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Exploring Secondary Teachers' Efficacy in Using Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in The Classroom

Romanus Sylvester Leonce
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

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Romanus Sylvester Leonce

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

Review Committee

Dr. Colleen Paepflow, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Deborah Focarile, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2023

Abstract

Exploring Secondary Teachers' Efficacy in Using Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in The
Classroom

by

Romanus Sylvester Leonce

MS, Nova Southeastern University, 2014

MEd, National-Louis University, 2012

BA, Northern Caribbean University, 1983

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

October 2023

Abstract

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is an approach to teaching that emphasizes teaching within the culture of the student. Culturally relevant pedagogy is proposed to help African American students increase reading achievement, yet research shows it is sometimes unclear to teachers how to implement CRP in their classrooms. Understanding teachers' efficacy in using CRP and perceptions of CRP is important because it has been linked to increasing student reading achievement. A basic interpretive qualitative study was conducted using Bandura's social learning theory (SLT). In this study, 10 secondary school teachers and administrators were interviewed. All the participants in the study taught African American students which made them eligible to participate. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis and a priori coding. Data findings were validated through triangulation of data sources and external audits. The findings of this study can inform school administrators and be useful content within workshops and seminars. The major findings of the study revealed that teachers communicated high student expectations, promoted positive perspective of families, encouraged learning within the context of culture, and implemented active student-centered teaching methods. One emergent theme was the need for professional development (PD) for teachers on CRP. This PD can be used to foster positive social change by informing secondary school teachers on the effective use and implementation of CRP with the intent to increase African American students' reading achievement. Increasing African American students' reading achievement has the potential to benefit schools within the private parochial organization.

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Dedication

To Him who created the Word to enlighten and lighten our journey, the Originator of the inexhaustible depth and breadth of literacy whose profundity I would never fathom; it would be amiss should I remiss to give Him sole dedication of my most feeble attempt in expressing all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise for all He has done in, through, and for me. To God be the glory who told me to pray throughout the doctoral journey.

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A doctoral study, by any measure, is never a solo journey. By its very nature, it garners corroboration from its inception to its completion. First, I am forever indebted to God for staying with me on this arduous journey. Again, and again God proved to me that He is dependable and reliable, fulfilling in me, for me, and through me His undisputed promises. God has kept His part of the bargain; I must keep mine to Him.

Second, I must acknowledge my Walden University doctoral committee. A doctoral committee chair performs the role of both mentor and advocate; Dr. Sarah Hough helped shape the study in the right direction, but Dr. Colleen Paepflow brought me to the finish line. Without Dr. Paepflow's mentorship and advocacy, the completion of my study would remain a dream. Both doctors Hough and Paepflow guided and mentored me, and for this, I must say thanks. Dr. Deborah Focarile, thanks for being instrumental in performing your role in helping me achieve this milestone. Your deep insight and constructive contribution are acknowledged and appreciated.

My wife, my biggest cheerleader, never stopped believing in me; thanks for believing in me and seeing a bright light at the end of the tunnel when I could not see any. Thanks to my two daughters who constantly and consistently reminded me "Daddy, you can do it." To my siblings who never failed to ask me how everything was coming on, thanks for your encouragement and spiritual support. Finally, through the doctoral journey, without everyone, the journey would be impossible.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
Section 1: The Problem.....	1
The Local Problem.....	1
Rationale	2
Definition of Terms.....	3
Significance of the Study	4
Study Site Evidence.....	5
Research Questions	6
Review of the Literature	7
Conceptual Framework	7
Review of the Broader Problem.....	9
Adequate Teacher Preparation	10
Effective CRP Implementation	16
Implications.....	27
Summary	28
Section 2: The Methodology.....	30
Research Design and Approach	30
Participants.....	32
Data Collection	37
Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants.....	40

Role of the Researcher	41
Data Analysis	41
Systems for Keeping Track of Data.....	43
Validity and Trustworthiness.....	44
Limitations	45
Data Analysis Results	45
Communicate High Student Expectations	52
Promote Positive Perspective of Families.....	63
Encourage Learning Within the Context of Culture.....	69
Implement Active Student-centered Teaching Methods.....	84
Professional Development	87
Section 3: The Project	93
Introduction.....	93
Rationale	94
Review of the Literature	97
Project Description.....	103
Project Evaluation Plan	105
Project Implications	107
Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions.....	109
Project Strengths and Limitations.....	109
Recommendations for Alternative Approaches	110

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change	111
Reflection on Importance of the Work	112
Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research	113
Conclusion	115
References.....	117
Appendix A: The Project	135
Appendix B: Email to Teachers	151
Appendix C: Email to Teachers	152
Appendix D: Interview Protocol for Teachers	153
Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Administrators.....	157
Appendix F: Principal’s Letter of Support.....	161

List of Tables

Table 1. Demographic Information on Participants..... 47

Table 2. Data Findings based on the Research Questions 91

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem that I investigated in this study was secondary teachers' low level of efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in their classrooms to address students' low reading proficiency scores. CRP was recommended as a strategy to improve reading proficiency for secondary students. Previous researchers found evidence of improved literacy among students exposed to CRP (Walker & Hutchinson, 2020). However, at the study school, no training has been conducted, and it is not known if and how secondary teachers are using CRP in the classroom. In addition, teachers' efficacy with using CRP within secondary classrooms at the study site had not been investigated: thus, no data were previously collected on if or how teachers are using this strategy in the classroom and the challenges they may be experiencing.

The data on low reading proficiency scores among African American students on the national level is also reflected at the local site with students' ACT data. At the study school, a private parochial secondary school in the Southern United States, composed of 100% African American students, low reading proficiency scores are cause for concern. Approximately 27% of students are classified as needing reading support as evidenced by ACT scores. A student who has achieved reading proficiency would have a score of at least 440 out of 450 on the ACT Aspire reading score scale. (ACT Aspire national assessment, 2018). According to ACT Aspire summative report (2018), students are classified into four reading categories which are (a) in need of support (400–420 range), (b) close to proficient (420–440), (c) proficient (440 and above), and (d) exceeding the

standard. Twenty-seven percent of the African American students at the school are in the 400-420 in need of support range and 50% are nonproficient readers according to this scale. To attempt to address the problem of how to support students with low reading proficiency, the principal at the study site recommended CRP to teachers. Prior to this study, no data had been collected to understand the strategies that teachers use in their classrooms to support student reading or their perception of the use of CRP to help improve reading proficiency among African American students. These data are beneficial to the school administration to decide what types of professional development teachers at the site might need. CRP is an approach if used effectively has shown to increase reading proficiency in African American students (Awilda, 2022; Capper, 2021). However, it may be unclear to practitioners exactly how CRP is used in the classroom (Capper, 2021; Dixon & Dodo, Mason, 2017,). The principal has advocated the use of CRP in classrooms at the study school to address students' low reading proficiency, but it is unclear if teachers are implementing CRP in the classrooms, how teachers perceive CRP, or what, if any, difficulties teachers experience with implementation. Therefore, this situation has created a gap in practice. I conducted this study to understand teacher perceptions and use CRP in their classrooms to address this gap.

Rationale

At the study school, African American students' low reading proficiency scores warrant concern. The registrar who reviews student data from national assessments routinely presents the data at staff meetings. On several occasions at staff meetings, teachers discuss the academic implications for students with low reading proficiency and

how they will progress academically. According to Scullin (2020) low reading proficiency among students could impede their academic success in a literate world. In addition to the low reading proficiency, STEM, science, and math results are not any better. Of the 23 students who did the 2018 STEM assessment, 91% are below readiness; in science, 57% need support, and in math, 48% need support (ACT Aspire national assessment, 2018). Research indicates that the use of CRP will result in the increase of reading proficiency among African American students (Awilda, 2022; Capper, 2021). At the school, there is no evidence of teachers' perceptions and use of CRP to increase the African American students' reading proficiency scores. Many factors may contribute to this problem, but one of the main factors may be that teachers may not know what CRP is, its potential, or how to use CRP in the classroom (Bean-Folkes & Ellison, 2018). Another factor may be teachers' difficulty in finding adequate information on CRP implementation in the classroom. This study was important because I identified the causes of low reading proficiency among the students and provide customized professional development for teachers on how to implement CRP in the classroom. In addition, this study contributes to the knowledge needed to address African American students' poor reading proficiency. Unfortunately, a gap in practice exists because while CRP is recommended to increase student reading proficiency, teachers' efficacy with using CRP within the classrooms as a means of addressing low reading proficiency among the students had not been previously studied.

Definition of Terms

I used the following terms throughout this study:

African American Students: African American students are people of African descent (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

Culturally Relevant Education: Culturally Relevant Education is a conceptual framework that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural backgrounds, interests, and lived experiences in all aspects of teaching and learning within the classroom and across the school (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2009; Milner, 2017). Culturally Relevant Education says what should be included in the teaching discourse but does not stipulate how to teach the culturally relevant content.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is an approach to teaching that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to inform knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 17-18).

Culturally Responsive Teaching: Culturally Responsive Teaching is using the heritages, experiences, and perspectives of different ethnic and racial groups to teach students who are members of them more effectively (Gay, 2002, 2010b). Culturally Responsive Teaching taps into the lived experiences of students and stipulates what to teach.

Significance of the Study

Teachers who build their capacity to use CRP in the classroom can teach more effectively in a multicultural setting and have increased self-efficacy in the use of CRP (McGregor et al., 2019). When teachers with CRP experience share their strategies in meaningful ways with their colleagues this information facilitates professional

development for teachers. Teachers who empower their colleagues also contribute to their self-improvement which leads to increased teacher self-efficacy in using CRP in the classroom. As is often the case in a school setting, teachers who are self-confident and effective in the classroom usually empower their colleagues by either sharing teaching strategies or through mentoring them (McGregor et al., 2019). In addition, teachers who value self-improvement experience increased self-efficacy in using CRP (Cruz et al., 2019). According to Choi and Lee (2020), professional development increases teacher efficacy to function effectively in a multicultural education setting. In general, teachers can benefit from their colleagues' shared experiences, lessons learned, and even learn from their mistakes. By collecting data on culturally relevant education, it is possible to help teachers avoid the pitfalls of their colleagues (Croxtton et al., 2021). Teaching and learning increase teacher self-confidence and self-efficacy (Cruz et al., 2019).

Study Site Evidence

During staff meetings, teachers at the school discuss how students' low reading achievement impedes their academic progress. To attempt to address the problem of how to support students with low reading proficiency, the school principal discussed culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) with teachers at the site. The goal was to improve reading achievement, yet no data had been collected to understand the strategies that teachers use in their classrooms to support student reading or their perception of the use of CRP to help improve reading achievement among the African American students. The principal said:

The efficacy of using culturally relevant pedagogy forms became more likely to increase reading achievement amidst specific racial groups that were culturally and socially linked to aspects of their race. When children later collaborated in groups with adult guidance, they were able to attain more than what they could have achieved individually. Pedagogy must be inclusive and culturally relevant in terms of idioms, words, environment, and context. Culturally relevant pedagogical forms will create interest and stir excitement.

Thus, these data can be beneficial to the school administration to decide what types of professional development teachers at the site might need.

Research Questions

There is a gap in practice at the local site which necessitates this study. While teachers are being asked to use CRP, implementation is problematic, and it is not clear if and how they are doing so. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate secondary teachers' perceptions of their efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. These three research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are secondary teachers' perceived efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How are secondary teachers currently using culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the barriers or challenges secondary teachers face in implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom?

Review of the Literature

CRP is a pedagogical framework that is used to help students, especially African American students, increase reading achievement. This framework continues to evolve as demands of immigration and shifting school demographics make it an imperative approach to remedy student reading problems (Bajaj et al., 2017; Muniz, 2019). Poor reading achievement among African American students and a growing student population that is becoming increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse pose an urgent reading problem that commands immediate national attention. Adequate teacher preparation in CRP, effective CRP implementation, teacher perception, and use of CRP are core issues in the current CRP dialogue (Allen et al., 2017; Gay, 2018). When first coined by Ladson-Billings in the 1990s, CRP was initially considered as an instructional approach to remedy low reading achievement among African American students. Now, CRP is inclusive of all cultures, and the acceptance of the rich cultural diversity students bring with them to school is now viewed as an asset and not a liability (Ladson-Billings, 1994; McGregory et al., 2019). Both educators and researchers refer to the fundamental concept of using student culture as a springboard to inform instruction by different names such as culturally relevant teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, and culturally relevant education.

Conceptual Framework

I based the conceptual framework for this study on Bandura's (1977) social learning theory (SLT). The SLT developed by Bandura recognizes how learning takes place. According to Bandura, learning takes place as people interact with each other in

social contexts. According to the SLT, one way learning takes place is by observing the behavior of others which can impact the behavior of the observer. Bandura stated that through the observational process, desirable behavior is imitated. Further, for learning to take place, and for developmental growth to ensue, one must be attentive, the behavior must register in the memory, and the motivation to want to change must precede a changed behavior. New information and new or modified behavior are attained by observing others. As such, Bandura promoted three principles of the SLT: observation, imitation, and modeling. For Bandura, modeled behavior is changed behavior and is one of the primary goals of the SLT. Therefore, changed behavior is a direct result of observed behavior which, in turn, is an integral part of human learning.

Applying the principles of the SLT directly to the classroom, teachers learn from each other, model for each other, and grow professionally. That professional growth and development can be referred to as changed behavior. Bandura further postulated that observational learning, attention, retention, reciprocation, and motivation are important prerequisites for learning and behavior change. According to Bandura, people generally imitate behaviors they observe that they know will benefit them. Bandura believed a live model, verbal instructional model, and symbolic modeling are imperative to the learning process. For Bandura, watching what others do and imitating that observed behavior is fundamental to behavioral growth, learning, and development.

Rosenstock et al. (1988), who studied Bandura's SLT, built upon the SLT theory and included classical conditioning and instrumental conditioning. Dacholfany et al., (2022) drew from Bandura's SLT and applied the theory to help understand how teachers

of Social Studies can use the SLT to achieve discipline in the classroom. Also, Deaton (2015) saw a direct connection between SLT and social media and sensed the two can both enhance each other. In addition, Ginsberg et al. (2020) believe Bandura's SLT is an opportunity to engage students. Grusec (1992) advocated that SLT presents an opportunity to explain human behavior. According to Bandura, the major components of SLT are observation, imitation, and modeling. Bandura gives insight into how learning takes place. Bandura's SLT connects with my study because it shows how teachers can learn from each other, grow professionally, and experience self-efficacy. When teachers grow professionally, students will benefit from teachers' growth which is consistent with Bandura's SLT and thus provide the appropriate lens in which to view my study.

Review of the Broader Problem

I searched for literature using several databases. The databases that were searched included Education Source, ERIC, and SAGE. All the articles I researched were current peer-reviewed studies (i.e., published within the last 5 years). To procure articles that were relevant to my study, I searched for terms such as culturally relevant pedagogy and reading achievement among African American/Black students, the state of reading scores among African American students, culturally relevant pedagogy and reading, and culturally relevant education and literature. The articles that I found using these keywords for my search criteria led to a deeper search of other sources which proved beneficial in my quest for the most up-to-date and relevant evidence-based information. In the literature search, I was able to identify four common focus areas: adequate teacher

preparation, effective CRP implementation, teacher perception of CRP, and teachers' use of CRP practices.

Adequate Teacher Preparation

Amidst the growing concern about the use of CRP to improve reading achievement among African American students, teacher preparation programs fall short of effectively preparing teachers to implement CRP for the improvement of reading achievement among African Americans (Gist et al., 2019). Mere focus on the theory and practice of multicultural education in the preparation of preservice teachers has proven inadequate (Bottiani et al., 2017). There is a need for thorough and balanced courses to fully prepare preservice teachers to teach in a multicultural and diverse setting (Christ & Sharma, 2018). Despite some efforts to address teacher needs, as pointed out, teachers are not shown how to implement CRP to increase student reading achievement. Research shows teachers who may have heard of CRP and have a casual understanding are not given a foundational concept of it.

Current supervised teaching practices do not require teachers to prepare lessons implementing CRP principles. Furthermore, teachers are not taught exactly how to use CRP in the classroom (Bottiani et al., 2017). With increasing demographic shifts in schools, adequate teacher preparation is tantamount and vital to the effective implementation of multicultural education among students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Ladson-Billings, 2021). According to Adams and Glass (2018), there is a general sense of teacher frustration with CRP.

First, teacher preparatory programs need to stress the significance of CRP to enable teachers to better serve students. Second, as a direct result, there is a lack of CRP infusion which leaves teachers inadequately prepared to serve students. Third, these programs fail to realize that teachers are a dynamic force in the teacher-student socialization process and need to reevaluate the role of the teacher. Fourth, these programs should teach all teachers how to reach and teach all students using CRP. Fifth, there is a general struggle among teachers to put CRP into practice. Sixth, there still exists confusion and misunderstanding between CRP as a theory and as a practice. Seventh, teacher preparation programs need to help teachers identify the gap between theory and practice. While Adams and Glass (2018) recognized the pitfalls to effective CRP implementation, it is not fully known to what extent teacher preparatory programs are taking heed.

In addition to successful CRP implementation taught at teacher preparatory programs, Whitaker and Valtierra (2018) have identified three dispositions that are essential for successful culturally responsive pedagogy. These three dispositions are social justice, community, and praxis. The authors see the need to use the three dispositions as an instrument for measuring teachers' CRP in a changing sociopolitical environment. According to Whitaker and Valtierra (2018), by social justice, students will be empowered and liberated; by the community, teachers will build relationships with students' parents; and by praxis, teachers must know themselves, their students, and their practice. While many researchers capture the essential elements of CRP, unlike Whitaker and Valtierra (2018) who propose community involvement and participation, they see a

need for parent involvement. However, lack of community and parent involvement are not the only factors to consider.

Another significant shortcoming of teacher education preparatory programs is the failure to recognize the diverse student population, and adequately integrate CRP in their programs (Allen, 2019; Gist et al., 2019). Teachers without CRP training are ill-prepared to meet the challenges of a diverse student population. Research shows a significant demographic shift in schools across the United States; unfortunately, teacher education preparatory programs have not fully awakened to that fact (Allen, 2019; Gist et al., 2019). Teacher education programs should incorporate a comprehensive approach to CRP to better prepare new teachers for a diverse student population. Teacher preparation programs should embrace a CRP road map that reflects a critical framework through critical reflection, social justice action, and critical questioning and empathy (Warren, 2017). By so doing, teachers will develop critical reflection skills and critical consciousness to dispel the prevailing social traditions that may impede CRP support (Allen et al., 2017; Lewis, 2017).

Researchers suggest there are three fundamental questions that are pertinent to teacher preparation programs: the first fundamental question is how are issues of race central to education? The second fundamental question is how are issues of race ameliorated or worsened by educational and social policies and practices? The third fundamental question is how can specific qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis yield insights that are especially helpful in these areas. (Nieto & Bode, 2018). Nieto and Bode (2018) advocated serious rethinking of literacy programs to integrate

social justice and critical race issues in the curriculum. The authors proposed curriculum redesign to include race and social justice issues. Education, in isolation of student race, social justice, and culture adversely affects and impedes student academic success and literacy achievement (Nieto & Bode, 2018). On the other hand, other researchers wish to dissect race and social issues from CRP (Allen et al., 2017; Lewis, 2017), but a careful understanding of CRP is inclusive of race and social issues. In fact, in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) author Paulo Freire saw the inclusion of race and social issues in the literacy process as liberating.

