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## Culturally Responsive Teaching With High School Teachers

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# Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Mahdee H. Muhammad

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University

2022

Abstract

Culturally Responsive Teaching With High School Teachers

by

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MS, Walden University, 2007

BA, Jackson State University, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May 2022

## Abstract

Despite incorporating the culturally responsive teaching (CRT) method into the culturally diverse classroom, teachers struggle to implement the CRT method. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. The study sample was 12 high school teachers with 2 or more years of teaching experience who used CRT to teach a diverse class. Sixteen interview questions were used to collect the data with the participants through Zoom interviews that lasted 20–40 minutes. The 16 interview questions were probing and open-ended questions. The interviews were recorded and downloaded into Otter.ai and saved under the same Greek name given to the teacher. The results of direct interpretation data analysis produced three themes. First, more teacher training in CRT is needed. Second, CRT is primarily about the students' race. Third, although most teachers understand CRT, they seem not to implement it consistently. Seventy percent of the teachers reported that if they were the same race as their students, this would be all they needed to understand their students culturally. Findings may encourage local school districts to introduce CRT-specific professional development for teachers, which may help them improve the academic performance of their diverse students.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to “Daddy’s Gang,” Stacie, Vernell, Daniel, and Zion, and I am proud to be called “Dad.” To my grandmother, Stacy Passmore, who is no longer here in body but is always with me in spirit. I want to thank everyone who has stood by me as I walked this journey. The footsteps that I leave are for my children to walk in.

## Acknowledgments

My gratitude goes out to my children and all who have assisted me throughout this research process. To my review team, who have helped open my eyes to new perspectives. I will be eternally grateful for all the support they have given me in my journey.

I want to thank Dr. Ashraf Esmail, the committee chair; Dr. Sylvia A. Mason, the committee member; and Dr. Givens, my university research reviewer. They have spent many hours on my behalf, helping me achieve my goal and directing me through every stage of this process.

Woodson (1933) stated “when you control a man’s thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions” (p.4). I hope to make a difference in how diverse students are educated by developing an encouraging and nurturing environment for them to learn.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The American educational system has rapidly expanded to include thousands of students from diverse backgrounds, such as African American and Latinx students from low- and middle-class families (Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019). During the school year of 2000, White students made up 61% of students in the United States, but in 2014–2015 this percentage had dropped to 49.7% (Aydin et al., 2017). During this time, there has been a significant change in the population of culturally diverse students within the United States. For the first time during the 2014–2015 school year, most of the students were not White (Aydin et al., 2017). This trend leads to a projection that by the 2022 school year, students who make up racial minority groups will constitute 54.7% of the student body within the United States (Aydin et al., 2017). This will cause an increase in the population of culturally diverse students within the United States (Aydin et al., 2017).

Although the student population has become more diverse, the curriculum being taught has not. DiFranza (2019) asserted that the education system needs teachers who can teach curriculum using the culturally responsive teaching (CRT) model. Schaeffer (2021) noted that the education system within the United States consists of 79% White and 21% racial minority teachers who teach a student population with 53% racial minority students. This imbalance of racial minority students and the teacher population creates a need for CRT. According to Gay (2010), CRT focuses on addressing students' needs related to their ethnic background and the diverse student culture. Wynter-Hoyte et al. (2019) noted that the curriculum within U.S. public schools has stayed monocultural

despite the student population becoming more diverse. This type of diversity calls for the recruitment and training of teachers who can apply CRT principles in the classroom.

According to Murry et al. (2020), due to growing linguistic diversity, the need for cultural diversity will be a hallmark within classrooms throughout the United States.

Murry et al. noted that teachers in the classrooms have struggled to apply CRT as many have not bought into its effectiveness. The problem addressed in the past study was that despite incorporating a CRT curriculum in one culturally diverse Midwest U.S. city school system, the high school teachers are struggling to implement the CRT method consistently. Teachers may not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of their diverse students. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Teachers play an essential role in fulfilling the learning needs of the growing population of diverse students in all schools and at all levels. Research indicated that CRT is an effective teaching method that teachers may use to meet diverse students' needs and to teach a culturally relevant curriculum (Erin et al. 2020; Rogelberg et al., 2020; Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019). When the curriculum does not capture diverse students' cultural interests and values, they often find it challenging to make sense of what they are being taught, making learning difficult (Erin et al., 2020; Rogelberg et al., 2020; Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019). Although researchers such as Bonner et al. (2018) have studied how teachers apply CRT in some academic subject areas, there was minimal literature related to this problem with high

school teachers in a high school setting in the Midwest. The literature was sparse regarding CRT's application in teaching in high school students from diverse backgrounds. The findings from the study will be shared with the local schools participating in the research. The results may help local school districts introduce CRT-specific professional development for teachers, which may help teachers improve the academic performance of diverse students.

### **Background**

During the 2014–2015 school year, the percentage of White students within the United States dropped to an all-time low of 49.7%; by 2022, it will be 45.3 % (Aydin et al., 2017). As the student population has changed without a corresponding expansion of teachers to include those from racial minority groups, the curriculum being created requires teachers who can apply the CRT model (Muñiz, 2019) in the classroom. Aydin et al. (2017) noted that

regardless of culture, national origin, or level of English fluency, no student should feel isolated; teachers must be committed to the principle that all students have the right to be engaged in their education and to receive a high-quality education. (p. 4)

Africa, Asia, and Europe have all made significant progress in this direction (Civitillo et al., 2019). According to Dee and Penner (2017), CRT's fundamental premise is that all students can learn effectively when their curriculum is culturally relevant and reflects diverse students' values and interests in the classroom. Dee and Penner noted that when students are given a culturally relevant curriculum, their grades and scores increase.

After American schools' desegregation during the 1960s, critical terms emerged in academic writing, such as culturally responsive, culturally appropriate, and cultural relevance (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). These new concepts appeared in the U.S. educational landscape because educational planners were determined to adjust the curriculum to meet students' changing needs. CRT helps teachers implement the students' culture into the lesson by giving them a multicultural education; studies have shown that when students' classwork aligns with their home culture, it helps to enhance their cultural enrichment and their academics and social skills (Erin et al. 2020; Phuntsog, 2001; Rogelberg et al., 2020; Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019). Ernst-Slavit and Morrison (2018) discussed how teachers could teach a high school lesson's content by incorporating students' home lives into the lesson. Ernst-Slavit and Morrison highlighted how CRT is a tool that can be effectively used for learning because it focuses on students' cultures more so than teaching a lesson.

Murry et al. (2020) noted that cultural diversity will be a hallmark within U.S. classrooms; nevertheless, teachers seem to struggle to apply CRT because they are unsure of how to use it effectively. I explored the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Yishak and Gumbo (2015) revealed that CRT principles help students learn when teachers apply CRT accurately. In contrast, Rogelberg et al. (2020) noted that CRT involves the use of students' life experience and perspective to teach them more effectively; when teachers misuse CRT, it creates a nonresponsive curriculum because it lacks relevance to diverse students. When

a curriculum includes cultural, political, and social values, it becomes relevant to that group of students because it is based on their cultural practices and values (Yishak & Gumbo, 2015). Scholars such as Gay (2002), Ladson-Billings (1995), and Yishak and Gumbo (2015) have observed that teachers who appropriately apply CRT in the classroom can help diverse students relate and understand the lesson being taught in the classroom. The Western principles of education are embedded in the foundation of learning. Nonetheless, this has not deterred educators from continually attempting to implement a CRT method; for example, a curriculum that includes the students' cultural and social values and has the students' social structure align with the curriculum is one that emphasizes critical points of CRT (Yishak & Gumbo, 2015). The purpose of the current basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. The gap in practice was that despite incorporating the CRT curriculum into diverse school system, high school teachers are struggling to implement the CRT method consistently.

Research showed that some students experience cultural cost or cultural dissonance when their culture is not included in their education (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Yishak & Gumbo, 2015). Kumar et al. (2018) concluded that not all students are the same; therefore, teachers should not treat them in a one-size-fits-all approach. Kumar et al. noted that students of color need to feel they have achieved academic success; they must also feel it was done using their culture in the learning process.



### **Problem Statement**

The problem investigated in this study was that despite incorporating a CRT curriculum in one culturally diverse Midwest U.S. city school system, the high school teachers are struggling to implement the CRT method consistently, which suggests the teachers may not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of students. According to the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction for a Midwest U.S. school district, the need for Midwest schools to make their curriculum more inclusive arose after the 1960–70 school desegregation in the United States. Diversity changes called for a more inclusive curriculum culturally reflective of the diverse student population. This curriculum change was done to incorporate CRT into the classroom and produce students who would become competent and informed citizens. The assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction noted that the primary goal of their school district is to focus on better educating their students from low-income families, racial minority students, and English language learners by giving them access to grade-appropriate assignments, intense instruction, deep engagement, and high expectations.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions (RQs) were developed to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools:

RQ1: How do high school teachers describe their use of the CRT method with culturally diverse students in their culturally diverse classrooms in Midwest U.S. schools?

RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools?

### **Conceptual Framework**

I used Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995, 2003) motivational framework for CRT. The motivational framework for CRT allows for the integration of critical constructs while exploring how CRT is implemented. CRT's motivational framework enabled me to examine how teachers address all of the skills and cultural knowledge students bring into the lesson (see Johri, 2020). The motivational framework is used to address the cultural diversity that the students bring into the classroom without putting all students into the same learning box (Johri, 2020). CRT consists of several key terms, such as culturally contextualized pedagogies, culturally sensitive, and culturally congruent (Rhode, 2017). Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995, 2003) motivational framework for CRT helped me connect these terms to the end goal of supporting all teachers to be better prepared to implement CRT. CRT focuses on empowering,

facilitating, liberating, and validating the students in the classroom (Rhode, 2017).

