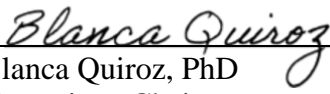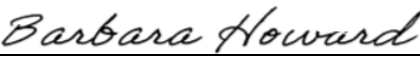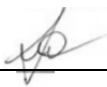ACCEPTANCE

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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING PRACTICE AS IT RELATES TO TEACHERS'
PERSPECTIVES

by

Elizabeth Reyes-Aceytuno

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for the
Degree of
Doctor of Education
in
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School of Education
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ABSTRACT

As the ethnic and linguistic diversity of school populations continue to increase, it becomes essential for school systems to engage in culturally responsive teaching, which emphasizes the need for students' culture to be at the forefront of their learning. Culturally responsive pedagogy takes into consideration student culture, teacher relationships, expectations, and curricula as elements contributing to educational attainment. The methodology of the study is a mixed methods explanatory study that used two data collection methods, a survey and interview. The data collection was completed in two phases. The first phase was a self-reporting Likert scale survey gathering quantitative and qualitative data. The next phase involved follow-up semi-structured interviews with a strategically selected subsample of participants. The sample consisted of 119 teachers from varied age groups and experience levels, ranging from beginning to veteran teachers. Participants also came from various grade levels, primarily the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Participants defined Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) as the integration of students' culture and strengths in their education, allowing them to make connections to what they are learning and to build on their knowledge. The findings suggest that to implement CRT, there should be increased use of instructional practices that encourage social justice, challenge the status quo, and provide different cultural perspectives that need to be applied. The findings also indicated a moderate positive correlation between teacher perception and CRT practices. The barriers identified described participants' experiences related to their load of responsibilities and time constraints. The supports and resources identified were leadership, professional development, and coursework.

Keywords: culturally responsive teaching, social justice, mixed methods

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The schools in the United States are progressively becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse. Our part in the multifaceted influences of people from different cultures, known as globalization, determines how we interact with one another. This interaction of cultures has also transpired in our public-school system. Globalization has influenced education by increasing the shared focus on developing the knowledge of the human capital in different countries. In particular, the shared educational emphasis on technology was developed to prepare students to be global citizens with the skills needed to enter a global workforce (Spring, 2008). The mission statement of the United States Department of Education (2018) is "to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access." The schools in the United States need to increase globalization in education.

Before *Brown v. Board of Education*, in 1954, schools in the United States were predominately, racially segregated, however, several factors have caused an increase in the diversity of the population in the country, which has led our school's population to become increasingly diverse. According to Hussar (2017), the enrollment of white students in elementary to secondary schools in the United States in the year 2013 has declined by 9%, while the enrollment of minority students has increased by 50%. A projection for the year 2025 reports the number of racially diverse students as 55% of the total number of students enrolled in K-12 schools (Hussar, 2017). The California Department of Education (n.d.) reported that the enrollment in California for the 2017-2018 school year was made up of 23% White and ethnicity not reported students while the remaining 77% of the population constituted of African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Island, Native American/Alaskan Native and Filipino

students. Of those students who were not White or whose ethnicity had not been reported, 42%

of the enrolled students spoke a language other than English at home (California Department of

Education, n.d.).
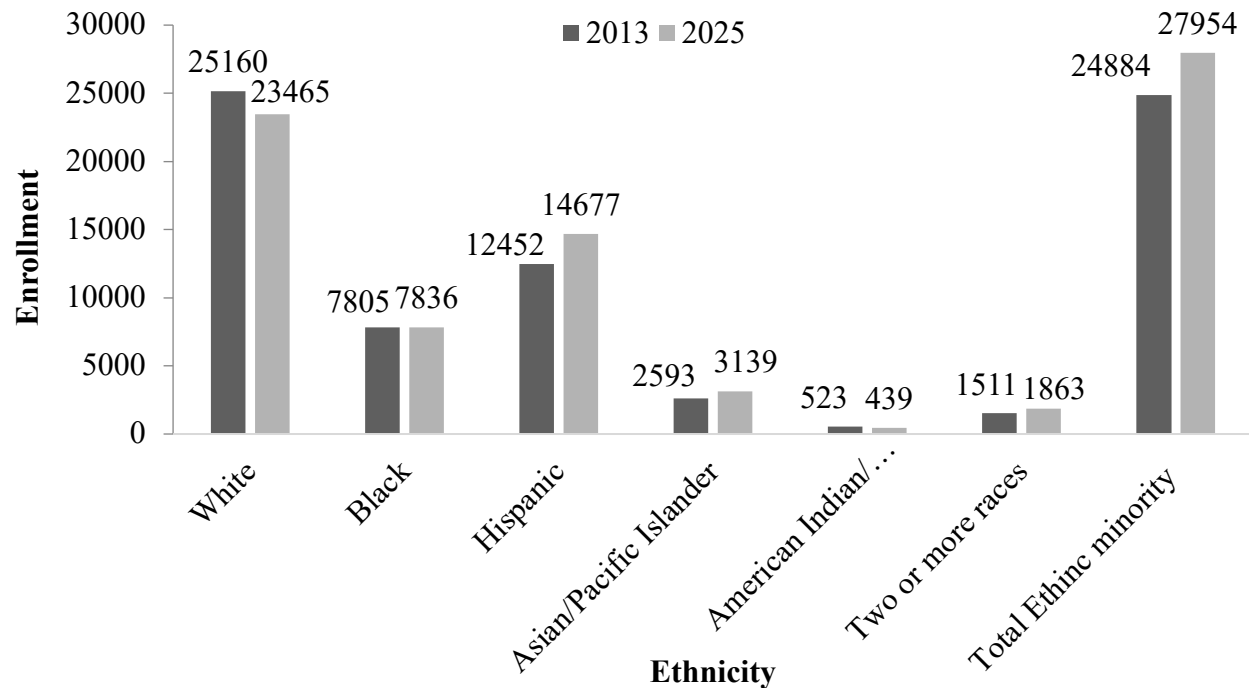
Figure 1. United States public schools k-12 enrollment comparison by ethnicity.

While the student population of American public schools is becoming more ethnically

diverse, the diversity of the teacher population around the country has not changed much.

According to Hussar (2017), 83% of teachers in all public schools are White non-Hispanic, with

the remaining 17% made up of teachers who are African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific

Island, Native American/Alaskan Native, and two or more races. California's teaching staff is

more diverse than the rest of the country. In 2017-2018, the teachers' ethnic makeup was 63%

White non-Hispanic, and the remaining 37% was made up of African American, Hispanic,

Asian/Pacific Island, Filipino, Native American/Alaskan Native, and two or more races (Ed

Data, n.d.).

Table 1

California Public School Teacher and Student Population by Ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Teacher	Student
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%	0.5%
Asian	5.6%	9.2%
Black or African American	3.9%	5.5%
Filipino	1.4%	2.4%
Hispanic or Latinx	20.2%	54.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.5%
None Reported	3.6%	0.9%
Two or More Races	0.8%	3.5%
White	63.3%	23.2%

Problem of Practice

National Opportunity to Learn Campaign conducted by the Schott Foundation (2009), declared that schools across the nation are only minimally meeting the needs of students of color. Students of color are still underperforming in standardized assessments. In 2013, the last year, California students were required to take the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR), minority students scored lower than their White peers. In math, 65% of Black/African American students and 58% of Hispanic/Latinx students were not proficient, whereas 62% of their White peers scored proficiently in the subject. In ELA, 57% of Black/African American students and 55% of Hispanic/Latinx students were not proficient. On the other hand, White students scored 72% proficient in ELA (California Department of Education, n.d).

This trend continues with the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) as shown in Figure 2. Black or African American students had the lowest percentage of students who met or exceeded standards in the area of English Language Arts. American Indian, and Hispanic or Latinx students also scored lower than their White peers. The highest

percentage of students that met or exceeded the standard in English Language Arts (ELA) were for students who were identified as Asian. The second-highest percentage of students who met or exceeded standards in ELA were for those students identified as White. Some scholars have argued that the only way to close the achievement gap is by looking for solutions in "theories which focus on home-community factors such as racial/ethnic heritage, family composition, and socioeconomic status as the cause for failure" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 67). Scholars such as Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) have thus pointed the need for cultural responsiveness.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is vital in education. Research shows that implementing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), through the application of its theory, and practices has increased the achievement of diverse students (Gay, 2018; Ladison-Billing, 1995; Byrd, 2016). CRT incorporates the student's culture in the curriculum and the teaching thus acknowledging the background knowledge they bring to the classroom. CRT teachers hold high expectations for all students and include student-centered activities in their teaching (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive teaching in education is imperative for the achievement of students of color.

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

Percentage(%)

■ Math   ■ ELA

American Indian/ Alaska Native: 25.7, 37.4
Asian: 73.5, 76.4
Black / African American: 19.7, 32.3
Hispanic / Latino: 26.7, 39.2
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander: 32.0, 43.2
White: 53.6, 64.9
Two / More Races: 54.4, 64.8

Ethnicity
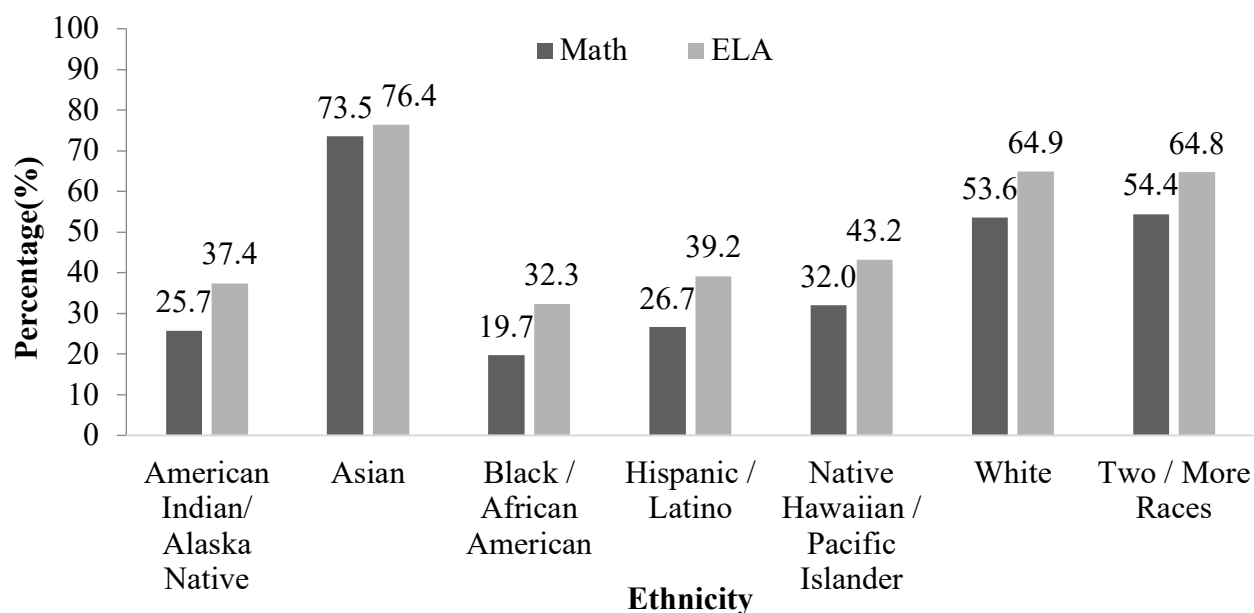
Figure 2. CAASPP percent of students statewide who met or exceeded standards.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed into law by President Obama on

December 10, 2015, safeguards education for all students ensuring that they are provided with

access to an equitable education. The U.S. Department of Education (2015, p. 1) stated that:

> ESSA requires states and districts to ensure that all students, including children with
>
> disabilities, English learners, and other historically underserved groups, graduate high
>
> school ready for college or a career. To measure progress against that goal and maintain
>
> a critical focus on educational equity and excellence for all, the law maintains the
>
> requirement that states administer to all students' annual statewide assessments in
>
> reading/language arts and mathematics in grades 3-8 and once in high school, as well as
>
> assessments once in each grade span in science for all students and annual English
>
> language proficiency assessments in grades K-12 for all English learners.

The students' education is held to a high standard. It is assessed throughout their

schooling to monitor progress using a computer-based and performance task on the Smarter

Balanced Assessment System, which measures the students' E.L.A. and math skills. The

assessment is given to students yearly, beginning in the third grade until the eighth grade and

eleventh grade. The assessment measures students' knowledge of skills and their ability to apply

these skills to grade-level standards.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015), actions need to be taken for low

performing students requiring that:

> when students fall behind, steps are taken to help them, and their schools, improve, with a
>
> particular focus on the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools, high schools
>
> with low graduation rates, and schools where subgroups, including students from low-
>
> income families, English learners, students with disabilities, and students of color are
>
> falling behind.

One requirement of the ESSA is that the necessary steps have been taken to support

students of color as a priority and that appropriate action has been taken to address their needs.

Research Problem

The rise in the diversity of the student population in schools across America has led to

ample research on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and multicultural education focusing on

students of color, which has increased these students' educational success (Byrd, 2016; Gay,

2018; Ladson-Billing, 1995), however, not all experts agree on the factors affecting the academic

success of students of color. Research by Son Hing et al. (2011) attributes success to hard work,

effort, and skill. Wiederkehr, Bonnot, Krauth-Gruber, and Darnon (2015) expand on students'

merit or lack of effort as a factor impacting their success. When schools associate student

achievement solely with students' efforts, they depict the students' willingness to learn as the

only factor determining their outcomes. The argument about students' efforts being the only

determinant of success is erroneous, given the multiplicity of factors that contribute to student learning. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, the theory behind CRT practices, takes into consideration student culture, teacher relationships, and expectations.

The education system as a whole can benefit from embracing the philosophy of CRP to improve the use of CRT practices. Haynes and Juarez (2012) examined the practices of higher education teacher preparation programs as well as their effectiveness of teaching Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). They concluded that more efforts and a change of practice need to be implemented to prepare teachers to work with diverse students successfully. Escamilla and Nathenson-Mija (2003) add that the topic of diversity needs to be included in teacher preparation courses. Research conducted by Siwatu (2011) as well as by Siwatu, Chesnut, Alejandro, and Young (2016) investigated the self-efficacy of pre-service teachers in implementing CRT and using CRT practices.

Although there has been much research conducted on teacher preparation programs and the self-efficacy of teachers in the area of CRT, there has been limited recent research on the use of CRT by teachers in the classroom (Jamil, Downer, & Pianta, 2012; Lancaster & Bain, 2007). The population that the current research focuses on is teachers who are currently in the classroom. The purpose of selecting teachers already in the classroom is to evaluate their use of CRT practices and gain a better understanding about the resources and obstacles they encounter in the implementation of CRT.

The researcher investigated how teachers received CRT training, the factors that impeded the implementation of CRT, and the potential relationship between teachers' perspective of CRT and their application. The results of the study were used to suggest supports for new and veteran teachers to increase their awareness of CRT and provide educators with the tools to implement

CRT practices in their classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this mixed-method explanatory study was to discover how Culturally Responsive Teaching is defined by teachers and implemented in the classroom. The second purpose was to find the relationship between the teachers' attitudes and their use of Culturally Responsive Teaching practice. The current study also aimed to explore barriers that are impeding the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching and the supports that improved the implementation of CRT practices in the classroom. At this stage in the research, Culturally Responsive Teaching as it relates to social justice is defined as "using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounter more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2018, p. 36).

Research Statement

This study examined the practices and strategies of teachers in Culturally Responsive Teaching as well as the barriers that impeded CRT routine practice.

The study examined the following research questions:

1. How do teachers across grade levels in Southern California school districts define Culturally Responsive Teaching?

2. How do teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward Culturally Responsive Teaching relate to their Culturally Responsive Teaching practice?

3. What barriers do teachers find in implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching in their classrooms regularly?

4. What supports or resources are most useful in promoting Culturally Responsive Teaching practices?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on two theories. First, it uses the critical race theory, which began in the 1980s as a law school theory focusing on power, race, racism, and laws (Martinez,2014)). Second, the current study uses the cultural ecological theory, which outlines the shortcomings in the education system in serving students of color. Critical race theory examines how racism is institutionalized, creating unequal access for minorities. Critical race theory is not just a view of racial dominance; it is also a call for action to reform in the quest for racial equity (Crenshaw, 2011; Delagado & Stefanicic, 2017). Critical race theory has been utilized as a framework in law, politics, and social sciences to explain how the dominant culture influences society. Racial issues permeate all areas of society. A student's race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status impact his educational experience.

Critical race theory has also been linked to education. Ladson-Billing (1998) describes critical race theory in education as manifested through the curriculum taught to students, the money allocated to schools, the instructional practices, and the students' evaluations. The curriculum and the subject matter that we teach students are influenced by the dominant culture and do not traditionally represent multiple cultural perspectives. Not only does the dominant race and culture influence what is taught, but it also influences how it is taught and what assessments are used to measure student achievement. For instance, student achievement is measured using state standardized assessments that have revealed an achievement gap between White students and their ethnically diverse peers. Policymakers allocate school funding ineffectively, leading to educational inequalities: the case of *Williams v. California* was a class-action lawsuit about the inequality in students' education that was brought forth by Eliezer Williams and other civil rights activist groups on behalf of thousands, mostly minority and

socioeconomically disadvantaged students in May of 2000. The premise was that many low socioeconomic, minority communities were not provided with an adequate and equitable education. Many of the schools were overcrowded. They did not provide enough textbooks, qualified teachers, or clean and safe school facilities. The inequalities in the education system are revealed in the achievement gap of minority students compared to their White peers. Critical race theory brings attention to the problems of inequality in society and education, created by the presence of racism in both. These theories create an exigency for addressing inequality.

The cultural ecological theory provides a different lens on the school performance of minorities. The cultural ecological theory was first identified in the field of anthropology, where it was used to explain how people adjust to a changing environment and how their culture impacts their experiences within that environment (Ogbu, 1981). Ogbu and Simsons (1998) examined the cultural ecology model in education as it affects student performance. Ogbu and Simsons (1998) reported that the factors that contribute to minority student performance are: (a) how the system, educational institutes, and society, have treated minorities; and (b) how the minorities have reacted and construed their treatment. Minorities' perspectives and behaviors are shaped by the historical and current treatment of the minority group, the status, and the treatment by White America shapes (Ogbu & Simpsons, 1998). Although the critical race theory and the cultural ecology theory do not provide strategies on how to improve student outcomes, studies related to these theories have identified areas that need to be improved in education. These theories provided the researcher of the current study an analytical insight into the problems that contribute to the inequity in minority student education.

The culture of power in education is the authority that teachers have throughout education, the power across instruction and curriculum, and the power over the students (Delpit, 2006).

Educators influence what students learn, how they are taught, and what they are taught, which are all influenced by the dominant culture. As students from diverse cultures enter schools, they are already coming in at a disadvantage because they do not have access to the unspoken rules. Delpit (2006) adds that the culture of power creates a struggle between students' home life and school. When students are learning how to interact according to the new social norms, they may experience conflict with the home culture, beliefs, and values held by the families.

The positionality of a person can also impact his ability to succeed in society. Sorrells & Sekimoto (2016) states that our positionality is formed from constructs such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality, which may reduce a person's opportunity. Race is a social construct; thus, racial differences are sustained by a society where racism is embedded (Gillborn, 2015). As ethnic minority students continue to face inequalities in education and the society at large, the implementation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) in school has become essential to these students' success. CRP focuses on the student's identity, achievement, equality, developmental appropriateness, holistic education, and relationships.

The theory behind Culturally Responsive Teaching is that of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, also referred to as Cultural Relevant Pedagogy. For example, Ladson-Billing's (1995) research highlights the principles of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. According to Ladson-Billing's (1995) concept of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, the students must experience all three: academic success experiences: obtain cultural competence, acquire a critical consciousness, and create change in society by challenging the status quo.

Teachers who embrace Culturally Relevant Pedagogy know how to foster student success while validating their students' cultural backgrounds. Gay (2002) emphasizes the use of culture to demonstrate successful teaching for students of color. To successfully teach ethnically diverse

students to connect with others, the learning can be embedded with multiple cultural perspectives, common cultural attributes, and students' experiences (Gay, 2002). These practices are the foundation of Culturally Responsive Teaching. When teachers focus on a student's cultural characteristics, such as communication, background knowledge, learning styles, and cultural norms, which are unique to the student, this can impact his achievement positively. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) add that schools that use Culturally Relevant Pedagogy create a better home-community connection as educators demonstrate cultural sensitivity by integrating cultural values, beliefs, and experiences to the learning environment. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) enhances a student's educational experience by creating an inclusive environment. Teachers who see the worth in their students' home experiences and cultural background, and further validate it by integrating it into their teaching, have embraced CRP successfully in their teaching.

Culture influences the way we think and learn, impacting our brain. The brain is hardwired for people to form collective values. For instance, the instinct to stay in groups has been ingrained in the brain as a survival mechanism. Culture guides how we process information (Triandis & Suh, 2002). Certain cultures value collectivism, while others value individualism. Understanding the student's family background can determine if he learns better when he collaborates with peers or alone due to a competitive cultural viewpoint. The brain's radicular activating system (RAS) influences behavior sorting information. The RAS shapes how and if we learn. RAS scans the environment for threats. For example, if a classroom is perceived to be a threat, the student will shut down, and learning ceases to occur. One of the roles of CRT is creating a safe learning environment for students. "Understanding culture, recognizing cultural archetypes, and recognizing the sociopolitical context are about laying the foundation for being a

culturally responsive teacher" (Hammond & Jackson, 2015, p. 33). As teachers increase their knowledge of how culture impacts multiple aspects of student learning, they can develop a learning community where students' learning can flourish.

