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Factors Potentially Influencing Suspensions at an Affiliated Charter High School

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Abstract

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by

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MA, Pepperdine University, 2005

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Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Federal government agency reports have documented concerns regarding the use of school discipline and suspension indicating that Black students are referred for discipline and/or suspended at a higher rate than students of other ethnicities. Available data from the local school district involved in this study reflected similar troubling patterns of discipline referral and suspension. The purpose of this study was to determine if variables such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender predict the likelihood of receiving discipline referrals or being suspended at an affiliated charter high school in the local school district. Guided by Bandura's social learning theory, this correlational explanatory quantitative study examined archival school discipline data for 1,570 students who received at least one discipline referral or suspension during the 2013–2014 school year at the local high school. Binomial logistic regression results showed that Black male students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were significantly more likely to be suspended compared to other ethnicities. Negative binomial regression analysis indicated students who were Black, male, and were from low socioeconomic backgrounds were at significantly greater risk of receiving a referral than other ethnicities. A professional development training was designed to provide school personnel with culturally-responsive, preventative discipline strategies that meet the needs of all students including those who are at highest risk for punitive discipline and suspension. By equipping school personnel in this and similar school communities with culturally-responsive discipline strategies aimed at meeting the needs of all students, diverse student populations are likely to experience greatly needed positive social change exemplified by improved social, behavioral, and academic outcomes.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my mother and father, Sylvia and Sonny Bryant, who taught me the value of education.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to all those who have supported me and uplifted me during this journey. I want to thank God for giving me the willpower to continue on this journey when I wanted to give up. I want to extend a special thanks to my committee chair, Dr. Georgene Risko, and to my committee members, Dr. Andrea Wilson and Dr. Jonah Eleweke, for providing feedback and support during this process. Thank you for your patience, kindness, and belief in me.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The Office of Civil Rights, a subagency of the U.S. Department of Education that is primarily focused on protecting students from discrimination, has revealed that school personnel at an affiliated charter high school located in Southern California and using the pseudonym SF are consistently implementing suspension and expulsion to address behavioral issues (U.S. Department of Education and Justice, 2014). Specifically, significant concerns were raised with regard to Black students. Students who receive multiple suspensions tend to participate in fewer extracurricular activities, have poor attendance, and add to delinquent behavior within the community; they are also more likely to be placed in special education programs (Hendricks, Sale, Evans, McKinley, & Delozier-Carter, 2010). According to the American Civil Liberties Union (2016), frequent suspensions prime students for entry into what has commonly been referred to as the "school-to-prison pipeline."

Ideally, public schools aim to ensure that educational leaders provide a free and appropriate education to all students regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity (Skiba, Shure, & Williams, 2012). Educational leaders seem to focus on academic results and the achievement gap between minority students and their White counterparts; however, the disproportionate number of disciplinary consequences issued to ethnic minority students receives much less attention (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010).

Within the last decade, educational reform has focused on closing the achievement gap rather on than correcting the inequalities that exist in education. Jensen (2013)

believed that closing the achievement gap will not occur until the issue of social inequality has been eliminated. The U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights have recognized that social injustice in schools needs to be addressed; on January 28, 2014, the U.S. Secretary of Education issued a letter to assist public schools outlining the need to examine their discipline policies (Duncan, 2014). The letter indicated that the disproportionate use of suspension and expulsion for students of color and those with disabilities would be seen as discrimination, and school districts would be subject to civil lawsuits (Epstein, 2014). Recent national reports have documented concerns involving the use of school suspension. The most commonly used punitive discipline practices include discipline referrals, detention, and suspension (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013). Losen and Martinez (2013) have reviewed data from over 26,000 middle and high schools; they have estimated that over 2 million secondary students, or 1 in 9, were suspended during the 2009–2010 school year. In the same study, 2,600 individual schools reported suspending over 25% of the entire student population (Losen & Martinez, 2013). The study shows that although some students were suspended multiple times, they were only counted once (Losen & Martinez, 2013). While making a threat or bringing a weapon to school led to suspension, these acts represented a small percentage of actual school behaviors (Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, 2012). Data from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (2013) indicated that suspensions increase the likelihood that students will repeat the same behaviors, become truant, fail to graduate, develop substance abuse issues, and possibly enter the juvenile justice system.

Losen and Skiba (2010) and the March 2012 publication of the Office for Civil

Rights (2012) have indicated that the overrepresentation of Black students in school disciplinary consequences continues to be prevalent, and suspension numbers appear to be increasing over time. Thus, although the odds of a single minor or moderate discipline incident leading to school suspension are low, the high volume of minor and subjective discipline infractions ensures a greater percentage of out-of-school suspensions (Gregory et al., 2010). During the 2011–2012 school year, 1.2 million Black students were suspended nationally (Smith & Harper, 2015). Some disciplinary outcomes of suspension are not directly linked to the student and his or her behavioral characteristics but are partially determined by the teacher and principal attitude toward discipline (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2011).

Stanford psychologists Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015) revealed that teachers are more likely to view infractions of Black students as a pattern rather than as isolated incidents of misbehavior. Furthermore, Welch and Payne (2012) have found that schools with higher numbers of Black students are more likely to have higher rates of suspension, court action, and zero-tolerance policies. Researchers have proposed a number of possible hypotheses as mechanisms to account for the disciplinary disparity and its relationship to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and the issuance of discipline referrals (Skiba et al., 2012). A number of possible hypotheses are proposed as mechanisms to account for the disciplinary disparity and its relationship to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and the issuance of discipline referrals (Skiba et al., (2012). Palardy, Rumberger, and Butler (2015) conducted a study examining the effects of socioeconomic, racial, and linguistic segregation on academic learning and student discipline in American high schools. They found that highly segregated schools are associated with disproportionate

suspension rates and gaps in student academic achievement, with Black, Hispanics, and students with low socioeconomic status most significantly impacted (Palardy et al., 2015).

The purpose of this correlational explanatory research study was to determine if factors, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender predict the likelihood of a student receiving a discipline referral or the likelihood a student of a student being suspended at an affiliated charter high school in Southern California. A quantitative approach was used to address the study problem. This design was used to identify statistically significant factors associated with the disproportionate suspensions of certain groups of students. Specifically, significant concerns have been raised about schools commonly issuing suspensions to Black students for defiant behavior (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). During the 2012–2013 school year, 4.6% of White students, as compared to 16.4% of Black students, received a suspension. When examining ethnicity and gender, researchers have found that Black boys and girls have higher suspension rates than any of their peers (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2014). The increasing use of suspension and expulsion for Black students is concerning because it is unclear if suspensions change students' behavior, improve their attitude toward school, deter them from associating with the wrong crowd, or improve the safety of the school.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The suspension and expulsion rates for Black students are two to three times higher than the suspension rates for other ethnic groups at the elementary, middle, and high school levels (Skiba et al., 2012). The disproportionate discipline of Black students is a problem

that affects millions of children and families each year (Hoffmann, 2017). In California, every year nearly 366,629 students are suspended, and 9,553 students are expelled, resulting in a suspension rate of 5.7% and an expulsion rate of .01% (California Department of Education, 2014). Further review of the data indicates differences in the suspension rates for certain student groups. Black students comprise 6.5% of total enrollment in California and have a suspension rate of 19% (California Department of Education, 2014). At the school site under study, SF affiliated charter high school, the current suspension rate for Black students is 4.4%. For this study, the pseudonym ABC high school is used to describe a school in Alameda County; its suspension rate for Black students is currently 3.1%.

In 2011, the superintendent of the SF district met with the board, and in the Spring, the SF board adopted a school discipline policy and the School Climate Bill of Rights, which outlines requirements intended to safeguard a student's right to a safe and healthy school environment, positive and effective interactions, and a district-wide commitment to a culture characterized by a positive and proactive approach to working with students.

The superintendent of SF's district uses both the school discipline policy and the School Climate Bill of Rights as focal points around which to develop specific goals. One such goal is to decrease the number of suspensions for all students. The superintendent is focusing on decreasing the suspension rate for schools with a figure exceeding the district's 0.6% suspension rate; however, he has noticed that Black students are suspended at a higher rate than students of other ethnicities (California Department of Education, 2014). According to the superintendent of ABC unified school

district also noticed a gap in the suspension rates between Black students and students of other ethnicities according to the school district's website.

Table 1 shows the percentage of total suspensions received by ethnic groups in ABC Unified.

Table 1

Percentage of total suspensions by ethnic groups at ABC Unified 2013–2014.

Ethnic group	Percent of total suspensions	Percent of enrollment in district
Black	37%	9%
Hispanic/Latino	19%	16%
White	20%	28%
Filipino	7%	7%
Asian	12%	30%

The superintendent of ABC Unified focused on decreasing the suspension rate for Black students in schools with a rate higher than the district's 2.9% average suspension rate for Blacks (according to the school district's 2015 website). According to Noltemeyer, Ward, and Mcloughlin (2015), schools have the right and responsibility to use suspensions to ensure that schools are safe, students can learn, and teachers can teach. The mildest form of school discipline is used to ensure that students understand school

rules and policies. The most secure form of school discipline used excludes a student from the campus. When a student is excluded from the school, school officials commonly fall prey to the misconception that the suspension will cause the student to reflect on the situation that led to the suspension to prevent a subsequent suspension (Noltemeyer, et al., 2015).

Rules and regulations that apply to all students are set forth in schools; however, the challenge for school administrators and educators is how the codes of conduct are administered when they are applied to Black students. According to Morris (2012), when decisions are made about why and where policy is needed, certain attitudes, racial stereotypes, and standards influence the decision-making process. Researchers have suggested that when given the opportunity to choose among several disciplinary options for a relatively minor offense, teachers and administrators choose a more severe option for Black students than for other students (Morris, 2012). Morris has argued that in schools where the population is predominately Black or Latino, educators and administrators perceive a "racial threat," which has been shown to affect their reaction to problematic students, and there is a higher likelihood that punitive exclusionary discipline is practiced. Once students are referred to the administration, Black students are 3 times more likely to be suspended than White students are, as 16.4% of Black students are suspended as compared to 4.6% of White students (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). This display of differential treatment can be seen in the suspension data for SF charter high school during the 2013–2014 school year, indicating that out of a total enrollment of 2,263 during that year, there were 13 suspensions. There were 157 Black students enrolled, and they accounted for 8 of the 13 suspensions. The

suspension rate for Black students was 5.10% (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2014b). The 2013 suspension rate for the district was 1.30%, but the suspension rate for Black students was 4.83% (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2014b). In the district under study, there were 12 American Indian/Alaskan Native students, 217 Asian students, 112 Filipino students, 7 Pacific Islander students, and 478 White students were enrolled. These student groups collectively accounted for 0% of the suspension rate. A further 1,280 Hispanic students were enrolled, accounting for 0.39% of the suspension rate.

In the district under study, the number of students participating in the free and reduced lunch program was 1,380, accounting for 0.80% of the suspension rate; the total number of males enrolled was 1,219, accounting for 0.41% of the suspension rate; and the total number of female students enrolled was 1,044, accounting for 0.77% of the suspension rate. These data indicate that there are gaps in the rates and severity of disciplinary actions administered to students based on ethnicity and socioeconomic status. School suspension is a reactive, punitive disciplinary practice that negatively affects schools' climates and all students (Bradshaw & Waasdorp, 2009). According to Perry and Morris (2014), the consequences might have broader impacts than are currently understood. Thus, the purpose of this correlational explanatory research study was to determine if factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender predict the likelihood of a student receiving a discipline referral or the likelihood of a student being suspended at an affiliated charter high school in Southern California.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

The disproportionate disciplinary representation of Black students is a growing topic that has permeated the literature on scholarship (Lewis, Butler, Bonner, & Joubert,

2010). The overrepresentation of Black students in suspension data is a national problem and a disturbing issue for schools across the United States (Stetson & Collins, 2010). Disciplinary exclusions of students have recently gained national media attention (Carr, 2010; Schwartz, 2011). Perry and Morris (2014) have hypothesized that the negative outcomes of exclusionary practices might have a wider range of consequences than is currently understood. They have stated that disciplinary exclusion of students interrupts educational progress, which may lead to disruptive behaviors causing school personnel to label the students as deviants (Perry & Morris, 2014). The concerns raised with regards to Black students include lower academic achievement, higher dropout rates, and accelerating the path to juvenile offending (Brownstein, 2010). Horner, Fireman, and Wang (2010) have examined the relationship between student behavior, peer status, ethnicity, and gender on decisions about school discipline. The study was conducted in an urban public school in a city located in the Southwest. They collected peer nominations and demographic information from 1,493 diverse elementary students. The participating sample was 43% Caucasian, 35% Hispanic, 20% Black, 1.5% Asian, and 0.5% American Indian; a further 0.8% opted against reporting their race. The collected information was used to examine behavior (prosociality, overt and relational aggression, and impulsivity), demographic characteristics (ethnicity and gender), and context (peer states) (Horner et al., 2010). While the factors that contribute to the disproportionate representation of Black students in disciplinary procedures are complex and varied, research spanning 2 decades has indicated that Black students, followed by Latino and Native American students, are disciplined at higher rates than students of other ethnicities (Losen, Keith, Hodson, & Martinez, 2016).

Horner et al. (2010) analyzed key variables that may influence how administrators and teachers decide to discipline elementary students. They sought to determine if peer behavioral ratings of prosocial behavior, overt behavior and relational aggression, and impulsivity were related to at least one school-enforced disciplinary action (Horner et al., 2010). This category included out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, expulsion, corporal punishment, alternative placement, and other forms of discipline. They also examined contextual factors such as ethnicity, peer status, and gender to determine if these variables were related to disciplinary actions issued by school personnel (Horner et al., 2010). For example, if Black student and Caucasian students are both judged by their peers as "overtly aggressive" would one student be more likely to receive disciplinary action based on ethnicity. The results indicated that the student's ethnicity was the most significant predictor, with Black students more likely to be disciplined than students from other ethnic groups, including Hispanics, Caucasians, and those classified as "other" (Horner et al., 2010). Black students represent 15% of U.S. students, but 35% of students suspended once, 45% of students with multiple suspensions, and 36% of expelled students (U.S. Department of Education and Justice, 2014). The intent of this project study is to provide educators with an understanding of how factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender may affect a student's behavior, and why these factors might be taken into consideration when issuing disciplinary actions.

Definition of Terms

Disproportionality: The ratio of the percentage of persons in a particular racial or ethnic group at a particular decision point or experiencing an event (e.g., maltreatment,

incarceration, or school dropout) to the percentage of the same racial or ethnic group in the overall population (Fong, McRoy, & Dettlaff, 2014).

Ethnicity: A social classification enacted on individuals based on physical appearance; it has contributed to social and hierarchal influences in society (Eisenhower, Suyemoto, Lucchese, & Canenguez, 2014).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): The ESSA is a United States. law passed in December 2015, which governs individual states' K–12 public education. The law replaced the No Child Left Behind Act (Erickson, 2016).

Exclusionary discipline: A disciplinary action leading to a student's removal from the typical educational setting (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013).

Expulsion: The procedural removal of a student for a longer period; expulsion involves a decision by the superintendent and school board (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013).

Gender: Gender is cultural and is the term to use when referring to women and men as social groups (Brannon, 2017).

My Data: A web-based tool that allows school personnel to access student's information such as test scores, suspensions and expulsions, grades, and attendance" (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2014a).

My Integrated Student Information System (MISIS): A web-based system designed to help school personnel use discipline referral, suspension, and expulsion data to design school wide and individual behavioral interventions (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2014a).

Positive Behavior support: A method for addressing schoolwide behavioral issues, classroom management, and individual support systems for students with and without special needs (Positive Behavior Support, 2015).

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support: A set of systematic prevention processes focused on developing positive and contextually appropriate relationships intended to facilitate the social and academic success of all students, regardless of their ethnicity in all school settings and all school types, including alternative schools (PBIS, 2015).

Socioeconomic status: Socioeconomic status is a measure of the influence that the social environment has on individuals, families, communities, and schools (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013).

Suspension: A brief exclusion from school for a disciplinary infraction (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013).

Zero tolerance: A policy that mandates a particular consequence, for example, suspension or expulsion, without consideration of the extenuating and mitigating circumstances of the case (Smith, 2015).

