recognize teachers' high expectations through the teacher's actions and statements.

Boser et al. (2014) studied the effect teacher expectations have on student achievement by analyzing several previous studies and concluded that, in general, when teachers hold higher expectations, students experience academic success. The researchers conducted a logistic regression of students' actual academic outcomes based on teachers' expectations and found that 10th-grade students whose teachers had higher expectations

were 3 times more likely to graduate from college than 10th-grade students who had teachers who had lower expectations (Boser et al., 2014). Boser et al. also found in their analyses that secondary teachers frequently displayed lower expectations of Black students than students of other races.

Rubie-Davies and Rosenthal (2016) examined the relationship between teacher expectations and students' achievement in mathematics. In their study, teachers were randomly assigned to an intervention or treatment group. The treatment group teachers received PD and workshop training focused on holding high expectations for all students. The authors found that students paired with teachers who received the PD training earned higher grades in their math classes for all grade, ethnicity, and socioeconomic levels than the students taught by teachers in the control group.

Recent study findings have indicated that students as early as kindergarten are impacted by teacher expectations. Minor (2014) explored how kindergarten teachers rate Black students' academic ability and social and behavioral skills compared to White students in kindergarten. In Minor's research, teacher's expectations about Black students impacted how much they could learn. Minor found that White students often had an advantage because teachers perceived that they could learn more successfully. The teachers studied also believed the White students would have fewer behavioral problems. Minor found that the kindergarten teachers' perceptions of their students were established on the first day of class and that these perceptions did not change throughout the school year. The researcher also found that teachers administered consequences that were more adverse for Black students.

El-Mekki (2017) stated that Black students are impacted by their teacher's opinion. For several decades, researchers have studied teacher expectations and their impact on students' success (Alvidrez & Weinstein, 1999; Brophy, 1985; Rubie-Davies & Rosenthal, 2016). These researchers have consistently found that the teacher's belief in the student's ability to succeed significantly influences the level of student success. Gershenson et al. (2016) reviewed the literature and concluded that little is known about how teachers form their expectations. Gershenson et al. gathered expectation data and found a difference in non-Black teachers' expectations concerning Black students. If teachers' low expectations (i.e., rote memorization) fill the day, students will likely meet the level, but the learning will not be genuinely impactful (Knapp et al., 1995). Another study presented by MetLife (Boser et al., 2014) explored the impact of teacher expectations on students' success. The study's survey results indicated that teachers and principals believe having high expectations affects how well their students perform (Gershenson et al., 2016). In turn, students believed in teachers who expected them to succeed. Even when knowing the importance of high expectations, teachers still noted that they only had high expectations for some. The teacher's expectations predicted students' postsecondary educational attainment (Boser et al., 2014).

de Souza Briggs (1998) found a direct correlation between middle school Black male students' perceptions and attitudes toward their reading and mathematics teachers and their teachers' perceptions of students' level of effort, ability, motivation, and achievement. Students whose teachers expected them to fail made minimum achievement gains. The study participants stated that teachers who had negative viewpoints also held

low expectations for Black male students (Royle and Brown, 2014). On the other hand, Noguera (2008) discovered that teachers' positive racial or cultural attitudes were associated with more significant minority achievement.

Staats (2016) explained the dynamics of implicit bias in an article concerning ways educators could mitigate its effects. The author asserted that all teachers should become aware of the biases they may garner. Staats stated that teachers' biases might result in actions and outcomes that do not align with the teachers' original intentions. The author added that biases, whether attitudes or stereotypes, may affect the actions and decisions taken unconsciously. Staats also reported that many teachers are unaware of their unconscious biases. The researcher added that these biases could influence teachers to make poor decisions, leading to unintended outcomes.

Researchers have indicated in multiple recent studies that teacher actions serve as the most significant single influence on student outcomes (Maulana et al., 2016; Maulana et al., 2013). Ladson-Billings (2014) concluded that classroom instruction is the most crucial factor in helping students experience intellectual growth. Other researchers generally have concluded that precisely determining an individual teacher's level of effectiveness is a challenging and imperfect science. Yet, research studies have indicated that teacher effectiveness is an essential factor in influencing students' success in K-12 schools (Assali & Kushkiev, 2016; Campbell et al., 2004; Griffin, 2013).

Studies on the Effect of CRP

According to Irvine (2010), culturally relevant pedagogy is a term that describes effective teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. The author stated that many people

find culturally relevant pedagogy to be a complex idea to understand and implement. Irvine suggested, however, that when used appropriately, CRT engages and motivates students. Irvine insisted that the purpose of culturally relevant pedagogy is to make the content more meaningful to all students, thereby maximizing learning opportunities for ethnically diverse students.

Noted researcher Ladson-Billings (2014) conducted several studies related to cultural relevance. In her research, Ladson-Billings (1994) found that some teachers employ less effective teaching strategies when teaching Black students. Ladson-Billings (1995) described cultural relevance as a teaching pedagogy or a way to teach. In providing a more specific definition, Ladson-Billings (1994) defined a CRP as "an approach to teaching and learning that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 18). Ladson-Billings stated that CRP is based on three components: students' academic success, students' cultural capacity, and students' literacy capability. The author asserted that teachers could better relate to the students they serve by focusing on how their instruction is culturally relevant in instruction. Ladson-Billings explained that a teacher who emphasizes cultural relevance in instruction relates course content to a cultural context to support student learning. The author explained that when teachers incorporate a CRP approach, they have expectations that all students can excel academically. Ladson-Billings added that teachers incorporating CRP work with students to co-construct the learning, and learners contribute collaboratively to the community.

Centered on previous years of work and difficulty understanding what would constitute pedological change, Ladson-Billings (2014) decided to shift from pedagogy (how to teach Black students) to help teachers identify ways to appreciate Black students' assets in the classroom. The shift led Ladson-Billings to coin the term CRP. CRP supported students and challenged them to use their cultural references to develop skills and draw meaning from their experiences and knowledge.

Researchers have asserted that Black students more successfully access learning when Teachers utilize CRP. Ladson-Billings (2014) and Paris and Alim (2017) stated that culturally sustaining pedagogy asked educators to utilize practices that provide rich notions of culture that focus on assets. Bottiani et al. (2018) proposed that culturally responsive practices might promote equitable learning environments, but the research is currently inadequate to conclude.

Borrero et al. (2018) focused on new teachers' experiences related to social justice in education, positionality, critical consciousness, and harnessing cultural assets. The researchers found that the study's teacher groups could foresee possibilities for compelling and authentic cultural practices and that culture was generally considered racial or ethnic. The researchers also noted that teachers needed time to collaborate, and they needed mentors and models to observe excellent practices. Lastly, the researchers stated that teachers needed opportunities to utilize a curriculum that was not standardized.

Research results indicate that teachers may not understand how to utilize culturally relevant materials, resources, and strategies. Christ and Sharma (2018) structured a study to explore how preservice teachers utilized culturally relevant texts

during literacy instruction to meet their students' challenges and successes. The researchers studied 17 preservice teachers, and they utilized three data sources. Christ and Sharma identified several problems with teachers' attempts to use culturally relevant texts. The researchers claimed that the teacher-selected texts were not culturally relevant for Black students; thus, the students' interest level in the related reading material was low. The researchers also found that many of the teachers were resistant to allow the students to make personal connections to the text, which is one way a text is culturally relevant. In addition, Christ and Sharma indicated that the teachers lacked opportunities to support their students in developing critical consciousness. The researchers concluded a need for PD that focused on ways teachers could learn about their students' culture and identities and that teachers needed support to develop knowledge of text selection and pedagogy. According to McIntyre et al. (2001), teachers should connect their students' culture with their lessons.

Robins et al. (2005) found that the organization's culture defines individuals and organizations' belief systems and behaviors. The authors asserted that the concept of cultural proficiency relates to exact values and practices that enable individuals and schools to work across cultures. The authors further stated that cultural proficiency helps educators utilize the information that contributes to frame the conversation when exploring one's assumptions and beliefs.

Many researchers have discussed the need for teachers to understand how to work best with students whose cultural background is different from theirs. Delpit (2006) suggested that to transform students' lives in urban schools, teachers' attitudes and

actions needed to change. Delpit added that students do not fit a preconceived mold and that Black students usually do not respond to their teacher's cultural norms. Delpit further stated that a new teacher's first response might not be the correct response to a given classroom situation. Delpit recommended that teachers visit students' homes to understand better how each child learns and urged teachers to interact more effectively with Black students by making personal connections. Understanding their students' backgrounds and environments will help them connect to the lesson (McIntyre et al., 2001).

Noguera (1995) also stated the importance of responding to students' needs but emphasized teachers' importance in understanding students' culture in their classroom. Sleeter (2001) reviewed studies of preservice teachers and found that there was a need for additional research on preparing teachers to work in underserved communities with students of color.

Ware (2006) conducted a study to determine if a supportive culture would lead to students of color achievement. He found that when teachers included examples and ideas related to all students' cultural backgrounds in lessons, and the teacher chose a cultural context, student academic success improved. Meyer and Crawford (2011) remarked that CRP and explicit teaching support Black and Latino students in learning science.

Research has indicated that many teachers may need to develop a greater understanding of different cultures to help all students achieve greater academic success. Researchers have found that to ensure cultural learning opportunities for all students, both teachers new to education and tenured teachers need targeted preparation in this

area. Tintiangco-Cubales et al. (2015) investigated the pedagogy of effective K-12 teachers who taught ethnic studies. The teachers in this study taught students how to understand their experiences with race and racism critically. Tintiangco-Cubales et al. recommended that preservice teachers complete a course in ethnic studies to ensure that all students receive culturally relevant instruction. These researchers also found that teachers new to the profession are more likely to learn about cultural differences and how to use the knowledge in their classroom. Dee and Penner (2017) agreed with Tintiangco-Cubales et al., stating that ethnic studies courses can support at-risk students when implemented with high fidelity.

Ballenger and Ninness (2013) provided arguments for educators to be culturally proficient and modeled a framework for developing a culturally proficient classroom. The authors described cultural proficiency as providing a framework that promotes opportunities for students from different cultures to interact and learn from each other. The authors also asserted that culturally responsive teaching allows teachers to use students' prior knowledge to make learning more appropriate and effective.

Knotts and Keesey (2016) studied four preservice teachers in a rural Old Order Mennonite community. The preservice special education teachers completed in-service training in which they learned about the Old Order Mennonite community and its culture. After completing the in-service training, the researchers found that the teachers developed a more vital awareness of cultural diversity. Teachers more effectively met growth in the criteria first identified by Ladson-Billings (1995), including opportunities for students to explore cultural diversity in real-life settings. Knotts and Keesey also

found that the teachers made greater use of cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attributes. The researchers added that the teachers increased their awareness of cultural diversity. Knotts and Keesey recommended that cultural responsiveness is emphasized in schools that are not in urban areas.

Lindsey and Lindsey (2016) explored how educators are shaped by PD focused on cultural proficiency. The authors explained that CRT leads the teacher to focus on the student by considering the student's academic need, culture, and learning style. Therefore, Lindsey and Lindsey maintained that historically underserved and Black students benefit academically when the teacher purposely includes their culture or provides strategies to support their students' culture in the lesson.

Gay (2018) presented arguments for incorporating a culturally responsive teaching approach. The author stated that this method supports diverse students. Gay and Howard (2000) further emphasized that Black students should be taught about their community and culture's positive aspects. The author asserted that culturally responsive teaching embodies the notion that a student's culture should be included in the instruction and that achievement levels will increase when the teacher filters instruction through the lens of the students' cultural experiences. Similarly, Griner and Stewart (2013) proposed that teachers who adopt a culturally responsive pedagogy encourage more equitable schooling experiences for students. Griner and Stewart further suggested that many teachers and school staff need tools and examples of culturally responsive practices to work with Black students. Kunjufu (2006) insisted that when teachers design culturally relevant strategies, they should combine race and poverty approach because students who

live in poverty might have similar experiences as Black students. Kunjufu (2011, 2014) identified strategies that are based on principles intended to promote Black student success and stated, “If Black students are not learning the way teachers teach, then teachers should teach the way Black students learn” (Kunjufu, 2011, p. 6). According to Kunjufu (2008), the strategies he identified have been used with many students based on observations in multiple classrooms, schools, and districts. Kunjufu (2008) identified the strategies based on observations of the best way he found Black students learn, rather than on the ways teachers typically teach. Kunjufu (2006) asserted that the strategies were highly effective in some classrooms with Black students. The author described his learning styles as a valid approach to closing the academic achievement gap (Kunjufu, 2011).

Hammond (2014) researched the connection between brain-based learning and culturally responsive teaching. The researcher stated that the brain allows for an understanding and organizing of culturally relevant strategies. Hammond asserted that many teachers use culturally responsive teaching to accelerate student achievement. The author also asserted that brain-based learning, coupled with culturally responsive teaching strategies, might close the academic achievement gap between Black and White students. Hammond further argued that culturally relevant strategies are highly effective when used by classroom teachers with Black students.

Kea and Trent (2013) conducted a case study to explore 27 special education preservice teachers’ ability to design and deliver culturally responsive lesson plans. The teachers were provided a 10-step culturally relevant lesson plan template. The researchers

found that even when the preservice teachers developed and embedded culturally responsive strategies into the lesson plans, they did not deliver them when they taught the lesson. The researchers suggested that preservice teachers be provided with time to practice writing and delivering culturally relevant lessons.

Other researchers have also asserted that having a cultural lens better-prepared teachers to support and engage students whose culture is different from the dominant culture (Alexander et al., 2001; Croninger & Lee, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee & Burkam, 2002; Noguera, 2003, 2008). Hanushek (2011) contended that Black students are more likely to experience higher academic achievement levels with the use of CRT strategies. Hattie (2003) synthesized more than 500,000 studies looking to find the greatest influence on student achievement. By determining the effect sizes higher than zero, the researcher found evidence that the teacher's most significant effect size was student achievement. This conclusion led Hattie to assert that the most influential person in the classroom regarding shaping students' success is the teacher. The most crucial classroom factor is the teacher's relationship with the learner. Hattie encouraged positive relationships between teacher and student to promote student motivation and participation and claimed that these positive relationships would result in positive academic achievement outcomes.

Researchers in several different studies have examined teacher education programs. The researchers focused on how these programs prepared teachers to work with racially and ethnically diverse students and the extent to which these programs prepared teachers to respond to students in culturally competent ways to meet each

students' varied needs (Boyd et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Boyd et al. analyzed 31 elementary teacher preparation programs. The authors found variations in the levels of effectiveness of the programs' preparation with the teachers they were preparing to work with racially and ethnically diverse students in New York City Schools. The authors found that teachers in their first year of practice appeared to understand how to utilize the training best.

Along these same lines, Bodur (2016) investigated the extent to which culturally responsive pedagogy was integrated into preservice elementary teachers' perspectives on effective teaching and examine whether teaching staffs' views changed over time. The data analyzed were reflection papers written by the 53 preservice teachers over two semesters at the end of each field experience course. The researcher found that the preservice teachers minimally integrated issues of cultural and linguistic diversity into their perspectives. Bodur indicated that beginning teachers might need to have experiences and training during the preservice program to support culturally diverse students.

Gregory et al. (2010) reviewed factors contributing to the achievement gap. They synthesized research on poverty, low achievement, differential behavior, selection, and processing. They found that there might be conscious and unconscious beliefs that might result in Black students' different treatment. They noted that more research is needed to explain the contributions of schools and teachers. Overall, the authors agreed that Black male student achievement is shaped in part by experiences within the school, connections

to the school, and teachers' expectations, all of which are affected by teachers' cultural beliefs.

Instructional Strategies

Since not all students benefit equally from a single teaching or learning strategy, and not all students learn the same way, teachers must differentiate to meet all students' individual learning styles (Marshall, 2016). Previous research indicates that teachers' decision to utilize specific strategies may impact academic outcomes for students. Lane et al. (2015) explored the relationship between instructional choice and students' engagement level in writing in an elementary first-grade classroom in the Midwest. The researchers found that there was a decrease in disruptive behavior when the teacher used different instructional strategies.

Additionally, Kiewra (2002) teaches college-level courses, and stated that many college students are ineffective learners because they did not learn how to learn. The researcher maintained that incorporating learning strategies into lessons will help students be more effective (Kiewra, 2002). Kunjufu (2008) asserted that teachers could employ strategies and techniques that would lead to better outcomes for students, particularly for Black and Latino students. After conducting some research, Kunjufu found more than 100 educational strategies that were considered effective with underserved Black and Latino students.

Kunjufu (2008) observed and interviewed thousands of students, teachers, administrators, and parents to determine if the strategies presented were effective with Black students. Kunjufu believed that there are five types of educators: custodians,

referral agents, instructors, teachers, and coaches. Kunjufu found that the strategies identified as effective with teachers and coaches were due to the fact that they support the way students learn. Kunjufu's idea of a good teacher was one who motivates and offers an environment that represents a culture of respect. The author stated that students raised in low-income homes where the father was not present needed motivation (Kunjufu, 2008). Kunjufu believed that a teacher could help Black students improve their academic performance in several ways. As Kiewra (2002) and Kunjufu found, teachers can teach students how to learn. The strategies teachers use might promote academic success for Black students.

Howard (2001) found that teaching strategies could reverse adverse outcomes for Black students. Howard examined the pedagogical practices of four teachers. The teachers studied were selected because they demonstrated success with Black students. Howard found three major pedagogical themes: (a) holistic instructional strategies, meaning teachers believed they needed to teach the whole child academic, moral, and social; (b) culturally consistent communicative competencies, where the teachers studied understood the importance of using the cultural language and communication their students used during instruction; and (c) skill-building strategies were used to promote academic success, an approach where teachers allowed students to ask questions.

Marzano et al. (2001), after extensive research related to at least nine instructional strategies, found some that might positively affect student achievement: however, not all the time. Therefore, teachers need to know their students and utilize the most appropriate strategies based on students' needs, the subject matter, and the situation (p. 9). Providing

students with an understanding of how they learn might provide them with skills to help them in the K-12 system and the postsecondary system. Teaching and utilizing strategies that support Black student success might decrease or eliminate disproportionality.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences using culturally relevant strategies. Based on the analysis of the study's findings, the project idea includes PD or training for teachers on how to incorporate culturally relevant strategies in lessons and instructional practices effectively.

The data gathered from this research study may have implications for the local school district and others who aim to address disproportionality in Black students' academic achievement. The findings of this study revealed that teachers need additional support in using culturally relevant strategies. The study results disclosed information about what teachers believe or think about the lesson and strategies they choose to increase Black students' academic outcomes. The research questions allowed multiple opportunities for teachers to share their experiences with resources designed for Black students and how they chose to set up their classrooms to provide cultural opportunities for their Black students.

The results indicated that PD might support teachers' reflections on why, how, and when to use culturally relevant strategies. A culturally relevant and responsive module was developed to provide teachers with a more robust understanding of their cultural competence, biases, and beliefs about other cultures. The modules may help the teachers reflect more on students' backgrounds and how and when to use culturally

relevant approaches. This PD might provide meaningful, relevant support for any district whose leaders seek to close the achievement gap between Black and White students.

In conclusion, the framework, literature, and research indicate that using the cultural experiences students bring to school has an effect on their academic achievement. The research questions aligned with the need to understand if and how CRR support Black students in achieving the skills of the lesson. Therefore, this study explored teachers' perceptions and experiences related to the use of culturally relevant strategies.

This literature review explored what research had been done on culturally responsive or relevant teaching related to cultural understanding. I then determined themes that would be synthesized from this research. The first section of the literature review focused on the racial achievement gap, including its history and current trends. The next focused on a review of research to identify how teacher expectations might relate to outcomes for students. Lastly, the literature review included studies focused on culturally relevant strategies and their impact on Black students' academic achievement. Culturally relevant and culturally responsive are both used in the literature.

Summary

The themes outlined in the literature review for this study focused on the racial achievement gap between Black and White students, the relationship between teacher expectations and student performance, and the effect of culturally relevant strategies on Black students' academic achievement and classroom behavior. These themes related directly to the significance of considering cultural context in teaching, as described in the Conceptual Framework section. These studies' conclusions indicated that Black students

might benefit from teachers' effective use of CRT or culturally relevant strategies. The reviewed studies' results highlight the importance of the teacher's role in ensuring all students are provided with the most effective learning experience. Furthermore, the reviewed study findings indicated that some teachers might not have the pedagogical background necessary to ensure that all students achieve academically. Findings of the reviewed studies suggested that when teachers considered students' cultural background and utilized strategies targeted toward Black students' success, Black students achieved higher levels.

In Section 1, evidence was shared, indicating a gap in performance between Black and White students. According to the district strategic plan, teachers need to plan and include in lessons cultural awareness and understanding strategies to engage Black students. This study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences related to the use of culturally responsive or relevant teaching strategies. In this section, Hale's learning styles theory related to CRP was described as an approach to increasing Black students' academic achievement. The three research questions were developed to elicit teachers' responses to understanding culturally responsive or relevant strategies.

The literature review, research related to CRP and teaching, the relationship between teachers' cultural relevance and student success, and background related to the Black and White student academic gap was discussed. Multiple study findings indicated that when the teacher has high expectations of student success and uses culturally relevant strategies, Black students might experience tremendous academic success. Results from the findings of this study show the need for a PD module. The workshops

provided district stakeholders and teachers with information and insight into culturally relevant strategies to decrease Black and White students' achievement gap. In Section 2, I described the methodology and how the data were collected.

Section 2: The Methodology

The local school district has had an achievement gap between the Black and White student populations. In the district strategic plan, the school board requested that the district focus on culturally relevant practices, so this study to explore teachers' perceptions of the value of using CRR strategies was purposeful. The research design, participant selection process, data collection, and data analysis will be presented in this section.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

Taking a descriptive case study approach, planned in the district in which the participants taught, allowed me to collect data from those who had the most relevant experience to the topic under study. According to Nath (2005), case studies have become more prevalent in education because they can serve as teaching tools. As a research method, descriptive research explores events experienced by individuals or groups to provide a comprehensive summarization in simple terms (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). The qualitative descriptive approach is straightforward and describes a phenomenon. It is an approach that is very useful when researchers want to know more regarding events or how or when things happened or took place. Qualitative researchers seek to understand experiences and to gain knowledge from the participants. Merriam and Grenier (2019) stated that filtering beliefs and perceptions through the participants' personal experiences allow the researcher to perceive their world.

Researchers utilize the descriptive method because it allows them to describe existing phenomena as accurately as possible (Atmowardoyo, 2018). According to

Nassaji (2015), educators commonly use qualitative and descriptive research methods. I selected this approach for this project to learn firsthand from teacher perspectives. The approach was appropriate because it allowed me to gain a more robust understanding of teachers' experiences in developing culturally relevant strategies. Utilizing the descriptive approach helped me understand teachers' thoughts and perspectives to gain a holistic picture of what was going on in their classroom environment. This type of research also yielded detailed descriptions of phenomena related to the research questions and facilitated the development of relevant themes and interpretations during the data analysis process (see Hays & Singh, 2011). The descriptive approach allowed me to capture teachers' perspectives and experiences related to CRT strategies and understand how teachers decide the strategies they choose to use in their classrooms.

I developed the following three research questions to align with the purpose of this study:

RQ1: What are teachers' perspectives of the value of incorporating culturally relevant strategies for students in their classroom?

RQ2: What experiences do teachers have with the use of culturally relevant strategies and approaches?

RQ3: How do teachers incorporate CRT strategies into their instructional practices?

I used the Data Alignment Tool to connect this study's framework with the research questions. The Data Alignment Tool specifies the questions and how they align with the problem (see Appendix B). This study's conceptual framework was based on

Hale's (1982) work that details how culture and learning are connected due to culture shaping an individual's cognition. Zhang and Sternberg (2005) defined cognitive style as both perceptual and intellectual. Hale explained that cognition is social and biological and stated that culture influences Black children's intellectual development. Hale added that teachers need to incorporate their cultural background when shaping and delivering instruction. I used teacher interviews as my primary data source and analyzed the data by coding the participant responses. Participant teachers also completed a self-audit (see Appendix D), which was used as a second data collection source. A project based on the findings was planned and is described later in the study.

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated that a case study, the design used in the current study, is an in-depth explanation and investigation of a system confined to the case and the product of the investigation. A case study design allows the researcher to collect data based on the participant's firsthand experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). A case study allowed me to develop an in-depth view of a social phenomenon based on real-life teachers' perspectives. I used one-on-one interviews with teachers to collect data on their perceptions of and experiences with different strategies, and the reasons for the strategies they choose to use in their classroom, particularly with Black students. Each participant also completed a self-audit of their classroom, which helped me determine the participant's strategies and resources used during instruction.

I chose a case study design because it better suited this study compared to other qualitative methods. A case study allows the researcher to hear the voice of the person being interviewed, and the participant has the freedom to talk, including how much to say

and how to express it. Semistructured interviewing is a flexible technique for small-scale research (Drever, 1995).

I did not select other qualitative designs because they were not as appropriate for this study. According to Creswell (2015), grounded theory is used when an existing theory does not address the participants or the problem. A grounded theory approach was not appropriate because this study directly addressed how the participants use culturally relevant strategies in the classroom. An ethnographic approach was not appropriate because it is designed to understand a culture-sharing group (see Creswell, 2012). This study's focus was on culture, but mainly on how teachers utilize culturally relevant strategies in the classroom. Lastly, a phenomenological approach, which involves emotional and often intense human experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019), was carefully considered but not selected. This study focused more on participants' perceptions of and their experiences related to a specific issue than the intense and emotional views that are more relevant to an ethnographical study.

Participants

In this subsection, I describe the criteria used for selecting participants and identify why the sample size used was chosen. The participants for this study were six teachers in the local school district. The teachers invited to participate worked in one of three identified school sites at the time of the study. According to Creswell (2011), individuals and sites are purposefully selected to learn or understand a phenomenon. Using purposeful sampling allowed me to obtain specific knowledge. The criteria for participation were formed to ensure that the potential participants had extensive

experience working with Black students. The district and school site names were replaced with pseudonyms. To ensure confidentiality, the participants were provided with information about the nature of the study, a detailed description of the project, and potential risks as well as informed that their participation was voluntary (see Lodico et al., 2010).

Criteria for Selecting Participants

The participants for this descriptive case study were six teachers from multiple schools in the local school district. There are approximately 38 school sites in the district, including 23 elementary schools, six middle schools, four comprehensive high schools, and five other school sites. Participants for this study were invited from three sites: an elementary school (i.e., Site A), a middle school (i.e., Site B), and a high school (i.e., Site C). There are approximately 65 core content teachers at these sites.

The selection of schools was based on the site demographics. All teachers invited to participate worked in a school where the percentage of Black students was significantly higher than other sites within each grade span (i.e., K–5, 6–8, and 9–12) in the district (California School Dashboard Data, 2020). I chose the potential participant sites because they have the highest percentage of Black students related to participant selection criteria. To be invited to participate, teachers had to have at least 3 years of teaching experience in the district and had taught multiple classes with at least two Black students. Requiring teachers to have taught in classes with at least two Black students was appropriate because they needed to have experiences with multiple Black students in their class. By ensuring that each teacher had experience teaching multiple Black

students, I collected data more relevant to the research questions concerning teachers' experiences using CRT strategies with diverse groups of students, specifically Black students.

Sampling and Sample Size

The justification for the number of participants recommended for this study was supported by several educational researchers' work. Guetterman (2015) researched best practices in qualitative research in education and health sciences and found that researchers often rely on previous researchers' work to guide them when determining sample size guidelines. While Creswell (2012) acknowledged, sample sizes vary and are determined before beginning the study, the author clarified that "it is typical in qualitative research to study a few individuals or a few cases" (p. 209). Mason (2010) discussed the concept of saturation and expressed skepticism concerning identifying an absolute number to achieve saturation. Mason reported that published research participants range from as low as five to as high as 350 before adding that the focus of the study should help determine the correct sample size. Kim et al. (2017) asserted that sample sizes range, and smaller sizes were commonly used when interviews or focus groups were employed. Similarly, Dworkin (2012) noted that different studies recommend participant sizes ranging from five to 50. Dworkin also cited evidence of the importance of achieving a saturation size determined by who provided relevant data. Following these recommendations, I included six participants in this study, which allowed for two participants from each of the three schools. Working with six participants helped incorporate a wider variety of perspectives from teachers of multiple grade levels.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

To gain access to the participants, I requested permission from the local district superintendent representative to conduct a study in the district. I provided the district superintendent representative with a written description of specific details about the study and what would be required of the participants and me as the researcher. After receiving approval from the local district, I requested approval to conduct the study from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB; IRB Approval Number 03-26-20-0304267 expires March 25, 2020). Once being granted these approvals; I again contacted the district to request access to the district teachers.

After receiving approval from the district, I sent an email via my Walden University email account to all teachers from the three identified school sites in the district. All teachers' email addresses were obtained through the local school district's publicly accessible school informational websites. In the email, I detailed the purpose of the study and the fact that participation was voluntary. The email also included the informed consent form. The participants had 48 hours to review the documents. When I received their signed consent forms, I emailed each potential participant a link to the self-audit. In that email, I requested that the participants choose a convenient time to schedule an interview.

Establishing a Researcher-Participant Working Relationships

According to Pitts and Miller-Day (2007), trust is the basis of establishing a desirable condition that ensures validity in a study; however, it is not easy to establish and maintain a positive rapport with participants. My relationship with the participants

was built on trust. To build trust, in my initial email to them, I explained the reason for the study and asked for their participation. I also verbally shared the reason for conducting this study before the interview, described how the data would be shared, and assured them that their names and/or personal identifying information would never be shared with anyone inside or outside the district.

Merriam and Grenier (2019) emphasized that the interviewer must allow the participant time to share and clarify their experiences, show interest when listening to the participant share their experiences, , and develop a positive relationship with the participant. I followed these recommendations by allowing each participant time to compile their answer and clarify their thoughts, showing interest through nodding as they talked, and sharing back their answers with each participant to let them know I heard their statements. As a researcher, I monitored my demeanor throughout the interview (see Yin, 2011). The interviewer-participant relationship was developed before and throughout the interview. The participants were supported and affirmed throughout the interview process. I also reminded them that many of the responses shared would be included in the final study. The participants' comments and recommendations were de-identified; therefore, they could be incorporated in the district's final report and the training modules without compromising the respondents' promised anonymity.

Measures to Protect Participants' Rights

Protecting the rights of each participant was essential. According to Creswell (2012), the researcher must maintain ethical practices throughout the process. The recommended procedures were intended to help ensure that participants' rights were

respected by ensuring minimal disruption to the participants' workplace and notifying the participants of the steps taken to protect the data. I explained to each participant before and after each interview the procedures to ensure their protection. The data were secured in my home in a locked file cabinet, and all electronic data were password protected. I clarified to participants that they had the right to know who had access to their responses and that their responses might help the district determine PD needs.

To ensure that each potential participant understood that the study was voluntary, I reminded them of their rights, confidentiality, the purpose of the informed consent form, and the participant's protection from harm each time I interacted with them. To ensure confidentiality, participants were informed of the nature of the study, provided a detailed description of the project and potential risks, and were assured that their participation was voluntary (see Lodico et al., 2010). Also, to ensure the protection of the participants' data, I will keep any electronic data, such as emails, transcribed interviews, and typed notes, stored in a password-protected file on my home computer for 5 years, as stated in the Walden University protocol.

Data Collection

Data were collected to answer the research questions. Two data sources were used to collect information from the participants, teachers. An interview is typically used to collect and analyze data in the social sciences (see King et al., 2018). Since my study aimed to better understand teachers' perspectives of CRR strategies, the first data source for this study was an interview protocol (see Appendix C). The goal was to understand broad patterns associated with how teachers illicit the strategies they choose during

instruction. The second data source was a culturally compatible self-audit (see Appendix D). A survey or questionnaire is the most common research method in a descriptive study (Koh & Owen, 2000). Therefore, to better understand a teachers' choice of strategies, the self-audit was also used as a data collection tool. It was used to examine teachers' experiences using CRR practices (Williams, 2007) in their classroom. While collecting data, all information that identified the school district, school site, or teacher was coded.

Semi Structured Interviews

The interview was used because it allowed for collecting rich data related to individuals' perceptions, experiences, and actions. Rimando et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of effective data collection in strengthening a research study's quality. Semi structured interviews were a suitable data source for this study because they helped answer the research questions by revealing information about the participants' use and views related to CRT strategies (see Zainal, 2007). Because case study researchers examined the participants' experiences, their voice served as the best opportunity to lessen the influence of the researcher's perspective from the process. The senses are powerful, and a person's lived experiences are multimodal (see Del Busso, 2011). They can trigger emotions that may have been missed if the interview is not in person (Drabble et al., 2016). DeMarrais (2004) quoted Husserl stating that the interview takes away what is known as "any critical position taking which is interested in their truth or falsity, even any position on their guiding idea of objective knowledge of the world" (p. 135).