Nevertheless, schools in the United States continue to undergo significant demographic changes which have resulted in a growing linguistically and culturally diverse student population. It is therefore imperative for teachers and pre-service teachers who are unfamiliar with CRP to realize that this demographic shift is predicted to peak around 2025 (Bransberger, 2017) which will result in their classrooms demographics looking different. In addition, according to Duffy and Powers (2018), some serious challenges and implications go with educating a diverse student population. Thus, the implications for educators should not be ignored. Research makes it abundantly clear that teachers need to be equipped with the tools to understand the use and implementation of CRP (Duffy & Powers, 2018). Duffy and Powers (2018) used embodied experience with teachers during professional development so they could experience and understand how to use CRP. It is still unfortunate that researchers continued to identify inadequate teacher preparation as one of the pivotal components missing for effective CRP implementation. Addressing this lack in teacher preparation is imperative if CRP is to positively impact

reading achievement among African American students. Furthermore, research shows that African American students are ranked on the lowest rung of the reading achievement ladder when compared to other demographic groups in the nation. According to Deng et al. (2022), it is of paramount importance teachers understand the concept of multiculturalism so they can facilitate equitable education for all students. Teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and the various approaches to multicultural pedagogy significantly impact teachers' understanding and practice of CRP. Hence multicultural education seeks to ensure equity for all students by removing all educational barriers that may impede student academic success. In addition, researchers believed multicultural education valued student culture and emphasized living in a diverse world with equality, justice, and equity for all students. Within this context, CRP is an approach in which a culturally competent teacher can teach in a cross-cultural multicultural setting and focuses on student academic excellence, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness within the student's cultural context. Therefore, multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy are interdependent: the former speaks to what to include in the curriculum, and the latter speaks to how to deliver instruction. According to Deng et al. (2022), it is of paramount importance that teachers understand the concept of multiculturalism so that they can facilitate equitable education for all students. Thorough and balanced courses are needed in preparing teachers to meet the cultural needs of culturally diverse students (Adams & Glass, 2018). To maximize student reading achievement and academic performance, preservice teachers should be exposed to the application of the three multicultural pedagogies which are teacher self-knowledge,

knowledge of the student, and knowledge of the community (Deng et al., 2022).

Therefore, it is not surprising that the authors Nieto and Bode recognized a three-fold approach that includes the three most important entities as fundamental to student success (Nieto & Bode, 2018).

It should be noted CRP does not only apply to reading, but other subject areas stand to benefit from CRP implementation. As part of teacher preparation for effective implementation of CRP in the classroom, a conference workshop setting to engage mathematics teachers and teachers in other subject areas could prove quite effective in CRP implementation (Marshall, 2023). A conference approach could incorporate a workshop setting used to improve teachers' perceptions of their CRP knowledge specific to mathematics or another subject area. Pre- and post-conference surveys can be given to attendees. Findings may indicate the participants' degree of increased basic knowledge of key terms regarding CRP (O'Dwyer, et al., 2023). As a follow-up, participants' use of CRP and CRP practices can be monitored as well. Three keys to successful CRP implementation are networking, collaborating, and sharing teaching practices (O'Dwyer, et al., 2023).

There is ample evidence (Boda, et al., 2018) that the dynamic of CRP among teachers at other secondary schools, in other areas such as agriculture, and teachers in ethnically diverse schools who seek to collaborate, are better practitioners of CRP. Potential objectives teachers may focus on could be comprehension and understanding; emancipatory and liberatory; empowerment and affirmation; multidimensional and multifaceted; transformative and transparent; and validation and endorsement of

culturally responsive pedagogy. Another possible objective is to identify the coded responses of the characteristics as proposed by teachers. Gay's six characteristics of culturally responsive teaching which also echoes Ladson-Billings' approach to CRP is quite helpful (Gay, 2010). The insights gained by teachers will put in context the major components of the effective use of CRP (Leming & Steele, 2022). There appears to be a consensus between Ladson-Billings and Gay's understanding of the foundational principles of CRP.

Effective CRP Implementation

Effective CRP implementation may come with challenges. Some factors could prevent effective CRP implementation and practice (Neri et al., 2019). According to Neri et al. (2019) in some instances it may be difficult to implement CRP at charter schools or private schools where the concept of accountability may hardly exist (Neri et al., 2019). On the other hand, in educational settings where accountability exists, and educators are held accountable by stakeholders, CRP implementation should not be hindered. However, the three pillars of CRP which are academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness may be challenging to implement. Apart from accountability, two major setbacks may be teachers' lack of CRP's conceptual pillars and administrative barriers (Neri et al., 2019) that could impede the integration of CRP into the curriculum. Successful implementation of CRP often requires two vital components: collaboration on the part of all teachers and the participation of the entire school community including administration (Anderson et al., 2017). It is important to note that accountability is not the only variable that interferes with CRP implementation.

Another factor that could affect the implementation of CRP is standardized curricula and testing that have marginalized culturally relevant education (CRE) (Warren, 2018; Dee & Penner, 2017). However, researchers seem to think that schools that are test-driven may not necessarily have difficulty in implementing CRP. CRE could be likened to the actual content of CRP, while CRP is the method or approach used to impact the instructional delivery of CRE. CRP is the vehicle that effectively delivers CRE to students. However, amidst some difficulties in implementing CRP, researchers believe that positive student outcomes could also be realized because of CRE (Warren, 2018). There is common agreement among researchers that CRP has the potential to help students. Researchers have found that the implementation of CRE across content areas has positive impacts on student outcomes. The evidence supports the proposition that CRP does increase student achievement (Waren, 2018).

While CRP considers teachers' cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity, a student-centered thrust is relevant. With students who are linguistically and culturally diverse, the use of socio-politically relevant pedagogy to facilitate a smooth transition in school may prove effective (McGregor et al., 2019). Building on the concept of CRP, it is of paramount importance to tap into incoming new students' experiences, self-conceptions, and their position in a global economy. Three key tenets of effective CRP implementation are the creation of formal and informal learning avenues inclusive of families, communities, and schools; material support and care for students and their families; and the cultivation of critical consciousness that is built around global inequalities and transnational migration (Bajaj et al., 2017). This research reinforces the

importance of including family and community in the student education process as two necessary keys for student success.

To promote student success, implementing CRP across the curriculum calls for possibly redesigning of school programs and curricula to foster and facilitate a process using CRP and examine its effectiveness with the use of student heritage language for example in a Spanish class. Among best CRP practices, findings indicate that planning and development of a cultural pedagogy proved to be a transformative experience for all the participants (Anderson et al., 2022). There is general agreement among researchers that leveraging student culture and experiences in the learning process are credits for the student and not debits.

For CRP implementation to be successful, the cross-cultural competence of teachers is imperative. The cross-cultural training of teachers for CRP competence must include teacher educators, pre-service teachers (i.e., student teachers), and in-service teachers. It is important to allow teachers to rate their cultural competence (Brown et al., 2019). Without a doubt, cross-cultural experiences will vary among teacher groups and locations. Another consideration is whether cross-cultural experiences will correlate with perceptions of cultural competence. Studies have shown that the cultural competence scores of teachers are higher and, especially more so in an environment where CRP is implemented and thrives better in a supportive and nurturing school environment (Kondo, 2022). Therefore, at this point, it is not fully known if teacher cross-cultural experiences easily translate to better perceptions of cultural competence.

CRP was first coined a little over 28 years ago although the overall concept was in practice prior. After 28 years of CRP use, there was a re-examination of the use and implementation of CRP to ascertain if the major tenets of CRP were still practiced. With major shifting demographics in schools in the United States as a direct result of globalization and immigration, the linguistically and culturally diverse student population demands that CRP remains among some of the best practices for teaching an increasingly diverse student population (Dee & Penner, 2017). At its core, CRP remains an evolving pedagogical framework whose approach needs to be adaptable to remain current, appropriate, and effective. As such, the ideal CRP approach remains applicable, appropriate, and relevant in all subjects (Mc Carther & Davis, 2017). One of the major understandings of the fundamental principles of CRP is to make it relevant for all students and not just African Americans.

Amidst the re-evaluation of CRP, as it is currently implemented and used, a further study examined the three main factors that put CRP under siege. Researchers have found that the over-emphasis on standardization, accountability, and neoliberal school reform have threatened the three cornerstones of CRP which are academic excellence, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. According to researchers, to only emphasize academic excellence and cultural competence in CRP, and to ignore sociopolitical consciousness is to trivialize the tenants of CRP. The focus on high test scores does indicate that this is the sole purpose of school. Sociopolitical consciousness is not less important than academic excellence and cultural competence, and, if neglected

in CRP, this denies students of emancipatory pedagogies which is an integral part of CRP (Gibson & Royal, 2017).

With CRP, students learn about their culture and the culture of others. Souto-Manning & Martell (2017) advocated the curriculum be all-inclusive to avoid students believing their culture is the only culture in the world. The three areas of commitment that are vital to culturally relevant literacy teaching are teachers' knowledge of students' potential and capacity; value placed on students' culture in the classroom, community, and the world; and the need to teach for critical consciousness. Although Souto-Manning and Martell (2017) may have expressed their ideals differently, other authors are in unison with their ideals of CRP.

Critical race theory must be considered in the context of factors associated with culturally relevant teaching strategies as perceived by students. Family, school, and community are imperative components in having a fundamental understanding of the factors that favor student academic success in schools whose demographics have shifted significantly (Cook et al., 2020). The development of culturally relevant teaching strategies based on recommendations by previous researchers provide a structure within which teachers can evaluate the presence and importance of these teaching strategies based on student self-report. In addition to CRP implementation, one must be mindful of the emergence and impact of technological strategies that can be intertwined with those of the traditional past. The use of technology to further enhance the implementation of CRP is important to inform teaching and learning practice. The use of technology and digital devices to enhance CRP outcomes is a growing concern, and while technology is

important, not much is known about exactly which technologies and digital devices would best serve students. According to Eliyahu-Levi & Ganz-Meishar (2021), all students should have access to digital devices for instructional use, but educators' perspectives and attitudes on the use of digital devices in the classroom can impact student success or failure. Vazquez-Cano et al. (2020) saw a stark difference with student use of technology in and out of school. According to Vazquez, et al. (2020) use of technology in the classroom may not necessarily translate to student academic success and may directly affect their academic performance. Students who controlled their computer use and used it for educational purposes performed better than students who did not use them (Vazquez et al., 2020). However, ample research evidence showed the undeniable relevance of culturally sensitive pedagogy across disciplines (Aloysius, et al., 2023).

In addition, not only is CRP useful, but researchers showed Black educators who continued to advocate for students of color through CRP lenses helped them avoid the academic failure plight of students of color who attended predominantly white schools. African American students who sensed Black educators' support and interest in their academic success tended to thrive better in school. The impact of students' perception of teacher support often helped them do better in school. Researchers have found that students who were protected from mistreatment, were encouraged, supported, and advocated for academically, experienced racial uplift, and reached their highest potential in all engaged activities (Warren-Grace, 2017).

Teachers' Use of Practices. There are common practices some teachers used that are contrary to the expectations of CRP. One such teacher practice was teachers deidentifying African American students by renaming them or anglicizing their names (Marrun, 2018). Disconnecting students from their cultural heritage by renaming them was akin to getting rid of their cultural identity. Culturally responsive teaching acknowledged students' cultural identity and maintained their integrity.

To evaluate the effectiveness of CRP in the classroom, the three areas of concern that researchers looked at were teacher practice, classroom interactions, and student experiences (Berry & Thomas, 2017). Berry and Thomas (2017) found that caring teachers had knowledge of content, were culturally competent, were critically conscious, set high expectations for both students and they, and those who implemented great instruction were more likely to succeed. Researchers have found that culturally responsive pedagogy used across all subject areas will benefit students (Berry & Thomas, 2017).

The training and preparation of new teachers in diversity are important for the success of CRP implementation in the classroom as new teachers transition to the classroom (Kumar, 2018). Researchers have examined the experiences of new teachers of color as they transition from their teacher preparation program to implement CRP in the classroom (Peng & Zhu, 2019). Teachers' successes and challenges were examined. Teachers found a great disparity between their understandings of the theoretical foundations of CRP versus the capability to implement it. Among the teachers with challenges, some emerging themes were understanding self, building community and

collaboration among critical pedagogies, and navigating theory and practice. As revealed by researchers, there still existed the need for a clear understanding of CRP, and the implementation of some of the major tenets in implementing CRP (Baidoo et al., 2023).

Not only are the experiences of new teachers of color important but exploring teacher perspective is important to ascertain how to improve CRP instruction and delivery in the classroom. Borrero et al. (2018) found out that the perspectives of pre-and in-service teachers of CRP as a teaching framework were tantamount to their success with students. Further investigation of teacher perception centered on the meaning of CRP, the consequences of CRP, the type of assistance received in CRP development, the challenges to CRP implementation, and what worked in CRP as a new teacher (Martell, 2018). Of paramount importance, researchers indicated that findings found that teachers needed to learn from and with new teachers to model practice, and to develop programs to better understand and implement CRP. While CRP remains a pedagogical framework to improve student academic success via increased reading achievement and offers latitude in its implementation, there is an appropriate way to show how CRP ought to be implemented (Borrero et al., 2018).

Evaluating CRP and monitoring its success cannot be ignored. A major thrust on CRP implementation relied heavily on how to move from theory to practice which seemed to be a major challenge. Researchers showed many teachers had a conceptual understanding of cultural responsiveness in theory, but they were unable to transfer the concept into practice (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017). Researchers found conclusive evidence that it was not only important that teachers understood the concept of culturally

responsive evaluation, but it was also important that they knew how to transfer theory into practice (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017). There is no doubt that there has been strong agreement among researchers that implementing CRP for effective teacher use remained a major challenge.

Another factor in teacher uses of CRP centered on how to design a process using CRP and examine its effectiveness with the use of student heritage language. This should also include students who have an IEP (Barrio et. al., 2017). Since the demographics of schools in the United States have shifted significantly with a more diverse student population, designing a CRP process must consider all students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Duffy & Powers, 2018). Student linguistic diversity is no longer viewed as a liability, but an asset. Researchers indicated that planning and development of a cultural pedagogy proved to be a transformative experience for all the participants (Samuels, 2018).

When CRP beliefs and practices of teachers were aligned with the core values of CRP, teaching across the curriculum proved more effective. An examination of CRP beliefs and practices of social studies and U.S. History classes at an urban high school with a racially diverse student population centered on race and racism. The three different models of CRP that were used were exchanging, discovering, and challenging. Regardless of the models that were implemented, the student's response to the use of CRP was positive (Martell, 2018).

The ultimate success of CRP hinge on a holistic approach and stipulate that CRP be taught across the curriculum versus the traditional approach and the stereotypical

assumptions of teaching science to students which put the students of color at a disadvantage. Writing which is an integral part of literacy should not be excluded (Woodard et al., 2017). In science education, the deficits that students of the color exhibit have more to do with the lack of the implementation of CRP than student ability.

Researchers found a minimal use of CRP in science education. Researchers also found that an increase in the use of critical race theory and CRP would not only give a better understanding of who studied science but would increase participation among students of color (Seriki, 2018).

As CRP is implemented across the curriculum, students must learn respect for their culture, and respect for the culture of others. In keeping with the idea of CRP across disciplines, Mass & Lake (2018) examined how scripted curriculum can be incorporated with CRP to create a more effective model than either model. Mass & Lake (2018) supported the approach of how integrating components of other programs can be integrated into CRP for meaning and relevance to students (Mass & Lake, 2018).

According to researchers, it is important to teach students about their culture and the culture of others. To accomplish this endeavor, it is advocated the curriculum be all-inclusive to avoid students believing their culture is the only culture in the world. The three areas of commitment that are vital to culturally relevant literacy teaching are teachers' knowledge of students' potential and capacity; value placed on students' culture in the classroom, community, and the world; the need to teach for critical consciousness (Souto-Manning & Martell, 2017). Further, researchers made it abundantly clear that CRP is important to both inform the teaching and learning practice. Researchers also

advocated for the relevance of culturally sensitive pedagogy across disciplines (Fallon, et al., 2022).

An examination of the critical race theory in the context of factors associated with culturally relevant teaching strategies as perceived by students on a historically black university in the southeast stipulated its embracement and facilitation within CRP endeavors. Development of a list of culturally relevant teaching strategies based on recommendations by previous researchers evaluated the presence and importance of these teaching strategies based on student self-report. The findings indicated the emergence of technological strategies intertwined with those of the traditional past. The findings were important to inform teaching and learning practice and the relevance of culturally sensitive pedagogy across disciplines (Fallon, et al., 2022).

Teacher Perception of CRP. There is an urgent need for the examination of the theory and practice of multicultural education in the preparation of preservice teachers. As part of this examination, the history and practice of multiculturalism deserve special attention. Effective CRP implementation necessitates courses in diversity to fully prepare preservice teachers to teach in a multicultural and diverse setting. There is absolutely no doubt that teacher preparation in CRP is vital to the effective implementation of multicultural education (Borrero et al., 2018; Kirylo, 2017).

In keeping with the theory and practice of CRP, Kirylo (2017) investigated the theory and practice of multicultural education and teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and the various approaches to multicultural pedagogy. After an investigative literature review, the authors found three forms of multicultural pedagogy: conservative,

liberal, and critical. It is of paramount importance that teachers understood the concept of multiculturalism so that they can facilitate equal education for all students. Courses on diversity and multiculturalism are needed in preparing preservice teachers to meet the growing needs of culturally diverse students. According to Adams & Kaczmarczyk. (2023) student reading performance increased with the application of the three forms of multicultural pedagogies (Adams & Kaczmarczyk, 2023).

Research has found some teacher difficulty in creating a balance to facilitate CRP implementation. Jacobs (2019) found that teachers were conflicted between balancing high academic standards and engaging students in culturally responsive pedagogy. Another challenge that was found was in an in-depth examination of the perceptions of science teacher use of CRP to address the needs of historically underserved or marginalized students in science classrooms (Jacobs, 2019). The researchers revealed that the participants acknowledged the need for change in science education but were not sure what CRP was or how to implement it. It is, therefore, reasonable to imply that knowledge of CRP and implementation of CRP are not the same. A concerted effort must be expended in further developing specific instructional guidance in effective CRP implementation. (Underwood, & Mensah, 2018).

Implications

This proposed basic interpretive qualitative study could help develop an understanding of teachers' perception of their low efficacy in the use of CRP to increase low reading proficiency scores of African American students. Because students experience low reading proficiency at the local site, a thorough look at the

implementation of reading strategies is needed to ensure student academic success. The anticipated findings of this study may inform how educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders within the private and parochial education system prepare professional development programs intended to help teachers increase reading outcomes among African American students. The anticipated findings of this proposed study may also help teachers in the parochial education system learn how to use CRP to help African American students increase their reading proficiency. In addition, the findings from this study may bring more awareness on reading improvements and reading outcomes for African American students. Teachers' perception and use of CRP to increase reading proficiency among African American students may inform educators of the use of CRP to help increase students' reading proficiency.

Summary

Research has shown low reading proficiency scores among various student demographic subgroups (e.g., African American students) within the United States of America. Within Section 1, I identified the problem at the local site as secondary teachers' low level of efficacy in using CRP in their classrooms (Cruz et al., 2019) to address students' low reading proficiency scores (Walker & Hutchinson, 2020). I also provided the rationale to justify the importance of the problem. In addition, I defined terms that are important to my study and showed the significance of the study. Also, I posed the study's three important research questions, discussed the pertinent research literature that is relevant to the study, and described the conceptual framework that guided the study. Finally, I offered the implications of the proposed study.