Culturally Responsive Teaching validates students' cultures by embracing the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge that they bring to the learning community. This approach creates a safe learning environment where students can practice skills learned and feel part of the learning community. CRT develops student-teacher relationships by increasing interaction with students, getting to know them and adapting the teaching for the student (Edwards & Edick, 2013). The use of different modalities of teaching, the inclusion of cooperative learning actives, and provision of individual practice opportunities to address different students' needs help build student-teacher relationships. Culturally Responsive Teaching supports the notion that all students could achieve academic success. Students are empowered by having successful learning experiences. When students experience successful learning, they develop a sense of accomplishment and are inspired to engage in more challenging learning activities.

Culturally Responsive Teaching allows students to take pride in their ethnic heritage and respect other cultures (Gay, 2018). It fosters a deeper understanding of other cultures to improve interaction with people from different ethnic backgrounds. Implementing CRT practices gives power to the student to seek social justice and challenge the status quo that causes inequality in society. Students learn that there are multiple perspectives on what is being taught, which increases their higher-level thinking skills, allowing them to think critically and analyze what they learned. CRT validates and embraces the student's ethnic background, which leads to empowerment, increases social justices, and creates successful learners. With the increasingly

diverse population in the United States, CRT is increasingly needed in public schools to develop

an equitable education for all students.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Holding high expectations for all students

Teachers become a part of the community/have a community environment

Develop relationships with the students

Create collaborative classrooms and communities of leaders

Cultivate necessary skills students need to be successful

Challenge students to think critically and question the status quo

Cultivate student's self-cultural awareness and awareness of other cultures

(Ladson-Billings, 1994)

Culture of power

Social norms, unspoken rules which emphasize the value of the culture in power.

Creates a barrier for those who do not have access.

Culture of power in education:

Teachers hold power over students.

How and what is veining taught is controlled by those in power.

Conflict between students home life and schools.

Deplit, 1998

Culture and the Brain

The brain searches for threats and creates the longing to fit in.

When student feel a sense of belonging to a group it increase engagement.

Engagement increases learning.

With no perceived threat the brain can do higher order thinking.

When students feel safe students can engage in the learning process

Cultural influences information processing.

(Hammond & Jackson, 2015)

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Figure 3. Conceptual framework model for CRT.

Significance of the Study

Previous research on Culturally Responsive Teaching has primarily been conducted on

(a) the impact on minority students' success and (b) the leadership styles that support CRT;

however, research on how teachers' knowledge of CRT has transformed instructional practices is

limited. The study seeks to promote an understanding of teachers' practices that support

students' success in school. The current research defines the practice of CRT in the classroom

and identifies barriers that impede teacher's use of CRT. The study ultimately seeks to discover

supports for pre-service and veteran teachers to increase the use of CRT. Identifying the

strategies which are currently being implemented can inform schools, districts, and policymakers

about successful strategies that can support teachers in moving from simple CRT strategies to higher-level uses of CRT, which can lead to the effective empowerment of all students.

Definition of Terms

The key terms, used in the current dissertation, have been defined below:

Achievement Gap: Represents any substantial disparity in academic outcomes between groups of students, for instance the of white and minority students or students from higher socioeconomics compared to the lower socio-economic peers (Goodman & Burton, 2012).

Critical Race Theory: A theoretical framework that views racism as interwoven in America and race as influencing all areas of society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Culture: A resource for a collective identity that has elements of shared values and beliefs as well as a process of communication through which the group conveys those values (Sorrells & Sekimoto, 2016).

Culturally Responsive Teaching: A compendium of teaching practices that promotes high expectations and yields academic success for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Gay, 2018).

Culturally Responsive Teaching Efficacy: An educator's confidence in his ability to implement teaching practices that yield high positive learning for all students that encompasses the students' cultural background and takes diverse learning styles into account (Siwatu, 2007).

Ethnicity: A grouping of people that identify as belonging to a geographical region, nationality, or culture group. The two options are Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).

Pedagogy: The skills, instructional strategies, and methods used to educate students and improve their learning outcomes (Bhowmik, Banerjee, & Banerjee, n.d.).

Positionality: The relationships to social constructs such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality that impact a person's opportunity, communication, and interaction with others, influencing a person's biases and worldview based on their identity (Sorrells & Sekimoto, 2016).

Race: A social construct developed by those in power used to classify people into groups and social class and delineate them into labor groups based on shared characteristics (Sorrells & Sekimoto, 2016).

Racism: The oppression of a group considered to be inferior or subordinate to the dominant group, which helps to maintain the dominant groups' ideology of being superior, generating structures that excluded other groups from obtaining power status and access to resources (Harrell, 2000).

Limitations

One limitation of the present study is the positionality of the researcher, a female Latina educator, which impacts her worldview. The researcher's philosophy of education is that every child deserves the right to access an equitable education. Students should also have access to an excellent education. Children learn best when they are in a safe and caring environment where they feel they can be themselves and ask for help without feeling ashamed or embarrassed. The researcher's beliefs can impact the reflective process of data analysis. To mitigate the effects of the researcher's bias on the research process, many measures were put in place.

Another limitation is that the participants are self-reporting their use of Culturally Responsive Teaching in the survey. The participants may answer questions to make themselves appear more socially desirable by answering the questions in ways that they may think the researcher wants them to be answered or in ways that do not make them look bad. When discussing the details of the study with the participants, the researcher asked them to be honest in

answering the questions of the survey.

Delimitations

The purpose of the mixed methods explanatory study was to develop a deeper understanding of the Culturally Responsive Teaching practice of elementary school teachers. The data collected from the participants in this study was not obtained in the hope of carrying out statistical generalizations from the study sample to that of a larger population. Instead, an explanatory study generalization is a form of analytical generalization; the findings of the study can go beyond the current study (Yin, 2018). The narrow focus placed on the participants was aimed at gaining an enhanced understanding of teachers' use of CRT or the challenges that are hampering them from using CRT by providing detailed information on how the study was conducted as well as on the expectations for other researchers to be able to replicate the study and attain similar findings. The use of interrater reliability and coder agreement to aid in the coding and reviewing of the data to eliminate researchers' basis.

Summary

With the increasing diversity of the schools' student population and the lack of an increase in teacher diversity, it is imperative for all teachers to learn the importance of working with students from different backgrounds to support student success. As teachers learn their students' cultural backgrounds, they use that knowledge to help students learn and reach empowerment. Through the current research, the researcher hopes to develop a greater understanding of the factors that contribute to and the supports that are needed to implement CRT practices.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to present research on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). It begins with the conceptual framework which investigates critical race theory in education. Then, it explores the culture and the impact on learning and achievement. Next, a comprehensive review of the research on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and teaching was completed to provide a clear description of CRT. Teacher characteristics were also explored to identify the qualities of teachers who implement Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Other relevant studies on the educator's perspective and implementation of CRT are also reviewed. From this analysis of the literature review, an exploration of the supports and resources teachers need to implement CRT practices in the classroom were developed. Barriers that restrict the use of best practices were also examined. Lastly, the research evaluated the use of social justice in education as it relates to CRT.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of race developed when the need for power from particular groups in power arose, shaping the construct as a form of identifying agent (McCarthy, 2005). The term race was developed to classify people, and it began by identifying groups by their physical characteristics. A doctor from Germany, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, used his thesis as the basis to claim that there were four species of humans, then later added a fifth species (Bhopal, 2007). From this work came the idea that race can be determined by physical attributes, such as skin color, hair texture and color, and body of people from a particular group. Researchers today argue that the biological makeup does not determine race but that it is a social construct (Appiah & Gutmann, 1998; Sorrells & Sekimoto, 2016; Castrellon, 2010; Machery & Faucher, 2005). Race as a social construct was developed to classify people not only into groups but into social class as well. The

term race was created to define people and place them in a division of labor controlled by those in power (Sorrells & Sekimoto, 2016). It is associated with a person's biological and physical features, whereas ethnicity relates to one's culture and heritage. These terms are often confused and mistakenly used interchangeably. There are many meanings for the word culture, so there is no established consensus on the word's definition. Anthropologists define culture as a group that operates and preserves a set of collective values, beliefs, and morals (Hudelson, 2004). Culture is a resource for a collective identity that has elements of shared values and beliefs as well as a process of communication of how the group conveys those values (Gay, 2002). The researcher identifies culture as a group that forms a collective identity through shared values and beliefs.

Critical Race Theory

The theoretical framework that has been used more broadly in the research of Culturally Responsive Teaching is that of critical race theory. Critical race theory as a conceptual framework allows the researcher to review the research while focusing on equity issues for minority students. Critical race theory began with legal scholars as a political and scholarly movement to challenge the dominant culture that keeps all other cultures suppressed (Crenshaw, 1995). Derrick Bell was considered the founder of critical race theory from its inception in the 1970s following the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Bell was a civil rights lawyer and an activist who then started writing about racism in history (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Critical race theory was initiated for social justice.

Critical race theorists described how race influences all areas of society and how racism is interwoven in America's history (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billing, 1998; Rose, 2017). People have argued that since Barack Obama was elected president of the United States of America, racism was no longer the view of the American people (Ford, Johnson, & Maxwell,

2010), however, we do not live in a post-racist America only because a black man was elected president. Disparities among people of color continue to exist in America.

Scholars such as Carnoy and Garcia (2017) and Esposito and Swain (2009) studied teachers' perspectives on student achievement. The current study examines teacher perspectives of students and Culturally Responsive Teaching. Esposito and Swain's (2009) study, conducted with seven urban elementary school teachers through interviews and focus groups, reported teachers' perception that students continue to face inequity in education. When children of color live in racially segregated communities and attend schools that have high levels of low-income enrollment in comparison to their white peers (Carnoy & García, 2017), it is easy to conclude that we are not yet in a post-racist America. Inner cities became minority communities when White families began to move out to suburban areas, which became known as the White flight. "We live in a world with a long history of oppression that manifests in virtually every aspect of society, including our schools" (Esposito & Swain, 2009, p. 46). Scholars have used race theory to address the uneven distribution of power in our society. They have identified the culture of power and privilege that dictates who the "haves and have nots" are. Most people who belong to this culture of power tend to be Whites and belong to the middle or upper class. Unsurprisingly, our history of exploitation and racism has benefited those who were part of the privileged few. A movement of colorblindness has suggested that we forget the past transgressions against people of color and move on (Carbado, 2013). It is essential to talk about the culture of power, which places some ahead of others while suggesting that we must forget our history.

Delpit's (1998) research refers to the constraints of educational success. His research findings indicate that the culture of power establishes social norms, the unspoken rules, which emphasize the value of the culture for those who are in power and limit or create a barrier for

anyone who does not have access to these norms (Delpit, 1998). Not having access to these rules creates constraints for those who are not in power. The culture of power as it relates to education is "the power of the teachers over the students, power of the publishers of textbooks and of the developers of the curriculum to determine the view of the world presented" (Delpit, 2006, p. 283). Studies carried out by Apple (1992), Ndura (2004) have found that textbooks have cultural and gender biases. Similarly, Keime, Landes, Rickersten and Wescott, (2002) looked at multicultural materials and found that the current textbooks and curriculum do not represent America's shifting demographics or diverse population; the curriculum is Eurocentric. The dominant culture determines what students learn, how they will be taught, and what they will be taught. A transformation of our education system is warranted to reflect our changing demographics. As students from diverse cultures enter schools, they are already coming in at a disadvantage because they do not have access to the unspoken rules (Rollock, 2012). Lacking access to the culture of power is an unnecessary barrier that students need to overcome before they can begin to learn. When students experience a disconnect between their family values and the school values, it creates an internal struggle for the student who has to choose between the school and their family (Greenfield, Quiroz, & Raeff, 2000). Another adverse effect of valuing one culture over another is that students acculturate into the dominant culture and lose a sense of self (Rodriguez, 2004). The education system can be the vessel for change, but not until educators challenge the culture of power and become advocates for students' equal opportunity in education.

A diagram of critical race theory, which explains how racism impacts and influences education, is presented (see Figure 4). This model was developed by the researcher from Ladson-Billing's (1998) principles of critical race theory in education.
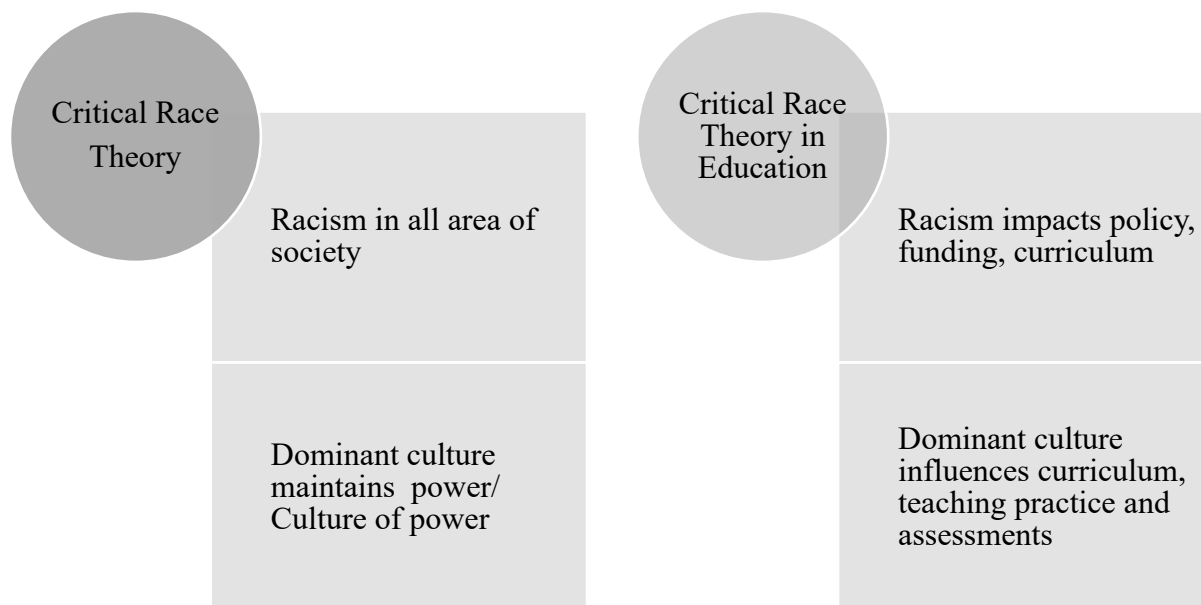
Figure 4. Critical race theory correlates to critical race theory in education model.

Ladson-Billings (1998) identified the application of critical race theory in education, linking the dominant race to curriculum, school budgeting, instruction, student evaluation, and school populations. With systematic racism being a part of American history and still very present in our society today, the need for social justice has become central to promoting equity in education. One way to achieve equity is with the use of Culturally Responsive Teaching practices starting as early as elementary schools.

Culture and Academic Achievement

The term achievement gap has had several meanings over the years. Nieto and Bode (2018) refer to the achievement gap as "circumstances in which some students, primarily those from racially, culturally and linguistically marginalized and low-income families, achieve less than other students" (p. 8). The U.S. Department of Education defines an achievement gap more specifically as the difference between the academic performance of each Every Student Succeeds

Act (ESSA) subgroup such as African Americans in a particular participating Local Education Agency or school and the mean student statewide performance of the highest achieving subgroups in the LEA or state (U.S. Department of Education, 2015.). The label *achievement gap* emphasizes the student subgroup's performance, implying that it is the individual student's responsibility to perform at the set proficiency rate (Choi, Seltzer, Herman & Yamshiro, 2007). This definition suggests unrealistic goals for the students as it places all the responsibility on them. Our society also has a crucial role to play, particularly in ensuring that all students have had equitable opportunities to learn. In response to this criticism, other terms that do not place blame on the student have been coined to refer to the outperformance of certain groups. Instead, the new terms underscored the students' access to educational resources as the opportunity gap, the resource gap, and the education debt. The Glossary for Education Reform defines the opportunity gap (2013) as the students' race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, and familial situations that influence education outcomes for particular groups of students.

The gaps between student subgroups also involve differences in their learning, so it is important to define the types of disparities that students can encounter in schools. Educators must understand the differences to address the needs of the student correctly. The learning gap signifies the difference between what a student learned and the learning expectation for any given lesson, unit of study, or grade. The achievement gap represents the disproportionate outcome between groups of students. Creating the awareness of inequalities and the specific ones that the educator should focus on requires distinct approaches.

Schools across the nation continue to experience achievement gaps between various minority groups. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, n.d)

reading report card, the score trends for fourth and eighth grade students in reading have not changed significantly from 2015. The nations' trend in reading scores by student groups shows that the Asian and Pacific Islanders groups are scoring above proficient, outscoring the White student group at both fourth and eighth grade levels (NAEP, n.d.). The national scores for the fourth-grade level show that the students scoring below grade level in the areas of reading and math were Black, Hispanic, Hawaiian, American Indian, English language learners (ELL), and students with disabilities. The California fourth grade scores reflect the national score trend, indicating the underperformance of minority and low socioeconomic status (SES) students compared to their White and Asian peers in both reading and math.

Some authors have also suggested that the students' ethnicity and cultural background can impact student achievement. The researcher, Smith-Maddox (1998), brings some information about the context of the students' culture and learning. Smith-Maddox (1998) conducted a longitudinal study on eighth grade students and found that there are cultural influences that positively impacted student achievement: family, economy, and cultural capital. Other researchers suggest that different cultures emphasize education and student achievement differently. For instance, the following study conducted by Spera (2006) claims that African American students who self-reported parents as having a higher education responded that "their parents held higher aspirations for them than did Hispanic and Caucasian adolescents" (p. 483). Hispanic and Caucasians students reported that their parents did not have high aspirations compared to their African American peers in the study. The study was conducted in a suburban public school located on the east coast, surveying 184 students in the fifth to eighth grades. Spera (2006) added that African American parents stress the importance of education accomplishment to their child's success. Although families value educational accomplishments

differently, educators need to ensure that all students have the same opportunities to experience success.

A study conducted by Chao (1994) on parenting styles found that Chinese parents attained higher ratings on the parental control scale than their European-American counterparts on items related to children's improvement in education. Greenfield and Quiroz (2013) suggested that Latino families emphasize collective achievement instead of individualistic achievement. Although based on simple analysis, the student's ethnicity was seemingly related to the amount of learning. This learning gap could be better explained by factors in the school climate-related to race relations that also affect a student's grade (Mattison & Aber, 2007). Research studies have identified the influence that culture has on students' achievement and motivation. As teachers' understanding of culture develops their understanding of how cultural values differ, and how these values impact student learning also grows. "Given that most students arrive at their assumptions, beliefs, and values about education from their personal experiences in their home school and community cultures, cultural factors are essential to understanding student outcomes" (Smith-Maxson, 1998, p. 307). A recent study done by Lopez (2016) examined the reading achievement of 244 elementary Latino students and found that when teachers implemented CRT strategies such as holding favorable views of the students and holding high expectations, the students' reading proficiency increased. The study also revealed a small positive relationship between the use of Spanish during instruction and the students' reading scores. It is important to understand the relationship between culture and student academic performance to understand the need for CRT, the importance for schools to implement the practice, and understand the impacts of implementation.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy form the theory behind CRT. The two terms have been used interchangeable by many researchers. To develop an understanding of how cultural responsiveness impacts learning, the history of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is examined. The history of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy has its foundations from the civil rights movement; however, there were also crucial educational court cases over the years that further inspired cultural responsiveness. In 1974, the Supreme Court case *Lau vs. Nichols* decided that the San Francisco school system violated the civil rights of 1,800 Chinese ELL students (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). The *Lau vs. Nichols* case led to the Lau remedies, which are policies for ELL students. As a result of the Lau remedies, Cazden and Leggett (1976) coined the term "culturally responsive." Being culturally responsive is being able to understand and respect people from all cultures. Ladson-Billing (1995) stated that "culturally responsive appears to refer to a more or dynamic or synergetic relationship between home/community and school culture" (p. 467). In education, cultural responsiveness brings the students' cultural background into their learning. Culturally Relevant pedagogies share mutual characteristics such as caring for all students, accountability, cultural competence, and critique.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy was defined by Gay (2002) as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 106). Teachers engaging in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy embrace their students' differences and incorporate the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds to enhance their learning. A student's cultural influence can affect their values, beliefs, traditions, communication, relationship norms, and learning styles (Gay, 2002). By

being aware of how the cultural characteristics impact the students, teachers can learn how to instruct their students better using the students' natural way of learning, so students are fully engaged.

Multicultural education encompasses Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) and focuses on students' cultures while bringing cultural awareness, however, it is different from Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as it does not include instructional practices. Multicultural education helps students relate and get along with others who are different from them (Marulis, 2000). Students gain cultural awareness with multicultural education however, we need to do more than teach our students to have essential awareness and tolerance of other cultures. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy changes the mindset of the teacher from thinking students have a deficit to a mindset that all students have knowledge, and that they can contribute to the learning environment (Kim & Slapac, 2015). CRT takes into account cultural socialization that influences learning (Gay, 2018). Educators need to evaluate their individual biases while expanding their knowledge of diversity to support CRT (Martins-Shannon & White, 2012). When teachers change their mindset about students having deficits, reflect on their limitation in cultural knowledge, and assess how their lack of knowledge affects their students' learning, students benefit. The existing studies covered in this section have contributed to the framework that the current researcher has used in developing insight into the qualities of CRP.

