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Perceptions of Southwest Missouri Public School K–12 Teachers and Building Principals in Regard to Preparedness of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Katie C. Kensinger

Perceptions of Southwest Missouri Public School K–12 Teachers

and Building Principals in Regard to Preparedness of

Culturally Responsive Teaching

by

Katie C. Kensinger

July 27, 2021

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Over the past two decades, K–12 public education demographics have reflected an increase in student diversity while over 80% of the teaching population remains White (Ramirez et al., 2016). As student demographics evolve, public schools must adjust to provide all students with an education relevant to their backgrounds and experiences (Jones-Good, 2015). Teachers must prioritize and be prepared to teach diverse groups of students (Gay, 2018). This mixed-methods study included an analysis of teacher and principal perceptions of their level of preparedness for culturally responsive teaching in four southwest Missouri school districts with diverse student populations. The focus was placed on gaining an understanding of strategies and procedures in place to meet the needs of diverse students. The conceptual framework of this study included the five components of culturally responsive teaching: 1) base knowledge, 2) curriculum, 3) classroom climate, 4) cross-cultural communication, and 5) cultural congruity in instruction (Gay, 2002). Upon analysis of teacher survey and principal interview responses, several themes were developed with regard to levels of preparedness. Teachers and principals expressed agreement with the five components of culturally responsive teaching but need more supports in place to practice this pedagogy effectively. Districts must prioritize culturally responsive teaching and the work of providing equity through learning experiences. Building leaders must provide teachers with professional development centered on culturally responsive teaching. Finally, teacher support must be provided through access to a curriculum centered on culturally responsive teaching practices.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Over the past two decades, K–12 public education demographics have reflected an increase in student diversity, reflecting changes to the outlook of the education system (Ramirez et al., 2016). With this change comes the need for teachers to bridge cultural divides in the classroom (Debnam et al., 2015). Multicultural scholars have asserted that for all students to succeed, teachers must be culturally responsive by connecting students' school experiences with their cultural reality (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Culturally responsive teaching is an approach "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2002, p. 29). Teachers must view the classroom as a small part of the world, accepting and welcoming all students and their experiences, values, and abilities (Chiu et al., 2017). With increasing student diversity, it is imperative for teachers and principals to ensure a common understanding of culturally responsive teaching through targeted professional development regarding the implementation of culturally responsive teaching (Mette et al., 2016).

Chapter One includes information on the background of culturally responsive teaching. The conceptual framework and statement of the problem are detailed. The purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study are provided. Chapter One also contains the definition of key terms and a list of limitations and assumptions.

Background of the Study

Implementing culturally responsive teaching first requires the acknowledgment that schools, teachers, and students are always alike, and due to this, school culture and student culture do not always align (Gay, 2018; Hramiak, 2015). To avoid discord and create a positive teaching environment, teachers must connect with students, and student backgrounds must be considered when focusing on learning (Larson et al., 2018). Gay (2002) noted the following:

> Culture encompasses many things, some of which are more important for teachers to know than others because they have direct implications for teaching and learning. Among these are ethnic groups' cultural values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions, and relational patterns. (p. 107)

When the lived experiences of students are apparent within academic knowledge and skills, classroom learning is more meaningful and engaging, and content is covered more thoroughly and efficiently (Gay, 2018). Teachers curate educational experiences for students, and implementing components of culturally responsive teaching within the experience can promote equity in the classroom (Paris, 2012).

Teacher awareness of diversity is essential as the increasingly diverse student population can lead to challenges in the classroom, especially when a teacher is not familiar with culturally responsive teaching (Lew & Nelson, 2016). The last two decades of research have revealed that when the number of diverse students increases, so does the achievement gap (Lakhwani, 2019). Additionally, most educators in the United States are White and middle class (Lambeth & Smith, 2016).

The achievement gap in education refers to "inequalities in education achievement" among various student demographic groups (Gillborn et al., 2017, p. 852). The most significant concern is the achievement gap between White students and minority students (Anderson et al., 2007). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 mandated state testing and led to an awareness of this achievement gap (Mason, 2017). Gay (2002) cautioned, "Test scores and grades are symptoms, not causes, of achievement problems" (p. 16).

While the achievement gap between White and non-white students has many facets, culturally responsive teaching is a potential solution (Thomas et al., 2020). Culturally responsive teaching requires teachers to embrace the whole child and their background in efforts to reduce the achievement gap (Johnson-Smith, 2020). The achievement gap is often talked about "in terms of race – racial relations, issues of oppression and equity – while ironically the solutions for closing students' learning gaps in the classroom lie in tapping into their culture" (Hammond & Jackson, 2015, p. 21).

The achievement gap masks a larger cultural opportunity gap for students, and teachers should help close this gap by guiding students to develop their full academic, social, and emotional selves with culture in mind (Lakhwani, 2019). Culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching are often used in response to these deficits with the goal of replacing White, middle class-dominant cultural norms in the school setting (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). Culturally responsive teaching moves education from deficit perceptions to more "comprehensive understandings of difference, culture, accommodation, differentiation, and teaching" (Murry et al., 2020, p. 105). Miscommunication and lowered expectations of students are often a result of this

demographic mismatch and lack of understanding (Groulx & Silva, 2010). In addition to targeting the academic gap, culturally responsive teaching has been found to increase positive identity development and resiliency (Hanley & Noblit, 2009). There is a clear need to prepare teachers to be capable of and dedicated to teaching diverse students (Gay, 2018).

The focus of school improvement and the success of all students, explicitly diverse students, should rely heavily on culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002). Teachers must understand students' "cultural, language, and lived experiences for students to be successful and sustain academic success" (Ramirez et al., 2016, p. 21). Thomas et al. (2020) stated, "A cultural divide between teachers and students has the potential to result in a deleterious impact ranging from low expectations, implicit bias, adverse disciplinary action – all of which lead students to various degrees of educational alienation" (p. 122). Culturally responsive teaching creates a learning environment in which students utilize their cultural backgrounds as strengths to make learning personal, engaging, and relevant (Adkins, 2012). The achievement of diverse students improves when they are "taught through their own cultural and experiential filters" (Gay, 2002, p. 106).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Gay's (2002) five core components of culturally responsive teaching: "base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communications, and cultural congruity in instruction" (p. 106). According to Gay (2018), "Using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more

relevant and effective is to practice culturally responsive teaching" (p. 31). These components form all or most of the basis for culturally responsive pedagogy in multiple learning models and are "grounded in teachers validating students' lived experiences and building a trusting and caring relationship with them" (Ramirez et al., 2016, p. 20).

Other popular models and definitions for culturally responsive teaching are quite similar to the five core components identified by Gay (2002, 2013). Ladson-Billings (1995) introduced the need for culturally responsive pedagogy as a means to focus on the academic and cultural capacity of all students. Ladson-Billings (1995) brought focus to viewing the backgrounds and lived experiences of students as assets in the classroom instead of deficits. Similarly, Taylor and Quintana (2003) shared the importance of culture and awareness of teachers' perceptions and backgrounds concerning diverse teaching. Rao (2005) proposed a model for a multicultural teacher education program to prepare teachers for diverse classroom populations. While all of these researchers encompassed components of culturally responsive teaching, Gay's (2013) research best reflects the work of teachers in their classrooms.

Gay (2002) outlined the foundation for improving the academic success of diverse students through the use of culturally responsive teaching. In order for teachers to be prepared to meet the needs of diverse students, they must develop an awareness of and readiness for the components of culturally responsive teaching (Roberts, 2020). Additionally, teachers must be adequately prepared to implement instructional processes detailed in culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002). The research questions for this study are directly tied to the five components of culturally responsive teaching and the

supports in place to achieve culturally responsive teaching. The conceptual framework is examined in greater detail in Chapter Two.

Statement of the Problem

The concept of culturally responsive teaching includes culture as the focus of everything done in education (Gay, 2002). With this in mind, additional "research in this area is crucial if we are to understand" how culturally responsive teaching affects instruction on a daily basis (Hramiak, 2015, p. 4). Hramiak (2015) revealed the need for more professional development on diversity and related issues, noting that "some teacher training courses devote only one or two hours to the subject" (p. 4). Studies within urban schools show teachers receive little or no preparation on the concepts of culture, language diversity, and race (Sleeter, 2012). Teachers do not have the needed tools and understanding of these concepts or the cultural backgrounds of youth (Ramirez et al., 2016).

Whether consciously aware or not, teachers belong to cultural communities and embrace their cultural identities, form their beliefs, and shape their attitudes, which can influence their interactions with students in the classroom (Kumar et al., 2015). Auslander (2018) suggested professional development must address the ways teachers are influenced by mindset and beliefs, including the importance of collaborating with colleagues and building leaders to reflect on personal practices. The increasing diversity of student populations while teacher populations across the country remain above 80% White demonstrates the need for culturally responsive teaching in the classroom (Weisberg, 2018, p. 38). Even in districts not experiencing growth in student diversity,

teachers must prepare students to be engaged citizens in the rapidly changing cultural

landscape of the United States (Kumar et al., 2015).

Despite unconscious bias and diversity gaps, teachers value having a diverse

student population in the classroom and often learn much about themselves through

interactions with diverse groups (Lambeth & Smith, 2016). In the K–12 public school

system, diverse students are often celebrated culturally, but the same cultures are not

recognized or used as a learning tool in the classroom (Jones-Good, 2015). Ramirez et al.

(2016) found teachers must be supported in teaching diverse students to bridge cultural

divides in the classroom. Culturally responsive teaching includes the core components of

teaching to and through the cultural strengths of students (Debnam et al., 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of teacher and

principal perceptions of their level of preparedness for culturally responsive teaching in

four southwest Missouri school districts with diverse student populations and to gain an

understanding of strategies and procedures in place to meet the needs of diverse students.

This required gathering data regarding a common definition of culturally responsive

teaching. Research participants identified which, if any, of the five most commonly

identified components of culturally responsive teaching (base knowledge, curriculum,

classroom climate, cross-cultural communications, and cultural congruity in instruction)

are currently utilized in their instructional model (Gay, 2018). Additionally, the data were

analyzed to determine whether culturally responsive teaching was a focus at each district,

what policies might be in place, and what types of professional development, if any, were

offered to teachers to prepare them for culturally responsive teaching.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are K–12 teachers' beliefs regarding the five components of culturally responsive teaching (base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communications, and cultural congruity in instruction)?

2. What are K–12 teachers' perceptions of their level of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices?

3. What administrative resources and supports are in place to meet the educational needs of diverse students?

Significance of the Study

Culturally responsive teaching includes "the ability to link principles of learning with deep understanding of (and appreciation for) culture" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 77). The teacher survey statements and principal interview questions were created to elicit data reflecting these key points. These data were used to address gaps in research by providing an opportunity for multiple stakeholders to share perceptions of the level of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching in their districts.

Jandrin (2017) identified a link between the use of culturally responsive teaching and graduation rates of diverse students and suggested additional research focused on teachers' and principals' perceptions of culturally responsive teaching practices. These data will allow district leaders to determine if their teachers are facing obstacles implementing culturally responsive teaching and to understand the factors that assist with culturally responsive teaching. By identifying where teachers feel ill-equipped to teach

diverse students, building principals can better evaluate their role in supporting teacher development and student learning.

Findings from the study provided more specificity about what barriers, either attitudinal or structural, exist for the use of culturally responsive teaching in the classroom. The results of the study may offer school principals a better understanding of teachers' beliefs about culturally responsive teaching, a meaningful data point for buildings with a higher-than-average enrollment of culturally diverse students (Berry-English & Ellison, 2017). Additionally, study results may offer a view of the teachers' level of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices in the classroom. Data from the study may reveal a gap between the resources available to teachers and what building principals believe to be available (Warren, 2017). Overall, the study findings may provide insight regarding beliefs and preparedness to implement culturally responsive teaching in the K–12 public education setting.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Culturally Adaptive Teaching

Culturally adaptive teaching involves continually adapting to the cultural needs of students (Hramiak, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching is an approach using the "cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2002, p. 29).