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because the current suspension rate for Black students at SF affiliated charter high school is 4.4%; which was 3.8% higher than the district's average. The superintendent of SF's district is focusing on decreasing the suspension rate for Black students in schools with a rate higher than the district's 0.6% average for Blacks. One reason administrators are seeking to reduce suspensions is that suspensions were previously restricted to fighting, engaging in gang violence, and selling drugs; now, they are being used to exclude students for truancy, insubordination,

and disruptive behavior in the classroom (Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014). If this study can assist SF in identifying a relationship among variables such as ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and the effects of suspension or receiving a discipline referral, SF could potentially serve as an example for other high schools experiencing the same problem.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Butler (2010) has indicated that there has been overwhelming interest in racial disparities in school discipline. One proposed reason for the increase in racial disparities is that Black students are simply more disruptive as compared to other ethnic groups (Losen & Skiba, 2010). If this were the case, higher suspension rates for Black students would not reflect bias. Instead, disproportionate suspension rates would be a relatively appropriate response to disproportionate behavior (Hoffmann, 2017). However, Skiba et al. (2014), have indicated that actual misbehaviors on the part of Black students does not account for racial disparities in school discipline; instead, most suspensions result from small infractions, such as refusal to take off a hat or failing to follow the dress code. Thus, the impetus for this correlational explanatory research study, specifically using an explanatory design, was to ascertain if other variables, such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status, are mitigating factors for students facing suspension or receiving a discipline referral**.**

I used the following the research questions and hypotheses to conduct this quantitative study:

1. What factors are important in predicting a student's likelihood of being suspended from SF affiliated charter high school?

$H_0$1: Factors such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status are not important when predicting the likelihood of a student being suspended from SF affiliated charter high school.

H_a1: Factors such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status are important when predicting the likelihood of a student being suspended from SF affiliated charter high school.

2. What are the predictive relationships between ethnicity and the total number of discipline referrals a student will receive?

$H_0$2: Ethnicity does not predict the total number of discipline referrals a student will receive.

H_a2: Ethnicity does predict the total number of discipline referrals a student will receive.

The variables considered to address the research question were ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status and if these variables increased the likelihood of a student being suspended or the likelihood of receiving a discipline referral.

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature relevant to this study includes (a) a theoretical framework for school discipline, social learning theory; (b) the purpose of school discipline and corporal punishment, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion; (c) factors that contribute to the disproportionate use of suspension; (d) general classroom practices that impact student behavior; (e) ethnic disproportionality; and (f) specific programs districts use to reduce suspensions and expulsions.

I conducted a thorough, extensive, and exhaustive review of the current literature.

I gathered information through Internet searches, ProQuest, ERIC library databases, SAGE, peer-reviewed journals, periodicals of the Walden University Library, EBSCOhost, textbooks, Google Scholar, and I used a variety of key terms and phrases in the search: *schoolwide positive behavior support, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, discipline referrals, positive behavior support, zero-tolerance policy, Every Student Succeeds Act, school safety, suspensions and expulsions,* and *Black students and school discipline.* The search continued until saturation was reached.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study was guided by the social learning theory. The social learning theory places emphasis on the consequences of observing the example of others, whose behavior is then copied. Theorists such as Bandura have developed a systematic program based on precursors that lead to aggression. In 1977, Bandura analyzed human learning, self-regulation, and the reciprocal causation between behavior and environmental determinants (McLeod, 2016). Behavior is learned from the environment through observational learning (McLeod, 2016). Bandura (1977) focused on the influence that family, peers, and school have on child development and self-efficacy. In society, children are surrounded by many influential factors, such as parents, media, friends, and teachers. These models provide examples of behaviors to observe and imitate (McLeod, 2016). Bandura (1977), found that family, peers, and school have a significant impact on a person's life, including education; athletics; and health and clinical problems that lead to stress, depression, and substance abuse. These environmental factors result in out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, which lead to students dropping out and more opportunities for delinquency and criminal activity

(Anfinson, Autumn, Lehr, Riestenberg, & Scullin, 2010).

Bandura's ideas influenced Skinner's behaviorist framework, which focuses on people learning from the consequences of their actions (as cited in Ferrari, Robinson, & Yasnitsky, 2010). Social learning theories argue that learning occurs within social situations and contexts. They also consider how people learn from each other and include related concepts such as observational, imitation, and behavior modeling (Smith & Hains, 2012). Discipline in education is rooted in theoretical frameworks associated with the social, behavioral, and cognitive sciences (Smith & Hains, 2012). Social learning theory, which describes the process through which society attempts to teach children to behave like the ideal adults of that society, provided the theoretical framework for this study (see Miller, 2011). The term *identification* as used by social learning theory is similar to the Freudian concept of the Oedipus complex because they both involve internalizing or adopting another person's behavior (McLeod, 2016).

Social learning theory explains behavior as an interaction of environmental, behavioral, and cognitive effects. Current discipline practices in schools and classrooms have their roots in behaviorism. Skinner believed that it is possible to change and maintain behavioral consistency for long periods of time. This is known as *operant conditioning* (Smith & Hains, 2012). The operant conditioning model that schools have adopted is designed to reward students for appropriate behavior and punish for incorrect behavior. Many school districts employ positive interventions and supports. This multitiered framework includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments (Lewis et al., 2010).

The second operant reinforcement discussed by Skinner (1968) is *negative*

reinforcement. Negative reinforcement strengthens behaviors by removing unpleasant stimuli. Schools use behavior modifications such as suspension and expulsion in an attempt to punish for incorrect behavior. Instead of taking something away from a student as punishment, schools present the student with an unfavorable outcome to reduce the undesirable behavior (Williams, 2015). The third operant reinforcement that Skinner (1968) described is *punishment*. Punishment is intended to reduce the repetition of incorrect behavior. Punishment continues to be used in certain school districts (Gershoff, Purtell, & Holas, 2015). As of 2015, 19 states use corporal punishment to discipline children, and a total of 163,333 students were subject to corporal punishment (Center for Effective Discipline, 2015b).

When examining reinforcement and punishment in a school setting, one must seek to understand why a student is exhibiting negative behaviors. If students wish to avoid or escape their peers, their peers would be considered negative reinforcement rather than punishment. In this case, suspension or the use of corporal punishment would serve to increase the behaviors the students' exhibited to escape his or her peer group. Conversely, if the function of the student's behavior is to engage with other students and adults, the other students and adults would be considered positive reinforcement. In this case, suspension would be a negative reinforcement because removing the student from his or her peer group would be expected to decrease the likelihood of the student engaging in misbehavior in the future.

When school discipline is viewed through the lens of behaviorism, one might expect to see no identifiable differences in behavior patterns, referrals, and suspensions (Kupchik & Catlaw, 2015). If students were disciplined equally, minority students would

not be disciplined disproportionately (Hoffmann, 2017). For example, if the school's population included 53% White students, 25% Hispanic students, 15% Black students, and 7% Asian students and if these students were equally likely to be referred to the office or suspended from school, discipline rates would reflect these above percentages. In other words, according to the lens of behaviorism, if students exhibit identical behaviors, then their gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status should have no connection to disciplinary outcomes. In the schools examined in this study, and in many districts, patterns of discipline have been disproportionately applied to students of color and "at risk" populations (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). By identifying the factors that may play a role in school districts having disproportionate discipline data through the lens of Skinner and social learning theory, this study may help school districts to examine their disciplinary patterns and to intervene to reduce the biased application of disciplinary procedures.

Disciplinary Practices

Corporal punishment continues to be used as a means of discipline in a third of the world's countries (Gershoff, 2017). Currently, some schools use a wooden or fiberglass board for corporal punishment (Porowski, O'Connor, & Passa, 2014). To discipline students, teachers may use physical means such as striking the student across the hands or buttocks with a cane, wooden paddle, leather strap, or wooden yardstick (Axelrod, 2010). In 1977, school corporal punishment was ruled constitutional, and it is allowed in 19 U.S. states (Gershoff & Font, 2016).

To this day, the Supreme Court has not made a decision on corporal punishment; it has left the decision up to the states (Slavin, 2010). According to (Gershoff & Font,

2016), corporal punishment is used in schools to deliberately inflict pain by hitting, spanking, or slapping as a means of discipline. The Texas education code allows for school personnel to use physical force with children (Gershoff & Font, 2016). In Florida, corporal punishment of a public school student may only be administered by a teacher or school principal, and another adult must be present. After the corporal punishment, a teacher or principal must provide parents with an explanation of why the student received corporal punishment (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Students are disciplined for a wide range of behaviors, such as fighting, disorderly conduct, cell phone use, and bullying (State Board of Education Department of Public Instruction, 2015). Gagnon, Kennedy-Lewis, and Gurel (2014) have revealed that more than half of the participants perceived corporal punishment as not being abusive and is effective in addressing student misconduct. Smith (2015) surveyed 162 students in a public school in Mississippi, and 42% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that their behaviors changed after receiving corporal punishment. On the other hand, some students felt that corporal punishment is often practiced in response to relatively minor violations, such as throwing paper or failing to complete class assignments (Center for Effective Discipline, 2015a). Researchers have analyzed state data and have found that socioeconomic status, education level, and religious factors are significant predictors of the use and frequency of corporal punishment (Gershoff et al., 2015). Findings have also demonstrated racial and gender disparities in the use of corporal punishment. In Alabama and Mississippi, Black children are at least 51% more likely to receive corporal punishment than White children (Gershoff & Font, 2016).

Racial disparities in corporal punishment are similar to those found for

suspensions and expulsions, such that Black children are subject to all forms of exclusionary discipline at a higher rate than their peers (Gershoff & Font, 2016). Black children are not misbehaving more than their peers; rather, they are disciplined more severely than their non-Black counterparts. Not only are there racial disparities in corporal punishment, but gender disparities also exist. In Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi, boys receive corporal punishment more frequently than girls do. In fact, boys are five times more likely than girls to be subject to corporal punishment (Gershoff & Font, 2016). Thus, corporal punishment is seemingly being used unequally, with boys more likely than girls. School corporal punishment is used in a handful of states, and there are clear disparities in its application according to children's ethnicity and gender.

Detention as a Disciplinary Tool

Detention is a behavioral consequence that requires a student to remain in a certain area of the school for a specific amount of time during the school day (Wyse, Hayward, Higgins, & Livingston, 2018). More specifically, detention is a classic form of punishment used by school personnel in which a student is assigned to a designated classroom to sit for a specified amount of time, usually without doing anything (Saloviita, 2017). Schools impose detention to deter a student from minor infractions, such as tardiness, chewing gum, and excessive talking. Detention can be implemented after school as long as the parent is informed that the student must remain after hours. The detention functions to deter the behavior, encouraging the student to choose not to repeat the same behavior.

Detention is only one method that schools use to gain student compliance. Schools implement various methods, such as rewards and praise. Examples include

student-of-the-month programs, perfect attendance awards, and "caught being good tickets" that can be exchanged for some type of prize. Other schools use more punitive approaches, such as suspension and expulsion.

Exclusionary Discipline

In the 1800s, European ideas from theorists such as Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg came to the United States; the underlying concept was that students learn better in a safe environment. Therefore, students were no longer punished for academic errors, only for misbehaving (Gershoff, 2017). In the second half of the twentieth century, teachers began to look at the causes of student misbehavior and adopted policies such as removing the student from the educational environment (e.g., detention, time out, suspension, and expulsion; Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, & Collins, 2010). Exclusionary discipline, which is far from an effective deterrent (Erickson, 2016), is a continuing problem in American schools. Findings showing the overrepresentation of Black students have been consistently documented since the Children's Defense Fund first gathered data in 1975 (Erickson, 2016). The literature focuses on the disproportionate suspension rates of Black males; however, Black females also suffer from disproportionate suspension, with rates 3 times higher than their White females (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2014). Black students comprise 18% of the nation's student population, but 48% of those students are suspended from school at least once (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2014). Within a regression framework, being Black and from a low-socioeconomic household are currently significant factors in predicting discipline outcomes, such as being suspended multiple times in the same year (Barrett, McEachin, Mills, & Valant, 2017). When Black and White students with similar discipline records fight each other, Black students tend to receive

more days of suspension. The current project study examines exclusionary discipline practices and their association with ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Suspension

Suspension is a method that schools use to address student misbehavior. The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health (2013) has defined *suspension* as the relatively short-term removal of students from school for a disciplinary infraction. Suspensions are used for a variety of reasons. At times, suspensions are administered to a student who has disrupted the classroom environment, fought, or made threats of violence toward other students or staff. The idea is that suspending disruptive students will improve educational outcomes for other students (Cobb-Clark, Kassenboehmer, Le, McVicar, & Zhang, 2015). Teachers use these policies to remove a student from the educational environment, but suspension thereby leads to more opportunities to interact with misbehaving peers. According to the Axelrod (2010), out-of-school youth are more likely to engage in physical fights, carry weapons, use alcohol and drugs, and engage in sex. Detention, suspension, and expulsion lead to the denial of educational services. Several disciplines—including psychology, education, sociology, and, more recently, economics—have suggested a number of channels through which suspension might have a negative impact on a student. These include effects on self-respect, increased contact with law enforcement, and increased dropout rates (Cobb-Clark et al., 2015).

Although the goal of suspension is to promote a safe environment, decrease violent behavior, and send a message that certain behaviors are not tolerated (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013). One disadvantage is that school officials

may apply rigid disciplinary consequences, thus leading to an increase in out-of-school suspensions in which certain students groups are disproportionately affected (Evans & Lester, 2012). The school principal recommends suspension, and the number of days that a student can remain out of school varies from 7–10. Suspension can last no longer than five consecutive school days and no more than 20 school days in total, unless the student has transferred. The board of education makes the final decision on whether to extend the suspension. A student may not be suspended for being tardy or truant and the school must try other means of intervention prior to issuing a suspension (Cody, 2013). The act for which a student is suspended must be related to school activity or school attendance while on school grounds, going to or from school, during lunch, or during a school-sponsored activity.

Schools do not have to suspend a student: The principal has discretion depending on the offense. Alternatives include anger management programs, counseling, and community service during non-school hours, that is, Saturday school or Local Park or beach clean-up. There are different types of suspensions that can be issued to a student: (a) out-of-school suspension, for example, the student is prohibited from the school grounds for the duration of the time issued. In-class suspension, for example, the student is placed in a supervised classroom away from students to work and discuss behavioral issues), and (c) classroom suspension, for example, the student is suspended from a particular teacher's classroom (Cody, 2013).

In-school Suspension

In-school suspension entails removing the student from his or her regular educational placement and placing the student in a supervised classroom away from peers. Students are allowed to complete their classwork and are supposed to be supervised by certificated

personnel (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013). The average rate of students experiencing in-school suspension ranges between 4.3% and 4.7% (Gagnon, Jaffee, & Kennedy, 2016). For those who seek to avoid school and to engage in illegal behaviors, school personnel utilize in-school suspension as an alternative to out-of-school suspension to keep students in school. Oftentimes, schools do not have the funds to pay a credentialed teacher to supervise the students in in-school suspension, and other school personnel, such as instructional assistants, supervise the students. Although the assistants are there to keep the students on task, they are not certified to provide instruction; thus, students do not receive the same quality of instruction normally provided in the regular classroom setting (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013). Data suggest that removing students from the educational environment and subjecting them to out-of-school suspension makes them 10 times more likely to ultimately drop out of school (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013). Therefore, using in-school suspension may prove cost effective and lead to fewer students dropping out because students are able to remain in school and focus on their studies, as well as to participate in interventions to help them manage their behaviors.

Out-of-school Suspension

Out-of-school suspension is the removal of a student from school for a specified number of days. The goal of out-of-school suspension is to promote a safe environment for students and staff and to decrease violent behaviors (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013). However, research has illustrated that schools with higher out-of-school suspension rates are not safer for students and staff, and students who are repeatedly suspended experience academic failure and engage in criminal activity

(American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013). Students who fail to complete high school can expect to earn considerably less than someone who has completed high school (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013). In addition, high school dropouts are more likely to become a part of the juvenile justice system (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013).

Martinez (2009) has stated that school administrators may abuse zero-tolerance policies to justify suspensions. School administrators should establish student codes of conduct that are enforced and equitable. Doing so allows school administrators to use professional judgment and discretion when making the decision to suspend a student. Ensuring the safety of students, teachers, and staff is pertinent to maintaining a positive school climate. The administrator's job is to ensure that acts of misconduct are addressed appropriately. It is therefore important for administrators to refrain from displaying any indication of allowing disruptive behaviors to occur on their campus. Consequently, administrators are adopting more severe consequences, such as expulsion, in response to unacceptable behavior (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013).

Expulsion

Expulsion is the procedural removal of a student for a longer period; it involves a decision by the superintendent and school board (Vincent, Sprague, & Tobin, 2012). The expulsion of a student is the most severe form of disciplinary action that school personnel can impose on a student for violating school rules (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). Under current legislation, an expelled student is no longer entitled to an education. An expulsion is essentially permanent unless it is reversed or amended by a school official or

the school board (Simmons, 2013).

Expulsions should only be used in the most severe cases of behavioral misconduct, such as bringing a firearm or explosive to school, committing sexual battery, selling a controlled substance, or brandishing a knife, according to the school district's website. Expulsions should be used as a last resort when all other methods of intervention have failed; however, with the implementation of zero-tolerance policies, the use of expulsion has become the norm for many school districts.