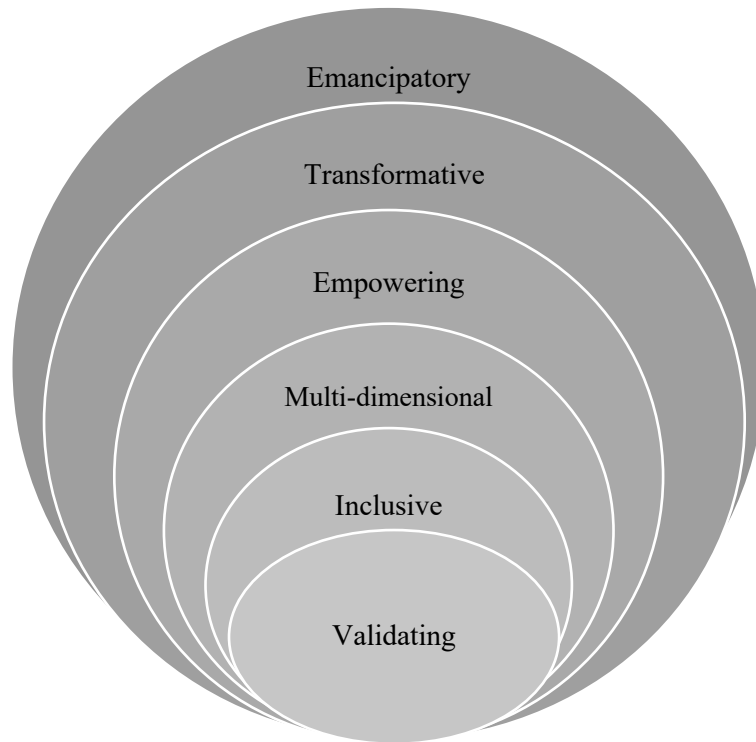**Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies**

Although there has been a substantial amount of research conducted on the theory of Culturally Responsive Teaching, little research has been done on what CRT looks like in the classroom. The research listed in this section provides the definition and identifies characteristics of CRT. Gay (2018) defines Culturally Responsive Teaching as "using cultural

knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches "to and through the strengths of these students" (p. 36). Ladson-Billing (1995) associates three critical concepts with Culturally Responsive Teaching: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. Bunner (2017) adds that CRT is allowing for more space for student voices as well as greater student visibility and proximity. CRT also allows for greater connections with student lives, engagement in students' cultures, consideration of racial issues, and links to the larger world, and students' future selves. The students' voices allow schools to facilitate students' learning and collaboration with peers (Cook-Sather, 2006). Visibility of students happens when a teacher creates a learning environment where students are valued and feel they are a part of the learning community (Bunner, 2017). Bunner (2017) defines proximity as "using physical space, personal space, and design to engage students and reduce perceived threat" (p. 41). The lessons taught should connect to the students' lives by linking curriculum to students' experiences and background knowledge. For example, by integrating the students' cultures into their learning, teachers can support the engagement of different student groups in the classroom. Instruction should also encompass learning about race and ways that it impacts the students while helping students to establish and achieve their personal goals

Gay (2018) describes the traits of CRT as being validating, inclusive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory. The characteristics and descriptions of CRT, as described by Gay (2018), are listed below:

- Validating a student's culture by integrating his strengths and cultural background allows him to make more significant associations with what he is learning.

- An inclusive and comprehensive learning environment starts with setting high expectations while developing the skills the student needs to achieve academic success while being culturally competent, maintaining a connection to his ethnicity, and not losing sight of who he is to obtain success.

- Multidimensional CRT includes cultural responsiveness in all areas of education from the curriculum, assessment, student-teacher relationship, and classroom management to meet the needs of all students.

- Empowerment encompasses academic proficiency, builds confidence, and generates students' courage to create social change.

- The transformative trait of CRT challenges the status quo of traditional education practice to expand Culturally Responsive Teaching to create an equitable education system.

- The traits of emancipatory practices are to limit the constraints that the marginalized student faces within the current education system. Students reflect on different versions of what is being taught to include information from ethnic scholars. Students gain insight and realize that there are many perspectives and that they need to seek out other versions.

Figure 5. Model of culturally responsive teaching characteristics.

When applying CRT in the classroom, teachers need to be proactive in planning how they can address negative stereotypes while allowing students to be able to express themselves freely (Martins-Shannon & White, 2012). One way of encouraging free expression is by creating a safe learning environment for students to learn, which is essential for CRT. A safe learning environment is not just a place where students are protected from physical harm but also a place where the students' social-emotional needs are addressed. Hammond and Jackson (2015) stated, "The brain needs to be part of a caring social community to maximize its sense of well-being" (p.47). A caring environment is an inclusive environment, which welcomes all students even if they do not look the same, do not speak the same language, or are not at the same readiness level. Learning is impacted when a student does not feel safe in their learning environment. When students hear other students or teachers make comments that they perceive as a threat, they then pick up on these nuances and determine the class to be a hostile environment, thus triggering the

students' natural reaction of neuroception, which are the neural circuits in our brain that distinguish whether situations or people are safe or dangerous (Hammond & Jackson, 2015). One way for teachers to create a safe learning environment is by developing relationships with their students. It is essential for teachers not only to learn about their students' cultures but also to associate these cultures with student learning to create a respectful and successful learning environment (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007). A safe learning environment is a setting where a student is physically and emotionally free from harm and threats to their wellbeing. Another way to create a safe learning environment is to include lessons that incorporate and foster peer collaboration and interaction.

CRT practices can be implemented in all areas of education, from classroom management to assessment of what students know. Lee (1998) examined Culturally Responsive Teaching as it related to assessment and found that students' results were enhanced when the skills students learned were tied to real-world problems. For assessments to be culturally responsive, students need to be challenged to think critically and apply what they have learned from the curriculum to real-world problems in which they are finding solutions. The real-world problems are based on the community needs in which the students live and allow students to draw from their cultural and background knowledge.

Culture influences a student's behavior. When teachers are unaware of how a different culture's expectations on behaviors impact the student's actions, the teacher may view the student's behaviors as unfavorable and punish him. Vincent, Randall, Cartledge, Tobin, and Swain-Bradway (2011) studied over 120,000 elementary school data entered in School-Wide Information System (SWIS), which collects student behavior data used to aid in decision making and the creation of interventions for schools. The elementary school data revealed that African

American and Latino students made up 48% of the office discipline referrals, while the White students made up 35.7% (Vincent et al., 2011). Latino and African American Male students with minor misbehaviors were more likely to receive suspension and expulsions compared to their White male peers (Vincent et al., 2011). Students' behavior can be perceived differently by different teachers. The student's cultural communication may differ from that of the teacher leading to misunderstandings, which may influence the student-teacher relationship (Erickson, 1987). Gaining knowledge about the acceptable behaviors specific to certain cultures can assist the teacher in interpreting the student's actions in class.

Positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) is currently being implemented in schools across California. When implementing behavior programs, the students' cultural backgrounds should be taken into account to determine which type of rewards would be relevant to students (Cramer & Bennett, 2015). Knowing whether or not a student likes verbal praise can determine if that type of reward is seen as reinforcement or as a punishment. Reducing negative behaviors is as important to increasing students' on-task time as ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to the students. Educators should not limit interactions with parents to discussions on negative student behaviors but increase and maintain a home-school connection focusing on positive student behaviors.

Creating a learning environment where students are respected and are equal may well contribute to classroom management. A recent study conducted by Bondy et al. (2007) studied three novice elementary school teachers' use of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM). Bondy et al. (2007) found similar CRCM characteristics of all three teachers who participated in their study. The teachers provided students with class expectations and examples

of strategies to use to be successful in class. They developed genuine relationships with their students by sharing personal stories and making connections to their students.

Culturally Responsive Teacher Traits

Most researchers agree that culturally responsive teachers share similar characteristics. For example, Villegas and Lucas (2002) and Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) describe one of the characteristics as teachers taking into account their students' perspectives and understanding that there are multiple realities based on students' perspectives. These realities are influenced by their background, race, culture, language, and socioeconomic status. Villegas and Lucas (2002) further bring to the fore the value that teachers place on their students' diverse perspectives and the importance of using these values as resources. Villegas and Lucas (2002) add that to effectively create change, teachers need to view themselves as being capable in creating equity in schools. Brown-Jeffy and Copper (2011) declare that CRT teachers use multiple modalities to teach students and help them learn. The teacher develops relationships with their students and creates lessons around their students' life experiences (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Also, Kozleski (2010) writes that CRT teachers have the same high expectations for all students, engage students in their learning processes, recognize the resources of the students' familial and cultural backgrounds, and use student experiences to help guide instruction and make connections between the curriculum, students' cultures, and life expectancies. Learning the characteristics of teachers who believe in Culturally Responsive Teaching can aid in hiring personnel who can work well in multicultural settings.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcomes

Researchers such as Sleeter (2012) contend that the impact of CRT on student achievement is limited, however, there has been empirical evidence that disputes such claims.

Although studies on CRT and student achievement on standardized assessments have been inconclusive (Coghlan, 2011), recent research has shown positive outcomes for student learning. CRT has resulted in a positive effect on student learning by increasing student engagement, developing more in-depth understanding of subjects, and improved test scores (Civil & Khan, 2001; Dimick, 2012; Gutstien, 2006; Laughter & Adams, 2012; Rodriguez, Jones, Pang, & Park, 2004). Studies on CRT practices utilized in all subject areas have shown positive outcomes for students. A study conducted by Rodriguez et al. (2004) was conducted on 193 tenth grade students who were from underserved diverse ethnicities. The students were part of an intervention that incorporated CRT to improve participants' academic skills in the areas of math and science using a pre and posttest to measure improvement. Rodriquez et al. (2004) found that there were significant increases in overall pre and posttest scores.

Enyedy and Mukhopadhyay (2007) researched CRT practices during a summer seminar with high school students in the area of math, which incorporated social justice discussions into the math lessons. The study was conducted with 25 Latino and African American students who attended different high schools in the Los Angeles area. The study used a pre and posttest analysis of student assessments and oral presentations. Enyedy and Mukhopadhyay (2007) found that there was a statistically significant gain in the students' posttest scores, with an increase of 3.6 from the mean score of 7 on the pretest to a mean score of 10.6 on the posttest. Coughran (2012) conducted a qualitative action research study focused on establishing student connections to the curriculum, which targeted 24 kindergarten students from different ethnicities. As part of the data collection process, the researcher recorded his conversations with students and with teachers during interviews with them. The analysis revealed that the students made connections to the curriculum. Coughran (2012) states that "the children showed the ability to

engage with emotionally difficult concepts such as racism and segregation when they were able to somehow relate those concepts to their own" (p. 22). As students make personal connections to what they are learning, they become further engaged, and their learning becomes more meaningful (Mazer, 2013).

Another subject area that students showed growth in with the implementation of CRT practices is in the area of reading. Bui and Fagen (2013) researched reading in a quasi-experimental study conducted with 49 elementary students in an urban school district located in Northern California. The Bui and Fagen (2013) research used a pretest-posttest design and investigated two fifth grade classes. The two student groups were provided with mainstream texts provided by the curriculum; however, one group was provided supplemental multicultural texts related to the theme. The study utilized a pretest and posttest analysis using *t*-test scores to determine any statistically significant differences. The results from Bui and Fagen (2013) showed that there was a "positive, moderately strong effect on the students' mean reading score" (p. 65). This research provided additional support for the claimed benefits of using CRT practices. The primary benefit of CRT is improved student learning. Students whose teachers implemented CRT practices improved scores on class assessments and showed increased intervention outcomes.

Teacher perspectives

Recent research on implementing change in education and teaching from the teachers' perspectives focuses on the areas of commitment, workload, capacity, collocation, and perception of the teaching profession (Fullan, 2006; Leithwood & McAdie, 2007; EPE Research Center, 2008). To gain commitment from teachers, Fullan (2006) claimed that teachers must have a moral purpose to commit their time and energy to implement change. Fullan, Hill, and

Crevola (2006) assert that to obtain high-quality instructional practices in the classroom, teachers must have a moral purpose as they are then motivated to do the right thing for their students. Teachers need to perceive that what they are doing will have significant benefits for their students. Also, educators need to feel confident in their skills to be able to deliver instruction and know their subject matter. Building capacity of the teacher after they have completed their coursework may perhaps take form as ongoing professional development, collaboration, planning time, and support from an administrator. Developing the capacity may ease some of the teachers' uncertainties and raise their self-efficacy, which can sequentially contribute to increasing CRT practices.

A teacher's perspective impacts his willingness to implement change with complete fidelity. Teachers' biases also impact their teaching; however, biases are hard to measure. When teachers hold a negative view of their students, it compromises the effective use of CRT practices. McKnown and Weinstein (2008) studied 41 elementary school teachers who worked with diverse populations to measure teacher biases and expectations they held of their students. In the study, McKnown and Weinstein (2008) controlled variables of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender to teacher expectations and found that "teachers did not have higher expectations of girls than of boys" (p. 512). They added that "socioeconomic status did, however, predict teacher expectations in a statistically significant manner" (p. 512). Good and Nichols (2001) add that teachers' attitudes towards students impact the students' performance. A study conducted by Rubie-Davies, Hattie, and Hamilton (2006) studied 21 primary grade teachers' expectations, revealing that teachers held different expectations for the Maori and New Zealand European students.

Previous studies have shown that racism can be subtle and can take on the form of

microaggression. Sue et al. (2007) define microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily, verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (p. 273). When educators partake in microaggressions, they generate an insecure learning environment for students, preventing them from being fully involved in the learning process. Current research on teacher perspectives on Culturally Responsive Teaching is limited. A recent study conducted on 200 K-12 teachers working in a low socioeconomic urban school district examined teachers' perspectives on CRT (Samuels, 2018). Samuels (2018) reported that positive teachers' perspectives on CRT had benefits for students. The benefits included exposure of students to diverse views, improved student-teacher relationships, and increased inclusive practices. Teachers described their challenges in implementing CRT, for example, in having difficult conversations around controversial topics and in managing any conflict that may arise in class (Samuels, 2018). Ebersole, Kanahele-Mossman, and Kawakam's (2016) study were conducted on teacher perspectives of Culturally Responsive Teaching. The study carried out with 18 teachers enrolled in a master's degree program, found that teachers were overwhelmed by CRT because they felt they had a deficit in cultural knowledge. Previous research on teacher perspectives and how these views had impacted the use of CRT, provides a good foundation upon which the current study builds. The present study examined teacher perspectives and investigated the relationships between perspectives and CRT implementation.

Factors and Resources

Teachers encounter multiple barriers in implementing CRT, such as the ineffectiveness of teacher preparation programs (Haynes & Juarez, 2012), however, many sources and types of

support exist to encourage the implementation of CRT. Some interventions, programs, and courses have been successful in encouraging greater cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

Teacher Preparation Programs on CRT

To gain a better understanding of the barriers that educators experience in implementing CRT, a review of the research on teacher preparation programs, and how they train teachers for CRT is examined. Teacher preparation programs are not effectively training potential teachers to work with a diverse student population. Haynes and Juarez (2012) declare that there is a crisis in the United States as teacher preparation programs are not preparing teachers to work effectively with all students. They claim that the reason behind the lack of preparedness is teacher training, which has historically been dominated by privileged whiteness (Haynes & Juarez, 2012), however, with the population of America becoming increasingly diverse, the need to change the mindset should begin in the teacher preparation programs. To effectively teach a diverse population of students "teachers must have the knowledge, disposition, and skill to effectively implement and access Culturally Responsive Pedagogy" (Haynes & Juarez, 2012, p. 4). Sleeter (2001) reviewed 80 studies on teacher preparation programs and how they prepare teachers to work with culturally diverse students. Sleeter (2001) found that the programs implemented at the time attempted to increase diversity by recruiting teachers from diverse backgrounds and that the pre-service programs strived to develop teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education.

Barnes' (2006) study was conducted on 24 elementary school pre-service teachers to determine how they taught in a culturally responsive manner after participating in a course that incorporated a field experience. After completion of their fieldwork, the pre-service teachers participated in a reflective written exam. Barnes (2006) found that several themes emerged from the responses given by teachers in the exams. The educators increased their focus on their

attitudes and beliefs about diversity, learned that students' backgrounds could positively influence learning, developed safe spaces for students, and gained a better understanding of the education system that can impact students either positively or negatively. Lastrapes and Negishi (2012) examined the cultural consciousness and self-efficacy of 46 pre-service educators enrolled in a diversity course that included working with diverse elementary school students. The researcher found that there was a statistically significant difference in the educators' self-efficacy rating on the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale after their participation in the diversity course.

Howard and del Rosario (2004) declare that it is essential for teacher preparation programs to convey the importance of race and race-related issues that can develop in their classrooms effectively. Teacher education programs also need to include the theme of diversity in their curriculum (Escamilla & Nathenson-Mija, 2003). Villegas and Lucas (2002) state that Culturally Responsive Teaching practices should be the framework for teacher preparation programs, with CRT practices deliberately and thoroughly taught and integrated into coursework.

A form of teaching CRT to teacher candidates is through the use of service-learning (Endo, 2015; Brown & Howard, 2005). Service-learning models provide educators with the opportunities to put into practice the theory learned during their coursework. Service-learning programs provide an opportunity for both the teacher candidate and the school. Brown and Howard (2015) described the outcome for student teachers, as having gained a deeper understanding of CRT and the call for social justice, which can promote equity in education. Another form of teaching CRT to pre-service teachers is through the use of multicultural literature. Multicultural literature is written by diverse authors and can provide an understanding

of issues that arise among varying people groups. This type of literature provides the reader with a wide range of perspectives, which can lead to productive conversations about social justice. Educators' courses should incorporate ethnic literature not only for providing knowledge of the available literary works but also as a means for teaching about different cultures, which is a way for embedding CRT in instruction. Escamilla and Nathenson-Mejia (2003) study conducted on 27 teacher candidates, who worked in a high Latino population, emphasized the need for teaching about students' culture explicitly for multicultural literature to have an instructional impact.

Providing coursework for pre-service teachers in the area of CRT will not necessarily transform into their use of CRT practices. Teachers need to be given opportunities to practice and master the skills. When teachers doubt their ability to present CRT practices in their classes accurately, they tend not to incorporate them into their lessons. Another reason teachers experience self-doubt in their efficacy of incorporating CRT is their inexperience with student diversity or unfamiliarity with the area of CRT (Siwatu et al., 2016).

Once teachers gain an understanding of Culturally Responsive Teaching in their coursework, they should continue learning about it in their schools. Through ongoing professional development time for teacher planning and collaboration with colleagues on how to implement CRT in their classroom, teachers' capacity and their self-efficacy in using CRT practices in the classroom can be bolstered (Smyth, 2013).

Administration and Culturally Responsive Teaching

Examination of the traits and practices of culturally responsive administrators as observed by teachers sheds light on the lens through which administrators are viewed, that is, as a resource or a barrier in the implementation of CRT in the classroom. Schools need to have the

support of the administrators to develop a learning environment that encourages and embraces Culturally Responsive Teaching. An educational leader could be a resource to the teachers and be supportive in the process of learning and the implementation of CRT practices. There is countless research conducted on leadership and school leadership styles; however, the research on culturally responsive leadership is limited. School leaders who have succeeded in implementing culturally responsive practice also improved student achievement and school communities at large. Culturally responsive administrators incorporate the community's history, challenge the status quo that causes inequities, remain student-centered, and demonstrate compassion for their students.

Everson and Bussey (2007) report that leaders for social justice develop relationships and embrace ethical leadership qualities to create an appropriate learning environment so all students can achieve their highest potential. In the same line, the researcher, Brown (2003), had also emphasized the importance of relationship-building, contending that successful administrators who are culturally responsive should genuinely take an interest in students and build a relationship with them. The relationships built should not be limited to teachers and students but rather should be created with all stakeholders. They may, at times, involve hard conversations about race with staff and other adults. Supervisors who engage in courageous conversations about race, inequality, and ethical issues improve communication with their employees from different cultural backgrounds (Burkard et al., 2006). Creating a safe environment for the staff is crucial as it opens up the dialogue to topics that may be hard to discuss, such as race and social injustices, which can lead to one of the goals of cultural responsiveness, that is, discussions about change.

The site and district administrators can serve as a resource to the teachers when

implementing CRT practices, however, teachers need more encouragement than the administrator's approval and buy-in of CRT practices. Additional resources are necessary for the effective implementation of new practices. Turnbull (2001) states that for successful implementation of new initiatives, teachers must be given adequate training, be provided with resources, receive helpful support from the program's developers and the school, and have control of how it translates into their classrooms.

Professional Development

For any training or professional development to be successful, it must be done over time. Educators cannot be expected to master the skills they need through one professional development session. The training should be ongoing, collaborative, and relevant to the participants. Smyth (2013) reviewed eight studies on CRT professional development and found that participants gained more from the training when there were cultural self-awareness and self-reflection exercises incorporated. It is important to follow-up on the implementation of the new strategies learned to increase the effectiveness of the training (Smyth, 2013).

Smyth (2013) brings to the fore the lack of follow-up and continual support as a factor that impacts implementation after the delivery of professional development. Ongoing support for teachers could be the use of professional learning communities (PLCs) for the teachers to continue building their professional capital in the area of CRT. PLCs provide teachers with the time they need for collective planning and learning with their peers and often includes the support of a coach. Guerrero, Shahnazarian, and Brown (2016) acknowledge that through the use of PLCs, teachers can gain a deeper understanding of practice that has been taught in professional development. Thus, teacher learning about the topic increases when PLCs focus on the implementation of CRT practices in lessons by encouraging planning and reflection on data.