Diverse Student Population

Students noted by mainstream society for their language, ethnicity, and social class are considered part of a diverse student population (Lippman et al., 1996).

Limitations and Assumptions

The following limitations were identified in this study:

Instrument

While a standardized instrument was considered, survey statements and interview questions were developed by the primary investigator. Building principal responses to the interview questions varied in detail and length.

Sample Demographics

Purposeful sampling was utilized for this study. The sample encompassed four districts in southwest Missouri with higher-than-state-average enrollment of non-white students grades K–12. The selected schools may not be representative of all districts in southwest Missouri or other regions of the state.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are accepted:

1. The responses of the participants were offered honestly and without bias.

2. The respondents provided answers based on their experiences.

3. The inclusion criteria of the sample were appropriate, and therefore, assured the participants had experienced the same or similar phenomenon.

4. The participating districts truthfully reported student demographic data to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE).

Summary

The background information and conceptual framework provided in Chapter One outline the various components of culturally responsive teaching. In addition, Chapter One included a discussion of the rationale for conducting this study of teacher and principal levels of preparedness for culturally responsive teaching. By gaining a better understanding of educator perceptions and of strategies and procedures in place to meet the needs of diverse students, gaps can be identified regarding professional development. Chapter One also included the research questions, the definition of key terms, and the limitations and assumptions of the study.

Presented in Chapter Two is a comprehensive overview of existing literature and related studies serving as the foundation for this study, highlighting the components of culturally responsive teaching in an effort to create a learning environment that is culturally congruent for all students to achieve academically. The chapter begins with an overview of the increasing number of diverse students in the K–12 education setting and the need to adjust teaching pedagogies for students of all backgrounds. Then, current evidence regarding the benefits of culturally responsive teaching is synthesized. Finally, studies are presented related to the identified barriers to culturally responsive teaching.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Shifts in school demographics and student diversity have changed public education over the last two decades (Ramirez et al., 2016). According to the United States Department of Education (USDOE):

> Between 2000 and 2017, the percentage of U.S. school-age children who were White decreased from 62% to 51%, and the percentage who were Black decreased from 15% to 14%. In contrast, the percentage of school-age children from other racial/ethnic groups increased: Hispanic children, from 16% to 25%; Asian children, from 3% to 5%; and children of two or more races, from 2% to 4%.
>
> (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2019a, para. 4)

As student demographics evolve, public schools must be aware of the changes and adjust to meet the greater need of providing all students with an education relevant to their experiences (Jones-Good, 2015). The moving demographics of the U.S. population make it increasingly important for teachers to be "adequately prepared for working with racially diverse groups of students" (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008, p. 9).

The results of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) are released yearly in a document known as the "Nation's Report Card" (NCES, 2019b). Missouri's 2019 NAEP data revealed a gap between elementary and secondary White and non-white students in math, science, and reading; White students outperformed non-white students from 12 to 42 points (on a 500-point scale) in the areas of English, mathematics, and science at both elementary and secondary levels, with the largest gap in scores occurring in the area of science (NCES, 2019b, p. 1). In response to the 2015 national data from the Nation's Report Card, the Education Trust, a non-profit organization with

the goal of promoting high academic achievement for all students at all levels, found the following:

> By the time minority students reach grade 12, if they do so at all, minority students are about four years behind other young people. Indeed, 17-year-old African American and Latino students have skills in English, mathematics, and science similar to those of 13-year-old White students. (NCES, 2019b, p. 6)

The public education system has fallen short of ensuring students from racially, culturally, and economically diverse groups are learning (Elliott-Engel & Westfall-Rudd, 2016). Gay (2002, 2013) suggested the answer to the achievement gap lies partially in the systemic realities of dismissing or actively suppressing the cultural backgrounds of students and their families.

Culturally responsive teaching has been viewed by teachers and administrators as a way to change the manner in which diverse students are taught and as a process for increasing academic achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Culturally responsive teaching includes "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Culturally responsive teaching practices offer a source of knowledge to be implemented in the classroom, positively impacting students and encouraging teachers to validate students' "lived experiences and frames of reference" to build a trusting and caring relationship with them (Gay, 2002, p. 106).

With culturally responsive teaching "students are seen as valuable, intelligent beings, who come to the classroom with knowledge that can help extend the learning in the classroom" (Stowe, 2017, p. 244). The increasing diversity of students can lead to

challenges for teachers, especially those not familiar with the components of culturally responsive teaching (Lew & Nelson, 2016). Debnam et al. (2015) indicated that with changing demographics of the U.S. public school population, more efforts are needed to determine teacher preparedness for effectively working with culturally diverse students. The potential for "cultural dissonance between contemporary teachers and their students necessitates that educators persistently seek culturally responsive practices" (Chiu et al., 2017, p. 47).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research was based on the work of Gay (2002), who developed the five components of culturally responsive teaching: base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communication, and cultural congruity in instruction. Decades of efforts centralized on facilitating equitable school experiences for all students have led to a foundation of components for teaching diverse students (Debnam et al., 2015). Irvine and Armento (2001) clarified, "Culturally responsive pedagogy has been referred to by many names: culturally responsible, culture compatible, culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, culturally relevant, and multicultural education" (as cited in Harmon, 2012, p. 12). While these pedagogies are not identical, they share the common goal of ensuring "students see themselves and their communities reflected and valued in the content taught in school" (Muniz, 2019, para. 6).

Numerous scholars have examined the importance of including culture within education systems. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) identified a model of culturally informed teaching. According to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995), the four components of "establishing inclusion, developing attitude, enhancing meaning, and engendering

competence" are "essential to developing intrinsic motivation" while being "sensitive to cultural differences" (para. 17).

The research of Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014) was conducted to define a teaching style that engages students whose backgrounds and cultures were traditionally excluded from typical educational settings. In this framework, Ladson-Billings indicated, "Teaching 1) must yield academic success; 2) must help students develop positive ethnic and cultural identities while simultaneously helping them achieve academically; and 3) must support students' ability to recognize, understand, and critique social inequalities" (as cited in Muniz, 2019, para. 3). Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy research has been widely cited and provided the foundation for additional research (as cited in Woodley et al., 2017). Beauboeuf-Lafontant (1999) argued for an examination of politics to be included in culturally relevant pedagogy, as diverse students are often members of groups treated unfairly.

Building primarily on the research of Ladson-Billings, Gay (2002, 2013) developed a framework with an emphasis on teacher strategies and practices, coining the term *culturally responsive teaching*. Culturally responsive teaching emerged in response to gaps in student learning and deficit approaches seeking to "replace the linguistic, literate, and cultural practices of many students of color with dominant language and literacy skills and other White, middle-class dominate cultural norms of acting and being that are demanded in schools" (Paris, 2012, p. 24).

The enactment of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has given states the opportunity to "establish their own goals for teaching and learning in the public schools, and to create accountability systems" regarding topics such as school climate, challenging

curriculum, and discipline practices (Schettino et al., 2019, p. 27). When examining all 50 states' ESSA plans submitted to the USDOE, 31 state plans reference "culturally responsive practices and programs, as well as the importance of recruiting and developing culturally responsive educators" (Schettino et al., 2019, p. 27).

The ESSA plan submitted by Missouri does not include a reference to culturally responsive practices or programs (USDOE, 2018b). Based on notable work on culturally responsive teaching in the last 25 years, the "most powerful and equitable learning begins in these efforts to make schools more culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining" (Schettino et al., 2019, para. 2). The role of culture within schools and classrooms must be factored into the education accountability system (Schettino et al., 2019).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Public schools have become more diverse over the past few decades, further widening the cultural divide between students and teachers and potentially contributing to educational learning gaps (Lambeth & Smith, 2016; Larson et al., 2018). During this change in diversity, professional literature has suggested teachers adopt culturally caring practices, yet this is not the norm in most classrooms (Williams, 2018). With culturally responsive teaching, academic knowledge and skills are shared with cultural background knowledge in mind, providing more personal, more meaningful, and more interesting lessons and generating higher interest levels and increased learning (Gay, 2002). Making culturally responsive teaching a priority in public education classrooms may positively influence learning for all students (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive teaching embraces cultural equality as a goal of public education (Paris, 2012)

and seeks to close educational disparities experienced by many students from diverse backgrounds (Fickel & Abbiss, 2019).

For effective instruction and learning, teachers must understand students' culture, language, and lived experiences (Ramirez et al., 2016). According to Williams (2018), culturally responsive teaching "is committed to collective empowerment and cultural integrity" (p. 3). This empowerment benefits students "intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 18). Without the knowledge and use of students' cultural backgrounds, it is difficult for programs and incentives to be successful in the school setting (Peterson, 2014). As students from diverse backgrounds become the majority, there is a greater need to provide educational experiences relevant to their experiences (Jones-Good, 2015).

Base Knowledge

To understand students, teachers must examine their own cultural identities first (Gay, 2018). Teachers' sense of their own and others' cultures is a must for appropriately connecting with students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). According to Gay (2002), having "explicit knowledge about cultural diversity is imperative to meeting the educational needs of ethnically diverse students," which establishes the first core component of culturally responsive teaching as base knowledge (p. 107). While most educators would include a base knowledge of content and pedagogy as necessary for effective instruction, Gay (2002) included base knowledge of student and teacher experiences to this foundation.

Teacher Identity

Identity itself is developed through historical, political, and cultural norms (Jones & Abes, 2013). Teacher identity is derived from self-concept and the social systems teachers are in when developing their skills and experiences (Edwards & Edwards, 2017). Setlhako (2019) found the school building and/or district plays a large part as a social system influencing teacher identity, encouraging teachers to adopt and integrate based on school community models, systems, and leadership. It is essential for teachers to develop their identities to be responsive and accepting of diverse student cultures in the classroom (Fickel & Abbiss, 2019).

Kumar et al. (2015) suggested, "Teachers' personal beliefs are instrumental in shaping their professional identity – their perceptions of their own professional roles and responsibilities for educating culturally diverse students" (p. 542). Understanding culture and incorporating this awareness into teacher identity can help lay to a foundation for culturally responsive teaching (Hammond & Jackson, 2015). Culturally responsive teachers assume the identity of a teacher who views student diversity as a strength and works to ensure success for all in the classroom (Fickel & Abbiss, 2019).

Teacher identity is also tied to the teaching practices used in the classroom, and as such, the quality of teaching (Trautwein, 2018). The experiences of teachers influence their navigation of everyday practice, representing their personal identities and not necessarily that of the students in the classroom (Edwards & Edwards, 2017). When teachers are more knowledgeable about culture and the ways students from various backgrounds learn best, they are able to incorporate students' languages and cultures into the educational process (Hollins, 2011). Additionally, this knowledge of culture allows

teachers to be more effective in teaching children from diverse cultural backgrounds in a general classroom setting (Gay, 2002).

Recognition of Student Identity

Teachers must see, understand, and use student backgrounds including knowledge; lived experiences; and informal education in the home, communities, and families (Ramirez et al., 2016). Scholars agree students learn best when content is relevant and can be connected to something they have previously experienced; culturally responsive teaching is essentially a tool for building this meaning and understanding with culture in mind (Fink, 2017). Teachers must learn about students' cultural identities and then center those identities in the classroom (Nash et al., 2019). Utilizing student backgrounds and leveraging strengths can offset academic gaps (Roe, 2019). Hollins (2011) emphasized, "Learning to teach people different from ourselves requires moving beyond a view of the world as an extension of self to an openness to diverse perspectives and to views of knowledge as socially constructed and evolving" (p. 117).