According to Merriam and Grenier (2019), an interview allows the participant and researcher to engage in a conversation focused on the research questions. The semi

structured interview protocol was used because it allowed for flexibility when asking the preestablished questions, facilitated asking additional questions or left some questions out of the interview, and enabled changing questions as the interview progressed (Hays & Singh, 2012). Another advantage of the semi structured protocol, as noted by Hays and Singh, is that it allows the participant's voice to be heard, resulting in a better picture of the investigated phenomenon. The interview is a source that allowed me to learn more about why the participant chooses particular strategies. An interview protocol (see Appendix C) was used to provide structure for the interview (Creswell, 2012).

The interview questions focused on how the teacher used and perceived the value of culturally relevant strategies or pedagogy during instruction. This method of data collection relates closely to the research questions concerning teachers' perceptions and experiences. The semi structured interview process kept the conversation with interviewees relevant to the research questions while discussing related relevant topics not explicitly included in the prepared research questions. According to Merriam and Grenier (2019), a semi structured interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored. This format will allow me to garner the most accurate responses from the study participants.

Each participant was asked questions aligned to the research questions, not including possible follow-up questions, which emerged during the interview (see Appendix C). The goal in each interview was to reach saturation of relevant data identified by the participants. Data saturation occurs when all relevant information on a topic has been obtained, and no additional data can add to the quality and depth of the

obtained information (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I developed the interview questions based on the research problem.

Self-Audit

Each teacher completed a self-audit of their classroom environment, lessons, and instruction and submitted it before the interview. During the interview, I shared each participant's responses to the self-audit and asked if they had anything else to add or delete to their responses. The self-audit was a vehicle for teachers to see how their classroom provided an environment that allowed for Black children's intellectual development. The self-audit survey was collected using a Likert scale survey. The need to gather human behavior and performance simultaneously is a challenge; therefore, a Likert scale was used to capture the participants' thoughts and feelings about their classroom environment. A Likert scale, according to Joshi et al. (2015), in their exploration, asserted that Likert scales as a way to detail respondents' attitudes and opinions. Qualitative researchers try to gather human thoughts, outlooks, and attitudes offered by the Likert scale (Joshi et al., 2015). The self-audit was offered as an instrument for participants to show their level of agreement.

Shade et al. (1997) developed the "Self-Audit of Your Culturally Compatible Classroom" to help teachers identify their strengths in developing a culturally compatible classroom. The self-audit allowed the participant to express how they viewed what happens in their classroom. The purpose of the self-audit as a data source was to provide the participant with an additional opportunity to share how they viewed the role of incorporating culture and cultural experiences in their classroom. As with the interview,

the self-audit provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on what they believe occurs in their classroom.

Each teacher completed an audit of their classroom lessons and instruction and submitted it before the interview. During the interview, I shared each participant's responses to the self-audit and asked if they would like to add or delete any of their responses. The self-audit was a vehicle for teachers to see how their classroom provides an environment that allowed for Black children's intellectual development.

According to Jawaid (2007), self-audits help in future planning and allow one to look back at their progress. Karapetrovic and Willborn (2002) stated that self-audit could evaluate the system against the requirements. The self-audit is a form of a questionnaire, and according to Tellis (1997), a questionnaire is a data collection instrument used in case studies. In this research, descriptive analysis was used rather than statistical analysis to understand the teachers' classroom environment.

The Likert scale survey allowed teachers to rank from high to low or best to worst using five levels. According to Allen and Seaman (2007), Likert surveys are consistently used to measure quality. The self-audit, which had a Likert scale, had five levels in which the participant could indicate the degree that something was happening in their classroom. According to Shade et al. (1997), the self-audit could help teachers reflect on their strengths and possible areas needing improvement to implement a culturally compatible classroom. This audit was used to measure or gauge how teachers viewed their classrooms. The participants indicated what they thought, felt, or believed about their classroom and how culturally compatible it was for students, particularly Black

students. During the interview, the participants validated and spoke to the rationale for how they viewed what is happening in their classroom.

The self-audit allowed the teacher to examine their classroom through a cultural lens (Shade et al., 1997). The Likert scale was used because it allowed the teacher to choose the best option that supported their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Each teacher expressed their opinion about their environmental style, interactional style, instructional strategies for cognitive style, instructional design for cognitive style responsiveness, and their assessment style. The self-audit enabled the participant to choose the option that best supported each of the different styles.

Each participant had the opportunity to think about their classroom environment and share how their classroom environment met Black students' needs. The participant might consider factors, including what materials they have on their walls, textbooks that included Black characters or people in the stories, and discussions about ideas that allowed Black students to relate to the text.

The interactional style category of the self-audit allowed the participant to express the degree to which they believed they provided a culturally responsive student-centered curriculum that was rich and meaningful. This category allowed each participant to reflect on whether the lesson(s) they taught focused on the student and a cultural response option. This style displayed how lessons were relevant to the students' lives; this style considered the students' experiences, realities, and interests.

The instructional strategies for cognitive style indicated how participants modified instruction to facilitate students' academic achievement from diverse cultural

groups. This process also allowed the teacher to determine if they utilized the students' past experiences to build on or help their students understand the new concept(s).

Lastly, the assessment style allowed the participant to reflect on evidence of learning. The teacher could use this facet to determine if learning occurred, and if it did, what evidence was provided. Each participant was allowed to modify or change their self-audit ranking during the interview. As a data collection source, the self-audit allowed each participant to reflect on how each of the five facets of a culturally competent classroom played a role in their classrooms.

The self-audit was completed using an electronic survey (see Appendix D). The participant received the link to the survey once they consented to participate in the study. After the participant completed the self-audit, the data was made available. During the interview, the participant addressed questions, add, or explain their ratings during their interview. The 1-5 scale showed how much or how little the participant believed his or her classroom was culturally compatible; if the participant provided a classroom environment that was conducive to culturally diverse learners; if the planned lessons represented the students in the classroom; if instructional strategies were provided that allowed students to connect to the lesson; and if the assessment used validated academic growth. The self-audit results and data were shared during the interview protocol. The self-audit elements related directly to the problem, purpose, and conceptual framework, and they yielded data, which directly related to the research questions.

The two data collection instruments, the interview, and self-audit were used to ensure that the research questions were adequately answered. Each participant was asked

interview questions that aligned with the three research questions. The interview and the self-audit helped the participants share their experiences related to using culturally relevant strategies and expressed their views concerning the need for these types of strategies. During the interview, the self-audit was used to help the participants reflect and provide detail or explain what they see in their classroom related to culturally responsive practices. In Research Question 2, the participants were asked to share their experiences using culturally relevant strategies, including the training and support they have received. Data related to Research Questions 1and 2 were generated primarily through the interview. Lastly, in Research Question 3, participants were invited to explain how they incorporated culturally relevant strategies into their lessons; this question was answered through the interview questions and the self-audit.

The interviews were completed via a phone conference or a video conference, and each participant was at their home and either used their phone or their computer to participate. Each interview was performed during non-school hours. The participants chose the date and time that was convenient for them. The participants' answers were recorded with an audio recording device. During the interview, I took notes and shared them verbally after the interview with the interviewee to ensure that I accurately captured what the participant wanted to state. Before the interview concluded, each participant could add or change any information from the interview or self-audit. After each interview, I reviewed the recording and my notes to make sure I captured everything shared. I then sent the recording to a transcription service to be transcribed. I used the Transcription Puppy transcription service to transcribe the recordings. I also used the

confidentiality agreement developed by this company (see Appendix F). The interview data were transcribed verbatim. Once the interview data were transcribed, I reread the transcript and listened again to the recording several times to ensure that all data was collected. I then cleaned the data, following Chu and Ilyas's (2016) recommendations concerning error detection and error repairing. To ensure that all data were collected correctly, I made sure all words were in the correct context and stated accurately, and if not, I repaired the transcript. I reread the cleaned transcript and then forwarded it by email to each participant. The participant had 24 hours to review and revise the transcript, if necessary. Each participant reviewed his or her interview transcripts and self-audit transcript before the data were analyzed. All transcripts were returned to me via email, and none of the participants indicated any changes were needed to the data.

The self-audit data were collected via an online survey, and each participant received a link to the survey once they agreed to participate in the study. The participant completed the audit at their convenience before the participant interview. The participant was able to clarify or revise any of her answer choices from the self-audit during the interview. I used Microsoft Excel and made a clear column heading to help me track the data. The self-audit data was then recorded on the Excel document.

To ensure that there was a record for all data collected during the interview, I used an interview protocol. The protocol helped me keep my study organized and focused on the research questions. I took notes on a Word document; this allowed me to make comments and ask follow-up questions to ensure that each response was understood and recorded correctly. To keep the information organized, I gave each participant a

pseudonym and listed their responses on a Word document and later on an Excel document. All notes, transcriptions, and self-audit rankings were stored in a file labeled for each participant.

I gained access to the participants after a request from the district and site administrator was approved. Each teacher at the selected sites received an email from me explaining the interview and audit expectations (see Appendix C). I sent a follow-up email to those who agreed to the terms, and I requested dates and times for the interview. My goal was to work with two participants per school for a total of six participants for the study. Once the teacher stated they agreed to participate, they were interviewed according to the date and time they stated. The teacher's email addresses are public information; I gained access to them using the school sites' website.

Sufficiency of Data Collection

To ensure a sufficiency of data collection and answer the research questions, each participant shared their perspective and expertise. An interview protocol and a survey were used to collect the data. The two data collection tools were considered sufficient once the data shared was repeated by multiple participants. Throughout and after the interview, probing questions were asked to ensure that no new data emerged (see Yin, 2011). The survey and interview data were analyzed multiple times until all data were recorded, no new data emerged, and there was no need for new codes (see Fusch & Ness, 2015). I then believed the study could be replicated and that data saturation had been reached (see Fusch & Ness, 2015).

System for Tracking Data

My system for tracking data was two-fold. I used a journal to take notes about key points and document the participant's behavior before, during, and immediately after the interview, and I audio recorded the interviews. I first assigned each participant a pseudonym to ensure their protection (see Creswell, 2012). Before each interview, I emailed each participant their results of the self-audit. I wrote copious notes during the interviews, and each interview was audio recorded to ensure that I was able to capture each participant's responses accurately. I maintained engagement and with each participant throughout their call or video conference. Before ending the call or video, I reviewed my notes with the participant, and they were able to provide more context or change their responses. After the interview, I reviewed the audio recording and my notes. Then, I emailed the audio-recording to the transcription service. My journal, recording, and transcripts are locked in a file cabinet in my home or on a password-protected file.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative work, the researcher's role is crucial because it is considered the study instrument (see Patton, 2002 & 2015). When conducting on-site research, the researcher should carefully consider and only cause minimal interruption while in the participants' natural environment (see Creswell, 2013). All interviews were via phone or video conference. To avoid bias, I listened carefully and did not interrupt the participant. I reported based on the participant's views and statements and used language that was sensible and respectful (see Creswell, 2013).

For this study, I was the primary data collection instrument. According to Bernthal (2015) and Wittmayer and Schäpke (2014), adequate timing is needed to design and plan to have a successful data collection, including self-reflexivity and self-analytical skills. I was previously employed from 2009-2015 in the local school district, where the research was completed as an elementary school principal. However, I did not supervise or interact with any of the potential participants daily. I was never a principal or teacher at any of the selected school sites. I did not lead any PD sessions, nor did I conduct teacher evaluations at any of the three schools studied. My previous role in the local district did not cause any bias throughout the data collection process. I am currently a principal in a different school district located in central California.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process began after all data were collected. Teachers from three identified school sites were sent an email asking them to participate in the study. Six teachers consented to participate. Once I received their email stating they consented, I replied to their email and requested that they send me two to three dates and times for an interview. Each participant also received a link to the self-audit questionnaire. The final participants were three elementary teachers, Grades K-5, one middle school teacher, and two high school teachers. There was at least one participant from each grade span. These six teachers also met the criteria of being a teacher for more than 3 years and having at least two Black students in a class or period.

Semi Structured Interviews

The first data tool was the semi structured interview protocol. The data collection process for the interview protocol was 100% anonymous. Each participant and their school site were assigned a pseudonym. The participants were interviewed either via video or phone conference based on their preference. Notes were taken during each interview, and immediately after the interview, the notes and the responses from the survey were reviewed. During this time, the participant could add, change, or modify their responses to the interview questions and the self-audit. This process helped me get to know and understand the data.

An email file of each audio-recorded transcript was sent to a transcription service. The transcription services provided a confidentiality agreement before receiving the recorded data. Immediately after each interview, I reviewed my notes. I used Yin's (2011) five phases of qualitative analysis to analyze the data. The first phase was to compile the data. After reading and examining the data multiple times, a Word document was opened, and I inserted two columns to sort the data. I began to compile the data for each interview question and response in the document; I reviewed my notes, and I assigned each participant a pseudonym (see Appendix G). For example, Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, Teacher D, Teacher E, and Teacher F. I reread my notes and listened to the recorded transcripts many times. Once each transcript was received, I listened to the voice recording and reread the transcribed text a few more times before the analysis process began.

According to Chu and Ilyas (2016), cleaning the data is a process that has two phases: one to detect errors and two to repair them. To ensure that all data, including my notes and the transcripts, were clean, I reread the transcript and reviewed the recordings to ensure accuracy. I had to determine if I would code manually or use an electronic system to code my data. According to Basit (2003), computer programs have been around for a while, but the researcher still has to do quite a bit of manual work when coding. After cleaning the data, my first thought was to upload my transcripts to the NVivo program. I thought it would be the best way to code the data and determine themes from my interviews. However, after reviewing my Word document, I felt it would be more efferent for me to analyze the data myself. I began to review the data by question and response and sort for repeated words or phrases. Once I cleaned the transcripts, I began to see reoccurring themes or ideas; I decided it would be better to identify broad themes based on the research questions and the literature.

During Yin's Phase 2, I carefully examined and studied each participant's responses, then sorted, rearranged, and merged the responses based on the research questions. Yin's third phase was to code the data. According to Creswell (2015), when analyzing qualitative text, coding takes the data apart and then meaningfully puts it back together. A code is often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (see Saldaña & Omasta, 2016, p. 4).

The data for this study were coded manually using an inductive approach. Inductive research is an unbiased way to code the data (see Yi, 2018). I color-coded

words and phrases that were repeated. All of the codes arose directly from the responses provided by each participant. All data were read and reread several times, looking for words or phrases related to the research questions. Codes were selected based on words or phrases repeated in the participants' responses or identified in previous research. A flat coding frame was assigned to obtain a level of importance for each code.

Coding procedures allow qualitative data to be analyzed in a meaningful way (Creswell, 2015). Merriam and Grenier (2019) stated that the coding process should include keywords from the conceptual framework. I copied the data into an Excel document because I thought it would better allow me to sort the data into themes. The coding process brought a deeper understanding of the participants' expressed experiences (Hays & Singh, 2012). After reviewing and analyzing the keywords and phrases from the survey and interview responses, the raw data was segmented, and then broad themes were determined. The themes were then placed in an Excel document in Row 1, Column D through K (see Appendix I). The interview questions and the coded responses were placed in Column C. The codes were identified based on the phenomena determined by the research, research and interview questions, repeated words, words, or phrases that surprised me, or things that seemed relevant.

Codes were then placed under the broad themes or categories (see Appendix I). Specific categories that emerged were based on the codes, focusing on CRP, culturally responsive strategies, learning styles, and cultural competence. The left column displayed each of the interview questions and the participant's responses to the questions. The second column was used to document a word and or phrases, i.e., code.

I color coded the essential words, phrases, or sentences during Phase 3, the data was coded according to the pre-identified theme. Some examples of the codes were: survey, questionnaire, getting to know "you" activities, Greet families, build relationships, welcoming activities, recognition and validation of Black student's culture, beliefs, PD, direct teaching, and think-pair-share (see Appendix I).

According to Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003), when analyzing qualitative data, one wants to bring meaning to the words, and listing themes in advance provides direction and a starting point. I then started to notice and highlighted words or phrases that would be the eight pre-identified themes. Each theme was given a number. I then created an Excel document to help with the theme process. The themes were listed horizontally across the top of the document, and each participant's pseudonym and their coded words or phrases were listed vertically in the left-hand column. The word and or phrase was coded under the appropriate theme. The preidentified broad themes or categories were listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Broad Themes or Categories

Theme	Description
1	CRR perspectives
2	Instructional strategies
3	Instructional delivery
4	PD/training
5	Experiences in the classroom
6	Experiences in the classroom-before teaching
7	Content or curriculum
8	Other - anything not applied to the other themes

The color-coded words and or phrases were aligned with a theme number. Each response was grouped into a code under the same themes (see Appendix I). I ensured that all codes were grouped, positive, and negative under the same themes. These themes were selected based on their alignment with the problem statement and the research questions. These themes provided a starting point in which to review the data. Each theme was selected based on the literature reviewed and the research questions.

Each interview question and each participant's response were copied in the Excel document. Each participant's words or phrases were listed next to their pseudonym (see Appendix G). Once all responses were coded, the total number of codes for the row was summed. For example, Participant C had three codes aligned with the first theme, two codes aligned with the second theme, and no other codes were identified. All codes were aligned with a theme. Once completed, all codes were summed for each row or theme.

The coding process brought a deeper understanding of the participants' expressed experiences (see Hays & Singh, 2012). Based on the grouped topics, groups were formed into categories using the textual descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). The descriptions were based on the facts the participants stated they experienced; also, the participant's formative experiences were categorized after analyzing their interpretations, perceptions, and feelings (see Moustakas, 1994) (see Appendix G).

Yin's Phase 4 was to reassemble all of the data to create a narrative of all relevant data. During the final phase, I identified my findings and drew relevant conclusions related to the research questions. As Moustakas (1994) asserted, theming the statements' clusters is the next step in the data analysis process. The themes were clustered based on

one word or phrase frequently used by participants, and the categories grouped using the textual descriptions. Based on the grouped topics, groups were formed into categories using the textual descriptions (see Moustakas, 1994). The descriptions were based on the facts the participants stated they experienced; also, the participant's formative experiences were categorized after analyzing their interpretations, perceptions, and feelings (see Moustakas).

According to Yin (2009), qualitative data analysis is the process of investigating, sorting, arranging, assessing, or merging evidence to draw conclusions based on findings. These steps were followed related to the collected data. The data sources were used to help understand teachers' perspectives, experiences, and how they incorporated culturally relevant classroom strategies.

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated qualitative researchers do not find knowledge; they construct it, and that one must uncover the interpretation of how people understand the world. The data collected for this study related to how the participants incorporate culturally relevant strategies to support the students in their classroom and their experiences with culturally relevant strategies.

When analyzing the data, I examined the data based on the thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences each participant expressed, without imposing my beliefs. The data analysis for this study was based on two sources: teacher interviews and culturally compatible self-audit. Each source was analyzed promptly, with themes synthesized from the data to provide detailed descriptions of the study's research questions. The phone or video conference interviews were analyzed within 24 hours of each conversation to

ensure that the statements made were as accurate as possible (see Drever, 1995). According to Stuckey (2014), after the spoken text (what is stated by the participant) is transferred into written form for analysis, it is then de-identified. The transcribed data then no longer is associated with the participant. By copying the data verbatim, the written text was comprised entirely of the participants' exact comments, and each participant was de-identified and provided a pseudonym.

Self-Audits

The second data collection tool was a Likert scale self-audit. A Likert scale survey is a technique used for measuring attitudes (see Batterton & Hale, 2017). Once the teacher agreed to participate, they were emailed a link to complete the self-audit. Each participant read each style and rated themselves from 1-5 in each of the subcategories of the styles: the environmental style, the interactional style, the instructional strategies for cognitive style, the instructional design for cognitive style responsiveness, and the assessment style. The self-audit data were used to measure teachers' attitudes about the five styles (Shade et al., 1997) and whether each teacher viewed their classroom environment as a tool to support student learning.

I created an Excel document to compile the five different styles into charts (see Appendix I). Each participant's name was listed on the left side of the spreadsheet. The preselected themes were listed across the top of the spreadsheet, and each participant's response was entered next to their name under the question. Each chart had four to five questions. The data were organized according to the survey questions and responses.

Lastly, the ratings for each of the responses from the related questions, each participant, and each style were summed.

Establishing Credibility

Multiple strategies were used to ensure the data's internal validity needed to establish credibility (see Creswell, 2009). For this study, I used member checking and peer-debriefing to ensure the findings' accuracy and credibility. I also took steps to ensure that insights and findings were valid and reliable. According to Merriam and Grenier (2019), the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted based on the study's findings. The findings collected were shared with each participant before publishing. The researchers added, the research findings must match reality, and the researcher must speak for the data.

Member checking was completed in multiple ways. First, three teachers were invited to comment on the interview and self-audit questions or share modifications. The teachers felt the questions were appropriate and did not offer any suggestions. The next was during the phone or online call. Before ending the call, I reviewed my notes with each participant to ensure that I accurately captured their thoughts. The participant could also revise, clarify, or delete any of her self-audit answers after discussing them. The final member-checking occurred once the data were transcribed. The participant was emailed my detailed notes, interview, and self-audit, which also included the themes attributed to their statements. The participant was able to verify that all comments and answers were correctly recorded. The changes or modifications were returned to me within 24 hours. See a sample of the notes (see Appendix G), transcripts (see Appendix

H), and the sample themes (see Appendix I). The project deliverable was designed to support the three findings in the report.

Credibility was ensured when the participants validated their responses or restated their views during the interview and summarized the participant's responses based on a review of the participant's comments, as was written in my notes. Interviewees also participated in member checking related to summarizing their interview data. According to Harper and Cole (2012), member checking is a quality control process that occurs during the interview and after. During the interview process, member checking took place, I summarized or restated the participant's information to ensure accuracy.

Each participant was emailed a draft of their answers or comments for review. The participant reviewed the draft findings to check for the researcher's interpretation of the data. Completing the member check process added to the credibility and accuracy of the summary of the participants' statements, thus adding to the data analysis's validity (see Harper & Cole, 2012, p. 2).

According to Baxter and Eyles (1997), the purpose of confirmability is to ensure that the results of the study focus on confirmation or corroboration by other researchers. The participants' narratives, rather than the researcher's biases, shaped the findings. To establish confirmability, I audited the processes I used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data. When I coded the data, I explained what and why the themes were selected. This process ensured confirmability.

Conformability is a strategy used to determine credibility. This study provided conformability based on the participants' genuine reflections in the findings (see Hays &

Singh, 2012). The findings were written in narrative form, beginning with the most significant themes. I then reported them based on answers from the different grade-span to determine if there was a difference. I suggested limitations to this study and made recommendations (see Creswell, 2013). I shared the answers with the actual interviewees and checked my report's accuracy to ensure that the data were correct. To ensure the interview data's accuracy, I reviewed and asked for clarification from each participant before ending the call or video. The interview data were transcribed immediately after each interview to ensure all data are captured and recorded correctly.

The peer debriefer also was a listening ear for me. Peer debriefing occurred before as well as after the interviews with participants. Teachers outside of the selected research sites reviewed the interview questions and data. Three retired teachers from the district served as the study's peer debriefers; none served as teachers at any identified sites. The peer debriefers were able to scan the questions and raw data to ensure that the findings are based on the data.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to explore teacher's perceptions and experiences related to CRT strategies to promote Black student achievement.

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the research of Hale (1982). The research indicated that there were benefits for the students when the classroom utilized the students' cultural assets. All participants expressed the belief that culturally relevant strategies will positively impact Black students' learning outcomes. Participant 1 stated,

"Any experience that is going to make you a more relatable teacher. Kids will be able to relate to you more, and if the kids relate to you, they can learn from you." However, 5 of 6 participants stated that they needed to receive additional training on utilizing culturally relevant strategies effectively.

Patterns, relationships, and themes began to emerge after the second interview was coded. Eight subthemes were determined before the coding process began. The codes identified were based on repeated phrases or sentences stated by the participants. There were about 400 coded phrases or sentences that emerged from the data. The repeated codes within the subthemes drew out the essential themes. Therefore, after the coding was completed, only seven themes had the largest number of codes associated with them, so those seven were determined to be the most vital.

Three findings emerged from the analysis of the data. Three hundred eighty-six total codes were noted from the six teachers who participated in the interviews. The highest occurring subthemes were related to the need for CRR perspectives. The participants' responses generally indicated that they believed that CRR strategies must be included during instruction with Black students. All six teachers responded that they regularly use materials and resources that support their Black students.

I organized the themes to generate the findings that answered the three research questions. There were three findings based on the seven themes that were found in the data for this study. The themes were paired with the three research questions. Overall, all three directly related themes were associated with RQ1, two more themes best addressed RQ2, and the final two themes were paired with RQ3.

The three findings are closely related. The first finding was related to what teachers know about using the cultural characteristics of their students. The second finding was also related to culture but was specific to PD or training needed to support teachers in using CRR practices. The last finding was about strategies and how teachers are familiar with utilizing many strategies when they prepare to teach or use when they teach. However, the participants also shared that they are unsure of what makes a CRR strategy, and they would like to learn how to use it appropriately.

Analysis of the data revealed that teachers often do not know how and when to use culture and culturally relevant strategies to respond to their students' needs. Therefore, each finding revealed the need for PD; teachers need tools to support them in utilizing culture and culturally relevant strategies. The three research questions, the themes, and the findings are summarized below (see Table 5).

Table 5

Teachers' Perceptions About the use of CRR Strategies – Findings

Research Questions	Themes/Outcomes	Findings
RQ1. What are teachers' perspectives of the value of incorporating culturally relevant strategies for students in their classroom?	The participants indicated that they believe there is a need to include the students' cultural aspects effectively in their classroom. The participants expressed a need for them to learn more about different cultural rules and norms. The participants indicated that Black students need to see their culture represented in their classroom environment.	The participants expressed the importance of utilizing culture as a strategy to support Black students.
RQ2. What experiences do teachers have with the use of culturally relevant strategies and or approaches?	The participants expressed that PD is needed to effectively address the gaps in understanding how to utilize their students' culture during instruction. The participants indicated they had very little PD related to the use of culturally relevant strategies	The participants conveyed the need for PD or training with an emphasis on how to incorporate CRR strategies in their instruction.
RQ3. How do teachers incorporate CRT strategies into their instructional practices?	The participants opined that utilizing instructional strategies is essential. Teachers are unsure of how to utilize CRR practices during instruction.	The participants communicated the need to know when and how to incorporate and align CRR strategies effectively.

Finding 1

The participants expressed the importance of utilizing culture as a strategy to support Black students. Participants indicated that they viewed CRR strategies as

necessary to include during instruction with Black students.

The teacher participants' views of incorporating culturally relevant classroom strategies were embedded in their responses to several interview questions. Based on this finding, the participants indicated that they value-adding their students' culture into their classrooms.

According to Teacher A, experiences that will make the teacher more relatable with their students will help students. Teacher A emphasized that teachers need to understand culture related to their students' beliefs and experiences. Teacher B indicated that educators need to be trained in strategies and beliefs related to intolerance, biases, microaggressions, and subliminal racism. She added,

"This training will help teachers have a better understanding and help kids." Teacher C opined that improvements are needed so that teachers can help Black students take ownership of their learning. Teacher F indicated that when the teacher identifies with the students' culture, the students and teachers will have better connections. Teacher E shared that her background and experiences help her support her Black students in understanding who they are and what others may perceive. She said,

> "I am an African American teacher myself, so I have tons of users in mind. I use many pictures from home, and I talk a lot about my family, so I try to make them feel comfortable with my world and compare them with their world."

Participants A, D, and F indicated they appreciate utilizing the district core reading materials because many stories depict Black characters that support their students' culture. Participant F added,

> "I go off the curriculum, and then I ask them, what do you know about this? I may ask them certain things they know about that."

According to Participants B, C, and D, incorporating elements of students' culture, including their background, family, environment, and experience, is a valuable teaching approach. Participant D also expressed that employing CRP includes the awareness of the family's backgrounds and expectations.

Each participant shared their thoughts concerning what they know about the term *cultural competence*, and at first, stated they have never heard the term, but they indicated they thought it would mean being aware of others' cultures. The teachers shared what they thought were the most important ideas related to one's culture or the students' culture, and there were many similarities in their answers. Teacher B stated that the cultural aspects students bring to school are important and should be valued. Teachers A, C, D, and F asserted that Black students need people who make them feel important, valued, accepted, and capable. Teacher D added that teachers need to see each student's potential, and students need to see themselves represented and understand that school is for them too.

> "Students need to see themselves represented. To see that a school is a place for everybody and man, this class I have this year, we enjoyed the lessons about Dr. King. This year's class embraced, love, and protected each other. We even talked about that, when problems come up, what would Dr. King say? Moreover, the kids understand it from the perspective of a five or 6-year-old. They felt it in their

hearts. Thus, I would say seeing it and knowing that every one of them, if they want to say something, they will be heard, they will be listened to."

Teacher B and E indicated that they saw the need differently; both stated that they used the lens of what teachers need to do to ensure that they are ready for Black students. Teacher E expressed that more Black male teachers, who can serve as positive role models for Black boys to interact with during the school day, are needed.

In the final interview, the question related to the first finding for RQ1, participants were asked to share their experiences to ensure that Black students can navigate the social status quo. Ladson-Billings (1994) expressed that teachers who utilize culturally relevant strategies and practices support students in navigating the social status quo. Five of the six teachers' responses were similar. Teachers A, B, C, D, and E stated that Black students need people who make them feel important, accepted, valued, and capable of learning. Participants A-C each shared that they believe the teacher must believe that Black students can achieve. Teacher A added that Black students need teachers who do not see them as a problem.

Participants were also asked to share what they feel are the challenges to implementing CRP. Participant C shared that understanding the definitions of CRP understanding why culture is influential serves as two obstacles for teachers who have not had training in how to interact with their Black students. She claimed that in schools, the dominant culture's beliefs are taught, and anything that does not fit into the mold of Eurocentric beliefs is not considered necessary.

Participant E stated that trust and confidence with the parents might be a challenge to CRP. She added that she had many problems relating to her Black students' parents as a new classroom teacher. Participant E suggested that understanding how to use the family to help demystify culture may benefit classroom teachers.

Interview Question 21 was provided to elicit the participants' beliefs and feelings about utilizing culturally relevant strategies to improve Black students' academic achievement. Each participant agreed that culturally relevant strategies would improve Black student achievement. Participant A shared the following:

> "I believe that they will be very helpful, but teachers don't know a lot about them. We can't all know about all cultures. I think anything that will make us more culturally aware is going to make us better teachers. Any knowledge, any experiences, any of that is going to make you a more relatable teacher. Kids will be able to relate to you more, and if the kids relate to you, they can learn from you."

Along these same lines, Participant E stated the following,

> "I can say yes, because, you know, you are identifying with their culture, and they would have more connection towards being included because that means more to them."

Each of the six participants expressed that it is necessary to use CRR strategies to support Black students in navigating the school environment.

Participants B and E opined that culture is a valued aspect for all individuals. Even though each teacher or student may view the value of culture in education differently,

incorporating students' culture and background during the lesson could result in more robust academic performance for culturally diverse learners.

Finding 2

The participants conveyed the need for PD or training with an emphasis on how to incorporate CRR in their instruction. The teachers who participated in this study indicated very few PD opportunities (PD) related to culturally relevant strategies.

PD or training was the third most occurring theme, emphasizing teacher participants' importance in receiving training in using CRR strategies. All six participants stated they did not have any course or training in their preservice teaching program related to supporting students culturally before they began their teaching career.

Interview Question 11 provided participants with the opportunity to share what they feel are the most essential needs for Black students. Participant A indicated that she had not had any PD related to equitable practices or culture. However, Participants B, C, D, E, and F confirmed that they have had some PD focused on equitable practices but minimal to no training related to culturally relevant strategies. Each participant shared how the PD related to equity impacted their instruction.

Teachers B, C, D, and E stated they participated in a district-led Equity Institute in the 2019-2020 school year. The institute was offered to site principals interested in PD focused on providing teachers with an understanding of equity. This PD was designed to provide the principal and leaders with training and support to lead the equity work. The team was comprised of the principal and lead teachers. The principal selected the team they felt would best provide training and support to the remaining staff members. Teacher

C responded that she enjoyed the Equity Institute because she could sit with other diverse leaders from her site, including the principal, and discuss equity and what needs to happen to ensure a healthy culture for all students. Teacher D said she also participated in equity-based workshops. However, she expressed that she already utilized the skills that were presented by stating, “Those kinds of things have been a big push in the last few years, and so I participated in all of that.”