To appropriately implement CRP to effectively increase African American students' reading proficiency, there must be adequate teacher preparation at the tertiary level, effective CRP implementation in the classroom, teachers' proper use of CRP best practices, and the oversight that teachers' perception of CRP aligned with all its major tenets. The lack of teacher perception of CRP, or teacher low CRP efficacy, teacher use of practices, effective CRP implementation, and adequate teacher preparation continue to stall successful CRP implementation. Although CRP is not new to many educators, challenges persist. African American students continue to stagnate academically, and their reading proficiency scores fall far behind their white peers. Notions on how to increase reading scores among African American students are quite common, but what is uncommon is one central and concerted effort to maximize CRP opportunities for the good of African American students.

In Section 2, I will discuss the rationale for choosing this study. In addition, I will discuss the methodology including the research design and approach, participants, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Furthermore, in this section, I will present the measures taken to protect the rights of the participants. In Section 3, I will discuss the project. In Section 4, I will discuss the reflections and conclusions of the final study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The purpose of this basic interpretive qualitative study was to investigate secondary teachers' perceptions of their low efficacy in using CRP in the classroom to improve African American students' low reading proficiency scores. In this section, I provide an overview of the research design and explain the details about the selection and protection of the teachers and administrators (i.e., participants), the instruments and methods of data collection, and the procedures for analyzing and coding the data.

In this proposed study I used a basic interpretive qualitative approach to investigate teachers' perceptions of their low efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy to increase African American students' low reading proficiency scores at the local site. According to Merriam (2009), qualitative research is scientific research in which the researcher examines, tries to understand, and describes a phenomenon. In qualitative research the focus is on the perception of the population being studied (Merriam, 2009). In a quantitative research design, the researcher collects and analyzes numerical data highlighting major differences between groups of interest or trends (Creswell, 2012). The quantitative researcher often collects data off-site, whereas the qualitative researcher collects data in the field to understand the problem studied (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Since the goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of teachers' perception of their low efficacy and use of CRP, a qualitative study design has been selected rather than a quantitative one. According to Merriam (2009), a qualitative study centers on understanding the experiences of those being studied and the researcher

was able to conduct an intensive analysis of people's experiences. A basic interpretive qualitative design is used when the researcher wants to understand how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). In a basic qualitative design, the researcher conducts interviews in which open-ended semi-structured questions allow the researcher the opportunity to collect rich data about participants' perception and use (Creswell, 2012; Dooly et al., 2017; Stahl & King, 2020). In a basic qualitative design, the researcher can interview participants extensively and collect rich sources of data to understand the problem being studied (Boling & Lachheb, 2018; Creswell & Clark, 2012).

I considered several qualitative designs but rejected them in favor of a basic qualitative design. In ethnographical research, the researcher immerses himself in the participants' culture and studies the people in their natural environment. Ethnographical research may also necessitate that the researcher's lives among the people being studied (Merriam, 2009). Other research designs, according to Creswell (2012) such as grounded theory, which is ideal for explaining a process were considered. Creswell (2012) also states that an ethnographic design lends itself to writing about groups of people. A phenomenological design focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a group (Creswell, 2012). It also uses a variety of methods to understand the essence and structure of the phenomenon being studied and how complex meanings are built (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, since my goal of my study was not to explain a process, neither to write about groups of people nor to write about the lived experiences within a particular group, a basic interpretive research design was in keeping with my research

objective and research questions. As such, a basic interpretive research design was the most appropriate option for my study to better understand the problem studied. My research design is best suited for my study because it aligns perfectly with the qualitative research questions and allowed me, as the researcher, to collect rich, in-depth information on the problem being studied. Therefore, a basic qualitative interpretive research design is the most appropriate approach because it allows me the opportunity to conduct in-depth interviews with open-ended questions (Merriam, 2009).

Participants

I conducted this study at a small private parochial secondary school in a Southern state. Purposeful sampling is a sampling method to intentionally select participants who can best help to understand the problem and enables the researcher to collect rich information (Creswell, 2012; Pessoa, et al., 2019). The sampling frame for this study consists of all 14 secondary school teachers at this school. The target number of participants was approximately 12 teachers and administrators from the total population. All participants in the study were sent an informed consent letter via their email. The 10 participants consisted of both full-time and part-time teachers and administrators and embodied the full range of subject matter disciplines taught in the secondary school.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

All teachers and administrators at the school were eligible to participate in the study since they all taught African American students. The number of participants was based on the need to reach saturation. Saturation is reached when no new information is generated from additional data collection. My plan was to interview 12 teachers and

administrators to participate in the study, however, saturation was reached within the first 10 interviews, thus no additional data collection was necessary.

Justification for the Number of Participants

In qualitative research, the researcher must procure an appropriate number of participants to make the study credible. In this study, I included administrators and teachers at secondary school to provide a complete in-depth description of their perception of their low efficacy in using CRP to increase African American students' low reading proficiency scores. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research affords the researcher to conduct an in-depth investigation. I was mindful that too small a sample may not have yielded the depth of data that I required for the best understanding of the problem. On the other hand, too large a sample could have yielded the lack of depth needed to secure rich data. The 10 participants provided adequate data to fully address the research questions.

Access to Participants

To gain access to the participants in the study, a letter of support from my principal to conduct research within my school was submitted with my Institutional Review Board (IRB) application (see Appendix F). Once IRB approval was granted, formal approval from the administrator of the local site was obtained. Formal support has been granted from the school administrator to conduct research at this site (see Appendix F). After permission was granted, an email was sent to the teachers and administrators of the secondary school at the local site requesting participation (see Appendix B). The names and email addresses of the teachers and administrators are listed on the school

website. The email included the same information about the study that was sent to the administrator along with a consent form (see Appendix B and C).

Establishing Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

I am currently employed at the local site for the past 9 years as an English and history teacher. Although I am viewed as a colleague, I am not in any supervisory position of authority over the participants. Given teachers may feel awkward answering questions about their instructional practices, I assured participants that I was objectively looking for their methods of teaching and not judging their instructional approaches. Since my qualification, teaching experience, and background may have presented a bias, I followed the interview protocol to reduce any potential bias in this study. In addition, to ensure an unbiased position during data collection, throughout the study, I kept a journal for reflections to help limit my biases and evaluate my thoughts (Edwards & Holland, 2020).

I maintained the confidentiality of the participants when recording, analyzing, storing, and reporting data. I am a regular full-time teacher at the local site and neither perform nor hold any administrative duties or positions. I have been at this local site for eight years, and all my colleagues work at the local site. All the participants work at the local site in either full-time or part-time positions. The administrators are full-time workers. The issue of researcher bias matters to me in this qualitative study. In addition, I honored standards of integrity and principles of honesty in all my interactions with interviewees by complying with IRB standards. I had two different interview protocols: one for teachers and the other one for administrators. In keeping and complying with the

standards of confidentiality, I conducted myself by the highest standards of moral and ethical department. As a direct result of low reading scores of struggling readers, I intend that the findings of this qualitative study will not only inform efforts to increase reading achievement but may positively impact social change at the local site, and at the other schools that belong to the private/parochial organization for which I am a part.

Methods for Ethical Protection of Participants

For the participants who responded favorably to my email and requested additional information on the study, I shared with them more details of the study and explained to them the informed consent form. I explained to participants that their participation in the study was strictly voluntary. Next, I informed participants that their identity and all responses would remain confidential, and that data would be used only for the current qualitative study and would not remain at the local site. I assured participants of the confidentiality measures and the procedures that would be used to keep all data secure in a locked cabinet at my home. Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) both governs and oversees all aspects of research and approves of research before it is conducted. In keeping with the IRB's requirements, I applied to the IRB for permission to conduct my research. Only after IRB permission was granted did I then discuss my proposed research study with prospective participants in the study. One of the roles of the IRB is to ensure the researcher protects participants from harm and injury. According to the IRB website (Walden, 2020), the researcher must guarantee that participants' names and information must be kept in strictest confidence, and the integrity of participants and the research must be safely guarded. As a researcher, I have met one

of Walden University's requirements before conducting research by doing the prescribed research course. As such, I completed the necessary training and received the certificate of course completion from The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Office of Extramural Research Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants" (NIH, 2016). In addition, I have also completed the basic research course with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) and received the certificate of completion (CITI, 2019). The training focused on how to keep participants' information confidential, the rights of participants in a study, and how to keep participants safe from harm or injury. In addition, the course addressed the benefits and risks of a study for participants. Also, to remain in compliance with Walden University's IRB and NIH requirements and expectations, I emailed a letter of consent to all participants. The letter of consent included possible risks to participants in the study, and the purpose of the study. An informed consent form protects both the researcher and the participant by establishing the rights of both (Creswell, 2012).

In the informed consent form, I briefly shared with interested participants more details of the study which was attached to the email. The email to interested participants required their signature on the informed consent form which they emailed back to me. The informed consent form mentioned that their participation in the study was strictly voluntary. Next, I informed participants that their identity and all responses would remain confidential, and that data would be used only for the current qualitative study and would not remain at the local site. I assured participants of the confidentiality measures and the

security procedures that would be used to keep all data secure in a locked cabinet at my home.

To protect the identity of participants, I deidentified their names after data collection; and deleted all their personal information after I had created a numbering coded system. In addition, to keep all data secure, I kept it on an external hard drive with a backup system on a thumb drive, both of which required a password for access. No one knows the secure password, and I am the only one who has access to the data. I shall also keep the participants' names and pseudonyms, emails of consent, and all other pertinent documents in a locked cabinet at my home for 5 years after I have completed the study. After 5 years have expired, I shall shred all hard copy documents and delete all files relevant to the study.

Data Collection

The two data sources for this study consisted of interviews with two different participant groups: secondary teachers and administrators. Two different types of face-to-face in-depth open-ended interviews were conducted (Dooly et al., 2017; Ivey, 2022). To triangulate the interview data, secondary teachers and administrators were interviewed. The interviews were essential to providing data on secondary teachers' perception of their efficacy in using CRP to increase students' reading achievement scores. Each interviewee was asked the same kinds of interview questions. The first data source came from open-ended face-to-face teacher interviews (see Appendix D) designed to explore in-depth their perceptions and use of CRP to increase students' reading achievement (Creswell, 2012). In addition, I collected data on what aspects of the culturally relevant framework

teachers were currently using. The second data source came from two administrators with an in-depth (Creswell, 2012) open-ended face-to-face interview (see Appendix E) designed to explore their perception and use of CRP to increase students' reading achievement. Interviews with the two administrators were essential because they both teach and administrate. One administrator teaches math and oratory, and the other teaches economics and U.S. history. All participants were interviewed once, and it was not necessary to interview them a second time for member checking (Dooly et al., 2017; Ivey, 2022). I audio recorded and transcribed all interviews. Interview transcripts were organized and coded according to common themes and patterns. The two sources of data from teachers and administrators were triangulated to increase trustworthiness. Participants in the study were told that their participation was voluntary, and all their interview information would be held in strictest confidence.

Not only was the interview information gathered informative to the study, but the data collected was pivotal to the study. Interviews allowed me to collect rich and detailed information. In addition, interviews also allow me to collect large amounts of descriptive responses and can lead to further and deeper questions. According to Creswell (2012), open-ended questions allow the interviewee the option to choose how they want to respond. Also, the interviewer can ask more probing questions and follow leads that can guide the interview process to gather more data (Merriam, 2009).

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and lasted for about 45-60 minutes. Each interview was recorded with a digital device and with the interviewee's permission and consent (see Appendix D and E). Notes were written on each interview. The style of

the interviews was open-ended but semi-formal. An open-ended, semi-formal question does not elicit a simple yes or no answer which limits responses but allows the interviewee to respond to questions in an unrestrictive manner. An example of a closed-ended question would be “Do you like to integrate student culture in instruction?” On the other hand, an example of an open-ended semi-formal question would be “How do you integrate student culture in instruction?” All interviews were prearranged and based on a time that was convenient for each participant at the local site. I used a bounded notebook to write notes on each interview.

I conducted semi-structured, open-ended, one-on-one interviews with administrators and secondary teachers at the study school to investigate their perceptions of their low efficacy in using CRP within the classroom to increase African American students’ low reading proficiency scores. Open-ended questions allowed teachers to share their experiences without any feelings of constraining (Creswell, 2012). Interviewing teachers was the most appropriate choice of data collection because this approach allows me to collect rich, in-depth data on the perception and use of CRP to increase student reading achievement.

To facilitate the data collection, I used two interview protocols. The two interview protocols were designed by me (see Appendix D and E) and based on the conceptual framework. Each interview began with me explaining to participants the purpose of the study and the confidentiality procedures. Each participant was asked for permission to record the interview with a digital recorder. At the beginning of the interview, each participant was asked a few general questions to gain their trust.

Each participant was interviewed once for 45-60 minutes and there was no need to conduct a second interview for member checking because the digital recording and the notes of each interview were in harmony and there were no discrepancies (Dooly et al., 2017; Ivey, 2022). The interviews were conducted at the local site in a classroom designated by the researcher and after the school day was over. The principal of the local site was informed of the interview and a “DO NOT DISTURB” sign was placed on the door. The interview was recorded with a digital recorder. I used a pen and notebook to record additional information. Immediately following each interview, I placed the recording into a locked cabinet to which only I had sole access. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously to afford over-interpreting or misinterpreting the data (Dooly et al., 2017; Ivey, 2022). Immediately after each interview, transcripts were analyzed.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

As mentioned above, I used the private school email system to gain access to participants after IRB approval was granted. I secured a letter of support from the principal (see Appendix F) to allow me to use the local site for my study, and upon IRB approval, I emailed the principal to seek permission to conduct research and to collect data at the local site. Even though the principal had granted me general permission to use the local site, I requested an official letter granting me permission to conduct the research and collect data. After permission was granted for use of the local site, an email was sent to each participant requesting participation. This email included the same information

about the study that was sent to the principal along with the consent form (see Appendix B).

Role of the Researcher

I am currently employed at the local site as an English teacher for the past eight years. The teachers with whom I work are my colleagues and I have not had any supervisory role at the local site. Because my colleagues know me very well and respect me as an experienced teacher, some bias may be present. I am currently the only English teacher at the local site. To alleviate any feelings of discomfort that the teachers may have felt answering questions about their perception and use of CRP, I assured them that my goal was to objectively look at their CRP perception and use, and not to judge their competency as a teacher.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted. In thematic analysis, the focus is on identifying key themes which are topics and patterns of meaning in the data (Yanchar et al, 2010). In this basic interpretive qualitative study, the purpose is to understand teachers' perceptions of their low efficacy in using CRP to increase reading achievement among African American students at the local site. Data collection and data analysis were done simultaneously. The interview protocols are guided by the research questions and conceptual framework. According to Creswell (2012), there is a process for thematic analysis data that includes six steps in analyzing qualitative data which are: (a) a description of how to prepare and analyze the data for analysis; (b) a description of how to explore and code the data; (c) the use of codes to build description and codes; (d)

construction of a representation and reporting of qualitative findings; (e) interpret the qualitative findings; (f) ensure validation for the accuracy of the findings. As such, I followed Creswell's guidelines for data analysis. I used a priori coding (i.e., codes developed before examining the data) from the conceptual framework which are (a) communicate high student expectations; (b) promote positive perspectives of families; (c) encourage learning within the context of culture; (d) implement active student-centered teaching methods, and (e) serves as a facilitator. The first step I followed was to interview the participants during which time the interviews were recorded, and hand notes were written. Second, I read through the data in preparation for data analysis. Reading the data allowed me to understand the trends, patterns, relationships, and themes in the data. After reading the data, during the third step, I then interpreted the data using a qualitative analysis of common trends, patterns, relationships, and themes. In the fourth step, I coded the data into common themes that are in alignment with the research questions and the tenets of the conceptual framework. In the fifth step, I began the coding process. Coding refers to interpreting the data and transforming it into descriptive discourse in the form of themes (Creswell, 2012). Data analysis and interpretation included all interview electronic recordings that were transcribed and all written notes in the bounded notebook. Interview transcripts were organized and coded according to common themes and patterns. All transcripts were reviewed for accuracy and compared with handwritten notes. Trends, patterns, relationships, and themes in the data were labeled according to the research questions and the tenets of the conceptual framework. I looked for similarities in the data to facilitate the coding. However, due to the nature of

my study, data interpretation and analysis took place simultaneously (i.e., the data was analyzed immediately after each interview). To ensure data accuracy and credibility, both interviewee recording and transcribed notes were compared. Finally, after data interpretation, thematic analysis and coding were complete, I then proceeded to write the report based on all the findings.

Systems for Keeping Track of Data

In keeping with IRB standards and proper research protocol, data collection and analysis for this qualitative study will be kept safe, secure, and confidential. As the researcher, I shall keep all research data and information securely. Measures such as ensuring my laptop is used only by me, and with access only via a safe password were taken which I have not shared with anyone. I shall also keep all notebooks, recordings, transcribed notes, and electronic devices with data in a locked cabinet. All participants' information, including consent forms, remain in my locked cabinet. Therefore, I am the only person with the key to the securely locked cabinet. In addition, all matters of communication with participants or other persons regarding my qualitative study are secured on my laptop accessible only by me via a safe and secure password. The identity of all participants has been coded to ensure confidentiality and their privacy. The coding system I used rendered all participants with pseudonyms.

Research Log and Notebook

During the entire data collection process, I kept a strict log with documented information on the participant interviewed, the time and duration of the interview, and the date of the interview. I also kept a bounded notebook with a record of each participant's

responses including the participant's behavior and reaction based on observation during the interview. The data from all interviews were written in the bounded notebook. All interviews were conducted face-to-face. One participant canceled twice because of uncontrolled circumstances; that information is recorded in the research log.

Validity and Trustworthiness

As a researcher, it is of pivotal importance that my research findings are accurate, credible, reliable, and valid and I present the actual responses of participants (Shenton, 2004). During the entire research process, I remained cognizant of the fact that I must adhere to all the standards and ethical guidelines of the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure quality research. The data collected were triangulated with the two separate sources of data that were collected from the two different participant groups of interviews. These two types of interviews included teachers and two administrators which produced two types of data sources for triangulation purposes. All face-to-face interviews were digitally recorded, and notes were written. After the interview responses were transcribed, participants were given a copy to review to check for accuracy and to avoid misinterpretation of the data. It was my sole responsibility to read and reread and analyze the collected data for accuracy. Member checking helped to establish that the data collected truthfully reflected accuracy, credibility, reliability, trustworthiness, and validity. In addition, during data analysis, I reviewed the data to identify any discrepant cases. All data are presented in my final analysis, including data that support the research questions, and discrepant cases that give a different perspective. To address biases and subjectivity, I internally reflected on the research process and wrote out my assumptions

in the research. Therefore, I maintained open dialogue and discussion with colleagues to ensure the research outcomes were not compromised.

Limitations

The study was confined to secondary school teachers who teach African American students. Except for one participant who has a West Indian background, the other participants were African Americans. The study did not examine which gender of participants was more knowledgeable in culturally relevant pedagogy. The study was conducted at a private parochial secondary school; thus, findings from the local site may not be generalized to other settings. Private parochial schools are generally small, and a family-like atmosphere is often nurtured. As a private parochial secondary school, religion drives the curriculum thus creating a Christ-centered environment. Many of the students at the local site generally come from two-parent families that hold to conservative Christian values. All the participants and most of the students subscribe to the same religious persuasion. In addition, most of the participants attended a college or university that is owned by the same private parochial organization. The study explored secondary teachers' efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom and did not explore other teachers' efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy at the other school that are owned by the parochial organization.