Confronting Teacher Bias

Often teachers are unaware of the influence of their identities and cultural backgrounds, allowing bias and stereotypes to have a negative impact in the classroom (Kim & Connelly, 2019). Teachers must acquire self-knowledge and challenge their assumptions and beliefs to best assist students with learning (Lambeth & Smith, 2016). Akifyeva and Alieva (2018) discovered teacher expectations of students were always favorable toward the achievement of majority students and unfavorable toward the achievement of minority students. Teachers' failure to recognize their consciousness of

ethnicity, race, and class can result in incorrectly characterizing some students by their deficits rather than their strengths (Gay, 2018).

Deficit-laden biases influence a teacher's pedagogy, especially when working with students from backgrounds differing from that of the teacher or the education system (Lew & Nelson, 2016). Teachers and leaders must first learn to remove the stigma of seeing these students as "deficient" or approaching the work from a "deficiency lens." Teachers must also have:

> …honest moments with themselves and address the privileges they hold and expand their thinking to see that the student's lack of cultural and linguistic resources is not the barrier, is the teacher's classroom that was not designed for the student's success, or the site leader's building that was not designed for the student's success. (Y. Garcia-Pusateri, personal communication, October 29, 2020)

Samuels (2018) determined, "When teachers are provided opportunities and spaces to be reflective, interrogate their assumptions, and investigate the realities of their biases, they are better prepared to consider how to promote equitable and inclusive classrooms" (p. 22).

Chong et al. (2011) explained that while a teacher's identity is inseparably linked to background and experiences, which makes change difficult, teacher education programs and professional development can promote growth in thinking outside of one's own identity. Additionally, building positive relationships with students and getting to know them as individuals can assist with overcoming bias (Culp & Salvador, 2017). With

assistance, teachers can reshape their knowledge and identities to represent those in their classroom and community (Edwards & Edwards, 2017).

      Stereotype Threat. Stereotype threat refers to the risk of students conforming to the negative stereotypes about their group of people assigned to them by a dominant group (Steele, 1997). It is natural for a person's brain to group like items to make cognition more efficient, especially when that person lacks experience or knowledge in that realm (Culp & Salvador, 2017). Teachers must be able to recognize and confront these personal biases (Robison, 2020). Stereotype threat is shown to have a detrimental effect on student learning, because students may feel judged based on their race, gender, or social group (Goodwin, 2016). Stereotype threats have the potential to create a stressful environment in which diverse students feel they must constantly perform well to avoid confirming to negative stereotypes (Talbert et al., 2019). Grouping individuals based on perception is also a stereotype threat (Goodwin, 2016).

      The curriculum must include resources free of stereotyping groups of people (Glock et al., 2019). Byrd (2017) determined, "Both positive and negative stereotypes can be harmful to student success as they limit the degree to which a student is seen as an individual and can unconsciously impair performance" (p. 703). Stereotyping can negatively shape a student's perception, self-judgment, and academic abilities (Steele, 1997). Further, the classroom environment must be free of stereotypes (Gay, 2002). A stereotypical environment can negatively impact student interest in coursework (Master et al., 2016).

Curriculum

An effective curriculum for culturally responsive teaching is purposeful and
meaningful; it includes the selection of materials, teaching strategies, how students
collaborate, and how students present and share their learning (Peterson, 2014). Standards
and objectives must be covered "while also taking into consideration diversity issues
among students" (Mensah, 2011, p. 302). A culturally responsive curriculum must be
more than just the education and celebration of diverse holidays (Jones-Good, 2015).
According to Jones-Good (2015), "Cultural responsiveness goes beyond the celebration
of holidays and requires a complete shift" (p. 7). Larson et al. (2018) suggested
curriculum development practices must include the following:

> Making the curriculum relevant to students (e.g., connecting it to real-world
>
> examples and incorporating cultural artifacts), varying the way in which students
>
> engage and display understanding (e.g., coteaching), and varying the way in
>
> which teachers communicate (e.g., using humor, providing direct commands). (p.
>
> 163)

Additionally, culturally responsive curriculum should be centered around diverse
representation, social justice, and teacher support materials (Bryan-Gooden, 2019). The
curriculum must include the experiences of diverse peoples throughout, not just during
events such as Black history month (Farag, 2021).

Representation

Diverse representation allows students' cultures to be reflected in the curriculum
and to be exposed to diverse authors, characters, identities, and situations (Kibler &
Chapman, 2019). These representations may include diverse images in classroom décor

and printed resources; selecting texts from and about diverse individuals is a way to ensure representation (Bryan-Gooden, 2019). Students' languages, literacies, and ways of being must be centered meaningfully in classroom learning across units and projects (Ferlazzo, 2017). Stowe (2017) reflected on a case study:

> While implementing a culturally responsive unit, I found that my students were more engaged, expressive, and more critical than ever before… Student behavior improved and all students met the unit's learning objective. I believe it is because students felt like their history and people were being celebrated, and therefore they were being celebrated and respected. (p. 247)

When teachers approach curriculum through the lived experiences and strengths of students, the relevance of instruction increases greatly, thereby improving student engagement and ultimately student learning (Murry et al., 2020).

Culturally Relevant Texts. Culturally relevant texts are texts that align with the backgrounds and experiences of students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). While the use of culturally responsive texts is essential for culturally and linguistically diverse students, they are truly beneficial for all students and are another way to provide student representation within the curriculum (Kibler & Chapman, 2019). Culturally relevant texts and culturally relevant teaching go hand in hand, as culturally relevant texts are often considered a central component of the culturally relevant approach (Kibler & Chapman, 2019). Hollie (2019) shared three types of culturally responsive texts to consider:

- *Culturally authentic texts* include a piece of fiction or non-fiction that highlights the authentic cultural experiences of a particular groups of people and includes authentic language, situations, and illustrations.

- *Culturally generic texts* feature characters of various racial identities but contain few and/or superficial details.

- *Culturally neutral texts* feature characters of color and essentially race based, sharing mainstream theme, plot, and/or characterization. (p. 31)

Providing texts centered on diversity creates a more equitable and approachable learning environment for all students (Nash, 2019).

Social Justice

Social justice has always had a place in K–12 publication education, with legal cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Mendez v. Westminster* shaping and often falling short of providing equal opportunities (Harrison & Clark, 2016). Gay (2013) stated, "The 'cultural fabric,' primarily of European and middle-class origins, is so deeply ingrained in the structures, ethos, programs, and etiquette of schools that is considered simply the 'normal' and 'right' thing to do" (p. 9). Social justice must be part of the school improvement conversation (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Further, the underachievement of diverse students can be tied to inequitable education systems rather than actual academic gaps (Gay, 2018). Garcia-Pusateri (personal communication, October 29, 2020) asserted:

> In 2020, with four years of an administration that has focused on school choice, the restriction of diversity training for state and or governmental entities like schools and threatening funding of schools who wish to expand their curriculum to become culturally consciousness and other dangerous tactics to stop inclusive learning for students, the role of social justice in K–12 public education is just as important as it was during segregation if not more.

Education must include a commitment to inclusivity, diversity, equity, and social justice (Woodley et al., 2017). Within the classroom and beyond, social justice is a process of striving for equality and the ability to fulfill student needs and create welcoming learning environments (Harrison & Clark, 2016).

Culturally responsive teaching helps both teachers and students develop processing skills needed to facilitate social change and acts as an example of utilizing cultural strengths for achievement (Leggett & King-Reilly, 2020). Teachers must not only "encourage academic success and cultural competence, but they must also help students to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476). Culturally responsive curriculum provides students with multiple perspectives and brings learning to life (Stowe, 2017). Multiple perspectives within the curriculum are essential for teaching historical truths and allow for high-level thinking and analysis (Farag, 2021).

Furthermore, teachers must examine the role of social justice related to the classroom and school system, probing the social and institutional processes that perpetuate inequality by grappling with issues of privilege and oppression and how these are manifested in the structures, processes, and cultures of schools and wider society (Dyches & Boyd, 2017). Culturally responsive teaching embraces equity as part of the democratic purpose of schooling (Paris, 2012) and promotes social justice "through the naming and critiquing discourses of inequality within and beyond the classroom" (Santoro & Kennedy, 2016, p. 209). Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy addressing student achievement while affirming students' cultural identities and developing skills to challenge social inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Critical Race Theory. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) described critical race theory as an examination of how racism is institutionalized and creates unequal access for minorities, influencing all areas of society. In education, critical race theory is a predominant theory to explain "race and its function in society as it pertains to social justice and oppression" (Harrison & Clark, 2016, p. 233). The theory "seeks to help people learn about and validate the experiences of those who've been marginalized and whose perspectives have often been ignored by policy makers, judges, educators, and others who hold positions of power in our society" (Farag, 2021, p. 19). Critical race theory is embedded in education through the curriculum taught to students, money allocated to schools, and instructional practices (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Critical race theory provides language to analyze and discuss misrepresented ideas, allowing those in education the opportunity to share about and shape their environments (Farag, 2021). Farag (2021) found critical race theory helpful in informing teaching practices and the creation of curriculum. Ladson-Billings (1995) emphasized curriculum is influenced by the dominant culture through what is taught, namely the teaching methods and assessments, and the curriculum most often does not represent multiple cultural perspectives. It is crucial for teachers to understand students' backgrounds to effectively select, create, and provide learning materials effective for all (Johnson-Smith, 2020).

Ramirez et al. (2016) explained teachers who effectively implement culturally responsive teaching utilize students' cultural background knowledge when creating lesson plans and activities to foster academic skills. By honoring the "cultural capital students bring into the classroom," teachers are better able to engage and assist students

(Woodley et al., 2017, p. 470). Hubert (2013) discovered students prefer being taught through culturally responsive teaching strategies that increase student interest and the feeling of relevance of content.

Classroom Climate

Krasnoff (2016) determined, "A critical component of culturally responsive teaching is creating equitable classroom climates that are equally conducive to learning for all students" (p. 9). A classroom environment must allow for culturally diverse students to find connections between themselves, the content being taught, and the skills they are required to perform (Robison, 2020). Teachers must use students' cultural experiences to build upon academic achievement by "demonstrating culturally sensitive caring and building culturally responsive communities" (Gay, 2002, p. 109).

Williams (2018) stated, "Culturally responsive caring can and should be foundational to successful teaching that does not discriminate but instead uplifts every student and assures them that teachers will seek to know, understand, teach, and not degrade them" (p. 1). Teachers cannot merely state they are committed to working with diverse students; established structures must be evident in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers can and must show genuine caring for students by making cultural and academic connections (Viloria, 2019).

Belief in All Students

One key aspect of a culturally responsive classroom is the teacher's communicated belief of all students' desire to learn, including those from diverse backgrounds (Gay, 2002). Teachers should expect learning growth from all students (Gay, 2018). Teachers who genuinely care for students generate higher levels of all kinds

of success than those who do not, as these teachers set high expectations and "will settle for nothing less than high achievement" (Gay, 2018, p. 49). Lambeth and Smith (2016) shared a teacher's reflection from a study of preservice teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive teacher preparation: "I believe I may have empowered many of my students by simply letting them know that I believe in their abilities. One of my students actually reminded me that I told her she was smart" (p. 54). With culturally responsive teaching, the whole child is considered, and the teacher's goal is to help students find success in every way possible (Stowe, 2017). When teachers express appreciation for students and provide encouragement and motivation, meaningful impacts on academic performance result (Hubert, 2013).