Prior to a student being expelled from the district, a hearing is held at a district office. The parent can bring an advocate or attorney, and the school must provide 10 days' written notice of the date, time, location, rights, and facts regarding the case (Simmons, 2013). These documents may be requested and received in the person's primary language, and the parent or guardian may request that an interpreter be present at the hearing (Cody, 2013). An administrative panel of three independent individuals must conduct the hearing within 30 days of the original date of the recommended expulsion. The hearing is recorded, and the school, parent and student, any witnesses to the event, and anyone harmed in the event all present evidence (Cody, 2013).

After all the evidence has been heard, the administrative panel has three days to recommend to the school board that the student be expelled from the district. The school board must examine all the evidence and determine that there is substantial proof that the student violated the education code while on campus, that other means of correction are not feasible, or that the child conducted a zero-tolerance offense (e.g., selling or soliciting illegal drugs or prescription medications, or inflicting serious bodily harm on another

person (Cody, 2013). A student may be expelled for up to one calendar year, a condition known as *suspended enforcement,* and the student then attends a school outside of the local school district.

Due to growing concerns regarding student safety, a growing number of schools have adopted zero-tolerance policies. A zero-tolerance policy allows schools or districts to mandate predetermined consequences for violating certain school rules (Hoffman, 2014). The expansion of zero-tolerance policies has come under scrutiny because of their disparate impact on students of color and questions regarding whether they are truly an effective and fair discipline tool that schools and districts should continue to implement. Exclusionary practices such as suspension and expulsion send a message to students that when they break the rules, they will be removed from school. Comparably, adults know that they can be sent to jail for having committed certain crimes (Hoffman, 2014). Yet, laws are still broken and students continue to be suspended and/or expelled. It is imperative that schools educate parents, teachers, and students on how they are maintaining school safety, which starts with developing relationships based on trust and mutual respect.

Background of Zero Tolerance

In the 1990s, most schools adopted a disciplinary approach known as *zero tolerance* (Darensbourg, Perez, & Blake, 2010). The theory behind the policy is that banning weapons and threats of violence in schools can create a safe climate for staff and students (Brownstein, 2010). Zero-tolerance policies, which are in effect at many public schools, are the extreme form of punishment. Zero tolerance is designed to help schools and districts to consistently enforce exclusionary disciplinary measures in response to

specific offenses, such as carrying a weapon, possessing drugs, and or engaging in violent acts on campus (National Association of School Psychologists, 2013a). As this policy began to gain more attention, school systems in California, Kentucky, and New York began adopting it. Zero tolerance was established to enforce harsher penalties against anyone involved with selling or distributing narcotics; however, schools adopted the policy to mandate severe consequences regardless of the severity of the infraction or the circumstances (Losen & Skiba, 2010). Hitchcock (2013) has stated that data retrieved from the Department of Education show that suspensions have doubled over the past two decades.

In 1994, former President Bill Clinton signed the Gun Free Schools Act. This act led to zero tolerance becoming a national discipline policy mandating that if a student is found in possession of a firearm, he or she will receive a mandatory one-year expulsion from the school district (Losen & Skiba, 2010). Since the Clinton administration implemented the Gun Free School Act into law, some states, boards of education, and local school districts, including many California districts, have expanded the zero-tolerance policy considerably beyond the scope of weapons. This widening has resulted in more students being suspended and expelled from school for minor infractions, such as tardiness, disrespect, and insubordination (Dupper, 2010). Civil rights advocates argue that zero-tolerance practices push students, especially students of color, out of school (Curtis, 2014). This review is not arguing that zero tolerance is solely attributed to schools' disproportionate use of suspension and expulsion. Students bring their unique and individual characteristics into the school environment, and some of these traits may generate negative behaviors (Teske, 2011). Although school personnel generally view

zero tolerance as a viable approach to keep students and staff safe, the procedural aspects are broadly defined, are deemed harmful to students, and may make schools less safe (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). Over the past decade, zero-tolerance policies have faced scrutiny for revealing bias in their disproportionate use against Black males (Smith, 2015).

According to Dupper (2010), the vast majority of school districts in the United States have one or more vague "catchall" categories that include minor and major offenses, yet these infractions are all treated in the same manner. Following the events in 1999 at Columbine High School, this incident led to zero-tolerance policies expanding to encompass a wide range of misconduct (Smith, 2015). Because many zero-tolerance policies are vaguely defined, they are highly associated with bias when used to address discipline problems in school (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). For example, an eight-year old student was suspended from her third-grade class for two days for bringing a pair of cuticle scissors to open the wrapper on her breakfast sandwich. Due to the school's zero-tolerance policy, the teacher believed that she had no choice but to report the student, who now has a permanent suspension on her record (Brownstein, 2010). As another example, a student in Columbus, Georgia was expelled for talking to his mother on a cell phone. He had not spoken to his mother in 30 days because she was on deployment in Iraq (Brownstein, 2010). Nationally, nearly one-third (31%) of Black boys in middle school during the 20092010 school year were suspended at least once; one possible explanation is that under-resourced urban schools with relatively high populations of Black and Latino students are generally more likely to respond with harsher discipline (National Association of School Psychologists, 2013a). The inconsistent application of suspension and

expulsion is further supported by the impact that zero-tolerance policies have on racial disparity. According to a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, Black students are suspended nearly three times as often and expelled 3.5 times as often as White students (Brownstein, 2010). According to Children Now (2014), "The Los Angeles Unified School District suspended 5.9% of all students. But the suspension rate among Black males, 23%, was more than four times the rate among White males, 5%" (p. 2).

The lack of training on dealing with disruptive students and cultural understanding creates an environment that increases the likelihood of Black students being suspended or expelled. There is much work to be done in teacher education programs around culture and its effect on teaching and learning (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). The inclusion of culturally responsive instructional practices will help prepare teachers to make connections with their students' existing mental schemes, learning styles, cultural perspectives, families, and communities (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Schools do not utilize their in-school resources, such as school psychologists, counselors, and mental health experts trained to work with students and families to help manage student behavior. School administrators and teachers can implement many strategies to create a safe school climate without having to turn to zero-tolerance policies.

The Disproportionate Use of Suspensions

In the United States, exclusionary discipline procedures have increased and seem to disproportionately affect students of color. Erickson (2016) has reported that compared to White students, Black students are 3.6 times more likely to be suspended from preschool, 3.8 times more likely to be suspended in grades K–12, and 2.2 times

more likely to be referred to law enforcement or subjected to arrest by school police. There is a history of inconsistent use of suspension and expulsion in school settings. The overrepresentation of Black students in suspension data is a national problem and a disturbing issue for schools across the United States (Stetson & Collins, 2010). Of K–12 students in 2013–2014, 18% of Black boys and 10% of Black girls received an out-of-school suspension, compared to only 5% of White boys and 2% of White girls (Barrett et al., 2017).

According to the Office for Civil Rights (2012), suspension and expulsion seem to have been common forms of punishment for Black students in American schools for the past 30 years. (Hoffman, 2014). Most studies that have examined disproportionality have found that Black males are more likely than Whites to be suspended or expelled (Losen, 2011). Research has illustrated that Blacks are often referred to the principal's office for being defiant. Schools' perceptions of whether behaviors constitute infractions might differ for students of color and students of low socioeconomic status (Skiba & Williams, 2014). Evidence shows that Black students are not the only students who are overrepresented in suspension data. American Indian and Native Alaskan students are also disproportionately suspended and expelled. American Indian and Native Alaskan students represent less than 1% of the total student population, but they account for 2% of out-of-school suspensions and 3% of expulsions (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). Black girls are suspended at a 12% higher rate than girls of any other ethnicity and most boys, and American Indian and Alaskan girls are suspended at a 7% higher rate than White boys and girls of other ethnicities (Erickson, 2016). According to Losen and Skiba (2010), Black students and students with disabilities are

referred to the principal's office for disrespect more often than their peers are. Skiba et al. (2012) have reported that the disproportionate suspension and expulsion rate for Black students is due to the disparate number of times they are sent to the office. Research has demonstrated that schools with higher suspension rates reap no gains in achievement, but instead have higher dropout rates and an increased risk of students being enmeshed in the juvenile justice system (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2014). The next section examines various factors that may influence student suspension. Socioeconomic status, gender, and ethnicity were incorporated as predictor variables in my investigation.

Socioeconomic Status

Poor children growing up in poverty are usually not provided with the necessary nourishment for proper human development. Low socioeconomic children are less likely to receive proper medical care. They also suffer from health issues such as asthma, lead poisoning, and other health-related conditions that can affect their learning (Jensen, 2013). Ramey (2015) examined more than 60,000 schools in over 6,000 districts and found that schools and districts with larger economically disadvantaged populations resorted to suspension, whereas schools that were economically advantaged were less likely to resort to suspension. These schools instead implemented therapeutic interventions and behavior management programs (Shabazian, 2015). School resources are limited for students living in high-poverty urban areas, and especially for those living in single-parent homes. Schools should remember that 1.2 million Black students were suspended in 2014 and that the majority of Black mothers with school-aged children are raising their children without a partner, immersed in the workforce, and classified as low income; this trifecta makes current suspension practices dangerous for

the children in such homes (Hoffmann, 2017). Schools should consider that for low-income students and families, the use of suspension as a discipline tool is misaligned with the needs of vulnerable families. Schools should continue to implement preventative strategies such as culturally responsive teaching and implicit bias training, and educational law should be taught in teacher training programs and reinforced through professional development sessions throughout a teacher's career (Hoffmann, 2017).

Gender

The research on gender and disciplinary procedures makes evident that trends exist as regard gender and discipline referrals, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension. Male students are suspended at a higher rate than female students are. The Office for Civil Rights (2012) has found that boys comprise 75% of all suspensions; thus, boys comprise three-fourths of all suspensions. In particular, Black males are disciplined more than any other group (Howard, 2010). Minority students, and particularly boys, tend to face harsher punishment, even at a young age, than non-minority students for the same disciplinary issues (Capatosto, 2015). According to Dumas and Nelson (2016), Black boys are frequently subjected to suspension, expulsion, arrest, and school transfers. For girls, gender bias is also at play, particularly for girls of color. As a result, Black, Latina, and other girls of color are disciplined at higher rates than their White counterparts (Capatosto, 2015). The U.S. Department of Education and Justice (2014) has reported that Black girls are suspended at a higher rate (12%) than girls of any other ethnicity and most boys of any other ethnicity.

An examination of the most current K–12 public school national database (U.S.

Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016) demonstrates that males are subjected to higher rates of discipline referral and suspension than females. During the 2013–2014 school year, 18% of Black males received at least one out-of-classroom suspension as compared to 10% of Black females. The suspension rate for White males was 5%, and for White females, it was 2%. Per this same report, Black females represented 8% of the total student population, but comprised 14% of students receiving at least one out-of-school suspension. Females of other ethnicities were suspended at rates proportionate to their representation in student enrollment.

In 2016, Mizel et al. surveyed a diverse sample of 10th and 12th grade students in Southern California and discovered similar results. Black males received referrals, suspensions, and expulsions at a higher rate than their representation in the population. They also examined whether family and student factors were a predictor contributing to overall disciplinary outcomes when controlling for demographic factors. While being male and Black was a predictor for higher rates of receiving some types of discipline, ethnicity and gender may put certain females at risk of being disciplined at above-average rates. Blake, Butler, and Smith (2015) found that Black females were suspended at nearly seven times the rate of White females. They reported that for the same offense, Black females received out-of-school suspensions at a significantly higher rate than White females, who were more likely to face in-school suspension. Data also clearly indicate that an interaction of ethnicity and gender results in Black males and females having higher rates of involvement in disciplinary procedures than Latino and White males (Losen & Martinez, 2013).

Ethnicity

Studies have indicated that the disproportionately high suspension and expulsion rates for students of color are a continuing problem in American schools. The Center for Effective Discipline (2015a) has conducted multiple quantitative studies revealing that a discipline gap between White and Black students is present in urban, suburban, and rural schools. A study conducted in Louisiana public schools by Forsyth et al. (2013) reported that Black students had the most in-school and out-of-school expulsions. While Black students comprised 48% of the sampled school population, 69.45% of these Black students were subject to some type of disciplinary action. Conversely, White students represent the second largest ethnicity in Louisiana (46.70% of the student population), but only 27.88% of them received some type of disciplinary action. In Massachusetts, Black students who were involved in fights faced discipline 25% of the time, while White students were disciplined 15% of the time (The Center for Effective Discipline (2015a).

The disproportionate representation of Black students in disciplinary actions is not limited to traditional public schools. Examinations of both charter schools (Losen et al., 2016) and Montessori schools (Brown & Steele, 2015) have indicated that Black students are disproportionately represented in disciplinary proceedings at almost the same rate seen in traditional public schools. In Connecticut (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2016), a study examined data from charter middle and high schools, and Black males had the highest suspension rate, over 30%. In New York City schools, the number of suspensions grew from 29,000 in 2001 to 70,000 in 2011 (Pownall, 2013). Black students represented less than 33% of the school population in 2010–2011, but they served half of all suspensions during that school year. In contrast, White students

comprised 14% of the total student population and served only 7% of the suspensions. From 2011 to 2013, Black and Latino students were involved 90% of school arrests and constituted 70% of total school enrollment.

While factors contribute to the overrepresentation of Black students in disciplinary procedures, research has indicated that Black students, followed by Latinos and Native Americans, are disciplined at a much higher rate than students of other ethnicities (Office for Civil Rights, 2012). School systems across the United States must investigate possible interventions to address the trends indicating inequity in disciplinary procedures involving ethnicity (Dasgupta, 2013).

Effects of Exclusionary Practices

The adverse effects of out-of-school suspension and expulsion are quite profound. The student is excluded from the instructional program and sent home without any intervention, and research has underscored that schools with higher suspension and expulsion rates are neither safer for students and faculty nor successful at reducing misbehavior (Lamont et al., 2013). The disciplinary removal of students has negative effects on student outcomes. According to Losen & Skiba (2010), the removal of students does not change the students' behavior; suspensions are associated with school dropout and juvenile incarceration. The unintended psychological and sociological effects of exclusionary practices on minority students can have consequences, depleting a student's sense of school belonging, causing underperformance in academics, and increasing the likelihood of juvenile delinquency (Hoffmann, 2017).

There are no data showing that out-of-school suspension or expulsion reduces rates of disruption or improves the school climate (Losen & Skiba, 2010). Out-of-school

suspensions result in students losing learning time and leaving school (Dasgupta, 2013). This information suggests that exclusionary practices are ineffective strategies for addressing certain student behaviors. The belief behind exclusionary practices is that when a student is removed from the instructional program, a change in his or her behavior will be the result (Losen & Skiba, 2010). However, longitudinal studies have reported that students suspended in the sixth grade are more likely to have been referred to the office or suspended by eighth grade. Vanderhaar, Petrosko, and Munoz (in press) have outlined the how exclusionary practices lead to alternative school placement and subsequent involvement in the juvenile justice system. Repeat suspensions are significant predictors of being placed in an alternative school for disciplinary reasons. Purging the school of students with behavioral problems in this way leads to long-term negative consequences for the students who are excluded.

Numerous studies have found that suspensions and expulsions contribute to students dropping out of school and lead to heightened risks to students' mental and physical wellbeing (Losen, 2011). In addition, studies have reported that suspensions and expulsions contribute to the racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile detention system (Teske, 2011). Monahan et al. (2014) conducted a study that examined the relationship between suspension and the likelihood of being arrested. They determined that being suspended increased the likelihood of arrest in the same month as the suspension as compared to in months during which the student was attending school. In response, the Obama administration issued voluntary guidelines to help schools reconstruct their disciplinary approaches to address the ineffective and unfair disciplinary policies that are taking an unfair toll on minority students (Chappell, 2014). These guidelines call for

more training for teachers and more clarity when defining behavioral issues at school. Schools must focus on building teacher-student relationships because all stakeholders play a role in building a positive culture and climate in schools. Suspension and expulsion are the most common responses to student misconduct, and they are not effective in meeting the needs of students.

Teacher-Student Relationships: Classroom Management

Relationships, whether in the home, at work, or at school, play an important role in our lives. Students may spend more time in school than they do at home, and as a result, educators are among the most influential people that they encounter. It is critical that teachers connect with their students and develop professional relationships with them. According to Kiriakidis and Lakes (2013), when teachers have a consistent classroom management system that leaves students feeling respected and welcomed, this saves instructional time and improves the school climate.

Teachers' attitudes toward students sometimes lead to out-of-school suspension. Teachers' expectations can affect students' academic and social-emotional outcomes (Herron-Rodgers, 2016). Teachers need to communicate high expectations for students by engaging them in activities that encourage higher-order thinking (Brackett, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2011). To illustrate this, teachers first establish academic goals by looking beyond traditional expectations. They invest in helping students achieve obtainable goals and assume full responsibility for moving students toward those goals and taking time to reflect and self-evaluate (Way, 2011). Educators must also track students' progress and keep students apprised of their performance. Student progress is monitored and assessed on a continuous basis, and adjustments are made in the teaching

and learning process to benefit all students (Brackett et al., 2011). Palardy et al. (2015) have claimed that teachers and administrators should adopt positive interventions to help reduce behaviors that interfere with learning without increasing suspensions.