Data Analysis Results

In this basic interpretive qualitative study, I explored secondary teachers' perceptions of their low efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy to increase African American students low reading proficiency scores at the local site. Eight teachers and two

administrators were interviewed. The duration of each interview was from 45 to 60 minutes. Semi-structured open-ended face-to-face questions were used. The two data sources were from teachers and administrators. To triangulate the data, I looked at what teachers reported versus what the administrators expressed. A thematic analysis was used to identify key themes, trends, patterns, and relationships in themes in the data. A priori coding approach was used, and the four themes were: (a) communicate high student expectations; (b) promote positive perspective of families; (c) encourage learning within the context of culture; and (d) implement active student-centered teaching methods. A color-coding system was used to color code the four major themes with red, brown, blue, and green respectively. One emergent theme, professional development, resounded throughout the interviews. The emergent theme was color coded in purple.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and lasted for about 45-60 minutes depending on the interviewee's responses. Each interview was recorded with a digital device with the interviewee's permission and consent (see Appendix B). Notes were written on each interview. The style of the interviews was open-ended but semi-formal with an interview protocol created prior to beginning the interviews. All interviews were prearranged and based on a time that was convenient for each participant at the local site. Interviewing teachers was the most appropriate choice of data collection because this approach allowed me to collect rich, in-depth data on the perception and use of CRP to increase student reading achievement. I used a bounded notebook to write notes on each interview. Table 1 provides demographic information on all the participants in the study (see Table 1).

Table 1*Demographic Information on Participants*

Participants	Sex	Years of Teaching	Years of an Administrator	Knowledge of CRP	Subjects Taught
1	Female	18	0	Yes	American History World History Government
2	Female	12	0	No	Science Biology Chemistry Anatomy & Physiology Physics Introduction to Emergency Medical Responder
3	Female	5	0	No	Senior Seminar
4	Female	4	0	Yes	Bible Math
5	Female	19	0	Yes	Bible Language Arts

Participants	Sex	Years of Teaching	Years of an Administrator	Knowledge of CRP	Subjects Taught
6	Male	25	0	Yes	Algebra 1,2 Geometry Precalculus
7	Female	30	0	Yes	Religion
8	Male	27	9	Yes	Oratory Math
9	Female	15	4	Yes	Science
10	Male	20	0	Yes	Music Education Music Appreciation General Music Choral and Instrument

To facilitate the data collection, I used two interview protocols. The two interview protocols were designed by me (see Appendix D and E) and based on the conceptual framework and research questions. The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in the social learning theory of Bandura (1977) which explains how students learn. The social learning theory (SLT) developed by Bandura recognizes how learning takes place. Learning, as perceived by Bandura takes place as people interact with each other in social contexts. According to the SLT, one way learning takes place is by observing the behavior of others which can impact the behavior of the observer. Bandura further recognizes that through the observational process, desirable behavior is imitated. Further,

for learning to take place, and for developmental growth to ensue, one must be attentive, the behavior must register in the memory, and the motivation to want to change must precede a changed behavior. New information and new or modified behavior are attained by observing others. As such, Bandura promotes three principles of the SLT: observation, imitation, and modeling. For Bandura, modeled behavior is changed behavior and is one of the primary goals of the SLT. Therefore, changed behavior is a direct result of observed behavior which, in turn, is an integral part of human learning.

Applying the principles of the SLT directly to the classroom, teachers learn from each other, model for each other, and grow professionally. That professional growth and development can be referred to as changed behavior. Bandura further postulates that observational learning, attention, retention, reciprocation, and motivation are important prerequisites for learning and behavior change. According to Bandura, people generally imitate behaviors they observe that they know will benefit them. Bandura believes a live model, verbal instructional model, and symbolic modeling are imperative to the learning process. For Bandura, watching what others do and imitating that observed behavior is fundamental to behavioral growth, learning, and development. Bandura's SLT played a pivotal role in crafting the research questions.

The research questions for this study were: RQ 1. What are secondary teachers' perceived efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom? RQ 2. How are secondary teachers currently using culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom? RQ 3 What are the barriers or challenges secondary teachers face in implementing culturally

relevant pedagogy in the classroom? The research questions were foundational to both interview protocols.

The interview started with me explaining to participants the purpose of the study and the confidentiality procedures. Each participant was asked for permission to record the interview with a digital recorder. Before the interview started each participant was asked a few general questions to gain their trust. The three general questions that were asked to all teachers were: How long have you been teaching? What subjects do you teach? What do you think is the best method of teaching? (Appendix D and E). The three general questions that administrators were asked were: How long have you been an administrator? What is your favorite part of administration? What do you think is the best method of teaching? (Appendix and E).

Each participant was interviewed once for 45-60 minutes and I met with three participants a second time for member checking (Dooly et al., 2017; Candela, 2019). The interviews were conducted at the local site in a classroom designated by the researcher and after school was over. However, two participants were interviewed during their free period and mine, and one participant was interviewed during the lunch period. The principal of the local site was informed of the interviews and a “DO NOT DISTURB” sign was placed on the door. The interview was recorded with a digital recorder. I used a pen and notebook to record additional information. Immediately following each interview, I placed the recording in a locked cabinet to which only I had sole access. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously to afford over-interpreting or misinterpreting the data (Dooly et al., 2017; Ivey, 2022).

During the entire data collection process, I kept a log with documented information on the participant interviewed, the time and duration of the interview, and the date of the interview. I also kept a bounded notebook with a record of each participant's responses including the participant's behavior and reaction based on observation during the interview. The data on the responses of all interviewees were written in the bounded notebook. All interviews were conducted face-to-face. Of the 10 participants, one asked to reschedule once, and another asked to reschedule twice. The two participants who asked to be rescheduled had uncontrolled circumstances that required the interview to take place at another time. A record of the two cancelations and rescheduled interview times were documented in the research log.

As a researcher, it is of pivotal importance that my research findings were accurate, credible, reliable, and valid and that I presented the actual responses of participants (Shenton, 2004). It was my sole responsibility to read and reread and analyze the collected data for accuracy. Member checking established that the data collected truthfully reflect accuracy, credibility, reliability, trustworthiness, and validity. In addition, during data analysis, I examined the data to identify all discrepant cases. All data are presented in my final analysis, including data that support the conceptual framework and the research questions. To address biases and subjectivity, I internally reflected on the research process and wrote out my assumptions in the research. Therefore, I maintained open dialogue and discussion with colleagues to ensure research outcomes were not compromised.

The data analysis revealed four major themes and one emergent theme. The four major themes and the emergent theme were color coded. The first major theme, communicate high student expectations was color-coded in red. The second theme, promote positive perspective of families was color-coded in a brick color. The third theme, encourage learning within the context of culture was color-coded blue. The fourth theme, implement active student-centered teaching methods was color-coded in green. The emergent theme, professional development was color-coded in purple.

Communicate High Student Expectations

Teachers reported communicating high student expectations with students and pushing them to excel by sharing motivational quotes on excellence. Students were allowed to take time to reflect, and to share their ideas and thoughts. Also, teachers shared that they used strategies such as success criteria to promote a certain level of expectation of the students so that when they are submitting work, they know exactly what is expected of them. When students submit papers or any type of assignment, they are given rubrics that promote the standard or a certain level of excellence. One participant said, “Students should not be left unguided and to assume they know exactly what the expectations are.”

In communicating the standards of academic expectations with students, rubrics are used explicitly stating what the expectations, and explaining the success criteria. Expectations are shared by outlining what the learning objectives and specifying the relevancy of the learning objective as it relates to the standards. “In addition, students are reminded explicitly what is expected of them, and what they should be able to

accomplish based on the learning objectives” a participant reported. Students are given the success criteria on slides before a lecture, or a project and before work is submitted. One participant said, “Students are never lost; they know what the standards are and what is expected of them.” Communicating high academic expectations to students necessitates the use of rubrics especially for projects and participants shared that they try to model examples of what is expected for major assignments. If assignments were not up to standard, students were asked to redo them.

The data analyzed showed student accountability is encouraged and students were motivated to work within the confines of the allotted time given for assignment completion. Teachers reported that students are also encouraged to practice self-accountability autonomy and given the skills to learn how to perform to higher standards. Teachers also shared that they remind students that when they leave high school and go to college, they would struggle with new expectations related to accountability, time management, and required deadlines if those skills are not instilled in them. According to a participant:

Students need to understand that when a professor says be there at this time you must be there unless you are in the hospital, or someone died. The idea is to help students meet those standards and encourage them to perform better when they leave and go to college or even in the workforce.

The focus on academic excellence is a high priority for participants. Participants shared that students are given the expectations, and that the high expectations are held without any compromise. Participants emphasize the requirements for all assignments so

that there are no surprises for students. The participants reported that they make the standards very clear and then let students know what is expected and what the outcome should be and what benefit that they will receive from it. “So basically, educating students like cognitively informing them of the benefits of reaching high expectations and what is expected of them” a participant shared. Participants use multiple ways to communicate high academic expectations to students such as verbal or written instruction, and other methods on the learning platform, Moodle which is the local site learning platform. In addition, participants use documentation, written forms, behavior modeling, repetition, and constant reminders to communicate expectations to students.

To foster a climate of academic excellence in the classroom, participants reported that they encourage high academic standards across all subject areas. Participants shared that during the first few weeks of school an important endeavor is to teach students how-to walk-in hallways, how to open their lockers “Or whatever the conversation must be had because at the beginning if we allow the students to think that they can't do it then they won't be able to do it and that's how you enable failure” a participant said. One participant shared that “The expectation is set from the very beginning of the school year when students get to the classroom that they have no choice but to succeed and yes, they will succeed.” Another participant said:

Students they must try hard; they will grow and that's not to say that everyone's is going to do extremely well, but they are going to grow from where they are now; and at the end of the year students will grow and if they cannot grow then this might not be the place for them and we want them here but they must be willing

to accept criticism to accept correction to want to better yourself, to want to learn something new and to become the best version of themselves.

The participant reported that setting that expectation at the beginning of the school year lets the students know what is expected of them. The participant said, “It is a hard adjustment especially for the students coming from elementary to the middle school to make; it's a hard adjustment being told you know that not everything is going to be handed to you.” A participant stated:

We're not going to take the excuses; you must be successful. When students hear that there's somebody who believes in them, they must get on board and if they don't it becomes difficult to beat in the presence of so many people who are on board; students who are not on board feel awkward.

Participants shared that when they communicate high expectations to the students, they make it clear that work which is subpar will not be accepted. For example, if handwriting is not neat, or if students have not followed the directions or read the directions, their work will not be accepted. “That's kind of a punch in the gut because some students like to rush through their work and hand in whatever they feel like” one participant said. Furthermore, participants reported that work that is not up to standard is neither accepted nor acknowledged. This expectation sets a high expectation, a high standard of excellence that students must either meet or deal with the consequences if they do not meet that standard. Additionally, participants reported that the transparency between teachers and students' parents reminds them that everyone is on the same team, striving for the same goal, and that the goal is to see their child succeed. Participants

shared that they remind parents that for their child to be successful; it is imperative that their child “be the person God created them to be.” Emphasis is placed on cooperation and not confrontation.

Another factor of academic excellence that was expressed was the need for teachers to be organized and have everything clearly written down so that both teachers and students are on the same page from day one. According to a participant:

Some things are put in the class and placed where students know I expect excellence for one, some students might not do assignments, or they don't study, and they come in and take the test and they don't do well on it, and they come back, and they beg if they can take it over. There are somethings in place now where it's kind-of like a job application and they must apply for a resubmit or to be retested and they can pick the form up, have it in a certain place, and pick it up and they must fill it out. It must be flawless, and it must give a good justifiable reason why they should be allowed to be retested or resubmit an assignment.

A participant shared that they had established a process where students can go online at any time and be reminded of what the expectations are for the class. Students can see what is being covered every week for the whole quarter and all components of test days. The participant shared that students who need assistance after school must again make an appointment and they cannot assume the participant will be available any day after school. The participant models what is expected and shares the expectations online with students. Participants reported using a variety of methods to communicate high expectations to students.

Most participants communicate high expectations to the students in multiple ways including through verbal communication, on the board within the classroom, via the online portal, and via rubrics. Also, the participants reported that they share with students by putting the expectations in writing: “students will find it online, they will find it on the board; there are also reminders everywhere.” There is a word that one participant writes at the top of the board, and it does not come down the entire year: it reads “Accountability.” The participant reported using the word as a visual reminder such that every time the participant must refer to the word, or just points to the word, and students know what is being communicated. Some participants shared that they no longer accept late homework and vouched that most students do their homework. Participants believe students must know the expectations and demand students be consistent and held accountable or else there are consequences.

Participants shared another way that academic excellence is fostered is to ensure that students know the learning outcome, the expectations, and the desired goal. Learning is guided by an essential question. One participant said, “It is better to know where you are going before you begin.” Participants always make sure that students know the starting point and the ending point. Most participants communicate high standards through web-based environments such as Moodle, Ren Web, and inside the classroom through modeling. Each week the standards are posted along with the previous skills that students have learned and the upcoming skills, so they know what they have achieved, where they are, and where they are headed.

Another way participants reported that they nurture academic excellence is to implement active student-centered methods in the classroom, and participants reported achieving that goal by making a connection and modeling. Participants may assign a task to students, and they are required to solve the problem. Especially in math, participants reported that they may assign a troubleshooting activity where a problem is created with at least one or two errors; and students are instructed to find the error on their own. Another method used by participants is with a chart where problems are modeled, a follow-up question follows, and in the last section students must create their own problem and solve it. This approach lets the participants know if students are moving toward mastery because not only now can they solve a problem, but they can create their own.

A reoccurring theme on how participants communicate high expectations to students reflects a same or similar plethora of resources used such as Moodle, and Ren Web. For many participants, one of the most effective means of communication is to be transparent with students. Some participants reported that they implemented active student-centered methods in the classroom engaging students in discussion without being judgmental which allows students to speak freely. In the religion class, one participant shared that they created an environment where the Holy Spirit can work effectively among students.

In the context of academic excellence, participants believe all students can learn, and teachers must approach a classroom with the perspective that all students can learn. A few participants shared that different psychological studies have shown that if you tell students they are smart and they can achieve greatness and they can achieve they will

strive towards it even in the standardized tests. Participants reported that they challenge students to aim for the highest possible score on the ACT. Participants shared that they tell students that great achievements always take place in the framework of great expectations. Students are encouraged to face academic challenges, and do not fear academic rigor, but welcome academic challenges. One participant said, “Brilliance unaccompanied by discipline often exists in the realm of mediocrity.” Another quote by a participant was “The height of great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight but they while their companions slept were toiling upward through the night.” One administrator said, “The whole thrust this year is to encourage and motivate a sense towards excellence, to model a school of excellence.”

Administrators expect teachers to communicate high expectations to the students through providing quotes on excellence, setting high standards of excellence, and maintaining records that track student excellence. Teachers are encouraged to repeat school of excellence over and over because repetition deepens the impression. In addition, administrators reported that they have challenged teachers to demand excellence of students and set the bar high. When a student receives an A in a class teachers will celebrate because they know it was well-earned. Even a well-earned B is celebrated because students know they worked hard because the teacher has set the standard high. Administrators reported that they provide all the tools and mechanisms and structures that teachers need to assist in student achievement.

Implementing active student-centered methods in the classroom is yet another strategy administrators encourage teachers to use to help students achieve academic

excellence. While administrators were aware of students centered methods, they were unable to give specific examples but vouched that teachers use different strategies; different methods with centers of learning because it is expected of them based on the emphasis of differentiated instruction. Administrators shared that teachers are provided with all the tools to foster student academic excellence, and administrators expressed confidence that teachers are doing different things in the classroom to facilitate student achievement.

One administrator said to support teachers as they work with students to achieve academic excellence, at the beginning of the year staff usually review student data from the previous years and identify areas of student academic weaknesses. Participants shared that staff meetings at the beginning of the school year focus on resources that would be needed to help teachers perform, and to facilitate effective scheduling to adequately address student academic needs in different subjects. Within these meetings, staff discuss other resources that may be needed in other areas in the curriculum. Participants reported that prior to this school year staff did a STEM push to intentionally focus on science, technology, and math and to ascertain if all the resources, materials, and software were available. Staff continue to monitor progress to measure the quality of the STEM program. Administrators shared that they believe it is better to help students gain mastery of concepts and skills than to rush to complete the curriculum because students would not have the needed proficiency to qualify them to progress to the next grade. Administrators shared that it did not make sense to rush through the curriculum if students did not achieve mastery.

Administrators reported that they encourage teachers to communicate high expectations to students using all possible tools at their disposal including communicating through providing rubrics, modeling, providing teacher direct instruction, participating in student conferencing, and requiring interactive notebooks where students take notes and interact with the notebook they use on a regular basis. One administrator reported that they had witnessed a teacher-student conference in which the teacher affirmed the student, built the student's self-esteem, and empowered the student with immediate feedback to help students know that teachers are invested in their academic success. "Immediate feedback," the administrator said, "always works wonders for students." One administrator shared:

Pulling students aside letting them know that it's okay to make mistakes, but let's not continue to do it right and so I think that's been helpful in identifying the areas of strengths and weaknesses and communicating that so that they know this is acceptable this is not this is what my teacher is looking for. One of the most important things is consistency across grade levels and across classes so my teacher is requiring me to write my name on my paper so also another teacher is asking that we do not write outside the red lines when writing on the notebook paper but guess what Miss. says, you can't write outside the red lines too. So having the consistency across grade levels and across classes also helps to communicate that level of excellence in the standard that you want your students to uphold.

In trying to illustrate academic excellence to students, participants reported that students are asked to think about life as a grade, and student character is judged every day when they walk out and only have one chance to make a first impression. For academic excellence students are told they only get one opportunity ever so often to prove themselves. Students are encouraged to aim high and set high goals and aim to get the highest score on the ACT and SAT exams.

Most participants believe modeling for students is one of the best ways to communicate high standards of excellence to them. Students are engaged in active discussions on what their understanding is of setting high standards of excellence. In addition, students are encouraged to reflect on their personal goals and what they must do to achieve that goal. Further, students are challenged to articulate what they need to do to be successful. There is a strong belief among teachers about the need to stop lecturing students and start modeling to them what success looks like. Participants hold firmly that students must be guided in setting goals and shown how to develop the steps to achieve their goals.

For promoting academic excellence within the context of culturally relevant pedagogy one participant admits because of this subject matter, the focus is more on the intangibles such as integrity; because too many people read their Bibles but very few people study it. For the participant, excellence is when students are seen modeling what they have been taught. For example, a student wearing a belt shows dress code compliance, or when a past student stops by to say: “Thanks You” or when a student requests their name be put on the prayer board. The participant emphasizes that in the

class, the intangibles are taught. One participant shared that they are gratified when students show signs of spiritual growth and development. According to one participant, “The Holy Spirit continues to transform students’ lives.”

Promote Positive Perspective of Families

Another theme in the data analysis was promoting a positive perspective of families. All the participants agreed that families are important, and families are an integral part of the students’ lived experiences, and that with family support there is better student success. Keeping parents and families informed of students’ progress is one way to engage parents and keep them abreast of how their children are doing by providing feedback which is essential. Families play an essential role in the students’ academic success in general and specifically with learning CRP. Promoting positive perspectives of students’ families is equally important. The participants reported that they maintain an open line of communication with parents or guardians and that parents know they can e-mail or contact the participants any time. Also, the participants keep parents up to date via e-mail when it is necessary and call when students are doing well. Participants reported that it can be difficult to call when students are not doing well, but the participants try to be positive especially when students are not doing well and make parents aware of missing assignments.