This focus can, in turn, lead to changes in instruction towards more culturally responsive practices.

Another form of support for teachers is the use of mentors. It would be effective for the support of a mentor to be enlisted after professional development or throughout professional development sessions on CRT. As research has shown, the lack of follow-up and continual support can hamper implementation (Smyth, 2013), however, having a mentor as follow-up support can boost the use of CRT practices in the classroom (Lucy & White, 2017). Mentors could help by collaborating on goals, planning the implementation of strategies, and creating a safe atmosphere where the teacher can self-reflect (Lucey & White, 2017).

The implementation of any program, classroom practice, or new strategy has many contributing factors that may stand in the way of successful implementation. The review of the literature reveals that the reoccurring themes that hinder implementation are the support from administrators and the inadequate amounts of training and resources. According to Turnbull (2001), the foremost influencing factors in implementation are school-level supports to address teachers' concerns and the lack of buy-in from the principal.

Minimal research has been conducted on factors that hinder the implementation of CRT practices. It is important to identify barriers, so that appropriate supports are put in place to ensure that student learning is maximized. According to Achinstein and Ogawa (2012), one barrier identified was the pressure teachers experienced to follow guided pacing and increase test scores, which impedes their ability to practice CRT methods in their classroom (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2012). Lopez and Bursztyn (2013) identified another challenge teachers experience in implementing CRT practices: The effort it takes to install culturally appropriate text into curriculum programs that have already been adopted by the educational system.

One of the main factors that stand in the way of CRT is the lack of awareness on the topic. Lew and Nelson (2016) state that new teachers are not well-versed in the area of CRT; they have surface-level knowledge of what CRT practices are and are not provided support to develop their understanding. Although the study included a small sample of 16 new teachers, the impact of teachers not knowing CRT is valid (Lew & Nelson, 2016). How are teachers expected to implement strategies that are best for students if they are not aware of them?

The current study aims to gain insight into what teachers know about and how they define CRT. The research thus promotes understanding of how the lack of awareness of CRT impacts the use of these practices in the classroom. The current research seeks to gain insight into the factors that contribute to or stand in the way of CRT implementation in the classroom. Discovering needed supports can help educational organizations choose the best course of action in CRT implementation to provide an equitable education to all students. Once supports are identified, organizations then need to build upon their strengths and continue to acquire new skills needed to maintain the use of CRT.

Social Justice in Education

The implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) calls for action to be taken in ensuring social justice in education for all students. ESSA provides significant civil rights safeguards for historically disadvantaged students, which improves equity in their schooling (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Educators can create social justice through the use of Culturally Responsive Teaching. Culturally Responsive Teaching can lead to a call for action for the creation of a movement for social justice. Everson and Bussely (2007 define social justice as "the quality of fairness that exists within communities of societies" (p. 178). Creating fairness in education is essential in making quality education accessible to all students. Social

justice is not only demonstrated through educators' mindfulness and attentiveness of matters, subjects, and practices that advocate for more equity but also through the encouragement they give for change and the support they demonstrate for justice (Dover, 2009). Since schools play an essential role in advancing societies, it is essential to ensure that all schools provide a balanced education to all of their students. When a school continues to maintain the traditional exclusive teaching practices, it sustains inequities and the persistent achievement gaps that exist between disadvantaged students and their wealthier peers.

The use of CRT practices can be a means for teaching social justice to influence students to create change. Esposito and Swain (2009) state that "teachers who promote the academic and social development of their students through culturally relevant and socially just pedagogies prepare them to make a tremendous impact on their communities and the world" (p. 46). As students learn about their heritage and the contributions that their ancestors made to societies, they take pride in their history and become empowered and engaged in their education (Esposito & Swain, 2009). Social justice in education is essential in creating change that is needed to achieve access and equity for all students' success in education. If the ultimate goal of educational organizations is student achievement, that of the implementation of CRT practices is the attainment of social justice in education. The application of social justice in education addresses issues of oppression, racism, injustice, privilege, and power. Teaching for social justice can create discomfort and uneasy feelings for teachers; however, when teachers become aware of the disparities among students, they have the opportunity to develop new perspectives on the inequities. Once a teacher changes his mindset, he becomes ready to engage in teaching for social justice. Building the teachers' capacity in the areas of CRT and social justice can ease their worries.

According to Dover (2009), there are six principles for teaching social justice. Social justice in education encompasses many of the same principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching. The ideologies associated with teaching social justice (Dover, 2009) are listed below.

- Hold high expectations of all students.

- Build on the students' existing knowledge that comes from their cultural experiences.

- Fill any gaps students have in their learning by teaching the skills needed.

- Foster collaborative relationships with all stakeholders (students, parents, and community).

- Utilize a variety of assessments, systematically assessing what students know.

- Thoroughly teach about inequities, power, and how to create change for justice.

Setting high expectations for students is a crucial principle for teaching social justice and CRT. The expectations and biases held by teachers about their students directly influence the students' achievement (Devine 1989). The belief held by teachers can impact students' outcomes, thus having negative views of students can be detrimental to their education. Another principle of social justice teaching that aligns with CRT is the reinforcement of students' background knowledge while teaching them skills they have missed along their learning process. When students experience gaps in their learning, it can limit their learning opportunities. According to Ladson-Billing (1994), in culturally relevant classrooms, teachers need to provide students with scaffolds for learning difficult concepts, which is also a principle associated with social justice teaching. Fostering collaborative relationships between the home and school is not only a principle for teaching social justice but also a form of culturally relevant teaching. Teachers should use a variety of forms of assessments to support all students effectively, as not all students can show what they know in the same manner. The sixth principle of social justice

teaching is transformative and emancipatory for students; teaching about inequities and power creates a platform for change, which is vital for justice. Teaching for social justice may create discomfort and uneasiness for the educator who may circumvent the implementation of SJT.

Hackman (2005) provides further explanations on social justice education, claiming that "social justice education encourages students to take an active role in their education and supports teachers in creating empowering, democratic and critical education environments" (p.103). Students can become invested in what they are learning through the support of their teachers who foster positive learning environments, causing their potential to exceed the expectations as they overcome the obstacles they encounter (see Figure 6).

Culturally responsive teaching traits Gay (2010)	Social Justice teaching principles Dover (2009)
Validating	Build on students prior knowledge
Inclusive	High expectations
Multidimensional	Build relationships
Empowerment	Use a variety of assessments
Transformative	Teach about inequalities
Emancipatory	Build student skills/fill in the gaps
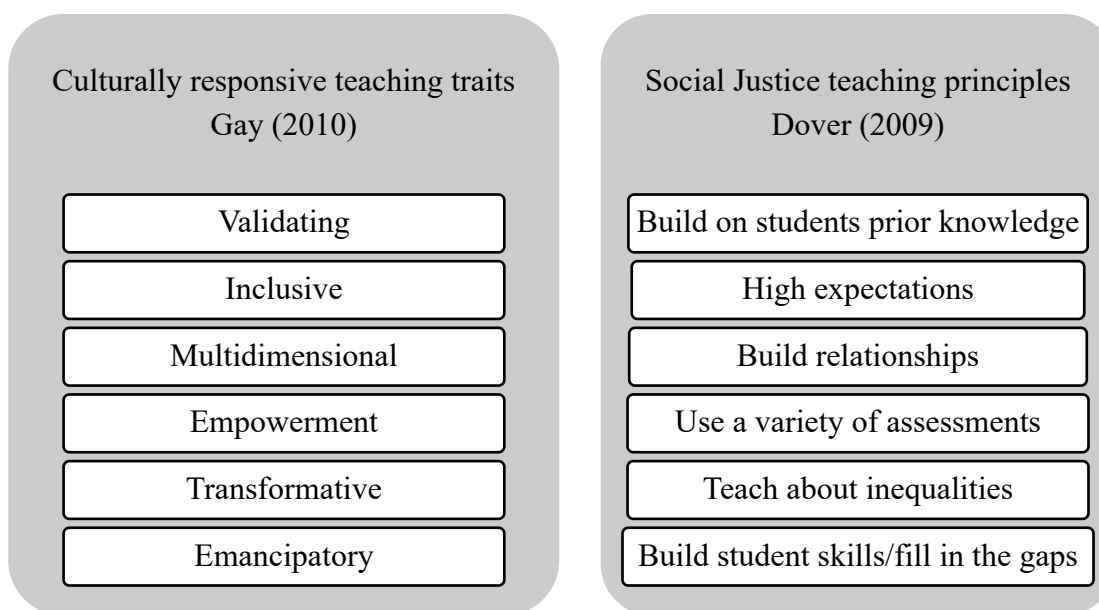
Figure 6. Comparison of culturally responsive teaching and social justice teaching principles.

To create social justice in education, Hackman (2005) describes the five critical elements of social justice education (see Figure 7). In Hackman's model of the five essential components of social justice education, content master refers to teachers fully understanding the concept of social justice as it relates to education. It is essential for teachers to challenge the status quo and

encourage students to think critically about the information that is presented to them. Teachers

help students make the connections between the real-world and the content that they are learning

about in class. Critical analysis deepens the students' awareness of issues that arise in society,

assists them in contemplating why these problems exist, and encourage them to think of possible

solutions to problems related to social justice or steps needed to increase social justice. The third

component is action and social change. The teacher allows students to come up with steps that

they need to take to challenge the status quo, however, for there to be action and social change,

there needs to be more reflection. Self-reflection allows the students to take time and reflect on

their actions, knowledge, and understanding of current social issues. Self-reflection is also

implemented for the educator to develop an open mind.
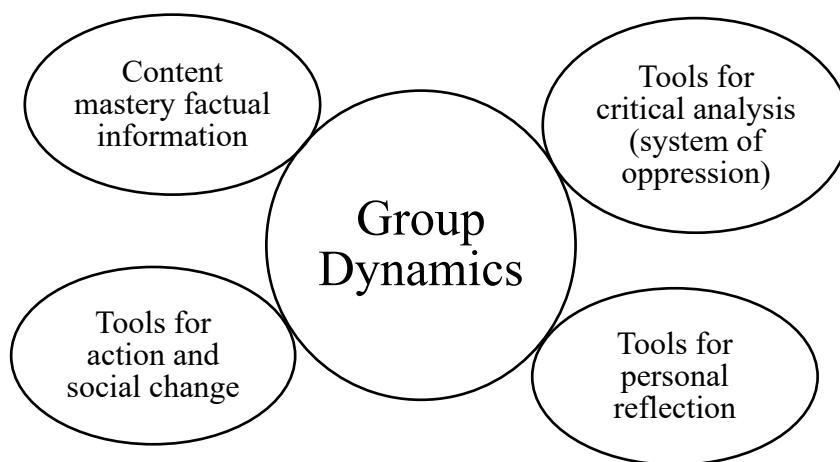
Figure 7. Five essential components of social justice education. Adapted from "Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education," by H. Hackman, 2005, *Excellence in Education*, *8*(2), 103–109.

Ebersole et al. (2016) claim that conversations about race, culture, and inequities can be

controversial. They argue that the teacher should not be the sole one to decide to discuss the

topic of race or culture. Administrators and parents should be informed of topics that may be

emotional for students to discuss, however, this should not deter teachers from holding such

conversations. Social justice teaching should not only be taught in high school. Bigler and Wright (2014) as well as Durden, Escalante, and Blitch (2015) conducted research in early childhood education, which found that instruction and conversations about race and social justice yielded positive outcomes for students as early as preschool. Therefore, implementing teaching on culture, race, and social justice is appropriate for all school-age groups from preschool to high school and beyond.

The main focus of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is to utilize the students' home culture as a means to achieve student academic success while cultivating students' critical thinking skills and fostering action for social justice. Social justice in education creates the drive and the means to change the social injustices that create inequities in the schools, community, and society. Students and teachers develop a shared commitment to promote equity and justice through raised expectations for their students, which builds the empowerment of students and supports engagement in their learning.

Summary

The research reviewed in this chapter included topics relevant to this dissertation, including critical race theory, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, CRT practices, teachers' perspectives, factors, and resources that impact CRT practices and social justice in education. Critical race theory in education impacts education, claiming that racism is integrated into all aspects of the education system. When the dominant culture constructs systems that keep them in power, it produces disparities among the historically disadvantaged groups in the form of an achievement gap. As the population of our students enrolling in schools across the nation becomes more culturally and linguistically diverse, the need for a transformation in education becomes more pressing to ensure students' equitable access to an education in which they can all

be successful.

Culturally Responsive Teaching is an approach that can be used to address the inequalities in education. Fully understanding the impact that culture has on students is essential to comprehend the influence that it has on learning. Guerrero et al. (2016) claim that for teachers to move away from a simplistic understanding of culture, teachers must develop an understanding that culture is fluid and that students can identify with different cultures. Students can experience inner conflict when their home values differ from that of the schools they attend. Culturally Responsive Teaching promotes academic success for all students. Culturally Responsive Teaching practices integrate the students' diversity as an asset and utilize their backgrounds in teaching.

Ladson-Billing (1995) associates three critical concepts to culturally relevant teaching: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. CRT practice can be utilized in all areas of academics, from instruction and assessments to classroom management. There are particular characteristics that teachers who implement CRT practices possess, and particular characteristics that define an administrator who encourages cultural responsiveness.

All educators do not commonly use CRT practices. Barriers that educators face which impede the use of CRT practices are lack of formal training in teacher preparation programs, the absence or lack of support from leaders, the lack of flexibility in the curriculum, and the push for following pacing guides to cover all skills that are assessed on state accountability assessments. Another factor that impacts the use of CRT is teacher perspectives (Ebersole et al., 2016). Despite the difficulties, teachers can be supported in their implementation. Administrators play an essential role in providing support and resources for teachers of all grade levels, however, supports and resources need ongoing professional development and the implementation of

policies and procedures supporting cultural responsiveness.

Schools need to move away from implementing superficial CRT by only participating in cultural celebrations. To promote student empowerment, CRT must go beyond the validation and acknowledgment of students' cultures. Social justice in education should be implemented at all levels of schooling. This gives the opportunity for students to learn about their heritage in a positive way, so they can take pride in who they are and in the contributions of their ancestors. This can, in turn, lead to higher student motivation and empowerment.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The research used for the current study was a mixed methods explanatory approach. The study investigated teachers' perceptions of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and the use of CRT practices across grade levels in Southern California schools. Two data collection methods were used. The data collection was completed in two phases. The first phase included a self-reported survey that had a variety of questions from eight Likert scale to one open-ended question. The survey was used for gathering quantitative information about the participants' perspectives on Culturally Responsive Teaching, the CRT instructional practices and related resources they use, and the barriers they encounter in their classroom in the implementation of CRT. In the next phase, the follow-up, the researcher carried out semi-structured interviews with a strategically selected subsample to ensure maximum variability of teacher participants. The purpose of the interview was to collect qualitative data on the same concepts examined through the surveys, however, the face-to-face interaction allowed the teachers to discuss their answers more deeply by adding other information they found relevant. The current chapter discusses these aspects of the research process in more detail. It is divided into five main sections: (a) the sampling procedures, (b) the research setting, (c) the instruments used, (d) the data collection, and (e) data analysis.

Sampling Procedures

The selection of the sample needs to be purposeful to include as much variation as possible. At the same time, convenience and snowball sampling were also used. Teachers were recruited from Southern California, where the researcher currently works and through her connections with school leaders in the region. She also relied on teachers who had answered the survey to recruit more participants into the study. The minimum sample size the researcher

aimed for was 100 participants to ensure enough statistical power to minimize errors associated with medium effect sizes in the quantitative analysis. The two main criteria for participation were (a) the student population that teachers worked with, and (b) the geographical region. The teachers recruited had to work with a diverse population in Southern California. Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that qualitative research seeks to explain rather than generalize findings. Therefore, the qualitative data collected from a subsample of participants was limited in scope, although it provided depth and richness of data. Criterion sampling was used to select the subsample of teachers from the larger population of participants that were surveyed. The participants chosen were those who were currently implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in their classroom.

Setting and Participants

The setting of the study began at an elementary school district located in Los Angeles County in Southern California. It is considered an elementary district because it is made up of only elementary and middle schools. The student population was made up of 58% Asians, 37% Latinos, 1.5% Caucasians, 1% Filipinos, and less than 1% African Americans or those identifying as two or more races. English Learners made up 41% of the population. Students in this district who were eligible for free/reduced-price meals upon enrollment make up 86% of the student population (Ed Data, n.d.).

An email was sent to the school administrators of ten schools, made up of elementary and middle schools, all of which were located in the targeted district to explain the research and invite teachers to participate in the survey electronically. The researcher also attended staff meetings at five different sites to introduce the study. The researcher relied on a snowball effect to recruit more respondents by having participants share the survey with other teachers they

knew. The initial number of surveys shared was 260. The total number of surveys shared after the initial distribution could not be determined. The survey and relevant interactions were carried out through online communication. Interview locations, on the other hand, were determined by the participants and varied in location, including coffee shops and classrooms. They were carried out during duty hours, and over dinners. The study did not take place in one particular school site.

The study population was made up of 119 participants having different genders and varying numbers of years of experience from beginning to veteran teachers. Participants taught various grade levels from the K to the 6th grade. Of those 119 teachers, 11 were selected strategically for interviews. This selection aimed to represent the most extensive variation on CRT practices, so after preliminary analysis of the survey data, teachers who used CRT to different degrees were selected. The researcher also ensured equal representation of school levels and teachers' multicultural characteristics (i.e., language, ethnicity). Twenty participants volunteered to participate in an interview. Of those, 11 were chosen to ensure that the subsample was representative of the larger sample. Teachers from all grade levels, elementary, middle, and high school participants were selected. The researcher also chose participants for the subsample to include a variety of ethnicities.

<p align="center">**Instrumentation and Measures**</p>

The two research instruments used in the current study were an online survey created in Google Forms (see Table 2) and an interview protocol. An online survey was chosen as a form of data collection for its efficiency. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), online data collection is effective as it allows the researcher to save time and money. The survey sample can be found in Appendix A. Data was also collected by face-to-face semi-structured interviews

with a selected subsample of participants. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

According to Maxwell (2013), interviews assist a researcher's understanding of the context of

the research. The researcher hopes that the interviews can provide in-depth insight into how the

educator's experiences affect their use of CRT. The researcher employed Cultural Relevant

Pedagogy and CRT traits as the framework in developing the questions for the survey and

interviews.

Table 2

Table of Instruments and Summary of Measures

Concepts	Constructs	Implementation
Demographics	• Educators' background • Teaching experience • Multicultural	In survey-administered electronically through Google Forms
Teachers' perspectives on CRT and their self-reported use of strategies	• Educators' view of colorblindness, CRT, cultural impact on learning • Educational approaches implemented to address students' cultural validation of culture, multidimensional instruction	In survey-administered electronically through Google Forms and semi-structured interviews conducted
Barriers and resources that educators confront when implementing CRT	• Support from administrator • Training / Professional development • Educational program • Policies	In survey-administered electronically through Google Forms and semi-structured interviews.

Survey

Survey Items 1-9 were developed to collect demographic background information from

the participants. Demographic information collected included questions about ethnicity,

language, age, teaching experience, and gender. Survey Item 10, as well as Interview Items 2

and 3, were created to gain an understanding of how teachers define CRT. These items

addressed Research Question 1, which asks: How do teachers across grade levels in Southern

California school districts define Culturally Responsive Teaching? Interview Items 5, 12, 14, 15, and Survey Items 12 to 19 were Likert scale questions that were developed to answer Research Question 2, which asked: What are the characteristics and attitudes that teachers of diverse students possess? Item 24 in the survey and Items 6, 9, and 17 in the interview protocol explored barriers, thus responding to Research Question 3, which asks: What obstacles do teachers face when implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in the classrooms? Interview Items 7, 8, and 16, along with Survey Item 25, were analyzed to answer Research Question 4, which asks: What supports or resources are most useful in promoting Culturally Responsive Teaching practice?

Survey questions were developed from several different surveys used in previous studies and adapted to fit the current research (Rhodes, 2017; Hsiao, 2015). The questions for the survey were developed to gain teacher perspectives on the following themes associated with critical race theory in education: curriculum, instruction, school-community engagement, social justice, and colorblindness (Ledesam & Calderon, 2015). The teachers' views on CRT pedagogy were also examined through the use of the survey.

Interview

Qualitative data was collected from participants through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The subsample of interviewees was strategically selected from the larger sample of 119 teachers who participated in the survey. The semi-structured interview included 17 semi-structured questions with an additional one to three probing questions. The interview questions examined the teachers' perspectives about CRT and requested an in-depth description of classroom practices, factors, and resources that teachers encountered in implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching. The interview protocol is located in Appendix B. The structure of the

interview protocol was modeled after De Kock, Lievens, and Born's (2015) interview protocol. Questions probed for an in-depth explanation of the educator's knowledge and use of CRT pedagogy. The interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed using an online transcription service.

Procedures

A pilot study was carried out to pre-test the survey with 16 teachers working in five different districts across Southern California. Based on the feedback, the instructions for the survey were clarified, and the amount of time to complete the survey was estimated at 30 minutes. The pilot study is covered in more detail in the validity and reliability section. An email was sent out to 10 elementary and middle school site administrators. The aim of the email was to introduce the study, ask permission to attend a staff meeting to provide teachers with information about the study and to recruit participants. Flyers were passed out during the staff meeting with information about the survey. A sample of the flyer can be found in Appendix C. Then, after presenting the study at the staff meetings, the researcher sent an email out to teachers to their personal email addresses which included a letter from the administrator and the online survey link. The teachers were asked to share the research information with other educators, colleagues, and friends from different districts to create a snowball effect. Participants were notified of the amount of time for questionnaire completion through the consent form, which was attached to the survey.