According to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (2003), fundamental to CRT's motivational framework are four functions: developing attitude, engendering competence, enhancing meaning, and establishing inclusion. I examined the collected qualitative data for evidence of these criteria.

Teachers working with a diverse student population who do not use CRT models in their classrooms tend to have less student engagement (Long, 2017). Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995, 2003) motivational framework for CRT helped me examine how CRT models improve education. This framework also allowed me to frame the data collections around the model's core components and explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools.

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995, 2003) motivational framework for CRT allowed me to address the research questions by interviewing high school teachers about their perception of CRT and how they are implementing it in the classroom setting. I looked at how teachers develop attitudes, engender competence, enhance meaning, and establish inclusion. I explored the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's motivational framework for CRT helped me examine CRT's application in the classroom related to the two research questions. I also used Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's motivational framework for CRT when conducting Zoom interviews with teacher

participants to understand what beliefs and cultural values the teachers bring to their classrooms and whether they align with their beliefs of CRT.

The two research questions in the study helped me examine the techniques that CRT teachers use, and Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995, 2003) motivational framework for CRT enabled me to explore the teachers' use of CRT and understand whether the teachers consider students' cultural backgrounds while using a CRT model. This motivational framework for CRT allowed me to gain insight into each teacher's perspective by asking "how" questions, such as how they use CRT methods to teach students from diverse backgrounds.

### **Nature of the Study**

I used a basic qualitative design (see Heale & Twycross, 2018) with Zoom interviews to collect data exploring the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Although researchers such as Bonner et al. (2018) have studied how teachers apply CRT in some academic subject areas, there was minimal literature related to this problem with high school teachers in a high school setting in the Midwest. The literature was sparse regarding CRT's application in teaching high school students from diverse backgrounds. The data for the research were collected from interviews with high school teachers who teach within diverse classrooms in a Midwest U.S. school district.

I used purposive sampling to recruit 12 high school teachers with 2 or more years of teaching experience who were using CRT to teach a diverse class. The participants

were selected from 12 high schools near a central Midwest U.S city. Direct interpretation and naturalistic generalization (see Teti et al., 2020) were used to analyze the primary data, which came from recorded Zoom interviews. During the Zoom interviews (see McInnes et al., 2017), I asked 16 interview questions to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools.

A CRT interview protocol was used, which allowed me to explore the CRT's method at six levels: assessment practices, teacher dispositions, classroom climate, planned curriculum activities, instructional discourse, and sociocultural perspectives. I explored how high school teachers in the Midwest U.S use CRT to highlight students' culture in the lesson from social, academic, and multidimensional standpoints, as well as how the teachers apply and implement the CRT model. This research may help local schools in the Midwest U.S implement practices and procedures in relation to the use of the CRT model.

### **Definitions**

The following terms and definitions were used for the purpose of this study. Throughout the study, these terms related to how the teachers' cultural identity factored into their teaching.

*Culturally relevant education:* This means to “engage students in critical reflection about their own lives and societies, using inclusive curricula and activities to support analysis of all the cultures represented” (Aronson & Laughter, 2020, p. 262) as it bridges the student culture to the academic concepts and skills.

*Culturally relevant pedagogy:* It is one “that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Aronson & Laughter, 2016, as cited in Henry, 2017, p. 4).

*Culturally relevant teachers:* They are those who “center students’ culture in teaching practice through three primary approaches: promoting high expectations, cultural competence, and critical consciousness” (Byrd, 2016, p. 1).

*CRT:* It implies “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Muñiz & New America, 2019, p. 9).

*Culture:* This term “has been defined as the integrated pattern of human behavior, e.g., thoughts, communication, action, customs, beliefs, values, and instructions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group. Some have described culture as a spectrum, ranging from surface elements, e.g., food, language, and dress, to deeper components, e.g., notions of self, norms, prejudices” (Larson et al., 2018, p. 154).

### **Assumptions**

This research involved several assumptions. The first was that the teachers would provide honest responses to interview questions. Second, I assumed that the teachers’ race, for the most part, would not affect how they apply and implement the CRT method. However, a lack of teaching training might affect the teacher’s understanding of implementing the CRT method correctly. The third assumption was that all teachers, no matter their race, go into teaching with the aim of helping all students; therefore, if teachers are given a curriculum that is more inclusive of their students’ racial diverse and

ethnic backgrounds, the teachers can implement an effectively CRT curriculum. The fourth assumption was that all teachers are competent regardless of their years of teaching experience. However, according to Wynter-Hoyte et al. (2019), teachers who are knowledgeable about CRT and are aware of their students' diverse backgrounds can teach lessons that improve academic learning.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The problem examined was that despite incorporating a CRT curriculum in one culturally diverse Midwest U.S. school system, the high school teachers are struggling to implement the CRT method consistently, which suggests the teachers may not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of students. CRT allows teachers to address their students' cultural needs (Civitillo et al., 2019). Data were collected from interviews to provide a better understanding of what makes CRT work when applied correctly. Bonner et al. (2018) examined whether teachers' personal biases or perceptions affected how they implemented CRT in an urban classroom in Southern California. The outcome of their study showed the need for more professional development and more resources and time for teachers when it concerns using CRT, and their research showed that there are gaps in how CRT is being implemented.

### **Limitations**

During the 2020–2021 school year, the United States was in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kaden, 2020). This is expected to have a lasting effect on how classrooms are set up and how the curriculum is delivered online; virtual and distance

learning is the new normal for many teachers (Kaden, 2020). CRT is critical because more K–12 students face social isolation as they struggle with virtual, distance, and online learning. The second limitation was the number of participants; this study was limited to 12 teachers from a Midwest U.S high school district. Data were collected through thought-provoking Zoom interviews. Many beginner researchers come into their study with the mindset that they can keep their bias out of the data collection process (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I endeavored to exclude any personal bias by recording the audio of the Zoom interviews to clarify any misconceptions about the data if there was a concern about researcher bias.

### **Significance**

This study was distinctive because it focused on 12 high school teachers who use CRT in the classroom, and how they perceive and use the CRT method with their diverse students to keep them engaged in the classroom lessons. This study may help the local school district understand the significance of teaching diverse students a curriculum that allows the teachers to teach from a culturally responsive perspective. When a diverse curriculum model is implemented correctly, it allows students' personal experiences, backgrounds, and home lives to be included in the lesson (Johri, 2020; Rhode, 2017).

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 addressed the problem that despite incorporating a CRT curriculum in one culturally diverse Midwest U.S. school system, the high school teachers struggle to implement the CRT method consistently, which suggests the teachers may not fully understand how to use the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning



needs of students. In response to this problem, I designed a study to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Muñiz and New America (2019) and Phuntsog (2001) showed that this problem with CRT is not local but national in scale.

Chapter 1 also provided the rationale underlying the CRT method making a difference that engenders social change in how high school teachers teach a diverse classroom. The assumption was that race and teaching experience do not affect the curriculum if the curriculum is more CRT inclusive. This study was limited to 12 Midwest U.S high school teachers, and I applied Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995, 2003) motivational framework for CRT to evaluate how the CRT method improves the curriculum. I recruited high school teachers with 2 or more years of teaching experience to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools.

The study focused on the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools to enhance students' learning. Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy helped determine the groundwork for Gay's (2002) CRT. The study also focused on how Gay's concept used students' diversity, the student's cultural knowledge, and their prior experience to enhance and make student learning more valuable and relevant to their needs. While examining CRT

and high school teachers' application, I focused on Gay's five essential CRT characteristics.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem addressed in this study was that despite incorporating a CRT curriculum in one culturally diverse Midwest U.S. school system, the high school teachers are struggling to implement the CRT method consistently, which suggests the teachers may not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of students. I explored the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Many students whose cultural interests and values are not captured by the school curriculum often find it hard to make sense of what they learn in a diverse classroom (Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019). Researchers had studied how teachers apply the CRT model in some academic subject areas (Bonner et al., 2018; Muñiz & New America, 2019; Phuntsog, 2001); however, no study appears to have been completed using only teachers in a Midwest U.S. high school setting. Bonner et al. (2018) focused on a Southern California high school, middle school, and elementary school. Bonner et al. noted that teachers from other student populations within the United States should be interviewed to better understand CRT.

The current study was conducted to fill this gap in the literature about this educational practice. I intended to explore how implementing a different educational approach could make a difference for diverse learners to see if they engage more in the curriculum as well as have a better understanding of what they are being taught by making it more applicable to their everyday life. This basic qualitative study addressed the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method

to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools.

The American educational system has been rapidly expanding to include thousands of students from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, all teachers' responsibility is to teach to meet the needs of the growing population of diverse students in all schools at all levels. Murry et al. (2020) noted that cultural diversity will be a hallmark within classrooms in the United States; however, teachers seem to struggle in the classroom to apply CRT because they are unsure of how to use it effectively. Research indicated that one effective teaching method to meet diverse students' learning needs in the classroom is the CRT approach (Bonner et al., 2018; Muñiz & New America, 2019; Phuntsog, 2001; Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019).

When teachers can address and voice their beliefs about the students they teach, they will be empowered to end the classroom's cultural barriers (Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019). Wynter-Hoyte et al. (2019) noted that teachers who include their students' culture in their lessons help to develop an environment that is more inclusive of learning and student learning. Muñiz and New America (2019) indicated that the need for more teachers who are culturally responsive to their students' needs is critical because this will help narrow the academic achievement gap for students of color. Muñiz and New America also noted that more teacher training is needed to help teachers make the lessons being presented to the students more effective for learning. More professional development is required for teachers in CRT, and the call for CRT to be included in the state requirement for teacher's quantification is overdue (Muñiz & New America, 2019).