Influences on Expectations. Culture influences both teacher and student expectations (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers must pair high expectations for students with positive relationships developed from an understanding of the students' cultural backgrounds and communities (Gay, 2018). They must reject deficit views of diverse students and their communities and develop a sense of common cultural interactions (Grant & Gibson, 2011). Gay (2013) provided an example of cultural intrusion:

> The energy and exuberance with which highly culturally affiliated African Americans invest their interactions is troublesome to many teachers. They may view this behavior as impulsive, overemotional, and out of control. Consequently, much of their classroom interaction with these students is of a disciplinary and controlling manner, directed toward getting them to 'settle down' and 'spend more time on task.' The students often are reprimanded for undesirable behaviors more than they are instructed on academic learning. (pp. 60–61)

Perceptions and stereotypes centered around student behaviors can be roadblocks in the learning process, affecting teacher expectations for academic growth (Williams, 2018). Additionally, favoritism based on racial, gendered, or cultural identities can influence teacher expectations of students (Robison, 2020).

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

Creating and maintaining a safe learning environment is imperative for student success, and becoming familiar with students' cultural history and language is essential for this environment (Kibler & Chapman, 2019). Teachers must learn about and show appreciation for students' assets, cultures, families, and communities for students to have a sense they are part of the classroom community (Roe, 2019). Caring is an essential component of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018). Schools and teachers must recognize student and family knowledge and learn from this to create caring classrooms, leading to learning environments where students are more likely to succeed (Williams, 2018). Murry et al. (2020) explained, "Students are able to bring their whole selves (their knowledge, talent, skills, ideas, emotions, etc.) into their learning process" (p. 114), and they are able and expected to build on knowledge in a safe and engaging practice.

Classroom Management. One way to create a safe and culturally responsive learning environment is to ensure mutual trust is a focus (Gay, 2002). Teachers should manage the classroom with dignity and empathy rather than with punitive measures by sharing the responsibility of respect and learning between teacher and student (Purkey & Novak, 2016). It is important to learn what respect looks and sounds like within the cultures represented in the classroom, including that of the teacher (Robison, 2020). One way for teachers to build trust is to share about themselves and their own identities

outside of the classroom (Roe, 2019). Thomas et al. (2020) found, "Agreeing to learn from a stranger who does not respect your identity causes a major loss of self – the only alternative is to 'not learn' and reject the strangers' world" (p. 6). Robison (2020) determined, "Even though customs vary widely, respect is the common denominator among cultures" (p. 37).

Another successful tool for a culturally responsive classroom environment is collaboration (Adkins, 2012). Gay (2002) reported, "Many students of color grow up in environments where the welfare of the group takes precedence over the individual, and individuals are taught to pool their resources to solve problems" (p. 110). According to Adkins (2012), within a collaborative classroom community, students recognize the value of their work and support each other during the learning process, assisting each other to meet the teacher's high expectations. Working in groups can strengthen the learning process, garner more student participation, and encourage teamwork and problem solving, all while learning content (Hubert, 2013).

Purposively building upon the strengths of student cultural backgrounds can also positively influence student behavior (Gay, 2018). Roe (2019) found when the culture of students is considered in classroom procedures and curriculum, student behavior is more positive and higher student self-efficacy may result. When teachers listen to and validate students' culture and stories, they can "move beyond White dominant views of caring, a move that is essential to supporting students of Color whose behaviors are regularly misunderstood, misinterpreted, and violently responded to when viewed through a White lens" (Williams, 2018, p. 6). Larson et al. (2018) proposed when culturally responsive teaching practices are present in the classroom, more positive student behaviors and more

proactive behavior management are experienced. Further, when an appreciation of diversity is a focus and students learn more about their peers, they learn to become more empathetic, better understanding the reality of others, and more positive behaviorally and socially (Edwards & Edwards, 2017).

The Physical Classroom Environment

The physical environment of the classroom and school should reflect the diversity of the student population (Fink, 2017). If objects in a room are to symbolize who belongs there but do not represent all, this creates a disparity between the individual and the classroom and school environment (Master et al., 2016). The images in a classroom should reflect the local community and diverse communities around the world (Culp & Salvador, 2017).

Creating a physical environment where students feel included can positively influence their enrollment in courses, their academic motivation, and their educational outcomes (Master et al., 2016). Culturally responsive teaching should include symbolic curriculum such as "images, symbols, icons, mottoes, awards, celebrations, and other artifacts used to teach students knowledge, skills, morals, and values" (Gay, 2002, p. 108). Forms of symbolic curriculum may include bulletin boards, images of heroes and heroines, classroom rules and procedures, and classroom achievements or incentives (Gay, 2002). Being intentional with the creation of physical classroom environments to ensure representation of all students is a practical area of improvement for teachers and school buildings (Master et al., 2016).

Cross-Cultural Communications

Teachers must be aware of elements of culture to better understand students'

actions and behaviors and to involve the students' families and communities in the

educational experience (Gay, 2002). Culture is associated with various elements, such as

behavior, norms, values, communication styles, and educational output (Adkins, 2012).

When studying the relationship between home and school in diverse households, Kourea

et al. (2016) found parents teach their children respect, responsibility, and safety at home

and desire these behaviors and communications to be part of the school system.

Instead of asking students to leave vital aspects of their cultures at home, such as

"their family stories, their language, their sense of community and their unique

perspectives of the world," these must be included within the educational experience

(Hurley, 2019, para. 3). With culturally responsive teaching, teachers must understand the

ways students operate at home and gain an understanding of "their neighborhood, their

heritage, their language" (Fink, 2017, p. 40). Fink (2017) declared, "You can't just be in

the classroom bubble" (p. 40).

Respect

Interactions among different cultural groups are "heavily influenced by the overall

tone of respectfulness and caring" (Byrd, 2017, p. 704). Respect is considered by many to

be the common denominator among cultures (Robison, 2020). Clear respect for students

of color can be transformative in the classroom (Woodley et al., 2017). Showing respect

for others, their backgrounds, and their perspectives can increase student participation in

the classroom (Roberts, 2020).

Respect for culture can be shown a variety of ways in the classroom and school district, and it looks and sounds different across cultures (Gay, 2018; Robison, 2020). Respect can begin by simply showing interest in learning more about students' cultural backgrounds (Roe, 2019). Learning student names and pronouncing those names correctly and with name formality customs is essential when showing respect to others (Robison, 2020). Acknowledgment of competing perspectives and providing opportunities to discuss these perspectives provide a sense of appreciation and respect to students (Farag, 2021).

Language and Communication

Cultural backgrounds play a large part in the language used and the methods of communication students are comfortable with, best understand, and utilize themselves (Larson et al., 2018). The native language is often referred to as a mother tongue, as language connects people to their families, ancestry, and communities, and this holds true for regional dialect as well (Fink, 2017). Teachers must be aware of communicative pluralism, understanding there are differences in native tongues based on cultural communities and believing all variations are correct (Gay, 2018). Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) determined, "Linguistically diverse students in U.S. public schools must undertake the responsibility of learning their academic content, new cultural principles, and possibly a new language" (p. 6).

Brown and Crippen (2016) found teachers struggle to adjust classroom language to best reflect student needs, and instead, language emphasis remains on content. According to Gay (2018), "Knowledge about general communication patterns among ethnic groups is helpful, but alone is not enough. Teachers needs to translate it to their

own particular instructional situations" (p. 125). Lack of connection to student backgrounds and home languages is viewed as a barrier to acknowledging and accessing student background knowledge for the purpose of learning (Brown & Crippen, 2016).

The use of non-traditional language must also be considered alongside grammar and lexicon in the classroom (Silva, 2018). Teachers must be aware of Larson et al.'s (2018) study results indicating the importance of consideration of culture when communicating with students, including allowing for formal and informal language based on settings to establish and maintain more positive student behavior. Edwards and Edwards (2017) found teachers who prioritize oral language use this as a standard with all students, though this may not be equitable for students from backgrounds other than the dominant culture featured in the classroom, school, and community. When students are allowed to use language interaction styles common to their cultures, they achieve at a higher level (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Knowing there are different communication styles across cultures and understanding those differences are not inherently signs of disrespect are helpful in any collaborative process, but more so in culturally responsive teaching (Robison, 2020). When considering communication styles, there can be discourse in discussion and participation, where the "roles of the speaker and listener are fluid and interchangeable" (Gay, 2002, p. 111). Ladson-Billings (1995) explained most cultures view the teacher as the expert, yet students should be considered resources of knowledge and skill. Utilized in most classrooms is a passive-receptive style of communication, with the teacher as the active speaker and the student as an active listener; however, the "communicative styles of most ethnic groups of color in the United States are more active, participatory,

dialectic, and multimodel" (Serpil, 2016, p. 130). Culture also guides how we process communication and information (Gay, 2002). Checking for understanding and asking clarifying questions are small ways to assist all students, including those from diverse backgrounds (Robison, 2020).

Student and Family Background

To show genuine interest and care for students, teachers need to learn about their students' families and lives outside of the classroom (Roe, 2019). Teachers must work to bridge the gap between school and home experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Understanding how families care for students is essential for successful classroom teaching (Williams, 2018). Communication with a student's family is a crucial component of understanding the funds of knowledge a student brings to the school environment (McGlynn & Kelly, 2018). Phone calls or emails home are a proven way to build relationships with both students and their families (Culp & Salvador, 2017).

Within the classroom, "academic knowledge and skills should be connected to students' personal experiences and frames of reference," providing a supportive frame of reference when learning (Abacioglu et al., 2019, p. 2). Hubert (2013) asserted that when teaching content is relatable to students' home lives, engagement increases. The findings from the case study conducted by Hubert (2013) included the following: culturally responsive teaching practices help students "feel smarter because the lessons dealt with issues related to their life and society," which helps them "understand things taking place in their current home environment" (p. 330). Knowledge of student background can help educators identify core reasons for classroom opportunities, such as misbehavior, and can

assist in creating a personalized plan of action to resolve the problem with the student (Parsons, 2017).

Family and Community Involvement

Culturally responsive teaching is about engaging the whole student by establishing connections with families and communities (Bassey, 2016). Murry et al. (2020) stated, "Finding innovative ways to involve parents in their child's learning further communicates to students that their culturally influenced ways of knowing and interacting in the world matter" (p. 112). When schools invite families to community events, allowing guardians and household members to see teachers interacting with their children, families' confidence about teachers' abilities to educate their children improves (Thomas et al., 2020). Families should be seen as and feel like partners working with schools to create the most ideal learning experience for students (Williams, 2018).

Hurley (2019) studied one district's implementation of Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP), the district's developed framework combining Gay's (2002) culturally responsive teaching and Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy. The implementation of CRRP was welcomed in the community with a shared belief that every family enrolled in the district had a cultural story to share, and "school would be a place where those stories were valued" (Hurley, 2019, p. 24). To establish caring relationships with students and the community, teachers must seek to understand the students' cultural characteristics, history, values, and behaviors (Williams, 2018).