In 2016, researchers from Stanford University conducted a study to gain an understanding of how educators and researchers collaborate to create a positive learning environment for students. These researchers examined student responses to a school climate survey and performed a comparative analysis of their responses using each student's school record. A logistic regression model was employed to determine the extent to which students' treatment by teachers and the administration was associated with their educational outcomes, and I concluded that male students, students with at least one suspension, and students of color all had had fewer positive experiences on campus in terms of their relationships with school staff.

Parental Involvement and Proactive School Discipline Practices

Parental involvement generally refers to parental interactions with school personnel. Parental involvement in a child's education has a strong impact on academic performance and school climate (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). The starting point is communication between teacher and parent. A study by Losen and Martinez (2013), reported that school districts use different approaches to handling behavior issues (e.g., Saturday school, social workers, Project Re-Direct, direct calls home, and behavior contracts) to decrease suspension rates and increase parental involvement. A high school in one school district utilizes Saturday school as an alternative to suspension. The school gives students a choice between attending Saturday school and serving a suspension. The parent is contacted and informed of the student's

actions and choice. Parents need to sign paperwork granting consent for their child to attend Saturday school. Those students who fail to attend Saturday school have to serve their suspension, and the parents and student have to attend a conference with the school's administrator.

An elementary school and middle school in another school district use social workers to involve parents; the initiative focuses on offering home visits, providing transportation to meet school personnel, and being more flexible regarding times parents can meet with teachers. Social workers meet with families in their homes to discuss possible strategies to reduce negative behavior (Losen & Martinez, 2013). A middle school in another district utilizes a half-day on-site program in an isolated on-site classroom. Run by a credentialed teacher, the program focuses on academics and behavior modifications. Parents have to meet with the principal and the Project Re-Direct teacher to discuss placement, program rules, and what the student will accomplish in the program. If any problems occur, the Project Re-Direct teacher communicates with the parent. Students can only enroll once a year (Losen & Martinez, 2013). An elementary school has two programs for calling students' homes. Initial calls take place at the beginning of the year; teachers contact all parents and establish open lines of communication. The second call, referred to as the "glad call," is unexpected; teachers contact parents at work and tell them something positive about their child to share with their coworkers.

Elementary and middle schools use behavior contracts for at-risk students and students who have been suspended to prevent future suspensions. Students and parents meet with counselors or administrators to discuss the cause of the previous suspension,

strategies for avoiding future suspensions, and the consequences of breaking the contract. The student writes down the agreed-upon consequences and signs the contract, the parent agrees to his or her role and signs, and the administrator places the contract in the student's file. If the contract is broken, the parents, student, and administrator review the contract in a conference and implement consequences (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Some preventive measures that school districts use to include parents in their discipline policies.

Resources for Teachers to Use in the Classroom to Address Student Behaviors

School districts must make systematic changes in their approaches to discipline and behavioral intervention. Schools that have implemented effective alternative strategies have reported reductions in discipline referrals (The National Association of School Psychologists, 2013b). Schools need to establish a universal handbook that clearly defines what constitutes a violation of the zero-tolerance policy and provide a fair, appropriate, and equitable response. The National Association of School Psychologists (2013b) has recommended that schools use a team of people such as administrators, mental health experts, lawyers, social workers, parents, counselors, community members, teachers, and students to research and develop discipline policies providing school personnel with alternatives to suspension. Alternatives that have been proposed include violence prevention programs with a prevention curriculum, such as Second Step and the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP). The Second Step program is used in PreK–8 education and is a research-based program that schools can implement inside and outside the classroom to teach students core emotional, social, and problem-solving skills (Espelage, Low, Polanin, & Brown, 2013).

The RCCP is a comprehensive school-based violence-prevention program designed for use with children in K–8 education. The program is based on the theory that aggressive and violent behaviors are learned and therefore can be affected through education. The primary goals of RCCP are to increase children's levels of knowledge regarding how to approach conflict situations, to develop children's conflict-resolution skills, and to promote children's positive interpersonal and intergroup relations (Zehr, 2013).

Research by the National Association of School Psychologists (2013b) has recommended social skills trainings as interventions for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Early interventions that target low levels of inappropriate behavior before they escalate include Stop and Think (Project ACHIEVE) and Positive Adolescent Choices Training (developed for Black youth). Project ACHIEVE is an innovative school reform and school effectiveness program whose ultimate goal is to help design and implement effective school processes that maximize the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral progress and achievement of all students (Durlak, Weisberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). The Positive Adolescent Choices Training program is designed to reduce the chances of Black and other at-risk adolescents becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Although the program was especially developed to be sensitive to the needs of Black youth, its techniques are applicable to and are frequently used with multi-ethnic groups. The programs mentioned above provide teachers and students with social skills curricula and positive behavior supports that lead to improved student learning in an environment where students and staff feel safe.

Culturally Relevant Disciplinary Training Strategies

No student, regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender should be

targeted to fail in school due to unfair discipline practices (Smith, 2015). There is a need for school personnel to utilize resources such as counselors to create discipline panels that include all stakeholders (e.g., parents, teachers, and school staff) to create equitable discipline practices. The importance of culturally relevant disciplinary programs needs to be recognized. The inclusion of culturally responsive instructional practices will help prepare teachers to make connections with their students' existing mental schemes, learning styles, cultural perspectives, families, and communities (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

Behavioral Interventions for Students

Schools offer alternative placement programs for students who misbehave and have infractions that do not warrant a suspension from school (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Some school districts use time-out rooms, behavior intervention centers, and Saturday school. Time-out rooms are classrooms where a student who is misbehaving can be sent to calm down and discuss what occurred in the classroom and possible alternate behavior choices. At the conclusion of the academic period, the student is then released and may attend the next class. Schools keep records of how many times the student is sent to the time-out room, the reason, and the teacher who sent the student. (National Association of School Psychologists, 2013a).

A licensed counselors oversee behavior intervention centers, and students who have already spent one period in the time-out room and who continue to have behavior issues spend the rest of the day in the centers. The counselor works with the student by providing counseling support and anger-management strategies, and the counselor also helps the student complete his or her class assignments. Saturday School is offered once

a month and is voluntary for middle and high school students (National Association of School Psychologists, 2013a). It is offered as an alternative to suspension, and students must have parental permission to attend. Saturday school runs for four hours, and a credentialed teacher or administrator supervises the students. Students work on a campus beautification project or assigned classwork. School personnel meet with each student individually to discuss why they were placed in Saturday school and different choices they can make in the future to avoid being suspended or returning to Saturday school.

Genesis is an alternative learning program that is housed in a mobile unit on a few high school campuses in different districts. It is a program for students who have been suspended for a long period of time (Evans, 2013). A staff member who is working toward teacher certification provides one-on-one instruction and oversees the program, or students are taught through a computer program called NovaNET. Students take career aptitude tests, research career fields, and complete a final project on the career field of their choice. Lastly, the Genesis coordinator meets with the student to discuss strategies for addressing their behavioral issues and steps they can take to avoid being suspended in the future.

The School's Responsibility for Maintaining School Safety

Schools need sound disciplinary systems to maintain school safety and increase academic achievement (Skiba, et al., 2012). School districts adopt codes of conduct to establish rules and regulations outlining expected behaviors and policies to deal with minor infractions (e.g., tardiness or chewing gum) and more serious infractions (e.g., assault with a deadly weapon or fighting; Lamont et al., 2013). The district code of conduct provides expectations for social behavior and informs parents and students of the importance of supporting those expectations. Zero-tolerance policies were developed to

ensure that consistent and firm consequences provide students with a safe and secure environment (Hoffman, 2014). Schools have adopted restorative justice programs. Restorative justice programs aim to put key decisions into the hands of the victim and to involve those who have a stake in a specific offense to collectively identify and address harms and needs (Hoffman, 2014).

Implications

Based on the findings of this study, a professional development plan was created to train teachers to provide strategies to address students' academic, social, and emotional needs and to gain a better understanding of their cultural differences. The training provided by the professional development initiative may help reduce the number of discipline referrals and suspensions issued to students. The information found in this study will provide school personnel with an understanding of disciplinary patterns that could be related to the disproportionality in discipline referrals and suspensions. Additionally, this study offers data and research-based resources to the school district, which could lead to a deeper understanding of culturally responsive practices based on current trends and best practices. Identifying where the district's current practices are in terms disproportionality enabled the creation of a professional development plan to support the schools in reducing suspensions. The professional development plan could be shared across the district and could affect decisions made when implementing school wide discipline policies. The information gained from the literature supported a deeper understanding of discipline practices; which was used to develop a project to best support local needs.

The professional development plan that grew out of this project contains details

related specifically to interventions, supports, and program changes that could decrease exclusionary practices. These recommendations are based on the data collected for this study and the review of the relevant literature. Using the information gained from both the data and literature, I offer recommendations to the local district, including teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders, about research-based interventions and tools for addressing students' behaviors.

Summary

The question addressed in this correlational study was if factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender predict the likelihood of a student receiving a discipline referral and of being suspended at an affiliated charter high school in Southern California. The rationale was based on recent national reports documenting issues involving the use of out-of-school suspension and the overrepresentation of Black students. In addition, peer-reviewed journal articles demonstrating the overrepresentation of Black students in a range of disciplinary consequences, including discipline referrals and suspensions. The significance of the project study lies in the fact that it may assist schools in exploring other factors than suspension and discipline referrals when issuing disciplinary consequences. The research questions used to guide the study were also included. An in-depth literature review has presented key terms, the theoretical and conceptual foundation, and an overview of the relevant topics. Section 2 addresses the methodology and design used for the correlational explanatory study, the appropriateness of that design, the population, and the sample. Section 2 concludes by discussing informed consent, data collection procedures, data analysis, and the validity and reliability of the study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

Quantitative research explains a phenomenon according to numerical data that are analyzed by means of mathematically based methods (Yilmaz, 2013). The purpose of this correlational explanatory research study was to determine if factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, and gender predict the likelihood of a student receiving a discipline referral and of being suspended at an affiliated charter high school in Southern California. In addition, I sought to identify which groups are more vulnerable to school suspensions, that is, Black, Hispanics, Whites, males, or females. Using correlation analysis, I assessed data from an extant database comprised of detailed information concerning all documented discipline referrals and school suspensions throughout the course of one school year. A significant amount of quantitative research has been conducted in this area using archival data produced at the local, state, or national level (Losen, 2011). One of the prevailing stereotypes suggests that students of color, particularly poor Black males, are more likely to be suspended due to being classified as overtly aggressive (Skiba & Williams, 2014). While patterns of disproportionality have been studied at the national and state levels, a comprehensive examination of possible factors associated with school discipline has not yet been carried out (Brown & Steele, 2015).

Research Design and Approach

Several options are available to researchers conducting a project study. Quantitative research identifies a research problem based on a need for an explanation of why something occurs or of the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2014); qualitative research summarizes results through interviews, observations, and narratives

(Yilmaz, 2013). Mixed-methods research collects both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure that there is complete understanding of the problem (Yilmaz, 2013). There are three ways to distinguish each research design: data collection, data analysis, and reporting (Creswell, 2014). For this study, a qualitative design would not have provided answers to the research questions because qualitative research questions are formulated in general and broad terms and data are collected from individuals or participants who are observed by you, interviews are conducted by you, and narratives are written by you (see Yilmaz, 2013). You analyze data into groups or themes (Creswell, 2014). Lastly, the report is written using flexible, subjective language (Yilmaz, 2013). Mixed methods and action research would not have been suitable to address the research problem because they use both quantitative and qualitative data to focus on addressing practical problems that individuals face within an educational setting (see Creswell, 2014).

The research design that was best suited for this study was a quantitative correlational explanatory design. This design was selected because the research questions were logically derived from the problem statement and were used to discover the simple associations between two or more variables. Creswell (2014) outlined six steps when conducting a correlational explanatory study: You begin by correlating two or more variables. Data are collected at one point in time. You analyze all participants as a single group. The correlational test results are reported specifically the strength and direction; and lastly, conclusions are drawn based on the statistical test results.

An experimental research design was not selected because I did not attempt to explain whether an intervention would make a difference for one group as opposed to another group (see Creswell, 2014). There were no interventions involved in this study.

Another form of quantitative research is the survey research design; there are two type of associated approaches: cross-sectional and longitudinal. For this study, the cross-sectional survey design was not selected because I did not attempt to examine current trends, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions (see Creswell, 2014). A longitudinal survey design was not selected because the study was conducted in 1 year, and I attempted neither to examine a trend over time nor to conduct follow-up research (see Creswell, 2014). Based on the purpose of this project study, a correlational design seemed to be the most suitable approach to answer the research questions and explain the relationships among the variables.

Setting and Sample

The project study was conducted at an affiliated charter urban high school in Southern California using the pseudonym (SF). This campus had approximately 2,494 students in Grades 9 to 12. The racial composition of the 2,494 students enrolled during the 2013–2014 school year was 496 Caucasian students (19.9%), 1,394 Hispanic students (55.9%), 197 Black students (7.9%), seven Pacific Islander students (0.3%), 116 Filipino students (4.7%), 271 Asian students (10.9%), and 13 Alaskan students (0.5%). Approximately 52% of the students were categorized as socioeconomically disadvantaged based on eligibility for the free or reduced lunch program (California Department of Education, 2014). Three hundred thirty four students were classified as English language learners, 269 were Spanish-speaking, eight spoke Vietnamese, and 29 spoke other languages, including Tagalog, Farsi, Chinese, Russian, Armenian, and Korean.

Sampling Strategy and Sample Size

The sampling strategy was convenience sampling. Convenience samples were chosen

because of the participants' availability and willingness to be studied (see Creswell, 2014). The students were identified using existing data sets. Convenience sampling is cost efficient, took a reasonable amount of time, and assisted me in gathering useful data and information that would not have been possible to obtain using probability sampling techniques, which require formal access to population lists (see Creswell, 2013). Participants with at least one discipline referral or one suspension were selected to participate in this study. The study included all students, regardless of ethnicity, who met that criterion. The sample (N = 1,570) was comprised of those students who were enrolled at SF affiliated charter during the 2013–2014 school year and who had received at least one discipline referral or at least one suspension. The statistical level of significance for this study was set at p = .05 (see Creswell, 2013).

Eligibility of Participants

The target population included students from SF affiliated charter high school who were enrolled during the 2013–2014 school year and who had received at least one discipline referral or at least one suspension. Students who were issued discipline referrals for afterschool detentions and tardiness were not included in the study, nor were students who had not received any discipline referrals. The reason these students were excluded was that the data might not have been relevant to the guiding questions. An archival data set of discipline referral records for all on-campus and off-campus suspensions for the 2013–2014 school year was obtained; the identities of both adults and students remained confidential.

Instrumentation

All schools within this district are required to input discipline referrals into the My Integrated Student Information System (MISIS). The study population was developed

using data from the MISIS system at SF. Specific variables were included to perform a statistical analysis. Data on the participants' ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status were obtained to comprise the final participant sample. The ages ranged from 13.8 to 19, the racial composition was diverse, approximately half of the student population received free or reduced lunch, and approximately 400 students were English language learners.

Data Collection and Analysis

No new data were collected for this study, and MISIS is a data system that encompasses all aspects of school operations. With this system, school personnel can access a detailed account of a student's discipline record. Archival data sets were used to construct the data set needed to complete this study. Prior to gaining access to the archival data set, the district director granted me permission; in addition, a letter of cooperation was completed and signed by the school district. Discipline referral data and suspension data were drawn from MISIS**,** which contains SF's discipline data and data on students' ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, suspensions, and discipline referrals. The archival suspension data and discipline referral data are compiled by the school district in accordance with California state mandates.

In documenting the construct validity, I identified the use of discipline referrals as a systematic and standardized way of making data informed decisions about behaviors in school (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010). When working with archival data, you do not have control over data quality; therefore, there may be inaccuracies in the data collected (see Creswell, 2013). When an archival data set is used, you must try to ensure that the results are valid by inspecting any model, template, or documents used in the original collection of the data as well as by consulting or interviewing anyone who had a

role in the initial data collection process (see Creswell, 2013). MISIS is a fully integrated data system that tracks a student's educational records from Grades K to 12 as long as the student remains within the district according to the district's website. Major components of the system include, but are not limited to, tracking a student's attendance, discipline, health, grades, schedules, and counseling records according to the district's website.

The system contains discipline data from K to 12 for each student according to the district's website. Using the archival data provided me with a detailed account of each student's disciplinary record. Without access to the MISIS system, I would not have been able to determine the number of discipline referrals and suspensions accumulated by all students and all ethnicities. Using correlation analysis, I focused on data fields within the system that provided detailed information on the number of discipline referrals and school suspensions participants had received throughout the course of one school year.