Bonner et al. (2018) noted that the student population is changing. The student racial makeup has become more diverse, and students of color are now the majority (Aydin et al., 2017). Muñiz and New America noted that this change has caused a need for CRT because many teachers do not culturally represent the students they are teaching.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

For this study, key terms such as *culture*, *culturally relevant education*, *culturally relevant pedagogy*, *culturally relevant teachers*, and *culturally responsive* were used when searching Google Scholar and the EBSCOhost, ProQuest Key, and ERIC databases. The peer-reviewed journal articles were published between 2016 and 2020. During the searches, I was able to find several relevant articles.

### **Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Foundation**

#### **Motivational Theory**

Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020) noted that “motivation refers to the processes that instigate and sustain goal-directed activities” (p. 1). Young (date, as cited in Ginsberg 2005) incorporated the motivational theory into research during the 1940s because it allowed for research to move forward. Illeris (2018) noted that up to the 1950s, motivational theory mainly focused on four approaches related to a geographical area or a specific language. The use of motivational theory was questionable because some scholars thought that humans were incapable of being studied with a motivational theory; therefore, motivational theory was primarily used to examine an organism that was resting into being active (Bernard, 1990). Bernard (1990) noted that this thinking did a disservice to the use of motivation theory in research because an educational

psychologist's primary goal is to motivate humans to want to learn something new, and motivational theory would allow this. During this time, industrial psychologists' goal was to get humans to make use of what they already knew, and it was not to motivate learning (Bernard, 1990). CRT is about getting teachers to teach students in a way in which teachers take students' knowledge and use it in the lesson to help them learn something new. Motivational theory was able to shift early research away from animals to humans; there was also an increase in the cognition aspect regarding behavior, which would allow motivational theory to be used more widely in educational research.

### **Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching**

The primary objective for any framework in research is to analyze the data that will be collected in the study; for that reason, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995, 2003) motivational framework for CRT allowed me to explore how educators can use CRT to meet the needs of their diverse students. When examining CRT, Hramiak (2015) relied on Gay's concept that teachers use the students' diversity, cultural knowledge, and prior experience to make student learning more valuable and relevant to their needs. Hramiak noted that Gay had five essential characteristics for CRT that acknowledge student cultural heritage. CRT affects students' connection with the curriculum by addressing the gap between home and school. According to Hramiak, CRT provides teaching and learning strategies, encourages students to embrace other cultural heritage, and includes a curriculum that offers a range of information and resources across all school subjects.

Humans' nature is to be active and curious about life and learning from life experiences; when students can personalize what they are being taught, it gives them the

desire to be motivated about the lesson (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2003). I used motivational theory to explore how educators can use CRT to meet all of their students' needs.

A motivational framework accepts the culture of all students, and teachers use students' culture to create a learning environment that is acceptable to all students because it clarifies the role that the student and teacher plays (Johri, 2020). Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (2003) noted that the motivational framework allows cultures to be respected and infused into an accessible lesson to students. According to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, there are four fundamental functions to a motivational framework in CRT: developing an attitude, engendering competence, enhancing meaning, and establishing inclusion. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg noted that certain motivational conditions are needed to address the cultural differences in the classroom.

### **Intrinsic Motivational Theory**

Intrinsic motivational is the act of doing something without a necessary outside reward. Teachers teach for the enjoyment of educating their students; the motivation for teaching students comes from the satisfaction of seeing their students learn (Santos-Longhurst, 2019). Santos-Longhurst (2019) noted that there are seven factors to understand the benefits and mechanisms of intrinsic motivation: challenge, control, recognition, fantasy, curiosity, cooperation, and competition. Santos-Longhurst found that when educators are allowed to teach without worrying about what they will receive for doing it, it provides for the freedom to work without rewards placed on the outcome. Santos-Longhurst looked at whether timing rewards earlier in a task can encourage

intrinsic motivation and increase enjoyment and encourage persistence, and the overall debate regarding whether extrinsic rewards have beneficial or adverse effects on intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is a personal desire for enjoyment and fulfillment in contrast to a mandate or externally imposed restriction or requirement.

According to Di Domenico and Ryan (2017), intrinsic motivation was first used in a study by Harlow during the 1950s when he used the term to describe research while observing rhesus monkeys and their interaction with puzzles. Harlow (date, as cited in Di Domenico & Ryan, 2017) examined how primates received internal rewards and how the monkeys' behavior was controlled and reinforced by their environment and contingencies. It was not until 1971 in Deci's study that intrinsic motivation was used to research humans (Di Domenico & Ryan, 2017). Jin et al. (2015) noted that the issue or observation had been addressed with better neuroscience studies because they were able to examine human neural responses related to observation directly, and most notably brain activity because this was a sign of intrinsic motivation within a human.

### **Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables**

#### **CRT**

The quality of education that racial minority students receive can be significantly improved when they are given lessons that mirror their cultural perspectives, experiences; and heritage; without a culturally responsive teaching education, diverse students are shortcut on their education experiences (Gay, 2002). "Teachers' knowledge about and attitudes toward cultural diversity are powerful determinants of learning opportunities and outcomes for ethnically different students. For some students, they facilitate



academic achievement; for others, they obstruct learning” (Gay, 2002, p. 613).

Americans are not recognized for being very receptive to change or difference in race, ethnicity, culture, and class; therefore, the education system tends to share these same biases (Gay, 2002). Teachers who willfully pretend not to notice the diversity within their classrooms are doing more harm than good when it comes to their diverse students (Pai, 1990).

CRT is a term that comes out of several cultural approaches to teaching. CRT was developed from Ladson-Billings’ culturally relevant pedagogy, Gay’s CRT, and Paris’s culturally relevant pedagogy, which developed culturally sustaining pedagogy; these are some of the scholars and educators whose works are considered to be the starting points for CRT (Muñiz & New America, 2019). When examining CRT, Hramiak (2015) relied on Gay’s concept that teachers use the students’ diversity, cultural knowledge, and prior experience to enhance and make student learning more valuable and relevant to their needs. Hramiak noted that Gay’s five essential characteristics for CRT consisted of acknowledging student cultural heritage as it affects their connection with curriculum, addressing the gap between home and school, providing a variety of teaching and learning strategies, encouraging students to embrace other cultural heritages, and including a curriculum that offers a range of information and resources across all school subjects.

CRT is essential because student enrollment throughout the United States public school system for the first time is majority people of color; as such, building a pool of diverse educators who can teach using CRT is critical to take advantage of the knowledge

that these students bring into the classroom (Muñiz & New America, 2019). Muñiz and New America (2019) noted that CRT requires teachers to stop underappreciating what the students bring to the classroom. This is how educators can make classroom learning practical and relevant to all students. One problem with CRT is that professional development training and teacher preparation are not training teachers to perform CRT correctly. Muñiz and New America noted that in a 2018 New York City survey of teachers, 1 in 3 teachers received regular training on addressing diversity in the classroom.

Student learning is the core of CRT when it comes to focusing on the student from a cultural standpoint; CRT takes the student's prior experiences and frame of reference and their cultural knowledge to map out a learning cycle (Rhode, 2017). Rhode (2017) emphasized that CRT is unique to the other cultural terms. CRT empowers, facilitates, validates, and liberates these students by allowing for their success from an academic standpoint.

CRT embraces cultural diversity in the classroom because it recognizes that teachers as primary stakeholders; therefore, it is critical that the teachers incorporate students' diversity into the classroom lesson to promote different perspectives and practices within their classroom, as well as acknowledge the diversity that comes with the students that they teach (Civitillo et al., 2019). CRT provides for the students' culture to be vocal in classroom lessons because it is students' culture that should be the central pillar in learning (Rhode, 2017). CRT shows that students learn better when they are taught a lesson for the first time based on a subject that the student can personally relate

to because the lesson has the student's life experiences and background (Muñiz & New America, 2019). Muñiz and New America (2019) noted that when CRT is taught to diverse students, it helps them to become more friendly to others because they have a favorable opinion about their own ethnic and racial identity; this feeling of ethnic-racial identity leads diverse students to have stronger self-esteem, it promotes a better attitude toward self, and it enables students to deal with discrimination better.

### **Culturally Responsive Education**

Gay and Ladson-Billing works were established to help teachers address diverse students' needs in classrooms (Khalifa et al., 2016). Gay's (2010) work noted how critical CRT was to teachings; but just having CRT alone would not fix the problems that diverse students face; there needed to be a contribution made by administrations that address funding as policymaking. Gay felt that teachers needed to respond to students' social needs and their cultural learning, and the school leaders needed to make it the school's mission to focus on student's cultural needs (Khalifa et al., 2016). Ladson-Billing (1995) examined how students perform better when teachers can link the student's culture to their learning; Cornel Pewewardy (1993) noted that Native American children were not performing well in school due to how teachers were not inserting the lesson into their culture; Pewewardy (1993) found this was true for all students who were not the typical white middle-class student.