The participants were notified that participation was voluntary and that they had the choice to decline to partake in the study. The participants could withdraw from the survey at any time and were offered the opportunity to decline to answer any particular question that they did not wish to answer. They were also assured that their information and the data collected would

be confidential and used only for the study. The data collection began in December 2019. A follow-up email with the link to the online survey was sent a month later to remind teachers of the timeframe to complete the survey and that data collection would be coming to an end. Overall, the data collection lasted two months until February.

An item on the survey asked the respondents who were willing to participate in a follow-up interview to provide their contact information. A maximum variation sampling approach was used to select interview participants after the collection of the survey data. The purpose of the criterion sampling was to recruit a sample of the population that uses CRT in the classroom. The participants that provided their contact information for an interview were either called or emailed to set up a date and time to meet for the interview. The participants selected the locations for the interviews.

Several steps were taken to ensure the confidentiality of the participants' information. For instance, the survey did not ask participants for their names, so no personal identifier was included in the research report. The interviews recordings were numbered. After the recordings were transcribed, the researcher assigned pseudonyms to interview participants. Participants' information and the data collected were saved on an external hard drive that was password-protected.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlations. The types of analyses that were used to address each research question are outlined below:

Research Question 1 was: How do teachers across grade levels in Southern California school districts define Culturally Responsive Teaching? A qualitative descriptive analysis was

conducted to answer Research Question 1. This research question was explored using the qualitative data from the open-ended questions included in the survey and the interview questions.

Research Question 2 was: How are teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward Culturally Responsive Teaching related to their Culturally Responsive Teaching practices? A Pearson correlation analysis between the construct of teachers' perspectives toward CRT and the CRT practices reported was conducted to answer Research Question 2.

Research Question 3 was: What barriers do teachers find in implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching regularly in their classrooms? A descriptive analysis of teacher responses to one survey item and three interview items about the type of barriers they encounter in implementing CRT practices was performed to answer Research Question 3. Also, this question was explored in the interview. A more in-depth description of perceived barriers was developed from the qualitative data.

Research Question 4 was: What supports or resources are most useful in promoting Culturally Responsive Teaching practices? A descriptive analysis of the type of resources and support teachers receive in implementing CRT practices was carried out to answer Research Question 4. This question was also addressed through the interview data. A more in-depth description of perceived support and resources were developed from the qualitative data.

A pilot study was conducted, and from the response of the pilot study participants, there were no foreseeable risks involved in participating other than those encountered in day-to-day life. The researcher ensured participants' confidentiality. The participants' email addresses were not collected when the survey was returned, and the researcher thus did not obtain any identifying information about the participants, such as their names, school site, or email address. The benefits

of participation were also listed in the survey. The subjects did not receive any direct benefits for participating in this research study, however, by participating in this study, the participants helped expand the body of research on this topic. Finally, the researcher's contact information was listed on the survey Google Form.

Interview questions consisted of open-ended questions with probing follow-up questions to gain further clarification on what CRT looks like in the classroom and the resources or barriers that teachers encountered. Interview questions were gleaned from the comprehensive literature review. Using two methods of collecting data, the survey and interview, allowed the researcher to validate the responses of the participants through validation.

Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research attempts to gain a deeper understanding and develop the meaning of phenomena. For the qualitative portion of the study, the researcher transcribed the recordings of the interviews to increase the reliability of the data. A second coder was utilized to assist with the coding and categorization of the qualitative data, and the intercoder agreement was checked throughout the process. Two independent coders, the researcher and a colleague who is familiar with Culturally Responsive Teaching, examined the transcribed. The intercoder agreement amongst the researchers demonstrated a common understanding of the themes. Detailed descriptions of the research, coding, and categorization processes were given to promote transferability.

The reliability of quantitative research is promoted when the research processes and outcomes can be reproduced (Leung, 2015). Survey questions were adapted from existing valid and reliable research instruments that Rhodes' (2017) and Hsiao's (2015) used in their studies. The reliability of the study was enhanced through the use of a survey and interviews that used

precise vocabulary about the constructs to test for the same outcome using different data collection tools, the survey and the interview. A Pearson correlation was computed to assess the relationship between the items on the teachers' perception of CRT. The research findings indicate that our measure of teachers' perspectives has some reliability, with most of the items on the scale being positively related to each other. A similar Pearson correlation was computed to assess the reliability of items related to CRT instructional practice. The findings indicate that five CRT instructional practice variables, namely, validating, inclusive, curriculum instruction, student confidence, and social justice, are positively associated with each other, validating the cohesiveness of this measure.

Validity

Validity is aimed to establish credibility and examine the appropriateness of the measure (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A pilot study was conducted with 16 educators from Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego County to test the content validity of the research instrument and ensure that it is error-free. During the pilot, the appropriateness of the questions was also checked through a peer review to test for construct and content validity. The instrument was reviewed by the course professor for construct validity to ensure that the questions measured the purported constructs accurately and were relevant. The participants mainly reviewed the survey for errors.

The participants were provided the surveys to complete, which they submitted to the researcher upon completion. Participants were asked to give feedback about the questions, the amount of time for completion, and concerns or other feelings that they experienced while completing the questionnaire. Piloting the survey before using it in the actual research can aid in identifying any errors or changes that need to occur with the tool being used to collect data

(McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The results of the pilot study led the researcher to make changes to the survey. Most of the feedback was about the significant amount of time participants took to complete the survey due to the number of open-ended questions. The survey was revised, and the number of open-ended questions reduced from 12 to one. The researcher devolved questions to address the same inquiry to a checklist-style question to reduce the amount of time it took the participants to complete the survey. The hope was to increase the potential response rate.

Validation in qualitative research is aimed to establish the trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity of the researcher, while validation in quantitative research focuses on the instrument used in the study. Another way for increasing credibility and validity is the triangulation of data. Maxwell (2013), states that "this strategy reduces the risk of chance associations and systematic bases due to a specific method" (p. 128). The data collected for the study came from surveys and interviews. To reduce the validity threat of the researcher's bias, the researcher provided detailed information about the researchers' positionality, views, beliefs, and values about the research topic. Having accurate information provides the reader with an opportunity to increase their understanding of why the research was conducted.

Ethical Issues

Before the research started, the researcher submitted the research proposal to the Internal Review Board of Concordia University Irvine for approval to ensure that the study was aligned with the ethical guidelines of the research community. Permission from the district board was also obtained to conduct the study on their campuses. The participants were notified of the purpose and nature of the study. The researcher ensured that respondents were aware that their participation was voluntary and that they may choose to opt-out at any time. Survey and

interview questions were carefully constructed to avoid the introduction of leading questions or personal biases.

Researcher Statement

The researcher's personal belief about education is that every child deserves the right to an equal opportunity in receiving an excellent education. The researcher believes that children learn best when they are in a safe and caring environment. Also, educators ought to create an environment where students feel they can be themselves. Students learn best in an environment where a child can tell the teacher when they need help without feeling ashamed or embarrassed.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of how teachers define Culturally Responsive Teaching across grade levels. The study also aimed to determine what resources were needed to implement CRT and the barriers that stopped teachers from implementing CRT practices. Finally, the study examined teachers' perspectives on CRT and the use of CRT practices. Data was collected through a sequential explanatory mixed methods approach. A sample of 119 teachers was recruited from an elementary school in Southern California through a mix of convenience, maximum variation, and snowball sampling. The research instruments used included a survey constructed by the researcher based on existing research instruments. Semi-structured face-to-face follow-up interviews were then carried out with a subsample of teachers based on preliminary analyses of survey responses.

The validity and reliability of the current study were enhanced using various strategies. The researcher ensured peer review of the study, pilot-tested the survey, stated her biases, and used different methods of collecting the same data. She used existing valid and reliable research instruments to construct the survey used in the current study. The reliability of the research

instrument was further confirmed by running Pearson's correlations. The items on the survey related to the same construct were positively correlated with one another. Intercoder reliability was used in the coding of the qualitative data collected during interviews. Data were analyzed using descriptive analyses and Pearson's correlations.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter describes the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data set of the current mixed methods explanatory study. The intent of the study was to understand teachers' definitions of Culturally Responsive Teaching and identify a relationship between their perspectives and their use of CRT strategies. Also, the current study also examined the barriers that are impeding the implementation of CRT as well as the supports that help teachers use CRT.

The research questions that the study examined were:

1. How do teachers across grade levels in urban Southern California school districts define Culturally Responsive Teaching?

2. How do teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward Culturally Responsive Teaching relate to their Culturally Responsive Teaching practice?

3. What barriers do teachers find in implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching in their classrooms regularly?

4. What supports or resources are most useful in promoting Culturally Responsive Teaching practices?

Participants

The total number of surveys shared could not be determined by the researcher, since surveys were initially shared with 260 teachers and they were asked to share the survey with colleagues of their own to recruit more participants through a snowball effect. The participants represented diverse schools located in Southern California. The total number of surveys completed in the study was 119. All 119 participants were provided an opportunity to participate in an interview. Twenty-one respondents volunteered, out of which 11 were selected and participated in the interview. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed using an

online transcription service. The audio files and transcribed documents were stored on the researchers' external hard drive that was password protected.

The mode age group of the sample was 40 to 49 years, with 59 participants belonging to this age group. The range of the participants' years of teaching experience was 39 years, which spanned from 1 year to 40 years of teaching experience. The mode number of years of teaching experience was 10 years, being reported by a total of nine participants. The educational levels at which the teachers taught varied across the elementary, middle, and high school grades (see Table 3). Most participants taught at the elementary level. The majority of the participants were female, making up 82% ($n = 97$), whereas males made up 17% ($n = 20$), and participants who preferred not to self-identify composed 1% ($n = 2$) of the sample of respondents ($n = 119$). In the subsample of participants ($n = 11$) who interviewed, most of the participants were female ($n = 7$. Most ($n = 6$) identified as Latinx as their ethnicity. The participants of the interview taught across grade levels, in the elementary ($n = 4$), intermediate ($n = 3$) and high school levels ($n = 4$). The participants taught in diverse areas, including special education, general education, Spanish dual language immersion, and single-subject areas such as history, math, and science. Fifty-four participants taught general education multiple subjects, 37 taught general education single subject courses while 16 taught special education. Twelve participants did not report the subjects taught. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the education levels taught by gender, as reported in the survey.

Table 3

Education level taught by gender

Education level	Female	Male	%
Elementary	45	8	45.2
Middle	19	3	18.8
High School	25	6	26.4
Other non-specified	8	3	9.4
Total	97	20	100

Note. n = 117. Two participants did not report their gender and were not included in this chart.

The diversity of the participants in the study reflected the ethnically diverse student population they taught. The percentage of participants identified as being multicultural was 75%. Figure 8 displays the breakdown of participants by ethnicity. The ethnic groups represented by the sample were White/Caucasian, Latinx/Hispanic, African America/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and other non-specified. As can be gleaned from Figure 8, the majority of participants, 40% (*n* = 47) identified as Latinx/Hispanic, 21% as White/Caucasian, 19% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 17% African American/Black. Three percent were non-specified, and less than 1% identified as Native American.
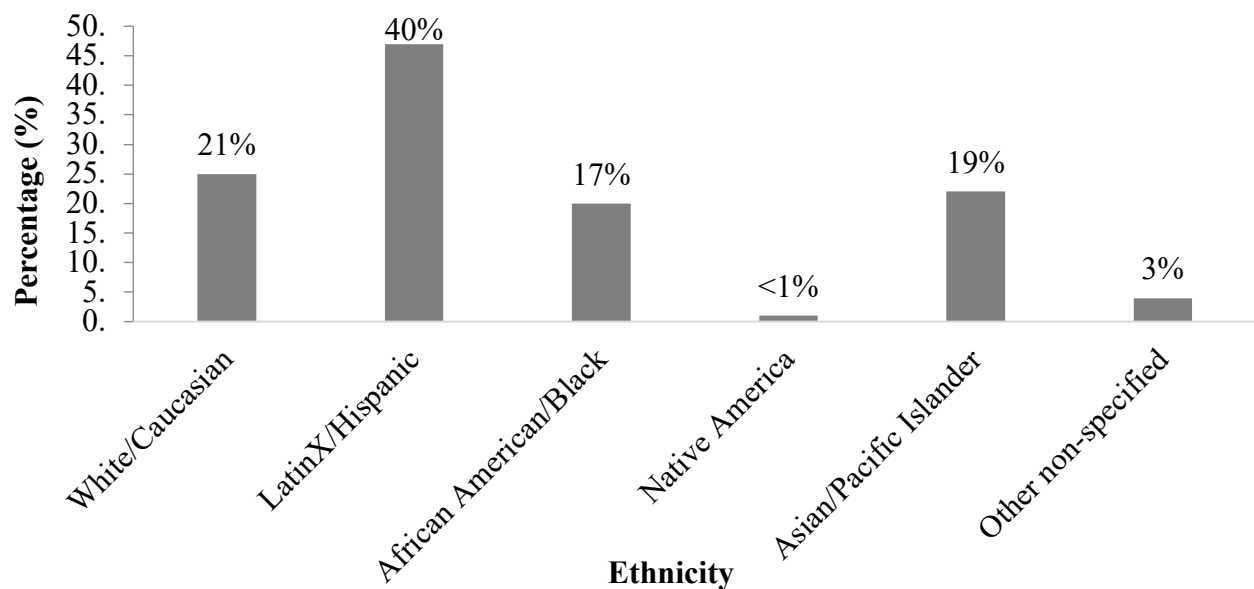

Figure 8. Percentage of participants by ethnicity.

Fifty-nine percent (*n* = 70) of the participants stated that they were multilingual. There was a total of 23 different languages spoken by the group of participants as a whole, however, all participants spoke English and 49 of the participants only spoke English. Most of the participants, 57% (*n* = 40) spoke both English and Spanish. Figure 9 provides a breakdown of the percentage of participants speaking specific languages other than English. According to Amaya (2019), English is the most common language spoken in California, with Spanish being the second most common language spoken is Spanish, and a Chinese dialect is the third most common language. The language make-up of this study mirrors that of the study conducted by Amaya (2019). The "Other" category was made up of a variety of languages such as American Sign Language (ASL), Igbo, Polish, German, Yoruba.
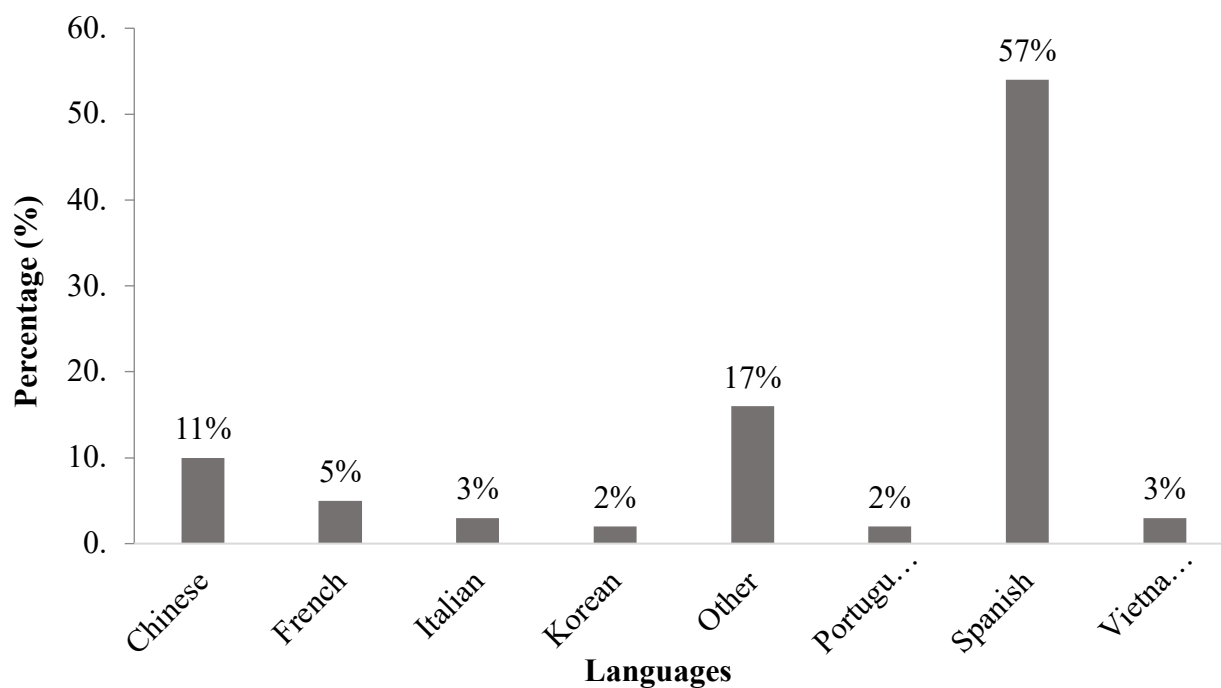
Figure 9. Language other than English spoken by participants

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was: How do teachers across grade levels in urban Southern California school districts define Culturally Responsive Teaching? Different types of data were

used to answer this question. First, an open-ended question answered by all participants, and two interview questions answered by the subsample of participants on the definition of CRT were analyzed. This qualitative data was collected through an online survey, in the form of open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews of a subsample of participants. The survey question was, "How do you define Culturally Responsive Teaching?", and the two interview questions were, "How would you define Culturally Responsive Teaching in your own words?', and "What does Culturally Responsive Teaching look like in your classroom?"

A codebook was created by the researcher with a list of codes and their definitions. The responses were analyzed at the paragraph level. Codes were not exclusive; that is, one paragraph could contain more than one code. The data was first reviewed by the researcher, who was one of the coders in this study, for initial memo notation and making notations of concepts, questions, or ideas that came up. In the second read, the researcher made notes of keywords, recurring themes, and concepts. There were eight themes identified at this stage. The researcher, along with a second coder, analyzed the qualitative data independently. After the third and last read, the coders came together to discuss the recurring themes they identified. Differences were negotiated through discussion until consensus was reached. They agreed on five final themes. Interrater reliability was 85% agreement between the coders. The themes identified in describing Culturally Responsive Teaching included: validation, inclusion, multidimensional teaching, empowerment, and other, which included all responses that did not match any of the themes. Responses such as "I don't have a definition," "Teaching that is respectful," and "Being mindful that all students are different" were thus placed under the theme other. The excerpts from the survey participants on their definition of CRT are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Excerpts from the Survey Participants on their Definition of CRT

Themes	Excerpts
Inclusion	"Being able to understand both where students exist in their own culture, how they relate to the school's culture, and through pedagogy."
Multidimensional teaching	"Being able to teach across the cultural spectrum for example if you are talking about the civil rights units for African Americans. I can also plug in the bilingual law act for the Hispanic culture as well."
Validation, Inclusion and Empowering	Culturally Responsive Teaching is using a student's culture and even language many times as part of the teaching, allowing students to feel validated, empowered, transformed, and liberated. It's comprehensive as it involved setting a culturally diverse class environment including artifacts and building on what you currently understand and comprehend about the students' cultures and inviting and allowing students, parents, and even community members to be involved as experts in the journey.

Figure 10 displays the frequency across grade levels of the themes related to CRT definitions. Eighty-four percent of participant definitions were classified under the two themes; validating and inclusive. The reminding 16% was distributed between multidimensional, empowering, and other.
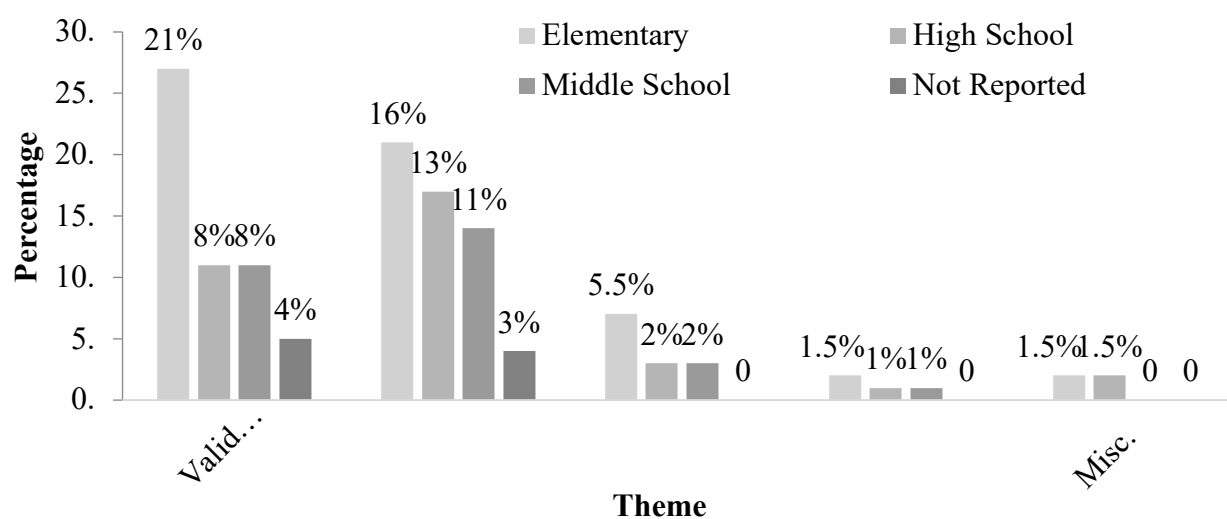

Figure 10. Bar graph of CRT definitions by levels.