The data collection process utilized archival discipline data from MISIS on students at SF. The data collection process began with a lengthy process of submitting the research proposal to the school district. The proposal had to identify key elements, which needed to be presented in the correct order according to the district's website. Approval was received from the Committee for External Research Review and Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), and data were collected. Approval was received on November 1, 2016 from the IRB and the Committee for External Research Review, and data files were made available. The IRB approval number for this study is 09-28-16-0232074. The analytical method used to answer the research questions was logistic regression analysis and I discussed this method as part of the IRB process in terms of its relation to the research questions in this study.

To answer the first research question, "What factors are important in predicting a student's likelihood of being suspended from SF affiliated charter high school?" I used logical regression because it allowed me to predict the likelihood of being suspended given additional factors such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. Negative binomial regression was used to answer the second research question: "What are the predictive relationships between ethnicity and the total number of discipline referrals a student will receive?" This method was selected because I sought to identify the relationship between the number of suspensions and ethnicity.

The SPSS Graduation Package (22.0) was used to analyze the archival data from the 2013–2014 school year, which was received from district personnel from MISIS. This database contained data on student absenteeism, suspensions, expulsions, discipline referrals, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. District personnel omitted any student identifiers that would have violated confidentiality and compromised students' identities.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

For this study, one affiliated charter high school was the focus; therefore, the data may only be applicable to this school or to schools of similar sizes or demographic compositions. According to Skiba and Williams (2014), 30 years of data exists on racial inequality in schools; therefore, it would seem plausible to extend the study to the national level, rather than to limit it to a single school or district. The choice to use archival data leaves you with no ability to control the quality of the data (see Creswell, 2013). There may have been inaccuracies in the data set because someone else other than myself collected the data at the school site with some type of pre-established instrument (see Creswell, 2013). The period was one academic year, which limited how much data

could be collected. The scope of this correlational explanatory research study was to determine if factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender predict the likelihood of a student receiving a discipline referral or being suspended at an affiliated charter high school in Southern California. Therefore, the ability to generalize the results to large populations of students beyond the local setting may be limited (see Creswell, 2014). However, the findings could potentially be generalized to other affiliated charter schools with similar discipline data.

Understanding the importance of ethical considerations when conducting research and reporting results. I attempted to report the findings with integrity, honesty, and objectivity (see Creswell, 2013). Prior to collecting the data, I received official permission from the director of student services of the district selected for my study, and I conducted all aspects of the project study in an ethical manner as outlined by the standards and requirements of Walden University's IRB (Walden University, 2010). Statistical procedures are reported, along with the steps that were taken to refine or correct the data as well as assumptions, limitations, and scope delimitations.

Protection of Participants' Rights

This project study did not involve any human participants; therefore, parental consent and student assent to conduct this study were not necessary. The data collection process was part of the normal procedures at SF, and district personnel omitted any student identifiers that would have violated confidentiality and compromised students' identities. However, official permission and a cooperation letter from the district's director of student services granting access to the student data were obtained prior to data collection and analysis. The superintendent of schools and the principal of the selected school were

contacted to request permission to use the school discipline data for the selected one-year period. All documents were kept in a locked, secured location. The records were shredded to ensure that all information regarding schools and school districts remained anonymous.

Data Analysis Results

Data collected for this study were prepared and organized in an Excel database and then input into the SPSS Graduation Package (22.0) for analysis. The data were collected from the archival discipline data set on SF students within MISIS for one school year. The coordinator from the office student services provided the data in an Excel database, omitting student identifiers. The results of the analyses are presented according to the research questions and the hypotheses. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the relationships among the variables: ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, discipline referrals, and suspensions. Preliminary analyses indicated that referrals and suspensions were related to certain demographic variables. Socioeconomic status was related to a greater frequency of both referrals and suspensions, meaning that those with lower socioeconomic status were more likely to have been suspended and to have received referrals. Gender was linked to referrals, with females receiving fewer than males. However, there was no significant gender difference in suspensions. The likelihood of being referred or suspended differed significantly between ethnicities; however, the specific differences were not investigated in the preliminary analysis because this was the purpose of the hypothesis testing.

Table 2 below shows the frequencies and percentages for demographic variables.

Table 2

Frequencies and percentages for demographic variables.

Factor	Ethnicity	Asian	225	8.9%
		Black	192	7.6%
		Filipino	120	4.7%
		Hispanic	1,468	57.9%
		White	531	20.9%
		Total	2,536	100.0%
	Gender	M	1,373	54.1%
		F	1,163	45.9%
		Total	2,536	100.0%
	SES	Y	1,545	60.9%
		N	991	39.1%
		Total	2,536	100.0%
Suspended		No	2,510	98.2%
		Yes	47	1.8%
Suspension Type		Suspension	7	.3%
Referrals		0	2,158	84.4%
		1	227	8.9%

Table 2 indicates that the sample contained a slight majority of males, with 1,373 (54.1%) male students and 1,163 (45.9%) female students. The sample was majority

Hispanic (57.9%), with the next most common ethnicity being White (20.9%), followed by Asian (8.9%), Black (7.6%), and Filipino (4.7%). The sample showed that 60.9% of the students met the criteria to receive free or reduced lunch. When looking at the suspension rates, I found that 98.2% of the students had never received a suspension, 1.8% had received at least one suspension, and 8.9% had received at least one referral.

The next step was to examine the distribution of referrals to determine which test would be appropriate for identifying the predictive relationships between ethnicity and the total number of discipline referrals a student received. After viewing the distribution, particularly the mean and variance, I selected the negative binomial model as the best distribution type. The negative binomial model was selected because the variance was much larger than the mean. The mean was .47, and the variance was 4.628. Spearman rank-order correlations and phi coefficients were utilized to examine relationships between important study variables. Quantitative data were used to address the research questions.

Research Question 1: What factors are important in predicting a student's likelihood of being suspended from SF affiliated charter high school?

$H_0$1: Factors such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status are not important when predicting the likelihood of a student being suspended from SF affiliated charter high school.

H_a1: Factors such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status are important when predicting the likelihood of a student being suspended from SF affiliated charter high school.

Specific variables were included in this study to perform statistical analysis:

students' ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, discipline referrals, and suspensions. Quantitative data for answering the first research question were analyzed using binomial logistic regression. A binomial logistic regression model examined ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status as predictors of suspension.

Table 3 shows the likelihood of a certain group being suspended as compared to White students.

Table 3

Binomial logistic regression predicting the likelihood of suspension.

		B	SE	p	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	White			16.294	4	.003	
	Asian	-16.125	2,657.639	.000	1	.995	.000
	Black	2.186	.659	10.998	1	.001	8.896
	Filipino	-16.021	3,631.931	.000	1	.996	.000
	Hispanic	.962	.618	2.424	1	.120	2.616
	SES	.824	.405	4.137	1	.042	2.279
	Gender	.075	.320	.054	1	.816	1.077
	Referrals	.148	.028	27.979	1	.000	1.159
	Constant	-5.707	.658	75.205	1	.000	.003

Note. a. Variable(s) entered in step 1: ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), gender, referrals.

Table 3 results displays the likelihood of a certain group being suspended as

compared to White students. The results show that Black students were 8.86 times more likely to be suspended than White students were, and Hispanic students were 2.61 times more likely than White students to be suspended. Referrals were interpreted slightly differently because the overall number of referrals for a student. Therefore, for each additional referral, the chance of suspension was 1.15 times greater.

Table 4 presents a binomial logistic regression model examining ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender as predictors of suspension.

Table 4

Binomial logistic regression predicting the likelihood of suspension.

		B	SE	p	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	White			23.734	4	.000	
	Asian	-16.212	2,643.311	.000	1	.995	.000
	Black	2.468	.645	14.627	1	.000	11.795
	Filipino	-16.038	3,613.714	.000	1	.996	.000
	Hispanic	1.059	.614	2.979	1	.084	2.884
	SES	1.059	.397	7.111	1	.008	2.884
	Gender	.305	.307	.987	1	.321	1.356
	Constant	-5.929	.666	79.247	1	.000	.003

Note. a. Variable(s) entered in step 1: ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), gender.

Table 4 indicates significant prediction of suspensions, $\chi^2(6) = 47.558$, $p = .000$. Three significant effects emerged. First, Black students were significantly more likely to

be suspended than White students were (11.79 times more likely). Second, Hispanic students were significantly more likely to be suspended; their likelihood of being suspended was 2.88 times greater than the figure for White students. Third, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were 2.84 times more likely to be suspended than students with a high socioeconomic background. A binomial logistic regression model examined ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender as predictors of suspension. The analysis indicated that ethnicity and socioeconomic status were significant predictors of suspension. Specifically, Black students and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds experienced more frequent suspensions than White students and those from high socioeconomic backgrounds, respectively. The results indicated that ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender were predictors of receiving a suspension. Since ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status are important when predicting suspensions and there were significant differences in suspension numbers based on ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status, the null hypothesis was rejected. Quantitative data were used to address the research questions.

Research Question 2: What are the predictive relationships between ethnicity and the total number of discipline referrals a student will receive?

$H_0$2: Ethnicity does not predict the total number of discipline referrals a student will receive.

H_a2: Ethnicity does predict the total number of discipline referrals a student will receive.

The second research question was analyzed using negative binomial regression to predict the number of referrals based on ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic

status. Negative binomial regression was chosen due to the distribution of referrals, which was overwhelmingly zero, with increasing numbers of referrals increasingly unlikely.

A negative binomial regression was conducted to predict number of referrals based on ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. Certain ethnicities (Native American/Alaskan Native and Pacific Islander) were excluded due to low sample sizes and too few referrals to create a distribution of a shape similar to that seen for other groups. Several models utilizing Poisson and negative binomial regression were tested, and the final model was chosen due to having the best fit statistics, particularly the log likelihood and information criterion (AIC). The overall negative binomial model included data from 2,536 participants and was highly statistically significant, $\chi^2(6) = 491.18$, $p < .001$. The analysis was conducted with SPSS Graduation Package (22.0) using the generalized linear models procedure. Results are summarized in Tables 5 shows the negative binomial regression statistical model for referral count and Table 6 shows the estimates for predicting referral count.

Table 5

Negative binomial regression model statistics for referral count.

N	Log Likelihood	AIC	χ^2	Df	P
2,536	-2,103.164	4,268.197	491.178	6	.000

Table 6

Negative binomial regression parameter estimates for predicting referral count.

			95% Wald Confidence Interval		Hypothesis Test				95% Wald Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
Parameter	B	Std. Error	Lower	Upper	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
(Intercept)	-2.132	.1166	-2.361	-1.903	334.327	1	.000	.119	.094	.149
Asian	-1.951	.3026	-2.544	-1.358	41.576	1	.000	.142	.079	.257
Black	1.107	.1372	.838	1.376	65.145	1	.000	3.026	2.313	3.960
Filipino	-.692	.2627	-1.206	-.177	6.930	1	.008	.501	.299	.838
Hispanic	.206	.1046	.001	.411	3.888	1	.049	1.229	1.001	1.509
White	0[b]	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.
Male	.935	.0807	.776	1.093	133.982	1	.000	2.546	2.174	2.983
Female	0[b]	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.
SES (Y)	.849	.0883	.676	1.022	92.431	1	.000	2.337	1.966	2.779
SES (N)	0[b]	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.
(Scale)	1[c]									
(Negative binomial)	1[c]									

Note. Dependent variable: number of referrals

Model: (intercept), ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic (SES)

a. A Hessian matrix singularity was caused by this parameter. The parameter estimate at the last iteration is displayed.

b. Set to zero because this parameter was redundant.

c. Fixed at the displayed value.

Multiple significant predictors of referrals emerged from the analysis. Asians, B = -1.951, Exp (B) = 0.142, $\chi^2 = 41.576$, $p < .000$; Blacks, $B = 1.107$, Exp (B) = 3.026, $\chi^2 = 65.145$, $p < .000$; Filipinos, $B = -.692$, Exp (B) = 0.501, $\chi^2 = 6.93$, $p = .008$; and Hispanics, $B = .206$, Exp (B) = 1.23, $\chi^2 = 3.88$, $p = .049$, all significantly differed from White participants. Asian and Filipino students received fewer referrals than White students did, while Black and Hispanic students received more referrals than White students did. Similarly, referrals were more numerous for students who were male, B = .935, Exp (B) = 2.546, $\chi^2 = 133.982$, $p < .000$, or of low socioeconomic status, $B = .849$, Exp (B) = 2.34, $\chi^2 = 92.431$, $p < .000$. In summary, students who were Black, male, or from a low socioeconomic background tended to have more referrals. Black students received 3.02 more referrals than all other ethnicities. Furthermore, Asian females from a higher socioeconomic background tended to receive fewer referrals.

Research Question 2 posed the following question: What are the predictive relationships between ethnicity and the total number of discipline referrals a student will receive? The question was assessed using logistic regression because the aim was to identify the relationship between the number of referrals and ethnicity. The results indicated that ethnicity had a statistically significant relationship with the number of discipline referrals a student received; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Summary

After receiving IRB approval, I gathered archival data pursuant to university standards and the procedures set forth in the cooperation letter obtained from the district's director of student services. Data on student ethnicity, gender, and

socioeconomic status were obtained to construct the final participant sample. The selected participants were high school students in Grades 9 to 12 who attended an affiliated charter high school in Southern California and who had received at least one discipline referral or at least one suspension. Table 2 provides frequencies and percentages for the data set. Table 3 displays the likelihood of a certain group being suspended relative to the reference group.

Table 4 contains the binomial logistic regression model that examined ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender as predictors of suspension and outlines the results of the hypothesis testing. Tables 5 and 6 present the findings of the negative binomial regression model used to predict referral counts and to conduct hypothesis testing. Based on the results of the logistic regression analysis, I rejected the null hypothesis. There was a significant difference between suspension numbers and ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status, and ethnicity had a statistically significant relationship with the number of discipline referrals a student received.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Based on data analysis, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status are factors that predict whether a student will receive at least one suspension or at least one discipline referral. As a culminating project for this study, a professional development plan focused on culturally relevant pedagogy was crafted. The purpose of the project is to help all staff to be more responsive to student needs and to gain a better understanding of cultural differences; these outcomes may result in fewer students of color being suspended.

In Section 3, I provide a brief description of the professional development project, including the rationale and the goals for the design. A review of the literature addresses professional development and culturally responsive pedagogy. Then, I provide specific details about the project, including the resources needed, implementation process, time table, and roles of those involved. In the final section, I present the plan for evaluating the professional development project, justification, evaluation goals, and implications.

The project consisted of creating a professional development training session on culturally relevant pedagogy. Colleges and higher education institutes often do not adequately prepare teachers for teaching diverse students with culturally responsive teaching practices (Siwatu, 2011). Thus, there is a need to provide professional development training for new and veteran teachers to help those educators better understand and use culturally responsive teaching strategies. The training integrates the standards of quality professional development by providing teachers with an opportunity to use their professional learning communities (PLCs) to engage in job-embedded professional development.

The goal of this professional development model is to provide all staff at SF charter high school with the knowledge and skills needed to practice culturally relevant pedagogy. The professional development training will provide staff with a comprehensive model of culturally responsive teaching: a pedagogy that will be implemented across disciplines and cultures to engage students while respecting their cultural integrity. The professional development training was developed to help participants achieve the following goals:

1. Cultivate a deeper understanding of culturally relevant teaching strategies.
2. Examine the complexity of the neighborhoods where students reside.
3. Understand culturally relevant teaching models that may be embedded into daily instruction.
4. Learn how to create a classroom environment in which it is safe for teachers and students to share so that each teacher can gain a deeper understanding of how his or her life experiences shape the lives of his or her students.
5. Reflect on cultural biases.
6. Better understand the impact of ethnicity and culture in the classroom.

Learning Outcomes

The intended audience for the professional development training is all staff members at SF. After completing the proposed professional development training, the participants should be able to do the following:

1. Define culturally relevant pedagogy and identify what it means to be a culturally proficient instructor.
2. Identify what culturally responsive practices look like personally and instructionally through modeling and instructional scaffolding.

3. Identify the role school culture plays in shaping barriers that prevent teachers from contributing to positive academic, attitudinal, and social outcomes for all students.
4. Create culturally relevant lesson plans that specify ways to continue learning and understanding culturally relevant pedagogy.

Rationale

Professional development was selected as the project genre based on the findings and the literature review. This projects focus is on improving teacher trainings that provide guidance on how instructors can adapt their instructional practices to meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds (Hramiak, & Xian-han Huang, 2015). Based on the data analysis, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status are factors that predict whether a student will receive at least one suspension or one discipline referral. Thus, I determined that a professional development training aimed at improving the school culture and providing teachers with professional development would allow staff to work together to implement positive behavioral interventions in the classroom (see Flynn, Lissy, Alicea, Tazartes, & McKay, 2016).