### **Diverse Students and CRT**

In the past ten years, classrooms in the U.S. have seen a change in the student population as there is more economic diversity in today's classroom; as the students

come from a linguistic, racial, and cultural multiplicity, which calls for teachers who can teach to this diversity (Bonner et al., 2018). School districts are required to meet the needs of all these students as not all educators have responded to this change adequately; more teachers who have the skills and knowledge to perform CRT are required; Bonner et al. (2018) noted that school districts need to make improvements in professional development so that it imparts current teachers' skills needed in teaching diverse students. Teachers understand that they face a challenge effectively teaching diverse students, as numbers show that one out of four diverse students do not graduate on time. CRT is a pedagogical practice that affects how teachers teach and reduce this number (Bonner et al., 2018). CRT allows teachers to teach diverse students a curriculum that includes the student's background and culture; as noted, the increase in student diversity requires professional development that gives teachers the tools they need to improve student achievement.

Kayaalp (2019) noted that by 2050, 57% of US students' would-be students in the minority, as the majority will no longer be White students; although, the teacher population will still be majority White and unable to teach these diverse students in a cross-cultural way properly. A diverse student that is non-white can go from grade K-12 and not be taught by one teacher that looks like them (Wynn & Mark, 2005). The US is a multicultural county; per Kauchak and Eggen (2008), the US. Places these multicultural into six sub-groups Native Hawaiian, Asian, White, Native-American, Pacific Islander, and African American. Teachers must ensure that their students' negative or personal feelings are not reflected in the lesson (Gay, 2010). Teachers are critical to their student's

cognitive development and academic achievement, and students from a different cultural diversity than White teachers tend to do poorly when they do not have a bond of trust with their teacher (Johnson & Prom-Jackson, 1986). Some teachers feel that not recognizing or making the culture or race a part of the lesson shows that they do not see color; however, this teaching practice harms diverse students' learning (Wynn & Mark, 2005). Gay (2010) CRT allows teachers to reach their diverse students and use their cultural differences to enhance the learning experience as they increase students' academic outcomes and opportunities

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Chapter two notes that the teacher's race is not a focus point as it relates to CRT. The literature focuses more on how the teachers can use CRT in the classroom, as well do CRT focuses on addressing students' needs related to their ethnic background the diverse student culture. Today, the classroom is changing as more minority; non-White students become the majority in classrooms as teachers' background stays the same. Works by Gay and Ladson-Billings are the foundation of CRT, as it shows how academic success is linked to imputing the students' cultural relevance; still, Gay understood that CRT alone would not correct academic issues as CRT requires support from school administration and funding for education. Past studies on CRT focus on how it is applied in various academic subjects; however, this will be the first to examine CRT at the high school level in a Midwest U.S school district.

The American educational system has rapidly expanded to include thousands of students from diverse backgrounds, such as African American and Spanish American

students from low- and middle-class families (Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019). This trend leads to a projection that by the 2022 school year, students who make up the minority groups will have 54.7% of the student body (Aydin et al.). This will cause an increase in the population of culturally diverse students within the United States. (Aydin et al.). Still the curriculum being taught to these diverse students has mostly stayed the same; as such, CRT allows teachers to address the cultural needs of these growing diverse students (Civitillo et al., 2019)

ErnstSlavit and Morrison (2018) discussed how teachers could teach the content of a lesson by incorporating students' home lives into the lesson. In addition, the authors highlighted how culturally responsive teaching, if used correctly, can be effectively used for learning with diverse students, as it focuses on students' cultures. According to Dee and Penner (2017), teachers who are CRT teachers believe that all students can learn effectively when their curriculum is culturally relevant and reflects the values and interests of diverse students in the classroom. However, this culturally limited curriculum entails less inclusion within the classroom (Civitillo et al., 2019).

Teachers play an essential role in fulfilling the learning needs of the growing population of diverse students in all schools and at all levels. Research indicates that CRT is an effective teaching method that teachers may use to meet these diverse students' needs in their classrooms to teach a culturally relevant curriculum (Erin et al. 2020; Rogelberg et al. 2020; and Wynter-Hoyte et al. 2019). When the curriculum does not capture diverse students' cultural interests and values, they often find it challenging to make sense of what they are being taught, making learning difficult (Erin et al., 2020;

Rogelberg et al., 2020; and Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019). Although researchers such as Bonner et al. (2018) have studied how teachers apply CRT in some academic subject areas, there seems to be very little literature related to this problem that researcher is in high schools in a Midwest U.S setting.

Schools located in the Midwest U.S have incorporated the CRT program into their district curriculum, where they have now included their high school student's relationships with family and friends into lessons such as economics, civics, history, and geography. Per Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for a Midwest U.S school district located in the state of Illinois, the need for Midwest schools to make their curriculum more inclusive arose after the 1960–70 school desegregation; diversity changes called for a more inclusive curriculum culturally reflective of the diverse student population. This curriculum change was done to incorporate CRT into the classroom and produce students who become competent and informed citizens. The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction noted that the primary goal of their school district is to focus on better educating their students from low-income families, minority students, and English Language Learners by giving them access to grade-appropriate assignments, intense instruction, deep engagement, and high expectations.

The need to make the curriculum for Midwest U.S schools more inclusive arose after desegregation in the nineteen sixties and seventies. Diversity changes called for a more culturally reflective curriculum of the diverse student population. However, the current curriculum often does not reflect this diversity as students are taught a culturally mainstream curriculum. This culturally limited curriculum entails more minor inclusion

within the classroom. As such, CRT allows teachers to address their students' cultural needs (Civitillo et al., 2019). It helps teachers make changes in the school curriculum from a social standpoint, allowing for social justice education (Aronson & Laughter, 2016).

The student population's notable growth calls for teachers to teach from a cultural perspective and teach cross-cultural differences (Bottiani et al., 2018). Studies by researchers such as Kumar et al. (2018) show that for students to achieve success academically, they must have teachers who are invested in their learning, and they must also feel as if the lesson being taught was done by using their own culture in the learning and teaching process.

Bonner et al. (2018) examined CRT's perceptions in an urban classroom located in Southern California. Their research examined whether teachers' personal biases or perceptions affected how they implemented CRT. The outcome of their study showed the need for more professional development and more resources and time for teachers when it comes to using CRT as there is a gap in how CRT is implemented.



### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. I examined what these teachers are doing to use CRT effectively and what they think is needed to make CRT work for all teachers who are motivated to give their students a culturally enhanced lesson.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

This basic qualitative study addressed how the CRT method helps teachers instruct diverse students; 16 interview questions (see Appendix A) were used to explore the perceptions of 12 high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. When the curriculum does not capture diverse students' cultural interests and values, they often find it challenging to make sense of what they are taught. This makes learning difficult for them. Twelve high school teachers with 2 years or more of teaching experience using the CRT method in their diverse classrooms were chosen. I used a basic qualitative design with Zoom interviews to explore the high school teachers' perception of the CRT method and how they use the CRT method to improve the way they teach their diverse classroom. The two research questions were used to guide the study addressing the perceptions of 12 high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Kegler et al. (2019) noted that

qualitative methods are crucial to understanding context, exploring new phenomena from multiple perspectives, generating, refining, and extending theory, and guiding quantitative studies by illuminating further research questions or informing more nuanced or culturally appropriate measures. (p. 24)

In contrast, quantitative studies deal with variables that measurements can be determined. In single or multiple case studies, these variables help researchers understand the phenomenon with research questions (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The intent of the current study was not to compare; instead, I explored the perceptions of 12 high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. Schools. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995, 2003) motivational framework for CRT was used to examine how the CRT method was applied in a high school classroom.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Researchers in qualitative studies must remain objective in their interviews. Bone et al. (2018) stressed that there should be a wall between the research and researchers. Researchers must be aware of their role in the research to conduct a nonbiased study. I did not include two teachers from the same school building so that the teachers would not have any personal knowledge of other participants in the study. I did not include any high school teachers who worked in my district or with whom I had any personal or nonpersonal relationship. I recruited 12 high school teachers from local districts in a central Midwest U.S metropolitan area. Each teacher had 2 years or more teaching diverse high school students using the CRT method.

## **Methodology**

This basic qualitative study addressed the perceptions of 12 high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Researchers should choose a sampling approach that removes any bias in the research (Banning, 2020). I used nonprobability sampling with the target population of high school teachers with 2 or more years of teaching experience who use the CRT method to teach a diverse class (see Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Nonprobability sampling was chosen because it allows for limited bias and ensures that the selected population is represented (see Banning, 2020). I used Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995, 2003) motivational framework for CRT to examine the qualitative data collected from the Zoom interviews. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's framework ensured that I explored the teachers' use of CRT by establishing inclusion and engendering competence and positive attitudes in the classroom .

### **Participant Selection**

I used nonprobability sampling to recruit 12 Midwest U.S high school teachers who had used the CRT model and had 2 or more years of teaching experience with diverse students. This study's target population was high school teachers located in the Midwest U.S who had used the CRT model for more than 2 years (see Moser & Korstjens, 2018). This was basic qualitative research; therefore, the sample should not have been randomly selected. That is why only high school teachers who had 2 or more years of teaching experience were chosen (see Moser & Korstjens, 2018). I used the social media site Facebook. In the search box, I typed "high school teacher" and focused

on the Midwest U.S metropolitan area. I selected some teachers' groups and joined; after becoming a member, I posted the recruitment flyer (see Appendix B) to the groups' page. The sample size was 12, which was appropriate for a basic qualitative study addressing the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools (see Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Once the 12 teachers consented to participate in the study, the data collection began. All correspondence was be done by email, Facebook Messenger, telephone conference, and Zoom.