In describing a lesson in which participants integrate aspects of students’ culture into the lesson, one example shared by participants was an activity where the class was focused on life skills and was talking to students about birth order and their family (i.e., the oldest, the middle, the youngest, or an only child). In addition, participants reported

that students were asked to explain the pros and cons of their birth order. For example, students were asked to share the pros and cons of being the oldest sibling with a lot of responsibilities and increased expectations. To enrich that lesson students were asked to share their home life and their perspective of their birth order and through sharing they were able to see that they are not alone and that they have some shared experiences with other students. At the end of the lesson, students were asked to come together and reflect on the lesson. Also, students can reflect on if they are in a group at school or at work, they may have someone in their group who is an only child or who is the oldest child, and they can anticipate how that may influence that person's behavior in their group setting. By understanding the influence of birth order, they have information and tools that provide them the knowledge of what to expect and how to work with others.

The participants believe it is important to know students and be very active in communicating with parents. Participants also indicated that families play an important role in student academic success and with CRP. Participants shared how CRP can form positive perspectives of students' families by building on their culture, bringing in different examples in a diverse manner, and using some of that information to give them a sense of belonging and a sense of worth. Participants shared that students' culture and their experiences have contributed in a positive manner to society; thus, activities using a variety of examples can be beneficial to students. The participants believe it is important to know students and be very active in communicating with parents as well. To communicate with parents, participants use the phone, e-mail, Moodle, and Renweb. Participants said if there is something that is personal or something that has been

observed, they would phone parents and then put it in writing. Participants shared that calling parents was done as a courtesy so that they would not have any surprises. Some of the notifications are just communicating with parents on a regular basis through written messages or in person.

Families play an important role in students' academic success and with CRP it is no different. Participants reported that they practice a high level of transparency and let parents know the school is behind them and want to see their child succeed. Participants foster a team approach and tell the students and parents they are on the same team; the team includes parents, students, teachers, and the principal and everyone plays on the same team. At the end of the day, participants want the students to be successful and help them understand that their families are not separate from them. Students are made aware that their academic growth stems from the team support, but they must work hard, and the team will be there to encourage them in their success. The student must understand that "the school is like family, and the family is the school." Participants shared that they advocate to ensure that all the various entities such as home, church, and school make up one family.

Participants reported that throughout the year they communicate with parents weekly, and at least three times throughout the year there are planned activities away from school with the parents and their child. Participants reported that parents do not just come as chaperones, but they may also host the events. Participants also reported that there were a couple of times when parents came as chaperones, but they worked together with the teachers and with the students. Participants shared that the most recent

engagement activity done intentionally to create parental involvement took place near the end of last year. According to the participants, during these events parents are receptive and positive. Based on parents' feedback or comments they were happy to meet and know the participants outside of the school setting which they felt helped to build their relationship.

Participants discussed the importance of family engagement in academics and with CRP. As shared by participants, one strategy used at the end of each year to encourage parental involvement is to speak to each parent and encourage them to take part in their child's education by finding out about their homework and what challenges they are having in class. According to participants, communication with parents helps to remove a lot of the frustration. Many students do not go home and tell their parents about their day even when they are directly asked. Participants shared that it is important for parents to initiate the conversation: how did your day go, what did you learn today? That kind of feedback will help strengthen communication and improve a two-way communication system between parents and teachers. Many participants agree this will probably develop a two-way communication channel which is essential for student success.

Participants shared that they believe family is who you are; and if you come from a family of achievers the expectations are high. Many participants reported that they have always approached families as one entity and seek to understand family culture and its positive aspects because "At this tenure in their lives the participants spend more time at school with students than parents do at home with their children." Participants generally

do not believe in superseding parents but try to understand the culture of the family and address it in a manner which the student can understand. Participants believe education is a lifetime experience and everyone is a lifetime student; therefore, it is imperative people learn from each other. Participants said they learn something from their students every day and recognize when a family is struggling with certain things. With knowledge of family struggles, participants said they are better equipped to be just and fair in doing the right thing for that family and their child.

Participants reported that they strive to ensure that parents are aware that they play an integral role not only in the success of their children but in the success of the school. Therefore, in letters to parents, administrators always use the term, dear valued parents / guardian and always end the letter with thanks for being a valued member of our family. Even during video conferences via Zoom, administrators reiterate, reinforce, and re-articulate that parents are valued and the role they play is critically important.

Administrators also used the lens of a teacher and expressed at the end of their course outline they always ask the question, “What can you do as a parent to help your child succeed?” Administrators recognize students cannot be successful without the valued partnership of our parents, that is why administrators model excellence. Most parents support the growth of excellence over the years; they support the program of excellence; and play an integral role in that endeavor.

A vital role in students’ academic success is promoting positive perspectives of students’ families. Participants shared their belief in the benefits of family engagement.

Participants reported that it has been quite difficult since COVID to get families to come out and be part of various school-based activities. One administrator said:

Our parents' nights and curriculum nights and things of that nature but ideally you would have those things for the parents to come and visit the classrooms see what we're learning and see what we're teaching. There have been occasions teachers will record themselves you know doing an example lesson and send it to parents and say hey this is what we're doing. Many of you have expressed that you're not sure how we're doing it in class, and parents will reach out I don't know how to do that. We don't say you're on your own, but we give parents tools to say this is what we're doing in class you can use this video to kind of brush-up and then or have your students watch it to give them tools to support their child we have take-home kits that we give the parents that have our standards and different games and things that they can play at home that will reinforce what students are learning at school.

Participants shared strategies to involve families, so parents know what is happening in class. Participants stated that when students know that the parents are aware of what they are doing they are more likely to say, "Oh yes I have my work, or this is what I'm doing today." Administrators encourage communication from parent to teacher and encourage parents to reach out if they have any questions. Other means of communication that teachers use include class Dojo, e-mail, text, and the telephone. These communication strategies are used to invite parents to communicate with them whenever there's an issue or whenever parents just want to say, "hey I'm here I want to

volunteer, or I want to be class mom or donate hand sanitizer.” Many other strategies are used to encourage parents into the school such as asking them to do career talks or come in to interact with students. A participant shared that a few months ago, a parent came to school to do a lesson on fundraising; they have a nonprofit and the 8th graders were raising money for their class festivities. Administrators agree that they work hard at involving families in school activities and events as much as possible. Participants and administrators know the important role families play in students’ academic success and capitalize on every opportunity to garner parental involvement and participation in school events and activities.

Encourage Learning Within the Context of Culture

A third theme the data revealed was encouraging learning within the context of culture. Participants reported that they incorporate a style of teaching that would resonate with students who are of African American descent by referencing pop culture or figures with whom students are familiar. Participants said, “It is important to tap into the cultures that are represented in the class because by doing this it helps students to be able to make sense of what they're learning.” Participants also reported that if students would understand the relevancy of what is being taught which, in a sense, this would help them to be more engaged and more interested in what they are learning.

One example a participant shared was to have students work on a project, for example, learning about sectionalism in American history. For one assignment students had to interview family members that lived in different parts of the country, and they did this to get a sense of the different region’s cultural elements like dialect and customs.

Students who had lived in New York or in the northern part of the country, determined what some of the distinct cultural differences were as it related to each geographical region. The participant reported students were able to interview their family members, friends, and different individuals within their circle of influence and learn about those individuals' cultures based on their geographical regions. That was one way the participant encouraged students to make connections between school and their cultural experiences.

Another participant reported that one method they used to improve teacher and student cultural knowledge is by sitting with students and talking about different aspects of their culture such as the food they eat from the Caribbean or in other states. In addition, the participant shared students discussed cultural differences in foods and how the same foods such as potatoes and rice are prepared differently by different cultures. Many participants said they encourage students to pull from their lived experiences, specifically their home life, to see how it may differ from the student who sits next to them. Participants shared that because of the lived experiences of students, they are asked to share a little about themselves so that the participant can better understand how to appreciate other cultural practices. One participant reported playing video clips that would be more culturally sensitive or by intentionally selecting video clips that are diverse and trying to solicit and use culturally relevant pedagogy.

Participants expressed that cultural competence might improve outcomes for students in the classroom by making students feel like their lived experience is important. Participants incorporated students' experiences so that they can improve their

understanding of the instruction, engage with their classmates, and develop a sense of belonging when teachers are using some of their norms and culture. Participants said that to engage students to make connections between school and their culturally lived experiences they utilize different activities, create different student groups, and ask students to share some of their thoughts and feelings. Participants shared that most of their students' thoughts and feelings are grafted from their lived experiences, home life, parents, and their culture of origin.

Except for two participants, the other participants who have heard of culturally relevant pedagogy reported that they create cultural consciousness by first finding out every student's background. Participants reported that they have Haitian students, Jamaican students, and African American students. Participants said once they find out their students' backgrounds, they try to relate to their students' familiar background by trying to learn a few phrases in their native tone or trying some of the foods from their countries to create a cultural bond. Additionally, participants reported they try to encourage students whenever they have projects to incorporate their culture into the project and occasionally bonus points are awarded for opportunities for students to involve or teach a class about their culture. Participants said this creates a level of sensitivity and awareness so that students who do not share the same background can be cognizant of each other's culture.

In helping encourage students to make connections between school and their cultural experiences, participants reported they encourage students to include their culture in their work. Students are encouraged to include their culture within class presentations

and projects. Participants shared that they encourage students to ask their parents about the way they were brought up versus stories shared in class to help students relate to course material especially in Bible class. Participants reported that they integrate faith and learning in all classes, but especially teaching Adventist history. A participant reported that in reading through the books of the Bible, students are encouraged to go home and ask their parents how they grew up and what they were taught to believe. Participants reported encouraging students to consider how what they believe culture relates to what they have learned in class. The participant said, “This exercise is intentional and helps students to embrace who they are.”

One participant reported a lesson in which they integrated aspects of students’ culture which was about solving equations with variables on both sides of the equal sign. The participant said they created an analogy in which students learn how to move variables from one side of the equation to the other side and moving constants from one side of the equation to the other. The participant reported that the learning experience was as if students were moving from one geographic location to the next. The participant reported they used the analogy of their parents who immigrated to the United States and showed the students how their parents were subtracted from their country of origin and added to the United States and explained how this involved moving from one place to another. The participant reported that students learned the concept of subtraction and addition and understood the concept of solving equations with variables. The participant said that students understood the idea of moving them from one place to another place, and that if they were subtracted from one place that meant they had to be added to

another place. The participant said they explained to students that if they subtracted their parents from South America, then they had to add them to the U.S. The participant said, “We're doing with the variables and being able to see that click for them like okay I know my parents have moved here from Haiti and so they subtracted themselves from Haiti and added themselves to the United States.” The participant reported many students only respond to stories or real-life analogies so just trying to make sure that the analogies that are used are relevant to their culture and they will understand.

To be an effective teacher in a multicultural setting it is important that teachers improve their cultural knowledge and their students' cultural knowledge. To accomplish this, participants reported that they first try to learn about students' language and the foods of different cultures. Participants shared that they encourage students to ask questions while guiding students to not simply jump to statements such as “that's different I don't like it when it's different it's weird or whatever.” One participant said, but participants reported they encourage students to embrace cultural differences and understand each other's culture. Participants stated that they explain to students that where they come from, and who they are is not something of which they should be ashamed. According to one participant:

The idea is to kind-of push students to get outside their comfort zones and outside of what they're used to whether that be in the actual formal classroom setting or just in casual conversation at recess or through the hallways and just kind-of taking the moments that there are lessons and using them as lessons rather than instant punishment or instant whatever or just letting stuff slide. These things

happen informally or formally so it is important to create the environment for that disposition to thrive.

Participants said in helping students make connections between school and their cultural experiences, they utilize projects. For example, a participant shared that in one project, students are required go into their community to find a senior citizen whom they are not related to and spend a certain amount of time with them each week. Students are required to write about their interaction with the senior citizen and share something that they did not know and have learned from the experience; and how to do something for this senior citizen. The participant said students must teach that senior citizen a new skill, and then often they become pen pals even after the project is over. The participant reported this project lasts about four weeks, and it affords students the opportunity to make a connection within their community. One example of new learning was shared by a participant who said that students learn how to make biscuits, or other cultural dishes from African American grandmothers and others in their community. The participant reported at the end of the project, students report to the class what they learned and what the experience meant to them. In addition, the participant said they plan events where students dress in their cultural garb and sometimes to show students other cultures. The participant said, students are taught to respect all cultures because sometimes it's easy for students to think their culture is the only culture or their culture is better. The participant reported students are taught no culture is better than the other, and they are all different.

Participants acknowledge CRP is very beneficial to all the students in their teaching and most participants vouch that they are familiar with CRP. To create cultural

consciousness, one participant said, students are African Americans, and assigned a project where students had to do research on an African American mathematician. The participant said they do that project every year. The participant reported many students do not think there are African Americans who are mathematicians. The participant reported it is interesting to see the student's reaction when they come back and share with the class. The participant said, "One of the goals of the research activity is to engage students so they can identify with people of their own kind especially those who have reached great heights in math."

Participants reported they believe cultural competence might improve outcomes for students in the classroom because now students know more about other peoples' culture, and not just their own culture. According to the participant, "It helps teachers get a better outcome. It is important to allow students to collaborate with the others and learn from other cultures." The participant has found that, in terms of culture, math is universal. The participant reported how they experienced African American students working well with Latino students. In the past, the participant reported they had seen different cultural groups working together. Although there may be some differences, students generally enjoyed working together. Students have gained more knowledge of each other's culture in a climate with no racial barriers and create real bonds with each other, the participant reported.

To encourage students to make connections between home and the school, one participant said, "It is difficult sometimes because one has the requirements the textbook, and the curriculum to fulfill." The participant admits sometimes it is a challenge because

one is trying to move through the material one is covering “So you do have to be intentional about finding time to allow students to understand culture and make the necessary connections.” The participant reported that they occasionally gave students assignments that would help them make connections between school, academics, and their cultural experiences. Students are encouraged to go and look up different sports from other cultures such as soccer and look up the statistics and watch an actual competition. Students must bring back the statistics on the game, and the statistics are used by students using probability to predict how many wins and losses. The participant said, “This activity engages students and helps them make connections. This allows students to see that math is everywhere, instead of just playing the sport, they learn how this applies to different cultures.” The participant reported that some students know only about basketball and the goal is to allow them to know that there are other sports outside of basketball. The results help students make connections, the participant said.

One participant reported they encouraged students to make connections between school and their cultural experiences first by educating themselves by reading widely on a variety of subjects such as Abernathy who was Martin Luther King’s associate. One participant said:

When students do not read there’s a gap. Students think that reading is indigenous to getting a root canal and they don’t understand that reading expands their mind and with endless possibilities, and it can foster or train. Students must understand to experience greatness they need to read and don’t waste time on a bunch of novels when the thing is truth is stranger than fiction. I am always reading on my

phone, and I encourage students to listen to PBS, NPR because statistically students who read, their test scores go up. Reading develops students' mind. In the digital age I am amazed that more students do not read on their devices.

One administrator said that they believe the teacher must be aware of the cultural identification of students in their class and must be mindful of the examples that are used in the social context. The participant said teachers must be mindful of the jargon used in their classes, the language, the jokes, and other examples. By incorporating familiar language instruction becomes culturally relevant. Cultural competence is a thought or philosophy that must not be taken for granted. The participant reported that not all African Americans students may be on the same level of awareness of their cultural history, a teacher should not assume that every single student is or is not at the same level at any point in time. The administrator continued by saying that teachers must be careful to craft lessons without making any assumptions regarding students' cultural competence. Teachers and instructors must be careful to make sure that they do not make any assumptions when it comes to students' culture, the administrator said.

Administrators reported they had seen teachers encourage students to make connections with school and their cultural experience by talking about a particular subject and allowing room for student participation even if they were talking about the civil war or end time events. Participants reported they often ask students "How do you relate your time where you're living now to what happened? How does what happened then affect you now? If you were to be in that time, how would you address that matter? What do you think your likely response might have been to a particular situation?" The

administrator expressed they had seen teachers engage students by asking them to probe questions on the topic.

In addition, administrators reported that they had seen teachers make deliberate attempts to include students' culture in instruction. Participants shared that pertinent concerns are how does the students' culture address this matter, what are the parallels between how their culture addresses issues or even students' entire response to a particular situation. Administrators expressed they had seen teachers sit in front of the class and ask students place themselves in a particular culture and share how they would react and how they would know what solution to implement in solving that problem. Administrators said they had consistently observed where teachers were not only sharing their culture, but also comparing students' culture to other time periods. Participants reported that they help students compare their culture with cultures of other time periods to give them a sense of the dynamic nature of culture. Administrators vouched that they had seen the growth process of their teachers in their level of critical analysis thinking so CRP goes beyond cultural competence. One administrator said, "Yes, it takes in the country, the whole person and teachers make deliberate attempts to draw, to solicit those kinds of connection culturally and otherwise as it pertains to the lesson that they're teaching."

Social-political awareness involves actively engaging and encouraging students to question the status quo and administrators are aware that teachers employ a variety of strategies within the classroom. One administrator said, "Yes, ...that relate to the current socio-cultural environment in which we live." Administrators reported they stressed to

teachers the importance of helping students make connections between the past and the present so students can see the relevance of how political issues affect them. One administrator said:

For instance, in history, in studying the French Revolution what were the elements in society that led up to the French Revolution and can students identify in the current setting, let's say for example, the George Floyd shooting, what led up to it and help students make that kind of connection and see if they can see parallels between what happened in the past with what is happening now.

An administrator reported that even in the teaching of mathematics or physics, administrators believe students must be taught to make connections with historical figures such as Albert Einstein, a great scientist, and analyze how he has impacted the field of mathematics. The administrator said teachers can further guide students in doing the same with Rene Descartes a great mathematician, and other historical figures in all subject areas across the curriculum. Administrators reported that students can watch documentaries on historical figures and teachers can ask how we can show what they invented, created, or discovered is impacting them now. One administrator said:

The socio-political elements that were identified causing for the French Revolution and other periods in Roman history, can you identify them today? The 2020 election how does the democratic system compare if they put on two different presidents or compared to whatever president's time. So, you know English, you know teachers may in the Middle Ages used certain vernaculars. Is

your connection between all these spoken vernaculars and social events then or social friends now can make all those connections by our brilliant teachers.

Most of the participants reported that they had heard of culturally relevant pedagogy and believe teachers should take responsibility for knowing and promoting the students' culture. Participants said teachers should be aware of students' culture and how culture impacts how they teach and how their students learn to think. According to participants, every student brings their culture to the classroom and so it is the teacher's job to understand the culture of the students and either merge, combine or learn from one another so that learning can take place. Participants reported that teacher ignorance of students' culture is a barrier similar to a language barrier and that the students may not understand what teachers are saying in the context of their culture and that happens more often than teachers realize. Participants said teachers need to be flexible, and practice reflective teaching and learning and sharing ideas with students and hearing what they are not saying through what they are doing because what they are saying is important.

Another administrator said:

Teachers encourage students to make connections between school and their cultural experiences and it happens more often than we realize when we make certain comments, or we use certain words; we call them cliches. Those are often cultural or we're assuming that the students have access to that background information when we make those types of things there are traditions in culture that we refer to or that we use as connections to our learning and so that again I think we may underestimate how much of it is infused and what we do every day.