The data collected made clear that students of color with low socioeconomic status are suspended at a higher rate than their peers. A binomial logistic regression model addressed ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender as predictors of suspension. The results indicated that Black students are 8.86 times more likely to be suspended than White students are, and Hispanic students are 2.61 times more likely than White students to be suspended. To adequately address these issues, school personnel need to be

prepared with the relevant content knowledge, experience, and training to work with a wide range of students (McIntyre, Hulan, & Layne, 2012).

According to the data analysis, students who are Black, male, and from a low socioeconomic background tend to have more referrals. On average, Black students are 3.02 times more likely to receive a referral than students of all other ethnicities. Furthermore, Asian females from a higher socioeconomic background tend to receive fewer referrals. One goal of this professional development training is to empower participants so they can cultivate ethnically diverse students' individual and academic abilities. Teachers will be able to examine the quantitative data and learn about what cultural differences may exist between themselves and their students and how their beliefs could potentially affect the quality and efficacy of teaching and learning (see Gay, 2013). This could help to teachers' recognize the roles language and culture play in influencing how students learn.

Focusing only on demographics, suspension data, and test scores may not give teachers a comprehensive view of their students. Thus, professional development initiatives that can assist teachers in improving their academic instruction and reducing behavioral issues are needed (Owen, Wettach, & Hoffman, 2015). Currently, disparities in suspension rates for students of color suggest the need for training on culturally responsive practices, which could in turn have positive effects on the classroom environment and reduce disruptive behaviors (Owen et al., 2015). For the project study, the professional development model was selected to provide teachers with the skills, tools, and language needed to transform their classroom environments into places where student success is promoted and positive behavior is fostered (see Flynn et al., 2016).

Flynn et al. (2016) used the Ramapo approach to train public school teachers in New York. Ramapo training is a professional development program whose purpose is to improve classroom and behavior management skills. The program employs a toolbox containing six content areas in four levels that build on each other. The first two levels are organized around strategies relevant for all children, role modeling and building relationships, and the next two content areas are clarifying expectations and establishing structures and routines. The third level is adapting to individual needs so teachers can focus on children who need support that is more intensive. The top level focuses on responding, reflecting, and repairing strategies to assist teachers with addressing students in crisis. The strategies in this toolbox are supported by research on effective classroom management and creating a positive school culture. The findings from the study constitute preliminary evidence suggesting that the Ramapo professional development training program is related to fewer disciplinary actions against students and the provision of strategies to support learning outcomes (Flynn et al., 2016).

Owen et al. (2015), focused on two professional development programs developed by the Curry School of Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia that have been shown to improve teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. The My Teacher Partner Program is web-based, and teachers are able to reflect on interactions with students and meet one-on-one with coaches to develop an action plan to address culturally responsive teaching strategies and behavioral issues in the classroom (Owen et al., 2015). The other professional development program is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System; this is an observational tool that outlines and measures teachers' behaviors and their connections to student academic gains (Owen et

al., 2015). The above studies outline professional development programs that can aid teachers in intentionally creating classrooms that are culturally responsive and students are engaged and behave in ways that benefit their learning. The focus of the proposed training is to use PLCs as job-embedded professional development; this approach may give teachers opportunities to discuss the value of culturally responsive practices, their existing skills, and the skills they perceive as lacking. In addition, PLCs provide teachers with time to plan, engage in meaningful dialogue, and share best practices for instructing diverse learners.

Review of the Literature

The literature review for the professional development training begins with the theoretical framework for this culturally responsive professional development project, critical race theory (CRT). It then offers a scholarly review of the literature on components of professional development, principles of effective professional development, benefits and barriers of effective professional development, and teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive professional development. The next section addresses effective culturally responsive professional development for teachers seeking to support the needs of diverse students. The last section addresses the use of PLCs to examine social justice issues.

For the project study, the online library on the Walden University website provided access to sources from the following educational databases: Education Research Complete, ERIC, ProQuest, SAGE, and Thoreau. The search began by using the following keywords: *culturally relevant pedagogy, professional development, teacher perceptions, minorities, teacher, professional learning communities and culturally*

responsive teaching, culturally responsive educational practices, *and critical race theory.*

Theoretical Framework

Teacher education programs often struggle to provide educators with the tools to teach and support students of color (Cook, 2015). Critical race theory is a theoretical method that analyzes the appearance of ethnicity and racism in an attempt to understand the sociocultural forces that shape how people respond, perceive, and experience racism (Brizee, Tompkins, Chernouski, & Boyle, 2015). Prominent CRT researchers such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia Williams have confronted and challenged the beliefs and practices that enable racism to continue while also seeking ways to overcome systemic racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In schools, as well as in teacher education programs, CRT provides a needed explanation, as it relates to issues such as equitable access to high-quality teachers for the most undeserved students (Lynn, 2014).

In Howard's (2010) case study of pre-service teachers, teacher candidates expressed concerns about lacking the skills needed to address the complex nature of ethnicity, and culture. They explained that the reason they did not feel comfortable discussing ethnicity was that they did not want their comments to appear racially insensitive, racist, or politically incorrect (Howard, 2010). By participating in professional learning tasks that include faculty members willing to engage in critical reflection and to develop racial awareness. By recognizing that reflection is a never-ending process and that all aspects of teaching have explicit and implicit racial and cultural implications, teachers are more likely to develop a conceptual understanding of racial issues in the context of teaching and learning (Howard, 2010). Thus, this

professional development project will create opportunities for teachers to learn and model culturally responsive skills and instructional strategies.

Professional Development

Administrators and districts are constantly exploring ways in which professional development can foster teacher learning and the expected link to enhanced teaching practices (Kennedy, 2016). Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) have referred to effective professional development as structured professional learning that shifts teachers' practices and assists educators in improving student-learning outcomes. Professional development is therefore a constant learning process, job-embedded, and collaborative (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). As a result, changes occur in teachers' practices, leading to improvements in student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Professional development that is collaborative and job-embedded can not only help teachers but also result in improvements at the school level and beyond (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In education, professional development does not simply seek to hold the teacher accountable for student learning; instead, it functions as a tool to revolutionize how learning and instruction take place in classrooms (Gulamhussein, 2013). As Gulamhussein (2013) has reported, in this era of higher standards and teacher evaluations being partially based on student achievement, districts must go further in developing new approaches to teacher learning, approaches that create actual changes in teacher practices and student learning. Hence, the challenge districts and schools face is the question of how to create opportunities for teachers to develop their teaching practice so that they can in turn help students grow (Gulamhussein, 2013). Thus, leading to the next section, which includes the following elements: principles, characteristics, and

benefits of effective professional development and barriers to effective professional development.

Effective Professional Development

As Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) have expressed, effective professional development is critical to teacher learning and improved student outcomes. Effective professional development is often seen as an important way to enhance teacher knowledge (Gulamhussein, 2013). This approach should emphasize practices that support the skills students need to be critical thinkers and problem solvers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Teachers who merely keep students working the entire period do not successfully prepare students for college or work in the twenty-first century. Schools and districts need to know that professional development workshops that are shorter than 14 hours, which are commonly held at school sites, do not have an effect on student achievement (Gulamhussein, 2013). As Gulamhussein (2013) has noted, longer professional development programs give teachers time to apply and practice skills in their own classrooms. Gulamhussein (2013) has also reported that Levin, He, and Allen (2013) demonstrated that teachers may need as many as 50 hours of instruction, practice, coaching, and modeling before implementing a new teaching strategy in the classroom. Simply increasing the number of hours teachers spend on professional development is not enough; time must be spent on supporting teachers during the implementation phase (Gulamhussein, 2013). Effective professional development programs offer teachers opportunities for learning that are interactive, sustained over time, and organized so that new learning strategies can be implemented in the classroom (Goodnough, Pelech, & Stordy, 2014). A program should provide follow-up and continued teacher support as

needed, and it should involve evaluation and joint participation (Goodnough et al., 2014).

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), effective professional development integrates most, if not all, of the following elements: (a) focus on teaching strategies associated with a specific curriculum that will support teacher learning; (b) focus on teachers incorporating active learning, which means designing and experimenting with lessons, which provides them with opportunities to engage in the same style of learning central to student development; (c) creation of a space where teachers can collaborate and share ideas to create communities that have a positive impact on school culture and instruction; (d) provision of coaching and support, with experts sharing their knowledge and focusing directly on individual teachers' needs; (e) provision of feedback (f) provision of ample time to learn, practice, implement, and reflect on new strategies that could enhance expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, and technology.

Goodnough et al. (2014) asked teachers to complete a questionnaire during a one-week training that focused on how to create action research projects in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) teaching and learning. One of the questions asked teachers to identify the characteristics of effective professional development, and 90% of the teachers reported that the professional development must be connected directly to student learning. They indicated that strategies developed during professional development programs should be practical, aligned with curricular outcomes, and suitable for addressing diverse learners; the teachers also reported that including an assessment tool that can reach all students is necessary.

The second theme that emerged was that 80% of the participants stated that

opportunities to share and collaborate are important. The participants described this as having the opportunity to go to other schools and observe best practices, as well as being able to share and work collaboratively during the professional development process. Goodnough et al. (2014) noted that participants also identified the need for adequate time to engage in professional development and for the content presented to be relevant subject matter for middle and high school teachers and by grade level for elementary teachers.

In terms of planning effective professional development initiatives, Guskey, Roy, and Von Frank (2014) have identified the importance of establishing a PLC. Such communities may consist of teachers and administrators and should meet monthly to engage in data dialogues to inform instruction, improve student outcomes, and conduct regular needs assessments to promote and support effective teaching practices and student achievement (Guskey, et al., 2014). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) have identified steps that schools and districts should take when implementing effective professional development programs. The first step is to adopt standards to guide the design, evaluation, and funding of the program. The second step is to evaluate the use of time and create bell schedules that increase opportunities for teachers to learn, collaborate, and participate in peer coaching and observations. The third step is to conduct a needs assessment using data from staff surveys; these assessments assist schools in establishing quality professional development initiatives that are relevant and meaningful. The fourth step is to identify experts and coaches to support teachers' learning. The fifth step is to provide technology to give teachers opportunities to engage in ongoing collaboration via online social forums. The final step is to provide flexible

funding and offer continuing education units for attending workshops, institutes, and seminars offering ongoing support to help teachers improve their knowledge, skills, and outlook to generate change.

Benefits of Effective Professional Development

Professional development, if implemented effectively, can provide benefits for the participants (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The first benefit is that it allows teachers to engage in the same learning activities they are designing for their students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). As Goodnough et al. (2014) have stated educators find important the development strategies for teaching diverse learners. Another benefit is ongoing support for teachers (Gulamhussein, 2013). Teachers need support while they attempt to implement new strategies to help them navigate any challenges or frustrations (Gulamhussein, 2013). In addition, teachers noted the importance of other kinds of support, such as support from the administration, district personnel, mentors, and coaches, to guide them as they theorize and implement new strategies in their classrooms (Goodnough et al., 2014).

The examination of student work and student data is another benefit of effective professional development. Collaboratively analyzing student work helps teachers to focus on structured learning, which could help them to change their practices and to determine instructional strategies that may or may not be working in the classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The professional development workshop that I designed is an effective way to provide teachers with a new perspective regarding taking risks, sharing failures, and providing opportunities to connect with students' cultural backgrounds.

Barriers to Effective Professional Development

The goals of professional development are to have a positive impact on student learning and to provide teachers with the necessary tools to support student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). However, at times, a well-designed professional development program may not improve student achievement (Kennedy, 2016). Schools face barriers when attempting to implement effective professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Among these barriers are a lack of time allotted for learning, practicing, and implementing newly acquired knowledge and skills; challenges associated with teaching diverse learners without specific professional development to address students' learning needs; a lack of resources, such as curriculum materials and technology; and financial constraints (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

A *New America* report by Tooley and Connally (2016) has identified system-level obstacles to implementing effective professional development beyond the school and classroom; the authors concluded that improvement is needed in four areas. Districts need to (a) identify teachers' needs, (b) develop new approaches that move away from "sit and get" models, (c) implement active learning strategies that assist teachers in creating real changes in their practices, (d) hire coaches who have expertise regarding the teachers' grade levels and subjects and who can provide observable feedback and suggestions for improving teaching practices, and (e) create systems to track what is and is not working and why. When planning for effective professional development, schools and districts will still face obstacles that can affect teaching practices and hinder the impact on student learning and achievement.

Teachers' Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Professional Development

Professional development for teachers should be an ongoing process permitting them to assess their teaching practices in order to support students' needs (Yurtseven, 2017). As the diversity of in the United States increases, today's teacher must be equipped to educate students with a range of cultural beliefs, values, languages, and abilities (Mette, Nieuwenhuizen, & Hvidston, 2016). Educational institutions must consider culturally responsive professional development because it gives teachers a safe space to explore cultural differences and to learn how to proactively work to understand, respect, and meet the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds (Brown, 2014).

One strategy teachers can use during instruction is scaffolding students' cultural knowledge and learning styles to create a classroom community that is student centered and supportive (Mette et al., 2016). However, it is difficult to offer a professional development training on culturally responsive teaching, especially when teachers have personal perceptions and biases regarding culturally diverse students. Research suggests that to become culturally proficient, teachers must experience a personal transformation through deep self-reflection on their own biases, attitudes, and beliefs about others (Mette et al., 2016). Deep reflection on their own personal histories and experiences could possibly help teachers recognize and overcome their biases towards specific groups.

Cultural Competency through Professional Development

As demands for deeper and more complex student learning intensify, schools and districts are working to create new opportunities for teachers to learn and refine the skills needed to develop twenty-first-century thinkers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Professional development must go beyond techniques so that teachers are prepared to develop student competencies such as deep mastery of content, critical thinking skills, and complex problem-solving skills (Goodnough et al., 2014). Participants are often subjected to a "sit and get" type of experience rather than asked to work collectively to share their knowledge and skills to help their students learn (McIntyre, et al., 2012). According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), effective professional development (a) deepens teachers' content knowledge; (b) provides opportunities for reflection, research, and practice; (c) takes place during the school day; (d) occurs over time; (e) involves collaboration among teachers and administrators aimed at deepening their pedagogical practices; and (f) creates PLCs.

Mayfield and Garrison-Wade (2015) investigated culturally responsive practices as school wide reform and discovered that embedding cultural competency throughout all communications and professional development trainings constructed teachers' understandings of ethnicity, culture, and their impact in the classroom. The Center for Effective Education Development created a matrix that can be used as a guide for teachers seeking to integrate culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). The matrix outlines culturally relevant teaching practices and themes that teachers can implement in their classrooms. The themes, practices, and recommended approaches include instructional engagement, multicultural awareness, high expectations, critical thinking, social justice, collaborative teaching, responsive feedback, modeling, scaffolding, child-centered instruction, assessment, and relevant materials (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). The themes, practices, and recommended culturally responsive teaching approaches were used to develop some of the learning tasks for this project. I also took into consideration studies related to multidisciplinary instruction under the aegis of

culturally responsive teaching. These studies have reported that using culturally responsive strategies can be used to teach different subjects.

Gehlbach et al. (2015) investigated teachers who had integrated rap music as a tool for teaching poetry to Black students; this approach enabled those students to outperform students at other schools within the district. That researcher also explored the importance of parental involvement in the classroom. Parents were invited to the class to share their wisdom and knowledge with students. The study suggested that diverse students benefit from the use of cultural characteristics that connect to their personal experiences.

Averill, Anderson, and Drake (2015) conducted a joint practice-based research study and they provided training to pre-service and in-service teachers to develop instructors' ability to teach mathematics using culturally responsive practices. The participants included four experienced New Zealand European teachers, two male and two female, and seven classes ranging from elementary to secondary math and four student teachers. The interview data corroborated the importance of coaching, teacher educator modelling, discussions of mathematical pedagogy, and the implementation of culturally responsive practices (Averill et al., 2015). The professional development was based on the idea that coaching and modeling enable student teachers to participate, reflect, and discuss pedagogical practice in relation to culturally responsive teaching strategies. The student teachers receiving the support found that it helped them to better understand their students and to teach them mathematics with greater success.

Similar studies have also supported the use of the pedagogy of cultural responsiveness. Johnson and Fargo (2014) conducted a study with 21 teachers in two

elementary schools located in a Southwestern state. The training provided these elementary school science teachers with the skills needed to improve science instruction and facilitate culturally relevant pedagogy. The training implemented a new science curriculum combined with instruction in conversational Spanish. The findings illustrated that students attending the school whose teachers participated in this program demonstrated significantly larger gains on the state-mandated science assessment.

Several other studies also influenced the design of this project. Li (2013) investigated a professional learning approach for teachers known as the "cultural worker continuum"; this strategy has been proven to have a direct impact on students' success. There are three stages that teachers experience in becoming effective cultural workers: cultural reconciliation, cultural translation, and cultural transformation.