### **Instrumentation**

The COVID-19 pandemic made social distancing, Google classrooms, and Zoom the new normal (Kaden, 2020). COVID-19 also caused a change in how research is done (Kaden, 2020). I relied on internet-based data collection via Zoom interviews. Direct interpretation was used for analyzing the data in a naturalistic generalization (see Teti et al., 2020). Direct and naturalistic generalization allowed for digital and note-taking to be used to document how the teachers are applying the CRT method during the Zoom interviews that were conducted with the 12 teachers (see McInnes et al., 2017). I adhered to the 2022 COVID-19 social distance protocol that was in place and used 16 probing and open-ended questions during the Zoom interviews. Two research questions were used to guide the study:

RQ1: How do high school teachers describe their use of the CRT method with culturally diverse students in their culturally diverse classrooms in Midwest U.S. schools?

RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools?

### **Interview Questions**

The purpose of the 16 interview questions was to explore how high school teachers in a Midwest U.S school district use the CRT method in diverse high school classrooms to increase culturally diverse students' learning. Using Zoom and the 16 open-ended interview questions (see Lobe et al., 2020) helped me ensure that any personal bias was kept out of the study.

1. How do you define culturally responsive teaching?
2. Does your school culture support and celebrate diversity with its diverse student body?
3. How well do you know the culture of your students?
4. Do you include your students' culture in your lesson?
5. How do you include your students' culture into your lesson plan?
6. Do you create space within your lesson plan for sometimes difficult conversations about current events and culture?
7. Do you constantly reflect on your own behaviors and biases that you might bring into the classroom? Furthermore, what do you do to limit your own personal bias in the lesson?
8. Do you build bridges between home and school that make the curriculum meaningful for students from different backgrounds?

9. Do you examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes?
10. Do you ask students to compare their culture with American culture?
11. Do you learn words in your students' native languages?
12. Do you use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairings in group work?
13. Do your students work independently, selecting their own learning activities?
14. Do you spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of your students?
15. Do you ask for student input when planning lessons and activities?
16. Do you encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material?

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

The target population was high school teachers with 2 or more years of experience teaching diverse students from 12 high school districts located in the Midwest in the U.S. After obtaining Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB approval # 11-09-21-0098438) approval, I understood my role in this basic qualitative study to maintain objectivity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I used Facebook to recruit 12 high school teachers with 2 or more years of experience teaching and using CRT. I posted the recruitment flyers on Facebook to recruit teachers located in the metropolitan Midwest U.S area.

I wanted to ensure that the 12 high school teachers chosen did not have any intimate knowledge about the study or me that might cause questions about the study's validity. The 12 selected teachers were given consent forms to read and were informed

that they were participating in a study to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. I served as the data collector and followed Moser and Kirsten's (2018) data collection plan. Zoom interviews were used to collect the data. Only I knew the teachers' names; all teachers were given a pseudonym from the Greek alphabet starting with Alpha and ending with Mu. The order of assigned pseudonyms corresponded with the years they had been teaching. An audio and video recording were made for each interview with the participant's consent. These recordings were used to recall the data in the study (see Lobe et al., 2020). Once the 12 participants were chosen and verbal consent was given, I set up the Zoom interviews with each participant.

After IRB approval (approval # 11-09-21-0098438), the study began after the first participant was chosen. The participants were emailed the dates, times, and pass codes for their Zoom interviews. Zoom interviews were audio and video recorded. The Participants were given the option to keep the video feed off and allow only audio. The pass codes were provided only to the teachers to gain access to their meeting. During the interviews, I explored the teacher's perception about their use of the CRT method with culturally diverse students in their culturally diverse classrooms and their perceptions about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools.

Teachers who appropriately apply CRT principles in the classroom can help diverse students make sense of what they are learning in the classroom (Yishak &

Gumbo, 2015). I explored each teacher's perception to see if the CRT principles were being taught in the classroom to help diverse students make sense of what they are learning in the classroom.

CRT should allow teachers to make changes in the school curriculum from a social standpoint, allowing for social justice education (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). The student population's notable growth calls for teachers to teach from a cultural perspective and teach cross-cultural differences (Bottiani et al., 2018). A study done by Kumar et al. (2018) shows that for students to achieve success academically, they must have teachers who are invested in their learning, and they must also feel as if the lesson being taught was done by using their own culture in the learning and teaching process.

Zoom interviews were conducted, and these interviews were transcribed using qualitative data software Otter.ai. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study as the teachers were giving Zoom interview pass code numbers and Greek names that only the researcher knows. Each teacher will be giving a Greek alphabetic in order starting with teacher Alpha; this will be the teacher with the most years teaching. The recordings and transcript are being stored in a locked safe that the researcher has the only access to the lock.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has moved qualitative data collecting to mostly online interviews (Kaden, 2020). Researchers found that using media for data collection can be asynchronously or synchronously (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). This study implemented all the listed virtual and digital approaches to collect data to explore the



perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S City Schools. The study used two qualitative research questions, 16 Interview questions; also, Zoom interview for the data to explore this study.

The research questions in the study focus on addressing the purpose of this basic qualitative case study explored the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S City Schools

RQ1: How do high school teachers describe their use of the CRT method with culturally diverse students in their culturally diverse classrooms in Midwest City Schools?

RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest City Schools?

As the data comes in, the researcher will analyze it because the emerging design and iterative approaches are vital when doing qualitative research (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). All Zoom interviews were recorded and quickly transcribed by using qualitative data software Otter.ai. Teachers in the study were assigned code names that were Greek alphabetical, the order of the name was base in the order of years teaching, starting from Alpha to Mu.

Per Shahsavari et al. (2013), research data collection should display words and ideas that kept recurring by letters; then, the researchers could place them into a category

and used them to form a theme. The theme would be the premiere product to gather information from the data that yields a practical result in the study field (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). When looking at this study, that researcher explored the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse students in Midwest U.S city Schools, and Otter.ai was used to help decode and transcribe the data and look for common words and themes.

### **Trustworthiness**

For this study, validity and reliability was maintained throughout the study. These terms will not be used to show usefulness but to validate this basic qualitative research, as this study will have applicability, neutrality, consistency, and truth value (Amankwaa, 2016). Biases in this research was avoided by using epoche practices and bracketing. These practices allowed the study to eliminate any potential presuppositions or preconceptions that might had spoil the data within the study's pre-supposed identifications (Shufutinsky, 2020). Lincoln and Guba (Amankwaa, 2016) established how trustworthiness is a fabric that holds research together; by establishing four points:

- Credibility - confidence in the 'truth' of the finding.
- Transferability - showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts.
- Dependability - showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated.

- Confirmability - a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest (p. 121)

This study relied on these four points and notetaking and using the digital transcripts when needed to clarify the Zoom interviews for any follow-up with the participants.

### **Ethical Procedures**

This study adhered to all the IRB rules, The researcher uses social media Facebook, in the search box, the researcher type 'High school teacher' and focus on the Mid-West metropolitan area. The researcher selected teacher groups and joined; after becoming a member the research posted the recruitment flyer to the groups' page. The teacher's name does not appear anywhere as participants were giving Greek alphabet names, starting with the first teacher as an Alpha teacher and ended with Mu. This correspond with the years they have been teaching. There was no relationship harm to the teachers as they had no relationship with the researcher or had any with the other teachers in the study as the researcher did not use two teachers from the same school.

It is the sole responsibility of the researcher to be transparent about any personal interest (Boumil & Berman, 2010) as well as to apply a strict ethical standard (Cumyn et al., 2019), as they also maintain honestly (Saiz et al., 2018). It is as well the researcher's duty to respect and protect all participants in the study; the researcher made sure to keep any of the participants from suffering any harm; be it physical or emotionally, as well as to maintain communication about the study until the results are finalized (Cumyn et al.,

2019). All data from this study will be protected and under the access to only the researcher; no one will know or have a list of names of any participant; all that would be known about the participants is that they have two years or more teachings and located in a Midwest U.S school district. The data collected from this study will be kept for a period of at least five years, as required by the university; after it will be destroyed and deleted as well as all recordings. Paper documents will be burned, and recordings will be deleted.

### **Summary**

In Chapter Three, the researcher has given a synopsis of this research's design, the role of the researcher's methods, participation selection, data collection; that is based on exploring the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S City Schools. The study used two research questions to examine what works and what more can be done to make other teachers successful using the CRT method. Chapter four gives a synopsis of the results of the study. It also details the data collection, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness that were used to summarize the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. According to Dee and Penner (2017), CRT's fundamental premise is that all students can learn effectively when their curriculum is culturally relevant and reflects their values and interests in the classroom. Dee and Penner noted that students' grades and scores increase when they are given a culturally relevant curriculum.

The problem investigated in this study was that despite incorporating a CRT curriculum in one culturally diverse Midwest U.S school system, the high school teachers are struggling to implement the CRT method consistently, which suggests the teachers may not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of students. The two research questions were focused on addressing the purpose of the study:

RQ1: How do high school teachers describe their use of the CRT method with culturally diverse students in their culturally diverse classrooms in Midwest U.S. schools?

RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools?

The data for this study were obtained by using 16 interview questions during Zoom interviews with 12 participants. The interview questions focused on the

perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Chapter 4 includes the setting, data collection techniques, data interpretation/analysis, trustworthiness, and results. All teachers were given a Greek alphabet name starting with the first teacher Alpha and ending with Mu. The order of assigned pseudonyms corresponded with the years they had been teaching. Each participant gave verbal consent to participate in the study.

### **Setting**

Participants were from high schools located in the Midwest who had worked 2 or more years. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. During the efforts to recruit participants, the Omicron variant of COVID-19 was spreading, and I contracted this virus. As a result, participant recruitment became much more complicated than initially expected; nevertheless, I was able to recruit 12 participants who agreed to do a Zoom interview. The participants' experience ranged from 2 years to 35 years teaching high school and working with CRT (see Table 1). The teacher's age was not a component in this study; however, the race and sex of the teacher were. There were two African American women, two African American men, one Latinx woman, two White men, and five White women.