Interview participants were asked: "what does CRT look like in the classroom?" Most of the definitions were identified as validating and inclusive, as can be inferred from Figure 11, which shows the frequency of CRT definition by theme and grade level.
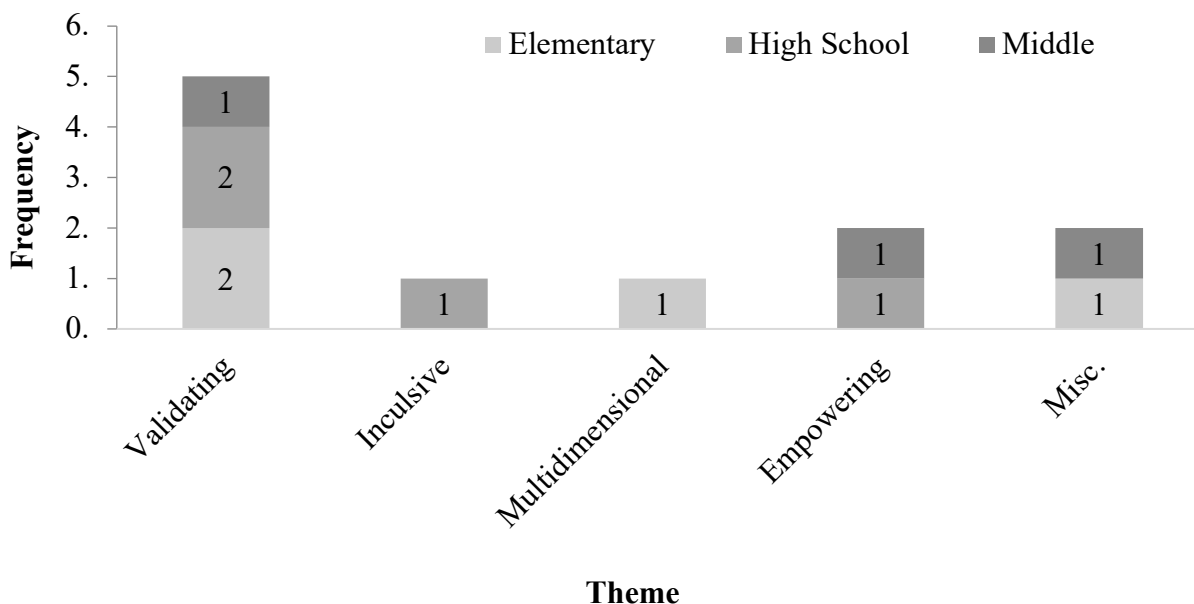
Figure 11. Stack column graph of CRT definition by grade level.

Two interview questions also addressed Research Question 1: They were: How do you define Culturally Responsive Teaching in your own words?" and "What does Culturally Responsive teaching look like in the classroom?" Excerpts of interview responses to these two questions are given below.

Adam is a multilingual Latino male who speaks English and Spanish. He teaches students with special needs in an elementary school. When asked what Culturally Responsive teaching looks like in the classroom, he gave a response that was categorized under the theme validating. He stated:

I would say that gathering, hearing cultural ideas or traditions from a student's home, and to bring those experiences into the classroom and make a connection between what they experience at home and what I'm teaching them at the moment.

Felisha, a female African American teacher who taught in the intermediate level, described what CRT teaching looks like in the classroom as empowering:

So, in my situation, culturally responsive teaching looks like being aware of social justice and social issues that are happening in the direct community that I work with. I work in an environment where kids are dealing a lot with police brutality, poverty, being a first-generation student here in the US, so for me, it's taking those things in consideration. So, having discussions where I'm actually talking to students about their rights as middle school students and students that interact with the police and bringing that in. It's having conversations about the dynamics of their family and their background in households, so restorative justice. In our circles, we bring in what's happening in terms of your life at home, what's happening in terms of poverty, what's happening in terms of maybe your parents are incarcerated, what's happening in terms of homelessness, or different things happening. We talk about that and make it an essential issue and then create projects around it. And then also there is the learning about different...What people would normally say is cultural relevance, right? So, learning about a different background in food and language and things like that. But for me, it's more the issues that they're actually dealing with day to day and bringing that in. Making curriculum that ties into that.

Kevin, a male teacher who teaches at the high school level, provided a different perspective to the question of what CRT looks like in his class. His response fell under the theme empowerment. Kevin stated,

In a social science context, it means including stories from various perspectives. It also means making sure to incorporate voices of people who are often ignored or devalued.

An inclusive curriculum would teach about immigrants, women's history, LGBT history and stories that reflect Hispanic and African American perspectives and leaders. As well as others.

There were several responses given to the question: How do you define CRT in your terms? Rosie a female Latina, teacher who teaches students with disabilities in a self-contained class at the secondary level, defined CRT as "Culturally responsive teaching is taking all students' backgrounds and ethnicity into account when you're lesson planning."

Giovanni, a male Latino elementary Special Education teacher, defined CRT as validating, emphasizing the importance of infusing lessons with different cultures:

When you incorporate respect and elements of different cultures, especially if you have students who are from a different cultural background, and you take responsibility to make them feel part of the learning process and incorporate not only posters in the classroom and words here and there in the different language but really getting from the students things that can reach everybody else.

The responses from the interview questions validated the responses from the survey. The responses provided a district example of what CRT looks like. The definitions given by participants were more elaborate, providing examples of CRT when compared to the survey responses.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was: How do teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward Culturally Responsive Teaching relate to their Culturally Responsive Teaching practice?

Both the online survey and interviews were used to collect data to answer Research Question 2. The online survey consisted of seven questions related to teacher perspective on

Culturally Responsive Teaching and five questions on CRT practices. The questions shed light on how teachers translate their views of CRT into relevant practices in their classrooms. There were five interview questions to help answer Research Question 2. The interview questions allowed the researcher to get more in-depth information on teachers' CRT practices and perceptions and to validate the information collected through the survey.

Teacher's perspectives were analyzed, and frequencies presented in Table 5. Table 5 shows the frequencies and descriptive statistics related to the key variables on culturally responsiveness specifically. The same number of participants completely disagreed, were neutral, or completely agreed on the Likert scale statement, "When students walk into the classroom, I don't see their race or ethnicity, all students are the same." This critical variable student race was trimodal, that is, had three modes. Out of a total of 119 participants, 83.2% ultimately agreed on the key variable of valuing culture. More than half of the participants, 55.5 %, completely disagreed on the key concept of race and opportunity, when asked if they agreed that "people of all racial groups experience the same opportunity?" About seventy-nine percent completely to the statement "Culture is part of who we are and teaching to the whole child requires understanding of different cultures and understanding culture," which is the variable the whole child.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Statistics of Perceptions on Culturally Responsiveness

Key Variable	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely Agree	M	SD
Students Race	23.5%	8.5%	23.5%	21%	23.5%	2.87	1.48
Culture and Learning	16%	23.5%	26%	18.5%	16%	3.05	1.31
Valuing Cultures	0.8%	0%	2.5%	13.5%	83.2%	4.78	0.57
Race and Opportunities	55.5%	24.3%	16%	1.7%	2.5%	4.29	0.93
CRT and Outcome	0.8%	0%	10.9%	32%	56.3%	0.93	0.93
Teachers Race & Learning	5.2%	7.8%	22.4%	33.6%	31%	3.76	1.13
Whole Child and Culture	0%	0%	6.7%	14.3%	79%	4.72	0.58

A Pearson correlation was computed to assess the relationship between the items on the teachers' CRT perception scale. The results are listed in Table 6. The research findings indicate that our measure of teachers' perspectives has some reliability, with most of our items being positively related to each other in a positive direction.

Table 6

Perception Variables Correlation

Variables	r	Color-blindness	Culture & Outcome	Recognize Student Culture	Race & Experience	CRT & Outcome	Teacher Race & Outcome	Whole Child & Culture
Color Blindness	r	1.000						
Culture & Outcome	r	0.306***	1.000					
Recognize Student Culture	r	0.118	0.095	1.000				
Race & Experience	r	0.311***	0.357***	0.145	1.000			
CRT & Outcome	r	0.162	0.082	0.528***	0.245***	1.000		
Teacher Race & Outcome	r	0.246***	0.168	0.157	0.343***	0.315***	1.000	
Whole Child & Culture	r	0.137	0.175	0.558***	0.278***	0.515***	0.353***	1.000

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

A similar Pearson correlation was computed to assess the reliability of the items related to CRT instructional practice. The results are listed in Table 7. The findings indicate that CRT instructional practice variables, including validating, inclusive, curriculum instruction, student confidence, and social justice are all related to each other, which provides evidence of the cohesiveness of CRT instructional practice measure.

Table 7

CRT Instructional Practice Variables Correlation

Variables	r	Validating	Inclusive	Curriculum Instruction	Student Confidence	Social Justice
Validating	r	1.000				
Inclusive	r	0.411***	1.000			
Curriculum Instruction	r	0.424***	0.467***	1.000		
Student Confidence	r	0.392***	0.518***	0.449***	1.000	
Social Justice	r	0.217**	0.382***	0.382***	0.512***	1.000

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

To answer Research Question 2, a Pearson correlation was computed, which assessed the relationships between teacher perception and CRT practices. The correlation was calculated between the total scores of each measure. There was a positive and highly significant correlation between the two measures, $r = .4804$, $n = 119$, $p = 3.2276E\text{-}8$. The research findings indicate that there is a moderate positive correlation between teacher perception and CRT practices. According to their self-report, the more favorable the teachers' CRT perception, the more likely their engagement in CRT practices in the classroom.

In Table 8, an itemization of the variables with the correlation coefficient results between teachers' perceptions and practices is reported. The correlation was significant, $p < .05$. Unsurprisingly, items measuring teachers' perceptions and practices were positively correlated. The only perception variable that yielded a smaller correlation coefficient and was not significantly associated with three practices was colorblindness.

Table 8

Correlation Matrix Between Perception and CRT Practices

Variables	*r*	Validating Culture	Inclusive Practices	Curriculum & Instruction	Student confidence	Social Justice
Colorblindness	*r*	0.112	0.210*	0.1194	0.124	0.251***
Recognize Student Culture	*r*	.265 ***	.225 **	.2393***	0.119	.026***
Race & Experience	*r*	.187*	.237**	.2439***	0.149	.309***
CRT & Outcome	*r*	.402***	.334***	.2284**	.293***	.313***
Teacher Race & Outcome	*r*	.233**	0.158	0.1697	0.271***	.410***
Whole Child & Culture	*r*	.349***	.333***	.4218**	.188 *	.308***

*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. ***$p < .001$

In the survey, participants were asked to select multiple teaching practices they use in their classrooms. The participants were provided with a list of culturally responsive teaching strategies, as identified by Gay (2018). Participants self-reported which CRT practices they incorporated in their classes. Figure 12 shows the frequency at which participants chose each CRT practice as the most commonly used one amongst the five options presented.
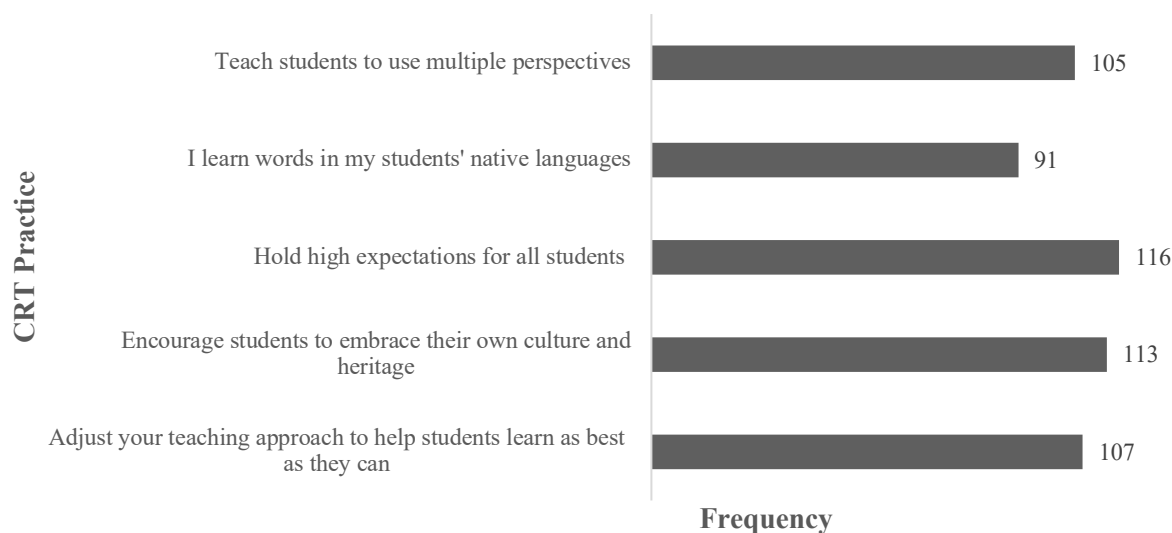
Figure 12. Bar graph of self-reported CRT practice most commonly implemented in class.

During the interview, the researcher asked questions to gain insight into CRT perspectives and the use of CRT strategies. The responses were non-exclusively coded at the paragraph level. The data set was independently coded by both coders. Interrater reliability was 85%. Differences were negotiated through discussion until consensus was reached. Four themes were generated from the question, "To what extent, if at all, do you think implementing CRT practices is essential for creating a diverse classroom environment?" They were: Essential, mindful, embrace, and understanding. The coding process originally produced six themes; however, the themes essential and impact student learning were combined to create the theme essential. The themes embracing and accepting were combined into the theme of embracing. Participants that responded that it was essential or important to use CRT practices for student learning were categorized as essential. Seventy percent of the respondents answered that implementing CRT practices was essential for creating a diverse classroom environment. The remaining 30% had various answers.

■ Essential　■ Mindful　■ Embrace　■ Understanding
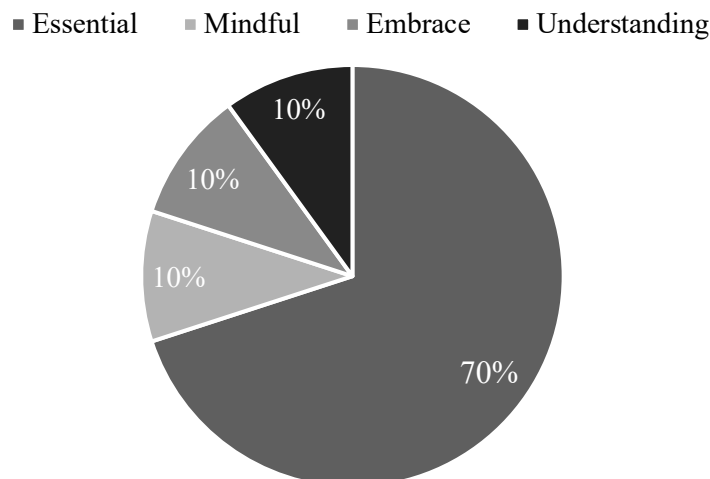
Figure 13. Pie chart of diverse classroom themes from interview question

Excerpts from participants' responses exemplify the themes that emerged during the qualitative analysis. The participant, Mia, a Latina female teacher who taught in a middle school, provided an example of how important cultural responsiveness. Her response was categorized under the theme essential. Mia stated,

> Yes, 150%, yes. I used to try to incorporate that into a lot of their journal writing just to get to know them and to figure out what a birthday was to one kid versus another kid. A lot of the writing was about that or looking at different cultures because I wanted the students to understand each other also to build the climate in the class.

Another participant, Luna, a female Latina who teaches multiple subjects at the elementary level, also provided an example of a response categorized under the theme essential. Luna stated, "I think it's very essential. I think it gives the students a sense of belonging, of safety, of being part of that class, not just in that class, but being part of it, along with each other", and Kevin the participant introduced previously simply stated, "It is essential."

Cindy, a Caucasian female that teaches science in middle school, gave a response, which was categorized into the mindful category. Cindy stated,

I don't necessarily know what the culturally responsive teaching strategies are because I haven't been trained or I'm not familiar with them, but just being a mindful teacher that every student's different regardless of their culture, where they come from. They're just different. And being mindful, open to that. And I feel a lot of teachers have closed themselves off to that and every year they get deeper and deeper in that hole that it's just a student. They don't try to learn about them. Because we may have a perception of what their culture is just by the outward appearance and that may not be. That, I think, is an issue as well. And I'm thinking that maybe when you become a single subject teacher, let's say of math or science where you don't get those opportunities to write, you just kind of negate that you don't get. You're, "I'm teaching the content and so there's just really no need to worry about that. You're here to learn the content. I don't take into account how you learn."

An interview question focused on the participants' perspectives toward the use of CRT practices. It was: what if anything, would encourage you to use CRT practices?

Luna, the elementary school teacher, introduced earlier, stated,

Some teachers are so accepting and think it's great and I think other teachers are very set in their ways, and you're not going to change them no matter what. I think it has to be, I don't want to say a directive from the principal, but it needs to be a suggestion, it needs to be brought out, like examples by other teachers or shared ideas.

Rosie, a high school teacher, said, "What would encourage me to use culturally responsive teaching? Student engagement, just seeing what they get excited about." Adam, the elementary school teacher, responded: "If we build a schoolwide culture of promoting it, I think that would encourage all of us to use different cultural practices into the lessons that we teach."

Another interview question provided further details of how CRT practices were being utilized in the classroom. It was: If you use CRT strategies, please provide an example of a time you were culturally responsive while teaching in your class? Rosie, the high school teacher, provided an example of a lesson in her class that was transformative and encouraged students to challenge the status quo. She explained,

> This year we had a conversation on whether or not it should be called Columbus Day or Indigenous Peoples' Day. We had students vote in the beginning of class before reading on the issue. We gave the students the background of Christopher Columbus and the Indigenous people. After reading the articles providing different perspectives, we had students vote at the end of class. Almost all but two students said that we should change it to Indigenous Peoples' Day. The students were able to hear both sides of Christopher Columbus settling and then choose from there.

Denise, an African American teacher who teaches at the secondary level, provided an example of a lesson which she co-taught as an education specialist in an inclusive classroom.

> One of my favorite examples is when I was co-teaching with a 10th grade English class. And we were in a PLC, and they were talking about doing poetry, which I absolutely love poetry. And so, they were talking about doing Shakespeare and then someone said, Maya Angelou. I was like, why don't we do something more diverse? Well Maya Angelou, which is great, but it's not something that a teenager, at the time, 2018, would ever relate to. So, I suggested using lyrics from rappers that they knew of like J. Cole and using Common and the John Legend song from the movie that had just came out, Selma. And so, using that to do a comparison and breaking down the lyrics. And I had to help them break it down so they could also explain it to the students because even though kids listen

to it, they may not understand what it actually means.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was: What barriers do teachers find in implementing Culturally

Responsive Teaching in their classrooms regularly? One multiple-choice question in the survey

and three open-ended questions in the interview were used to answer Research Question 3. The

interviews were transcribed and coded for themes and patterns. Qualitative data sets were

analyzed using the same process used to address previous research questions.

Participants identified barriers encountered when trying to implement CRT. Out of the

119 participants, 107 responded to the survey item: Barriers that I have encountered when trying

to implement culturally responsive teaching. Participants were provided with a list of possible

barriers that were previously identified by research. Participants were given the option to choose

one or more answers related to the experiences they have encountered. Table 9 presents the

responses by frequency. The mode of the survey items related to barriers identified by percent

was: "Quick pace of pacing guides have not allowed me to implement other topics related to

CRT." The second most frequently identified barrier was: "Curriculum as a set of predetermined

topics." The third barrier was: "Lack of professional development opportunities."

Table 9

Frequency Distribution of Barriers.

Barriers	Count	Percent
Lack of professional development opportunities	57	18%
Courses on CRT was not offered during my course of study	37	12%
Curriculum has a set of predetermined topics	62	20%
Lack of leadership support	35	11%
Policies limit topics covered in class	26	8%
Quick pace of pacing guides have not allowed me to implement other topics related to CRT	97	31%

The interview provided the participants with the opportunity to explain, in more detail, the barriers they experienced while implementing CRT practices. Qualitative data sets were coded the same way as for the previous research questions, that is, nonexclusively and at the paragraph level. Thus, it was possible to glean more than one theme from each paragraph. Coders identified seven themes related to barriers: responsibility, testing, PD, leadership, exposure, efficacy, and biases.

The first theme responsibility/time related to the number of responsibilities teachers have during the workday, which leads to time constraints. The theme testing refers to the curriculum, in particular, the emphasis that participants placed on covering standards and getting students to perform well on standardized tests. The theme PD represents a lack of professional development and training. The leadership theme represents a lack of leadership support or a disconnect between staff and leadership's philosophy. Exposure signifies the limited experience teachers had with other cultures. The theme efficacy encompasses the teachers' ability to implement CRT strategies successfully in their classes. The theme biases/prejudice refers to the teachers' own irrational and unpleasant feelings towards a group, which can be caused by factors at the unconscious (implicit) or conscious (explicit) level.