Participants C, D, and E indicated that the Equity Institute allowed participating teachers to learn with their site peers. According to Participant C, the PD helped participants learn about the differences between equity and equality. She also shared that the group of teacher participants was culturally diverse, and therefore their discussions were rich with different perspectives. Participant C added that this was valuable training because the discussions allowed the team to discuss equitable practices on their campus. Participant C explained that during the Equity Institute PD, the team observed classes, and they took notes when they observed that Black students lacked engagement during instruction. After each classroom visit, the team members would debrief after leaving the classroom. They shared what they saw and discussed how each observed strategy supported or lacked support for Black students. The team participants then offered a solution or strategy to the administrator regarding how the teacher could better engage Black students. Participant C stated that the administrator then shared those recommendations with the teachers.

The participants in this study acknowledged they were unaware of why, when, and how to apply culturally relevant strategies best. This may correlate to the need for

CRR techniques in a PD series or other training. All six of the participants expressed in their responses that additional PD that is on-going in using CRR strategies is needed.

Finding 3

The participants communicated the need to know when and how to incorporate and align CRR strategies effectively. Each of the six participants stated they were not aware of strategies that are deemed culturally relevant; however, they use strategies that they think may provide support to the Black students in their class.

The need for specific aligned instructional strategies that are CRR was the second most occurring theme the participants shared based on the interview question responses and the self-audit survey. Each participant acknowledged that they utilize strategies that support all of the students in their classroom instead of strategies that specifically support Black students' learning. The participants indicated that direct teaching, checking for understanding, small group instruction, and hands-on practice are examples of strategies they use for all students. However, the participants indicated that they are not familiar with strategies designed to be CRR when they teach lessons. The participants indicated in their reflections that they needed to do more in terms of incorporating CRR strategies in their lessons.

Participant A explained that she uses direct teaching for most of her lessons because her students need to concretely understand why and what before she allows them to work on their own and practice. She added that she "chunks" her lessons, which allows her to stop repeatedly throughout the lesson to check for understanding. Participant C shared that she has an entrance and exit ticket for each lesson. When students enter the

class, there is a question or problem that needs to be solved on the board, and before leaving the class, another problem or question is posed for the students to answers; both the entrance and exit are used as an informal assessment. Lastly, Participant E echoed Participant A and C and included the following,

> "I verbally tell them, I go over the objectives, and I check for understanding. I show or use a visual aid; sometimes I use the internet to display like a short little video, or some kind of response to it, or using the Elmo. I try to use several different visual ways to understand the lesson, so they see what I'm doing or what I'm about to teach."

The participants shared and detailed many strategies they use most often when they teach lessons. Participants A, B, C, and E stated that they used strategies that they thought were culturally relevant, but they did not know what makes a CRR strategy. According to Participants A, B, D, E, and F, small group instruction, direct teaching, modeling, using charts and graphs, "chunking" the lesson or breaking it into smaller parts, using materials that have Black characters, celebrating Black History Month, displaying posters of Black artists, poets, or entertainers, and building relationships are strategies they typically use but are may or may not be CRR. Providing and using materials and resources that include Black characters, displaying posters of Black people, and relationship building are strategies that are identified as culturally relevant. However, the participants indicated they felt a need to incorporate the culture of their students.

Participant A stated that understanding the culture of students as a strategy is important. She uses the experiences of her children to connect with her students. She

added that she feels that teachers need to know about culturally relevant strategies and how to use them when teaching. Participant B added, embracing the culture and using it will help Black students. She added,

> "I make it very clear to the students that I want to establish a culture. We have norms; I stand at the door, greet everybody, shake everybody's hand, and give everybody eye contact."

Participant E stated that she feels the need to understand and use her students' culture because it is the best way to connect. She included an example of how she ensures that her Black students feel included in the classroom by noting,

> "I use a lot of pictures from home, and I talk a lot about my family, so I try to make them feel comfortable with my world and compare it with their world. I use as many books as possible like Salt In His Shoes, by Michael Jordan."

Teacher A shared that she celebrates many cultures in the classroom. She explained that during February, she celebrates Black History Month and shares stories about African Americans. Teacher B opined that Black students are usually viewed by others, including teachers, administrators, and even their peers, as negative or "bad," so she explained that she makes sure to show Black student groups in a positive light. Teachers D, E, and F responded that they work on themselves being aware of different cultures. Teacher D explained:

> "I've been reading a lot of books from authors of different cultures. And once I realized how different my upbringing was from the upbringing of other very intelligent people, I realized that it's just not like, I have to be able to, you know,

look at everybody's culture, even if I didn't live it. I have to be able to allow the kids to represent who they are."

Each participant indicated that they often use strategies that may be CRR. All six teachers stated that they typically use Morning Meetings or circles to start the day. Teacher A explained that the Morning Meetings are a strategy that may be culturally responsive in allowing students to share details of their lives, thereby bringing their cultural experiences into the classroom. Teacher A explained how this approach is used by stating,

> "They are a time, usually, before instruction begins, when the teacher poses a question (E.g., "How was your weekend?") or starts a discussion with an open-ended statement." Students can share something that happened or relates to the statement.

According to Participant E, this strategy supports students in "getting prepared" to learn. The students can talk about and discuss what is on their minds before instruction begins.

Participants A, B, and E indicated that they develop lessons or use strategies to support their students' learning; however, they may not be related to the students' culture. For example, strategies that these participants determine to be relevant due to time of the year, texts that are appropriate to help build understanding because the students can relate, displaying posters that look like the students, or allowing students to create a rap song as a culminating activity were provided to help students connect to the lesson. Participant A, B, D, and F stated that they chose resources related to a time of the year,

including Black History Month, read stories and share poems that display Black characters, and used approaches to recognize individual students, such as allowing students to be leaders in the classroom. Participant B shared an additional strategy related to culture to develop on-campus experiences to support Black students, such as the "Young Black Achievers" program. She stated that this program provided Black students space to collaborate and discuss their culture and academics and learn how to socialize appropriately. Students in this program also were able to attend programs targeted to Black students and attend Black College tours.

The participants shared examples of the strategies they believed may be CRR. Depending on how they were presented or used, many strategies could be considered culturally relevant. Some examples included reading specific text that displayed characters who represented students in the class, relationship-building activities, and allowing students to create their activity or outcome that illustrated their learning. Participant C explained how she allowed her students to develop their presentations to explain or share with the class. Participant D expressed that she did not rely on tests to show what her students know and can do but instead allowed them to verbally share their learning. The participants explained that they use many strategies, but they were unsure if the strategy is culturally relevant and what makes it so. Participants D, E, and F added that it is essential to include strategies that support Black students.

The self-audit data revealed how each of the participants related to the five different styles identified by Shade et al., (1997). Shade et al. found that these styles help teachers evaluate the strategies and procedures when planning and teaching lessons. The

Environmental Style was the first, and the teacher had to select the rating that expressed how their environment supported their students' cultural groups. The second was the Interactional Style. The teacher again selected the rating that best conveyed how they interact with students and how they were responsive to different cultural groups.

The third style was Instructional Strategies for Cognitive Style, and each teacher was able to select the option that best acknowledged their engagement with their students when teaching. This style detailed the teacher's actions when determining their lesson plan, how they taught the lesson, and how they assessed student knowledge. Each participant had to select the option that best expressed their view. The fourth style was Instructional Design for Cognitive Style Responsiveness. The teacher had to select the level to which their lessons were relevant to their student's lives. The last style was Assessment Style. The last set of questions focused on how the teacher viewed assessments and whether the assessments were varied to show students different ways to show what they know. Each teacher selected the rating they felt demonstrated the different styles related to how they utilized their classroom space, planning, instruction, and assessment to support students in learning the skill or objective. The self-audit survey provided teacher participants with the opportunity to rate themselves according to how they see or feel their environment, and instruction provide strategies to support students, especially Black students.

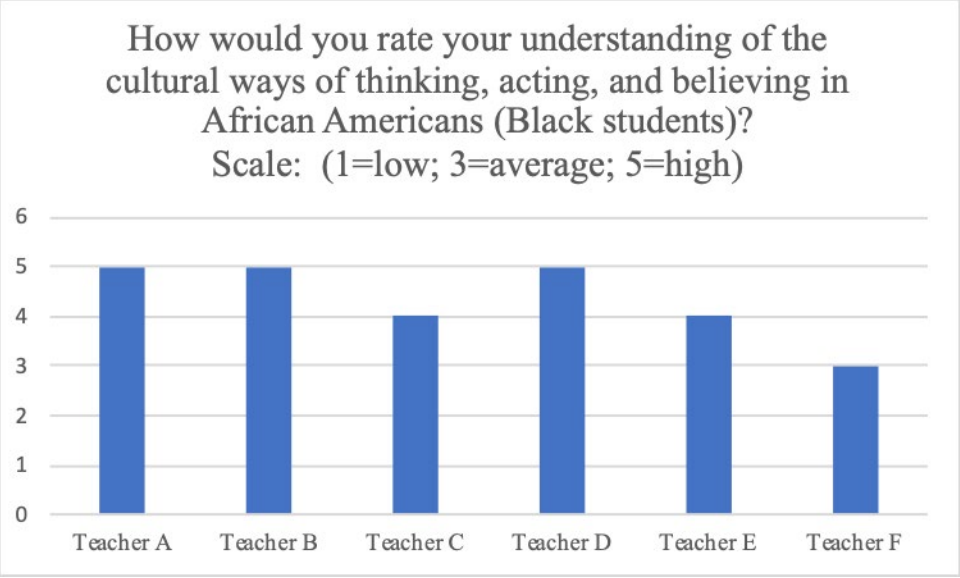
The next few paragraphs will provide information about the third research question and how teachers perceive their teaching, as reported in the self-audit survey. Each question directly or indirectly related to how teachers applied the environment or

instructional styles as strategies or how they regarded them in their classroom, instruction, and assessment to support Black students' learning and outcomes.

The Environmental Style questions focused on what teachers understood about cultural ways of thinking, acting, and believing in Black students (see Figure 2 chart below). The rating scale was based on points, with five indicating always, three representing sometimes, and one meaning never. According to the self-rating, Teachers A through E believed that they always think, act, and believe in Black students. Teacher F selected three, meaning that she sometimes thinks, acts, and believes in Black students. When I probed Teacher F about her answer choice, she explained that she responds to all of her students the same. She added that she does provide extra support for some of her Black students, but she tries not to let the other students know. Figure 2 chart shows each teachers' option choice.

Figure 2

Bar Graph – Cultural Ways of Thinking, Acting, and Believing



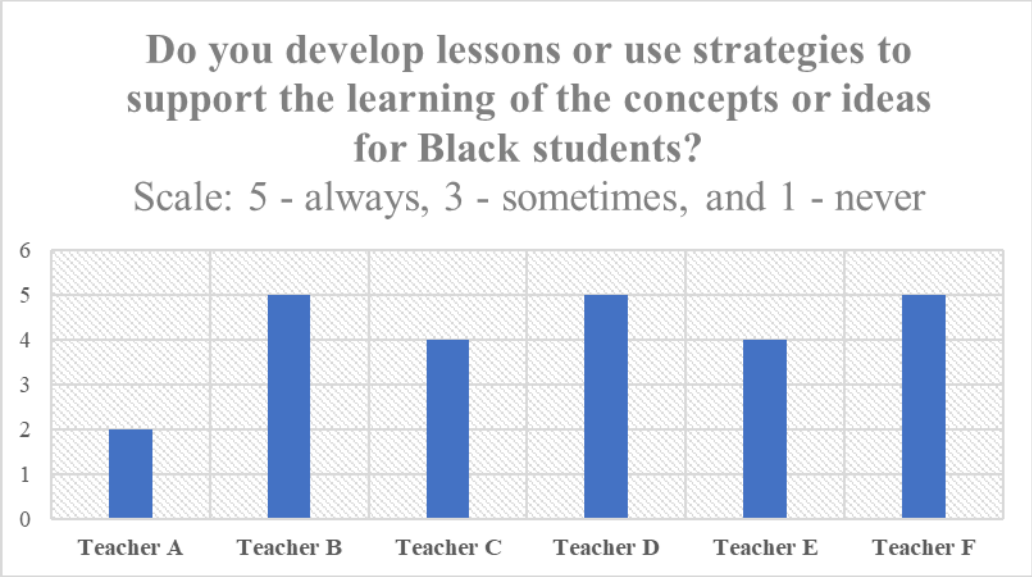
Note. Question 5. Teachers A-E state they almost always understand the cultural ways of thinking, acting, and believing in African American (Black) students. Culturally Competent Classroom Self-Audit by Shade et al. (1997). Creating Culturally Responsive Classrooms. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. Permission to use was obtained, see Appendix E.

The self-audit also had questions about how the teacher designs, plans, and connects information to support Black students in learning the lesson. The Instructional Design for Cognitive Style Responsiveness style asked teachers to choose an option that closely detailed how they provide lessons relevant to their lives. According to the self-audit, 5 of 6 teachers selected the rating of four or five, indicating that the teacher always provides lessons relevant to the students' lives. However, Teacher A selected the option that she rarely provides lessons relevant to her students' lives. During the interview, she was asked to provide more explanations. She stated that she chose two because she rarely does anything different for her Black students. She went on to share that she uses the same strategies for all students. I asked if she provides strategies that help Black students understand the content. She said,

> "I use many strategies that may be recognized as culturally appropriate because several of my students are Black."

Figure 3

Bar Graph – Strategies to Support the Learning of Concepts for Black Students

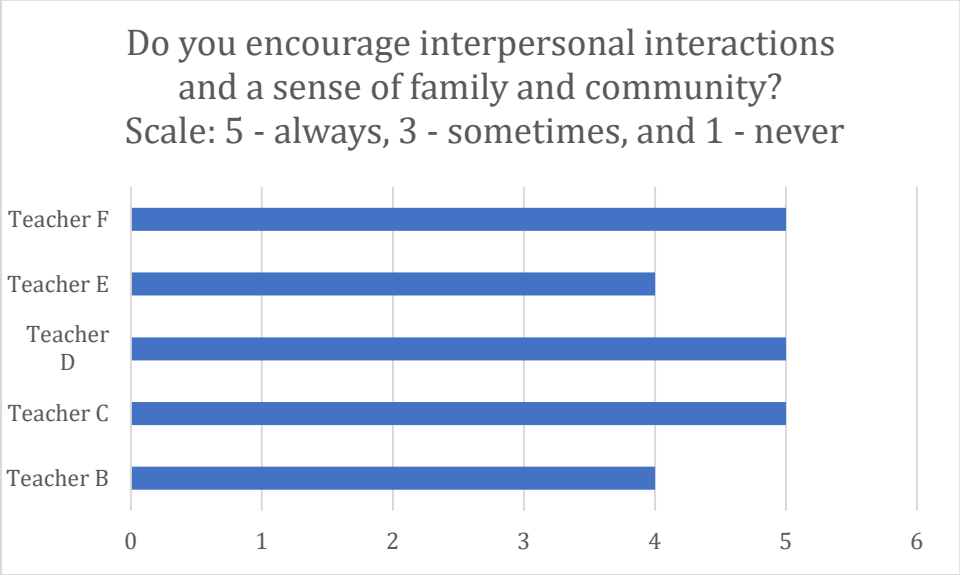


Note. Question 21. Teachers B-F state they almost always develop lessons or use strategies to support Black students' learning of the concepts or ideas. Culturally Competent Classroom Self-Audit by Shade et al. (1997). Creating Culturally Responsive Classrooms. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. Permission to use was obtained, see Appendix E.

Question 4 expanded the classroom environment's notion by asking teachers to choose how they encourage interpersonal interactions and a sense of family and community in their classroom. Based on the results, all six teachers believed that they always encourage interpersonal interaction and a sense of family or community in their classroom on the self-audit. Participants B through F, teachers stated they always or almost always encourage interactions and family community in their classroom (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Bar Graph – Interpersonal Interactions and a Sense of Family & Community

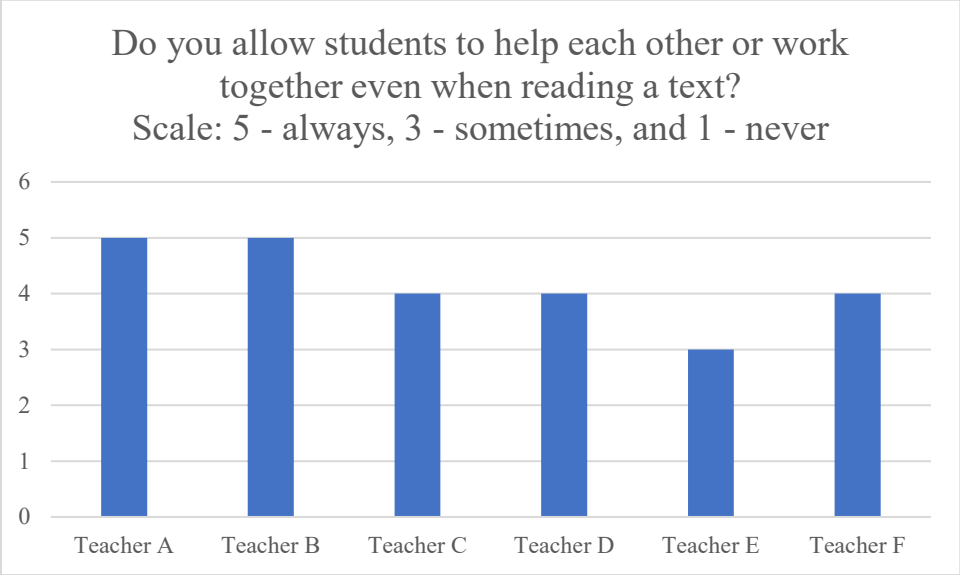


Note. Question 4. All six of the participants A-F stated they always encourage their students to be like a family. Culturally Competent Classroom Self-Audit by Shade et al. (1997). Permission to use was obtained, see Appendix E.

In the Interactional Style section of the self-audit, participants were asked to choose often they allow students to work together when reading a text. According to the self-audit, 5 of the 6 teachers selected four or five, and one teacher selected three (see Figure 5). When Teacher E was probed, she stated that her kindergarten students do not have the skills to help each other during reading. She indicated there are times when she allows students to work together, but reading is not one of the times.

Figure 5

Bar Graph – Do you Allow Students to Collaborate During Reading?



Note. Bar Graph – Teacher responses to Question 5. Teachers A-E state they almost always students to work together during reading to support students in reading. Culturally Competent Classroom Self-Audit by Shade et al. (1997). Creating Culturally Responsive Classrooms. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. Permission to use was obtained, see Appendix E.

Two participants shared that they felt there could be obstacles to teachers utilizing strategies that supported the students' culture. Participant D asserted that the teacher's evaluator or administrator could be an obstacle by writing a negative evaluation based on an observation of what students were doing when they walked into the classroom. The teacher may provide an activity that values their students' culture, but the administrator may not see it appropriately. She also added that teachers need the administration to hold them accountable for CRR strategies, especially since Black students are not performing well academically at her site. Participant F identified her lack of understanding of

different cultural practices or beliefs as an obstacle to utilizing culturally relevant strategies. The Participant said,

> "Like I don't know the culture, I can't tell the difference between the Hispanic culture or Asian, I don't know like how those cultures are. That would be – the hardest thing for me, each of them, you know, I don't know different cultures."

The data analyzed detailed that the participants studied used many different strategies when they teach. Participant A uses at least 14 different strategies when she teachers a reading lesson. She shared that the strategies help her ensure that her students can access the skill or lesson objective. Participants B, C, and E identified at least eight. However, each of the six participants stated they were unsure if their chosen strategies were CRR or if they helped the Black students in their class.

Marzano et al. (2001) identified nine specific instructional strategies proven to improve student achievement. Instructional strategies are purposeful in assisting the teacher in identifying the best way for students to understand the skill or lesson. Instructional strategies are most appropriate with specific types of knowledge, such as vocabulary terms, generalizations, and processes (Marzano et al., 2001).

In conclusion, based on all the data analysis, participants indicated that they regularly use various instructional strategies; however, they are unsure whether or how to use culturally relevant strategies appropriately. Therefore, it would be valuable to incorporate CRR strategies to support Black students in learning the lesson. These findings present the idea that teachers may use culturally relevant strategies, but they are unsure if they are using them appropriately. Since they do not know if the strategies are

culturally relevant, they may need support in determining what strategies are CRR and when and how to utilize them during their lessons most effectively.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases allow the researcher to reflect critically. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), the researcher should consider discrepant or negative cases. The findings from the raw data and the emerging findings should be congruent. This study's findings are congruent with the raw data, and the experiences shared were more similar than they were different. Responses that differed from those of the majority seemed to attribute differences the teachers had in their background and experiences.

One discrepant case example was found in response to RQ 2 related to the amount of PD or training the participants had before teaching. This case example was found in Participant B. Participant B's response stated that she started her educational career as a parent helper in her daughter's elementary school. Participant B could see the differences in how Black students were regarded in particular teachers' classrooms. She expressed that she never wanted to be a teacher who did not provide positive academic outcomes. All of the other participants wanted to be a teacher while in college.

Another example of a negative or discrepant case was found in interview questions focused on the resources teachers felt were needed to support utilizing CRR perspectives. Teacher D stated that teachers need to be allowed to do what is right. I probed to clarify the teacher's meaning; she elaborated and stated that teachers need to feel that administrators will allow them to teach the way they feel is best. Each of the other five participants stated that teachers need PD. Teachers A, C, E, and F stated that

teachers need planning time labeled PD in most school districts because teachers are provided with time to collaborate with their peers. Teacher B stated that teachers need PD to help them understand biases, prejudices, racism, and how to ensure equitable classroom practices.

According to Merriam and Grenier (2019), strategies that promote trustworthiness in a study may also include thorough consideration of discrepant cases. I embraced discrepant cases because they helped me develop new themes or categories to analyze the overall data set.

Data Validation

The need to validate the data is crucial. According to Birt et al. (2016), the value of qualitative research is dependent on the trustworthiness of the results. One technique for exploring credibility is member checking. Member checking allowed the participant to validate their responses and ensure their experiences' accuracy (Birt et al., 2016; Creswell, 2009, p. 191). I forwarded a copy of the detailed notes that included the themes that correlated with their answers to each participant and allowed them 24 hours to review, change, or modify their interview responses and survey to ensure their statements' accuracy. The participants were able to provide feedback or corrections concerning the summary and return. Each participant indicated agreement with the accuracy of the statements and themes they reviewed.

I analyzed and reported based on the following categories: transferability, conformability, credibility, dependability, and saturation of data (Hays & Singh, 2012). To maintain trustworthiness with the participants throughout the study, I implemented

various strategies and structures throughout the analysis process. I developed relationships with the participants, listened, and made sure that each of them felt comfortable. I also compared and crosschecked the data collected through interviews and the self-audits (see Patton, 2002).

During the data analysis process, there was a synthesis of the textural-structural descriptions (see Hays & Singh, 2012). When analyzing the data, I first read all transcripts, made notes, and reread the transcript carefully multiple times to ensure accuracy. The goal of the textural-structural descriptions was to develop a greater understanding of the various strategies teachers use. After reading and annotating the transcripts, I labeled, coded, or indexed the relevant information such as words, phrases, or sentences. The information in the transcript was relevant to code when it answered the research questions. After the relevant information was coded, I combined or deleted codes and then created categories or themes. I then decided what categories were relevant and answered the research questions.

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For this study, to assure accuracy and credibility, validity, triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing were used. Triangulation is the most commonly used strategy (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Creswell (2009) described triangulation as "the process of corroborating evidence from different sources of data collection used to build a coherent justification for descriptions and themes in qualitative research" (p. 191). I triangulated the data by comparing and cross-checking the interview and self-audit data collected from the participants (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The established themes were based on the participants' perspectives, which increased the study's validity. I triangulated the data by comparing and cross-checking the interview and self-audit data collected from the participants (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The established themes were based on the participants' perspectives, which increased the study's validity.

The credibility and trustworthiness of the data collection instrument and process also depend on data saturation. Saturation was reached when the participants provided no new information, indicating no new data, themes, coding, and enough information to replicate the study (see Fusch & Ness, 2015). The data were generated via recording and researcher notes. The self-audits were analyzed to identify patterns. Saturation was determined once there was no new information from the participants.

To ensure that this study's results were transferable, I included detailed descriptions of the process used throughout the research. According to Merriam and Grenier (2019), to ensure external validity, the research must transfer to other settings outside the local district. Steckler and McLeroy (2011) explained that it is essential that external validity be ensured when improving the public's health. Educational institutions

should also look to improve the well-being of public-school students. There is external validity for this research study. All processes can be duplicated and applied in other public-school settings. According to Merriam and Grenier, one must collect, analyze, and interpret the data based on the study's findings. The researchers added, the research findings must match reality, and the researcher must speak for the data. This study's findings were collected and shared with each participant allowing the "data to speak" before publishing.

Project Description

The interview protocol was the primary data source, and the data was collected through semi structured interviews and a self-audit survey. Both instruments were analyzed. The interview responses were color-coded, and then the repeated words, sentences, or phrases were coded. There were more than 138 different codes. Eight coding categories were preidentified, and each code was matched to one of the eight categories. The categories were analyzed, and three findings emerged from the data. According to the participant responses, additional support in using culturally relevant tools and strategies to support Black student achievement improvements is needed.

The self-audit was used as a second data source. Self-audit data were analyzed; I looked for patterns of how teachers provided a culturally relevant environment, instruction, pedagogy, and or how they used strategies in their classroom. Each participant completed an audit of his or her classroom. The self-audit (see Appendix D) was used as a tool for teachers to evaluate their classroom regarding it being culturally relevant based on the five different styles. The self-audit data were analyzed, and there

were similarities to the participants' interview responses and how they rated their classroom environment. The ratings also revealed the need for additional training in providing lessons or strategies that support Black students' learning.

It became evident based on the findings that teachers would benefit from PD or training (see Appendix A) in how to use CRR practices to benefit Black students. A series of PD workshops were needed to ensure that teachers understand different cultures, use their students' cultural identities when they teach, and effectively utilize CRR practices.

I developed a 3-day PD workshop series to provide teachers with tools to support the understanding of equity and culture as a strategy and effectively use culturally relevant strategies or practices to support Black students. This PD should be a beginning for the district to ensure that teachers who interact with Black students are better equipped to support them. The purpose of the 3-day PD is to increase teacher knowledge of equitable practices, culture, and identification of CRR strategies and how to use them effectively. Collaborative opportunities are embedded in the PD workshops. Teachers will have time to prepare lessons, practice, and share their learning with their peers. This PD will facilitate the needed learning of culture as a strategy for teachers.

I believe the local district should include this 3-day PD into their district PD calendar; it will be on-going, have follow-up sessions, and be available multiple times a year. Once teachers begin to utilize CRR practices or strategies learned during this PD, teachers will consciously choose strategies that promote Black students' academic

outcomes, which may decrease and eventually eliminate the academic achievement gap between the Black and White student groups.

In Section 2, the research and design for this study were explained. A descriptive case study based on the local district provided a more robust understanding of teachers' experiences in developing culturally relevant strategies to improve Black students' academic achievement. The participants for this study were six teachers who shared their experiences related to culturally relevant strategies. The participants were teachers who work at three different sites with the highest proportion of Black students. After receiving approval from IRB and the superintendent to conduct the study, the data was collected.

There were two data collection instruments for this study. Each participant was asked questions that were aligned to the three research questions. Each participant was interviewed via phone or video conference call. The self-audit was an online survey. The audit allowed the teacher to examine his or her classroom through a cultural lens. I was the primary data collection instrument for this study.

To ensure the findings' accuracy and credibility, I read all the transcripts multiple times and annotated them. After each interview, I generated the recording, the transcript, and the researcher notes. I cleaned the data and emailed it to the participant. The participant was asked to return any additions or changes within 48 hours. Each participant was comfortable with the transcript. The self-audits were analyzed, looking for patterns.

Seven overarching themes emerged from the data and yielded three findings that aligned with the research questions. The first finding: The participants expressed the importance of utilizing culture as a strategy to support Black students; the second finding:

The participants conveyed the need for PD or training with an emphasis on how to incorporate CRR strategies in their instruction; and the final finding number three: The participants communicated the need to know when and how to incorporate and align CRR strategies effectively. Based on these findings, a 3-day PD workshop series was developed.

Conclusion

This study was conducted in three participating school sites in a district. I explored teachers' perceptions and experiences related to CRT strategies by collecting data from classroom teachers from each grade-span. Data were collected through teacher interviews and self-audits to answer the following research questions: What are teachers' perspectives of the value of incorporating strategies for students in their classroom? What experiences do teachers have with the use of culturally relevant strategies and or approaches? How do teachers incorporate CRT strategies into their instructional practices? Six teachers, including three elementary, one middle, and two high school teachers, who have been teaching at least 3 years and have taught multiple classes with at least two Black students in their classroom, participated in the study.

All procedures were followed in collecting, analyzing, and reporting the data. The data collected during the interview, the member checking, and the self-audit, supported the findings. The data were collected after approval from the IRB and the local district. The two data sources were an interview protocol and an online self-audit. The self-audit data via phone or an online platform was collected after each participant completed the survey.

In Section 3, the outcomes based on the data results and the prepared PD modules, training curriculum, and materials were explained. Lastly, in Section 4, I will share my reflections and conclusions.

Section 3: The Project

In this qualitative, descriptive case study, I explored teachers' perceptions of, and experiences related to culturally relevant strategies to promote Black student achievement. Six teachers who had taught for more than 3 years and had at least two Black students in their class or period were interviewed and surveyed. Throughout the interviews, the participants expressed a need for PD that specifically addressed culturally relevant practices. The data findings showed that teachers seek ongoing PD (see Appendix A) to address how and when to utilize CRR practices or strategies.

In the interviews, the participants shared reoccurring ideas. The three significant themes revealed that culturally responsive/relevant perspectives, PD/training, and instructional strategies combined with content knowledge are necessary. Based on the findings, I proposed that ongoing PD be provided for teachers who teach Black students to address the achievement gap between Black and White students. Consequently, I developed a 3-day PD series that embedded discussion and gave teachers with tools to be successful by providing them with the knowledge to effectively implement CRR strategies to support Black students.

I designed a PD workshop entitled, Culturally Relevant Strategies! Why? to offer teachers options for creating an environment that may help Black students excel, thrive, and achieve academically at higher levels. This training was aimed at supporting teachers' understanding and use of culturally relevant strategies. Black students have been academically achieving at much lower levels than other student groups in the local district.

With this project, I sought to provide teachers with learning experiences using culture to ensure that Black students' academic outcomes improved. The workshops provide multiple opportunities for teachers to assess their own beliefs and behaviors by exploring relevant readings, watching videos, searching for relevant materials, and collaborating and sharing with their peers to understand the need for culturally relevant/responsive practices. Each participant will have an opportunity to build their capacity to learn and practice using strategies to support teachers in teaching Black students. Teachers will collaborate, work independently, and in small groups with their grade-level or grade-span peers.

Project Description and Goals

Based on the findings of the data collected, I designed a PD project to address teacher perceptions of CRR strategies in the local district. The PD sessions were developed to provide 3 days of research-based activities related to cultural competence to support teachers who have Black students assigned to their class or period. The PD is being offered to prepare teachers with the tools needed to support Black students. This PD will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. on days allotted by the PD director. The 3-day module comprises six-hour sessions. The resources required for the PD will include ample space for each participant; their laptop; and table space for games, reading activities, and collaboration. They will include a comfortable area for continental breakfast, snacks, and breaks. The room environment will have wall space for displaying charts, posters, and a projector screen. The facilitator will utilize the provided presentation slides, notes, and agenda for each session. At the beginning of each session,

there will be an opening activity, a Community Builder/Ice Breaker. In the end, there will be a survey or exit ticket from each participant to collect data on the effectiveness of the day. An evaluation will be used to determine needed sessions and the effectiveness of the workshops.

Rationale

I developed this project based on the local district's disproportionate academic achievement outcomes for Black students. Black students have been academically achieving at much lower levels than other student groups in the local district. The local school board expressed the need for teachers to be culturally responsive. The conceptual framework that guided this project was Hale's (1982) theory of how utilizing the culture students bring to school may impact Black students' academic outcomes. This project on the findings of exploring teacher perceptions about using culturally relevant strategies. The participants agreed that culturally competent teachers understand how to use the students' cultural background in their classroom successfully.