**Table 1***Participant Demographics*

Interviewee	High school teaching experience	Subject area
Alpha	30–35 years	History/economics
Beta	30–35 years	History/English
Gamma	30–35 years	Science
Delta	25–30 years	Math
Epsilon	25–30 years	English
Zeta	25–30 years	Driver education
Eta	25–30 years	Spanish
Theta	20–25 years	Art
Iota	20–25 years	Physical education
Kappa	2–3 years	History/social science
Lambda	2–3 years	History/social science
Mu	2–3 years	Special education

*Note.* Findings showed 25% of participants had 30–35 years of teaching experience, 33% had 25–30 years, 17% had 20–25 years, and 25% were novice teachers with 2–3 years of teaching experience.

### **Data Collection**

I received IRB approval on November 09, 2021 (approval # 11-09-21-0098438) and completed all of the Zoom interviews by January 14, 2022. While adhering to the social distance protocol that was in place, I conducted Zoom interviews that lasted 20–40 minutes. The 16 interview questions were probing and open-ended questions (see Appendix A) All interview recordings were saved to a thumb drive after the interviews. The video and audio recordings were downloaded from the thumb drive into Otter.ai and saved with the same Greek name given to the teacher. I had considered using ATLAS.ti to transcribe the data; however, Otter.ai was suggested and had a higher rating, and it was easier to determine initial categories and coding.

It was challenging to recruit participants because many teachers were dealing with COVID and burnout from the year. I offered a \$75 cash gift to attract potential participants. Some declined the gift; nevertheless, they received them for their time. After the first six interviews, I discovered that more African American teachers were being used in the study. Because White teachers make up 79% of the total teacher population (Schaeffer, 2021), I recruited only White and Latinx teachers to make sure that the study was in line with the national makeup (see Schaeffer 2021.) to validate the study. The teacher's race is not a factor as it relates to CRT; nevertheless, to validate the study, I thought that it was best to make sure the participants represented the national average. I was able to achieve data saturation after 12 interviews.

The Zoom interview transcripts were made from the audio and video copy of the interviews. After confirming accuracy of both audio and video transcripts with the teachers, I highlighted keywords and phrases from the transcripts. All participants were given a chance to review a copy of their transcript from the Zoom interview for accuracy. Of those who chose to review, none stated that any changes were needed to their transcripts.

### **Data Analysis**

Greek alphabet names were assigned to each participant to protect their identity, starting with Alpha, and ending with Mu. These Greek names aligned with the number of years teachers had been teaching high school, ranging from over 30 years to 2 years. A transcript was made using both the audio and video and only the audio of the Zoom interview; both were read to make sure they were identical. After confirming that they



were, I noted all reflections on the transcripts in the page margins. The transcribing Otter.ai program indicated phrases and keywords from each transcript and group them for the study.

During the interviews, the teachers talked 77 % of the time, and I spoke 23% of the time (see Table 2). I allowed ample time for the teachers to give detailed answers when addressing the 16 questions. Some teachers gave lengthy answers, and some were very short and to the point. During the interviews, some words and phrases were similar for all of the transcripts, such as *student*, *lesson*, *learning*, *culture*, *teacher*, *teaching*, and *lesson plans* (see Table 3).

**Table 2***Interviewee Speaking Time and Interviewer Speaking Time*

Greek name	Interviewee	Interviewer
Alpha	Speaker 2 (74%)	Speaker 1 (24%)
Beta	Speaker 2 (71%)	Speaker 1 (28%)
Gamma	Speaker 2 (80%)	Speaker 1 (18%)
Delta	Speaker 2 (82%)	Speaker 1 (18%)
Epsilon	Speaker 2 (73%)	Speaker 1 (24%)
Zeta	Speaker 2 (61%)	Speaker 1 (37%)
Eta	Speaker 2 (81%)	Speaker 1 (17%)
Theta	Speaker 2 (83%)	Speaker 1 (16%)
Iota	Speaker 2 (79%)	Speaker 1 (21%)
Kappa	Speaker 2 (77%)	Speaker 1 (23%)
Lambda	Speaker 2 (73%)	Speaker 1 (25%)
Mu	Speaker 2 (73%)	Speaker 1 (25%)

*Note.* On average, the teacher (Speaker 2) spoke 77% of the time to answer the 16 questions. I (Speaker 1) talked for only 23% of the time, allowing the teacher to answer the questions in detail.

**Table 3***Similar Words and Phrases for All Transcripts*

Word/phrase	Frequency
Culture	100%
CRT	100%
Teaching	100%
Student	92%
Lesson	75%
Learning	75%
Teachers	66%
Class	40%
Classroom	40%
School	40%
Lesson plan	40%

*Note.* Words or phrases noted on 40% of the transcripts are listed.

From the study I was able to develop three themes from the words, phrases, and transcripts to answer the two research questions for this study:

1. Theme 1: More teacher training is needed in CRT.
2. Theme 2: CRT is primarily about the race of the students.
3. Theme 3: Teachers are not implementing CRT consistently.

### **Results**

The two research questions in the study focused on addressing the purpose of the study:

RQ1: How do high school teachers describe their use of the CRT method with culturally diverse students in their culturally diverse classrooms in Midwest U.S. schools?

RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools?

The 16 interview questions focused on teachers' use of and perception of CRT. The results are reported according to the interview questions and the three themes that emerged from the data.

### **Interview Questions**

The first and second research interview questions asked the following: How do you define culturally responsive teaching? (See Table 4.) Does your school culturally support and celebrate diversity with its diverse student body? (See Table 5). The third

research interview question was the following: How well do you know the culture of your students? Teachers such as Alpha had taught for enough years that they were teaching second generation students:

I am kind of at the point in my career, now that I have a lot of second-generation students. Okay. Unfortunately, for me, I'm at the point where I've had a lot of parents of students that I have now I've had a lot of older siblings. So, I do know a lot about the families of the students that I teach.

Teachers like Beta reported that because they and many of their students were the same race, they shared the same culture with their students. Zeta was at the end of her teaching career, and she talked about how at this stage there was not the same push as with Eta who starts the year off getting to know their students' culture.

The fourth interview question was the following: Do you include your students' culture in your lesson? Theta spoke about how they are always ensuring that they can include the student's culture into their lesson because they thought this would help keep their students engaged in the lesson: "Yeah, always, always, partially because I want to keep my students engaged." Mu's answer was similar to some other teachers who spoke about how even though they might try to do this, they did not do it as well as they could, and more could be done to do a better job including the student's culture into the lesson.

The other 12 research questions were vital to answering the two research questions. The data from the interviews revealed three themes. First, most teachers reported that more teacher training is needed in CRT. Second, the teachers assumed that CRT was primarily about the students' race. Third, most teachers did not understand how

to implement the CRT method consistently. Although most teachers understood what CRT is and spoke about using it, they were not as effective at using CRT as they should be. Most of the teachers did not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of all students. Many of the teachers reported that if they shared the same racial makeup as their students, this was all that was needed to understand their students culturally.

### **Theme 1: More Teacher Training Is Needed in CRT**

Past studies have showed that teachers who include their students' culture into their lessons help to develop an environment that is more inclusive of learning and student learning. This study was to show that there is a need for more teachers who are culturally responsive to their students' needs is critical and some of the teachers in the study agreed. The teacher in the study agreed that more teacher training is needed to help these teachers make the lessons being presented to the students more effective for learning.

The Mu teacher spoke about how the interview questions made them reevaluate what they have been doing in their classroom, and as other teachers, they felt that they needed to do a better job. The Kappa teacher felt that the lesson being taught included the student culture; as such, they did not see what more they could do to include the student's culture into the lesson more. The Alpha teacher who had more years in the classroom talked about getting to personally know your students; and do not think of them as just a name or number on a roster:

I think one of the biggest things and something that I learned over the years is you just have to really get to know your kids. Just and I'm not saying like don't get to know him like you're their best friend you're not get you need to get to know them. You need to let them know that you care about them and their culture that will help you immensely those relationships that you have with the students that will change your life in an instant. And I do think you know, I think um, student teachers you know, they need to be taught like how to look for relevant materials for students and what I've no I, and how to bring that into the lesson and how to tie I think when you first started teaching.

Teachers in the study spoke about more professional development should be required for teachers in CRT, as the call for CRT to be included in the teacher's education requirement is long overdue. This is something all the teachers spoke about; the Lambda teacher with only two years; talked about how the ideal of CRT is being used; the students "cultures are not at the forefront" this is because they were not properly taught how to use CRT.

## **Theme 2: CRT Is Primarily About the Race of the Students**

Some teachers speak about how when they are working with their students; they do not recognize the race or culture of the student; these teachers spoke about being color-blind teachers. Those teachers who are doing this cannot make CRT a part of the lesson and effectively teach their diverse student body as their race and culture are crucial to CRT. The participation in this study spoke about the race of the students and that being

something that they were very concussion. Teachers assumed that just because most of their classrooms share their same racial makeup, CRT was not needed in those classes:

I think that I think that I am naive myself in the setting that I'm in. And now I'm reflecting back on some of the so right now; my classroom is all same gender, ethnicity, I mean, we are white males in my room. So now in the past, that has always been true. And I, I look back and I think, you know, maybe had I spent more time or done a little more towards this, maybe I could have reached some of my other students who weren't the same as me.