Figure 14 displays the frequency of the seven barriers identified from interview responses. The barrier identified as the mode was Responsibilities/Time, which constituted 30% ($n = 7$) of the responses. Biases/Prejudice constituted 22 % ($n = 5$) of the responses.
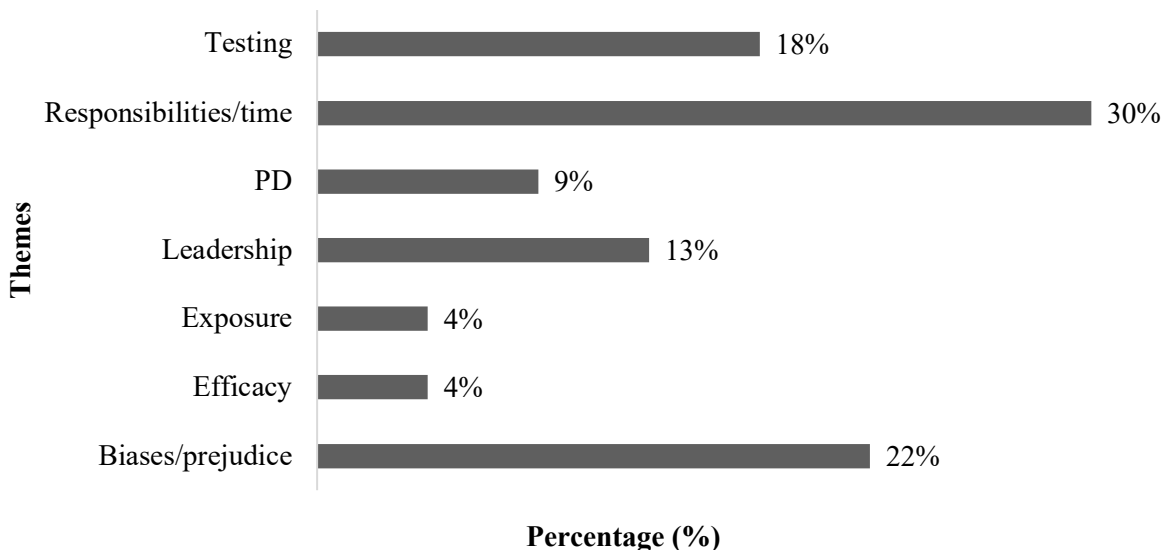
Figure 14. Barriers reported during interviews.

Excerpt responses illustrate the seven barriers that were extracted from the interview transcripts. Adam's response provided insight into the teachers' responsibilities and their lack of time. Adam stated,

Good question. I feel that nowadays, the district is pushing more responsibilities on us. We have to work on the iReady, we have the alternative curriculum, we have to monitor the students, like IEP goals and objectives. We have coding. We have PE. There's a lot of things that we do throughout the day. I feel that our plates are already full. I think it's possible to use cultural responsible teaching, if that it's somehow incorporated into the lesson or incorporated into the lessons that we already teach versus adding another something else on our plates.

The focus on achievement testing was also identified as being a factor that impeded the use of CRT practices. Mia, a middle school teacher participant, stated:

The measurement of tests. Just all the focuses on academics and not so much on the whole child. I feel the fact that we aren't culturally responsive in general adds to a lot of

our behavior problems. And when we think of culturally responsive, you think of just foster youth also. Not taking the time to get to know them and understand them and understand where they're coming from to be able to meet their needs. So that's what I see. Or the fact that if they attend to the students' needs to be more culturally responsive for them to see that it can assist with behavior, which is going to assist with the academics or vice versa.

Another factor hampering the use of CRT practices that were identified in the interviews was teacher biases and prejudices. Felicia, a middle school teacher, stated:

I'll be honest; I have my own bias. I think that the world we live in is very dominated by White people and White views. And I think that it's not a world that we live in that actually welcomes culture and flavor. And if we do, it's at a very kind of controlled like what I can feel comfortable with. So, you can be Mexican if you're this type of Mexican, you can be black if you're this type of black, but anything outside of that and has me be uncomfortable, I don't want to deal with it. So, I think that there needs to be, on a larger level, real discussions about bias, real discussions about stereotypes and ideas that we have about different groups of people, and more open conversations where we allow people to say what's there for them, even if it is ignorant in a place where they can be trained and developed to be better. So, it's like you have some teachers who are ignorant and don't understand the kids that they work with, so it's like how do you give them a space to say those things and maybe have professionals that could be trained to deal with it where it's not going to trigger them and then actually guide them to be better. And I think that until our society starts to do that because we haven't done that with a lot of injustices that have happened to people of color, we probably won't do that in our

schools. That's how I feel about that.

Giovanni, an elementary teacher, reports another example of teachers' biases and prejudice.

> Prejudice, from some teachers, people who haven't been exposed too much to different
> cultures. People who think that teachers, instructors, who think that cultural responsibility
> is to put posters in the classroom. Or teachers who take an extra step to ensure the
> wellbeing of the students, who are not only learning a different language but the students
> who have been here for a while. But still are by culture or….Actually, I think, what
> hinders the most is lack of understanding that we live in one planet. If everybody
> internalized this idea that we are all earthlings...I am so philosophical, so idealistic, but I
> truly believe that we are all earthlings, and we just happened to be born in different parts
> of the same planet. And if we internalize that, then we... automatically, you'd have more
> respect, admiration, understanding, willingness to work with differences in, and, yeah.

As participants referred to their own experiences of barriers, they were related to external

barriers such as time constraints and responsibilities. When they referred to others, the

participants reported on biases and prejudices.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 was: What supports or resources are most useful in promoting

Culturally Responsive Teaching practices? Data for this research question was collected using

an item in the online survey and three questions in the interviews. Interviews were transcribed

and coded for reoccurring themes. The interview responses were coded nonexclusively and at

the paragraph level. A single response could have multiple codes. The survey item relevant to

this research question provided the participants with a checklist of resources and supports which

aid in the implementation of CRT. The resources and supports were supportive administration,

ongoing training or professional development, Curriculum with different cultural perspectives, formal coursework, attending professional conferences and reading on CRT. The actual survey found in Appendix A. Figure 15 below lists the supports for CRT identified from interviews. The findings indicated that the most frequent support was "read on CRT" at 24.5%. The second-highest occurrence at 23.5% was "supportive administration."
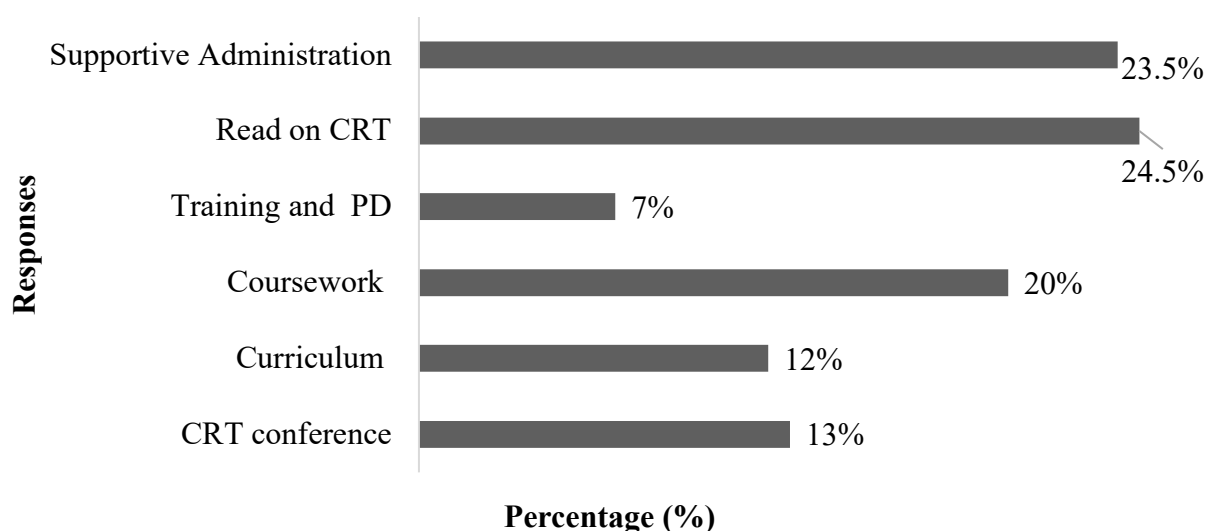
Figure 15. Supports identified in interviews by frequency.

Both coders independently coded the qualitative data set. Differences were negotiated through discussion until consensus was reached. Seven themes were identified from the coding of the interviews; awareness, coursework, curriculum, mindset, models, training, and administration. The theme awareness has to do with the teachers' knowledge of CRT. Curriculum relates to the curriculum, including cultural responsiveness and different cultural perspectives. The theme models referred to examples of CRT strategies and examples of how to implement CRT. Training refers to participation in professional development on CRT. Administration was linked to the provision of support in the implementation of CRT by education leadership.

Figure 16 displays the itemization of each theme and corresponding frequencies to the interview question, "What supports, if any, do you feel are needed to ensure CRT is implemented?" The mode was the theme training, which was mentioned as a percentage of 46%, while the remaining themes were mentioned at an equal frequency of 9%.
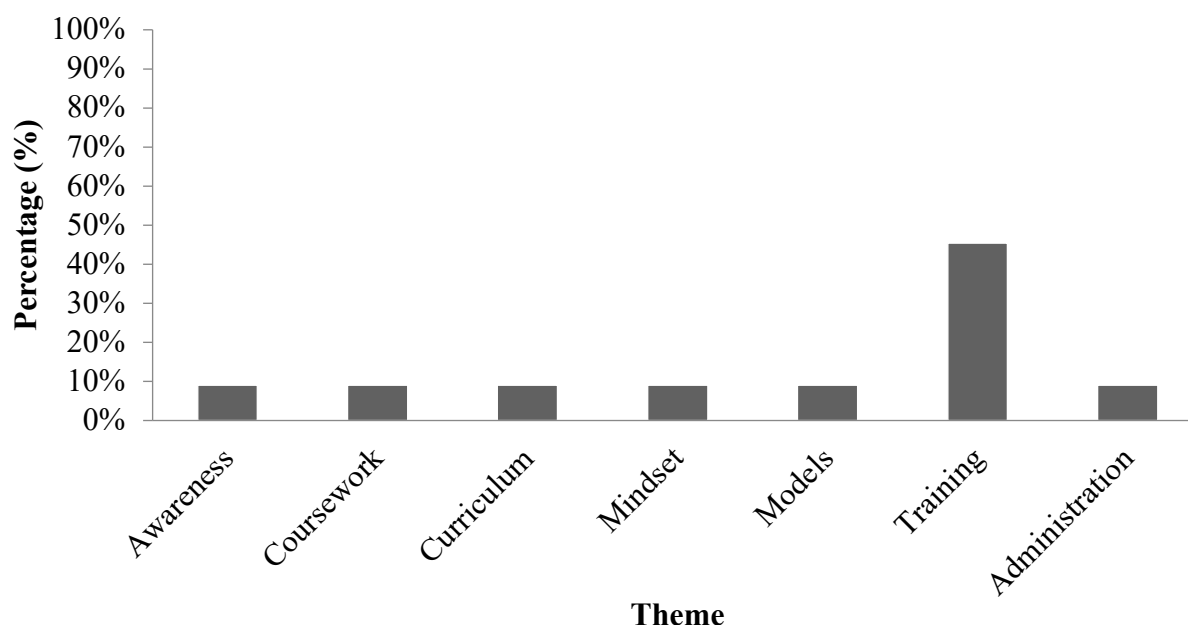
Figure 16. Frequency of themes identified from the interview support question.

Participant Mia answered with an example of awareness of culturally responsive teaching. Mia said,

I'm going to start with awareness. Teachers have to be aware of what it is, how to incorporate it, what it would look like in a classroom. I think it can be part of the whole child going into the MTSS, but I don't know if they touch on that a lot.

Participant Kevin, the high school teacher, gave a response that fell under the mindset theme. Kevin stated, "A willingness to listen to and discuss stories that are often unheard and unappreciated and viable curriculum that includes everyone."

Most of the participants' responses were related to training and the need for professional development (PD). Adam stated, "It would be awesome to have PDs that would concentrate on

that. PDs would greatly help a lot because also we have teachers from different backgrounds and learn about traditions instead of relying on common stereotypes or misunderstandings."

Esmeralda, a female Latina Transitional Kindergarten teacher, described a few conversations with her students as she responded to what supports help in the implementation of CRT. Esmeralda stated,

> How comfortable are we as teachers to teach it? Because I'm working with the young ones. My little ones, it's not a big deal. We move on. It's not the color of your skin. They just literally want to know why do I have all these freckles? That's it. I mean, it's like, "How come you have the dots?" And I go, "Oh, because I was born that way. That's the color of my skin. My skin has little dots. They're called freckles." "Oh." And that's it. I had a student say, "I have two daddies. Isn't that funny?" And I replied, "Yeah, that's great. You have two more people who love you." That's it. It's just pointed out. It's very basic. It's not anything done in any... But I do think that as they get older and they watch television and things come up, how do you have those social justice conversations without taking... You have to, as a teacher, be very not take a side and just present the facts and this is what we're going to talk about. So anyway, I think it would be training. All of that for training.

Participant Felisha, who is a middle school teacher, gave an answer, which also underlined the need for training. Felisha stated,

> I think that there needs to be ongoing training. I don't think it should just be a one-time thing or once a year, which I've never actually had. I think that trainings need to be more affordable for teachers if they're not going to be implemented in school districts so that teachers can actually make access to it. And I think that there needs to be a clear

accountability in terms of how do you assess if a person is doing it, and again, not in a judgmental way. So, how are we training administrators perhaps, so that they can come in and be able to give a support or training even other teachers who may have that skill so that they can be mentor teachers? More mentorship and guidance and less of a you have to and more of the enrichment of why kids can learn.

Summary

The objectives of the current study were to (a) understand teachers' perspectives on Culturally Responsive teaching; (b) identify a relationship between perspectives and the use of CRT strategies; (c) define CRT strategies that are implemented in the classroom; and (d) explore barriers that are impeding the implementation of CRT, as well as any supports or resources that encourage the use of CRT. The total number of participants in this study was 119, out of which a subsample of 11 was chosen to participate in semi-structured interviews.

Research Question 1 was: What does Culturally Responsive Teaching look like in the classroom? Analysis of surveys and interviews emphasized the use of students' native languages, the need for encouraging students to embrace their culture, the importance of adjusting teaching to meet students' learning styles, and the call for high expectations and the use of multiple perspectives.

Research Question 2 was: How do teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward Culturally Responsive Teaching relate to their Culturally Responsive Teaching practice? A Pearson correlation was computed to assess the relationships between teacher perception and CRT practices. There was a moderate positive correlation between the two variables, teacher perception and CRT practices, $r = .4804$, $n = 119$, $p = 3.2276E-8$.

The third research question was: What barriers do teachers find in implementing

Culturally Responsive Teaching in their classrooms regularly?" The most frequent answer given was, "Quick pace of pacing guides have not allowed me to implement other topics related to CRT." The interview responses most frequently identified barriers that were related to the number of teacher responsibilities and time constraints.

Research Question 4 was: What supports or resources are most useful in promoting Culturally Responsive Teaching practices?" The analysis of the surveys revealed that participants' most frequent support was reading books or articles on CRT at 24.5%. The second-highest occurrence at 23.5% was supportive administration. The interview findings reveal that the most frequent answer was training to support the use of CRT.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study investigated the teachers' perspectives on the use of Culturally Responsive Teaching. Research shows that implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) including the theory and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) practices have increased student achievement of diverse students (Byrd, 2016; Gay, 2018; Ladison-Billing 1995). Gay (2002) states the importance of these practices in "improving the school success of ethnically diverse students… and for preparing teachers in pre-service education with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to do this" (p. 106). There is limited research on teachers' experience in learning about CRP and CRT, and on the motivation, they find to learn, address the challenges they encounter, and implement these practices effectively in their classrooms. This study provides the perspective of 119 teachers who participated in a self-reported survey and shared their experiences, perspectives, and attitudes about CRT.

Summary of the Study

The data were collected in Southern California through a self-reported online survey and semi-structured interviews. A total of 119 participants completed the survey, while a subsample of 11 of those participants participated in follow-up interviews. Most of the participants of the study defined CRT as validating and inclusive. By bringing students' culture and background into their lessons, and tying it to student learning, teachers perceived that they created a welcoming environment for all students to succeed. The findings of the study revealed that the teachers who held positive views about CRT also applied CRT practices in their classrooms.

The study helped in identifying and describing the challenges that teachers encountered, such as having a large number of responsibilities during the day and struggling to pace the curriculum, which stands in the way of the implementation of CRT practices in the classroom.

Leadership was viewed as both a support and a barrier. Educational leaders who provided resources and encouraged CRT were seen as a resource and leaders who did not were seen as a barrier.

Interpretations of Findings

This discussion is organized by research question. The qualitative and quantitative findings are merged to address the key questions that guided this study.

Research Question 1

The data from the open-ended questions about the definition of CRT yield six themes. Most of the participants defined CRT as having characteristics associated with the validation of the students' culture and the use of inclusive practices. Some responses connected CRT to the combined use of culture and the integration of student strengths, which build students' knowledge, thus making more significant connections to what they are learning. The other identified themes were being inclusive, creating a learning environment that has high expectations for all students, developing students' cultural competence while attaining academic success. Not surprisingly, these themes are a replication of findings from previous studies. Gay (2018) had made a list of Culturally Responsive Teaching traits that are aligned to the current findings, including validating, inclusive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory.

The findings suggest that to implement CRT in our classrooms fully, more instructional practices that encourage social justice, challenge the status quo, and provide different cultural perspectives need to be applied. Acknowledging and validating students' cultures is an excellent place to start applying CRT and should be carried out by teachers in all classrooms. However, if we genuinely want to impact student lives more, acknowledgment and validation of student

cultures should be done through the use of CRT practices that are empowering, transformative and emancipatory. These strategies are likely to increase social justice and give the opportunity to all students to receive an equitable education. Being Culturally Responsive or Culturally Relevant is not enough to tap into a student's culture and background to make learning relevant; teaching students to develop critical consciousness to challenge the status quo is essential (Ladson-Billing, 1995).

Most of these themes were aligned with previous work on CRP. Using the framework of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, the researcher also observed that the theme acknowledging students' cultures and backgrounds had a high occurrence in participant responses, however, this sample is not representative of other school districts in some ways. Most of the participants from this sample worked in schools that served a population that was on free and reduced lunch, were classified as English Language Learners, and fared from diverse ethnic minorities. Although this composition reflects the student population of a lot of public schools in Southern California, the representation of the teachers in the current sample who come from the same ethnic groups as the students were unusual. The Latinx/Hispanic participants of the study made up 40% of the sample. This turnout is incredible, but it is also unusual. This representation brings value to the current research as these teachers have had firsthand experience of exclusion and social inequity, which may have transpired in their perceptions and attitudes about CRT and CRP. These participants bring their unique perspective to the current study.

Another interesting finding that supports the uniqueness of this sample is that not all of the participants reported that they encountered challenging negative stereotypes in their classrooms. Addressing negative stereotypes supports a safe learning environment. The framework created by Hammond and Jackson (2015) on the culture and the brain addresses the

need for students to feel safe in learning environments to engage in their learning. To create a safe learning environment, which is a component of CRT, all teachers should challenge the negative stereotypes that cause racism. Esposito and Swain (2009) state that "teachers who promote the academic and social development of their students through culturally relevant and socially just pedagogies prepare them to make a tremendous impact on their communities and the world" (p. 46). To truly impact student's lives, the CRT practices that are implemented in the classroom need to go further than validating students' cultures to developing their sociopolitical consciousness throughout all grade levels.

Research Question 2

In the present study, the relationship between perspectives on CRT and the use of CRT practices was also examined. The research findings indicate that there is a moderate positive correlation between teacher perception and CRT practices. This finding suggests that the more teachers hold positive perceptions of CRT, the more they are likely to implement CRT strategies. These results align with the research of Esposito, Davis, and Swain (2012), who reported that teachers' cultural beliefs impact their willingness to implement CRT strategies. Frye, Button, Kelly, and Button (2010) add that teachers' beliefs on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy impact their implementation. As teachers become aware of CRT and the impact that it has on students' learning, it is possible that this awareness, in turn, facilitates CRT use in the classroom, which gives rise to a positive correlation between teacher perception and use.

Samuels (2018) reported that positive teachers' perspectives on CRT had benefits for students. There is thus research-based evidence for increasing the use of CRT practices in the classroom due to the many educational and non-educational benefits it brings to all students. The participants of the study are teachers who work with a diverse student population and have

direct experiences with the consequences of systemic educational inequities; this explains their high level of understanding of and favorable perspectives about CRP, which has contributed to addressing the opportunity gap. Previous studies were problematic as they targeted teachers who mostly belonged to different ethnicities or backgrounds than that the minority students whose culture needed to be intentionally promoted in the classroom (Allard & Santoro, 2006; Santoro, 2007; Museus, 2008). Their awareness of minority students' culture was limited as they mainly belonged to the mainstream culture, however, the teacher participants in the current study were primarily Latino, were still practicing in the classroom, and believed in implementing CRT practices, making their views particularly valuable. These teachers' cultural identity and their knowledge about and possible prior experiences with the barriers such as the lack of resources that their students may encounter make their professional and personal views about the implementation of CRT particularly valuable.

Research Question 3

The barriers that impeded the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices were explored using both the online survey and interview. The top two highest-ranked barriers denoted by the survey data were the curriculum and assessments. The challenges encountered by participants related to the curriculum which prescribed predetermined units of study, and the pacing of the curriculum, which called for timely coverage of the topics to be assessed in standardized tests. The analysis of the interview data indicated that the top-ranked barriers were responsibilities/time and biases/prejudice. The barriers that participants reported described their experiences in handling a high number of responsibilities and the resulting time constraints. The obstacles that the participants encountered aligned with those identified by Ebersole et al. (2016), which included the lack of time, the lack of resources, and the competing

demands of multiple initiatives.