The participants represented at least one of the grade-spans: elementary, middle, or high school teachers. Each shared their reasoning for PD in the use of CRR strategies. The lack of continuous or on-going training in research-based strategies has delayed teachers' progress in understanding how to use culture as an asset. Each of the participants shared the need for CRR PD to support teachers in utilizing culture in their classrooms. The teachers' responses revealed the need for teachers to gain the skills to understand and utilize the culture of their students as a strength. Furthermore, Black students' achievement data showed a need for teachers to work differently to obtain

better academic outcomes for that student group. Teachers need to implement CRR strategies that may work more effectively with Black students.

The use of culturally relevant strategies may enrich the classroom environment, thereby increasing Black students' academic outcomes. Providing training and resources for teachers to learn more about culturally relevant and CRS and becoming culturally competent may provide teachers with a better understanding of how to use culturally relevant strategies and provide richer educational experiences for Black students. Furthermore, according to Howard and Navarro (2016), cultural diversity warrants that educational practitioners think creatively about the strategies they choose.

In the PD module, teachers will be provided with tools to help them create an environment that is culturally relevant and responsive to Black students' needs. Currently, the local district has little to no PD or training to support teachers in using CRR strategies. Brown and Militello (2016) found that principals expressed that PD is one of the most popular strategies to impact teachers.

Principals may need help designing an effective PD because they would need to know what components are needed and in what order to ensure that the learning will positively impact teachers. An example would be implementing educational equity. The advancement of educational equity requires school systems to see three problems, the system, the minds, and the practices, and district and school leaders must intentionally decide that all problems need attention (Gaines et al., 2019). Teachers must continually examine their beliefs and actions as they relate to race in their practices. Teachers need PD designed to provide the tools and experiences of culturally responsive practices.

Students need to become the leaders of their learning, and CRT practices support students in doing so (Hammond, 2014). The findings suggest that teachers need PD that will allow them to increase their knowledge and stay abreast of current instructional practices.

According to the district's current PD plan, there are no workshop sessions designed for teachers to learn about employing the students' culture as a strategy. Participants confirmed that this type of PD is highly desirable. According to Brown et al. (2019), with the increase of diverse classrooms, cognitive and cultural nuances must be reflected during instruction. This PD may provide teachers in the study site district with the understanding to create systemic opportunities for positive change in their classroom environment.

The goal was for the PD to be available for teachers in the district during the district's Leadership Summit and offered throughout the school year. Teachers should be encouraged to meet frequently during weekly or monthly collaboration. Principals may decide to allow their teachers to utilize professional learning communities (PLCs) to discuss and share the strategies learned because collaboration improves practice (Kim et al., 2017). I designed the PD to allow teachers time to learn about their personal biases, understand how Black students are still behind, collaborate with their grade-span peers, and explore why and how to effectively utilize CRR strategies that may help Black students succeed.

The PD will be 18 hours (divided into three 6-hour day sessions), packaged as Day 1–Day 3. The PD can also be divided into six half-day sessions if needed. A facilitator will deliver this PD. Teachers will have multiple opportunities to practice and

apply the new learning in the sessions and their classroom. This PD is only a start to ensuring CRR practices, and it should be offered multiple times each school year to teachers who teach Black students. Each participant who completes the PD series will receive a certificate at the end of Day 3.

Teachers will have many take-aways from the PD that will allow them to increase their knowledge, understanding, and utilization of CRR strategies. There are three goals for this project:

1. Teachers will learn about different cultures and how culture can be leveraged to support Black students.
2. Teachers will learn about CRR strategies that have been shown to support Black student achievement.
3. Teachers will learn how to utilize CRR strategies when they teach.

I designed this PD to be made available multiple times a school year for teachers who teach Black students. By employing other researchers' recommendations, this project presents a viable option because it incorporates the why and how to utilize strategies teachers can use to promote Black students' academic achievement. Teachers will be provided with opportunities to learn about why there is a need for Black students' culture to be present in their classroom and how the lack of understanding of their culture has harmed Black students. These understandings may help teachers accept their biases and be aware of the different pedagogies and strategies that exist.

Teachers will have opportunities to develop lessons and units that employ culturally relevant pedagogies and strategies to promote learning and improve Black

students' academic achievement. This PD provides teachers with "tools" for their toolbox to support Black students. The PD project offers 3-days of learning. The instructional practices and strategies presented in the PD are research-based and allow time for guided practice to strengthen each teacher's ability to improve their understanding of cultural pedagogy.

In researching existing PD options in the local district, I could not find PD opportunities for teachers or leaders to explore culture, equity, or diversity. There also were no opportunities for teachers to collaborate and develop lesson plans, units of study, or craft lists of effective strategies to use with Black students, which may explain some of the district's low academic achievement numbers. Therefore, I believe there is a need for these PD workshops to allow teachers to examine their personal beliefs about teaching Black students and a need for them to utilize CRR practices.

The PD will allow teachers to challenge their current pedagogy and provide them with the ability to identify strategies that may be more appropriate for their students. This PD will provide the participants with an understanding of culture and CRR pedagogy and opportunities to question their culture, others' cultures, and how to use the students' culture as assets. Teachers will learn effective strategies, how to apply them, and how to work with their grade-level peers. There will be opportunities for teachers to learn, practice, and apply their learning throughout the year.

Review of the Literature

Teachers' professional growth has a direct impact on student outcomes (Brown & Militello, 2016). Teachers need opportunities to improve and grow professionally

continually. According to Brown and Militello (2016) one of the best ways to improve teacher practice is PD. Therefore, I chose the genre of PD for this project study. The participants stated that PD that provides knowledge, content, and how to deliver the content effectively is needed. Teachers need learner-center instructional strategies and time to grow as a professional. There are not many opportunities for PD because the majority of the teacher's workdays are student days. For PD to be effective, it must address what teachers need. Graham (2007) and Owen (2015) found a relationship between PLCs and teacher improvement, reporting that PLCs allow teachers to engage with their peers on concepts that are central to what they need and time to develop their knowledge for teaching and their practices. Principals play a vital role in providing teachers with opportunities to grow as professionals because they can control the PD available in their school (Brown & Militello, 2016).

The literature reviewed and compiled for this section was from scholarly sources that validated the need to implement CRR practices to better meet Black students' academic needs. The data indicated that PD workshop sessions could present teachers with multiple opportunities to become culturally competent. I focused on developing a PD project that would offer teachers a broad understanding of how best to include students' culture, cultural bias, and time to gain knowledge in implementing CRR strategies.

The literature reviewed for this study presented the need for research-based strategies and pedagogy to ensure that teachers are prepared and understand how to effectively utilize culture as an asset. In this literature review, I focused on how PD helps

improve teacher knowledge and effectiveness to improve Black student achievement. I noted that PD is useful in providing teachers with the opportunity to obtain their Black students' skills and strategies.

I accessed resources from the Walden Library, Google Scholar, ScholarWorks, Education Source, and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). The following key terms were searched: *culturally responsive or relevant PD; CRP PD; teacher training; PD strategies for teachers; PD that supports the culture and learning of Black students; and PLCs or collaboration.*

The combination of these terms and databases yielded sufficient literature to saturate the literature review. The majority of the sources were peer-reviewed, scholarly articles or books dated between 2010-2020. The results were then limited to peer-reviewed, scholarly articles from 2016 to 2020. However, the focus of this review will primarily be related to PD, the importance of PD, how PD supports teachers, the role principals play in ensuring that PD is relevant to the teachers at the site, PD as a learning tool to help improve the teaching practice, PLC as an opportunity to learn and grow with peers, and finally how CRR PD impacts Black students' outcomes.

Importance of PD

PD is essential but is offered and applied differently in various schools and districts. Many other professions provide PD for their employees, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and accountants (Mizell, 2010). According to researchers, the most critical factors in raising student achievement in schools are high-quality teachers and principals. For teachers and school district leaders to be as effective as possible, they must

continually expand their knowledge and skills to implement the best educational practices.

PD has many implications in schools and can be used as a tool to increase teachers' skills. PD is not only necessary to improve teacher practice, but it also may be a predictor of effectiveness for student outcomes (Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019). PD as a growth tool for teachers is necessary, especially for a new teacher (Szeto & Cheng, 2017). PD designed to focus on active teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection impacts teachers' pedogeological skills and student learning (Matherson & Windle, 2017). According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), although improving teacher practice is necessary for students to develop 21st-century skills competencies, effective teacher PD is not easy to determine. There are many options for PD. Site leaders or principals must carefully determine the PD needs for their teaching staff.

Effective PD could be a *relative* term. Abu-Tineh and Sadiq (2018) investigated effective PD and the characteristics of effective models, according to teachers. The researchers' findings revealed that the teachers studied rated three characteristics the highest. First, the PD "enhanced teacher's content and knowledge of pedagogy" (p. 316); next, it promoted "collegiality and collaboration" (p. 318); and last, the PD "focused on individual and school improvement" (p. 317). Teachers' ratings show that the PD is relevant to their personal needs and their school community's needs.

The principal and teacher both understand the implications of PD and the outcomes that transfer to student achievement. Many teachers who are provided with effective PD can better recognize and support students who are not learning. They also

can analyze data and can pivot and adjust their lesson and outcomes based on student needs. PD that is geared toward teacher needs allows the teacher to implement his or her instruction more effectively. My study's findings also revealed the need for PD to increase the teacher's "toolbox" and develop their ability to incorporate CRR strategies to improve Black students' academic achievement.

Other researchers also found similar outcomes when they studied teachers' opinions about PD. Ekinci and Acar (2019) studied 20 primary teachers in Istanbul to determine if the PD model was effective. The qualitative study data was primarily collected through interviews. The researchers asked the teachers about three topics, first, the concept of PD, next, the processes of providing PD, and last, the characteristics of effective PD. The researchers concluded that effective PD consists of goal setting, planning, development, and evaluation. Traits of effective PD support this PD project (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018; Ekinci & Acar, 2019). The 3-days of PD workshops will allow teachers to set goals, plan for their students, learn how to utilize CRR strategies, and offer multiple opportunities for teachers to evaluate the PD's success.

After synthesizing their findings in their study related to effective PD, Patton et al. (2015) believe that effective PD is linked to three concepts: (a) teacher engagement, (b) teaching practice, and (c) student learning. These concepts dictate that teachers may need to shift their practice. Teacher engagement included teachers' interests and needs, the idea that learning is a social process; teachers working together are associated with a learning community. The learning would be ongoing and sustained. The researchers connected practice to PD's core features, which included teachers as active learners,

teachers improving their pedagogical skills and content knowledge, knowledge of facilitation, and PD's connection to improving student learning (Patton et al., 2015).

How PD Supports Teachers

PD supports teachers in learning and continuing to grow in their craft (Darling-Hammond, 2005). In a study performed in four low-income districts, the researchers found that teacher evaluations stayed the same or declined during 2-3 years of study (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Even when no growth was noted, the researchers continued to recommend defining what it means to improve a teacher's practice. Effective PD offers teachers learning opportunities to impact their knowledge and practices (Darling-Hammond et al.). When designing effective PD, according to the researchers, there are seven characteristics:

1. Content focused
2. Active learning based on the adult learning theory
3. It is job-embedded, supports collaboration
4. There are models and modeling of effective practices
5. Provides coaching and expert support
6. Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
7. Sustained duration

Many of these characteristics operate simultaneously. PD should be focused on content. Providing PD that is based explicitly on content or context is needed for learning. According to Milner IV (2017), CRP is usually embedded in core content areas,

like ELA, math, or science. The PD workshop goals for this study are to connect CRR strategies to the core content.

PD as a Learning Tool for Teachers

PD serves many purposes for teachers and should be an on-going approach. PD helps teachers implement new initiatives, allows the teacher to better understand their lesson goals, and determine the best way(s) to present a lesson. It helps teachers learn how to improve the academic outcomes of their students. There are many options for how to deliver PD. PD can be provided based on teacher and site needs.

PD should be more than a "sit and get" opportunity (Wei et al., 2009). PD must be designed to help teachers develop the pedagogical skills needed to impact student learning (Matherson & Windle, 2017). However, due to many school districts' mandates, it is difficult for the PD to be meaningful and useful for teachers (Matherson & Windle). PLCs are ways for teachers to collaborate or work together to support each other and students in a grade level or department.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) examined the research from 35 studies looking to identify the effects PL had on changing teachers' practices and student outcomes. The researchers found that PD had a positive effect on student outcomes. Korthagen (2017), based on findings, stated that teacher learning is multi-dimensional, and it is determined by the connections the teacher makes with the PD. The teacher is making connections between the profession and their aspects of learning (Korthagen, 2017). PD can be a learning opportunity for the teacher, but the content must connect personally with the teacher and their needs.

Depending on the type of PD, the learning could be sustained. González and Skultety (2018) examined a 2-year PD intervention with geometry teachers. The researchers examined videos of the teachers interacting with their students. The findings suggested that the teachers noticed the students' prior knowledge revealing that the PD did promote the idea that teachers continued to notice what their students were thinking throughout the intervention.

Granger et al. (2019), examined the effects of teacher learning as they participated in a science PD. The study compared the PD with the enactment of curricula with learning following limited PD. The researchers studied 125 teachers and 2,694 students in Grades 4-5. They had a control group and a treatment group. The findings indicated that the treatment group of teachers experienced a more significant increase in content knowledge than the control group. Also, teachers learned more from PD and extended the theoretical framework, showing that teachers' relationship with the curricula supported teachers' learning. This type of PD learning is needed for teachers to utilize the curriculum entirely. They understand how to effectively utilize the materials and resources, thereby making the learning meaningful for their students. McFarland et al. (2019) further indicated that veteran and new teachers reported needing PD that addressed the curriculum standards.

Teachers understand how to use materials and resources and address the standards, but they also must know how best to connect their lesson's content to their students. PD is a tool to help make the connections. Bana (2018) explored brain development that may inform teaching and instruction. The study was based on five

components of Desimone and Garet's (2015) model for effective PD. This theory's foundation is that if teacher practice is to be ultimately informed, the PD's appropriate conditions and characteristics are necessary. The PD can no longer be passive; it must be active (Desimone & Garet, 2015). A supportive environment surrounded by colleagues is needed. The researchers identified four themes produced by the data; however, there are limitations to the study:

- Theme 1: The structure of the PD is critical to its success.
- Theme 2: Follow-up PD is critical to the implementation of the training.
- Theme 3: Effective PD on the neuroscience of learning needs specific components.
- Theme 4: Neuroscience of learning PD is beneficial for elementary teachers.

These themes were adhered to when completing the PD for the 3-day workshops for this study.

According to Theme 1, the PD structure was *chunked* into 3 days but could be broken down into half days to allow time for the teachers to digest the learning. Theme 2 offers follow-up training. The PD for this project is only a starting point; increasing teachers' awareness of culture and its impacts on Black students is demanding and requires time. Theme 3 identified that the PD needs to be relevant to the audience. During the interviews, the participants indicated that the local district shares the need for PD to ensure that culturally relevant practices were utilized effectively. Lastly, Theme 4 understanding how different teachers work. The workshops were developed to allow the PD to be facilitated, discussions, videos, and hands-on opportunities. The four themes

presented identified that they allow for active learning, coherence, sustained duration, and collective participation (Bana, 2018).

The Principals' Role in Providing PD

The need to develop and manage human resources is advantageous in all organizations. Particularly in education, it is vital that training and development are provided for teachers from preservice to the in-service stage (Vikaraman et al., 2017). The researchers explored the need for principals to support the beginner teacher. The role of the principal in the school in leading PD is critical. The principal is critical because they are the primary resource for developing teacher leaders (Szeto & Cheng, 2017). According to Szeto and Cheng's (2017) study, teacher leaders are leaders in the classroom and outside the classroom. They ensure student learning (within their grade level or department), and they support their peers. The principal and teacher leaders help determine the school's vision, instructional needs, support, curriculum development, and PD. The principal's role is to communicate regularly and allow time for feedback in shaping the needs of the teachers and students in the school.

After studying PD in education, Koonce et al. (2019) identified factors that prevented principal engagement in the PD process. Two hundred forty-nine participants were surveyed, and a sample of 20 principals was also interviewed. According to the findings, many leaders at the site are equally responsible for PD, including principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and the PD team. The researchers also found two themes. When determining what the PD looked like, 75% of the principals indicated that teachers needed to use the knowledge and skills acquired in

the PD. The second theme identified was the need to increase the time allowed for PLCs. The principals noted that teachers needed more time to collaborate with their peers. Again, these researchers found that PLCs allow the teachers to develop and improve their knowledge and skills.

Along these same lines, Choy and Chua (2019) expressed the importance of school leadership and how site leadership determines its site's PD needs. They further stated that PD brings about more outstanding teacher quality and promotes school leaders' and teachers' growth and development, enhancing student learning and growth. As the primary PD lead, the principal allows for the development of knowledge and skills for their teaching staff. Speck and Knipe (2005) examined the need to use PD as a tool to ensure that all students had the best teaching and learning. The authors found that teachers who knew their content and strategies had many options to teach all students and ensure this success.

PLCs as PD

The term PLCs, according to DuFour and Eaker (2009), stated that each word of the phrase was purposeful. A *professional* is someone who had experience in a specialized field. *Learning* refers to educators who can better achieve their goals based on their collaborative investigation; they continually practice and study. The phrase's last word is *communities*, a structure or group linked by common interests. Dufour and Eaker also explained the role PLCs play in PD.

According to Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017), PLCs enhance teacher collaboration, student achievement, allow greater collective efficacy, and are predictive of teachers

working together. The researchers also investigated the relationship between teachers' collective efficacy and their PLC (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2018). They collected 310 surveys from one district that systemically implemented PLCs. Their finding suggested that teachers who engaged and supported each other in PLC work lead to collective efficacy that contributed to student achievement.

Brown et al. (2018) reviewed and explored the role of PLCs. They found that PLCs implemented in the lower grade levels through college years have many resulting benefits. PLCs provide an environment that encourages PD, collaboration, and innovation among teachers. Research suggests positive school reform occurs when teachers participate in authentic PLCs, with improved student achievement as a by-product.

Wilson (2016) researched to understand better secondary teachers lived experiences through their involvement in a PLC. PLCs are a place in which professional growth can be cultivated (Wilson, 2016). There were 65 participants involved in the data collection for the study. The research findings showed that principal leadership has a significant impact on cultivating teacher leaders and that school culture in the work of PLCs must be deliberate but also delicate.

The role of PLCs as an opportunity to predict student achievement was studied by Ronfeldt et al. (2015). Ronfeldt et al. investigated the kinds of teacher collaboration across a school district to report different collaboration quality. The quality was related to student achievement. Teacher observations, a teacher survey, and administrative data were used as data collection tools. The findings revealed that 84% of the teachers identified as a member of an instructional team, and 90% of these teachers noted that

their experience was helpful. The findings also suggested that better collaboration was linked to student achievement gains.

A PLC, when developed within the school community, is usually part of the school culture. According to Schaap and de Bruijn (2018), PLCs are composed of teachers who volunteer to participate and complete specific tasks. The researchers observed four PLCs for 3 years and disseminated a questionnaire along with a participatory research methodology. The questionnaire was used for flushing out the group characteristics, collective learning process, and outcomes. Through participatory research, the researchers identified seven elements that affect PD, task perceptions, group composition, tensions between roles, beliefs about alignment, reflective dialogues, socialization, and ownership. This longitudinal study revealed elements that affect the PLCs' development and how this may change over time. Based on the conclusions, there was a more significant commitment and motivation when the members took ownership of the group's goals and objectives. The members needed to engage in professional dialogue, and the collective knowledge base was improved. Those who plan PD must be deliberate and intentional about the goals and outcomes of the experience. Teachers must have an abundance of time to digest the learning and make connections to their current practices.

PLCs are also seen as PD opportunities, and they foster a sense of agency in teachers. According to Brodie (2019), PLCs intend to position teachers as agents of their PD. Brodie conducted a study to investigate teachers' professional agency and their decision to participate in or abandon their PLC. Brodie conducted interviews with

teachers and principals. According to Eteläpelto et al. (2013), being able to make choices, take the initiative, or influence others, is "agency." This sense of agency in PLCs is a clear and shared focus, challenging the members to develop and embrace a shared focus (Brodie, 2019). The findings suggest that there are three kinds of agency. My study included PLCs as a form of PD because PLCs provide more time for teacher collaboration and are sometimes used by the site administration and teachers as PD. PD in which teachers learn and grow with their grade level or department teams.

CRR PD

The students in the United States are racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse. Several teachers who teach these students are not (U.S. Department of Education Equity and Excellence Commission, n.d.). Many researchers have studied and documented that students' race and cultural background significantly influence their achievement (Gregory et al., 2010; Milner, 2013; Sleeter & Grant, 2011). According to Scott (2000), if education impacts students' lives, school districts need to require PD and training for teachers that equips them with knowledge and skills through culturally relevant, expert practice.

Culturally responsive teaching is not new. Researchers (Gay, 2013, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Nieto, 1992) have been conducting studies for the last 40 years and taught teachers how to develop instructional delivery systems based on what works racially ethnically and linguistically or culturally diverse (Krasnoff, 2016). Teachers must be intentional about creating a culturally responsive classroom, and PD is usually needed for teachers to acknowledge their own biases and understand equitable practices.

CRR PD must begin with the participants looking inward at "self." According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), CRT is a multifaceted approach. It is something the teacher does or an approach they use to support students in accelerating their learning. Students need to become the leaders of their learning, and CRT practices support them (Hammond, 2017). Culturally relevant strategies support student learning because they significantly recognize the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Kuykendall (1989) stated, "Culture determines how children perceive life and their relationship to the world. Because culture also influences how and what children learn, educators can use culture to improve self-image and achievement (pp. 32-33)."

My study explored teachers' perceptions of the use of CRR strategies to improve Black student's academic outcomes (Krasnoff, 2016; Kunjufu, 1986; & Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995) determined that students who are not from the dominant culture need teachers who understand how to create a classroom that is responsive to the students who are not from their culture. The need for PD was evident based on the responses from the participants in the study. The developed PD workshop series will support teachers in obtaining the tools to support and encourage Black students.

Implementation and Timeline

A proposed timeline would be presented to the local district, outlining a timeline for implementation. Table 6 is the proposed timeline for the PD. The implementation would be the superintendent's goal. There would be close contact with them to present

the study and the findings. There would also be close communication with the director of PD, site principals, and PD coaches to share the plan.

Table 6

Proposed Timeline

Month	Mission	Team Members	Provide Information – Visual
May	Meet with the superintendent	Superintendent and researcher	Executive report
June	Meet with the director of PD	Director and researcher (other members recommended by the superintendent)	Executive report Presentation – goals/outcomes of the PD
July	Train the PD coaches	PD director, PD coaches, principals and researcher	Executive report presentation – goals/outcomes of the PD
August	Conduct PD sessions	Coaches, principals, and researcher	Presentation slides and resources
September/October	Conduct PD sessions	Coaches, principals, and researcher	Presentation slides and resources
November	Conduct PD sessions	Coaches and researcher	Presentation slides and resources
December/January	Review the evaluations	PD director, PD coaches, principals and researcher	Online evaluations and data outcomes
February	Develop plan with PD director and principals – PLC, more sessions	PD Director, PD coaches, principals and researcher	Plan for the remainder of the year and next year
March	Conduct PD sessions	Coaches and researcher	Presentation slides and resources
April	Conduct PD sessions	Coaches and researcher	Presentation slides and resources

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

The resources needed for the PD sessions will be included. When the focus is on a school district, the majority of the supports are readily available. Teachers are provided with time throughout the school year to attend mandatory or growth PD, at least 3-5 days a year. The district usually provides three days before school begins. The mandatory is based on a requirement of the school board or district administration. The growth PD is available year-round, and teachers may select from a PD calendar based on their growth needs. This growth is usually considered to be professional growth. The planning for mandatory or professional growth is usually determined by the director of PD and her team. The director uses survey data to determine what growth PD is needed. Once the mandatory PD is planned, the site principals are informed, provided with overviews, and asked to select based on their site needs.

The majority of the classroom spaces would be able to accommodate the PD workshops. Classrooms have computers, Smartboards for visuals, and internet access for the facilitator and each teachers' laptop. The school site leadership team will determine the time and dates for the PD workshops and include the district PD calendar's learning opportunity. As the developer of the modules, I would work closely with the PD director to ensure that the facilitator is appropriately trained before presenting any workshop material. Since this is a mandatory PD determined by the school board, there would be no financial cost for teachers to participate.

Potential Barriers

There are a few barriers that I could foresee. The district has an annual PD calendar, and the topic of cultural proficiency is not on the calendar for this year. The PD director and her team develop the calendar at the end of May for the upcoming school year. They make decisions based on many factors. One factor is textbook adoption, new standards or curriculum, or needs from sites.

Another barrier that the site-level PD team may refuse to focus on CRR strategies. The site leadership team may not see value in providing training that is not included in their School Site Plan. Principals usually have a 3-5-year plan, and this topic may not be a top priority.

I anticipate that this district will ensure that the 3-day workshop series will take place. However, equity, implicit bias, or stereotypes work on oneself, and looking inward takes time. Therefore, a potential barrier could be that the district or site principal may choose not to provide teachers with ongoing support. The follow-up training is essential to teachers changing their instructional practices to meet Black students' needs better. As the facilitator, I would encourage the district and site administration to continue with this training type.

The final barrier could be that teachers would not be interested in the PD because they have not been immersed in the "why." This work is hard to do if you do not see the need or do not have a leader sharing the student data by race and ethnicity. The teacher may feel. Teachers have a lot of choices in the PD they elect to attend. This PD should

not be by choice. The district's data is apparent; Black students are underperforming at all sites and grade levels in this district.

Potential Solutions to Barriers

To address the district PD calendar's concern, I could meet with the PD director and share and explain the data. Most administrators are willing to do more when they have a rationale. The participants expressed the need for this type of PD multiple times during the data collection.

The site leadership is a little more complicated because the sites usually do not have the funding to offer substitute days for their teachers to attend PD. However, I would again meet with the principals and share my research and data. Also, principals are generally interested in finding solutions to low student achievement.

The most probable solution to the barriers is to meet with the school board. The school board requested that the district begin to focus on CRR practices. The local district took 3 years to engage all stakeholders in the strategic planning process. This process involved parents, students, community leaders, and district staff, and managers. One of the goals was to increase cultural awareness. The district offered a few PD opportunities for site leaders to bring a team and engage in equity work.

Lastly, my solution to a barrier is to provide a published executive report to the school district and explain the research, data and share their staff members' voices. The district data would be represented in the report, and each site principal would receive a copy that details the Black students' levels at their site.

Roles and Responsibilities

Several district leaders will have roles and responsibilities in the implementation of this PD. I will also have roles in the PD implementation and timeline. The first person I would connect with is the superintendent. The superintendent will ensure that the PD plan is implemented and sustained. I would meet with the superintendent to share the executive report and express the PD series' need. The data were impetuous, but, not all educators value or use data when making decisions or setting goals.

The director of PD would play a significant role in the implementation timeline. The director would also have to be her team members who would be trained as a trainer-of-trainers. The director would also have a role in the evaluation. A meeting would be arranged to ensure that we analyzed the participant's session evaluations and their feedback on the presentation. The PD director would also be responsible for including the PD in the district calendar, providing updates to the superintendent and school board.

School site principals and leaders are critical stakeholders, and this project will directly impact them. Site principals and leaders determine the need for a PD series at the site. Therefore, it will have to be vetted by them; they will also provide the location or space, select the date and time, and provide needed resources. They also benefit greatly by their teaching staff being culturally proficient.

My role in providing the implementation for the PD is also significant. I can also facilitate the PD workshop sessions if needed. I would train the coaches and principals on the use of the presentations and resources. Share the evaluation data with the

superintendent and director and maintain an open communication line with the PD director and site principals.

Project Evaluation Plan

There will be many opportunities for formative and summative evaluation so that the superintendent can evaluate the effectiveness of the recommended PD series. Embedded in the school year is a date for the PD director and me to analyze, disaggregate the data, and prepare a report for the superintendent and the school board.

Formative Evaluation

The PD workshop series' focus consists of a formative evaluation that all participants will complete at the end of each PD session. Each participant will have an opportunity to learn and use evidence-based, culturally responsive tools and instructional strategies to help them better understand the reasons for and how to apply culturally relevant strategies appropriately. The PD opportunity will allow teachers to learn about culturally relevant resources and materials, create a culturally relevant classroom environment, and have time to work with their peers to develop CRR lessons.

Teachers will be evaluated based on their attendance in the PD sessions and completion of the modules; there will also be daily outcome measures, i.e., charts and graphs, entrance and exit tickets, and daily electronic PD surveys will be used as evaluation measures. The workshop modules will be evaluated using a Google Form survey. The participants will complete a survey after each module to determine if the PD's format and content were useful and offer feedback on the need for future PD. Teachers will also have planning time embedded in the workshop sessions.

Summative Evaluation

A summative evaluation will be completed at the end of each workshop session and the workshop series. All assessments will be completed online, and the participants will express their strengths areas, their areas of growth and assess the PD goals. The final evaluation will be provided after Session 3. The following online questions will be posted at the end of the third workshop session:

1. How did this PD support you in increasing your understanding of culturally relevant and responsive strategies?
2. Please share three strategies you will attempt within the next few days.
3. What are two of the changes you made in your classroom environment as a result of this PD?
4. What are two to three strategies you learned that you would share with a member of your staff?
5. What could we have done better? What should we add or increase the time to do?
6. What session had the most considerable impact on your understanding of how to choose the best strategies that are culturally relevant?
7. How did this PD workshop series cause you to reflect on the instructional strategies you choose for your Black students?
8. Did you have enough planning time? How many lessons were you able to review?
9. How do you plan to increase the academic outcomes for your Black students?

10. How was this series? Do you need more PD? If so, what specifically do you need?

Some of the above questions will be included in a preassessment. This data will help us measure impact and needs. The summative data would be collected and compiled at the end of the series.

The participants who completed all three sessions will receive a "Culturally Relevant and Responsive" certificate. The summative evaluation will be used for two purposes, first to determine future PD, and two, and report to the superintendent and the school board. During the calendar PD year, the PD director and I will review the evaluation data and share it with other stakeholders.

Key Stakeholder Group

Others would have roles in this PD implementation, teachers, students, families, administrators, district officials, and board members. This group is vital because they have a significant influence on the success of this PD. Each of these stakeholders benefits from teachers improving their practice and effectively utilizing culturally relevant practices to increase Black students' academic outcomes. Students who are not Black also benefit from teachers knowing and utilizing Black students' culture and background when they teach. According to Lynch (2018), culture impacts how one sees the world and how one processes information. Teachers seeing Black students through a more positive lens allows the other students to do the same.

School site principals and leaders are critical stakeholders, and this project will directly impact them. Site principals and leaders determine the need for a PD series at the

site. Therefore, it will have to be vetted by them; they will also provide the location or space, select the date and time, and provide needed resources. They also benefit greatly by their teaching staff being culturally proficient.

Project Implications, Including Social Change

There are implications for the CDE and the Department of Education. Currently, California has standards that address CRP. However, teachers who have been in the educational system for more than five years were not required to participate in PD or course work and are still required to adhere to the Professional Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). Therefore, this PD would allow teachers to learn how to utilize and meet state standards. This PD could be a model for other districts in the state. In California, districts are contemplating how to provide and ensure equity in policies, procedures, and practices. This PD would be a great place to begin this work.

At the federal level, the Department of Education could require legislators and policymakers to ensure that teachers could access PD and curriculum designed to ensure culturally relevant pedology and practices. This project will provide teachers who teach Black students with an opportunity to add new tools to their toolbox, learn and improve their awareness of race and culture, learn when and how to utilize strategies that are culturally relevant during instruction, learn how to create a culturally rich environment, and learn how to develop culturally relevant lessons.

This project has implications to potentially benefit teachers, students, families, and the local district. The social change that this 3-day PD could provide is two-fold. It could benefit Black students by ensuring that more of them engage during instruction and

apply the skills and concepts to ensure they graduate college and career ready. The local district benefits when teachers are more prepared to teach all students at high levels. A PD such as this may allow the academic achievement gap to decrease and eventually be eliminated between the Black and White student groups. This project would also support the local district in ensuring that teachers who teach Black students are prepared to improve their Black students' academic outcomes. This study can have a positive impact on Black students, teaches, and district leaders. The need is great for PD that addresses equitable practices.