An example of how teachers integrate aspects of student culture was described by one administrator who shared that their school is like an Historically Black College and University (HBCU) of elementary schools because the school started in 1906. The school began following the race riots in Atlanta and because of that the community decided they needed a place for African American students to be able to learn and grow safely. Thus, the school was started thereafter and so that is the school's foundation so every time teachers are teaching a lesson, every time they encourage students, they want students to do their best because there are people who dreamed about this for them and so they want to honor the sacrifice of their ancestors. The administrator said:

For us to sit in this classroom in this air-conditioned building and our uniforms looking our best doing our best and God requires that of us and so using that as a foundation we encourage the students to do their best that is cultural that is a result of what we know was against us once upon a time. So how we're still overcoming that on a day-to-day basis as the world is not necessarily happy with us moving into the corporate environment or us getting certain positions that still exists to this day and so we're battling that; as teachers we're aware of that and so we're using that to say hey it's going to be hard for you out there, we need you to get this now; we need you to do your best.

Participants reported “They motivate and encourage students to be the best that they can be and that is cultural and is the foundation of their success.” Students are reminded that they need to win and be their best. A participant said, “Students will encounter struggles and difficulties but with an attitude of resilience, they can succeed.”

One participant reported what they understood culturally relevant pedagogy to mean, and a strategy they use in class to teach students music appreciation. One participant reported that culturally relevant pedagogy is basically when you teach based upon the culture or you understand the culture of the student and you teach a lesson based upon the students' culture. Cultural consciousness involves the activities a teacher does to promote student consciousness. A participant reported they intentionally integrate various dimensions of different cultures when it comes to music and tell students about music appreciation because some students do not like Mexican music, and others do not like country music. Students are redirected to learn to appreciate music in general and to remain objective and open-minded to appreciate different types of cultural music. For music, the participant reported they would have different cultural days:

Like one day would be Mexican day and all the students dress up in Mexican clothes and eat Mexican food and play the music they have to study and understand Mexican composers from every genre: dance, pop, religious music, classical music so that students have to understand that they have to give examples of that and then by the end of the week not only did students learn about cultures, they realized that the music is really not that bad.

This is one way the participant reported they help students develop appreciation for other music in other cultures.

In encouraging students to make connections between school, music, and their cultural experiences, participants reported they foster that connection by taking students every year to an opera, or to a ballet. The participant reported that about 90% of the

students have never seen a Broadway play. The closest activity students have seen to the production of a play, the participant said, was at church. The participant said, “It was amazing how students looked at the community where they live and then they go outside and you see their eyes open and said I didn't realize all this existed and then a lot of them said they want to take dance lessons, or music lessons, and it just opens their whole world.”

Participants described how they integrate students' culture into class instruction. In describing a lesson in which the participant integrates aspects of the students' culture, one participant reported they would ask students to get a poster and draw what's in their neighborhood. The participant said they want to know how people eat; how they dress; how they live; what type of music they listen to; at the same time the participant probes students to share visually aspects of their culture. The participant also reported they showed students examples of other cultures all over the world and how those people are so well informed about their culture and other people's culture and asked students what happened if they stayed right here, and are not open-minded to other cultures, a lot of students said they would be ignorant of other cultures. The participant reported that students said they want to live and that they feel they are living when they go out visiting.

To be an effective teacher in a multicultural setting it is important that teachers keep improving their cultural knowledge and their students' cultural knowledge. To accomplish that goal, a participant shared with students a personal experience regarding their dislike for hip-hop and rap music. The participant reported they referred to that type of music as trap music but visited a museum called the Trap Museum and it is a history of

rap music and history of music of that genre. Before visiting the museum, the participant reported they experienced negative undertones about that type of music and still does not like the music because of how the message and the language portrayed certain aspects of life negatively. The participant said they developed an appreciation of the artistry and how they make their music, where the performers have come from, and why they express themselves in that manner. The participant reported that they told students about this experience and realized the role the environment played in music. The participant expressed that music is directly impacted by the environment within which it is created. Although the participant still does not love rap music, the participant said they have learned to separate the appreciation for the creativity and the artistry from the message in the hip-hop songs. The participant reported that they teach students to cultivate an open mind to music but be mindful of the message in the music. Additionally, the participant shared, that they warn students of the long-term effects of music on the individual. Students, according to the participant, “Become what they listen to.”

Implement Active Student-centered Teaching Methods

Implementing active student-centered teaching methods was the fourth theme that was analyzed during data analysis. Several participants reported how they go about actualizing active student-centered teaching methods. For example, one participant reported that in a lesson in World History class students had to create a rap poem or some creative lyrical that illustrated their understandings of the Fall of Man which was the first lesson in World History class. The participant said that this perspective allowed students to tap into the culture of rap music which some of them listened to and be able to apply

their lyrical skills, their musical skills and still tap into the content and their culture or some elements of their youth culture.

In utilizing student-centered learning approaches, participants reported they used stations within the classroom where students rotate to different learning stations to achieve mastery of different skills. A participant reported using cooperative learning structures to help students grapple with a problem or a project or for concept sharing amongst themselves. Many participants reported making use of discourse, questioning, and critical thinking to facilitate their student-centered learning approaches. A few participants reported that they allow students to engage in debate where they must formulate arguments based on evidence.

Another way participants reported that they help students achieve academic excellence in implementing active student-centered methods was to deemphasize long lectures. Participants reported that they lecture minimally to demonstrate and then put students in groups to do different activities or they are put in escape rooms to work on puzzles to solve problems. Participants said, “Sometimes a class activity may require students taking things home for further learning and research.” In addition, participants shared that alternatively students may be required to return to class with the acquired information to teach the class.

A few participants reported that they utilize an explicit instruction approach to help students attain academic excellence within the context of implementing active student-centered methods in the classroom. A participant reported that in their use of explicit instruction, students are first shown what to do by the participant, then the participant and

students work together, after which the student works on their own. The participant said that they will inform students, show them, and then allow them to share and then have some sort of assessment to see how they have retained the information. The participant said they referred to this approach as explicit instruction.

In participants' attempts to implement active student-centered methods in the classroom to help students achieve academic success, participants reported that they allow students to take the lead. Participants shared that often it is difficult, especially with a subject such as math, but as soon as an opportunity arose, students were allowed to take the lead to come up to the board and teach the class. This participant reported that they included projects where students were assigned a lesson and they were supposed to teach the class. Participants reported that they do not try to speed past areas where students are struggling. Most participants said it is important to meet students where they are academically. In addition, some participants reported that some students are competitive and like to play games such as Kahoot and compete with other students in such. Participants also reported that during game playing they can assess how much learning is taking place. Many participants admit that game playing made the learning experience more enjoyable.

Participants reported that one of the most effective ways to implement active student-centered methods in the classroom was by choosing activities with minimal teacher input. Participants said when they taught a new concept, they left it up to the students to think critically, work either independently, in pairs, or as a cooperative group where they knew that the teacher only guided their learning. During student-centered

activities, participants reported that they walked around and listened to the students. In addition, participants reported that they did a variety of assessments to ascertain if learning was taking place. All participants agreed that student-centered activities which are student-driven, but teacher guided, are an excellent opportunity for participants to learn the best teaching approaches, and how learning took place.

Based on the data analysis, active student-centered methods in the classroom facilitated student-driven instruction. A few participants admitted that a planned lesson may be put on hold to address the immediate academic needs of students. In such cases, participants reported that they have learned to be flexible and guide the learning process. One of the most valuable lessons participants said that they have learned was to understand where students are in their learning, and gradually move them forward incrementally until they are at that intended place. Some participants said when students are allowed to teach a lesson there is an assessment on how effective the student was in their teaching and what the other students did not understand. Participants reported that active student-centered methods facilitate student engagement and participation.

Professional Development

All participants reported that professional development could be designed to help teachers learn about students' cultural knowledge. Participants shared that understanding students' cultural knowledge was a very critical area of education where any kind of exposure to other students' culture is critical. Furthermore, teachers should not assume they have adequate background information related to different cultures and recognize that a professional development course may bring enlightenment. A few participants

admitted that general cultural knowledge does not translate to cultural competence. An administrator reported that students' culture or teachers' may be general knowledge based on their interaction with each other but with professional development they learn that they need to be aware of their speech, jokes, comments, questions, and jargon used in the classroom may prove to be culturally insensitive. A participant said given a phrase or uncertain jargon may be offensive to another person's culture, professional development can be offered that broadens teacher awareness of different components of culture.

After combing through and analyzing the data an emergent theme which emerged was professional development. Participants stated that professional development will help teachers do better by adding to their cultural reservoir of knowledge. Participants said even though teachers teach students, teachers must regard themselves as lifelong learners and there was never a time that teachers should believe they have arrived. Administrators reported that professional development would give teachers a sense that they are always arriving, growing, learning, climbing, building, and adding to their body of knowledge; thus, professional development is critical. One administrator recalled attending a life-changing workshop five years ago which was one of the most enriching and uplifting they had attended in their entire career. The participant reported had they not attended that workshop, they would have missed a great opportunity to grow professionally and would have robbed themselves of a tremendous experience and based on what was learned from that workshop, the participant was better able to help students. Participants vouched that professional development is critical. Indeed, professional development is not to be undervalued or underestimated, rather these opportunities are critical to helping teachers

grow in their careers and as they grow, they are better equipped to understand all the theories, learning styles, and the cultural differences to better help students on different academic levels. Participants expressed that professional development helps equip teachers to be relevant and modern thinking, and to deal to with 21st century students and all that these factors impact. One participant stressed that a teacher cannot use 1960s methods to teach 21st century students. In addition, the participant said one cannot use 1920s pedagogy to teach in the 21st century. Further, according to the participants, professional development helps teachers understand other cultures which adds to their toolbox. One administrator said:

This adds to teachers' skill set; yes, it adds to their reservoir of knowledge. If teachers are increasing their professional growth, then they are better equipped to assist their students in the learning process, in the educational process, and in the academic process to realize academic success.

Participants reported that professional development could be designed to help teachers learn about students' culture because it is important for teachers to identify the cultures that exist in their classroom to empower teachers in the classroom. One administrator said, "Culture is impacted by everything and everything is impacted by culture including how it affects poverty and one's socioeconomical status." The participants said that culture greatly affects how students learn in their home environment, and in class. Generally, many people may not be aware how their culture is affected by poverty and impacted by their daily struggles; one participant shared. Another participant said, "Culture is even impacted and affected by racial struggles." Participants

reported that it is important to have professional development that highlights how culture is impacted by every aspect of society. The far-reaching effects of parents' socioeconomic status impact what sports their children play and that in and of itself may set new cultural boundaries for their children, an administrator reported. Participants said professional development that enlightens parents will go a long way in opening their eyes to realize the other implications of culture. One administrator said:

Professional development is important specifically for a deeper understanding of culture and the implications it may have for learning in the classroom. Teachers believe plenty of time is spent on implementing strategies for teaching, but if they do not understand the student or their family or where they're coming from, all that is done in the classroom would be less effective without that understanding.

The data analysis of this study was guided by the research questions and the conceptual framework. The results of the data analysis were closely aligned with the research questions and conceptual framework. The four major themes that were analyzed from the data: (a) communicate high student expectations; (b) promote positive perspective of families; (c) encourage learning within the context of culture; (d) implement active student-centered teaching methods; and the emergent theme of professional development are all supported by the research questions and the conceptual framework. The outcome of the data analysis is not only pertinent to the purpose of this basic interpretive qualitative study but was useful in exploring secondary teachers' perceptions of their low efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy to increase African American students low reading proficiency scores at the local site.

Table 2*Data Findings based on the Research Questions*

Research Question	Theme	Code
RQ 1 What are secondary teachers' perceived efficacy in using culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom?	Academic Benefits of CRP	Academic Excellence Academic Success High Academic Standards Cultural Awareness
	Cultural Competence Benefits	Teacher Cultural Knowledge Student Cultural Knowledge Cultural Acceptance Instruction Relevance
RQ 2 How are secondary teachers currently using culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom?	Making Connections	Cultural Infusion Cultural Immersion Connecting Home and School Fostering Students' Lived Experiences Cultural Activities
	Parental Involvement	Parental Communication Parental Participation Parental Involvement
	Socio-political Competence	Awareness of Social Issues Awareness of Political Issues

Research Question	Theme	Code
RQ 3 What are the barriers or challenges secondary teachers face in implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom?	Teacher CRP Challenges	Implementation Challenges Inadequate CRP Knowledge Inadequate CRP PD CRP Implementation Skills Inadequate CRP Clarity Inadequate Resources Cultural Integration Sensitivity

All aspects of this study are based on the research questions and the conceptual framework of Bandura. In addition, this study is guided by the research problem and the purpose of the study in investigating teachers' perceptions of their low efficacy in the use of CRP to increase reading proficiency scores among African American students. In the data analysis, I identified themes, patterns, and trends within the responses to the fundamental research questions. To facilitate appropriate data analysis, I used a coding system to categorize all the interviewees' responses to the data collected. Furthermore, teachers' perception and use of CRP to increase African American students' reading achievement were ascertained because the data collected furnished a clear understanding of what prevails at the local site.

Section 2 described the qualitative methods that were used for the project study. The focus was on collecting data from 10 interviews. Section 2 also explained the data collection and analysis processes that were utilized. A description of the proposed project is in Section 3.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In this basic interpretive qualitative study, I investigated secondary teachers' perception of their low efficacy in using CRP in the classroom to improve African American students' low reading proficiency scores. I investigated teachers' perception and use of CRP to improve African American students' low reading scores. I interviewed 10 secondary teachers, which included two administrators. Throughout the interviews, the participants reported a need for a better understanding of the use and implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy practices. All the teachers interviewed had taught for a minimum of 4 years and taught various secondary subjects. The data indicated that teachers are open to further training in the use and implementation of CRP.

During the interviews, the participants shared similar ideas on CRP. The four major themes that were identified in the data collection were communicate high student expectations, promote positive perspective of students' families, encourage learning within the context of culture, and implement active student-centered teaching methods. One emergent theme was professional development in CRP. Based on the findings, I proposed that professional development be provided for teachers who teach African American students to address their low reading proficiency scores. As a direct result of data findings, I developed professional training that will equip teachers with the necessary skills that will enable teachers to use and implement culturally relevant pedagogy successfully in the classroom.

I constructed a Professional Development entitled *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Uses and Implementation Strategies*. The goal of the professional development was to empower teachers in the use and implementation skills of culturally relevant pedagogy to help African American students improve their low reading proficiency scores. The purpose of the professional development will be to enhance teachers' use and implementation of CRP. African American students have disproportionately low reading scores compared to other races.

With this project, I sought to provide teachers with learning experiences using culture with the goal of improving African American students' reading scores. The professional development will take the form of workshops and will provide various opportunities for teachers to learn how to use and implement culturally relevant pedagogy. The professional development workshops will use an explicit teaching method approach. First, I will model the use and implementation of CRP to teachers. Second, teachers and I will do one session together. Third, teachers will practice what they have learned. During the workshops, teachers will have the opportunity to ask questions, self-reflect, learn from each other, and model what they have learned. Teachers will also be given the opportunity to collaborate and share with their peers. Three of the goals of the professional development workshops will be to equip teachers with instructional strategies, build their capacity, and facilitate time for practice to hone their CRP skills.

Rationale

This project centers on PD for the teachers who participated in the study. The results of the study show 100% of the teachers are willing to use CRP in the classroom but

70% of them do not know how to do so. The data revealed that only 30% of the teachers are knowledgeable in the potential use of CRP in the classroom to increase and augment student learning. Approximately 70% of the teachers in the study did not know of the culturally relevant pedagogical framework and did not know how to use it in the classroom. The teachers in the study expressed a deep desire to learn more about CRP. Professional development for teachers can be conducted using multiple formats to accomplish desired goals that are congruent with the study findings. In addition to the congruity of the study findings and the achievement of professional development goals, the conceptual framework of this study focused on Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, Berry, Q. R., & Thomas, A. C. (2017). A qualitative metasynthesis on culturally responsive teaching & culturally relevant pedagogy: Unpacking mathematics teaching practices. *Teaching and Classroom Practice*, 1202–1206.

SLT) which explains how teachers can learn from each other by observation, social interaction, and modeling. Considering teachers' PD need as validated by the study findings, Bandura's SLT, and the dominant role video technology plays in learning, it became apparent that a series of workshops utilizing YouTube videos prepared by professional experts in the field of CRP would be an effective way to conduct PD for teachers.

The use of videos in PD is a standard and established practice in PD for teachers. Because most learners are auditory and visual, the use of videos in PD for teachers is in harmony with sound, evidence-based, culturally relevant pedagogical practices.

According to Chan, et al, (2020), video use for PD can be maximized with proper guidelines. Also, videos allow for reflection on teaching practice because they are evidence-based. In addition, video use allows for collaborative discussion and facilitates PD discourse. Not only is collaborative discourse a vital part of video use, but it also promotes peer discussion. Hamel and Vian-Guay (2019) concur that video use in PD allows for collaborative learning and leads to significant learning. Moreover et al. (2019) state that video use allows for the reflective practice among professionals and is ideal for PD among teachers.

Another benefit of video-based PD is the fact that the facilitator can use videos to support teachers' learning (Coker et al., 2017). Teachers can also record and videotape their teaching practice, engage in reflective discussion, and can rethink their teaching practices. Teachers are also able to share instructional feedback and engage their peers in the discussion. Elby et al. (2020) observed that video use in PD facilitated classroom growth and development. The use of videos by the facilitator is ideal for training and allows for peer coaching and feedback. In another study, teachers improved their teaching practice, and strategies, and honed their teaching skills (Kim et al., 2019). Teachers can also achieve their desired learning goals especially if activities are tied in with the videos (Kang et al. 2019). The use of evidence-based videos by the facilitator in PD allows the facilitator to help teachers sharpen their pedagogical teaching skills as teachers observe how CRP is used and implemented, and is effective training for teachers (Cattaneo et al., 2021).

The PD proposed in this project will be conducted over 5 days. Each workshop session will last 2 hours and will start at 9 a.m. and end at 11 a.m. At each workshop, a YouTube video will be shown on a different CRP topic. After the video, a discussion will follow on a preselected topic that is tied to the video. Teachers will then engage in a reflection activity sharing what they have learned. Teaching practice will follow with teacher feedback. Each teacher will have a turn at teaching practice and will be allowed to practice the CRP strategies they have learned. In the last part of the daily workshop, each teacher will fill out a formative survey (see Appendix A). The purpose of the formative survey is to help me customize the videos to suit teachers' needs. At the end of the fifth workshop, in addition to the formative survey, teachers will also fill out a summative survey (see Appendix A) which will indicate what learning has occurred.

Review of the Literature

The teaching profession demands that teachers remain abreast of the best practices that are evidence-based. Moreover, the dynamism of teaching necessitates that teachers are continuously seeking professional growth and development opportunities to remain cutting edge and up to date with their teaching craft. Teachers' PD fosters teachers' professional growth and development. PD equips teachers with skills that enhance and enrich their classroom experiences whereby improving students' academic achievement (Crouse, et al., 2023; Cantrell, et al., 2022). Teachers who are provided with PD opportunities improve and grow professionally. According to Timmons et al. (2016), one of the best ways to improve teacher practice is through PD. However, in the digital age with information at one's disposal, PD for teachers can occur any time, any place,

and even at teachers' convenience in the comfort of their homes. In addition, the digital age allows for teacher PD to be conducted multiple ways using multiple digital devices, platforms, and computer-imbedded programs. The idea of integrating technology in the classroom for students also holds true for teachers in PD. Moreover, since most people are both auditory and visual learners, and teachers are not excluded, it is imperative that any kind of PD for teachers must consider how teachers are apt to learn even in the digital age. The digital age has brought in a plethora of technological instructional delivery methods that were not possible in the past (Hernandez, 2022). The mode of instructional delivery used in PD for teachers is determined by teachers' instructional needs, the time allotted for PD, and the most appropriate delivery method that would maximize the learning opportunities for all teachers. In addition, one of the most important factors to consider in designing PD for teachers is based on the findings of one's research study. Hence the findings of my study and knowledge of the participants' immediate instructional needs influenced the use of videos in the PD of the teachers.