In a case study conducted by Williams (2018), teachers were more successful with student engagement and learning when they embraced the idea of working together

with students, families, and communities to make connections. Thomas et al. (2020)

stressed:

> As the school to prison pipeline for minoritized and lower income students is well
>
> documented, it is not an understatement that in many instances, children's lives
>
> literally depend on teachers who know, understand, value, and appreciate the
>
> cultures from which they cone, and work actively and intentionally to
>
> meaningfully connect the content they are responsible for teaching to the cultural
>
> wealth and assets of communities. (p. 132)

Schools that utilize culturally responsive teaching create better home and community

connections by integrating cultural values, beliefs, and experiences into the learning

environment (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Cultural Congruity in Instruction

With cultural groups approaching learning in various ways, the instructional

delivery of lessons with culture in mind is a key component of culturally responsive

teaching (Gay, 2002). Gay (2018) emphasized dissimilar approaches to learning at home

and school:

> A single area of achievement (such as academic performance) is maximized when
>
> multiple areas of learning (e.g., academic, cultural, personal, social, civic) are
>
> facilitated at once and different teaching techniques are used, all within the
>
> cultural contexts of various ethnic groups. (p. 213)

For students to have academic success, their teachers must understand and apply the

components of culturally responsive teaching (Mensah, 2011). Mensah (2011) stated, "In

order for students to learn in the ways that Ladson-Billings outlines, their teachers must

learn them similarly so that they may teach in this manner" (p. 306). Demonstrating an honest commitment to learn about students and their cultural and home backgrounds is a foundational component of culturally responsive teaching (Ramirez et al., 2016). Teachers must validate the cultural heritage of all students by implementing cultural practices into classroom instruction (Thomas & Berry, 2019).

Teacher Support

Teachers must understand the components of culturally responsive teaching, yet school leaders cannot expect teachers to complete all of this work on their own (Sleeter, 2012). There cannot be an assumption of teachers being able and willing to adapt their teaching practices without support from others (Vandeyar, 2017). For culturally responsive teaching to work, teachers must receive time for ongoing inquiry, critical thinking, and problem solving related to adapting teaching practices to meet student needs (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Teacher assistance related to acquiring knowledge of how culture impacts learning, as well as guidance for connecting this knowledge to classroom practices and curriculum development, are vital (Grant & Gibson, 2011). When districts assume responsibility for and commitment to culturally responsive teaching, equipping and supporting teachers must be reflected through the process (Fickel & Abbiss, 2019). Ensuring teachers are able to acknowledge the importance of culture, build meaningful relationships between school and family, and incorporate multicultural resources and teaching strategies is essential for culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002). Larson et al. (2018) suggested school leaders utilize observations to identify teachers most in need of additional support.

Barriers to Culturally Responsive Teaching

Educators must resist the urge to view culturally responsive teaching as something to be done, and instead, understand cultural responsiveness as a state of being (Mason, 2017). Culturally responsive teaching is new to most school faculty, and guidance is necessary to enact culturally responsive practices (Gay, 2018). Various roles and factors in education play a part in the teachers' ability to implement culturally responsive teaching (Makovec, 2018).

Prioritization of Culturally Responsive Teaching

School districts must prioritize culturally responsive teaching as a relevant, necessary classroom practice for student success (Murry et al., 2020). Districts should have an instilled commitment to equity and diversity in their strategic plans, and the commitment should be visible and transparent (Y. Garcia-Pusateri, personal communication, October 29, 2020). Within the Missouri School Improvement Program 6 (MSIP6), effective February 2021, there is a focus on equity and diversity from the MODESE (2020c). This state-mandated focus on the equity of educational experiences will require districts to evaluate their ability to "intentionally focus on educational outcomes and the allocation of resources to ensure that each student is purposefully engaged and is provided rigorous instruction, meaningful supports, and relevant educational experiences" (MODESE, 2020c, p. 5). When schools value student backgrounds and funds of knowledge, they model learning and interacting as equal members of a community (Murry et al., 2020).

Professional Development

Understanding culturally responsive teaching requires teachers to utilize the cultural knowledge of diverse students to increase learning; it is imperative teachers receive professional development to help grow this knowledge (Bullock & Pack, 2020). Muhammad (2020) found many teachers cite their desire to learn more about culturally responsive teaching practices but often do not know where to begin. It must be part of the culture and climate of the district to have teachers, staff, and leaders participate in regular equity trainings and build in equity goals and measures in professional development plans and evaluations (Y. Garcia-Pusateri, personal communication, October 29, 2020). The focus of professional development should be developed based on student population needs, and with the increase in diverse student population across the nation, many districts would benefit from more culturally focused teacher learning (Lakhwani, 2019). Building leaders must prioritize professional development centered around culturally responsive teaching to increase teacher efficacy and student success (Viloria, 2019).

Professional development for culturally responsive teaching must include planning, teaching, and assessing the strategies being implemented, as well as the time and tools to understand students in the classroom and building (Auslander, 2018; Mensah, 2011). Training, coaching, and data-based feedback are necessary for teachers to successfully implement culturally responsive teaching in the classroom (Debnam et al., 2015). Mason (2017) found without adequate professional development training and time, teachers are left with an awareness and concern for inequities, yet not enough support to address the issue. According to Paris (2012), it is crucial to learn more about students during an intentional time frame. Providing support, including the necessary

time, for teachers who implement culturally responsive teaching is essential (Ramirez et al., 2016).

New Teacher Induction. Teacher preparation programs influence teachers' expectations of the profession and play a role in professional identity development (Makovec, 2018). Many postsecondary teacher education programs are beginning to include diversity and equity within the preparation curriculum, but there is still work to be done (Thomas et al., 2020). When new teachers are hired at a district, there are benefits to providing professional learning related to identity and influence in the classroom (Edwards & Edwards, 2017). These new professionals need proper training to teach a growingly diverse student population (Hammond & Jackson, 2015).

Discomfort

Teachers are most effective in teaching students similar to themselves in culture, ethnicity, and race; however, to teach all students effectively, teachers must break the barriers of their comfort zones (Lambeth & Smith, 2016). As determined by Ramirez et al. (2016), sustaining cultural identities through education is an element for culturally responsive teaching and often is a challenge to the traditional ways of thinking in school settings. Teachers cannot merely teach skills, but they must "fundamentally transform their perceptions of schools and culture" to bring culturally responsive teaching to the classroom (Groulx & Silva, 2010, p. 8).

According to Hurley (2019), there are ways to educate teachers about culturally responsive teaching:

> … [This is not a program to be] distributed at a staff meeting or single
> professional development session. Instead, it is a framework that provides a set of

tools and lenses that, if taken seriously, can lead to thoughtful unpacking, personal reflection, and honest dialogue among staff, students, and communities. (p. 23)

In a study of an undergraduate education course, Kumar et al. (2015) found preservice teachers were "well aware" of negative media "representations of race but felt uncomfortable discussing them in the context of a whole-class discussion" (p. 115). Kumar et al. (2015) challenged these preservice teachers to discuss uncomfortable topics and found as time progressed, many preservice teachers began to provide input and opinions on these topics, potentially indicating personal growth.

True transformation into a culturally responsive classroom may require new knowledge to disrupt the classic way of thinking, which causes discomfort (Mason, 2017). This disruption challenges teachers to recognize ways culture has informed their current beliefs (Lambeth & Smith, 2016). The K–12 Consulting and Professional Development Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania found evidence revealing "when children have a strong, positive racial identity, they are more academically and socially successful" (as cited in Fink, 2017, para. 16). This same work revealed many teachers to be uncomfortable explicitly addressing race (Fink, 2017). Considering the current trends in student populations in K–12 public education across the nation, teachers must learn how to have conversations about current events and matters related to diversity of the classroom (Samuels, 2018).

Leadership

Auslander (2018) established effective and supportive school leadership is a foundational piece when working with students of diverse cultural and linguistic

characteristics. School building leaders and the practices they put into place must align with viewing cultural backgrounds as strengths in the school setting (Gay, 2018). Leaders must be intentional with the communication used, the climate created, and the capacity to empower students and their identities (Jones et al., 2016).

Byrd (2017) found a positive correlation between a school climate focused on equity and diversity and student academic outcomes. Standard Three of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, supported by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015), reads as follows:

> Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Investing in culturally responsive teaching requires leaders who are willing to "reflect, model, learn, and lead in order to disrupt systems that fail to serve all students." (as cited in Nerenberg, 2017, p. 1)

Kumar et al. (2015) asserted administrators must understand culturally responsive teaching to avoid pushing back the teachers' desire to meet the needs of diverse students. If adopting culturally responsive teaching practices is an expectation of teachers, leaders must begin with intentional leadership practices (Viloria, 2019).

Summary

Chapter Two included information about culturally responsive teaching to add clarification on its definition and the framework for the purpose of this study. Special consideration was given to the conceptual framework, and a deeper examination of culturally responsive teaching provided a clear understanding of the teacher's role and

influence in the classroom. The currently documented benefits of culturally responsive teaching were provided to demonstrate the impact of acknowledging and utilizing cultural backgrounds with regard to student learning. Lastly, current barriers of culturally responsive teaching were examined.

The research methodology and design used for this study are included in Chapter Three. A brief explanation of the problem and purpose is provided, and the research questions and design of the study are reintroduced. Additionally, the population, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations are addressed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

As K–12 student demographics become more diverse, there is a clear need for teachers to enact multicultural and culturally responsive teaching (Marrun, 2018). The shift in demographics has revealed a cultural gap between teachers and students in U.S. schools, which can lead to instances of cultural misunderstanding and requires teachers to be open to diverse perspectives (Jandrin, 2017). Gay's (2002) research on the concept of culturally responsive teaching focused on culture being at the heart of everything in education.

While all teachers benefit from training to facilitate and guide students in a diverse community, those teachers who differ in terms of cultural identity from their students often benefit the most (Oya, 2016). With this in mind, research in this area is crucial if educators are to understand how culturally responsive teaching affects instruction on a daily basis (Jandrin, 2017). This study is significant, because the results reveal helpful information to district leaders regarding potential gaps when educating diverse students, perceptions of teacher preparedness for teaching diverse students, and needed professional development. Moreover, few researchers have examined teachers' sense of responsibility for meeting the needs of diverse students (Kumar et al., 2015).

Problem and Purpose Overview

The concept of culturally responsive teaching acknowledges that schools, teachers, and students are not homogeneous, and school culture and student culture do not always align (Gay, 2018; Hramiak, 2015). To avoid clashes and create a positive teaching environment, educators must connect with students and consider their backgrounds when planning instruction (Larson et al., 2018). Krasnoff (2016) stated,

"Teachers must be prepared with a thorough understanding of the specific cultures of the students they teach, how that culture affects student learning behaviors, and how they can change classroom interactions and instruction to embrace the differences" (p. 1). Educators need to be attentive to aspects of student identities, and this must be done to implement culturally responsive teaching (Milner, 2016). Culturally responsive teaching "fundamentally changes what teachers do because teachers' knowledge of their culture and the culture of their students can influence the delivery of content as well as the students' ability to gain knowledge and skills" (Walter, 2018, p. 25).

Culture may affect the teaching of diverse students more than non-diverse students, with direct implications for instruction and learning and the need to include ethnic groups' "cultural values, traditions, learning styles, contributions, and relationship patterns" (Diaz et al., 2018, p. 2). The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of teacher perceptions of their level of preparedness for culturally responsive teaching in four southwest Missouri school districts with diverse student populations. This research required gathering data regarding a common definition of culturally responsive teaching. Research participants identified which, if any, of the five components of culturally responsive teaching (base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communications, and cultural congruity in instruction) were currently utilized in their instructional model (Gay, 2018).

The responses of the participants were examined to gain an understanding of strategies and procedures in place to meet the needs of diverse students. Data obtained from the study were analyzed to determine whether culturally responsive teaching is a teacher and/or district focus and if professional development is offered to teachers to

prepare them for culturally responsive teaching. With the United States student

population becoming increasingly diverse and the teacher population remaining largely

homogenous, Marx stated, "It is imperative for teachers to have a focus on democratic,

multicultural, and social justice lens through which to view curriculum, communication,

and instruction" (as cited in Griffin et al., 2016, p. 2).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are K–12 teachers' beliefs regarding the five components of culturally

responsive teaching (base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-

cultural communications, and cultural congruity in instruction)?