Improvement of teacher's practices will impact academic outcomes for students, especially Black students. The local and national economy can also be positively impacted by more Black students graduating from high school college and career ready. The local district would benefit because they have a large population of Black students; an increase in student achievement could also decrease the need for Black students to enter into Special Education program, decreases the number of out-of-school suspensions, and increases the attendance rate.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, I present my reflections on the process of conducting a study to explore teachers' perceptions of the use of CRR strategies to improve Black students' academic outcomes. The problem explored in this study was the academic achievement gap between Black and White students, which could be caused or contributed to by teachers not using CRR strategies in their classrooms. The participants were six teachers who worked in three school sites in the local district. There was at least one participant from each grade-level span. In this section, I discuss the project's strengths and limitations, my recommendations, my reflections on the study and the PD workshops developed, and the suppositions I concluded from both. Based on the findings of this study and the literature reviews, PD workshops related to culture, equity, and bias may provide teachers with skills to support Black student achievement. Therefore, I developed a 3-day PD workshop series that provides teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators with presentations, activities, and strategies to address their Black students' current cultural backgrounds, learning styles, and needs.

Project Strengths

This project's strength is that it increases teachers' knowledge and understanding of practices that culturally support the students they teach. The data collected from the participants and the findings validate this strength. Providing PD that targets students' cultures will improve their learning outcomes. The 3-day PD workshop sessions will increase the tools available to teachers to address the gap in practice in the local district. Teachers trained with knowledge of how to best use CRR practices could help ensure that

Black students excel academically. Teachers' cultural and cognitive decisions with their diverse students are reflected in the strategies they chose to use during instruction (Brown et al., 2019). This project study is essential for teachers and district leaders. According to the district's SPC, teachers need to understand the diverse cultures of the students they serve.

I designed the PD based on the results from the two data collection instruments. The participants shared their beliefs and understanding of CRR practices during an interview and through a self-reflection survey. Korthagen (2017) proposed that teachers who connect with the PD will increase their skill sets. The PD may help teachers determine the strategies they choose and provide a lens for how teachers see Black students in the textbooks, curriculum, and lessons they use. It may also allow Black students to have a voice in what and how they learn.

Once the PD sessions are completed, teachers will understand how to choose and use CRR strategies. The tools teachers acquire may support them in deciding when and how to apply CRR practices during instruction. The use of CRR strategies may assist Black students in learning and applying the skills taught. This project study offers teachers PD that may allow them to obtain the skills needed to ensure that Black students excel academically.

Project Limitations

I identified a few limitations to this project. One major limitation is time. Time is a commodity for most teachers and administrators. Teachers need time for planning lessons, collaborating with peers, and learning or participating in PD. The PD workshop

developed for this study is 3 full days in length, and the district must include and offer the PD in their PD calendar. The 3 days of PD must be spaced closely, on back-to-back-to back days, or at least one session a month. Spreading the sessions throughout the year is not the best way for teachers to adequately apply the tools or strategies learned. This PD and other similar training should be offered multiple times a school year.

Another limitation of this project study is that most districts do not offer PD to all who need it. The PD calendar usually only allows space for a few staff from each site. The best outcomes for this PD will be achieved when teams participate and attend the sessions. This PD should take place during the school year and be available for all grade levels and all teachers at a school site. Teachers need allies and support when learning about equitable practices and culture. The strategies and learning embedded in the PD will allow teachers time to learn and grow with their peers. The PD workshops may do little to make that cultural climate change needed without a majority of the staff participating.

The sample size could also be a limitation. The sample for this study was only six teachers from different school levels and sites. The district is relatively large, and the teachers who participated are a fraction of the teaching force. This limitation may have provided a narrower view of how the teachers, as a group overall, perceive culturally relevant strategies.

The last limitation of this project study is that the findings may not be generalized. This study was completed with only six teachers in an urban district in the southwest part of the United States. The study findings apply to the study sites but may

not be generalized to school sites in other districts, counties, or states. This study can be strengthened by adding similar school sites and districts in various parts of the country and collecting similar data (see Mooij et al., 2016). A study with more teachers is also needed. On a positive note, this study's participants included teachers from the three grade spans so the local district could generalize the findings to other similar grade spans. The participants in this study expressed the need for additional PD to understand how utilizing strategies based on cultural assets can increase Black students' academic outcomes.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

One recommendation for an alternative approach is to increase the time allowed for teachers to participate in PD. The district may need to offer extra flex days or hours for teachers to participate in the PD workshop. Districts can embed extra duty pay for their teachers by increasing their duty year by 3 to 5 days. Teachers need time to discuss and collaborate with their peers to utilize CRR strategies best. Principals could use a portion of their staff meetings each week and provide this PD of teachers in small chunks. Teachers could also be brought back to school early in August or leave late in June to receive this PD if time is unavailable during the school year.

Teachers also need to be provided with resources that are specifically designed for Black students. The resources could include various ways the teacher could differentiate the instruction for Black students. Gregory and Fergus (2017) recounted that differences begin to emerge as early as preschool between Black and White students. Gregory et al. (2010) added that these trends would continue unless the district provides additional

learning time for teachers. Pharis et al. (2019) also found that school-based PD prepares teachers and supports their instruction quality. Providing additional PD opportunities, which include resources teachers could utilize immediately, could ensure more culturally aware and responsive teachers. If time is a barrier, this PD could be provided virtually and provide support during collaboration or PLC time. Another recommendation for collecting more relevant data would be for more researchers to conduct a similar research study in other districts across the country.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

My choice to enter the doctorate program was due to my belief that education is the great equalizer. I know that continual learning will help me help the others that I serve. The PD project I developed was also a tool for learning. While researching and working on this project study, I learned a great deal about how culture impacts how people learn. When teachers learn and understand how the culture of their students may have impacts on the students' learning outcomes, they will teach utilizing those cultural aspects to ensure their students' academic growth. I have learned even more about how teachers' beliefs affect their actions. The problem of focus in this study was identified while I was a district leader. I was responsible for reporting district academic outcomes, and it was evident that Black students were not improving academically for more than a decade based on any data point. Black students were the lowest-performing student group in ELA, math, graduation rate, suspension rate, and college-going rate. As a result, I started to focus on determining why; this led me to exploring classroom teachers and

their knowledge and beliefs about CRR practices or strategies and how using the students' cultures could increase Black student achievement.

While working on my doctoral degree and working in various instructional leadership positions, my role as a scholar-practitioner intensified. I often thought I would just quit, but my need to continue learning would always bring me back. When I realized this was a process and not a product, I began to experience less stress. The editing and revising process were very exhausting. However, once I searched for relevant, peer-reviewed literature about how an individual's culture impacts their learning, I was pleasantly surprised and became inspired to continue my doctoral journey. When I interviewed teachers, it reinforced this thought. Each participant stated that they believed utilizing the students' culture in the class is definitely needed, and to do that, the teachers need more PD. The PD series would be a start to helping teachers understand the why, how, and when to use evidence-based strategies and practices and apply culturally diverse resources that could make a positive difference in the classroom (see Dean & Hubbell, 2012; Gay, 2013).

Reflection on Importance of the Work

My reflections on this work's importance are based on my belief that all students should end each school year on grade level, graduate high school, and be academically prepared for college and career. I want to see academic growth for all student groups. However, in the last few decades, the release of state academic data has consistently shown that the achievement gap between Black and White students has not closed or decreased. As a Black administrator, I will continually review and analyze achievement

data and hope to soon see that the gap closes. As an administrator, it is my job to support teachers in increasing their knowledge and skills to close this gap. According to the literature and research, having cultural knowledge can begin to bridge the gap; therefore, I believe this work is essential.

Teachers must develop their cultural competence and racial awareness (Howard, 2019). Having been a classroom teacher, a principal, and a district leader, I have observed how devastating the results can be for Black students. They feel misunderstood and left out of the education process. All individuals want to be in a place where they feel people understand and care about their success. The district data shows that there has been little effort in preventing Black students from failing. After reviewing the literature, I found that cultural competence could also help other students from various races or backgrounds. This work's importance is that if teachers learn how to use culture as a bridge to understanding, then student learning is not far behind.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The study contributes to the literature on teachers' use of CRR strategies to engage and involve Black students in the lessons being taught. The participants' perceptions of the need for PD were evident in their responses. Teachers shared many examples of their reasons for wanting the PD developed in this project.

One implication for future work would be for teachers to better understand their culture and others' culture and begin to use it to close the learning gaps between the student groups in their classroom and, eventually, the academic gaps in achievement data. The PD developed for this study could increase teachers' knowledge of CRR strategies,

why equitable practices are important, and how their biases may unintendedly lead them to mistreat Black students. This knowledge could help teachers plan, instruct, and support students more appropriately.

The findings of this study were grounded in the perceptions and experiences of six teachers who taught either at the elementary, middle, or high school level for more than 3 years and had at least two Black students in a class. Future researchers could continue conducting studies about teachers' understanding of cultural competence. Additional research may be necessary to compare teachers who, according to data, are culturally competent versus teachers who are not or do not show academic growth for Black students over time. One possibility would be looking at Title 1 schools versus non-Title 1 schools to see if there is a difference in Black students' academic outcomes. Lastly, future researchers could conduct a series of classroom observations and identify strategies or practices that produce better academic outcomes for Black students.

Conclusion

Cultural competence is needed by all teachers who teach Black students. I developed this project study to explore teachers' beliefs and experiences related to CRT strategies to promote Black student achievement. Based on the findings, I developed a 3-day PD workshop to provide teachers with tools to address the gaps in their cultural understanding and support them in improving the academic outcomes of Black students. According to the study results, teachers do not possess many strategies to support Black students' learning outcomes. The need to do things differently in their classrooms is not always recognized or understood. The PD workshops provided in this study permit

teachers to develop a lens that will allow them to see all students. The PD workshops are a venue to support teachers in understanding and learning how to organize their room environment, choose materials, and utilize strategies that will support Black students academically. This knowledge may lead to social change needed in the local district and other districts that may show gaps between Black students and other student groups.

I was motivated to conduct this study because, as a classroom teacher and then a principal, I was not sure why some teachers were more effective than others with Black students. As I researched and collected and analyzed the data, I discovered essential facts about being culturally competent that helped me better understand why knowing, using, and allowing students to utilize the cultural assets they bring to the classroom would result in academic success for the students.

There is a need for teachers to become more culturally aware. This awareness can lead to teachers teaching lessons in which all students can assess the skills and learn the concepts. PD is a way to support teachers in learning and doing things better. I hope once this PD is presented to the local district and teachers are provided with the workshop, the teachers will utilize the strategies and practices learned and begin to use the cultural assets students bring to school, students will learn at higher levels, and the academic achievement gap between the Black and White student groups will begin to decrease and eventfully close. The participants interviewed and surveyed shared the need; therefore, I believe once the PD workshops are presented to the district, they will begin to implement them.

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Appendix A: The Project

PD/Training Curriculum and Materials

Introduction

The title of the PD title for this project was "Culturally Relevant Strategies! Why?" This type of training aimed to support teachers' understanding and use of culturally relevant strategies. Black students have been academically achieving at much lower levels than other student groups in the local district. The use of culturally relevant strategies may enrich the classroom environment, thereby increasing Black students' academic outcomes. Providing training and resources for teachers to learn more about culturally relevant, culturally responsive, or becoming culturally competent may provide teachers with a better understanding and provide a richer educational experience for Black students. According to Howard & Navarro (2016), cultural diversity warrants that educational practitioners think creatively about the strategies they choose. Providing teachers with understanding and tools to support them in creating an environment that is culturally relevant/responsive to Black students' needs.

Design

The PD modules were designed to provide 3-days of research-based sessions and activities for teachers who have Black students assigned to their class or period. The PD is being offered to prepare teachers with the tools needed to support Black students. This PD will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. on days allotted by the PD director. 3-day module with six-hour sessions. At the beginning of each session, there will be an opening activity, "Community Builder/Ice Breaker." In the end, there will be a survey from each

participant to collect data on the effectiveness of the day. The survey will be used as an exit ticket. It will be collected at the end of the PD session on each day.

The 3-day workshops are designed to offer teachers options for creating an environment that may help Black students excel, thrive, and achieve academically at higher levels. This PD may provide teachers with the understanding to create systemic opportunities for positive change in their classroom environment. This PD will be 18 hours broken into three-hour sessions that will be packaged as six modules. This PD can be completed in three 6-hour day sessions or six 3-hour half-day sessions. The modules are not designed as a one-time event. This PD series is only a start; the district should continue to provide similar PD sessions that should be offered multiple times each school year. There should be follow-up or similar PD sessions offered multiple times throughout the school year. Each participant will receive 3-hours of participation for each Module A and F. CRR PD must begin with the participants looking inward at "self." According to Hammond (2014), Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is a multifaceted approach. The teacher can utilize this approach to support students in accelerating their learning. Students need to become the leaders of their learning, and CRT practices support students in doing so (Hammond).

Goals

There are two goals for this training:

1. Classroom teachers will be provided with learning opportunities as to the "why" of utilizing culturally relevant strategies.

2. Classroom teachers will learn how to effectively utilize strategies to support Black students in accessing grade-level content.

Learning Outcomes

During the PD sessions, teachers will,

1. Understand the why for culturally relevant strategies and how they may be used to support Black student achievement.
2. Identify the different types of strategies that may be used to support the academic achievement of Black students.
3. Design lessons that are culturally relevant/responsive, utilizing culturally relevant strategies.

Target Audience

The target audience for this PD is TK-12th grade teachers who teach Black students. However, site administrators may also benefit from these PD sessions.

Implementation Plan

Module Format

The Sessions will be in Module Format – There are six modules:

Day 1 – Equity in Schools

Module A – Introducing Bias

Module B – How Does Bias Manifest in Our School?

Day 2 – How History Influences Education

Module C – Historical Perspective About Race in America

Module D – How Curriculum May Impact Black Students?

Day 3 – Culturally Relevant/Responsive Strategies

Module E – Understanding Culturally Relevant Strategies

Module F – How to Determine and Use Culturally Relevant/Responsive Strategies

Resources Needed: Chart paper, sticky notes, notebooks/paper, pencils/pens, markers

Timeline: Three-days of Culturally Relevant Training Modules (may be ½ day training)

- Day 1 – 6 hours – Modules A & B (Bias)
- Day 2 – 6 hours – Modules C & D (History)
- Day 3 – 6 hours – Modules E & F (Strategies)

Each module is a 3-hour session

Day 1
Agenda

PD Module 1-2

Date:
Time: 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Location: TBD
Topic: Equity - Introducing Bias Part 1 & 2

Time	Topic/Content	Method/Materials
7:30-8:00	Sign-In, Breakfast, Network	Breakfast, Sign-In Sheet, Name Plate, Agenda, & Handouts
8:00-8:30	Welcome, Introductions, Overview of Day, Prompt – What are your expected outcomes for the day?	Norms Chart (once developed for the group), Writing Prompt
8:30-8:45	Why? District Data	PowerPoint Presentation Handout
8:45-10:00	What is Equity?	Discussion
10:00-10:15	Break	
10:15-11:30	Introducing Bias – Part 1	PowerPoint Presentation Handout
11:30-11:45	Morning Reflect	Reflection Journal
11:45-12:30	Lunch Break	
12:30-1:15	Continue Bias Conversation	PowerPoint Presentation Handout
1:15-1:30	Break	
1:30-2:10	Article – We're All a Little Biased, Even if We Don't Know it"	Article Read Handout

2:10-2:25	Process & Reflect	Reflection Journal
2:25-2:30	Evaluation	

Day 2
Agenda

PD Module 3-4

Date:
Time: 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Location: TBD
Topic: How History Influences Education

Time	Topic/Content	Method/Materials
7:30-8:00	Sign-In, Breakfast, Network	Breakfast, Sign-In Sheet, Name Plate, Agenda, & Handouts
8:00-8:30	Welcome Back – Day 2 Introductions, Overview of Day - What are your expected outcomes for the day?	Norms Chart (once developed for the group), Writing Prompt
8:30-8:45	What is Equity?	Video
8:45-10:00	Introducing Bias – Part 1I	PowerPoint Presentation Handout
10:15-10:30	Break	
10:30-11:30	Introducing Bias – Part 1I – continued	PowerPoint Presentation Handout
11:30-11:45	Process & Reflect	Reflection Journal
11:45-12:30	Lunch Break	
12:30-1:15	Prejudice & Bias Video – "A Girl Like Me"	PowerPoint Presentation Handout
1:15-1:30	Break	
1:30-2:00	The House We Live In: -Race – The Power of an Illusion	Video

2:00-2:25	Process & Reflect	Reflection Journal
2:25-2:30	Evaluation	

Day 3
Agenda

PD Module 5-6

Date:
Time: 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Location: TBD
Topic: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy & Culturally Relevant Strategies

Time	Topic/Content	Method/Materials
7:30-8:00	Sign-In, Breakfast, Network	Breakfast, Sign-In Sheet, Name Plate, Agenda, & Handouts
8:00-8:15	Welcome, Introductions, Overview of Day, Prompt – What are your expected outcomes for the day?	Norms Chart (once developed for the group), Writing Prompt
8:15-8:45	Review Day 1 & 2	
8:45-9:15	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	PowerPoint Presentation Handout
9:15-10:15	Process & Reflect	Reflection Journal
10:15-10:30	Break	
10:30-11:15	Understanding CRT	Jigsaw – Article Read Handout
11:15-11:30	Process & Reflect	Reflection Journal
11:30-12:15	Lunch Break	
12:15-1:15	Research Strategies and Practices that are Culturally Relevant	Resources
1:15-1:30	Break	
1:30-2:00	Celebration	Certificates
2:00-2:25	Process & Reflect	Reflection Journal
2:25-2:30	Evaluation	

Project Facilitator Notes – Day 1

Introducing Bias

Slide 2. Welcome to Day 1 of a 3-day Series – "Equity, why and how" and the goals of the PD – Reminder: "We are all connected through humanity; this work is about people!"

PLEASE NOTE: This seven-step framework is adapted from © Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education by Paul C. Gorski and Seema G. Pothini, 2018.

Introductions – each person will introduce themselves – 30 minutes

1) Name
2) School Site
3) What do they look to gain from this PD?
4) Questions/concerns (keep a chart for questions)

Slide 3. Agenda – share goals for the day – 1 minute

Slide 4. Norms – It is vital to carefully set up this conversation and have group norms that the group creates or agrees to. Here are some suggested norms. Read them aloud, ask if the group can live with each norm – first to 3, I don't like it, or live with it.

1) Be Willing to surface and explore unconscious beliefs and values.
2) Listen to hear, not respond.
3) Be mindful that your truth can be different than others.
4) Honor confidentiality.
5) Take responsibility for your own learning.
6) Be willing to think about situations and issues with a new or expanded perspective.

Slide 5. Quote – Why we need to have these conversations. Share – 2 minutes

Please Share - The landmark Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education (Hill Jr., 2004) shifted the educational terrain for all students across the United States. This historical ruling not only named the pervasive weed of inequity that had grown throughout the schoolhouses in towns, cities, and states, it brought to light the injustices that the U.S. suffered due to the systematic racism that weaved throughout our laws, town-halls and societal practices. It forced individuals to, at the very least, adjust the blatant biases that were the norm of the day. Some may even say it placed the burden of acquainting communities to children and their families who had never had the opportunity of knowing individuals outside of their neighborhoods.

While Brown v. Board of Education placed the technical burden of ensuring that all children received an equal opportunity to education, it did not solve the adaptive work of recognizing the micro and macro practices of biases intertwined in individual educators and the systems they serve. The national data of school achievement by race indicate that these practices have not ceased over time; a closer look at school data trends, national assessment stats, and discipline data gives us an even greater sense that it has increased.

Slide 6. Video – What is Equity in Education? **–**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_feXDXgBvM
13 minutes

> **Please Share** – To ensure educational equity, we must disrupt patterns of implicit bias, privilege, and racism in ourselves, our organization, and the education field to contribute to equitable outcomes for all students. Without an intentional study of biases, we as educators will continue, even if unintentionally, to create barriers to learning despite our belief about educational equity and the need to use strategies that are culturally responsive/relevant.

Slide 7. Data – Set the context –help frame our work during the PD modules; this slide helps you understand the urgency and the "why" for looking at culturally relevant strategies. Review the slide – local district data – ELA and Math by Year % Perficient by race

As we embark on the bias conversation, please look at the differences in Black and White students' achievement. This is the district ELA and Math results for 7-years.
20 minutes

Slide 8. Read Article – "Equity Literacy for All" by Paul C. Gorsky and Katy Swalwell Jigsaw Activity – 1) break group into four groups (number 1-3) – depending on the size of the group – 5-7 people per group) 2) Read section 3) Share within group 4) Discuss – whole group

Slide 9. Break – 15 minutes

Slide 10. Activity – Inside/Outside – There are a few options for running this activity.

a) You can split the room into two parts, creating pairs that face one another. A/B Partners
b) Ask those on the left side of the room to be partner A and the right side of the room to be Partner B. Partner A will answer questions on slide 9, and then Partner B will listen. Next, Partner B will answer questions on slide 10, and then Partner A will listen. Ask the pair to debrief what they took away from the back and forth. You can also split the room into triads and have each person share their answers for a larger group.

15 mins

Slide 11. Continue with the Inside/Outside activity by having the groups work through these questions. Being **Inside**

Think of a situation in which you are an "insider." In this situation, you feel accepted, respected, and feel you "belong."

1. Why do you feel like an insider in the situation you described?
2. What advantages/privileges do you enjoy as an insider?
3. Did you do anything to earn the advantages/privileges of being an insider? Please explain your response.

15 minutes

Slide 12. Continue with the Inside/Outside activity by having the groups work through these questions. Being **Outside**

Think of a situation in which you are an "outsider." In this situation, you feel a lack of acceptance, respect and feel you do not "belong."

1. Why do you feel like an outsider in the situation you described?
2. What are the disadvantages of being an outsider?
3. Did you do anything to deserve the disadvantages of being an outsider? Please explain your response.

15 minutes

Slide 13. The facilitator should debrief with the whole group, asking a few groups to share what they took away/ what they learned about one another through this activity.

15 minutes

Slide 14. Morning Reflection – One word, phrase, or sentence – please share your thoughts about what you have learned this morning – 15 minutes

Slide 15. Lunch Break – 45 minutes

Slide 16. Introduce Bias – Part 1 – This activity is setting us up for a conversation about bias. This is simply a framing slide and should require no more

Questions We're Going to Discuss -

1. What is Unconscious Bias?
2. How does Unconscious Bias manifest in our world?
3. How can we recognize it and begin acting?

3 mins.

Slide 17. Unconscious Bias – refers to the **automatic** and **unconscious** stereotypes that drive people to **behave** and make decisions in certain ways. It is the mind's way of making uncontrolled and **automatic associations** between two concepts very quickly. This is the definition of Unconscious Bias. Be sure to read it aloud to the group and give them a moment to reflect on it.

It is important to note that well-intentioned people may also hold implicit biases that run counter to their stated values.

1 min

Slide 18. Video – Understanding Unconscious Bias – 5 minutes

Slide 19. Question – How does Bias Manifest Outside Education? **–** 1 minute

Slide 20. How the Legal Sector Exhibits Bias

Read the statement. Ask the group to reflect and react. "What is your initial reaction?" Please jot down your answer(s) on a sticky note – a few will share their thoughts. – 10 minutes

Research Notes:

- In a recent study, Partners at several law firms scored the same memo far differently when told that the author was white or black.
- The researchers drafted a research memo from a hypothetical third-year litigation associate. Deliberately inserted 22 different errors.
- Distributed to 60 different partners from 22 different law firms, of whom 23 were women, 37 were men, 21 were racial/ethnic minorities, and 39 were Caucasian.

- While all of the partners received the same memo, half the partners received a memo that stated the associate was African American. In contrast, the other half received a memo that stated the associate was Caucasian.
- On a five-point scale, reviews for the exact same memo averaged a 3.2 for the "African American" author and 4.1 for the "Caucasian" author.
- Overall the memo presumed to have been written by a "Caucasian" was "evaluated to be better regarding the analysis of facts and had substantively fewer critical comments.
- Partners found more spelling and grammar errors, more technical writing errors, and more errors in facts in the "African American" Thomas Meyer's memo.

Source: Reeves (2014). Written in Black & White: Exploring Confirmation bias in Racialized Perceptions of Writing Skills. http://www.nextions.com/wp-content/files_mf/1446822647201404011 4WritteninBlackandWhiteYPS.pdf

Slide 21. How the Economy Exhibits Bias Now, we will take a second to look at the economy. Read the statement. Ask the group to reflect and react. "What is your initial reaction?" Please jot down your answer(s) on a sticky note – a few will share their thoughts. – 10 minutes

Research Notes:

Analysis of grant data from the National Institute of Health (NIH), black scientists—and not other types of minorities—are less likely to receive government funding for a research project, even when they have the same credentials as their white peers. A black researcher's chances of winning an NIH grant are ten percentage points lower than a white researcher's chances.

Source: Ginther et al. (2011). Race, Ethnicity, and NIH Research Awards. http://science.sciencemag.org/content/333/6045/1015.full

Slide 22. How the Health and Human Services Sector Exhibits Bias - Now, we will take a second to look at the economy. Read the statement. Ask the group to reflect and react. "What is your initial reaction?" Please jot down your answer(s) on a sticky note – a few will share their thoughts. – 10 minutes

After reading the case study, we'll work through the following protocol to examine it.

Step 1) Identify the problem or problems posed by the case study
Step 2) Take stock of the different perspectives
Step 3) Consider possible barriers and opportunities
Step 4) Imagine equitable outcomes
Step 5) Brainstorm a shortlist of immediate-term responses
Step 6) Brainstorm long-term policy and practice adjustments
Step 7) Propose your plan of action

Slide 23. Break – 1:15-1:30

Slide 24. Article - Jigsaw Activity – break the group into 4 groups (number 1-3) – depending on the size of the group – 5-7 people per group) (50 mins)
Slide 25. Unpack the group's reactions and takeaways from the conversation. Ask participants to take some time at home to reflect on the Inside/Outside activity and write down their thoughts for the next session.
Here are some additional questions:
1. What does our data (district/school site) show us about bias?
2. What are some ways to begin screening our thoughts/actions and catch ourselves when we begin acting on UB (unconscious bias)?
3. What are some ways to begin implementing a support system around UB amongst the adults within the school?
4. What are some different ways we can begin extending this conversation and dive deeper?
Reflection – Afternoon - We did not include this as a slide, but you can also do a "plus" and "could be better if" about what worked during the meeting and what could be improved for the next one.
Slide 26. Writing activity – participants will complete 3 things that were a plus for them during today's PD and 3 things that could be better if.

Plus (+)	Could be Better if…
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Slide 27. Evaluation – 5 minutes
Evaluation Link: https://bit.ly/2Iys11X

Project Facilitator Notes – Day 2
Introducing Bias – Continued

Slide 2. Welcome Back - Introductions – each person will introduce themselves
1) Name
2) Questions/concerns (keep a chart for questions)

10 minutes
Slide 3. Review the Norms – 5 minutes
Slide 4. Review Data – "Why" for the PD Modules – 7 minutes
Slide 5. Video – *Predictability of Achievement by Race* – 5 minutes
The President and CEO of UnboundEdu – speaks about the predictability of achievement in education by race – why we need to understand our part and what we can do –,; please talk to your elbow partner about what you just heard – you may want also to jot down their answers and then ask a couple of people share. Share 10 mins
In the last session, we learned about bias outside education – today, we will learn about bias inside education – 3 minutes
Slide 6. Bias Conversation Continued - This activity is setting us up for a conversation about bias. – 5 minutes

Slide 7. We used data sets outside the education world to show what bias is and how it can manifest in other sectors. Now it is time to look at how it can manifest in education. – Ask: Have you seen bias in education? – 15 minutes
Slide 8. 49% of public-school students are not white, 51% of students are white, the flip side: 72% of public-school teachers are white, 18% are not white. Not saying that anything is wrong with a White teacher, but Black students need to have models that are "successful" As a matter of fact, ALL students benefit by having Black teachers. – 10 minutes
Slide 9. Do any of these examples play out in our school? Gather the current disciplinary data, special education data, tracking data, etc.
The question to consider: Ask the participants on a scale of 1-10 (1 = nonexistent and 10 = consistent with every school community member). – 10 minutes
Slide 10. Article – Jigsaw- "How to Have Conversations about Race" – 45 minutes
Slide 11. Break
Slide 12. Question - Is it possible that teachers' implicit sex and race biases may impact their behavioral expectations, leading them to expect and anticipate more challenging behaviors from some children and pay more attention to those children, and scrutinize them more closely? What do you think?

1) Share with your elbow partner
2) Share with whole group

15 minutes
Slide 13. After explaining this study, ask the group, "What is your initial reaction?" You can have people jot down their answers and then ask a couple of people to share.
Research Notes:
Read: 132 Participants (recruited at a large conference of early educators)
Task 1, participants viewed a series of video clips lasting 6 minutes. They were told the study is how teachers detect challenging behavior in the classroom. None of the videos contained challenging behavior.
Following the video clips' administration, participants were shown a screen with photos of the four children they had previously seen in the balanced clips (a Black boy, a Black girl, a White boy, and a White girl). When expecting challenging behaviors, teachers gazed longer at Black children, especially Black boys. 42% indicated that the Black boy required the most of their attention, followed by 34% (White boy), 13% (White girl), and 10% (Black girl)
Task 2, participants read a standardized vignette of a preschooler with challenging behavior and were randomized to receive the vignette with the child's name implying either a Black boy, Black girl, White boy, or White girl (Latoya, Emily, DeShawn, Jake) Participants rated White children's behavior as more severe than Black children's. White teachers appear to hold Black preschoolers to a lower behavioral standard.
Source: Gilliam et al. (2016). Do Early Educators' Implicit Biases Regarding Sex and Race Relate to Behavior Expectations and Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions and Suspensions?

https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/zigler/publications/Preschool%20Implicit%20Bias%20Policy%20Brief_final_9_26_276766_5379_v1.pdf
15 minutes
Slide 14. Disproportionality in Discipline **-** This is simply more data to share with your group
Research Notes:
Read: More than 3 million students are suspended each year, which is more than the total number of seats in all major league baseball and football stadiums in the country combined. Such a high number of suspensions is alarming because besides losing instructional time, suspension is one of the leading indicators of whether a student will drop out of high school or become incarcerated in the future.
Source: Civil Rights Project. (2012).
http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/upcoming-ccrr-research/losen-gillespie-opportunity-suspended-summary-2012.pdf
10 minutes
Slide 15. This is simply more data to share with your group
Research Notes:
Read: "Who Believes in Me" Study: In 16,000+ student-teacher dyads, two teachers reported their educational expectations for each 10th grade student.

- A white teacher was about 30 percent less likely than a Black teacher to predict the same student will complete a four-year college degree.
- Non-Black teachers were 12 percentage points more likely than Black teachers to predict black students wouldn't finish high school.
- Black female teachers were 20 percent less likely than white teachers to predict their students wouldn't graduate high school.
- White male teachers are about 10–20 percentage points more likely to have low expectations for black female students.

Source: Gershenson, Holt, and Papageorge. (2015). "Who Believes in Me? The Effect of Student-Teacher Demographic Match on Teacher Expectations." Upjohn Institute Work-
http://research.upjohn.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1248&context=up_workingpapers
What do you think?

1) Share with your elbow partner
2) Share with whole group

10 minutes
Slide 16. Morning Reflection – One word, phrase, or sentence – please share your thoughts about what you have learned this morning – 15 minutes
Question: So, what does this have to do with us?
Slide 17. Lunch Break

Slide 18. Question – So, what does this have to do with us? Discuss: write responses stated by participants – no correct answer
Slide 19. Explain that although unconscious bias was once a beneficial survival mechanism, it is no longer necessary and has severe repercussions in the modern world. – 5 minutes
Slide 20. If you have time as a group, watch "A Girl Like Me" (start at 3:21 – 4:56) to show how bias can be developed at an early age.
The video can be found here: https://youtu.be/YWyI77Yh1Gg?t=3m21s
Children develop biases as well. – 15 minutes
Slide 21. Explain that there once was an important reason for us to rely on our unconscious biases. Discussion – share with your elbow partner your thoughts. Ask if anyone wants to share with the whole group. – 5 minutes
Slide 22. Break – 15 minutes
Slide 23. How Are Biases Reinforced? – 5 minutes
Slide 24. Video: The House We Live In: -Race – The Power of an Illusion- 30 minutes
Slide 25. Reflection - Unpack the group's reactions and takeaways from the conversation. Ask participants to take some time to think about their own biases and prejudices. Can your biases and prejudices change?
15 minutes
Here are some additional questions:
1. What does our data (district/school site) show us about bias?
2. What are some ways we can begin screening our thoughts/actions and catch ourselves when we begin to act on our UB (unconscious bias)?
3. What are some ways we can begin implementing a support system around UB with the adults within the school/district?
4. What are some different ways we can begin extending this conversation and dive deeper?
Slide 26. Writing activity – participants will complete 3 things that were a plus for you during today's PD and 3 things that could be better if. – 5 minutes

Plus (+)	**Could be Better if…**
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Slide 27. A look at what is in the next module. – 1 minute
Slide 28. Evaluation – 4 minutes
Evaluation Link: https://bit.ly/2Iys11X

Project Facilitator Notes – Day 3

Culturally Responsive/Relevant Strategies

Slide 2. Welcome to Day 3 of a 3-day Series – "Today is the 3rd day of this series. I hope you will continue to attend a future session because teaching is a human experience, and we need you! Thank you for attending the 3-part series!" – 5 minutes

Slide 3. Review the norms. It is helpful to include any relevant data or notes that you have about your district/school. This is simply a framing slide and should require no more than – 5 mins.