The participants in the study reported that a PD presenter who provides skills on the effective use and implementation of CRP is needed at the local site. Teachers need a learning environment that cultivates and facilitates time to grow as professionals. For PD to be effective, the presenter must address teachers' needs in an instruction area that would benefit them (Hernandez, 2022). In addition, a PD presenter must allow teachers to engage with their peers, learn together, with each other, and from each other. This ties in with the conceptual framework of the study which is Bandura's (1977) SLT that explains how learning takes place. Bandura (1977) shares three vital dimensions of how learning

takes place: social interaction, observation, and modeling. For Bandura, learning cannot take place in a vacuum, but is a direct result of social interaction, social discourse, and social intercourse. Bandura's (1977) SLT, when combined with PD, allows the presenter to guide the professional growth of teachers which, in turn, would allow them to develop the skills to help improve reading scores for African American students with low scores (Dixon, 2021). A presenter of PD helps create a learning environment which is vital to empowering teachers with opportunities to grow as professionals because they are learning in areas where they recognize their shortcomings (Smith et al., 2018; Anyichie, et al., 2023).

According to Chan et al, (2020) one of the best ways to conduct PD for teachers is using videos. The use of videos in PD for teachers has become an educational staple. A presenter of PD recognizes how people learn by appealing to their auditory and visual propensities. Chan et al, (2020) believe that with proper guidelines for the use of videos in PD for teachers, learning can be maximized. In addition, with the use of videos, teachers have ample time to reflect on their own teaching practice. Moreover, YouTube is often perceived as a medium for entertainment, but contrary to that false perception, YouTube can be regarded as a learning portal with presenters who are professionals and experts in their field. YouTube is a rich resource of videos on any topic one chooses and can be regarded as a professional learning community (PLC). The use of videos by a PD presenter would allow for rich collaborative discussion and thus creates a professional learning community. Moreover, Hamel and Vian-Guay (2019) see the use of videos for PD for teachers as enriching, facilitating open discussion on teaching practice

improvement, and fostering professional growth among teachers. There is significant learning for teachers and self-evaluation of their teaching practice when they see other professionals teach. Coker et al. (2017) see the use of videos in PD for teachers as teacher support that is not easily found in any other PD for teachers. Teacher support is pivotal in teaching success, especially for new teachers. When teachers watch videos, they are also able to share feedback and engage in discourse with their peers (Elby et al., 2020). Further, the use of videos in PD for teachers exposes teachers to the most current teaching practice, strategies, and pedagogical teaching skills that are evidence-based (Kim et al., 2019). Kang et al, (2019) concur that once the PD's learning goals and outcomes are tied in with the videos, achieving those goals are attainable. For Kang et al. (2019) there must be clearly defined desired goals and videos that are in harmony with the desired goals to maximize teacher benefits. For Cattanco et al. (2021) the use of videos for PD for teachers must be evidence-based to help teachers sharpen their pedagogical teaching skills as teachers observe how CRP is used and implemented. Cattanco et al. (2021) see the use of videos in PD for teachers as an opportunity to provide effective training.

Furthermore, the findings of the study are in direct sync with the literature review in Section 1 and the study findings in Section 2. The focus of the study was on exploring secondary teachers' efficacy in using CRP in the classroom. CRP is a framework for helping students in general, but more specifically African American students achieve academic success. The three major tenets of CRP are academic excellence, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness. The literature review in

Section 1 gave insight in the shortcomings of teacher preparation programs and the inadequacies teachers experience regarding the use and implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. Moreover, the four main areas of concerns revealed in the literature review in Section 1 are (a) inadequate teacher preparation, (b) teachers' inability to implement effective culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom, (c) teachers' difficulty in the use of culturally relevant pedagogy practices, and (d) teacher perception of CRP. Furthermore, the findings of the study reveal that teachers were able to communicate high academic standards to students, promote positive perspective of families, encourage learning within the context of culture, and implement active student-centered teaching methods. However, most teachers were unsure of how to effectively use and implement CRP in the classroom. All the participants in the study recognized their CRP inadequacies and reported a dire need for PD. Moreover, all participants in the study reported that CRP has the potential to help African American students increase their academic success.

The use of videos in PD for teachers covers all subject areas and encompasses teachers in any geographic location whether remote or not. Richardson and Sterett (2020) stress the use of digital resources to enhance and support PD for teachers via a principal leadership focus. Maker and Prescott (2017) advocate video conferencing PD for teachers who are remote and rural. Maker and Prescott (2020) believe PD is very important, and distance should not inhibit teachers' professional growth and development. In addition, Karsenty and Sherin (2017) stress that because of rapid technological advancements, computers, and digital devices, the use of videos in PD for teachers is unavoidable. The

changing times and the countless innovations the digital age, to which teachers are exposed, provides multiple ways of accessing PD for teachers. Technological advancements have given teachers easier, quicker, and broader access to resources for their professional growth. In addition, Chen et al. (2020) acknowledge that video-based PD increases teacher dialogue and collaboration. Teachers can dialogue with their peers, exchange ideas on teaching practice, and grow professionally. Moreover, according to Schoenfeld (2017) the presenter (Hernandez, 2022) who uses videos allow for multiple watching, support teacher learning, and help both teachers and students. There is ample evidence that the use of videos for teacher PD is standard practice in the digital age. Rapid technological advancements have contributed immensely to a plethora of teacher resources which make the use of videos of pivotal importance.

The literature reviewed and written for this section came from scholarly sources that confirm the need to implement CRP practices to better meet African American students' academic needs. The data indicated that PD workshop sessions could present teachers with various opportunities to become competent in the use and implementation of CRP. The focus is on designing a PD project that would offer teachers an understanding of the use and implementation of CRP. Notwithstanding however, a few of the participants who used CRP in the classroom were unaware of what they were doing but reported that with PD on CRP, they would not only know what they are doing, but they would know how to use and implement CRP more effectively.

The literature reviewed for this study focused on retrieving best practice scholarly articles that are grounded in research-based strategies on CRP to ensure that teachers are

prepared and understand how to use and implement CRP in the classroom. In this literature review, the primary focus was on how professional development helps to improve teachers' use and implementation of CRP. PD is imperative in providing teachers with the opportunity to learn how to teach within the context of students' culture.

In preparing for this literature review, resources from the Walden Library, Google Scholar, Scholar Works, Education Source, and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) were used. The following key terms were searched: CRP workshops or CRP PD workshops in the use and implementation of CRP; CRP workshops; PD workshops in CRP; and workshops on how to use and implement CRP.

The combination of these terms and databases yielded sufficient literature to saturate the literature review. Most of the sources were peer-reviewed, scholarly articles dated between 2018-2023. The combination of these terms and databases yielded sufficient literature to saturate the literature review. The results were then limited to peer-reviewed, scholarly articles from 2019 to 2023. However, the focus of this review was related to PD in the context of ensuring that it is relevant to the teachers at the site, PD as a learning tool to help improve the teaching practice, PD as an opportunity to learn and grow with peers, and finally using PD to help increase African American students' low reading scores.

Project Description

Based on the findings of the data collected, I designed a PD project to address teacher use and implementation of CRP (see Appendix A). The PD will be in the form of

workshops. The workshops will occur over a 5-day period. All the sessions of the workshops are research-based and are YouTube videos presented by professionals and experts in CRP. The evidence-based videos cover the major aspects of CRP such as the origin of CRP, uses and implementation, and strategies and approaches to use based on best CRP practices. The ultimate goals of the workshops are to ensure that teachers are proficient in the use of, and competent in the implementation of CRP to positively impact African American students' low reading scores. The PD will equip teachers with the CRP skills and strategies needed to help improve African American students low reading scores. The PD workshops will occur over a 5-day period during teacher preparation week to start the new school year. Each workshop session will last for two hours and will start at 9:00 a.m. and end at 11:00 a.m. The workshops will be conducted from Monday through Friday. Each two-hour session will start with watching a YouTube video after which a discussion and reflection period will follow. After the discussion and reflection session, one teacher will teach their peers for thirty minutes implementing what they have learned. An explicit instruction approach will be used, and I will teach the first class to model CRP use and implementation. On each day a different teacher will do the teaching. A clear touch screen will be used to show the videos and additional resources will be provided to teachers as needed. Each session will end with a closing discussion on what teachers knew, what they did not know, and what they would like to learn. In addition, each teacher will fill out a survey after each workshop that will give me a clear indication of what specific areas of CRP to address.

Project Evaluation Plan

The success of this project is measured by evaluating the project goals to ascertain if they have been achieved. The 10 project goals are in keeping with the study findings. The purpose of the evaluative process is to ensure that the project goals have been achieved. As part of the evaluative process two types of surveys will be used. The surveys are grounded and embedded in the contents of the workshops and directly guided by the 10 project goals. The overall project goals cover the major aspects of CRP and seek to help teachers lay a foundational understanding of the use and implementation of CRP. With that approach, many stakeholders stand to benefit from the project. The main beneficiary stakeholders are teachers, students, parents, principals, school boards, and the parochial organization that owns and operates approximately 21 schools in three Southern states. Therefore, the use of surveys as evaluative tools is pivotal to the success of the project goals.

Two types of surveys will be conducted. At the end of each session a formative survey will be conducted which will give me a sense of what type of learning is taking place and how to customize the videos to address teachers' concerns. The formative survey is for learning. Ten videos have been selected but only five will be shown and the other five videos will be used as additional resources. The second type of survey that will be used is summative. This summative survey will be used at the end of all the workshop sessions to give a clear idea of what type of learning took place. The summative survey is designed to be a survey of participants' learning. The summative survey gives a clear idea of what teachers learned, did not learn, and would like to learn.

Both the formative and summative surveys will be done in class with pen and paper. Teachers will be evaluated based on their responses and feedback on the surveys. Daily rapport with teachers will also give valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the workshop sessions. The results of the formative survey will be used to improve the daily sessions. The results of the summative surveys will be used to improve future workshops on the use and implementation of CRP. Both surveys will be completed in class using pen and paper. The formative survey will be given to the teachers at the end of each session. The summative survey will be given to the teachers at the end of all the workshops. At the end of all the sessions, teachers will receive a certificate of attendance in the use and implementation of CRP. Table 3 provides the implementation and outcome goals.

Project Goals

The following are the project goals of the 5-day workshops

Implementation Goals	Outcome Goals
To provide a brief background of CRP	To facilitate open discussion and reflection on the use and implementation of CRP
To identify what constitutes CRP	To provide teachers with the opportunity to practice CRP among their peers
To provide evidence-based best CRP practices	To allow teachers time to customize CRP for their subject

To share multiple approaches to use and implement CRP	To help teachers hone their CRP strategies and skills
To share multiple CRP strategies	To serve as a resource person and guide the CRP professional development

Project Implications

There are possible social change implications and social change for the local site and the other 20 plus schools that are part of this parochial system where the study took place. All the students are either African American or are from African American descendants. This project will provide teachers who teach African American students with an opportunity to add new CRP strategies and skills to their CRP repertoire, learn and improve their awareness of race and culture, learn when and how to utilize specific strategies that are culturally relevant during instruction, learn how to create a culturally rich environment, and learn how to develop culturally relevant pedagogy lessons.

This project has implications to potentially benefit teachers, students, families, and the parochial organization where I teach. The social change that this 5-day professional development workshop could provide is three-fold. First, it could benefit African American students by ensuring that more of them engage during instruction and apply the skills and concepts they learn to ensure they graduate from high school and are college and career ready. Second, the parochial organization benefits when teachers who teach in a predominately African American environment are competent and proficient in the use and implementation of CRP to help African American students. Third, a

professional development such as this may allow students to be academically successful, become culturally competent, and become socio-politically conscious. In addition, this project would also support the parochial organization in ensuring that teachers who teach African American students are prepared and equipped to improve their students' academic achievement. This study can have a positive impact on African American students, teachers, parents, the school board, and the entire parochial organization that covers three states. In short, all stakeholders stand to gain and be enriched in culturally relevant matters.

Improvement of teacher's CRP practices will positively impact academic achievement for students, especially African American students. The local and national economy can also be positively impacted by more African American students graduating from high school who are college and career ready. The parochial organization would benefit because they have a large population of African American students; an increase in student achievement could also decrease the need for African American students to drop out of high school. However, the parochial organization I belong to has a history of more than 85% of its high school graduates matriculating into college. Furthermore, with culturally relevant pedagogy workshops, there may well be an increase in the percentage of high school graduates who move on to college.

Section 4 concludes this study with reflections and conclusions. In addition, Section 4 will address the strengths and limitations of the study, recommendations for alternative approaches, reflection on the importance of the study, and the implications, applications, and directions for future research. Finally, Section 4 ends with a conclusion.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, my reflections on exploring secondary teachers' low efficacy in using CRP in the classroom are presented. The problem I explored in this study was secondary teachers' low level of efficacy in using CRP to address African American students' low reading proficiency scores. There were two administrators and eight teachers who participated in the study. In this section, I discuss the project's strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, project development and evaluation, reflection on the importance of the study, implications, and conclusion. I also reflect upon the professional development workshops on CRP that I recommend based on the findings of this study and the review of the literature. The 5-day workshops provide teachers with a working framework of CRP, strategies, and skills in using and implementing CRP in the classroom to address African American students' low reading proficiency scores.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The strength of the project is that it equips teachers with the skills and strategies necessary to use and implement CRP in the classroom to support African American students. The findings collected from the data confirm the strength of the project. PD workshops on CRP will equip teachers in CRP to address African American students' low reading proficiency scores. Teachers at my local site and at the other schools in the parochial organization I teach in stand to benefit from the 5-day professional development workshops on CRP. The data collected indicate the need for the PD. Many participants shared that there is a high need for professional development in CRP.

The supporting evidence to prove the high need for PD workshops came from two sets of data. One set of data came from interviews with secondary teachers and the other set of data came from interviews with administrators. Both sets of data were collected from interviews. One way to help teachers build capacity is by designing professional development workshops that equip them with the appropriate skills and strategies in areas that are lacking. The professional development workshops I designed will not only give teachers skills and strategies in using and implementing CRP but will also give them opportunity to practice among their peers and hone their CRP practices.

Upon the successful completion of the PD workshops, teachers will know how to use and implement CRP using the skills and strategies they learned. Teachers' uses and implementation of CRP in the classroom may help them address African American students' low reading proficiency scores. I am hopeful that this study, with its project component, may assist teachers in helping African American students in the classroom.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

There are three recommendations for alternative approaches to ensure that teachers receive the necessary professional development training they need in CRP to increase their use and implementation of CRP and thus be better able to help African American students increase their low reading scores. One recommendation for an alternative approach is for the parochial organization to include training sessions in its annual teachers' conference at the start of each school year. Thus, when all the teachers who teach in the parochial organization meet at the annual teachers' 4-day teachers' conference in preparation to start the new school year, CRP training should be part of the

agenda (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Johnson, et al., 2020; Tanase, 2021). A second recommendation for an alternative approach is for principals in the parochial organization who oversee approximately 21 schools to ensure that regular and ongoing CRP professional development is conducted. Principals at the parochial schools have the prerogative to determine the types of professional development teachers need (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Johnson, et al., 2020; Tanase, 2021). A third recommendation for an alternative approach can come from department heads who sense the instructional needs of teachers. Ultimately, teachers need professional development in CRP to help African American students increase their reading achievement. Department heads can always schedule professional development when teachers are available, or they can give teachers the resources to read or view in their free time (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Johnson, et al., 2020; Tanase, 2021).

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

After teaching English at the high school level for many years, I became deeply affected by the many African American students who struggled with reading. I was unable to overlook African American students' low reading achievement. In pursuing a solution to the problem, I felt the urge to study about the many factors that are likely to impede African American students' reading performance. In my search I discovered that African American students rank on the lowest rung of the reading ladder in comparison to other races. During my research, I learned that if the deficiencies of struggling readers are not addressed and remediated, the problem is compounded and worsens as students climb the academic ladder.

Pursuing this doctoral degree has afforded me the opportunity to study the many possible root causes that are contributory to African American students' low reading performance. African American readers do not struggle with reading for the same reasons. One of the most insightful aspects of the doctoral process was interviewing teachers and administrators. They all concurred that they believe CRP has the potential to help African American students academically. This confirmation from the participants in the interviews served to reassure me that I was on the most logical path. Designing the professional development workshops on CRP to empower teachers with strategies and skills to help increase African American students low reading proficiency has been impactful. Teachers of African American students will be equipped with CRP tools to help their students in meaning ways.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

In reflecting on the importance of my work, I am more deeply troubled by what the data say about African American students ranking on the lowest rung of the reading ladder when compared to other races. It is my firm conviction that no student should graduate from high school and being semiliterate or not being able to read. Granted not all high school graduates may want to pursue a college education, but the least teachers can do is to ensure that all high school graduates are fully literate, and not functionally literate. The ability to read is the single most important skill a student can acquire at school which is foundational for any academic pursuit and the world of work. The ability to read is so essential to academic success, that it is akin to breathing to stay alive. Based on my research during this doctoral journey, teachers' knowledge of CRP, but more

specifically their acquisition of the skills, and strategies in implementing CRP in the classroom may contribute to assisting African American students increase their reading proficiency. As an English teacher, it is my determination to ensure that African American students are taught within their cultural context, and their teachers are culturally conversant and competent.

To whom much is given, much is expected says the adage. Teachers can make a difference in addressing low reading scores among African American students, but for this to happen teachers must be equipped with the appropriate CRP tools. For far too long now African American students have struggled with reading, and while some measures have been taken to address their reading problems, the success achieved has been limited in comparison to the reading scores of other races. Based on the literature review, many teacher training programs fall short in training teachers on how to implement CRP in the classroom. Although there seems to be a dearth in CRP training for teachers, individual schools can conduct professional development workshops in CRP for teachers. These CRP workshops will equip teachers with resources, skills, strategies, and implementation techniques to address African American students' low reading scores. Thus, the value and significance of my work is that it will build teachers' CRP capacity and help African American students increase their low reading achievement.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

My study makes a vital contribution to teachers' efficacy in using CRP in the classroom to help African American students increase their low reading achievement. During the interviews the participants expressed keen interest in CRP and reported a

desire to learn more about CRP. The participants showed great interest in professional development workshops on CRP. Therefore, the professional development workshops on CRP were a direct result of participants' responses in the interviews. Thus, the project in the form of the workshops was in response to teachers' professional needs.

Future researchers should focus on teachers getting to know their students' culture and teach within their students' culture and lived experiences. Doing so may help students enjoy academic excellence, cultural competence, and socio-political consciousness and awareness of their society. The professional development workshops on CRP would impart to teachers the skills and strategies in implementing CRP in the classroom to fully address African American students' low reading scores and may help the students increase their reading achievement.

I collected the data for this study from eight teachers and two administrators of a secondary school. The participants' professional teaching experiences ranged from 4 to 36 years. All the participants taught African American students. Additional research into how to implement effective and appropriate CRP strategies may be necessary as school demographics continue to change and shift. In addition, future researchers could also continue to research how to ensure that teachers are culturally competent. One of the best methods to help teachers become culturally competent is to visit their classroom, observe them as they teach, and mentor them in the best CRP strategies. This hands-on approach coupled with mentoring and coaching may necessitate further research to prove its effectiveness in helping teachers become culturally competent.