2. What are K–12 teachers' perceptions of their level of preparedness for

implementing culturally responsive teaching practices?

3. What administrative resources and supports are in place to meet the

educational needs of diverse students?

Research Design

A mixed-method design was used for this study to allow for analysis of the

perceptions of teacher preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching. A

mixed-methods study can help to answer questions about what, when, and how much a

certain phenomenon occurs, drawing on comparisons and lending greater validity, as the

findings are supported by multiple forms of evidence (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017).

Quantitative data were collected from teacher surveys, and qualitative data were

collected from building principal interviews. Structuring a mixed-methods study

allowed for a better understanding of research problems, and using both quantitative and

qualitative methods offers a cohesive and beneficial data collection process (Bluman, 2017; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017).

Population and Sample

The research population consisted of K–12 classroom teachers and principals from four southwest Missouri public school districts. The four school districts each reported an above state average enrollment of non-white students during the academic years 2014–2019. In Missouri K–12 public school districts, the 2014–2019 five-year average of non-white student enrollment was 27.94% (MODESE, 2020a, para. 1). For the four participating districts, the average of non-white student enrollment ranged from 28.4% to 43.66% from fall of 2014 through spring of 2019 (MODESE, 2020a). The total population within these four districts included approximately 1,045 K–12 teachers and 37 building principals (MODESE, 2020a). The diverse populations of the selected districts increased the teacher and building principal capacity to respond to survey statements and interview questions, since each group has had more experience working with diverse students.

The teacher survey was forwarded to approximately 1,045 K–12 teachers by their building principals. Despite the fact the survey was forwarded internally by building principals, the survey was considered an external survey with the link coming from an external source. Fryrear (2015) explained it is best to consider a "10–15% response rate for external surveys" (para. 3). This created a minimally acceptable sample size of 105 teachers for this study. A purposive sampling method was considered appropriate to select the teachers who would participate in this study. Purposive sampling allowed the

researcher to deliberately select participants due to the qualities they possess and their ability to assistant with relevant research (Etikan, 2016).

Principals who volunteered to participate in the interviews served as the initial sample. From this sample, four principals were selected for interviews using a stratified random sampling method to ensure representation from elementary and secondary levels and representation from each of the four school districts included in the study. While there is no set number required for interviews within qualitative research, it is the quality of the analysis and the care and time taken to analyze interviews, rather than quantity, that provide the most value to research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The stratified random sample improves the representation of groups within a population, ensuring these strata are not over-represented, allowing for "more valid inferences from the sample to the population" (Laerd Dissertation, 2012, para. 13).

Instrumentation

A survey was selected as the instrument to gather data from teachers, allowing the researcher to collect opinions about a particular topic (Fraenkel et al., 2019). The survey developed for teachers was based upon the framework of culturally responsive teaching developed by Gay (2002) and was aligned to research question (RQ) one and RQ2. The principal interview questions were created to align to RQ3 based upon Gay's (2002) framework of culturally responsive teaching and culturally responsive leadership and the resource support research developed by Auslander (2018). The interviews allowed for inquiry-based conversations to gain an understanding of the respondents' perceptions of culturally responsive teaching in general and within the districts (Young et al., 2018).

The teacher survey (see Appendix A) included three prompts designed to collect demographic data and 14 statements designed to collect data related to the research questions. The following demographic information was elicited in section one of the instrument: number of years in education, number of years in current school district, and grade level of students taught. This information was disaggregated into elementary and secondary subgroups.

Within the survey, teachers responded to statements centered around culturally responsive teaching on a five-point Likert-type scale. Ten of the 14 survey statements are tied to RQ1 and are aligned with the five components of culturally responsive teaching (base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communities, and cultural congruity in instruction) (Gay, 2018). Culturally responsive teaching is based on the idea "when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students the skills are more meaningful and are learned more easily" (Gay, 2002, p. 6).

The remaining four statements are tied to RQ2, focused on the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices. Teachers were prompted to consider the extent of their ability to teach diverse students and the availability of professional development related to culturally responsive teaching. Krasnoff (2016) determined, "Being an effective teacher means more than providing subject-matter instruction" or focusing on student achievement; rather, cultural responsiveness is essential to "effective teaching" (p. 3).

Building principals participated in an eight-question interview, conducted at a time and place suitable for the participants. The building principal interview (see Appendix B) included eight semi-structured interview questions. The first three questions

were designed to collect demographic data. The remaining five questions align with RQ3 and focus on the resources and supports in place related to culturally responsive teaching. The purpose of an interview is "to enter into the other person's perspective" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 108). Interviews provide a meaningful opportunity to gain access to the realities and experiences of those interviewed (Silverman, 2016).

Khalifa et al. (2016) determined, "Effective leaders must be capable of promoting and sustaining an environment stable enough to attract, maintain, and support the further development of good teachers," and gaining building leader viewpoints on culturally responsive teaching, school climate, and professional development will further enhance research (p. 1273). Building principal interviews allowed for information to be gathered through the telling of stories and experiences, shedding light on occurrences from the perspective of the interviewees (Miller & Glassner, 2016). Responses were analyzed to identify emerging themes and categories regarding perceptions of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching.

Reliability

Reliability is a key factor in study replicability (Farghaly, 2018). Lovelace and Brickman (2013) defined reliability as the measure to determine if a survey would "provide consistent results if it were administered again under similar circumstances" (p. 611). Comrey (1988) found reliability is generally increased when more than four response options are used; therefore, the survey was constructed using a five-point Likert-type scale. All Likert-type responses to survey statements were given an equivalent numerical value for computational purposes.

Additionally, the wording of statements can be the main cause of reliability concerns in surveys (Fowler, 2014). To prevent this, survey statements for teachers were field-tested with a group of 10 teachers. Bluman (2017) recommended conducting a field test using a small sample of respondents similar to the population of the study to pretest surveys and interviews and to test the validity of the questionnaire by assessing the survey design and finding any poorly worded, misleading, or unclear statements or questions. Feedback from individuals who reviewed the survey statements was considered and incorporated into the final survey statements.

Validity

Validity must be established in a study to find meaningful and useful information (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Construct validity can be proven by using more than one source of data (Howe et al., 2020). The validity of this study was improved through between-method triangulation of data using surveys and interviews. Enhancing the validity of the study through triangulation improves the transferability of the study, or the ability of the study to be replicated (Fusch et al., 2018).

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Trustworthiness and credibility refer to the "confidence in the truth value of the data and their interpretations" (Farghaly, 2018, p. 8). Qualitative data are widely based on interpreting and collecting information; therefore, member checking is essential to protecting the credibility of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Member checking allows participants the opportunity to check or approve aspects of the interpretation of the data they provided (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Interview questions for principals were field-tested with a group of four

principals. Feedback from individuals who tested the interview questions was considered

and incorporated into the final interview questions. Follow-up questions were asked

during interviews when further clarification was needed. Principals were given the

opportunity to review their interview responses for accuracy to ensure participants'

viewpoints were accurately translated in the data.

Data Collection

Email addresses for the four participating superintendents were obtained from the

Missouri School Directory (MODESE, 2020b). An invitation email to the superintendents

(Appendix C) was sent explaining the purpose of the study and requesting permission for

K–12 teachers to participate in the survey and for one principal to be interviewed.

After approval from the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board (IRB)

(see Appendix D), building principal email addresses were obtained from the Missouri

School Directory (MODESE, 2020b). A letter of participation to principals (Appendix E)

was emailed to all 26 principals in the four school districts and included a brief

introduction to the study, a request to forward the letter of introduction to the teachers

(see Appendix F), and the research information sheet for teachers (see Appendix G). A

link to the survey was included in the letter of introduction to the teachers.

The use of a web-based survey assisted in collecting a higher volume of data and

ensured the "ability of participants to take part anonymously, which means more

participants may be willing to participate" (Rice et al., 2017, p. 59). Initially, the survey

link remained open for two weeks for participants to respond to the survey. After two

weeks, a follow-up email was sent to all building principals requesting the survey be sent

to staff again to gain additional responses. After this, the survey remained open for one additional week and was then closed for responses. The survey was open for responses for a total of three weeks.

The letter of participation emailed to the principals also included information about the principal interviews, inviting those interested in participating to email their willingness to participate to the researcher. Identified building principal participants were contacted via email regarding the study. Participants were provided the research information sheet for principals (Appendix H) along with a copy of the interview questions through email. Phone, in-person, or virtual chat meetings were scheduled, depending on availability. A reminder of the date and time of the interview was sent to each of the participants prior to the interview. With permission from the participants, the interview sessions were audio-recorded to ensure their responses were documented accurately.

The interviews were transcribed using the software program Google Docs. Transcripts were then provided to the principals, who had the opportunity to check their responses for accuracy. Member checking is a method of rigor used within qualitative research, allowing participants to "provide input on whether the data are accurate and/or results accurately reflect their experiences" (Smith & McGannon, 2018, p. 103).

Data Analysis

The data from the survey were analyzed, summarized, reported, and presented using descriptive statistics (Bluman, 2017). Frequency counts of responses to the survey statements were compiled within the Qualtrics platform. In an attempt to identify possible trends, the demographic data were disaggregated by each teacher's years of experience at

the current district and grade level taught. The data were analyzed by examining the

mode and the frequency distribution of responses in percentage form. The mode was

chosen, because the mode is the only measure of central tendency that can be used in

finding the most typical case when the data are nominal or categorical (Bluman, 2017).

Building principal interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Once responses

were collected, a thematic analysis was conducted. Thematic analysis is a data analysis

strategy commonly used across qualitative data collection, focused on identifying,

analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Open coding allowed for anecdotal notes to be used to identify relevant data found within

the interview transcripts and then grouped using axial coding to identify themes (Merriam

& Tisdell, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

Safeguards were established to ensure the participants in the study were protected,

and responses were kept anonymous and confidential (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017).

The data collection process began after IRB approval from Lindenwood University.

Information collected electronically through surveys was stored on a password-protected

personal computer. Information collected through interviews was secured in a locked

cabinet. All documents will be destroyed three years after conclusion of the study.

All survey responses were anonymous, guaranteeing the confidentiality of teacher

participants. Each participant received a letter of introduction to teachers explaining the

purpose of the study and how the data would be collected. Further, the research

information sheet for teachers explained participation was voluntary, and participants

were offered the opportunity to opt-out of the study at any time.

Pseudonyms were assigned to each building principal and school district to maintain anonymity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Each principal received a letter of participation explaining the purpose of the study. Principals also received a research information sheet for principals that reiterated the opportunity to opt-out of the study at any time.

Summary

Presented in Chapter Three was an overview and rationale for the mixed-method research methodology used to gather and analyze data regarding the perceptions of teachers' levels of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching. Details regarding sample selection and participant solicitation were discussed, as well as descriptions of the survey instrument and interview protocol. A discussion of the data collection and data analysis processes, as well as ethical considerations, was included.

Chapter Four contains the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the breakdown of the sample who participated in the study. Included is a presentation of the survey and interview data. Specifics from each survey prompt are shared, and data are organized in a variety of frequency distribution tables. Details from each interview question are also shared. Common perceptions are noted, and developing themes are identified.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The student population in K–12 public education across the nation has become increasingly diverse over the past two decades (Ramirez et al., 2016). As teachers work with more diverse students, they must be equipped to provide an equitable education for students from all backgrounds (Jones et al., 2016). Teachers must utilize the cultural backgrounds and experiences of students to make learning more relevant and effective, and this can be done through culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018). Culturally responsive teaching strategies help teachers meet the needs of diverse students and can positively impact student success (Lakhwani, 2019).