Slide 4. Data Review – 5 minutes

Slide 5. Question – What do you know about CRT? **–** 10 minutes

Slide 6. Video – Introduction to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy – discuss the terms, begin with what the participants know. – 5 minutes

Introduction to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Slide 7. Deconstruct the video – 45 minutes

The basic word is culture – filters that help us make sense of the things

Visible vs. invisible, tangible and intangible – values, beliefs, assumptions, opinions

Builds on student's prior knowledge – cultural knowledge – making connections between known and unknown

Using cultural filters

Culture – not new – individual students, belong to an ethnic group – attachment and bonds vary

Culture a trait – race not off the table – but culture is membership

Slide 8. Research Culturally Relevant Strategies - Time to research and plan using culturally relevant strategies with peers– 45 minutes

Slide 9. Break – 15 minutes – 10:15-10:30

Slide 10. Jigsaw article – *"Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching"*

Jigsaw Article

1) Number group 1-3 (5 mins)
2) Read section (20 mins)
3) Share within-group (10 mins)
4) Discuss the whole group (15 mins)

45 minutes

Slide 11. Morning Reflection - One word, phrase, or sentence – please share your thoughts about what you have learned this morning – 15 minutes

Slide 12. Lunch Break – 11:30-12:15

Slide 13. Research Culturally Relevant Strategies - Time to research and plan using culturally relevant strategies with peers– 60 minutes

Slide 14. Break – 1:15-1:30

Slide 15. Celebration – Distribute the certificates to all participants who attended the 3 PD days. 30 minutes

Slide 16. Reflections - What are your general reactions and takeaways from our conversation today? What did you learn that you didn't expect? – 10 minutes

Unpack the group's reactions and takeaways from the conversation. Ask participants to share some strategies they found and explain how they will use them in their classroom.
Slide 17. Writing activity – participants will complete 3 things that were a plus for them during today's PD and 3 things that could be better if. – 15 minutes

Plus (+)	Could be Better if…
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Slide 18. Evaluation – 5 minutes
Evaluation Link: https://bit.ly/2Iys11X

Slide 19. Resources

References

UnboundEdu (2020). Retrieved from URL https://www.unbounded.org/.

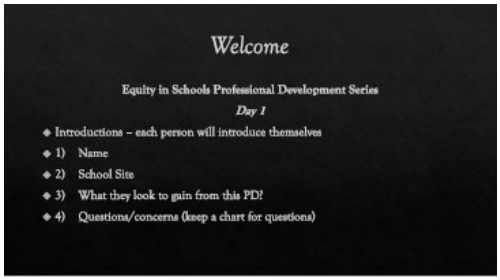
Additional Recommended Watching

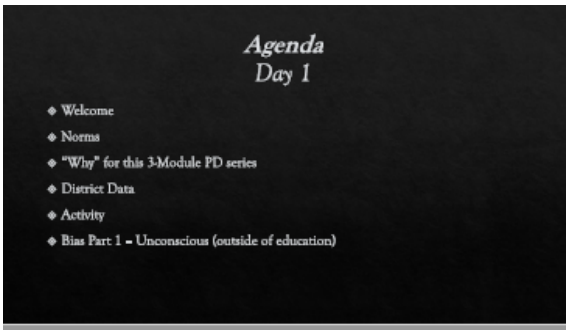
- Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible
- Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity
- Bias in American Schools
- Racial Equity Film List
- 13th on Netflix

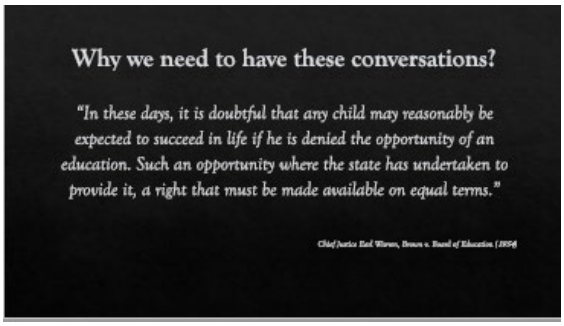
Additional Recommended Reading Resources

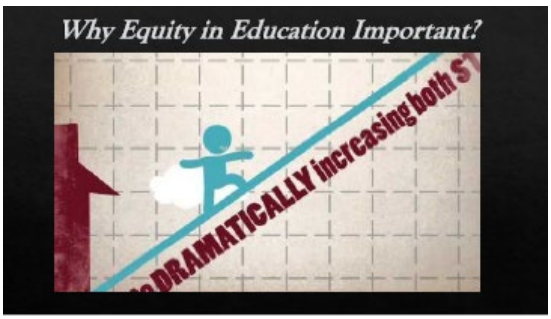
- Supreme Court History, Expanding Civil Rights: Brown v Board of Education
- We won't break the status quo until we admit our own biases
- 5 Ways to Create a Culturally Responsive Classroom
- Why We Should Talk to Children About Race
- U.N. Experts Seem Horrified by How American Schools Treat Black Children
- Accentuate the Positive: The Transformative Power of Small Encouragements And Welcoming Interactions
- Racism Got You Stressed? That May Be Holding Kids Back At School, Too
- We're All a Little Biased, Even if We Don't Know It
- How Teachers Learn to Discuss Racism
- Facilitator's Guide to Courageous Conversations About Race by Glenn Eric Singleton
- Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap by Paul C. Gorski
- Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education by Paul C. Gorski and Seema G. Pothini
- Equity 101 - The Equity Framework by Curtis Linton
- Voices for Diversity and Social Justice by Julie Landsman, Rosanna M. Salcedo, and Paul C. Gorski

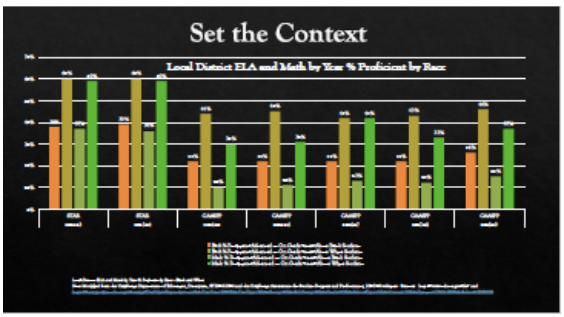
Day 1 Slides and Articles

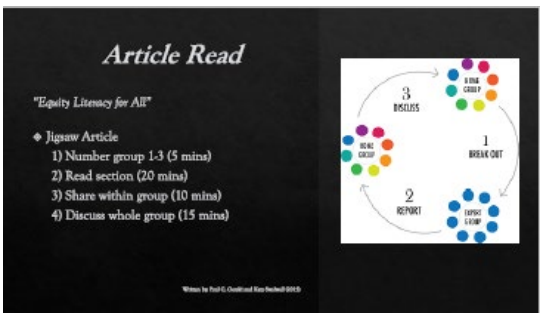








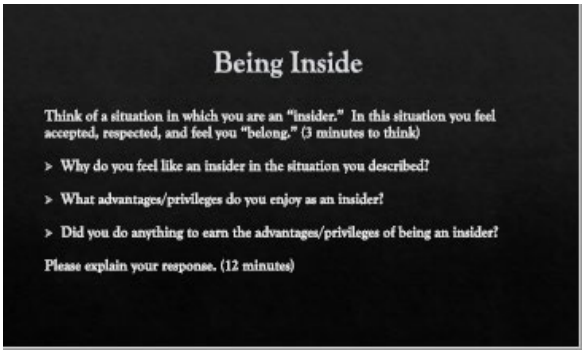


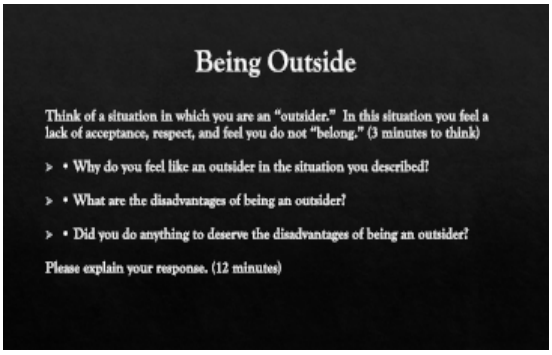


Equity Literacy FOR ALL
We're All a Little Biased, Even If We Don't Know It

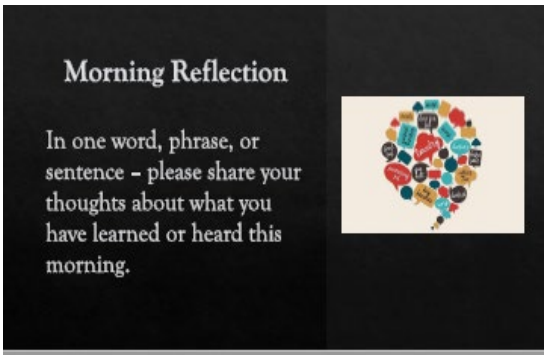
Break Time
15 min break

Activity
Being Inside
Being Outside

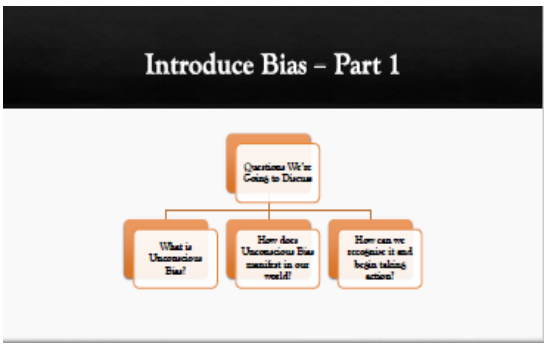

Being Inside
Think of a situation in which you are an "insider." In this situation you feel accepted, respected, and feel you "belong." (3 minutes to think)
Why do you feel like an insider in the situation you described?
What advantages/privileges do you enjoy as an insider?
Did you do anything to earn the advantages/privileges of being an insider?
Please explain your response. (12 minutes)

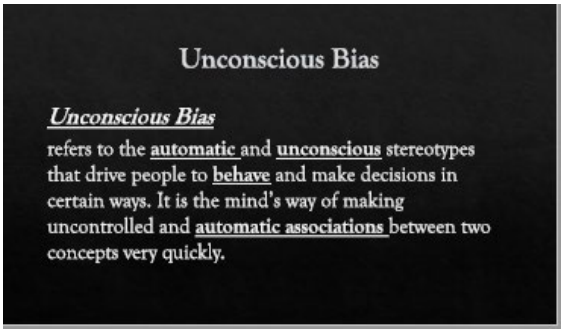

Being Outside
Think of a situation in which you are an "outsider." In this situation you feel a lack of acceptance, respect, and feel you do not "belong." (3 minutes to think)
• Why do you feel like an outsider in the situation you described?
• What are the disadvantages of being an outsider?
• Did you do anything to deserve the disadvantages of being an outsider?
Please explain your response. (12 minutes)

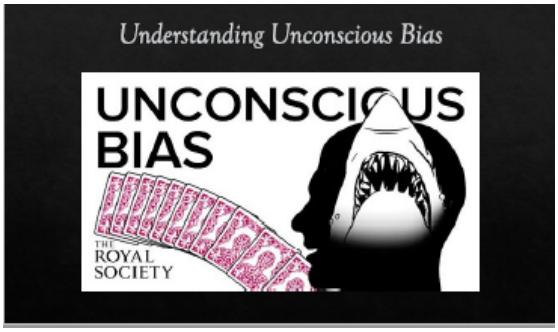
Being Inside/Outside
Debrief with the whole group, asking a few groups to share out what they took away/ what they learned about one another through this activity.

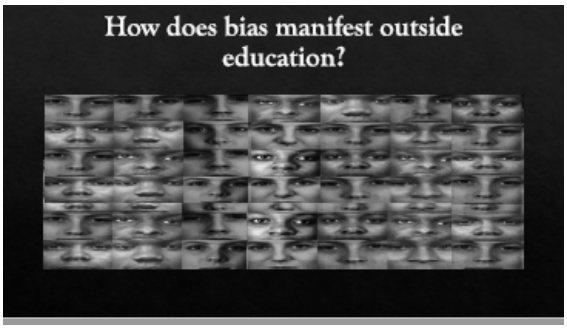

Morning Reflection
In one word, phrase, or sentence – please share your thoughts about what you have learned or heard this morning.

LUNCH BREAK
A HAND2WRITTEN FONT


Introduce Bias – Part 1
Questions We're Going to Discuss
What is Unconscious Bias?
How does Unconscious Bias manifest in our world?
How can we recognize it and begin taking action?


Unconscious Bias
Unconscious Bias
refers to the automatic and unconscious stereotypes that drive people to behave and make decisions in certain ways. It is the mind's way of making uncontrolled and automatic associations between two concepts very quickly.

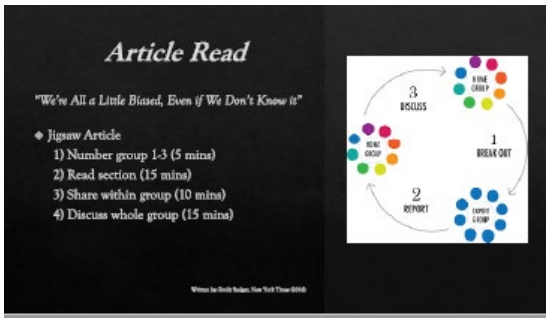

Understanding Unconscious Bias
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS
THE ROYAL SOCIETY


How does bias manifest outside education?

The Legal Sector Exhibits Bias
A research memo from a hypothetical third-year litigation associate was sent to 60 partners from 22 different law firms.
"Caucasian" Thomas Meyer:
"genuinely good writer but needs to work on..."
"has potential"
"good analytical skills"
"African American" Thomas Meyer:
"needs lots of work"
"can't believe he went to NYU"
"average at best"
Source: Reeves (2014).

The Sharing Economy Exhibits Bias
20 Airbnb accounts inquired about the availability of roughly 6,400 listings on Airbnb across five cities.
Guests with "African-American" names were 16% less likely to be accepted compared to guests with "White" names.
Source: Edelman, Luca, and Svirsky (2016).

The Health and Human Services Sector Exhibits Bias
Even with the same credentials, a Black researcher's chances of winning a National Institute of Health grant is 10 percentage points lower than a White researcher's chances.
Source: Ginther et al. (2011).



Group 3

connotation does not line up with scientific research on what implicit bias is and how it really operates.

Researchers in this growing field say it isn't just white police officers, but all of us, who have biases that are subconscious, hidden even to ourselves. Implicit bias is the mind's way of making uncontrolled and automatic associations between two concepts very quickly. In many forms, implicit bias is a healthy human adaptation — it's among the mental tools that help you mindlessly navigate your commute each morning. It owes us to contexts for lexical reduction and race (if you make the rote assumption that fruit stands have fresher produce, that's implicit bias). But the same process can also take the form of unconsciously associating certain identities, like African American, with undesirable attributes, like violence.

The science of how this subsurface bias affects your actions is still a work in progress: studies have found a link between the biases and speedy actions in some situations but not others. But because this bias is a function of universal human psychology, researchers say, we all experience it — and you can't exactly get "rid" of it.

Well-intentioned people may also hold implicit biases that run counter to their stated values. That's why it's hard to square Mr. Pearce's description with the science. To broach implicit bias isn't to impugn someone's values; it's to recognize that our values compete on an unconscious level with all the stereotypes we absorb from the world around us. And even black police officers aren't immune to internalizing them.

Group 2

"These types of cultural biases are like smog in the air," Jennifer Richeson, a Yale psychologist, wrote in an email, citing an analogy often used by a former president of Swarthmore College, Beverly Daniel Tatum. "To live and grow up in our culture, then, is to 'take in' these cultural messages and biases and chose largely unconsciously."

In the context of race, implicit bias is considered a particularly important idea because it acknowledges forces beyond biases that necessitate inequality. If we talk less about it, as Mr. Pearce suggested — this "really has not to stick," he said Tuesday night — we lose vocabulary that allows us to confront racial disparities without focusing on the character of individual people.

"You've removed the language that allows you talk about the mechanism of inequality," said Phillip Atiba Goff, the president of the Center for Policing Equity at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a professor there. "If you take away that language, what that means is inequality gets stronger and justice gets weaker. It really gets that serious."

Mr. Goff said he hears objections similar to Mr. Pearce's every time he gives presentations or leads training sessions with police departments. "Someone will say, 'I'm tired of being called a racist,' " he said. To which he explains that racism and implicit bias aren't interchangeable.

"That wrong formulation is so ingrained," Mr. Goff said. "That's what's dangerous. It's so easy to call it a slight, and if that contaminates in our political discourse, we really have lost out on an incredible opportunity to take great strides forward."

2

He fears that implicit bias could become a political tactic, dismissed as an insult and not an science, or worse, leaned into the realm of political correctness. He acknowledges that the left mistreats the topic, too, citing implicit bias as a catchall to explain all the forces of racial unfairness in society that aren't bigotry.

In fact, implicit bias is just one of many sociobehavioral processes that shape how we interact with one another. We also tend to be better at remembering the faces of people in our own racial group, or to subconsciously favor people in our group. The fear of being stereotyped psychologically weighs on people, too. In police training, Mr. Goff has watched officers notice other kinds of mental shortcuts in which they associate "active shooter" most be men. He now talks more broadly about "identity threat" that encompass implicit biases and much more.

The challenge, he argues, isn't to eliminate biases, but to try to intercept them so we can act more often in ways that line up with our values. Researchers, though, still have a lot to learn about how to do that. And it would be unfortunate, Mr. Goff argued, if implicit bias became politically unsustainable right at the moment when science was trying to uncover the answers.

For now, laboratory simulations don't easily translate to the real world, and it's hard to convert beliefs into behaviors. It's unclear how well seasonal police training programs work. And police officers are not the only ones facing implicit bias training — this fall, the home-sharing company Airbnb announced it planned to offer such a program to its hosts. It's not clear that will work, either.

Tony Greenwald, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington, said training can even backfire, as a result of another tendency we have. People who attend programs like these may falsely believe they've sorted out their biases and so don't need to worry about them anymore.

"Just wanting to eliminate implicit bias is not sufficient," Mr. Greenwald said. "You can't unlearn implicit biases. We live in a society and culture where the influences that create these are so strong and pervasive, that we're not going to get rid of those influences in any short period."

The Upshot provides news, analysis and graphics about politics, policy and everyday life. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Sign up for our newsletter.

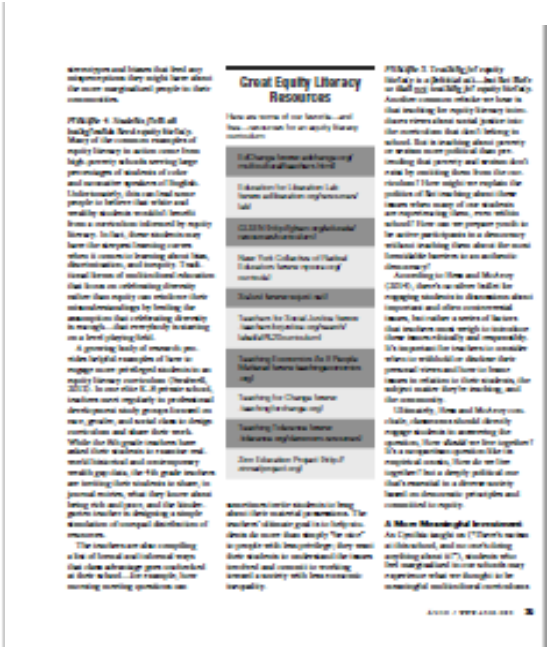
A version of this article appears in print on Oct. 7, 2016, Section A, Page 16 of the New York edition with the headline: We Are All a Little Biased. Order Reprints | Today's Paper | Subscribe

3

At the heart of a curriculum that is meaningfully multicultural lie principles of equity and social justice.

Great Equity Literacy Resources

Many initiatives present the illusion of multicultural learning even as they guarantee a lack of sophisticated multicultural learning.



Great Equity Literacy Resources

DESIGN YOUR EDUCATION
MASTER YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

Reflections

What are your general reactions and takeaways from our conversation and leaning today? What did you learn that you didn't expect?

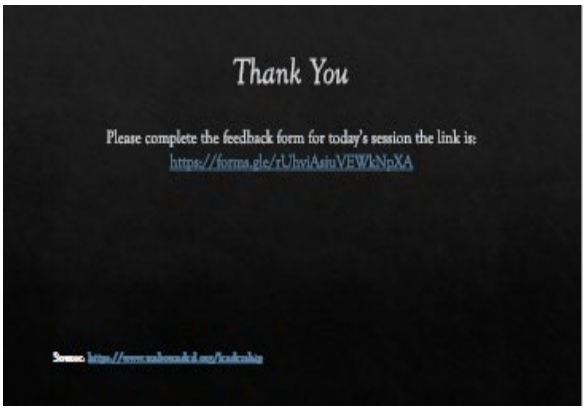
Thinking back to the Inside/Outside activity, write a brief reflection on where biases or the impact of biases may have played out with you or with students you support in your educational career. Be ready to share during the next session.

Reflections Chart

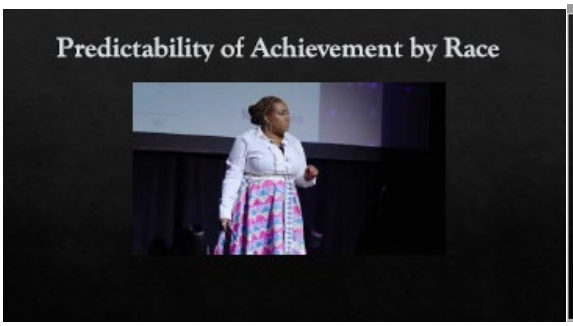
PLUS (+)	COULD BE BETTER IF...
1.	1.
1.	2.
1.	3.

A Look at What's Next

1. Introducing Bias – today was an introduction to bias
2. Understanding Historical Perspective about Race in America –and How Bias Manifests in our school – next session
3. Culturally Relevant Strategies – last session

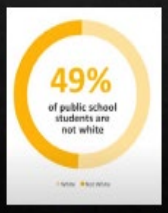


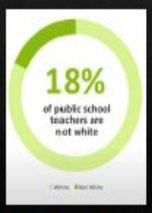
Day 2 Slides and Articles



How does bias show up in education?

Educators Do Not Reflect Our Students





Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (2013), Standards Institute (2007)

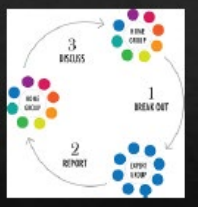
Some examples of ways unconscious bias can reveal itself in school

- ✔ Disproportionality in discipline
- ✔ Disproportionality in special education designation
- ✔ Disproportionality in lower performing "tracks"
- ✔ Teacher mindsets, beliefs, behaviors: "orientation"
- ✔ Dominant discourse re "smart" "bright" "slow" students

Article Read

"How to Have Conversations about Race"

- Jigsaw Article
  1) Number group 1-3 (5 mins)
  2) Read section (20 mins)
  3) Share within group (10 mins)
  4) Discuss whole group (15 mins)

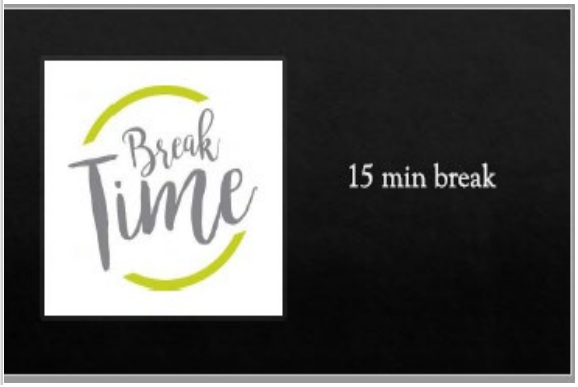


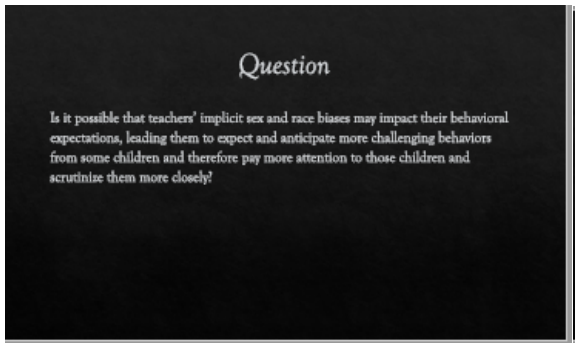
Day 2 - Slide 10

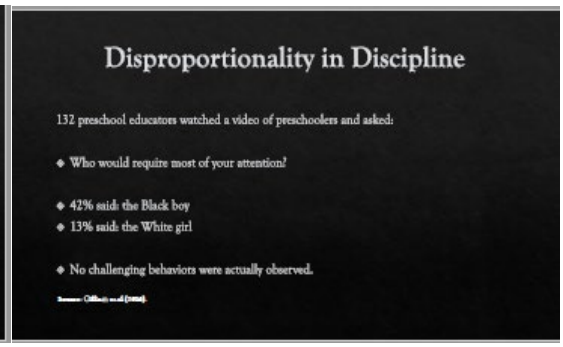
interview / with BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM

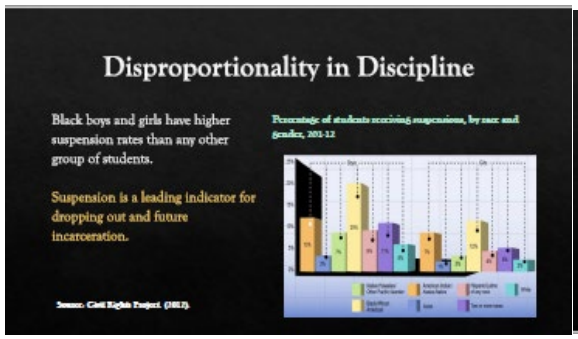
How to have conversations about race

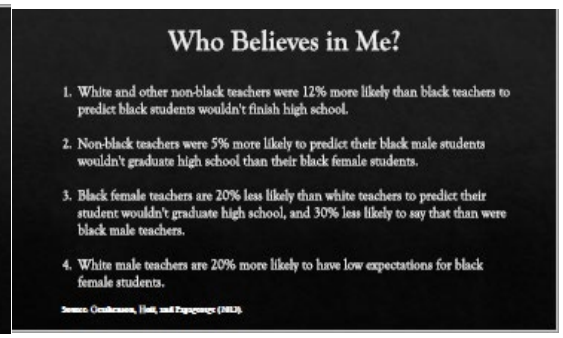
Beverly Daniel Tatum

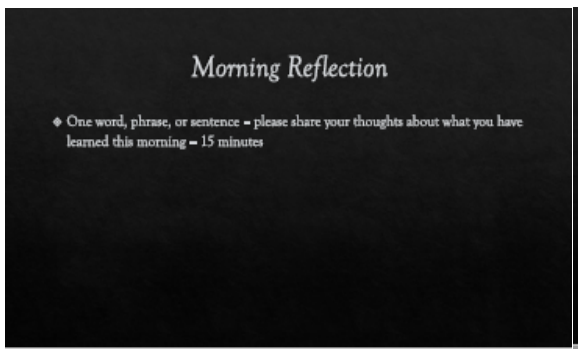

Break Time
15 min break


Question
Is it possible that teachers' implicit sex and race biases may impact their behavioral expectations, leading them to expect and anticipate more challenging behaviors from some children and therefore pay more attention to those children and scrutinize them more closely?

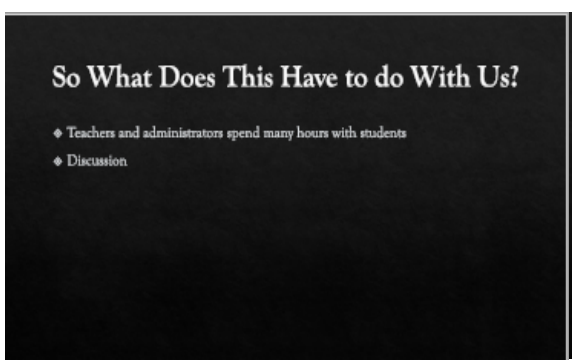

Disproportionality in Discipline
132 preschool educators watched a video of preschoolers and asked:
Who would require most of your attention?
42% said: the Black boy
13% said: the White girl
No challenging behaviors were actually observed.


Disproportionality in Discipline
Black boys and girls have higher suspension rates than any other group of students.
Suspension is a leading indicator for dropping out and future incarceration.
Percentage of students receiving suspensions, by race and gender, 201-12
Source: Civil Rights Project (2012).


Who Believes in Me?
1. White and other non-black teachers were 12% more likely than black teachers to predict black students wouldn't finish high school.
2. Non-black teachers were 5% more likely to predict their black male students wouldn't graduate high school than their black female students.
3. Black female teachers are 20% less likely than white teachers to predict their student wouldn't graduate high school, and 30% less likely to say that than were black male teachers.
4. White male teachers are 20% more likely to have low expectations for black female students.
Source: Gershenson, Hull, and Papageorge (2013).

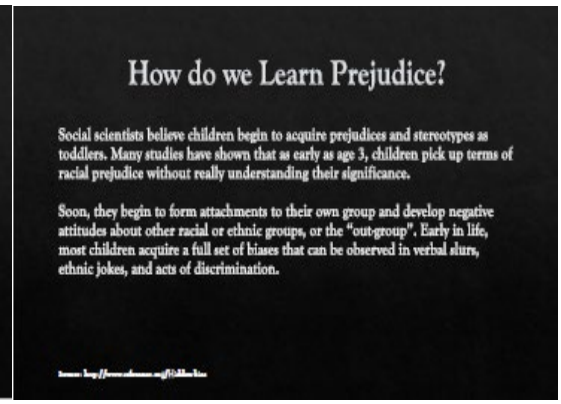

Morning Reflection
One word, phrase, or sentence – please share your thoughts about what you have learned this morning – 15 minutes

LUNCH BREAK
A HANDWRITTEN FONT


So What Does This Have to do With Us?
Teachers and administrators spend many hours with students
Discussion

Bias Lives in All of Us
The ability to distinguish friend from foe helped early humans survive, and the ability to quickly and automatically categorize people is a fundamental quality of the human mind. Categories give order to life, and every day, we group other people into categories based on social and other characteristics.
This is the foundation of stereotypes, prejudice, and, ultimately, discrimination.

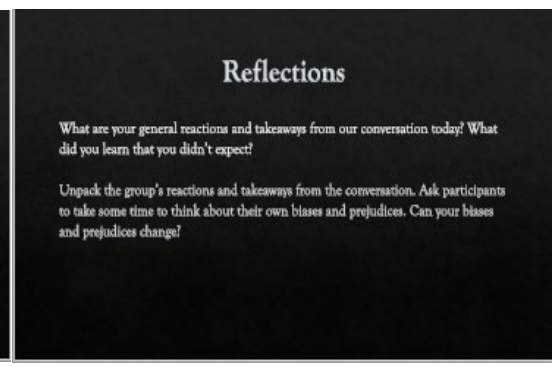
Bias and Prejudice Are Learned
at an Early Age

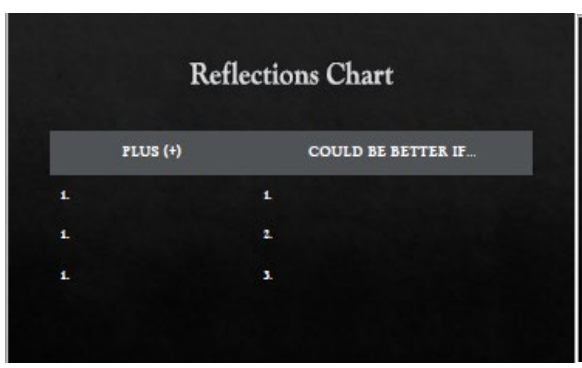

How do we Learn Prejudice?
Social scientists believe children begin to acquire prejudices and stereotypes as toddlers. Many studies have shown that as early as age 3, children pick up terms of racial prejudice without really understanding their significance.
Soon, they begin to form attachments to their own group and develop negative attitudes about other racial or ethnic groups, or the "out-group". Early in life, most children acquire a full set of biases that can be observed in verbal slurs, ethnic jokes, and acts of discrimination.