The teachers assumed as the Mu teacher that just because you are or share the same race or sex as most of your students, that does not always transfer over to having the same culture as them. The African American teachers in the study who teach at schools with a majority student body with the same racial makeup feels this factor is all that would be needed for them to teach CRT. The mindset of these teachers was that sharing race is all they needed to teach CRT. At the end of the interviews, as these teachers reflected on CRT, they understood that sharing race does not mean they are teaching CRT correctly.

### **Theme 3: Teachers Are Not Implementing CRT Consistently**

Theme three explores the fact that just because a teacher walks into a classroom sharing the same racial makeup as the students in that classroom; does not mean they also share a cultural understanding of the students in that classroom. It having the same racial makeup is all that would be needed for teachers to teach CRT correctly, then only an African American teacher would be able to teach African American students. CRT allows

anyone to teach diverse students if they correctly apply CRT. The Epsilon teachers spoke about having an all-African American male writing class:

10th grade English. And I have, I have all black male writing class. And I really do a lot of work to incorporate. With Alfred Tatum talking about, you know, like having a legacy of literature, and like connecting them to the works of black folks across the diaspora and helping them to see themselves as writers and as thinkers, scholars. So, in that way, yeah, definitely. That's, that's on my mind a lot.

The Epsilon teacher work in the inner city of a Midwest city in a school with most African American students that live below middle-class standers. As such, their ideal of what the students might want to learn from a culture standpoint; might not align with the teachers think CRT teaching calls for.

The Delta teacher summed it up the best as they talk about how going forward; they understand now: "And just because I'm black, doesn't give me a path to not think critically about, you know, how I'm incorporating more culturally relevant experiences for my students". The Eta teachers spoke about more teacher training on learning how to bring the different student cultures into the lesson., that would include their student's background being taught more in the lesson.

The Theta teacher spoke about how their school is very diverse as they have an equal amount of African American and Latinx students and a racially diverse teaching staff. The Kappa teachers spoke about how at the school they teach, more clubs are being started, such as the African American and Hispanic club; they both felt that by these facts the schools they are teaching at are becoming more culture responsible. The Lambda



teacher talks about how their school is majority African American, this factor for them translated into that the African American student culture was more represented than the other minority students:

I would say no. With my district, it is a heavily minority majority district.

Makeup, you know, something like 50%, African American, 25%, Hispanic and 5%. White. And I've heard a lot from Hispanic teachers and students, that because the majority of students are African American, the Hispanic students and their families and their cultural views are pushed aside, mostly. So, there is the diverseness in terms of focusing on the black students, but not the other minority students in the district.

Whereas the Mu teacher spoke about how they shared cultural diversity with their student. This belief was because they were the same race as the students, even if the class was a self-contained special ed class. 75% of teachers interviewed understood that CRT is about giving students a lesson that mirrors their cultural perspectives, experiences, and heritage. Research has shown that diverse students are shortcuts in their educational experiences without a culturally responsive teaching education. Teachers need to be more culturally responsive to their students' needs and wants and include their culture and not the teacher into the lesson plan. The student's race is essential; although their culture is critical for CRT to work successfully.

**Table 4***Participants' Definitions of CRT*

Participant	Definition
Alpha	Having a cognizant of the student background, cultures and using it within the curriculum
Beta	Bringing awareness to other cultures that are not always represented
Gamma	Instruction that is inclusive and being sensitive to the students from different backgrounds
Delta	CRT is student-centered and being sensitive to the context being taught
Epsilon	Having an awareness of the cultural context of the students their history
Zeta	It is knowing the backstory of the students and using that in the lesson
Eta	Including the student culture into the lesson and allowing the students to learn about other cultures
Theta	Knowing my culture and the culture of the students and using both in the lesson to teach
Iota	Respecting all cultures, not just those in the classroom; having a lesson plan that is diverse with materials that are also diverse
Kappa	Having an awareness of the student's background and culture and include that into the lesson
Lambda	Being cognizant of the students' background and using that background in the lesson
Mu	Being sensitive to the students and creating a lesson that reaches the students in the class

*Note.* This is a summary of the teacher's answer.

**Table 5**

*Whether Participants' School Culture Supports and Celebrates Diverse Student Body*

Participant	Does school culture support and celebrate diversity with a diverse student body
Alpha	Yes, the African American and Hispanic, more than any others
Beta	Yes, they acknowledged the diverse culture throughout the school year
Gamma	Yes and no; they do something for Cinco De Mayo; and Black history month; however, that is about it
Delta	Yes, they celebrate their diverse student body
Epsilon	Did not respond to this question
Zeta	They do; the school is small and not very diverse; however, they accept all the students
Eta	No, as the school is not very diverse, nothing is done to acknowledge the different cultures
Theta	Yes, very diverse school, and the whole school does a lot to make sure everyone feels welcome and included
Iota	No, not a very diverse school; as such, that is not a priority, unless someone brings it up
Kappa	Not as much as it should; however, they are working to address this; more diverse clubs are allowed
Lambda	No! The school is diverse; however, the only focus is on the African American student population
Mu	No, being a predominantly White school, little is done to celebrate the few diverse students there

*Note.* This is a summary of the teacher's answer.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

The main goal of this research is to make sure that the data is accurate and reflects the veracity of the study that is being researched (McGinley et al., 2021). The authors noted that Lincoln and Guba had four criteria to ensure that the study had credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The main objective of this study was to make sure the research established evidence of trustworthiness. This section will describe

the procedures and steps that were done to make sure the study is trustworthy, starting with credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

### **Credibility**

Credibility is the first criterion to demonstrate trustworthiness in a study (McGinley et al., 2021). Credibility was vital for this study, and to ensure that, the researcher made sure to interview teachers that taught all subjects, from history to physical education. The participant's race was not a focus of this study; nevertheless, the researcher wanted to ensure that the teachers mirror the United States; 79% of teachers are White, and 21% are minorities (Schaeffer 2021). There were two African American Female, two African American male teachers, one Latinx female teacher, two White male teachers, and five White female teachers.

Otter.ai was used to transcribe the transcripts, both video/audio and audio; they were both compared to confirm they were similar. All participants were allowed to review their transcript for any errors, only three out of 12 wanted to do such, and all three responded that no changes were needed. Each participant received \$75 after the interview to thank them for their time; one participant would not accept as they felt this was a study that needed to be done. Data saturation is not achieved by having many participants; it is achieved when the data stops providing new information (McGinley et al., 2021). Data saturation for this study was achieved after the 12 interviews as the transcripts showed repeated words and themes.

**Transferability**

Transferability establishes applicability construct as this allows the study findings to be applied to others; outside of those that participated or the researchers (McGinley et al., 2021). For this study, transferability was achieved by including direct quotes from the teachers' transcripts and a narrative of the results using those transcripts. Both audio and video/audio transcripts were examined for each participant, and all participants were asked to review both for any errors in the transcripts. Twelve participants were interviewed; initially, the study was only going to use ten; however, for the study to be valid, the research chose to interview physical education and driver ed teachers to ensure that most of the high school courses were covered. Future studies are needed with middle and elementary schools in the Midwest and the Eastern and Southern parts of the United States, would benefit the literature as it relates to this study; that study was done in the Mid-West, and past research has been done in the Western Part of the United States.

**Dependability**

Dependability can be achieved by having an external researcher review your data; to ensure that what is being reported is accurately interpreted (McGinley et al., 2021). For this study, the researcher asked the same 16 questions to all participants, and all interviews were done by Zoom. As well the researcher committee members were allowed to review the transcript for accuracy.

**Confirmability**

This chapter documents how the data was collected, and the process used to transcribe the interviews. The study has listed director quotes from the interviews in this

chapter; where some of the teacher responses were summarized information, it was a summary direct from the transcripts.

### **Summary**

Chapter four starts with the results and discusses the three themes from the Zoom interview transcripts. First, most teachers feel that more teacher training is needed in CRT. Second, the teachers assumed that CRT was primarily about the students' race. The third theme, the study confirms that although most teachers understood what CRT is, and they could speak about using it effectively. Most teachers seem not to understand how to implement the CRT method consistently. The student's race is essential; although, their culture is critical to CRT. Most of the teachers did not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of all students. Many of the teachers felt that if they shared the same race with their students, this was all they needed to understand their students culturally. The setting deals with the number of chosen participants, what qualifications were needed, where they were located, and why they were picked. The chapter addresses how the data was collected and what process was used to collect the data. During the interview, each participant was asked 16 interview questions.

'' The participants were given Greek alphabet names starting with Alpha and ending with the Mu teacher. These were assigned by the years they had been teaching high school. All transcripts were transcribed using the Otter.ai program as it also highlighted vital phrases and words. This study covers Lincoln and Guba's four criteria to show trustworthiness (McGinley et al., 2021) by being credibility, transferability,

dependability, and confirmability. Chapter 5 will interpret the findings, address the limitations in the study, the recommendations, implications, and end with summarizing the study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. Schools. This study was distinctive because it focused on 12 high school teachers who used CRT in the classroom, and how they perceived the use of the CRT method with their diverse students to keep them engaged in the classroom lessons. This study may help the local school district understand the significance of teaching diverse students a curriculum that allows the teachers to teach from a cultural perspective. When a diverse curriculum model is implemented correctly, students' personal experiences, backgrounds, and home lives are included in the lesson (Johri, 2020; Rhode, 2017). The research finding might help high school teachers who are struggling to implement the CRT method consistently because they might not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of all of their students, not only their racial minority ones.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings in the study indicated that most of the teachers understood what CRT is and how to effectively use it. However, most teachers seemed not to understand how to implement the CRT method consistently and how the race of the student is important. Most of the teachers did not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of all students. Many of the teachers thought that if they shared the same race with their students, this was all they needed to culturally understand their students.