Conclusion

Teachers who teach African American students should be trained in CRP to become culturally competent. This study was based on secondary teachers' low efficacy in using CRP in the classroom. Based on the data collected, I designed a 5-day professional development workshop on CRP to give teachers the necessary skills and strategies in using and implementing CRP in the classroom. The purpose of the workshops is to equip teachers with CRP to better help them address African American students low reading scores. Teachers will be able to be more effective in teaching African American students within their culture and lived experiences. Doing so should allow teachers to help African American students increase their low reading achievement. Research shows that teachers either get very little training in CRP, or if they do, they do not know how to implement CRP in the classroom. The professional development workshops will facilitate a smooth transition for teachers in the use and implementation of CRP in the classroom. There are approximately 21 schools in my parochial system which stands to benefit and may lead to the social change necessary for teachers to teach students within their culture and lived experiences.

As an English teacher teaching in high school for many years, I became dissatisfied with teaching my students all the great literary masterpieces while they struggled with reading. I set out on a quest to discover how to help my students improve their reading skills. The quest to help my African American students improve their reading skills became my motivation to pursue a doctoral degree in reading and literacy leadership. During the doctoral process of researching and conducting interviews to

collect data, I was able to understand and identify a missing component in my classroom instruction and that of other teachers that may be added to help students increase their reading scores. That missing component was cultural competency. With the addition of cultural competency, African American students stand a better chance to increase their reading achievement.

Teachers of African American students should be educated in CRP. CRP training fosters and nurtures in teachers the need to know their students' culture and lived experiences. With appropriate CRP training, teachers will encourage students' academic excellence, cultural competence, and socio-political awareness. PD workshops in CRP are an effective way to equip teachers with the necessary skills and strategies to use and implement CRP in their classroom instruction. The project of PD workshops on CRP is a direct result of the results of the data collected from the participants in the interviews of the study. The PD workshops on CRP will benefit teachers in the 20 plus schools in the parochial system in which I teach.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development Training on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

This professional development (PD) training is a direct result of the study's findings. The study's findings validate the census among the teachers for PD training in the use and implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy to help African American students increase their low reading proficiency scores. The use and implementation of CRP in the classroom has the potential to help African American students experience academic success. The 5-day PD will afford teachers the opportunity to improve their knowledge and understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy. In addition, teachers will learn how to use and implement culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. Teachers will also learn CRP strategies and skills that will better equip them to help African American students increase their low reading proficiency scores.

Design

The PD will be conducted in a workshop format. The workshop will be conducted over a 5-day period, from Monday to Friday. Each workshop session will last two hours, from 9 a.m. to 11 a. m. These workshops will be conducted in August during teacher preparation week for the new school year. Each session will start with a You Tube video on an aspect of CRP, discussion, reflection, round table talk, and a teaching session in which teachers are given the opportunity to practice what they have learned. At the end of each session, teachers will fill out a formative survey. The formative survey will give me an understanding of what teachers are learning, and what the emphasis of the next video

should be. At the end of the five sessions, teachers will also fill out a summative survey which will give me an idea of what teachers have learned.

The 5-day workshop with two-hour sessions was designed intentionally so as not to burden teachers with too much information in a shorter period. Overloading teachers is quite common in PD and such overloading results in saturation, boredom, and disinterest. Taking into consideration that teachers will have a packed agenda with activities necessary to start the new school year, I thought it prudent to spread the PD workshop sessions over a 5-day period with two-hour sessions instead of limiting it to two or three days with longer hours at each session. The PD workshop sessions were also deliberately designed to be interactive to garner maximum teacher engagement and participation.

Goals

The following are the training goals:

1. To equip teachers with CRP strategies.
2. To build teachers' capacity in the use and implementation of CRP skills.
3. To provide teachers with the opportunity to practice CRP strategies and skills with their peers

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the professional development workshop sessions, teachers will be able to:

1. Know the background of CRP.
2. Identify what constitutes CRP.
3. Share multiple approaches to use and implement CRP.
4. To practice CRP among their peers.

5. Use multiple CRP strategies.
6. Customize CRP strategies for their subject.
7. Use evidence-based CRP best practices.
8. Participate in open discussion and reflection on the use and implementation of CRP.
9. Feel confident in honing their CRP strategies and skills.
10. Serve as a resource person in the use and implementation of CRP.

Implementation Plan

Because the local site is a parochial school, each PD workshop will start with a welcome and prayer. After prayer, teachers will be given the agenda for the workshop. Before each workshop starts, the agenda will be shared with teachers. Sharing the agenda with teachers will include the topic for the workshop, the discussion question, reflection, practice session, and the formative survey. Teachers will be told the amount of time that will be spent on each segment of the agenda. Before teachers start each workshop, they will know of all the items on the agenda. After the preliminaries, the You Tube video will be played. After the You Tube video, teachers will participate in a round table discussion on the pre-selected topic. Next, teachers will be allowed to reflect on what they have learned, and what areas are of concern to them. After the reflection session, a teacher will be given the opportunity to practice what they have learned. A different teacher will participate in teaching practice at each workshop. I will do the first teaching practice session which will serve as a model for the other teachers. The last segment of each workshop will end with teachers filling out a formative survey. The purpose of the

formative survey is to give me feedback on how to make each workshop more meaningful.

Professional Development
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Workshop
Monday Session 1

Date:

Time: 9-11 a. m.

Venue: Local Site

Topic: What is Culturally Relevant pedagogy?

Time	Topic/Content	Method/Materials
9 -9:30 a. m.	You Tube Video # 1 What is Culturally Relevant pedagogy?	Presentation/Clear Touch
9:30 -10 a. m.	Discussion Question What is your understanding of what culturally relevant pedagogy is?	Round Table Discussion Focused on the Discussion Question.
10 -10:30 a.m.	Reflection on what teachers have learned.	Open Rapport on areas that are not clear to teachers.
10:30-11 a.m.	Teaching Practice Presenter teaches the first class on the video topic.	Practicum Teachers give feedback.
After the session	Teachers will fill out the Formative Survey.	Explicit Instruction Analyze the Formative Survey.

Professional Development
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Workshop
Tuesday Session 2

Date:

Time: 9-11 a. m.

Venue: Local Site

Topic: Introduction to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Time	Topic/Content	Method/Materials
9 -9:30 a. m.	You Tube Video # 11 Introduction to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	Presentation/Clear Touch
9:30 -10 a. m.	Discussion Question What are the components of culturally relevant pedagogy?	Round Table Discussion Focused on the Discussion Question.
10 -10:30 a.m.	Reflection on what teachers have learned.	Open Rapport on areas that are not clear to teachers.
10:30-11 a.m.	Teaching Practice Two teachers teach for 15 minutes each.	Practicum Teachers give feedback.
After the session	Teachers will fill out the Formative Survey.	

Professional Development
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Workshop
Wednesday Session 3

Date:

Time: 9-11 a. m.

Venue: Local Site

Topic: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Cultural Competence

Time	Topic/Content	Method/Materials
9 -9:30 a. m.	You Tube Video # 2 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Cultural Competence	Presentation/Clear Touch
9:30 -10 a. m.	Discussion Question How do we help students achieve cultural competence?	Round Table Discussion Focused on the Discussion Question.
10 -10:30 a.m.	Reflection on what the teachers have learned.	Open Rapport on areas that are not clear to teachers.
10:30-11 a.m.	Teaching Practice Two teachers teach for 15 minutes each.	Practicum Teachers give feedback.
After the session	Teachers will fill out the Formative Survey.	Explicit Instruction Analyze the Formative Survey.

Professional Development
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Workshop
Thursday Session 4

Date:

Time: 9-11 a. m.

Venue: Local Site

Topic: Infusing Student Culture in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Time	Topic/Content	Method/Materials
9 -9:30 a. m.	You Tube Video # 3 Infusing Student Culture in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	Presentation/Clear Touch
9:30 -10 a. m.	Discussion Question How do we infuse students' culture and lived experiences in instruction?	Round Table Discussion Focused on the Discussion Question.
10 -10:30 a.m.	Reflection on what the teachers have learned.	Open Rapport on areas that are not clear to teachers.
10:30-11 a.m.	Teaching Practice Two teachers teach for 15 minutes each.	Practicum Teachers give feedback.
After the session	Teachers will fill out the Formative Survey	Explicit Instruction Analyze the Formative Survey.

Professional Development
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Workshop
Friday Session 5

Date:

Time: 9-11 a. m.

Venue: Local Site

Topic: Gloria-Ladson-Billings-Successful Teachers of African American Children

Time	Topic/Content	Method/Materials
9 -9:30 a. m.	You Tube Video # 5	Presentation/Clear Touch
9:30 -10 a. m.	Discussion Question What are the strategies and skills in using and implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom?	Round Table Discussion Focused on the Discussion Question.
10 -10:30 a.m.	Reflection on what the teachers have learned.	Open Rapport on areas that are not clear to teachers.
10:30-11 a.m.	Teaching Practice Two teachers teach for 15 minutes each.	Practicum Teachers give feedback.
After the session	Teachers will fill out the Formative Survey and the Summative Survey.	Explicit Instruction Analyze the Formative Survey.

Formative Survey
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Formative Survey
Workshops 1-5

1. The presentation was helpful.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

2. Culturally relevant pedagogy is new to me.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

3. Culturally relevant pedagogy has the potential to help me improve classroom instruction.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

4. Do you understand how to use and implement culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom?

Yes
No
Somewhat

5. Some areas of culturally relevant pedagogy are still unclear to me.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

6. What specific areas of culturally relevant pedagogy are still unclear to you?

Using culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom.
Implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom.
Finding more information on culturally relevant pedagogy.
I am not sure how to make the transition.
I am not sure how to start.
Other (explain)

7. I feel confident that I can start using culturally relevant pedagogy in my classroom.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

8. I do plan to use culturally relevant pedagogy in my classroom.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

9. Overall, the presentation has been beneficial.

Not beneficial
Somewhat beneficial
Beneficial
Very beneficial
Extremely beneficial

10. I will share culturally relevant pedagogy with a colleague.

Yes
No
Maybe

Summative Survey
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Summative Survey
Survey on Workshops

1. The workshops were informational.

Yes
No
Somewhat

2. The information was very helpful.

Yes
No
Somewhat

3. I learned from the workshops.

Yes
No
Somewhat

4. I would like to learn more about culturally relevant pedagogy.

Yes
No
Somewhat

5. I have learned the following

What culturally relevant pedagogy is.
How to use culturally pedagogy in the classroom.
How to implement culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom.
Culturally relevant strategies and skills.
The benefits of culturally relevant pedagogy.

6. I would like to learn more about the following

What culturally relevant pedagogy is.
How to use culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom.
How to implement culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom.
Culturally relevant pedagogy strategies and skills.
The benefits of culturally relevant pedagogy.

7. The workshops will help me enrich classroom instruction.

Yes
No
Somewhat

8. The workshops were invaluable.

Agree
Disagree
Somewhat

9. I would attend similar workshops in the future.

Yes
No
Quite likely

10. The use of culturally relevant pedagogy has the potential to improve student academic achievement.

Agree
Disagree
Quite likely

Teacher Certificate



Certificate of Completion

"Awarded to" or other text here

Recipient Name

Course name or other text here

Your name or organization
here

Add course details such as date and your address
and any other verification information here.



Resources

Professional Development Workshops links on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrbJrXMgrhU>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dKY7DtMsY0>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KrxfcW7Irg>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mySy5dC4IW8>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmAZjNRmali>
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLBez6XSFTQ>
7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VxNHUL95Ts>
8. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTOMvU8P9pA>
9. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjLOuUhn6xY>
10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPfMExJZOIw>
11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGTVjJuRaZ8>

Appendix B: Email to Teachers

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Research

My name is Romanus S. Leonce, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know me as an English teacher at this school, but I am conducting interviews as part of my research study. Each interview will be 45-60 minutes.

You are invited to participate in a research study about culturally relevant pedagogy to increase reading achievement among African American students. The purpose of this study is to understand teachers' and administrators' perceptions and use of culturally relevant pedagogy to increase reading achievement among African American students. Your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

The researcher is inviting secondary school teachers and administrators at this school whose students struggle with reading, to participate in the study.

If you are interested in participating, please email at romanus.leonce@waldenu.edu.

Should you have any questions, or need additional information, do not hesitate to contact me. Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

Romanus S. Leonce

Appendix C: Email to Teachers

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Research

My name is Romanus S. Leonce, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know me as an English teacher at this school, but I am conducting interviews as part of my research study. Each interview will be 45-60 minutes.

You are invited to participate in a research study about culturally relevant pedagogy to increase reading achievement among African American students. The purpose of this study is to understand teachers' and administrators' perceptions and use of culturally relevant pedagogy to increase reading achievement among African American students. Your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

The researcher is inviting secondary school teachers and administrators at this school whose students struggle with reading, to participate in the study.

If you are interested in participating, please email at romanus.leonce@waldenu.edu. Should you have any questions, or need additional information, do not hesitate to contact me. Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

Romanus S. Leonce

Appendix D: Interview Protocol for Teachers

Introduction

Thanks for taking the time to participate in this study. The purpose is to understand your perception and use of culturally relevant pedagogy to increase reading achievement among African American students. You are the expert in your classroom, and I am excited to hear your perspective and experiences. This study is in no way connected to SAC. Before we get started, I must remind you that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Any responses you give will be kept strictly confidential. Do let me know if any of the questions make you uncomfortable. You are also free not to answer a question if you so choose to. At any time during the interview process, if you do not want to continue, please let me know. Could I get your permission to digitally record the entire interview? With your permission, could I also write notes based on your responses? Would you like to ask any question before we start the interview?

Before we begin the interview, I would like to get to know you more. Tell me a little about yourself.

Opening Questions

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What subject/s do you teach?
3. What do you think is the best method of teaching?

Questions incorporated with the Framework elements

1. Could you share with me what you know about culturally relevant pedagogy?

If no, I will say, “CRP consists of the methods and strategies a teacher uses in a multicultural environment in order to empower students to make connections between their school and home cultures to develop their cultural and academic competencies.”

Then I will give a brief overview of the components of culturally relevant teaching or say something such as: “I am going to ask you some questions about the different components of culturally relevant teaching, which are: cultural consciousness (understanding that learning happens within the context of culture and taking responsibility for knowing and promoting their student’s culture); academic excellence (having high expectations for and knowing how and what to teach to their students); and sociopolitical awareness (actively encouraging students to question the status quo).

Interview Questions

Cultural Competence/Consciousness

2. Cultural consciousness involves the things a teacher does to know and promote his or her students’ culture. Please could you tell me about the ways in which you promote cultural consciousness?
3. What is your perspective on the ways in which cultural competence might improve outcomes for students in your class?
4. Can you share with me any ways that you encourage students to make connections between school and their cultural experiences?

5. Could you describe a lesson in which you integrate aspects of student culture?
6. To be an effective teacher in a multicultural setting, it is important that teachers keep improving their cultural knowledge and their students' cultural knowledge. Could you share how you go about improving your cultural knowledge and student cultural heritage?

Academic Excellence

7. Another aspect of CRP is academic excellence. Could you describe how you establish standards of academic excellence in the classroom?
8. Could you explain how you communicate high expectations to students?
9. One way to help students achieve academic excellence is to implement active student-centered methods in your class. How do you implement active student-centered teaching methods in your class?
10. Families play a pivotal role in students' academic success and with CRP it is no different. Could you explain how you promote positive perspectives of students' families?

Sociopolitical Consciousness/Awareness

11. Sociopolitical awareness involves actively encouraging students to question the status quo. Are there ways in which you create sociopolitical awareness?
12. Do your students sometimes raise sociopolitical issues in the classroom?
13. What types of sociopolitical issues do students raise in the classroom?

14. How do you know that your students are socio-politically conscious of major issues of the society?

Closing Question

15. Is there any information you would like to add about helping students become culturally competent, setting high academic expectations, or creating sociopolitical awareness?

Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Administrators

Introduction

Thanks for taking the time to participate in this study. You are the expert in your field of administration, and I am excited to hear your perspective. This study is in no way connected to South Atlantic Conference (SAC). The purpose is to understand your perception and use of culturally relevant pedagogy to increase reading achievement among African American students. Before we get started, I must remind you that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Any responses you give will be kept strictly confidential. Do let me know if any of the questions make you uncomfortable. You are also free not to answer a question if you so choose to. At any time during the interview process, if you do not want to continue, please let me know. Could I get your permission to digitally record the entire interview? With your permission, could I also write notes based on your responses? Would you like to ask any question before we start the interview?

Before we begin the interview, I would like to get to know you more. Tell me a little about yourself.

Opening Questions

1. How long have you been an administrator?
2. What is your favorite part of administration?
3. What do you think is the best method of teaching?

Questions incorporated with the Framework elements

4. Could you share with me what you know about culturally relevant pedagogy?

If no, I will give an overall definition of CRP. Example: “CRP speaks to a teacher’s ability to show cultural consciousness and competency and the ability to teach in a multicultural environment that allows students to make connections between school and their cultural experiences.”

Then I will give a brief overview of the components of culturally relevant teaching or say something such as: “I am going to ask you some questions about the different components of culturally relevant teaching, which are: cultural consciousness (understanding that learning happens within the context of culture and taking responsibility for knowing and promoting their student’s culture); academic excellence (having high expectations for and knowing how and what to teach to their students); and sociopolitical awareness (actively encouraging students to question the status quo).

Interview Questions

Cultural Competence/Consciousness

1. Cultural consciousness includes understanding that learning happens within the context of culture and teachers taking responsibility for knowing and promoting their students’ culture. Do you know in what ways teachers create cultural consciousness in their classroom?
2. What are your thoughts on cultural competence?
3. Can you share with me any ways that you see teachers encourage students to make connections between school and their cultural experiences?

4. Could you describe a lesson in which you see teachers integrate aspects of student culture or could share how a teacher's lesson plan in which student culture was addressed?
5. In what ways do you think professional development could be designed to help teachers learn about students' cultural knowledge?
6. Could you share how you go about helping teachers develop students' cultural knowledge?

Academic Excellence

7. Another aspect of CRP is academic excellence. Could you describe how you contribute to assisting teachers in setting standards of academic excellence in the classroom?
8. Could you explain how your teachers communicate high expectations to students?
9. One way to help students achieve academic excellence is to implement active student-centered methods in their class. How do your teachers implement active student-centered teaching methods in their class?

Sociopolitical Consciousness/Awareness

10. Sociopolitical awareness involves actively encouraging students to question the status quo. What are the ways in which your teachers create sociopolitical awareness?
11. How can professional development help teachers do this better?
12. Do your students sometimes raise sociopolitical issues in the classroom?

13. If so, what types of sociopolitical issues do students raise in the classroom?
14. How do you know that your students are socio-politically conscious of major issues of the society?

Closing Question

15. Is there any information you would like to add about helping teachers become culturally competent, setting high academic expectations, or creating sociopolitical awareness?

Appendix F: Principal's Letter of Support

June 30, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

Romanus Leonce has served as a dedicated and skilled Language Arts teacher for Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy for eight years. He is currently in the process of completing his doctoral program and is conducting research for his dissertation. His topic is "Exploring Secondary Teachers Efficacy in Using Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in the Classroom to Improve Reading Proficiency among African American Students".

Mr. Leonce has formal permission to approach teachers and administrators for the purpose of research. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Denise Shaver, Ph.D., Ed.S., M.A.T.