15 Minute Break
Break Time

How Are
Biases
Reinforced?
Once learned, stereotypes and prejudices resist change, even when evidence fails to support them or points to the contrary.
People will embrace anecdotes that reinforce their biases, but disregard experience that contradicts them. The statement "Some of my best friends are _____" captures this tendency to allow some expectations without changing our bias.

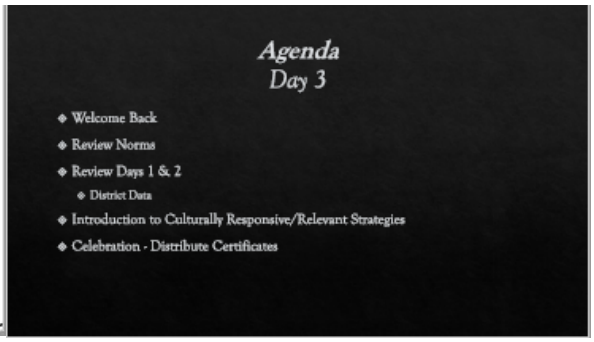
The House We Live In:
Race – The Power of an Illusion
Sorting People
Can You Tell Somebody's Race by Looking at Them?
Begin Sorting
Explore Traits
What is Race?
Sorting People
Race Timeline
Human Diversity
Me, My Race &I
Where Race Lives

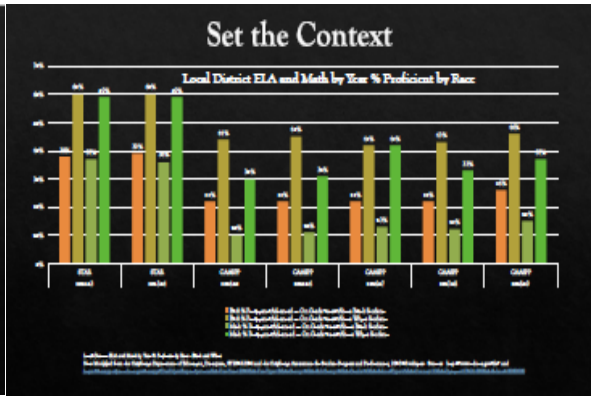

Reflections
What are your general reactions and takeaways from our conversation today? What did you learn that you didn't expect?
Unpack the group's reactions and takeaways from the conversation. Ask participants to take some time to think about their own biases and prejudices. Can your biases and prejudices change?


Reflections Chart
PLUS (+)
COULD BE BETTER IF...
1.
1.
1.
1.
2.
3.

A Look at What's Next
1. Introducing Bias – today was an introduction to bias
2. Understanding Historical Perspective about Race in America –and How Bias Manifests in our school – next session
3. Culturally Relevant Strategies – last session

Day 3 Slides and Articles





Question

- What do you know about culturally relevant teaching?
  1) Think 2 minutes
  2) Share with your table group or elbow partners
  3) Share whole group

Record on chart paper

Introduction to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Video

- Part 1 – Stop video (0.00)
  - Discuss - What are culturally responsive/relevant pedagogy?
- Part 2 – Stop video (1.09) discuss –
  - Discuss – Why are culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy important?
- Part 3 – Stop video (3.02)
  - Discuss – Are culture and race the same thing?

Research Culturally Relevant Strategies

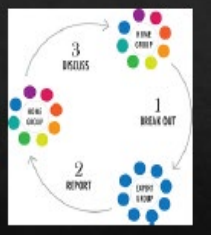
- Time – 60 minutes to research and plan using culturally relevant strategies with peers

15 min break

Article Read

"Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching"

- Jigsaw Article
  1) Number group 1-3 (5 mins)
  2) Read entire article (20 mins)
  3) Share within group (10 mins)
  4) Discuss whole group (15 mins)



Day 3 – Slide 10

LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching

By Jennifer Gunn – December 5, 2018

All Read

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is so much more than a trendy education term, but many educators struggle to define it. They are unsure of how it's different from other equitable teaching practices and they can't explain how to utilize it in their classrooms. Zaretta Hammond's popular book Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students cites neuroscience to argue that CRT allows students to become drivers of their own learning and build their cognitive capacity. I spoke with Zaretta Hammond to demystify CRT and to explore the dimensions of education equity.

Group 1

The misconceptions of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)

Just a singular strategy that one applies in classroom teaching. "What I think is One major misconception about culturally responsive teaching is that it's a thing teacher do to students or a technique they use in class. "It's not," says Hammond. "It's a multifaceted approach where the various parts come together to create a synergy that allows students to accelerate their own learning." CRT isn't important to embrace is equity by design and helping students to become the leaders of their own learning. I believe Culturally Responsive Teaching practices are a vehicle to that end. People have to begin with the end in mind. It's an

approach — a multifaceted approach. It's not the goal. The idea is that we really need to have some instructional equity."

Another misconception is that CRT is just another name for multiculturalism. "Anything that comes with equity or has to do with children of color or immigrant students, we lump it all in one big basket," says Hammond. "People confuse CRT with diversity and inclusion. They confuse it with cultural proficiency and talk around implicit bias. We just take an 'it's a small world' approach — have a little bit of everybody and everybody will feel seen and heard, and that's a real reductionist view. It just reinforces the lack of understanding about inequity by design and how the roots of inequity are hardwired into our school systems. There's no amount of multiculturalism that can undo the legacy of segregation that has underdeveloped the cognitive resources of students and their competence as learners."

Dimensions of equity

Equity in education encompasses a multitude of practices, beliefs, theories, attitudes, shifts, and structures that overlap, but are often used interchangeably when they are, in fact, quite different.

In Hammond's 3 Dimensions of Equity she states that there are three different aspects to focus on:

1. Multicultural education
2. Social justice education
3. Culturally responsive pedagogy

"Only Culturally Responsive Teaching is focused on the cognitive development of underserved students. Multicultural and social justice education have more of a supporting role in CRT," Hammond says.

Multicultural education

Multicultural education is the incorporation and celebration of diversity in schools. This can include reading more diverse texts or the consideration and inclusion of various perspectives. Traditionally marginalized students should see themselves reflected in the school's images, faces, and curriculum, while more "white-based students" should have more exposure to cultures and perspectives outside of their own.

Group 2

Social justice education

Social justice education helps students identify injustice and inequalities in their everyday lives and in their community. It focuses on building school practices and a culture that disrupts these inequalities. This dimension can include students

working on projects for social change or declaring more equitable behavior management systems that include restorative justice practices.

Trauma-informed education

This falls outside of Hammond's 3 Dimensions of Equity, but it is a component of equity. Trauma-informed education utilizes social emotional learning practices to boost academic success, decrease disruptive behavior, and reduce emotional distress in the long term. It involves teaching the whole student, taking into account their personal history, and the resulting coping mechanisms when attempting to understand behaviors and teach learners. Adults in the school community are prepared to recognize and respond to the students who have been impacted by their past experiences.

and inclusion — all of which impact student outcomes. Positive response methods

At Rio Norte, CEO of Trillium Family Services, put it, "Schools are the future wellness hubs of our communities." Trauma-informed care promotes equity, safety, and strategic interventions are used to directly address students' behavioral issues. And, trauma-informed methods can improve reading scores and reduce absenteeism.

Culturally responsive pedagogy

Group 3

Hammond's third dimension of equity, culturally responsive education, focuses on elevating the learning capacity of students who have traditionally been marginalized in education. According to Hammond, academic struggles that are so often attributed to a "culture of poverty" or "different community values toward education" really exist because "we don't offer [students] sufficient opportunities in the classroom to develop the cognitive skills and habits of mind that would prepare them to take on more advanced academic tasks."

In essence, students of color are routinely taught a "pedagogy of poverty," featuring a more shallow well of skills, content, and knowledge, according to Wanda Hallenbeck, professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This leads to the perpetuation of dependent learners who leave school unprepared for the demands and rigor of post-secondary learning or the workplace.

"Here's what we know from neuroscience: When you're engaged in complex thinking, your brain grows," says Hammond. "Too many classrooms have students passively sitting. The teacher is doing the majority of the work." Hammond sees CRT as a driver toward "helping students have environments in which they can grow their brain power and be active participants in their own learning" and where

"they see that they are more than capable because competence precedes confidence. And if we only see Culturally Responsive Teaching as something to build student confidence, but we don't help them build competence as learners and pay attention to how to learn from their mistakes — how to use that as information — then I think we are missing the point of CRT as a vehicle for getting to equity by design."

Consider the academic performance of your English Language Learners, students of color, and low-income students. If they are not successful, your teaching may need to become more culturally responsive. CRT "concerns itself with building resilience and an academic mindset by pushing back on dominant narratives about people of color," states Hammond.

Getting started with CRT

One way educators can begin digging into CRT is by examining their own pedagogical practice using Hammond's Warm Demander chart. The chart identifies four types of teaching styles that either help, stagnate, or hinder student learning and independence. "The ultimate goal as a warm demander is to help students take over the reins of their learning," says Hammond. "Dependent learners have been conditioned to be passive when it comes to making decisions about their learning moves. They have relied on the teacher to tell them what to do next. If they are to become more independent, we have to provide them with the tools." Identifying one's practice on the chart and surfacing areas for growth is a good first step in the work. Another place to start is Hammond's Ready for Rigor Framework, which offers four quadrants of approaches for the classroom.

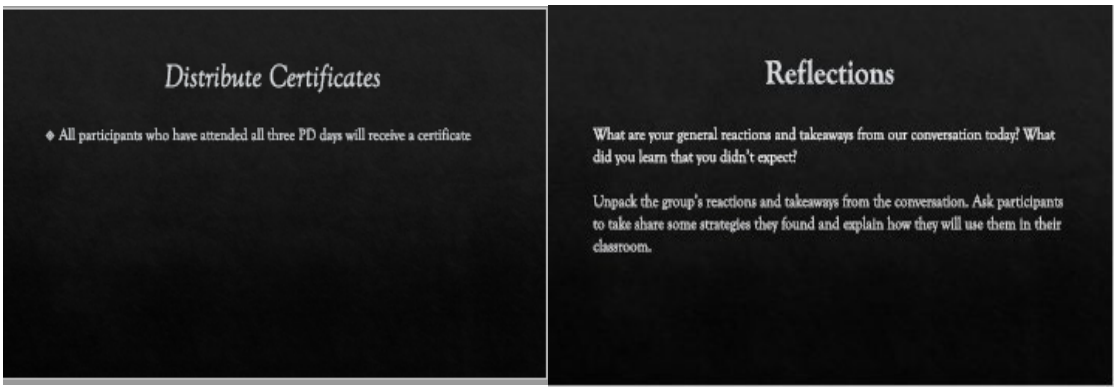
Zaretta Hammond's book, Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students, is full of CRT research, information, frameworks, and strategies for school leaders and educators to make the shift to a more culturally responsive practice. You can also check out Hammond's Elevate Edu website for additional information, including workshops like "Culturally Responsive Lesson Design" and "Coaching for Cultural Responsiveness."

Jennifer L.M. Gunn spent 10 years in newspaper and magazine publishing before moving to public education. She is a curriculum designer, teaching coach, and high school educator in New York City. She is also co-founder of the annual EduGAINYC Education Conference for teacher-led innovation and regularly presents at conferences on the topics of adolescent literacy, leadership, and education innovation.

You may also like to read
Morning Reflection
One word, phrase, or sentence = please share your thoughts about what you have learned this morning = 15 minutes

LUNCH BREAK
A HAND2WRITTEN FONT
Research & Share Culturally Relevant
How?
45 minutes to discuss and share how you will plan lessons or activities
Look for videos that display different cultures to include the students in your classroom
Nearpod/Peapod - digital platforms that the teacher controls
How can you use more culturally relevant...
Curriculum
Instruction
Assessment

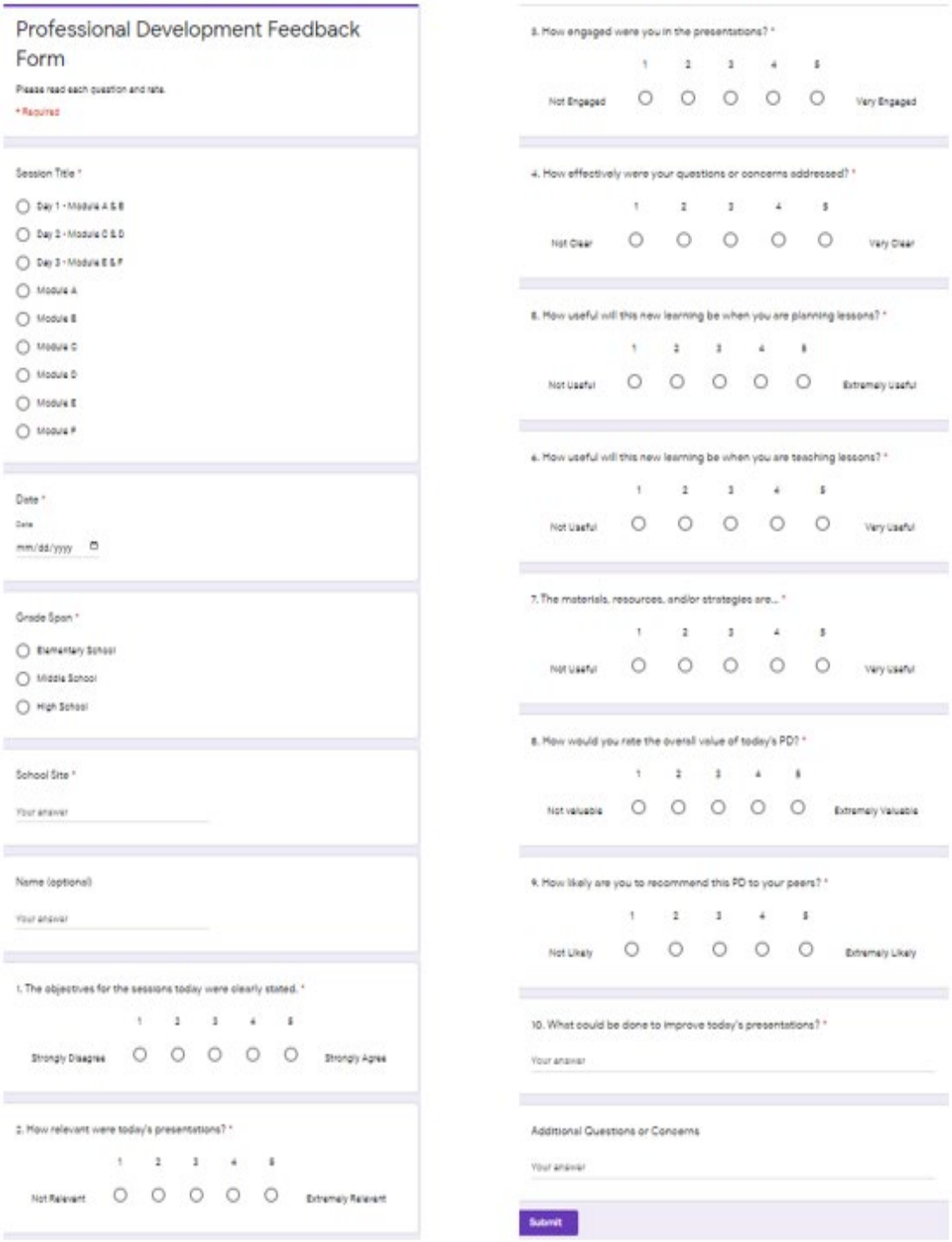
15 Minute Break
Break Time
You Can Do This!


Distribute Certificates
All participants who have attended all three PD days will receive a certificate
Reflections
What are your general reactions and takeaways from our conversation today? What did you learn that you didn't expect?
Unpack the group's reactions and takeaways from the conversation. Ask participants to take share some strategies they found and explain how they will use them in their classroom.

Reflections Chart
PLUS (+)
COULD BE BETTER IF...
1.
1.
1.
1.
2.
3.
Thank You
Please complete the feedback form for today's session the link is:
https://forms.gle/rUhviAsjuVEWkNpXA

Resources
1. The Complexion of Teaching and Learning: https://blog.unbounded.org/the-complexion-of-teaching-and-learning/

Workshop Session Evaluation



Professional Development Feedback Form

Please read each question and rate.

* Required

Session Title *

- Day 1 - Module A & B
- Day 2 - Module C & D
- Day 3 - Module E & F
- Module A
- Module B
- Module C
- Module D
- Module E
- Module F

Date *

Date

mm/dd/yyyy

Grade Span *

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School

School Site *

Your answer

Name (optional)

Your answer

1. The objectives for the sessions today were clearly stated. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

2. How relevant were today's presentations? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Relevant	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely Relevant

3. How engaged were you in the presentations? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Engaged	○	○	○	○	○	Very Engaged

4. How effectively were your questions or concerns addressed? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Clear	○	○	○	○	○	Very Clear

5. How useful will this new learning be when you are planning lessons? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Useful	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely Useful

6. How useful will this new learning be when you are teaching lessons? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Useful	○	○	○	○	○	Very Useful

7. The materials, resources, and/or strategies are... *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Useful	○	○	○	○	○	Very Useful

8. How would you rate the overall value of today's PD? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not valuable	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely Valuable

9. How likely are you to recommend this PD to your peers? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Likely	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely Likely

10. What could be done to improve today's presentations? *

Your answer

Additional Questions or Concerns

Your answer

Submit

Teachers' Perceptions about the use of Culturally Relevant Strategies - Findings

Research Questions	RQ# 1 What are teachers' perspectives of the value of incorporating culturally relevant strategies for students in their classroom?	RQ# 2 What experiences do teachers have with the use of culturally relevant strategies and or approaches?	RQ# 3 How do teachers incorporate CRT strategies in their instructional practices?
Themes	Culturally Responsive/Relevant Perspectives	PD/ Training	Instructional Strategies/Content
Codes	Survey/questionnaire/getting to know "you" activities Greet families Build relationships Welcoming activities Recognition and validation of Black student's culture Character Development Make students feel valued, important, connected Black role models Environment Have high expectations	PD necessary Beliefs need to change Teachers not knowing Experiences differ Levels of	Direct Teaching Think-pair-share Allow students to determine how they learn best Allow students to be assessed best for them Differentiate lessons Provide intervention Provide visuals Materials/resources Standards

Data Self-Audit Results

Environmental Style				
1. Are your visuals representative of all cultural groups?	**2. Do you have learning centers that capitalize and focus on the different modalities/intelligences?**	**3. Do you have routines and a daily schedule to provide some important structure?**	**4. Do you encourage interpersonal interactions and a sense of family and community?**	**5. How would you rate your understanding of the cultural ways of thinking, acting, and believing in African Americans (Black students)? (1=low; 3=average; 5=high)**
4	5	5	5	5
4	4	5	5	5
4	4	5	5	4
5	5	5	5	5
4	4	5	5	3
4	3	4	4	4
Interactional Style				

6. When you use cooperative groups, are you certain everyone understands their role in the performance of the task?	7. Are you prone to heterogeneously group by race, gender, and ability unless the task specifically demands another type of grouping?	8. Do you find ways to engage all students in each lesson?	9. Do you encourage formality with role definitions and appropriate etiquette (Ex: teacher versus student)?	10. Do you allow students to help each other or work together, even when reading a text?
4	3	5	3	5
4	2	4	4	5
4	4	5	4	4
5	1	5	3	4
5	4	4	5	4
4	2	5	5	3

Instructional Strategies for Cognitive Style						
11. When giving an assignment, do you provide a global view of the task as well as a step-by-step plan for what students or student groups are to accomplish?	12. Do you operate in the classroom as a guide and facilitator rather than a "performer" in front of an audience?	13. Does engagement mean more to you than asking and responding to questions or worksheets?	14. Do you model and schedule opportunities to practice the ideas or concepts before you require students to demonstrate or test their understanding?	15. If you use lectures to convey information, do you limit your presentation to 5-10 minutes and have visuals and examples as models of the concept about which you are speaking?	16. Do you plan ways of helping students process and internalize the information that has been presented?	17. When you use videos, guest speakers, or lengthy readings, do you design ways to assist students to think about and understand the information?
5	4	5	5	5	5	5
4	5	5	4	5	5	4
5	4	5	4	5	5	5
5	4	4	5	4	5	4
4	3	4	4	4	5	5
3	4	5	4	3	4	4

Instructional Design for Cognitive Style Responsiveness			
18. Do you have each day/lesson carefully planned?	19. Do you plan a lesson or unit with specific activities, themes, or concepts that include material or information to demonstrate connections across disciplines?	20. Do you use the knowledge of the fine arts (art, music, literature) as other ways in which students can gain knowledge about concepts or ideas?	21. Do you develop lessons or use strategies to support the learning of the concepts or ideas for Black students?
4	4	5	2
4	4	4	5
4	4	4	4
3	3	3	5
4	5	4	4
3	3	4	5

Assessment Style			
22. Do you include both qualitative and quantitative data in your assessment of individual students?	**23. Do you include both qualitative and quantitative data in your assessment of your class?**	**24. Do you include both qualitative and quantitative data in your assessment of individual students?**	**25. Have you analyzed the tests given by you or the school district to ensure that the questions have an assumption of knowledge with which students are familiar or which they will become familiar with through your instruction?**
4	4	4	3
4	4	4	3
4	4	4	3
5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5
4	4	4	2

Appendix B: The Design Alignment Tool

Conceptual Framework This study's conceptual framework is based on Janice Hale's theory that culture affects Black children's intellectual development. Hale proposed that culture is the medium for understanding human behavior Hale, 1982).					
Study Problem and Purpose (Must align with all rows.)	**Research Questions** List each research question (RQ) in a separate row below.	**Data Collection Tools** List which instrument(s) are used to collect the data that will address each RQ.	**Data Points Yielded** List which specific questions/variables/scales of the instrument will address each RQ.	**Data Source** List which persons/artifacts/records will provide the data.	**Data Analysis** Briefly describe the specific statistical or qualitative analyses that will address each RQ.
According to student achievement data, students are not improving academically, how do teachers use culturally relevant strategies to help Black students reach higher levels of academic success. **Evidence 1:** There is a more than a 5-year discrepancy	**RQ 1:** What are teachers' perspectives of the value of incorporating culturally relevant strategies for students in their classroom?	Interview Self-Audit	1. Do you work in a high, middle, or elementary school? 2. What type of intake and or survey (information from your students about what they like and or how they learn) data do you collect at the beginning of each school year? 3. Explain how you determine the strategies you use to ensure that your students have access to the skill or lesson (planning). 4. Explain how often you use materials and resources that display and or represent Black students (materials and or resources).	Classroom teacher	Inductive processes will be utilized. The teacher will be asked the following questions. The answers will be transcribed. The data will be coded in categories, and major and minor themes will be identified. Self-audits will be reviewed

in the academic performance of Black and White students in the Local school district (the District). **Evidence 2:** Comments from the Strategic Planning Committee, which includes district and site administrators, indicating that teachers should consider using strategies or approaches which support the academic needs of Black students. **Evidence 3:** Teachers do not have courses or PD experiences explicitly related to supporting Black student achievement.			5. Explain how you deliver lessons to ensure that all students obtain academic success (instruction or delivery). 6. Explain what you know about cultural competence. 7. Explain how you ensure that the lessons you provide for your students will lead to Black students having an understanding about their culture. 8. Explain how you ensure that your Black students can navigate the social status quo (understand who they are they are in this world).		during the interview to ensure the accuracy and validity of the scales. The participant can add, delete, or modify their rank.
	RQ 2: What experiences do teachers have with the use of culturally relevant strategies and or approaches?	Interview	9. What PD and or trainings have you attended related to culturally relevant strategies? 10. If you have attended PD or trainings, tell me about how you use the strategies in your classroom? 11. What do you feel are the most important needs for Black students (the needs can be things or people)? 12. Explain how the credentialing program provided you with the knowledge you need to utilize culturally relevant strategies? 13. What do you feel are the most important needs for teachers (the needs can be things or people)?	Classroom teacher	Inductive processes will be utilized. Each teacher will be asked the following questions. The answers will be transcribed. The data will be coded in categories, and major and minor themes will be identified.

			14. Tell me about a course or experience you had prior to teaching (in your own classroom) that helped you understand how to utilize strategies that support positive academic outcomes for Black students?		
	RQ 3: How do teachers incorporate CRT strategies in their instructional practices?	Self-Audit Interview	15. How many years have you been teaching? 16. Explain how the credentialing program provided you with the knowledge you need to work with Black students. 17. When you began teaching, how confident did you feel that you could increase academic achievement for all students? 18. When you began teaching, how confident did you feel that you could increase academic achievement for Black students? 19. What does culturally relevant pedagogy mean to you? 20. What do you feel are the challenges to culturally relevant pedagogy? 21. Why do or why don't you feel utilizing culturally relevant strategies will improve Black students' academic achievement?	Classroom teacher	Self-audits will be reviewed during the interview to ensure the accuracy and validity of the scales. The participant can add, delete, or modify their rank. Inductive processes will be utilized. The teacher will be asked the following questions. The answers will be transcribed . The data will be coded in categories, and major and minor themes will be identified.

Typical case sampling – teachers were selected because they represent the norm and are in no way atypical. Random sampling – each teacher will represent the District population.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Project: Teacher Perceptions of Culturally Relevant Strategies to Promote Black Student Achievement

This interview will take place at a school site (School Site A, B, or C). It will take approximately 60 minutes, starting with the scripted questions. The interview will be electronically captured using a digital voice recorder as the primary device. In addition, an audio capture application on an iPad will serve as a backup. The audio files will be sent to a transcription service. I will then develop a summary of your interview; the summary will be forwarded to you for review. You may make corrections or provide additional feedback if necessary. Please return within 48 hours via email.

Framework: The conceptual framework for this study is based on Janice Hale's theory that culture has an effect on the intellectual development of Black children. Hale proposed that culture is the medium for understanding human behavior Hale, 1982).

Time of Interview:

Interview Location:

Date:

Interviewer: Kimberly Hendricks

Interviewee Pseudonym:

Position of Interviewee: Participant sitting across from researcher

The project's purpose: This project was designed to explore beliefs teachers have about the use of culturally relevant strategies. Teachers are able to explain the rationale for the strategies they choose.

Questions:

RQ1

1. Do you work in a high, middle, or elementary school?
2. What type of intake and or survey (information from your students about what they like and or how they learn) data do you collect at the beginning of each school year?
3. Explain how you determine the strategies you use to ensure that your students have access to the skill or lesson (planning).
4. Explain how often you use materials and resources that display and or represent Black students (materials and or resources).
5. Explain how you deliver lessons to ensure that all students obtain academic success (instruction or delivery).
6. Explain what you know about cultural competence.
7. Explain how you ensure that the lessons you provide for your students will lead to Black students having an understanding about their culture.
8. Explain how you ensure that your Black students are able to navigate the social status quo (understand who they are they are in this world).

RQ2

1. What PD and or trainings have you attended related to culturally relevant strategies?
2. If you have attended PD or trainings, tell me about how you use the strategies in your classroom.
3. What do you feel are the most important needs for Black students (the needs can be

things or people)?

4. Explain how the credentialing program provided you with the knowledge you need to utilize culturally relevant strategies.
5. What do you feel are the most important needs for Black students (the needs can be things or people).
6. Tell me about a course or experience you had prior to teaching in your own classroom that helped you understand how to utilize strategies that support positive academic outcomes for Black students.

RQ3

1. How many years have you been teaching?
2. Explain how the credentialing program provided you with the knowledge you need to work with Black students.
3. When you began teaching, how confident did you feel that you could increase academic achievement for all students?
4. When you began teaching, how confident did you feel that you could increase academic achievement for Black students?
5. What does culturally relevant pedagogy mean to you?
6. What do you feel are the challenges to culturally relevant pedagogy?
7. Why do or why don't you feel utilizing culturally relevant strategies will improve Black students' academic achievement?

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Your cooperation is much appreciated. You can be assured that all of your statements, comments, answers, and names will be kept confidential. All artifacts, including audio recordings, will be kept in a data-locked file or digital file in a locked cabinet in my home for five years, after which it will be destroyed. Thank you again!

Appendix D: Self-Audit of Your Culturally Competent Classroom (Five Styles Here)

This self-audit was developed by Shade et al. (1997) to help teachers identify elements that support a culturally compatible classroom. According to the authors, each of the different styles may help the teacher examine their classroom through a cultural lens. The link below will take you to the rating scale. Please click here to access the audit: https://goo.gl/forms/TFy6yuX15rnKjmFA3

Please read each of the different styles and rate yourself according to a Likert scale 1-5.

Environmental Style:

Students need to see themselves and their cultures reflected through pictures, displays, artifacts, room arrangements, and the inclusion of different languages.
Please rate yourself on each of the following elements using a scale of 1-5 with 5 making corrections/culturally responsive, 3 starting to put into practice, and 1 seeking understanding.

1. Are your visuals representative of all cultural groups?
2. Do you have learning centers that capitalize and focus on the different modalities/intelligences?
3. Do you have routines and a daily schedule to provide some important structure?
4. Do you encourage interpersonal interactions and a sense of family and community?
5. How would you rate your understanding of the cultural ways of thinking, acting, and believing in African Americans (Black students)? (1=low; 3=average; 5=high

Interactional Style:

A culturally responsive student-centered curriculum is rich and meaningful because it considers the experiences, realities, and interests of the students. All lessons must be relevant to the students' lives.

Please rate yourself on each of the following elements using a scale of 1-5 with 5 always, 3 sometimes, and 1 never.

1. When you use cooperative groups, are you certain everyone understands their role in the performance of the task?
2. Are you prone to heterogeneously group by race, gender, and ability unless the task specifically demands another type of grouping?

3. Do you find ways to engage all students in each lesson?
4. Do you encourage formality with role definitions and appropriate etiquette (Ex: teacher versus student)?
5. Do you allow students to help each other or work together even when reading a text?

Instructional Strategies for Cognitive Style:

Teachers must modify instruction to facilitate academic achievement among students from diverse cultural groups.

Please rate yourself on each of the following elements using a scale of 1-5 with 5 always, 3 sometimes, and 1 never.

1. When giving an assignment, do you provide a global view of the task as well as a step-by-step plan for what students or student groups are to accomplish?
2. Do you operate in the classroom as a guide and facilitator rather than a "performer" in front of an audience?
3. Does engagement mean more to you than asking and responding to questions or worksheets?
4. Do you model and schedule opportunities to practice the ideas or concepts before you require students to demonstrate or test their understanding?
5. If you use lectures to convey information, do you limit your presentation to 5-10 minutes and have visuals and examples as models of the concept about which you are speaking?
6. Do you plan ways of helping students process and internalize the information that has been presented?
7. When you use videos, guest speakers, or lengthy readings, do you design ways to assist students to think about and understand the information?

Instructional Design for Cognitive Style Responsiveness:

All lessons must be relevant to the students' lives. Teachers start from students' own experiences and build on them to help students understand new concepts.

Please rate yourself on each of the following elements using a scale of 1-5 with 5 always, 3 sometimes, and 1 never.

1. Do you have each day/lesson carefully planned?
2. Do you plan a lesson or unit with specific activities, themes, or concepts that include material or information to demonstrate connections across disciplines?
3. Do you use the knowledge of the fine arts (art, music, literature) as other ways in which students can gain knowledge about concepts or ideas?

4. Do you develop lessons or use strategies to support the learning of the concepts or ideas for Black students?

Assessment Style:

Assessment is as much of a part of instruction as planning the activities. If done correctly, assessment determines whether learning has occurred or whether other ways of presenting the information are needed.

The assessment also provides us with information about the student's development and the effectiveness of the instructional activities. Both norm-referenced (the process of comparing one test-taker to his or her peers) and alternative assessment (used to determine what students can and cannot do) are needed to provide feedback on students' individual students and communities.

Examples of qualitative data may include student work samples with comments from the teacher, feedback from a teacher about a student's progress to parents, a transcript from a focus group with parents, students provide written or verbal feedback about the lesson presented, or classroom observation feedback from your administrator.

Examples of quantitative data may include scores on tests, quizzes, exams, etc.

Please rate yourself on each of the following elements using a scale of 1-5 with 5 always, 3 sometimes, and 1 never.

1. Do you include both qualitative and quantitative data in your assessment of individual students?
2. Do you include both qualitative and quantitative data in your assessment of your class?
3. Do you include both qualitative and quantitative data in your assessment of yourself as the teacher?
4. Have you analyzed the tests given by you or the school district to ensure that the questions have an assumption of knowledge with which students are familiar or which they will become familiar with your instruction?