Wynter-Hoyte et al. (2019) noted that students whose cultural interests and values are not captured by the school curriculum often find it hard to make sense of what they learn. Teachers in the current study did not think about the fact that they might share the same pigmentation as their students but might not share the same home life, economic background, or living environment. Bonner et al. (2018), Muñiz and New America (2019), and Phuntsog (2001) noted that previous studies on how teachers apply the CRT model in academic subject areas had been done, but the current study was the first to address this subject with high school teachers in a Midwest setting. These researchers noted that perspectives of teachers from other student populations in the United States were needed to better understand CRT. The current study was conducted to fill the gap in the literature about this educational practice.

Bonner et al. (2018), Muñiz and New America (2019), Phuntsog (2001), and Wynter-Hoyte et al. (2019) noted that research indicated that teachers may use CRT as an effective teaching method to meet diverse students' learning needs in the classroom. The current study showed that many teachers must understand when to apply the CRT method. The teachers in this study would be able to address the cultural needs of the students they teach and bring an end to the classroom's cultural barriers (see Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019) if they understood when to apply CRT. This research contributed to filling a gap in the literature regarding when and how to incorporate a CRT curriculum in a culturally diverse classroom. Midwest U.S school districts may use this study's findings to address teachers' understanding that CRT is not only about the students' race; it is also about understanding the student's cultural background. Bonner et al. (2018) noted that

teachers' personal biases or perceptions affected how they implemented CRT in an urban classroom. The findings of this study and the current study showed that teachers must understand that they do not come into an urban classroom and share the same cultural background of the students they teach.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The findings in the current study confirmed those in the existing literature. Most of the teachers understood what CRT was about, yet they did not understand when to apply it correctly. During the data collection process, there was an increase in COVID infections due to the omicron variant; therefore, all interviews were conducted via Zoom interviews. CRT is critical as more students get back into the classrooms after 2 years of virtual learning. The study was conducted with 12 teachers who taught across all subjects. Otter.ai was used to transcribe all Zoom interview recordings. During the interviews, some words and phrases were similar for all the transcripts, such as student, lesson, learning, culture, teacher, teaching, and lesson plans.

### **Recommendations**

The quality of education that racial minority students receive can be significantly improved when they are given lessons that mirror their cultural perspectives, experiences, and heritage; without culturally responsive teaching, diverse students are shortchanged on their education experiences (Gay, 2002). Teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward cultural diversity are potent determinants of learning opportunities and outcomes for ethnically different students. The current study showed that many teachers did not understand that having the same race does not qualify as a CRT teacher. Mu works with

students in special education classrooms, and they felt that they were culturally like their students because they shared the same race. The teacher's race is not a focus point related to CRT. The literature focused more on how the teachers can use CRT in the classroom, as well as how CRT focuses on addressing students' needs. Delta understood after the interviews that being an African American teacher teaching African American students does not give them a pass because they did not share the same socioeconomic background.

Previous studies on how teachers apply the CRT model in some academic subject areas were conducted in a Southern California high school, middle school, and elementary school. The current study focused on Midwest U.S high schools. Future studies are needed with middle and elementary schools in the Midwest U.S and the East and South areas of the United States. During the interviews, most of the teachers commented about how they never thought about how they were not using CTR correctly because they assumed that it was something only for African American students. After the interview, they understood that CRT is more significant than the race of the students.

### **Implications**

This study offers pathways to positive social change by helping local schools in the Midwest U.S implement better student engagement between teachers, students, and parents through CRT use in the classroom. The study results may contribute to a positive social change by allowing local school districts to introduce CRT-specific professional development for teachers, which may help teachers improve the academic performance of their diverse students. I explored high school teachers' perceptions about using the CRT

method. Most of the teachers in the study agreed that CRT is needed to help teach students because when the curriculum does not capture diverse students' cultural interests and values, they often find it challenging to make sense of what they are being taught, making learning difficult. A few teachers did not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of students because they thought that CRT was a method used primarily with African American students.

Student learning is the core of CRT when it comes to focusing on the student from a cultural standpoint by using the student's prior experiences, frame of reference, and cultural knowledge to map out a learning cycle (Rhode, 2017). Rhode (2017) emphasized that CRT empowers diverse students by facilitating, validating, and liberating them. In the current study, Iota spoke about having students who might share the same race but come from different socioeconomic backgrounds. This point made Iota aware of things such as after winter breaks talking to the class about gifts that they might have received over the break. Not all students lived in a home where gifts might be new cars or such; some were living in homes where they were lucky to have food to eat. These actions of noticing and recognizing issues such as this are applying CRT in the classroom.

Murry et al. (2020) noted that cultural diversity will be a hallmark in the U.S. classroom. As such, CRT is needed even though teachers seem to struggle to apply CRT because they are unsure of how to use it effectively. This was true for the teachers in the current study; some never thought about how culture is defined as the integrated pattern of human behavior. Teachers who come from a two-parent household in the middle of

America might share the same racial background as racial minority students in the inner city; however, they might not share the same cultural background.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools. Bonner et al. (2018) examined CRT's perceptions in an urban classroom in southern California. Their research addressed whether teachers' personal biases or perceptions affected how they implemented CRT. Their findings also showed the need for more professional development and more resources and time for teachers when it comes to using CRT.

The current study had two assumptions. The first was that the teachers would be honest in their responses. Second, I assumed that the teachers' race, for the most part, does not affect how they apply and implement the CRT method. After the Zoom interviews, three themes emerged from the data analysis. First, most teachers thought that more teacher training is needed in CRT. Second, the teachers assumed that CRT was primarily about the students' race. Third, although most teachers understood what CRT is, they spoke about using it effectively.

Most teachers did not understand how to implement the CRT method consistently. The student's race is essential; however, their culture is critical to CRT. Most of the teachers did not fully understand how using the prescribed CRT method can effectively support the learning needs of all students. Many of the teachers thought that if they shared the same race as their students, this was all they needed to understand their

students culturally. These three themes helped to answer the two research questions in the study.

### **Research Question 1**

How do high school teachers describe their use of the CRT method with culturally diverse students in their culturally diverse classrooms in Midwest U.S. schools? Most of the teachers reported that they understood what CRT was, and they also said they, in some ways, were using CRT effectively. However, after the interviews were over, many of the teachers questioned whether they were effectively using CRT because they thought that to use CRT, they needed to have a classroom that was mostly African American students.

African American teachers thought that they were effective in using CRT due to the simple fact that they shared the same race as the students in their class. These teachers thought that introducing writing and works by African American authors and artists would be all they needed to teach CRT. One teacher spoke about having a majority African American class and having them read and listen to artists and writers that were from people that the students had chosen because they could relate more to their work. The teachers who thought that they were teaching CRT to a special education class did not understand that sharing the same race did not give them a pass. When the follow-up question addressed whether they were ever a student in special education, they reflected that they needed to rethink how they were teaching CRT.

All the teachers understood that CRT focuses on addressing students' needs related to their ethnic background and the diverse student culture. However, they did not

understand that culture is defined as the integrated pattern of human behavior that can include one's life actions, customs, beliefs, values, racial makeup, ethnicity, religious background, or social group. Just because teachers might share the same racial background as their students does not give them a pass to think that this is all that is needed to be a culturally responsive teacher.

### **Research Question 2**

What are high school teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of using the CRT method to support the learning needs of their culturally diverse high school students in Midwest U.S. schools? All the teachers understood that CRT focuses on addressing students' needs related to their ethnic background and the diverse student culture. However, they did not understand that culture is defined as the integrated pattern of human behavior that can include one's life actions, customs, beliefs, values, racial makeup, ethnicity, religious background, or social group. Just because teachers might share the same racial background as their students does not give them a pass to think that this is all that is needed to be a culturally responsive teacher.

The teachers in the study also agreed that more teacher professional development is needed for older teachers and newer teachers to be taught how to apply CRT effectively. The teacher's race is not essential as long as they can apply CRT correctly by incorporating the student's background into the lesson that is being taught. Teachers need to be more culturally responsive to their students' needs and wants and include their culture and not the teacher's culture into the lesson plan. The student's race is essential; however, their culture is critical for CRT to work successfully.

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## Appendix A: Interviews Questions

1. How do you define culturally responsive teaching?
2. Does your school culture support and celebrate diversity with its diverse student body?
3. How well do you know the culture of your students?
4. Do you include your students' culture in your lesson?
5. How do you include your students' culture into your lesson plan?
6. Do you create space within your lesson plan for sometimes difficult conversations about current events and culture?
7. Do you constantly reflect on your own behaviors and biases that you might bring into the classroom? Furthermore, what do you do to limit your own personal bias in the lesson?
8. Do you build bridges between home and school that make the curriculum meaningful for students from different backgrounds?
9. Do you examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes?
10. Do you ask students to compare their culture with American culture?
11. Do you learn words in your students' native languages?
12. Do you use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairings in group work?
13. Do your students work independently, selecting their own learning activities?
14. Do you spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of your students?
15. Do you ask for student input when planning lessons and activities?

16. Do you encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material?

## Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

# HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED FOR A STUDY

PARTICIPATED WILL BE SELECTED FROM THE CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AREA.

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**Mahdee Muhammad**

**708-819-0619**

**[mahdee.muhammad@waldenu.edu](mailto:mahdee.muhammad@waldenu.edu)**

## Requirements

**Two or more years teaching diverse high school student in a Mid  
West School District**

**Two or more years using Culturally Responsive Teaching**

**Culturally responsive teaching is a research-based approach to teaching. It connects students' cultures, languages, and life experiences with what they learn in school.**

**Payment \$75**