Polly et al. (2015) conducted a non-experimental study with 291 elementary mathematics teachers from two school districts, one large urban district and a suburban district, to bolster standards-based math instruction and to develop cross-cultural and diversity training. The study was designed to be learner-centered and teacher-owned, to offer active and collaborative learning activities, to be supportive of changes in teachers' teaching practices, and to introduce culturally responsive teaching strategies. After the professional development program, which included modeling, peer coaching, and support from a culturally responsive leadership team, they observed a direct positive impact on student outcomes. The data indicated that the students experienced significant gains in mathematics, as demonstrated by their pre- and post-test results (Polly et al., 2015).

Culturally responsive teaching strategies do not come naturally to most teachers. However, researchers have shown that providing pre-service and in-service professional

development for educators aimed at developing their cultural and linguistic awareness is imperative to prepare them for teaching diverse student populations (Bower-Phipps, Tate, Mehta, & Sature, 2013; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Irvine & Banks, 2003; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2012). Teacher education programs must realize the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy as a "personal and professional developmental process" (Gay, 2013, p. 59). According to Gay (2013), the purpose of culturally responsive pedagogy is to empower educators to help diverse students to achieve academic success while respecting their identities and backgrounds as meaningful opportunities to create optimal learning environments.

Professional Learning Communities

Educators have used PLCs as the foundation for improving student achievement, addressing culture; PLCs operate under the notion that improving learning for students is a continuous and systematic process in which teachers analyze their teaching practices to achieve better results for their students (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Professional learning communities allow for support and training through regular meetings, ongoing discussions of strategies and effective classroom practices, feedback from peers and group leaders, and self-reflection. Sharratt and Planche (2016) have reported that principals must be able and willing to work alongside teachers to develop common curricula, placement plans, and assessments based on the ongoing collection of data.

Professional learning communities give principals and teachers a safe, supportive, and creative environment to explore cultural differences and to address issues of social justice (Mette et al., 2016). Strong leadership is necessary for educators to talk about ethnicity and the achievement gap between White and non-White students. Thus, through

PLCs, educators can critically examine race-related matters and culturally responsive pedagogy (Mette et al., 2016). Based on this comprehensive literature review, the goal of this project is to provide educators with the skills to acknowledge cultural differences and to improve the ways in which teacher preparation programs address ethnicity and racism. This work is important yet difficult, especially as society continues to diversify.

Project Description

The proposed professional development training will occur at the school site over a three-day period during the summer of 2019. Teachers will be compensated at their regular hourly rate each day they attend. Funding for the project will be provided through the school budget. During the training, the participants will have the opportunity to internalize the definition of culturally responsive education; recognize what culturally responsive practices look like at the personal, organizational, and instructional levels; and determine if these strategies can be implemented in their classroom practices (Heitner & Jennings, 2016). In addition, the teachers will learn to identify the role of school culture; and reduce your own prejudices; learn to construct culturally responsive systems for the classroom; and develop an understanding of contributive, additive, transformative, and social action models as they apply to teaching and learning.

The proposed professional development training will begin with a PowerPoint presentation on the conceptual frameworks of cultural responsiveness. On the first day of the presentation, teachers will be introduced to dimensions of culturally responsive education based on the research of Banks (2006). On the second day, teachers will focus on the dimensions of culturally responsive pedagogy based on the research of Little (2009). This information can be viewed in Appendix A.

On the third day, teachers will examine characteristics of culturally responsive teachers based on the research of Villegas and Lucas (2002). The final stage will give teachers the opportunity to examine culturally responsiveness by reading vignettes. Teachers will also discuss what is happening on the institutional, personal, and practice levels and consider which culturally relevant teaching strategies will be needed to implement in their classrooms.

The professional development training will take place in August prior to the start of school to provide teachers with time during the 2019–2020 school year to implement, practice, and reflect on culturally relevant teaching strategies. The professional development trainings will start at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. The six-hour period will be long enough to allow for all of the training activities, along with collaboration, feedback, and reflection. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), collaborative approaches are effective in promoting school change as they provide teachers with a basis for inquiry and reflection into their own practices, which allows them to take risks and solve problems. To ensure that communication and support are ongoing, the facilitator will ask participants to submit reflective journals via email after each training session. Throughout the three-day period, participants will have the opportunity to engage in challenging conversations and to extend their own learning about what it means to be culturally relevant through reflective journals. Through this model, teachers will receive professional development on teaching diverse populations. Often, teachers participate in a single "hit or miss" training, leaving them without time for follow-up and with unmet learning needs (McIntyre et al., 2012). This proposed professional development training will provide participants with a total of 18 hours of professional development time.

Resources, Supports, Potential Barriers, and Potential Solutions

Needed Resources and Existing Supports

The following resources will be needed to conduct the proposed professional development training: a location, copies of the necessary books, journals, notepads, pencils, pens, highlighters, a laptop, a large sticky note pad, and refreshments for morning and afternoon. Existing supports include the school where the professional development will occur. The school will provide a meeting room, tables, chairs, access to the Internet, a television and camera, a document reader, a projector, and a screen.

In addition, a commitment from the principal and his school staff is needed. The participants will need to commit to three days in August prior to the start of school and to agree to being compensated at their hourly rate. During the school year, the principal will also need to provide substitute coverage and release time for the participants to receive coaching and observe classes.

Potential Barriers

The potential barriers to implementing the proposed professional development training are a lack of funds and time, a lack of teacher buy-in, and scheduling issues. Also, lack of resources (e.g., technology, books, and materials to support teacher learning). For the 2017–2018 school year, the local district received $100,000 in Title 1 grant money (according to the school district's 2017-2018 website). Assuming equal funding for the 2018–2019 school year, the district would need to provide the schools with funding. The average cost of a teacher, including salary and benefits, is between $75,000 and $100,000, depending on experience (according to the school district's 2017-

2018 website). Given the cost, the schools will have to ask for financial assistance from the local district to cover the professional development training. Teacher time is a potential barrier that schools face when asking teachers to attend professional development programs taking place over an extended period. In an effort to overcome this barrier, the non-mandatory, but highly recommended, training will take place during the summer when school is not in session. I will inform the administration and the leadership team teachers will need to be compensated.

To address the potential barrier of lack of teacher buy-in, I will meet with the administration and leadership team to discuss the importance and benefits of participating in the professional development training. Yoon (2016) has stated that teacher buy-in is affected by five factors: (a) whether the professional development is beneficial to the teachers' school; (b) whether it will help them to become better teachers; (c) whether it personally motivates them; (d) whether it could be implemented in their classrooms; and (e) whether it will help in improving student achievement.

In an effort to prevent issues with technology, I will ask technology support for assistance a few days prior to the training to ensure participants will have access to the Internet if necessary. As regards the schedule, the schools schedule their professional development meetings on Tuesdays for 90 minutes according to the district's website. To assist the school administration with implementation, I will present the dates and times to the administration and leadership team to make sure that the teachers and meeting space will be available. To ensure the teachers have access to the books and materials, the presenter will provide copies during the training.

Solutions to Overcome Potential Barriers

To effectively implement the culturally responsive professional development, the school and district will need to address the potential barriers noted above. To overcome the fiscal challenges, the school and district may need to work together to split the cost of the professional development by using money from the general fund. School leadership plays a significant role in increasing teacher buy-in. Yoon (2016) has suggested that school leaders can use data to improve performance and connect teachers to a particular reform. In the local district, administrators can provide professional development, conduct assessments throughout the year, and share results with teachers to increase teacher buy-in. To address potential scheduling issues, the school administration can work with its leadership team to ensure that culturally relevant professional development topics are included as an agenda item when teachers meet in their PLCs.

Implementation Timeline

The proposed timetable will include three professional development days before the school year begins, possibly in early August; program sessions will start at 8:00 a.m.to 3:00 p.m. Participants will be compensated at their hourly rate for participating. Although the trainings will not be mandatory, the school's administration will highly recommend that teachers participate. The teachers will have many opportunities to collaborate between meetings, and participants will be asked to email reflective journals. Participants will also meet in their PLCs on the second Tuesday of every month to collaborate, plan, and create lesson plans that will create change in their classrooms and perhaps alter their interactions with students from diverse backgrounds. The Tuesday meetings are job-embedded and built into the schools' professional development plan.

Roles and Responsibilities of Presenter and Participants

The presenter and the participant both play a role in the learning process. The presenter should create a safe and open environment where knowledge is shared and teachers are able to work collaboratively while being exposed to various research-based pedagogical strategies (Wood & Palmer, 2016). The participants are actively engaged, using artifacts such as student work samples or state test scores to identify areas of concern and working collaboratively with other teachers as well as the presenter to develop a teaching innovation that addresses the area of concern. Finally, all teachers on that team practice the new strategy in their classroom (Gulamhussein, 2013).

Project Evaluation Plan

Participation in this project is expected to result in teachers being able to define dimensions of culturally responsive education and to recognize what culturally responsive practices look like at different levels. Teachers will also be able to identify the role of school culture and will develop an understanding of contributive, additive, transformative, and social action as they apply to culturally relevant teaching practices. Prior to the start of session 1, the participants and the presenter will establish ground rules since ethnicity and culture are sensitive subjects. This activity will generate rules that will direct how participants can discuss topics such as ethnicity and culture in a safe and comfortable setting without fear of judgment and negative reactions. To evaluate the project, I will utilize formative assessment. Formative assessment is often described as a classroom practice in which evidence of student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers to improve their instruction (Taylor, 2017). According to Creswell

(2014), formative assessment involves continuous reflection and includes the following questions:

1. Did the findings fit the problem?
2. Will the research be useful in our school?
3. Will the research add to our scholarly knowledge about a topic?
4. Will the research help address some pressing educational problem?

At the end of session 1, participants will be expected to identify what it would look like to be culturally responsive and to list what they do personally or have observed in their schools that is culturally responsive. This will assist the presenter in determining if the participants are prepared to proceed to the second session without the presenter having to review or clarify any of the material. Participants will be asked to reflect after each session and to inform the presenter of the most and least helpful activities. The participants will also have the opportunity to anonymously rate the presenter and the activities to potentially inform future professional development trainings.

The project will be shared with key stakeholders such as the principals, district personnel, and university facilitators to assist them in conceptualizing and implementing culturally relevant pedagogy. During project implementation, I will collaborate with colleagues to generate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to overcome issues with implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in schools.

Project Implications

The development and success of the culturally responsive professional development training could have positive social implications. Educators who work with students from culturally diverse backgrounds need opportunities to meet and adequate

time to implement culturally relevant teaching strategies aimed at improving student achievement. Important stakeholders in this case include all teachers who will actively engage in the learning process by attending the professional development training. The proposed professional development will possibly lead to social change by helping staff in schools with diverse student populations become agents of social justice. Educators must work together to highlight school reform and policy issues that lead to students of color being alienated based on ethnicity and socioeconomic factors (Blount, 2013).

In a larger context, after participating in the proposed professional development training, the participants will be able to share their experiences with other educators who work with students of color. This professional development training will potentially help educators to address injustice and inform policymakers of what might be done differently to eradicate deep-seeded issues of excluding students of color from having access to the curriculum and the negative effects this has on possibly narrowing the achievement gap (Range, 2013).

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

In this section, I reflect on the project's strengths and limitations. I make recommendations for alternative approaches and reflect on my growth as a scholar and project developer, as well as on the implications for future research. The greatest strengths of this project are the structures in place to support the teaching and learning that will take place throughout the professional development program. The school has PLCs embedded into the schedule, and the administration supports the project. The administration understands the importance of this project, as it may benefit the school's understanding of the essential role educator's play in addressing social injustices that minority students face in schools. The findings from the data revealed to the administration that a project such as this may be able to improve the quality of professional development by providing the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively meet the needs of diverse students. The school is committed to fostering a learning environment that will promote academic achievement for all (see Tichnor-Wagner, Harrison, & Cohen-Vogel, 2016).

A challenge involved in implementing this project is that attempts to integrate something new, such as culturally relevant teaching strategies, into the classroom can sometimes meet with resistance from teachers and administrators, and they struggle to define culturally responsive pedagogy (Han et al., 2014). Barriers that need to be considered are: teachers who think culturally relevant pedagogy is teaching students about their culture instead of attempting to learn from the student and teachers who feel uncomfortable addressing their own ethnic and racial biases. These may include color-

blind racial attitudes and dispositions, and individual resistance to taking advantage of trainings to become more culturally responsive (Gay, 2013).

The most notable limitation of this project is that the proposed timeline cannot provide the dynamic and complex culturally relevant training that teachers require. This type of professional development should be a transformational process that is part of a school's professional development plans. The intention of this project is to use the findings and trainings to better integrate culturally relevant pedagogy within the PLCs. One way to address the projects limitations would be to train leaders in each PLC and allow them to fill in the knowledge gaps regarding the issues that minority students face, how teachers consider them in their classroom practices, and to what extent they value and apply cultural responsive practices (see Heitner & Jennings, 2016).

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The literature on culturally relevant pedagogy emphasizes ways in which each state approaches the problem of closing the achievement gap and preparing teachers to understand how concepts of racism are embedded in the educational system (Evans, 2013). For example, the Los Angeles Unified School District and San Francisco Unified School District have implemented districtwide culturally responsive guidelines and programs that help educators transform their schools by focusing on improving student achievement. A school in the Midwest took an alternative approach by creating a multicultural committee, which included teachers, school administrators, and district administrators. Together they began to research the achievement gap, and culturally proficient teaching, as well as examine the societal notion of White privilege. While working collaboratively, they developed a districtwide professional

development program that supports culturally relevant teaching strategies (Mette et al., 2016).

Scholarship; Project Development; and Evaluation, and Leadership, and Change

I started my journey as a doctoral candidate at Walden University in 2010. I had never seen myself entering a doctoral program for education because long ago, I wanted to be a doctor of medicine. However, God led me on a different path, and I found myself holding the positions of middle school science teacher, high school science teacher, testing coordinator, assistant principal, operations coordinator, lead operations coordinator, high school principal, and currently, administrator of operations. These positions required me to constantly remain up to date with the current academic research. Education intrigues me because I am always learning new and exciting things. By choosing to pursue my doctorate, I have learned so much about myself as well as about the children whom I serve. I selected my topic of study because I want to encourage social change within schools and the community. In choosing to conduct a quantitative study, I was challenged to grow in my capacity as a data collector and analyzer.

Furthermore, being able to apply my research findings to many school districts across the nation has been instrumental in my development as a scholar. Efforts to help districts implement culturally relevant professional development to train teachers to support students of color makes me feel that I am well on my way to making an impact as regards just one of the equity issues in schools.

Analysis of Self as a Practitioner

In researching culturally relevant pedagogy and PLCs, I reflected on when I was a principal, and realized that I could have done much more to assist my staff with

implementing culturally relevant teaching strategies in their classrooms. I also realized that I have much more to learn about how to take advantage of all the positive aspects of PLCs and that I must use what I have gained from my research to model culturally responsive teaching strategies when I visit school sites.

Analysis of Self as a Project Developer

Designing a professional development training for teachers was a difficult task because I did not want to reinvent the wheel and had to consider that I was developing a project for adult learners. Hence, I conducted an extensive search of the professional literature, which allowed me to identify activities that have already been evaluated and successfully implemented. These studies helped me to create a clear set of goals and learner outcomes. When teachers are the target audience, they must take into consideration their time, learning styles, and skill set prior to developing a project.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

This project has shaped my beliefs surrounding the challenges that minority students face in schools as well as in society. Students of color are seen as low achieving, and disruptive, and teachers often feel unable to connect with these students. This work taught me that this project is necessary to help narrow the achievement gap and provide teachers with teaching strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

My research has shown me that as society continues to diversify, we have a social responsibility to create classrooms that will meet the needs of diverse students. Many teacher education programs do not prepare pre-service teachers to meet the needs of these students. The professional literature sets the context for educators that in order to meet

the needs of diverse students, they must recognize the importance of identity, language, and culture in shaping the way students learn (Heitner & Jennings, 2016).

This research project was intended to generate awareness of a problem that society needs to address. With support from the California Department of Education, culturally responsive social changes in how we educate diverse learners could have a significant impact nationally and globally. The implications of this project may inform future researchers seeking to provide adequate culturally relevant professional development and to support all teachers who teach diverse learners.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review in Chapters 1 and 3, coupled with the findings of the quantitative study, reveal the need for this professional development project aimed at providing teachers with culturally relevant teaching strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners. The intended outcome is for teachers to be able to apply these strategies in their classrooms, thus creating equal opportunities for academic success for students from diverse backgrounds.

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Appendix A: The Project

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Practice

Summer Institute Professional Development Workshop

A1 Flyer for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AUGUST 6, 7, & 8, 2019
8:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M.

Professional Development

Educators, you are invited to attend the culturally relevant responsive pedagogy and practice professional development training. Participants will learn what it means to be culturally responsive as it applies to educators and students.