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of teacher and principal perceptions of their level of preparedness for culturally responsive teaching in four southwest Missouri school districts with diverse student populations and to gain an understanding of strategies and procedures in place to meet the needs of diverse students. The four districts included in the study had an above-state-average student enrollment of non-white students. The data collected were centered around the five most commonly identified components of culturally responsive teaching: base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communications, and cultural congruity in instruction (Gay, 2018). The analysis of the data could assist these districts and others wishing to better understand and utilize culturally responsive teaching to best support students from all backgrounds. The survey instrument could also be a resource school districts utilize to gauge the specific barriers to and perceptions of culturally responsive teaching according to classroom teachers.

The instrumentation for this study included both a survey and an interview. To investigate the perceptions of teachers, a survey consisting of demographic and Likert-scale statements was electronically distributed to teachers from grades kindergarten through 12 from four school districts. Teachers self-reported their skill level and training related to culturally responsive teaching. The Likert-type statements aligned to RQ1 and RQ2.

Data collected from the survey respondents were analyzed in multiple ways. The mode measure of central tendency was documented for all statement responses. The survey data were analyzed, summarized, and reported on using descriptive statistics. The data were analyzed as a whole as well as by grade level taught (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, or 9–12) and years of experience in the current school district.

The building principal interviews included eight semi-structured interview questions designed to collect demographic data and focus on resources and supports in place related to culturally responsive teaching. These questions were also aligned to RQ2 and RQ3. Principal interview responses were analyzed to identify emerging themes and categories related to perceptions of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching.

Population and Sample

Four southwest Missouri districts were invited to participate in the study. After district permission was granted, email requests were sent to 37 principals asking each principal to forward the survey link to the classroom teachers in their buildings. Overall, 110 (10.5%) of the approximately 1,045 K–12 teachers who should have received the survey responded. Of the 110 respondents, 15 (13.5%) identified as teaching kindergarten

through second grade, 28 (25.5%) identified as teaching third through fifth grade, 35 (32%) identified as teaching sixth through eighth grade, and 32 (29%) identified as teaching ninth through 12th grade.

With regard to total years of teaching experience, 30 (27%) reported having worked four or fewer years, 22 (20%) reported having worked for five to nine years, 15 (13.5%) reported having worked 10 to 14 years, 13 (12.5%) reported having worked 15 to 19 years, and 30 (27%) reported having worked 20 or more years. Specific to years of experience at their current districts, 47 (42%) reported having worked in their districts four or fewer years, 26 (24%) reported having worked in their districts five to nine years, 13 (12.5%) reported having worked in their districts 10 to 14 years, 15 (13.5%) reported having worked in their districts 15 to 19 years, and nine (8%) reported having worked in their districts for 20 or more years.

Teacher Beliefs Regarding Components of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Participants were presented with nine statements addressing the five components of culturally responsive teaching. These statements were centered around RQ1. Two statements focused on the teachers' base knowledge of culture in the classroom. One statement was aligned with curriculum. Two statements aligned with classroom climate, two statements aligned with cross-cultural communication, and two statements aligned with cultural congruity in instruction. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement using a Likert-type scale of one to five, with one designated as *strongly disagree* and five as *strongly agree*.

Statement 1: *Modern learning should include the use of personal experiences and cultural backgrounds.* All 110 participants responded to this statement. The mode was

strongly agree with 71 (64.5%) respondents choosing this option. Over 97% of the respondents agreed at some level with this statement. The complete description of participant responses is included in Table 1.

Table 1

Overall Teacher Support for the Use of Personal Experiences and Cultural Backgrounds

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	2 (1.82%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.91%)	36 (32.73%)	**71 (64.55%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, the mode remained *strongly agree* for each subgroup. All grade-level ranges agreed with the statement at a rate of at least 96%. See Table 2 for the disaggregated frequency distribution of all 110 responses.

Table 2

Teacher Support for the Use of Personal Experiences and Cultural Backgrounds by

Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.07%)	6 (40%)	**8 (53%)**
3–5	1 (3.58%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (32.14%)	**18 (64.28%)**
6–8	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (37%)	**21 (60%)**
9–12	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (25%)	**24 (75%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by years of teaching experience, differences in

the mode were apparent between the response groups. *Strongly agree* remained the mode

for teachers with zero to 19 years of total teaching experience and for teachers with zero

to 19 years of teaching experience in the current school district. For teachers with 20 or

more total years of teaching, the mode was *somewhat agree* with 14 (46.67%) responses.

For those with 20 or more years in the current district, the mode was *somewhat agree*

with four (44.44%) responses. See Table 3 for the disaggregated frequency of responses.

Table 3

Teacher Support for the Use of Personal Experiences and Cultural Backgrounds by

Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (30%)	**21 (70%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (32%)	**15 (68%)**
10–14	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (26.67%)	**11 (73.33%)**
15–19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.7%)	**12 (92.3%)**
20 ≤	2 (6.67%)	2 (6.67%)	1 (3.3%)	**14 (46.67%)**	11 (36.67%)
Experience in Current District					
0–4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (27.65%)	**34 (72.35%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (30.7%)	**18 (69.3%)**
10–14	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (38.45%)	**8 (61.55%)**
15–19	1 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (33.3%)	**9 (60%)**
20 ≤	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (11.1%)	**4 (44.44%)**	3 (33.3%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 2: *Curriculum should offer opportunities for teaching cultural*

diversity. All 110 participants responded to this statement. The mode was *strongly agree*

with 68 (61.8%) respondents choosing this option. An additional 35 (33.65%)

respondents selected *somewhat agree*, resulting in 95.45% of the respondents agreeing to the statement at some level. The complete description of participant responses is included in Table 4.

Table 4

Overall Teacher Support for Curriculum about Cultural Diversity

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	1 (.91%)	1 (.91%)	1 (.91%)	39 (35.45%)	**68 (61.82%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, *strongly agree* remained the mode for each group with 68 (61.8%) respondents selecting the option. An additional 39 (35.45%) respondents selected *somewhat agree*. Table 5 includes the disaggregated frequency distribution for all 110 responses.

Table 5

Teacher Support for Curriculum about Cultural Diversity by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.67%)	6 (40%)	**8 (53.33%)**
3–5	0 (0%)	1 (3.65%)	0 (0%)	8 (28.5%)	**19 (67.85%)**
6–8	1 (2.86%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (40%)	**20 (57.14%)**
9–12	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (34.37%)	**21 (65.63%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by total years of teaching experience, the mode remained *strongly agree* for three of the five subgroups. *Strongly agree* was the mode for those with four or fewer years of total teaching experience (73.33%), those with 10–14 years of total teaching experience (73.33%), and those with 15–19 years of teaching experience (92.30%). The mode was *somewhat agree* for respondents who taught for a total of five to nine years with 12 (54.54%) responses and for respondents who have taught for 20 or more years with 16 (53.33%) responses.

Strongly agree remained the mode for four of the five subgroups based upon years taught in the current district. The mode for teachers in the current district for 20 or more years was *somewhat agree* with five (55.55%) responses. Those who selected *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree* across all years of experience in the current district

included 107 (97.25%) of the 110 respondents. Table 6 contains the disaggregated

frequency distribution for all 110 responses.

Table 6

Teacher Support for Curriculum about Cultural Diversity by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (26.67%)	**22 (73.33%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**12 (54.54%)**	10 (45.46%)
10–14	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (26.67%)	**11 (73.33%)**
15–19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.70%)	**12 (92.30%)**
≥20	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)	**16 (53.33%)**	11 (36.67%)
Experience in Current District					
0–4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	15 (32%)	**32 (68%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (38.5%)	**16 (61.5%)**
10–14	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (23%)	**10 (77%)**
15–19	0 (0%)	1 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	6 (40%)	**8 (53.33%)**
≥20	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (11.1%)	**5 (55.5%)**	2 (22.3%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 3: *Teachers should learn about the communication styles of students in the classroom.* All 110 participants responded to this statement. The mode was *strongly agree* with 80 (72.73%) respondents choosing this option. Table 7 includes the complete description of participant responses.

Table 7

Overall Teacher Support for Learning Communication Styles of Students in the Classroom

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	3 (2.73%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.91%)	26 (23.64%)	**80 (72.73%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, the mode was *strongly-agree* for each of the subgroups. *Strongly agree* was the mode for teachers in the subgroup of kindergarten through second grade with 10 (66.67%) responses. Twenty-one (75%) teachers in the third through fifth-grade subgroup and 22 (62.85%) of those in the sixth through eighth-grade subgroup selected *strongly agree*. The highest subgroup percentage was for those teaching ninth through 12th grades with 27 (84.37%) respondents selecting *strongly agree*. The complete description of participant responses is included in Table 8.

Table 8

Teacher Support for Learning Communication Styles of Students in the Classroom by

Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	1 (6.66%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (26.67%)	**10 (66.67%)**
3–5	1 (3.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (21.4%)	**21 (75%)**
6–8	1 (2.95%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (34.2%)	**22 (62.85%)**
9–12	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.13%)	4 (12.5%)	**27 (84.37%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

The mode of data for total years of teaching experience was *strongly agree* for each of the five subgroups. *Strongly agree* was the mode for those with four or fewer years of experience (60%), those with five to nine years of experience (95.45%), those with 10–14 years of experience (93.33%), those with 15–19 years of experience (78%), and those with 20 or more total years of teaching experience (60%).

Strongly agree remained the mode for four of five subgroups based upon years taught in the current district. For teachers within the current district for 20 years or more, both *strongly agree* and *somewhat agree* had the most responses at four (44.44%) each. See Table 9 for the disaggregated frequency distribution of all 110 responses.

Table 9

Teacher Support for Learning Communication Styles of Students in the Classroom by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (40%)	**18 (60%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.55%)	**21 (95.45%)**
10–14	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	**14 (93.33%)**
15–19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (22%)	**10 (78%)**
20 ≤	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (23.33%)	**18 (60%)**
Experience in Current District					
0–4	1 (2.135%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.135%)	14 (29.78%)	**31 (65.95%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (19.25%)	**21 (80.75%)**
10–14	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**13 (100%)**
15–19	1 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (20%)	**11 (73.33%)**
20 ≤	1 (11.12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**4 (44.44%)**	**4 (44.44%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 4: *Instructional techniques should match the learning styles of diverse students.* All 110 participants responded to this statement. The mode was *strongly agree* with 82 (74.5%) respondents choosing this option. These data are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Overall Teacher Support for Instruction Matching the Learning Styles of Diverse

Students

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	3 (2.73%)	1 (0.91%)	3 (2.73%)	21 (19.09%)	**82 (74.55%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

The mode of the data for grade level taught was also *strongly agree* for each of the four subgroups. *Strongly agree* was the mode for those in the kindergarten through second-grade subgroup (73.33%), the third through fifth-grade subgroup (78.57%), the sixth through eighth-grade subgroup (62.85%), and the ninth through 12th-grade subgroup (83.75%). See Table 11 for the disaggregated frequency distribution of all 110 responses.

Table 11

Teacher Support for Instruction Matching the Learning Styles of Diverse Students by

Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	0 (%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	4 (26.67%)	**11 (73.33%)**
3–5	0 (%)	0 (%)	1 (3.58%)	5 (17.85%)	**22 (78.57%)**
6–8	3 (8.5%)	0 (%)	1 (2.94%)	9 (25.71%)	**22 (62.85%)**
9–12	0 (%)	1 (3.125%)	1 (3.125%)	3 (9.375%)	**27 (8.375%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

The mode of the data for total years of teaching experience was also *strongly*

agree for each of the five subgroups. *Strongly agree* was the mode for teachers with four

or fewer total years of teaching experience with 18 (60%) respondents choosing this

option. Twenty-one (95.45%) of those with five to nine years of teaching experience

chose *strongly agree*, 14 (93.33%) respondents with 10–14 years of experience chose

strongly agree, 11 (84.6%) respondents with 15–19 years of experience chose *strongly*

agree, and 19 (63.33%) respondents with 20 or more years of experience chose *strongly*

agree.