Source: Shade, B.J., Kelly, C., & Oberg, M. (1997). Creating Culturally Responsive Classrooms. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Appendix E: Permission Request Submission

July 19, 2018

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American Psychological Association

Book: Creating culturally responsive classrooms.
Author: Barbara J. Shade, Cynthia Kelly, and Mary Oberg
Publisher: American Psychological Association
Date: Jan 1, 1997
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Appendix F: Confidential Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

It is understood and agreed to that the below identified discloser of confidential information may provide certain information that is and must be kept confidential. To ensure the protection of such information, and to preserve any confidentiality necessary under patent and/or trade secret laws, it is agreed that

1.The Confidential Information to be disclosed can be described as and includes:
Transcription Audio File Uploaded by Irina Ten

2. Subject to full payment of service fee(s), the recipient agrees not to disclose the confidential information obtained from the discloser to anyone unless required to do so by law.

3. This Agreement states the entire agreement between the parties concerning the disclosure of Confidential Information. Any addition or modification to this Agreement must be made in writing and signed by the parties.

4. If any of the provisions of this Agreement are found to be unenforceable, the remainder shall be enforced as fully as possible and the unenforceable provision(s) shall be deemed modified to the limited extent required to permit enforcement of the Agreement as a whole.

WHEREFORE, the parties acknowledge that they have read and understand this Agreement and voluntarily accept the duties and obligations set forth herein.

Recipient of Confidential Information:
Name: Evolution World Wide Limited

Signature:

Date: **April 2, 2020**

Discloser of Confidential Information:

Name: Kimberly Hendricks

Signature:

Date: **April 2, 2020**

Appendix G: Sample Field Notes

Interview Protocol Data Collection Sheet
Project: Exploring Teacher Beliefs and Experiences Related to CRT Strategies to Promote Black Student Achievement
This interview is taking place at (location). It will take approximately 60 minutes, starting with the scripted questions. The interview will be electronically captured using a digital voice recorder as the primary device. In addition, an audio capture application on an iPad will serve as a backup. The audio files will be sent to a transcription service. I will then develop a summary of your interview; the summary will be forwarded to you for review. You may make corrections or provide additional feedback if necessary. Please return within 48 hours via email.
Framework: The conceptual framework for this study is based on Janice Hale's theory that culture has an effect on the intellectual development of Black children. Hale proposed that culture is the medium for understanding human behavior Hale, 1982).

Time of Interview:	12:00 PM – 1:05 PM
Date:	April 2, 2020
Interviewer:	Kimberly Hendricks
Interviewee Pseudonym:	Teacher C
Position of Interviewee:	At home – phone conference
Research Question 1	
1. Do you work in a high, middle, or elementary school?	High School
2. What type of intake and or survey (information from your students about what they like and or how they learn) data do you collect at the beginning of each school year?	Learning style inventory – verbal – explain different learning modalities (auditory, visual, kin Learning modality Tally each modality Personality test – free test online (individual) Group students based on their personality – take notes, share, discuss
3. Explain how you determine the strategies you use to ensure that your students have access to the skill or lesson (planning).	Many strategies Admission ticket – question we start with – pop quiz – a little assessment – get to know what kids know Discussion Exit Ticket
4. Explain how often you use materials and resources that display and or represent Black	Quotes from different people – not all black Pictures in slide shows – different races (ex: Dr. King – character) Use all year long

students (materials and or resources).	Google classroom – quote or image – that look like them – daily Safe place (who they connect with – grab their attention) Use song/music too Surprise – requests from students – they don't know what song you will play
5. Explain how you deliver lessons to ensure that all students obtain academic success (instruction or delivery).	Basic Madeline Hunter plan – content standard for the week Objective – verbiage from standard Create activities Big Question of the Day – start the day Exit – end the day with the same Keeps us on topic (includes me)
6. Explain what you know about cultural competence.	New to me – equity Intuitive Common sense – who students are before I try to connect What does the student bring to the classroom – not an empty vessel Connect with them personally before teaching a lesson What are familiar to them What do they know – ex: how does authority work, rules – where do you fall in your family dynamics (kids share) Celebrate culture Recognitions – how do you like celebrate at home (eat, go, etc.) – try to replicate a little of this in the celebrations Classroom culture – norms Greet all, shake hands, model for students – when students present, they have to do the same Transcends race Do what is right for every kid Hard to define a culturally competent vs. one who is not – can tell by what they say and do Not a new term – but hard to explain
7. Explain how you ensure that the lessons you provide for your students will lead to Black students having an understanding about their culture.	Have them express themselves – perspective from their own cultural viewpoint Talk in groups Full class discussions Safe place Survey – to elicit certain viewpoints from certain cultural groups (college student: a new girl asks to touch your hair…what do you do?) Ex: write prior to sharing Start with the curriculum, but go way outside Have fun

8. Explain how you ensure that your Black students are able to navigate the social status quo (understand who they are they are in this world).	Interview students – talking – where are the learning and social gaps Group students Offer choices I ask what they need
Research Question 2	
9. What PD and or trainings have you attended related to culturally relevant strategies?	Equity institute – this year - eight trainings Sit with the principal and four others from my school (diverse group) – discussions about equity versus equality First-year I participated
10. If you have attended PD or trainings, tell me about how you use the strategies in your classroom.	Partner/pair share activities during training – bring back to my classroom the next day Ex: Stickers – asked to put on paper – represented racial or ethnic group – narrowed the questions – see it – I thought I was open and diverse – all of my close relationships are with African Americans (when I have control, these are the groups I decide to have in my life) Same activity to fit my students – all periods – see the diversity within the classroom and their relationships with others
11. What do you feel are the most important needs for Black students (the needs can be things or people)?	#1 they need a voice – (black students say – they don't hear us) – need to be heard (girls and boys)
12. Explain how the credentialing program provided you with the knowledge you need to utilize culturally relevant strategies.	Zero
13. What do you feel are the most important needs for teachers (the needs can be things or people).	A safe place to talk about what is really going on – no criticism – keep it real Need a voice too
14. Tell me about a course or experience you had prior to teaching in your own classroom that helped	Unique – AVID from 7th-12th grade as a student Mission Statement – Close the Achievement Gap for all Students Mandatory – Honors course each year Mom was strategic – putting me in specific programs

you understand how to utilize strategies that support positive academic outcomes for Black students.	The goal of AVID – black students (first was SES) Support of AVID tutors – first introduction to something that would help Your mom helped you find that program was designed for you
Research Question 3	
15. How many years have you been teaching?	17 years Includes my student teaching years
16. Explain how the credentialing program provided you with the knowledge you need to work with Black students.	Zero
17. When you began teaching, how confident did you feel that you could increase academic achievement for all students?	Very optimistic until halfway throughout my first year I was very confident I was a hard worker, and they still were not getting it – reflection
18. When you began teaching, how confident did you feel that you could increase academic achievement for Black students?	Very confident – started with my story – typical in a single parent household I used every program offered – tutor, office hours Step up and say I need help Trained to advocate Mom told me to speak up
19. What does culturally relevant pedagogy mean to you?	Open enough as a teacher use a textbook, but also open enough to go outside that book – i.e., video, TicTok – pull from the outside to supplement the textbook
20. What do you feel are the challenges to culturally relevant pedagogy?	Understanding what it means – talk about differences – one barrier A safe place – neutral space – honest, not afraid of what someone else will say or their facial expressions Understanding why culture is important – Assumption – beliefs – Eurocentric beliefs (re-educate self) life and people Everyone knows something I do not know, and then I can offer them something Learning happening all over Challenging us to discuss – no worries District leaders participate in the discussion – about culture Agree to disagree
21. Why do or why don't you feel utilizing	Yes, effective strategies will help Improve practice

culturally relevant strategies will improve Black students' academic achievement?	Ownership of the learning Give them chances to show their value (Final exam – shared what they thought the exam should be – explain what and why – everybody passed) Given guidelines – but they created their exam Honors what the students want Need time to hear students' ideas Difficulty – must be ready to hear what they say

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Your cooperation is much appreciated. You can be assured that all of your statements, comments, answers, and name will be kept confidential. All artifacts, including audio recordings, will be kept in a data-locked file or digital file in a locked cabinet in my home for five years, after which it will be destroyed. Thank you again!

Appendix H: Sample: "Clean" Interview Transcript-Coded Data

Questions and Answers	Codes
1. Do you work in a high school, middle school, or an elementary school?	High School
I work in a high school	
2. What type of intake or survey information from your students about what they like or how they learn do you collect at the beginning of each school year?	Learning Style Inventory Discuss different learning styles Code each style Personality Test for each student Discuss – groups Take notes on the different styles
Participant C: Okay, I have them do a learning style inventory. And this is just verbal. I did explain to them the different learning styles like auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and I asked them out loud, "What do you think you're learning modality is?" And we discuss that. And then I might put a little tally mark on the board underneath each one of those modalities, and we talk about it. That's pretty much verbal for the learning styles. And then I have them do a personality test and I have them do the 16-personality test, a free test online. And we talk about like, "Okay, so are you an introvert? Are you an extrovert?" And the test does everything for me because they can email their results to me, or they can email the results to themselves. But what I like to do is put them in groups, and they talk about their personality according to how they step in. So that one is more in-depth than I have them write notes as they're learning about their personality. So, they have to write it down. But the learning style one is just telling me what you think you are, and then as the school year goes on, you can kind of adapt different modalities. So, learning styles, personality, that's what I start with from the beginning.	
3. Explain how you determined the strategies you use to ensure that your students have access to the skill or lesson that you planned or that when you're planning	Discussions Admission tickets

Participant C: Okay. So, the strategies to make sure that they have access to learning? So, I do a lot of discussions. And I usually have an admission ticket and an exit ticket. So, the admission ticket is the question that we start with. And then the exit ticket might be a different question, or it could be the same question. So, for example, we talked about different governments like in history. So, we talk about socialism, communism. And so, the first question is, what is socialism? What is communism? They have to give a definition. Then we go through the discussion, we go through the activities, and then at the end of the period, I'll ask again, "Okay, so what's the difference between capitalism and socialism?" And they usually don't get it on the first day. It's too much; these concepts are big, so I'll do this same thing every day. And sometimes I'll call it a pop quiz. So that's the strategy that works best for me is when they walk in the door, and I say, "Okay, you have a pop quiz." But it's actually just a little assessment so that I know where they are. And if they're all looking at me like a deer in the headlight, I know, "Okay, we need to cover this first, and then I'll give it to you again, so they did get it." So that's a basic strategy I use all the time.	Question of the Day Vocabulary Exit tickets Activities related to concept "pop quiz"/assessment helps me know what they don't get or need
4. Explain how often you use materials and resources that display and/or represent black students in the materials and/or resources. Participant C: Okay, so materials I use a lot of quotes. I use different pictures in my slide shows of different people, of different races. But I really like to zero in on different quotes. So, I have things by Dr. King about character. How it's very important during your educational process that you advance as a person, and you develop your character, and not just your academic skills. So, I try to find quotes from all different kinds of people, but when it has to do specifically with African American students, I bring in the same stuff that I would use in February. I bring it in, I leave it in all	I use quotes – different races Character – development Use all year not just February Use images of people that look like them Promote a safe space Use music/songs Student choices of music

year long. And I have my Google Classroom online. And every time they log in to the Google Classroom, there's some kind of quotes there, or there's some kind of an image. And I try to find images and of people that look like them. So, every time they open up the Classroom, they see a picture of me, and then they see a picture of somebody else, and then they see a quote. Because I really want them to say, "Oh, this is a safe space for me, I belong here." There are women, there's Hispanic, there's all kinds of differences. Because you don't know who their thinking. You don't know who, you know, it's got an average. So, I love quotes. I need quotes for everything. And songs, I use music too. Sometimes I'll ask them, "Okay, who's your favorite artist?" And I'll ask them to give me a song then maybe play it to get everybody kind of like, in a good mood. And I'll say, "Okay, it has to be something clean." And I'll play it. And a lot of times, they'll look, and they'll be like, "Oh, she's playing my song." I never let them know what I'm going to play. So, they're always kind of like, "Oh, that's my song, I requested that." And then some artists, some of these artists, I don't even know who they are. But the kids can...	Madeline Hunter, lesson plan Content standard Objective stated Activities based on the objective Question of the Day Exit ticket Discussion Design keeps me focused
5. How do you deliver lessons that ensure that all students obtain academic success? Participant C: Okay, so I have a basic, like Madeline Hunter, lesson plan, but I kind of shortened it because he had like nine steps or something. I always start with a standard, I look up the standard, find out what it is for that day or that week. And with the standard, I put an objective underneath it. So, the objective takes the verbiage out of the standard, and then based on that objective, then I will create my activities. And then from the activities, then I'll always have a briefly question of the day, which will get us started and then I end it, again, I end it with an exit ticket which is a reminder of what was the standard, and what was the objective, and what are we talking about anyway.	

And that keeps me focused because I can talk all day. But when I'm through to that design, I stay focused and the kids appreciate, and they're like, "Okay, we're doing what we're supposed to be doing today." We're getting it done and sometimes we finish early we can have a long discussion. So that's my basic lesson style. Standard, objective, and then it needs discussion an exit ticket. So, it's like five. **6. Explain what you know about cultural competence?** Participant C: Okay, see, that's a new one to me because I just started going to this district meeting who's all about equity. So, I have an intuitive understanding. But it's very hard for me to articulate exactly what it is... because I kind of just use common sense before I go into a room. Any people, any person, I can kind of figure out who are they before I started to connect to them? Regardless of what their culture is. So, it's hard for me to get define that term. And I guess I'm going to learn from you. You're going to help me define that term but the way that I see it is I look at what it is that the student brings in the door with them. I don't assume that they come in as an empty vessel. For example, I have 70% Hispanic students. So, I'm always talking my broken Spanish because I'm trying to connect with what they've already heard me. So, my students think I'm fully [inaudible]. Yes, so I try to figure out, what are some of the things that are familiar to them. Like we talked about government, so I'll start by asking them questions about, "What do you know about how authority works? What do you know about leadership? What do you know about... like, how does it work with your family dynamics? Who's in charge? Are you the oldest? Do you have authority? We're trying to talk about rules and everything and I ask them, where do you fall into your family	District training focused on equity; New to the team; Connect – know who is in the room; "I don't assume that they come in as an empty vessel." Speak their language; Look for familiar things. Understand family dynamics; Celebrations; Recognitions; Share stories; Try to replicate a little bit of that; Establish a culture; I stand at the door, greet everybody. Shake everybody's hand; eye contact with their audience; ask questions; cultural understanding; do what's right for every kid; culturally competent; certain way, do certain things

dynamic?" So, the older kids have their own different understandings of leadership. Then the babies and the middle ones, they tell me, "Oh, well, I'm the oldest, I have the most responsibilities, I have to do this, I have to do that." So, we talk about that and then I asked them, okay, well, what about their focus, we talk about what they celebrate. What do you celebrate? So that when I get ready to do my recognition, I do little recognition in my class for kids. And I do a birthday party every month, so we celebrate all the birthdays in that month. So, I asked them, "How do you like to celebrate? What do you guys do at home?" And they'll share. It's a safe space, so they'll share. This is about what we do, we eat this, this is where we go, and I will allow them to share that. And try to replicate a little bit of that, right? I'm not going to do everybody's family's business, but another thing about what they do, I wanted to include is when I go into the classroom, I make it very clear that I wanted to establish a culture. When we're together, we have things that we do that are norms like, I stand at the door, I greet everybody, I shake everybody's hand, I give everybody eye contact and they go up and they do presentations. And they have to do the same thing that I do. They have to make eye contact with their audience. They have to speak loud enough so that everybody can hear them. Give their time for questions they have, to take questions. And people who are asking questions have to be respectful, and the audience has a job. So, we have a cultural understanding of the waiting board in my class which hands and raise. So, it's kind of hard for me to just focus on the black kids because I have so many kids. So, I just try to do what's right for every kid, and it works out. But it's hard, it's hard to actually define a culturally competent person. Like, it's kind of hard for me to explain, if I look at the features, it's hard to explain why one is constantly competent and while the other one is not. I mean, there's a blank thing, obviously, that you could say that makes you question, wait a minute, so you haven't any [inaudible], what's close to not?. But it's a very, it's not a new term, but it's a term that's	stand up and express themselves their own cultural viewpoint do presentations on their own talk in their groups full class discussion a safe place elicit answers from certain racial groups write

kind of hard to explain. It's intuitive. It's like common sense to me because I was trained in a certain way, do certain things, so this is good. This is a good study because this needs to be talked about more.	share it out loud start with the curriculum
7. Explain how you ensure that the lessons you provide for your students will lead black students to having an understanding about their culture?	
Participant C: Okay, so I have them stand up and express themselves. So, if they want to say something about their own perspective, from their own cultural viewpoint, it's going to come out in the conversation. So, they get to go up, and they get to do presentations on their own, and then they get to talk in their groups, and then we do a full class discussion. So, at any time, if they ever feel like they want to say something, it's a safe place. Now, there was one activity that was really fun that I specifically put questions on this survey to elicit answers from certain racial groups. So, for example, one question was, here's a scenario, how would you handle it? You're an African American female, your new to college, and one of your roommates in the dorm wants to touch your hair. What's your response? They looked hilarious. Even the boys were like, "No, "The kids weren't even African American, who had a very strong emotional response to that question. It was a funny discussion. So, they're like, "Never let anybody touch your hair, you don't do that." "Why are they even asking?" And it was funny because even the boys in the class were like, "Do people really ask to touch your hair?" And I was able to share, "Yes, I've got that question 10 times." Yes. So that was funny. And then there was another question about, you are the only Asian student in the class, in their study group, and they invited you to be a part of the study group. And they said, while they were studying with you, "Oh, it's so nice to	interview of the kids

have an easy kids group." And I said, "What is your response to that?" And that was a funny discussion. So, I kind of do that. I try to throw something there that I know is going to come, something's going to come out that has a racial episode. They love it. They like to talk about it. Oh, we've also talked about when we were studying a little bit of philosophy, like Aristotle and Socrates. There was a question I put on the test, and I said, "What is your definition of love? And would you date someone outside of your race?" And the kids were like, they loved that question. And they had to actually write, and then they had to share it out loud. And then they start sharing about, "Oh well, my parents aren't okay with me dating outside my race, but I think it's okay, because when I have kids..." I start with the curriculum and then I go way outside the curriculum. And so, it's always a fun discussion. It's fun. **8. Explain how you ensure that your Black students can navigate the social status quo (understand who they are they are in this world).** Participant C: Okay. So that goes back to just basically like interview of the kids. When we were talking, it's like an interview. So, I'm trying to figure out where are the learning gaps academically. And then where are the social gaps. So, for example, I have a couple of students that don't like being in groups, because they don't feel like they fit in anywhere. And they're African American, and so what I'll do is I'll put them together, two or three of them together. And then I'll ask, okay, these are the groups. You have to be in a group for this activity, you can't be alone. So, you could choose. So, I'll let them choose sometimes, and sometimes I won't. This is kind of mixed it up. But it is hard to know where their deficiencies are without having a	figure out where are the learning gaps academically social gaps groups choose conversation and asking questions asking them, "What do you need The Equity Institute group diverse discussions about equity versus equality

conversation. So, I think that's key, I'm always having a conversation and asking questions about my role, how I step in and help them. Like, what do you need from me? I'm always asking them, "What do you need?" Because they'll tell you. They're high school kids. They're very honest. They know what they need. They know if you're doing too much. They're like, "Oh, you're doing too much." They will talk to you. **9. What PD and/or training have you attended related to culturally relevant strategies?** Participant C: The Equity Institute this year. Powerful. I'm actually sad that we're not having them anymore because of this virus. So, I was supposed to go to three more, well wait, let me see, I have my notebook right here. We had one on March 16, then one on April 7 too. Those two got canceled, but it was two out of eight trainings. And when we got to sit down with, I got to sit at the table with my principal and four other staff members from each school. And she was very wise, the way that she picked us because she picked a history teacher, that's me, and then she picked an English teacher, who just happened to be a white guy. So, she made the whole group diverse. She had an instructional assistant there, who is a Hispanic woman. And then she brought in an administrator who is a male, Hispanic male, he's also a football coach. And then she brought in the athletic director, he's a white guy, and she's a white woman. So, us, sitting at that table, having these discussions about equity versus equality, that was a powerful training. I really, really liked that training. And this is the first year I've participated and even heard of the equity; it was good. It's really good. **10. If you have attended PD or trainings, tell me about how you use the strategies in your classroom?**	partner pair-shared activities put their papers up on the wall so that they see relationships different little colors and it represents the diversity

Participant C: So, we do a partner pair-shared activity during the training. So, we're always encouraged to go talk to other teachers from other school sites. So, what I do with the activities is I bring them back to my classroom. And I teach them the next day, I don't wait. Because if I wait, I'll forget. I'll totally forget it. So, there was one thing, where we had these little stickers, these little colorful stickers, and so we were asked to put these stickers on a piece of paper. And each sticker represented us to a specific ethnic or racial group. So, there were questions like, the first question was, "What type of ethnic groups are at your place of employment?" So, you could put one or two stickers, or however many stickers, right? And then, so obviously I had many stickers because I work in a pretty diverse environment. So, these questions got more, and narrower, basically, down to, what color is your doctor? What color is your dentist? What color is your best friend? What color are the people in your neighborhood? So yes, so when you start to see it, I was shocked because I thought I was pretty open, and pretty diverse, and everything. But then, when I got down to my personal relationships, all of them are African American. Every single one. It was like, wow, I had thought I was more, what do you call it? Not tolerate because that's [inaudible] more. I thought I was more open. Well, those relationships with different people. But the little activity reveals that when I have control, these are the proofs that I decide to have in my surroundings. I liked that. So, I took that same activity and I kind of modified it to fit my students, and I did that. And then I had them put their papers up on the wall so that they see. And you can't see the names. You can see all my students in every different period, you can see all these different little colors and it represents the diversity within us.	need a voice hear and I've had them write Zero safe place to talk need a voice AVID program from 7th grade to 12th grade close the achievement gap for all students African American students and Hispanic students are represented at the college level with AB courses, honors courses
11. What do you feel are the most important needs for black students (they can be people or things)?	

Participant C: I think, the first number one thing is they have, they need a voice. They need a voice. Because I always hear, and I've had them write about this as well. And what black students say all the time is that people don't hear us. They ignore us. They act like we're not here. If they do address us, it's for a negative reason. They think that we're causing a distraction because we're loud, so we don't get a voice. We're not heard. That's a big issue. It is very deep, and it comes from girls and boys, that are African American.	my mom has always been very strategic first introduction to something that was going to help black students and African
12. Explain how the credentialing program provided you with the knowledge you need to utilize culturally relevant strategies. Participant C: Zero.	
13. What do you feel are the most important needs for teachers (they can be people or things)? Participant C: What do teachers need? Teachers need a safe place to talk about what's going on, what's really going on. A safe place where they're not going to be criticized, or judged, or retaliated against for just keeping it real. The teachers need a voice, too.	Teaching 17 years Zero
14. Tell me about a course or experience you had prior to teaching in your own classroom that helped you understand how to utilize strategies that support positive academic outcomes for Black students? Participant C: Well, I kind of have a unique situation, because I was in the AVID program from 7th grade to 12th grade. Yes. And I was an AVID tutor, and now I'm an AVID teacher. So, in the AVID program, the mission statement is to close the	very optimistic very confident So, I learned that after the first semester of my first year, it was like, "Whoa, I'm doing all this stuff but they're still not getting it.

achievement gap for all students. And so, there's an effort to make sure that African American students and Hispanic students are represented at the college level with AB courses, honors courses, so we were told it's mandatory. You have to take an honor course every year. You have to take at least one. And they wanted us to take more than one, but they knew that it was a struggle.

No, the program, my mom has always been very strategic at putting me in certain programs. And so, the AVID program is what gave me a voice, it's what taught me that I could do higher level classes, because I had the support of the AVID tutors. So, the program worked perfectly for me, that was my first introduction to something that was going to help black students and African. Well, it was mostly low income, that was the group that they went after, it was low income. And then after they looked at socioeconomic status, then they looked at different racial groups. So African American, Hispanic was always built into that program. So that was my experience from middle school to high school, was like, "Look, you're at a disadvantage, you're going to have some hard times, but this program is designed for you to take advantage of, to help you." And that's a good idea.

15. How many years have you been teaching?

Participant C: 17

16. Explain how the credentialing program provided you with the knowledge you need to work with Black students.

Participant C: Zero.

17. When you began teaching, how confident did you feel that you could increase academic achievement for all students?

Participant C: I started out very optimistic until halfway through my first year, I was very optimistic.

very confident
an advantage to be an African American woman, in the teaching profession
my story is very neat, but it's also typical of what happens in a single parent household
I used every single program
tutor
trained to advocate
You need to speak up
bring in stuff that's relevant to what your students are going through
do a little TikTok dance video to demonstrate
library in my classroom
always pulling things from the outside

Yes, I walked through the door very confident, very, very excited, and then I started to learn that you can try to meet everybody's needs, you think you're meeting everybody's needs, but you're not. So, I learned that after the first semester of my first year, it was like, "Whoa, I'm doing all this stuff but they're still not getting it. Okay, what's going on? Is something wrong?"	Understanding the definitions, or the terms, that's one of the challenges; the definition of culturally relevant pedagogy that's one barrier; the second barrier is understanding why culture is important; some people assume that culture is not important, because when you come to school, school is the dominant culture; anything that doesn't fit into the mold of Eurocentric beliefs, that stuff is not important; stuff that I learned in the classroom is important, but there's things about life; And there's things about people that you also have to learn; I always assume that everybody that's in front of me knows something that I don't know; it's my job to gain understanding things from them, and then I can offer them whatever
18. When you began teaching, how confident did you feel that you could increase academic outcomes for Black students?	
Participant C: I was very confident, because I would always start with my story. And I always felt like I have an advantage to be an African American woman, in the teaching profession, because of my story is very neat, but it's also typical of what happens in a single parent household. But I was one out of three that ended up for the college, because I use every single program, every single little thing that I do, if they said there's a tutor, I got the tutor. If they said there's extra office hour with the teacher, I was going. I was doing every single little thing to make sure that I was successful, but unfortunately, a lot of our kids don't, they are all confident enough to step up the thing, you know. And meet a tutor and you can meet with new teachers, I was trained to advocate from account, from a little girl, I'm the oldest to three and my mom always said, "You need to speak up, whatever you need, you need to let me know." So, I quit in very confident.	
Were you open enough with the teacher to use the textbook, but not be afraid to go outside of the textbook. And bring in stuff that's relevant to what your students are going through. Like now, the kids are all about cell phones, and Chromebooks. And so, you have to be open to using YouTube in your classroom, use a little small clip from YouTube. Okay, have the kids do a little TikTok dance video to demonstrate, because they're doing it anyway.	

So, why not use that, be okay with maybe getting an outside reading, a little, get them to read on an outside book. Recommend books, I have a little library in my classroom, and I put books up there, and I put my own books up there. And I'm like, "If you want to read one of these, you can borrow and take it, bring it back." "And you write books?" "Yes." You've seen it too." Yes, so I'm always pulling things from the outside to stop lament the textbook.	
19. What does culturally relevant pedagogy mean to you? Participant C: Culturally relevant pedagogy. Understanding the definitions, or the terms, that's one of the challenges, what it does mean, and why do we need to talk about it because there's a lot of stuff out there, that they're like, "what?" we talk about it with our staff, I'm pretty open about having conversations, difficult or easy, whatever. But there's a lot of staffs that can't just, that's a barrier. So, the definition of culturally relevant pedagogy that's one barrier, just understanding what it is, making sure everybody's on the same page, and then the second barrier is understanding why culture is important, because some people assume that culture is not important, because when you come to school, school is the dominant culture, all the other subcultures don't matter. It's just like English. English is not the official language, but it's the language that everybody speaks, the educated class so, all the other languages don't matter. There's an assumption because we live here, in the western world, and everything is kind of Eurocentric, or it is Eurocentric, so anything that doesn't fit into the mold of Eurocentric beliefs, that stuff is not important. So, as a person that's been to college, and got a master's degree, and got everything in the educational system. You kind of have to sit back, and you have to reeducate yourself, and say, "Okay,	safe place mutual space where people can come together be honest not be afraid of what someone else is going to say Equity Institute small group of professionals pushing us to work with people who are different challenging us Look, we're having these conversations because these things need to come out." district leaders that are in the building people could go to agree to disagree Effective teaching strategies will help African Americans;

all that stuff that I learned in the classroom is important, but there's things about life. And there's things about people that you also have to learn, too." And so, that's why I don't ever just assume that people come in, and they don't know nothing. I never assume that; I always assume that everybody that's in front of me knows something that I don't know. So, it's my job to gain understanding things from them, and then I can offer them whatever it is that I want to put to test. But I never assume that because I have four degrees, I don't assume that all my degrees are going to be imparted on listening, because they might not even know what I know. It might not be relevant to them. So, I always ask, "What is it that you're interested in knowing? What questions do you have for me? Because there's some stuff that I don't know, you can help me learn it." There's a lot of learning happening that goes all over, my students are teaching me, I'm teaching them, they're teaching **20. What do you feel are the challenges to utilizing culturally relevant strategies will improve black student achievement?** Participant C: Okay, so first we have to have a safe place. There has to be some kind of safe mutual space where people can come together, and be honest, and not be afraid of what someone else is going to say, or what someone else face is going to look like when they really get honest. That's why I like the Equity Institute because it's a small training, it's a small group of professionals, and there's principals in there, counselors, teachers, and there's the facilitator, and he's pushing us to work with people who are different. He's pushing us, challenging us, to do his assignments, but we're doing them in that space. And there's an understanding, they really didn't have to say it out loud. But there's an understanding that, "Look, we're having these conversations because these things need to come out." But this is a safe place.	improve our practice; giving African American students an opportunity to take ownership of the learning. chances to create things that we use to show them that they have value; everybody was able to share. they took ownership and they took that final exam, everybody passed; standard; guidelines; make a video, would you like to make a song; African-Americans rarely get an opportunity to stand up and tell their teacher what they want to learn, or how they want to take their test need an opportunity to come out and share

And so, you don't have to worry when you leave here, about getting some type of look from someone or getting an e-mail about what you said, and so he makes it clear. And then not only that, we have district leaders that are in the building, and therefore this is a thing in the training, we have people that work at the district, they're in the room having the discussion. So, it's as safe place that people could go to agree to disagree because sometimes we talk about that and we agree to disagree and it's good. **21. Why do or why don't you feel utilizing culturally relevant strategies will improve Black students' academic achievement?** Participant C: Yes, yes. Effective teaching strategies will help African Americans, they will. And whatever we do to improve our practice, it's going to help all of the kids, but I think giving African American students an opportunity to take ownership of the learning is important. So, we have to give them chances to create things that we use to show them that they have value. So, for example, I have my kids do a final exam in December, I didn't create the final, I had them talk about what they wanted for their final. And everybody was able to share, not just the white students or the Hispanics, but the African American, I encouraged everybody, and they understand that, and expressed, "This is what I would like to do for my final exam." And they had to explain why. And so, they took ownership and they took that final exam, everybody passed, because it was something that they decided that they want to do. And I told them, "I have ideas on what I would like for you to do. Let me give you the big idea. Let me give you the standard that I want to master." So, I gave them that, "These are the guidelines, and now I want you guys to tell me what you would like to do, would you like to make a video, would you like to make a song?" and we talked about this for like a whole week, and they created it, and came up with it, and they get it, and I graded all of them that same day	

and they walked away feeling like, “Yes. She actually honored what I wanted to do for that final.” [inaudible] That is very cool, but African Americans rarely get an opportunity to stand up and tell their teacher what they want to learn, or how they want to take their test. There’s no room for teachers hearing what kids want, there’s no time for that, there’s no flexibility for that. So, it needs to happen because the kids have their ideas and they have their geniuses, they just need an opportunity to come out and share. But that is a difficult thing, because you have to be ready to hear what the kids have to say. So, at times kids don’t know how to talk in a respectful manner, they just know how to blurt out.	

Appendix I: Sample Coded Data to Themes

Interview Question & Coded Answers	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6	Theme 7	Theme 8
	Culturally Responsive/ Relevant Perspectives	Instructional Strategies	Instructional Delivery	Professional Development /Training	Experiences - in classroom	Experiences - prior to teaching	Content	Other
	3	2						
	3	3						
	3	3						
	3							
		1						
	5							
	8	6	8				3	3
	16		1					
		4	3					
	4	2						
		6						
	3	9						
	3	3	18					4
		15						
		3	5					1
	2	5						
	2	3						
		7						
	16	2						1
	386	117	37	33	2	9	26	610