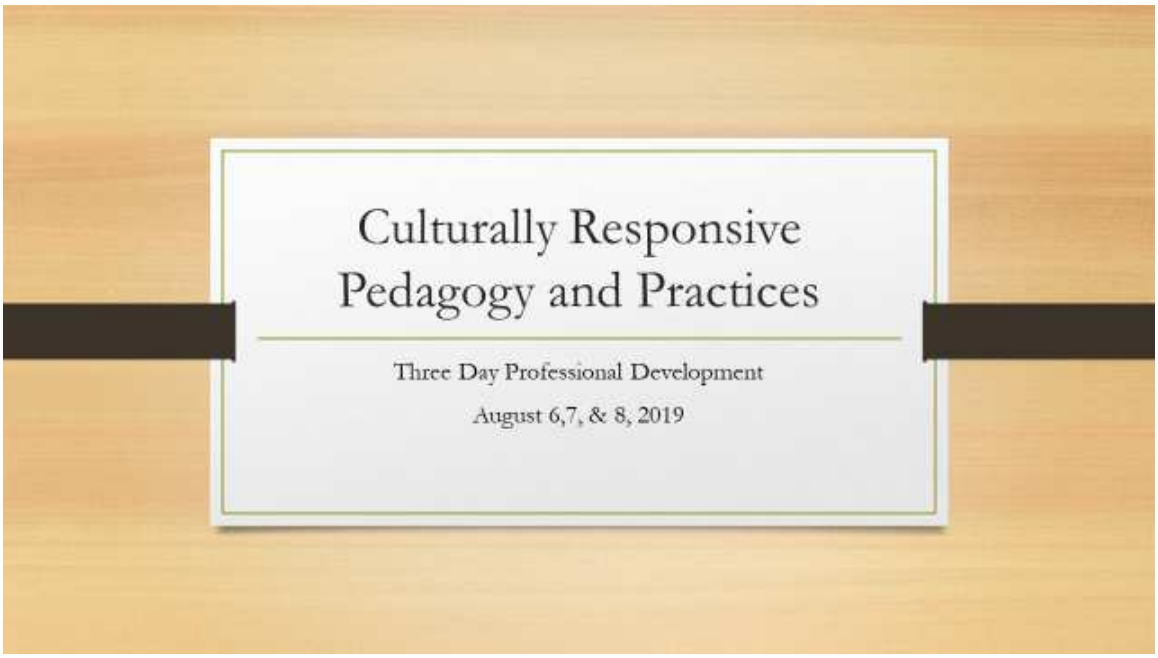
A2 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Three-Day Professional Development

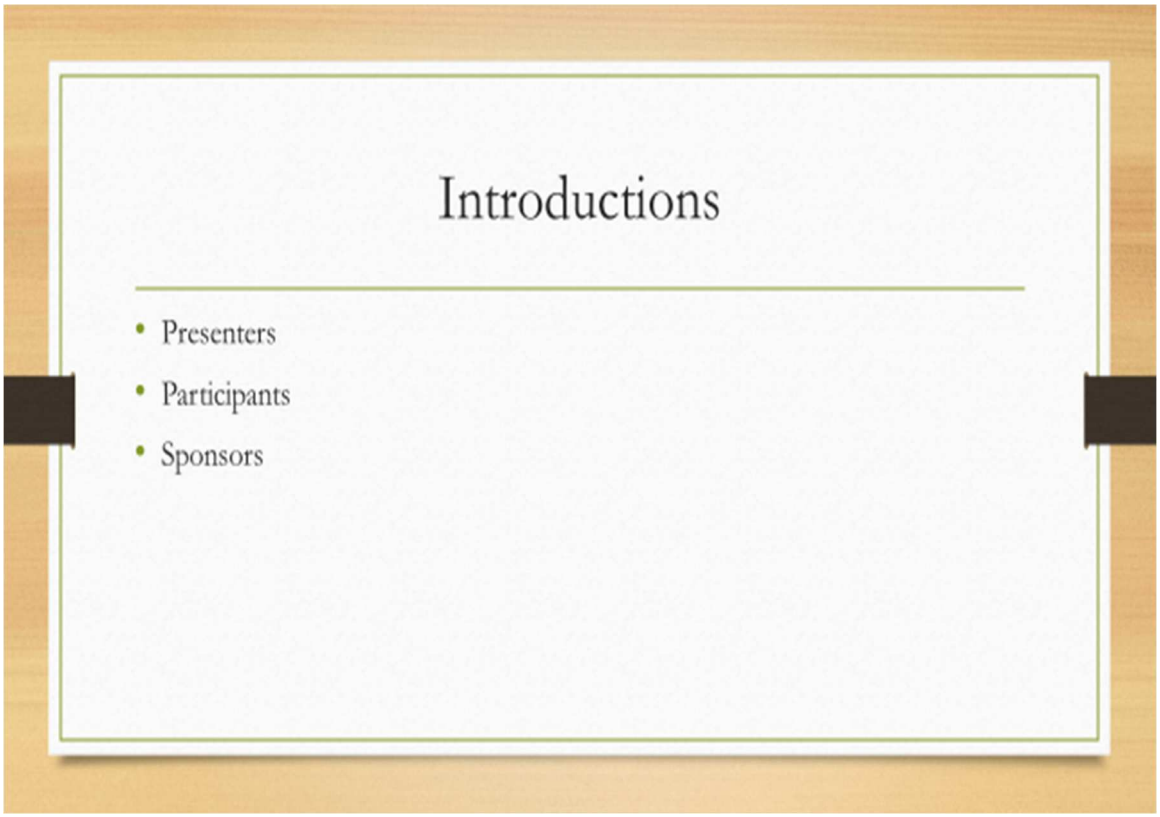
August 6, 2019–August 8, 2019

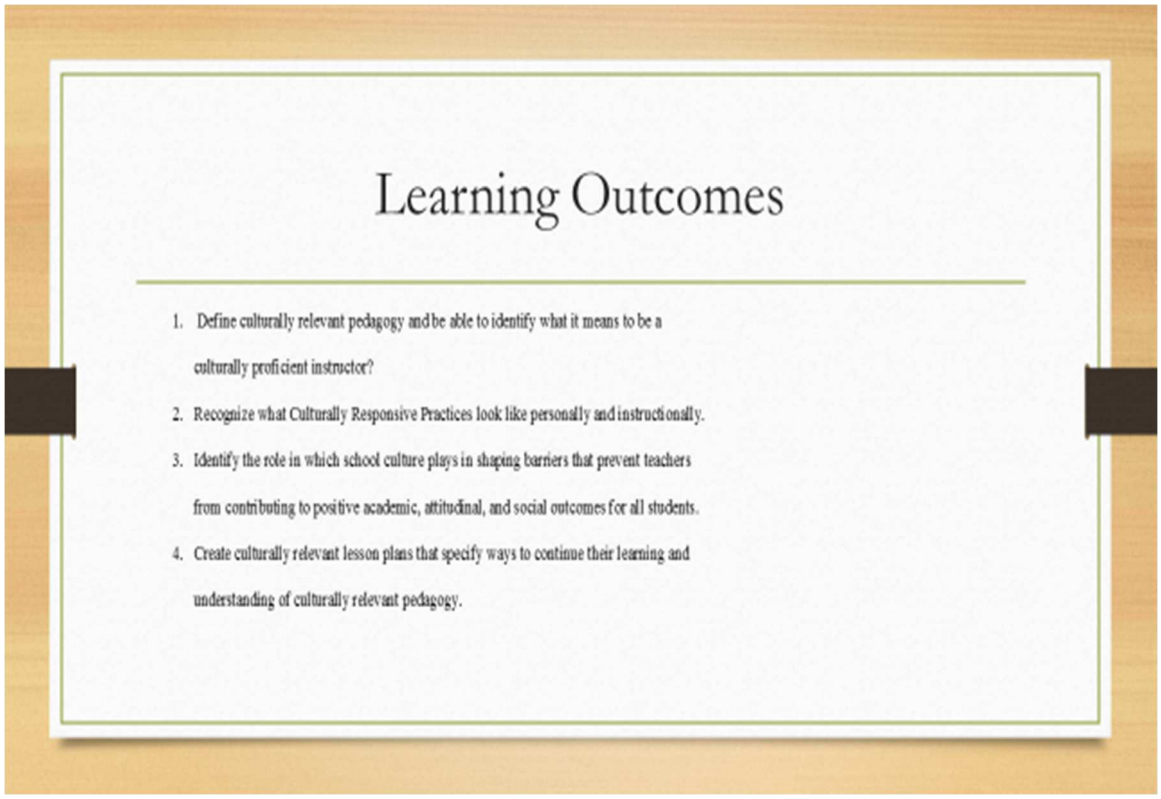
Time	Wednesday, August 6, 2019	Thursday, August 7, 2019	Friday, August 8, 2019
7:30–8:00	**Breakfast**	**Breakfast**	**Breakfast**
8:00–8:15	Introductions by facilitators and teachers	Introductions of new facilitators and any new teachers	Introductions of new facilitators and any new teachers
8:15–8:30	**Opening activity**: Ground rules	Review ground rules	Review ground rules
8:30–9:00	**Read and discuss** "Dimensions of Culturally Responsive Education" based on the research of Banks (2006)	**Read and discuss** "The Institutional, Personal, and Instructional Dimensions of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy"	**Read and discuss** "Characteristics of a Culturally Responsive Teacher"
9:00–9:15	**Break**	**Break**	**Break**
9:15–10:30	**Presentation:** Conceptual frameworks of cultural responsiveness (PowerPoint)	**Presentation:** Institutional practices that improve culturally responsive systems	**Presentation:** Transforming ourselves and our systems: becoming culturally relevant teachers
10:30–11:00	**Group activity:** What do you already do? How can you transform yourself into a culturally responsive educator?	**Group Activity:** What do the following areas of the institutional dimension look like in your district? ● Building ● Classroom ● Organization of the school ● School policy and procedures ● Community involvement	**Group Activity:** Read the vignettes and talk about what is happening on the institutional, personal, and practice levels. What would you do to improve each situation?

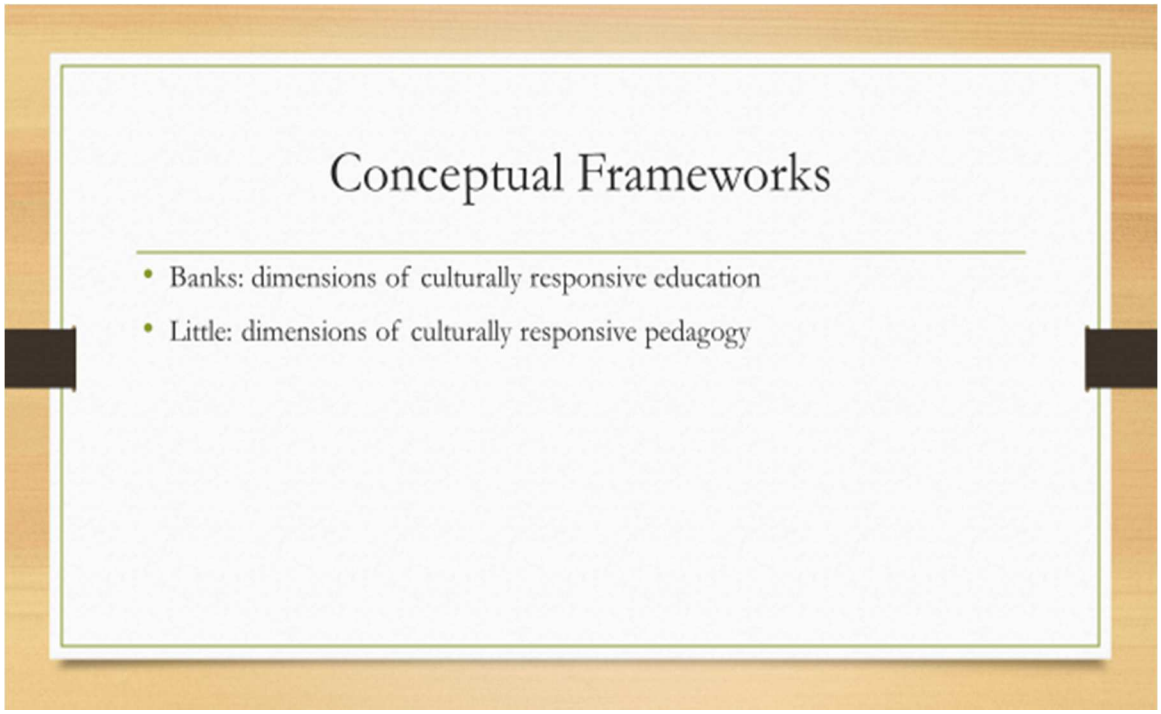
11:00–12:00	**Pair share:** Participants discuss their ideas with small groups and then share sample ideas with the whole group. Responses are recorded on chart paper.	**Pairshare:** Participants share what the personal and instructional dimensions of culturally responsive teaching look like in their district, classroom, and building.	**Pair share:** Participants discuss their ideas with small groups and then share sample ideas with the whole group. Responses are recorded on chart paper.
12:00–1:00	**Lunch**	**Lunch**	**Lunch**
1:00–2:00	**Video:** Sample culturally responsive lesson from secondary grade levels	**Video:** Culturally relevant success stories narrated by teachers, students, and parents	**Video:** Culturally relevant teacher and classroom characteristics
2:00–2:10	**Break**	**Break**	**Break**
2:10–2:50	**Presentation:** Using site-based data to inform cultural proficiency	**Presentation:** Facilitator models how to plan a culturally relevant lesson	**Presentation:** Outcomes. Facilitator reviews the outcomes and asks participants to pick one or two and share with the audience
2:55–3:00	Wrap-up and evaluation	Wrap-up and evaluation	Wrap-up and evaluation

A3 PowerPoint Presentation






Learning Outcomes
1. Define culturally relevant pedagogy and be able to identify what it means to be a culturally proficient instructor?
2. Recognize what Culturally Responsive Practices look like personally and instructionally.
3. Identify the role in which school culture plays in shaping barriers that prevent teachers from contributing to positive academic, attitudinal, and social outcomes for all students.
4. Create culturally relevant lesson plans that specify ways to continue their learning and understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy.


Conceptual Frameworks
• Banks: dimensions of culturally responsive education
• Little: dimensions of culturally responsive pedagogy

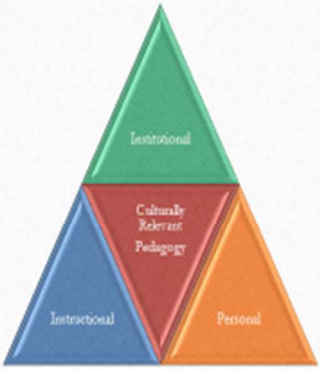
Ground Rules

- Take the chart paper, markers, and tape
- Small groups- Discuss what it would take to make sure you feel safe when talking, sharing, and participating in the professional development
- Share out and summarize them into three to five ground rules that we will follow for the next three days.

What Does it Mean to be Culturally Responsive

- To be culturally responsive means that we have the ability to learn from and relate respectfully with people from all cultures.
- To be a culturally responsive teacher is a method used to deliver instruction by seeing our students and listening to the ways our students express their desires

Institutional, Personal, and Instructional Dimensions of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy



Characteristics of a Culturally Responsive Teacher

- Socially conscious
- Affirming Attitude
- Agents of change
- Constructivist view of learning
- Care for students lives and view points
- High expectations

Vignette

- Please read the following vignette and consider what would you do if the child were in your class.
- Vignette 1: Tyrell , 13 years old, grew up in a rough neighborhood, ditches school, mom passed away, and is very disruptive in class. Family never responds to phone calls, and has no support at home. His behaviors in class are preventing him from doing well in school.
- What can we do as culturally relevant educators to help Tyrell be successful in school and at home?

Outcome Review

A4 Evaluation Form

Professional Development Title: _____

Date Attended: _____

Please select the rating for each section based on the following criteria:

5 = excellent 4 = good 3 = average 2 = fair 1 = poor

Please rate the presenters(s) on the following:

1. Knowledge of the subject matter.	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
2. Ability to explain and illustrate concepts.	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
3. Ability to answer questions completely.	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1

Open-ended comments (use the back if you need more space):

4. What specifically did the presenter do well?

5. What recommendations do you have for the presenter to improve?

Please rate the content and structure of the Professional Development:

6. The objectives were clearly defined.	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
7. Participation and interaction were encouraged.	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
8. The pace of the PD session(s).	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
9. The content was organized and easy to follow.	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1

10. The usefulness of the materials. ☐5 ☐4 ☐3 ☐2 ☐1

11. Was this PD appropriate for your level of experience? ☐Yes ☐No

If you said "No" to #9, please explain:

Open-ended comments (use the back if you need more space):

12. What did you most like about the PD?

13. What can be improved with regard to the structure, format, and/or materials?

Your name: _____ (optional)