Another noteworthy finding was that when participants were referring to the reason for which coworkers were not implementing CRT practices, their responses centered on teachers' biases and prejudices. Some acknowledged their own biases and, in doing so, demonstrated reflexivity. Others perceived that coworkers did not apply CRT due to their biases, which they linked to the firsthand experiences with prejudice that they encountered in their daily lives. Leadership was perceived by teachers as both a barrier and support for the implementation of CRT. This suggests that the support given by administrators was inconsistent across different school sites. Administrators play an essential role in achieving CRT at their sites, and previous studies suggest that when leaders embrace Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, it positively impacts CRT.

Research Question 4

The themes that emerged from the data collected about supports and resources for promoting CRT were leadership, professional development/training, and coursework. The findings suggested that educational leaders who embraced a culturally relevant school climate supported the staff by providing resources, offering training, and modeling CRT practices. The participants stated that ongoing training and relevant coursework during their credential program would support the use of CRT practices in the classroom. Although the participants reported that their involvement in CRT training, to date, had been limited, they perceived that having more opportunities for professional development would support general awareness about CRT.

It was unsurprising that training was identified as support. Previous research reports that ongoing training for staff and the provision of time to collaborate with colleagues on the implementation of CRT in the classroom builds teacher's efficacy in increasing their use of CRT

practices (Smyth, 2013). In the same line, Turnbull (2001) argues that for the successful implementation of any new program, the staff must have adequate training, be given resources, and support at the site level.

Limitations of the Study

The data collected for the study was from a self-reported online survey and semi-structured interview. Surveys have been used as a convenient form of data collection for empirical research. Although it has been broadly used, self-reported questionnaires are believed to have threats to their validity (Lance & Vandenberg, 2009). The use of an online self-reported survey may have led to the collection of inaccurate data.

The use of an online survey was convenient for the researcher to disseminate but presented several limitations. Emails were sent out to site administrators, which the researcher asked to forward to the school staff. Once emails were sent, there was nothing set in place to determine if emails were read and forwarded. The time of year during which the data collection was carried out also presented challenges. Emails were sent out to notify the start of data collection in early December when teachers and students were away on holidays. This led to a slow response rate, which, however, picked up speed at the beginning of the following academic term. The time of data collection may have affected the net response rate of the participants. Although the sample size was fair, more participants would provide increased statistical power. Caution needs to be exercised in generalizing the results of this study to other districts or states as the participants were self-selected and volunteered to participate in the interviews. The composition of the participants in the current study may not be similar to the composition of other districts. In particular, the sample of interviewees was made up of unusually high participation of Latinx teachers.

The current study focused on teacher perspectives, thus limiting the scope of the type of participants that were considered. It would have been interesting to widen the population to include administrator and student attitudes, thus providing a broader view of CRT perceptions. Increasing the understanding of the challenges and supports that administrators encounter when implementing CRT at their school sites could provide valuable insight to school districts who are implementing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy with the aim of increasing student learning outcomes. Learning about students' perspectives on CRT practices such as those that they perceive as being valuable contributions to their learning could support the implementation of CRT.

Implications for Practice

As mentioned previously, the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) emphasizes the improvement of educational outcomes for all students. It provides significant civil rights safeguards to historically disadvantaged students to improve equity in their schooling (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Research shows that implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) practices and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), including the theory, have increased student achievement of diverse students (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billing 1995; Byrd, 2016). CRT can support the effort of students to improve student outcomes and promote equity in their education.

The research findings suggest that when teachers are implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching, the strategies that are being implemented are those related to acknowledging and validating cultures. Fewer strategies are being utilized in the area of social justice, and the empowerment of students to challenge the status quo. For all students to have access to an equitable education, they need to become culturally competent and develop critical

consciousness. Training for teachers on how to implement CRT teaching strategies to support student growth in these areas is essential. Participants reported efficacy in the ability to implement strategies as a factor impeding their use of CRT. A possible cause for teachers' self-doubt in their effectiveness for incorporating CRT is their inexperience with student diversity or unfamiliarity in the area of CRT (Siwatu et al., 2016). As an education system, we need to do a better job at preparing teachers to work with diverse students, starting with the college-level course for teachers who are still working on their credentials to the professional development of those who are already in teaching positions. The findings of the study suggest that there is a relationship between a teacher's perceptions of CRT and their use of CRT teaching practices. To encourage staff to adopt positive attitudes about CRT, the benefits of such practices, and the shared knowledge of best practices that promote cultural proficiency should be communicated to staff. Schools that develop a collective understanding of cultural responsiveness and provide culturally appropriate strategies to address the need of their students will reach cultural competence (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009).

The finding suggests that professional development and leadership can both serve as a barrier or resource for implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching. It is no wonder that when participants did attend training related to CRT, they found it to be beneficial in supporting their CRT practices. Education systems should seek out opportunities to train teachers on CRT to provide a foundation on which the application of CRP and CRT practices can be built. Educational leaders could be a resource to the teachers by supporting the process of learning and the implementation of CRT practices. The implication of the study for educational leaders is to provide ongoing support for the implementation of CRT through training, modeling, and the provision of resources to create the appropriate learning environment which offers the

opportunity to students to achieve their highest potential. Educational systems need to find leaders who are student-centered, have compassion for their students, and are comfortable in challenging the status quo that causes inequities to impact students positively and bring about social change through the implementation of CRT.

Recommendations for Further Research

The current study examined the relationship between teacher perspectives and the use of CRT strategies and investigated participants' definitions of CRT practices. This research also examined the perceived factors that either support or hamper teachers' use of CRT practices. Further research on the perspectives of administrators about their training and other supports of Culturally Responsive Teaching that they have received is recommended. Researching schools that have successfully implemented CRT schoolwide can provide a deeper understanding of other school factors that have supported the successful implementation of CRT.

The transformation of educational systems through the implementation of new programs is dependent on ongoing training and accountability. It is recommended that further research be conducted on CRT professional development and its effectiveness in transforming learned skills and knowledge of CRT into classroom practices. One limitation was identified as the sample size of the current study. The researcher suggests that a similar study be carried out using a larger sample of participants for the survey and interview. Having a larger sample of survey participants would increase statistical power while having a bigger subsample of interviewees could lead to a more in-depth understanding of how CRT and related instructional practices are being implemented in schools.

The population of the study was as diverse as the students they teach; 40% of the sample was Latinx/Hispanic, 19% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 17% African American. Their diverse

backgrounds may have impacted their perceptions and understanding of CRT, however, although the lack of training was common across different participant groups, one commonality was the positive views the participants held about CRT training. The diversity of the population, their positive views about CRT and their extensive use of CRT practices suggest that teachers who resemble their students are more likely to be culturally sensitive. This is an area that is recommended for further research. For example, the possibility of a cause-and-effect relationship between teacher ethnicity and their use of CRT practices could be investigated. A potential cause and effect relationship between teacher perceptions and their use of CRT practices could also be examined.

Summary

The framework utilized by the researcher in the current study was based on the assumption that a culture of power exists in education. The culture of power emphasizes that what is valued, what is taught to students, and how students are being taught (Delpit, 2006) creates inequity in education. The framework assumes that teachers who believe in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) create learning environments that hold high expectations for all students, develop relationships, challenge students to think critically, and question the status quo while cultivating students' cultural awareness. With the understanding that culture impacts learning, the researchers utilized the framework of the culture and the brain (Hammond & Jackson, 2015) to understand teachers' implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching.

The current study's findings suggest that the culture of power continues to impact education. Participants in the study identified barriers such as the curriculum and the pacing of predetermined units in their use of CRT. When an educational organization places more

emphasis on the pacing of the curriculum, standardized test scores, and unit themes that have been prescribed, they leave little to no room for teachers to address inequities that their students experience. Policymakers need to put in place policies that promote the representation of different cultural perspectives in the curriculum and that do not focus on a single assessment to determine students' knowledge.

The educators who embrace a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy empower students to achieve better academic outcomes while maintaining their cultural integrity (Ladson-Billing, 1995). The current study suggested that the participants held positive perceptions of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, however, holding a positive Culturally Relevant mindset is not enough to create a culturally responsive environment. Furthermore, the perspective did not translate into the implementation of more social justice, empowerment, or challenge of the status quo. In the current study, 80% of the participants reported that they challenged negative stereotypes when encountered in class, which is, according to the researcher, the bare minimum. However, teachers also need to reflect on their cultural competence, biases, and beliefs. Educators should seek out opportunities to learn more about Cultural Responsiveness when working with diverse populations. They should not only learn about cultural relevance but seek an understanding of how culture impacts student learning so they can use teaching practices that address the needs of all students. As teachers gain knowledge about culture and Culturally Responsive Teaching, they are more likely to develop efficacy in the area, which may lead to more confidence in challenging the status quo. These strategies can help teachers create a safe learning environment for students to engage actively in their learning.

Culturally Responsive Teaching provides a framework for instructional practices to support Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. It is not a checklist that can be followed for compliance;

instead, it is a mindset that is underscored by the aspiration to provide equitable education and social justice through the use of CRT practices. Culturally Responsive Teaching should be implemented schoolwide across disciplines and in all aspects of student learning, classroom management, teaching, assessments, and parent and community involvement.

The current study, in line with the dimensions of CRT, put forward by the National Center on Culturally Responsive Education Systems (2004), calls for a collective effort from individual school personnel and the education system at large to ensure CRT implementation. The study focuses on the dimension of self, giving a voice to teachers to discuss the factors that help and hamper their use of CRT. The study also provides research evidence of the positive association between teacher CRT perceptions and practices. This provides a foundation on which future research can be built to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between perceptions and practices. The current study and the growing knowledge base in the field can help policymakers and educational practitioners in supporting the implementation of CRT at the local level.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Survey

CRT Survey

You are invited to participate in a web-based online survey on Culturally Responsive Teaching. This is a research project being conducted by Elizabeth Reyes-Aceytuno, a student at Concordia University Irvine.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this survey is voluntary, You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at time. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: The adult participants for this study are given anonymity.

DURATION: survey will be opened for a month and will take approximately 15 to 20 min to complete.

RISK: There are no foreseeable risk involved in participating in this study other than those encounter in day to day life. Researcher will provide participants with anonymous survey that will ensure anonymity. Surveys will not collect any identification information such as names, or school sites from the survey participants.

CONTACT: If you have any questions at anytime about the study or the procedures, you may contact the Researcher, Elizabeth Reyes-Aceytuno via phone (626) 665-3952 or via email elizabeth.reyes-aceytuno@eagles.cui.edu

* Required

Untitled Section

1. Electronic Consent: Please select your choice below. Clicking on the "Agree" button indicates that you have read the above information. *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes, I agree

   ◯ No

Demographic

The following questions are background information.

2. What is your gender?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ Prefer not to say
- ◯ Other: _____

3. What is your ethnicity?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ White
- ◯ Latinx or Hispanic
- ◯ African American or Black
- ◯ Native American
- ◯ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ◯ Other

4. Do you consider yourself to be multicultural?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

5. Are you monolingual or multilingual ?

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Monolingual
    ◯ Multilingual

6. What languages do you speak?

    _____

7. What is your age?

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ 21-29
    ◯ 30-39
    ◯ 40-49
    ◯ 50-59
    ◯ 60 or older

8. What grade and subject do you teach?

    _____

9. How many years have you been teaching?

    _____

10. Does your current class have diverse learners?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

11. How do you define Culturally Responsive Teaching?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Opinion | Please indicate your opinion about each statement below by marking one of 5 responses in the column. The scale of responses range from 1 completely disagree to 5 completely agree.

12. When students walk into my classroom I don't see their race or ethnicity, all students are the same.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I completely disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	I completely agree

13. We all have culture and learning is similar across cultures.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I completely disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	I completely agree

14. Good teaching strategies impact all students positively.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I completely disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	I completely agree

15. Recognizing and valuing different cultures represented in the classroom is important to student learning.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I completely disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	I completely agree

16. People of all racial groups experience the same opportunities.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I completely disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	I completely agree

17. Use of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies improves student outcomes.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I completely disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	I completely agree

18. The educators/teachers race, ethnicity, and cultural background impacts student learning.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I completely disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	I completely agree

19. Culture is part of who we are and teaching to the whole child requires understanding of different cultures.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I completely disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	I completely agree

Instruction practices

Check off all instructional practices that you implement in you teaching.

20. I recognize students' cultures by:

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Encouraging students to speak their native language
- ☐ Spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and language
- ☐ I learn words in my students' native languages
- ☐ Celebrate heritage months
- ☐ I make an effort to get to know my students' families
- ☐ Encourage parent participation

21. The inclusive practices I implement in my classroom are:

Check all that apply.

☐ Encourage students to embrace their own culture and heritage

☐ Provide students with models and demonstration of a successful product

☐ Provide students with a variety of supports for areas of need to participate in class

☐ Students have access to books and materials in their primary language

☐ Build student's confidence by showcasing their strengths

☐ Elicit prior knowledge by having students' share experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities

☐ Regularly grouping students with different classmates

☐ Calling on students without their hands up

22. The curriculum and instructional practices that I utilize in my class are:

Check all that apply.

☐ Examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes

☐ Make the assessment process less intimidating by offering different ways to demonstrate skills and understanding

☐ Adjusting your teaching approach to help students learn as best as they can

☐ Provide a range of material to each student by setting up learning stations

☐ Provide multiple opportunities to use effective feedback to revise and resubmit work for evaluation

☐ Acknowledging all students' comments, responses, questions, and contributions

23. I develop my students confidence by implementing

Check all that apply.

☐ I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities

☐ Explaining or modeling positive self-talk

☐ Hold high expectations for all students

☐ Empower students to tell their own stories

☐ I allow students to choose between activities and assessments

☐ I have students practice skills they've learned in service learning, debates, leadership, volunteerism or community service

24.   I incorporate social justice in my teaching by:

Check all that apply.

☐ Using of media, such as books and movies, that positively depict a range of cultures and are relevant to your topic

☐ I have students reflect critically on their knowledge and beliefs and actions

☐ I build student capacity and confidence as agents of change for social justice

☐ I teach students to challenge the status quo

☐ I challenge negative stereotypes when encountered in class

☐ Teach students to use multiple perspectives

☐ I have conversations with my students on the difference between fair and equitable practices

25.   Barriers that I have encountered when trying to implement Culturally Responsive teaching are:

Check all that apply.

☐ Quick Pace of pacing guides have not allowed me to implement other topics related to CRT

☐ Curriculum has a set of predetermined topics

☐ Lack of professional development opportunities

☐ Courses on CRT was not offered during my course of study

☐ Policies limit topics covered in class

☐ Lack of leadership support

26.   Resources and supports that have aided in the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching I have encountered are:

Check all that apply.

☐ Supportive Administration

☐ On going training and professional development is offered on CRT

☐ Curriculum adopted includes different cultural perspectives

☐ Formal education on topics such as coursework during undergrad and grad school

☐ Attending professional conferences related to topic

☐ Read a book or article on CRT

End
of
survey

Thank you for participating in the survey your answers are a valuable part of this research. If you are interested in being contacted to learn more about possibly taking part in a follow-up Interview for the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of CRT, please provide the researcher with your contact information.

27. I would like to participate in a follow up interview *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

28. Please provide your contact information below. If you agree to be contacted for a follow-up, you can always decline the request when contacted.

_____

29. I would like to receive a summary of the study's results. (Please note that your name and contact information will remain completely confidential and will not be linked with any of your survey answers. If you would like the results provide your Email)

_____

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Study	Culturally Responsive Teaching
Time of interview	Start time : _____ End time: _____
Date	
Location of interview	
Interviewer	Elizabeth Reyes-Aceytuno
Participant	A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Position of Participant	

Research Questions

The study will examine the following research questions:

1.   What does the practice of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) look like in an elementary classroom in an urban Southern California school District?

2.   How teachers' perspective and attitudes toward CRT are related to their culturally responsive practice?

3.   What barriers do teachers find in implementing CRT in their classrooms regularly?

4.   What supports or resources are most useful in promoting CRT practices?

Step 1: Describe study

Script: This study examines the practices and strategies of teachers as it relates to culturally responsive teaching as well as factor or barriers that implead putting these strategies into routine practice. Along with the teachers perspectives on culturally responsive teaching and working with diverse students. Interviews are being conducted with teachers and administration. The

interviews will be recoded for data collection and for accuracy. The recoding will be transcribed and code. The data collection will be accessible to the researcher (me) and stored on a password-protected external hard drive. The interview will take 1 hour.

Step 2: Consent form (have participant read and sign consent form)

Script: I have handed you a copy of the consent form please take time to read, review and ask any questions you may have regarding the consent form. If you are in agreement please sign the form. All forms will be only accessible to the researcher (me) and locked and stored in a secure location.

Step 3. Provided background information

Script: In this interview there are no right or wrong answers. You will not be judged based on your responses. I want to collect honest data for my study. I am looking for you perceptions toward CRT, working with diverse students along with any factors or supports that need to set to support the use of CRT in the classroom. Before we being, I will provided you with the definition of CRT and allow you to review for one minute.

Step 4. Provided card with definition and time for one minute.

Step 5: Begin recoding (turn on recoding device)

Script: I am going to begin recording now. Todays date is I am with participant A, B, C, D (ect..)

Step 6. Ask the following questions and probing questions if needed.

1. Prior to this interview, had you heard the term Culturally responsive teaching?
2. How would you define CRT in your own terms?

    a. Probe: When you say _____ (whole child/individual student), what does that term mean to you?

3. What does CRT look like in the classroom?

    a. Probe: Can you be more specific?

4. What is your background on teaching and mentoring experiences with students from diverse cultural backgrounds?

    a. Probe can you be more specific?

5. If you use CRT strategies, please provided an example of a time you were Culturally Responsive while teaching in your class?

    a. Probe: Can you be more specific?

6. What, if anything, would enhance your ability to implement culturally responsive teaching practices while in your classroom?

    a. Probe: Can you be more specific?

7. What supports, if any, do you feel are need to ensure culturally responsive teaching is implemented?

    a. Probe: Can you be more specific?

8. What if anything, would encourage you to use culturally responsive teaching practices?

    a. Probe: can you be more specific?

9. What, if any, factors do you see in the educational system that may hinder your ability to implement culturally responsive teaching practice?

    a. Probe: can you elaborate more on that?

10. What if any professional development training culturally responsive teaching have you attended?

    a. Probe: How resent was the professional development?

      b.   Probe how did you hear about the training?

11. In what ways, if any, has participation in professional development influenced

    your thinking about culturally responsive teaching?

        Probe: Can you be more specific?

        Probe: Is this a change from how you thought about culturally responsive

        teaching before the professional development?

        Probe: In what ways, if any, has Geneva Gay's text informed your understanding

        of culturally responsive teaching?

12. To what extent, if any, do ethnicity, culture, and language factor into student learning?

      a.   Probe: can you elaborate on that?

13. To what extent, if any, do you think all children learn from the same teaching method,

    regardless of cultural differences?

      a.   Probe can you be more specific?

      b.   Probe can you elaborate more on that?

14. To what extent, if any do ethnicity, culture, and language factor into student learning?

      a.   Probe: can you be more specific?

      b.   Probe can you elaborate more on that?

15. To what extent, if any, do you think implementing culturally responsive teaching

    practices is essential for creating a diverse classroom environment?

      a.   Probe can you be more specific?

      b.   Probe can you elaborate more on that?

16. In what ways do you feel like you are not prepared to teach in culturally responsive ways?

    a. Probe: can you be more specific?

    b. Probe: Can your provide examples?

17. How can teachers become more aware and prepared to teach from a culturally responsive pedagogy?

    a. Probe: can you provide examples?

    b. Probe can you elaborate on that?

    c. Probe can you be more specific?

    d. Probe: what does that look like?

Step 6: Thank the participant and let the participant know this is the end of the interview. Offer to send the participant a copy of the dissertation.

Script: We have come to the end of the interview. I want to thank for your time and your honesty. If you would like to receive a copy of the dissertation please provide me with an email you would like it to go to?

Step 7: Stop the recorder.

Appendix C

IRB Board Decision

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DECISION

☐ Exempt Review 45 CFR 46.101   ☑ Expedited Review 45 CFR 46.110   ☐ Full Board Review 45 CFR 46

Review Date	November 5, 2019
IRB#	5301
Title of Project	Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices as it relates to elementary teachers perspectives
Researcher/s	Elizabeth Reyes-Aceytuno

☑ **APPROVED**

Effective duration of IRB Approval: November 5, 2019 _____ to November 4, 2019 _____

– The supervisor's IRB certificate will expire on January 2020 - please renew through CUI's CITI training program before the certificate expires in order for the study to continue beyond January 1, 2020.

For Exempt Approved, Please Note: while your project is exempt from providing Informed Consent information to the IRB, your project must still obtain participants' informed consent.
For Expedited and Full Board Approved, Please Note:
a. The IRB's approval is only for the project protocol named above. Any changes are subject to review and approval by the IRB.
b. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB.
c. An annual report or report upon completion is required for each project. If the project is to continue beyond the twelve month period, a request for continuation of approval should be made in writing. Any deviations from the approved protocol should be noted.

☐ **NEEDS REVISION AND RESUBMISSION**

☐ **NOT APPROVED**

Printed Name IRB Reviewer   Eugene P. Kim, Ph.D.

Signature of IRB Reviewer   Kim, Eugene