Strongly agree remained the mode for four of five subgroups based upon years

taught in the current district. For teachers within the current district for 20 years or more,

both *strongly agree* and *somewhat agree* had the most responses at four (44.44%) each.

See Table 12 for the disaggregated frequency distribution of all 110 responses.

Table 12

Teacher Support for Instruction Matching the Learning Styles of Diverse Students by

Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	0 (%)	0 (%)	3 (10%)	9 (30%)	**18 (60%)**
5–9	0 (%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	1 (4.55%)	**21 (95.45%)**
10–14	0 (%)	1 (6.67%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	**14 (93.33%)**
15–19	0 (%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	2 (15.4%)	**11 (84.6%)**
20 ≤	3 (10%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	8 (26.67%)	**19 (63.33%)**
Experience in Current District					
0–4	1 (2.135%)	1 (2.135%)	3 (6.38%)	11 (23.4%)	**31 (65.95%)**
5–9	0 (%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	4 (15.4%)	**22 (84.6%)**
10–14	0 (%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	**13 (100%)**
15–19	1 (6.67%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	2 (13.33%)	**12 (80%)**
20 ≤	1 (11.12%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	**4 (44.44%)**	**4 (44.44%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 5: *I am confident in my abilities to teach in a manner that recognizes cultural diversity.* All 110 participants responded to this statement. The mode was *somewhat agree* with 53 (48%) respondents choosing this option. See Table 13 for the complete description of participant responses.

Table 13

Overall Teacher Beliefs of Their Confidence in Teaching in a Manner Recognizing Diversity

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	1 (0.91%)	12 (10.91%)	15 (13.64%)	**53 (48.18%)**	29 (26.36%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, there were differences in the mode among groups. The mode was *somewhat agree* for three of the four subgroups. The subgroup of teachers of kindergarten through second grade had a mode of *strongly agree* with seven (46.66%) members of the subgroup selecting this option. Table 14 contains the disaggregated frequency distribution for all 110 responses.

Table 14

Teacher Beliefs of Their Confidence in Teaching in a Manner Recognizing Diversity by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	0 (%)	2 (13.34%)	0 (%)	6 (40%)	**7 (46.66%)**
3–5	0 (%)	1 (3.57%)	4 (14.28%)	**15 (53.5%)**	8 (28.5%)
6–8	1 (2.88%)	4 (11.42%)	5 (14.28%)	**19 (54.28%)**	6 (17.14%)
9–12	0 (%)	5 (15.63%)	6 (18.75%)	**14 (43.75%)**	7 (21.87%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by years of experience, the subgroup of total years taught resulted in three different modes across the five subgroups. The mode remained *somewhat agree* for teachers who taught for four years or fewer (60%), five to nine years (50%), and 15 to 19 years (61.53%). *Strongly agree* was the mode for those who taught for 20 or more years with 13 (14.33%) members of the subgroup selecting this option. *Neither agree nor disagree* was the mode for teachers with 10 to 14 years of experience with six (40%) responding.

When the data were disaggregated based on years taught in the current school district, those with four or fewer years of experience (53.19%), five to nine years of experience (46.15%), and 10 to 14 years of experience (38.46%) had a mode of *somewhat agree*. *Strongly agree* was the mode for those who taught for 15 through 19

years in the current district with seven (46.67%) selecting this option. For teachers within

the current district for 20 years or more, both *strongly agree* and *somewhat agree* had the

most responses at four (44.44%) each. Table 15 contains the disaggregated frequency

distribution for all 110 responses.

Table 15

Teacher Beliefs of Their Confidence in Teaching in a Manner Recognizing Diversity by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	0 (%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	**18 (60%)**	3 (10%)
5–9	0 (%)	3 (13.64%)	3 (13.64%)	**11 (50%)**	5 (22.72%)
10–14	0 (%)	0 (%)	**6 (40%)**	4 (26.67%)	5 (33.33%)
15–19	0 (%)	1 (7.71%)	0 (%)	**8 (61.53%)**	4 (30.76%)
20 ≤	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67%)	3 (10%)	11 (36.67%)	**13 (43.33%)**
Experience in Current District					
0–4	0 (%)	9 (19.14%)	4 (8.53%)	**25 (53.19%)**	9 (19.14%)
5–9	0 (%)	0 (%)	7 (26.92%)	**12 (46.15%)**	7 (26.92%)
10–14	0 (%)	1 (7.71%)	3 (23.07%)	**5 (38.46%)**	4 (30.76%)
15–19	0 (%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	6 (40%)	**7 (46.67%)**
20 ≤	1 (11.12%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	**4 (44.44%)**	**4 (44.44%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 6: *I actively seek out opportunities to learn more about students' cultural backgrounds.* All 110 participants responded to this statement. The overall mode

to this statement was *somewhat agree* with 54 (49.09%) respondents choosing this

option. The data are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Overall Teacher Beliefs of Seeking Opportunities to Learn about Students' Cultural

Backgrounds

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	2 (1.82%)	5 (4.55%)	8 (7.27%)	**54 (49.09%)**	41 (37.27%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, the mode remained

somewhat agree for all grade levels. This represented all 110 responses. The complete

description of participant responses is included in Table 17.

Table 17

Teacher Beliefs of Seeking Opportunities to Learn About Students' Cultural Backgrounds by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	0 (%)	**7(46.66%)**	6 (40%)
3–5	0 (%)	0 (0%)	3 (10.73%)	**13 (46.42%)**	12 (42.85%)
6–8	1 (2.86%)	1(2.86%)	2 (5.71%)	**21 (60%)**	10 (28.57%)
9–12	0 (%)	3 (9.5%)	3 (9.5%)	**14 (43.75%)**	12 (37.5%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by years of teaching experience, the mode remained *somewhat agree* for four of the five subgroups. Those who taught for 10 to 14 years were bimodal. The mode for this subgroup was both *somewhat agree* and *strongly agree* with six (40%) responses each.

When the data were disaggregated by years of teaching in the current school district, there were two modes. The subgroups of years taught in current district data remained with the mode of *somewhat agree* for those with four or fewer years (55.31%), those with 15 through 19 years (46.67%), and those who taught in the current district for 20 or more years (44.44%). *Strongly agree* was the mode for teachers with five to nine years in the current district with 12 (46.15%) respondents choosing this option. *Strongly agree* was the mode for teachers with 10 to 14 years of experience in the current district

with six (46.15%) respondents choosing this option. The disaggregated frequency

distribution for this survey statement is shown in Table 18.

Table 18

Teacher Beliefs of Seeking Opportunities to Learn About Students' Cultural Backgrounds

by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	0 (%)	1 (3.33%0	1 (3.33%)	**15 (50%)**	13 (43.33%)
5–9	0 (%)	0 (%)	1 (4.55%)	**15 (68.18%)**	6 (27.27%)
10–14	0 (%)	2 (13.33%)	1 (6.67%)	**6 (40%)**	**6 (40%)**
15–19	0 (%)	0 (%)	2 (15.39%)	**6 (46.15%)**	5 (38.46%)
20 ≤	2 (6.67%)	2 (6.67%)	3 (10%)	**12 (40%)**	11 (36.67%)
Experience in Current District					
0–4	1 (2.13%)	1 (2.13%)	1 (2.13%)	**26 (55.31%)**	18 (38.29%)
5–9	0 (%)	1 (3.95%)	2 (7.6%)	11 (42.30%)	**12 (46.15%)**
10–14	0 (%)	2 (15.38%)	2 (15.38%)	3 (23.07%)	**6 (46.15%)**
15–19	0 (%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	**7 (46.67%)**	6 (40%)
20 ≤	1(11.12%)	0 (%)	2 (22.22%)	**4 (44.44%)**	2 (22.22%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 7: *I understand that different ethnic groups have different communication styles, and I take this into consideration in my classroom.* All 110 participants responded to this statement. The mode was *somewhat agree* with 55 (50%) respondents choosing this option. The complete description of participant responses is included in Table 19.

Table 19

Overall Teacher Support for Utilizing Diverse Communication Styles in the Classroom

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	3 (2.73%)	4 (3.64%)	9 (8.18%)	**55 (50%)**	39 (35.45%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, the mode remained *somewhat agree* for two subgroups. The subgroups of sixth through eighth grade (51.14%) and ninth through 12th grade (62.5%) had a mode of *somewhat agree*. The mode was *strongly agree* for kindergarten through second-grade teachers with eight (53.33%) responses and those who teach third through fifth grades with 12 (42.85%) responses. Table 20 contains the disaggregated frequency distribution for all 110 responses.

Table 20

Overall Teacher Support for Utilizing Diverse Communication Styles in the Classroom

by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	1 (6.67%)	0 (%)	0 (%)	6 (40%)	**8 (53.33%)**
3–5	1 (3.6%)	0 (%)	5 (17.85%)	10 (35.7%)	**12 (42.85%)**
6–8	1 (2.85%)	2 (5.7%)	3 (8.5%)	**20 (51.14%)**	9 (25.7%)
9–12	0 (%)	2 (6.25%)	1 (3.13%)	**20 (62.5%)**	9 (28.12%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

For total years of teaching, *somewhat agree* remained the mode for four of the five subgroups. Those with five to nine years of teaching experience had a mode of *somewhat agree* with 14 (63.63%) respondents choosing this option. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those with 10–14 years of experience with seven (46.67%) respondents selecting this option. Teachers with 15–19 years of experience had a mode of *somewhat agree* with nine (69.23%) respondents choosing this option. Those with 20 or more years of teaching experience had a mode of *somewhat agree* with 13 (43.44%) respondents choosing this option. *Strongly agree* was the mode for those with four or fewer years of experience with 13 (43.33%) respondents selecting this option.

When the data were disaggregated into years taught in the current district, *somewhat agree* remained the mode for three of the five subgroups. Those with four or

fewer years in the district (48.9%), those with five to nine years in the district (65.38%), and those teaching for 20 years or more in the current district (55.55%) had a mode of *somewhat agree*. For those who taught 10 to 14 years in the current district, the mode was *strongly agree* with seven (53.84%) members selecting this option. Those in the current district for 15 to 19 years had equal responses for *somewhat agree* and *strongly agree*, both receiving six (40%) responses. Table 21 contains the disaggregated frequency distribution for all 110 responses.

Table 21

Overall Teacher Support for Utilizing Diverse Communication Styles in the Classroom

by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	0 (0%)	2 (6.67%)	3 (10%)	12 (40%)	**13 (43.33%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.56%)	**14 (63.63%)**	7 (31.81%)
10–14	0 (0%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	**7 (46.67%)**	6 (40%)
15–19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (15.38%)	**9 (69.23%)**	2 (15.38%)
20 ≤	3 (10%)	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67%)	**13 (43.33%)**	11 (36.67%)
Experience in Current District					
0–4	1 (2.18%)	2 (4.25%)	3 (6.38%)	**23 (48.9%)**	18 (38.29%)
5–9	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (11.55%)	**17 (65.38%)**	6 (23.07%)
10–14	0 (0%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	4 (30.76%)	**7 (53.84%)**
15–19	1 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	2 (13.33%)	**6 (40%)**	**6 (40%)**
20 ≤	1 (11.11%)	0 (0%)	1 (11.11%)	**5 (55.55%)**	2 (22.22%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 8: *Teachers should receive targeted professional development on the*

practical implementation of culturally responsive teaching. All 110 participants

responded to this statement. The mode was *strongly agree* with 59 (53.64%) respondents

choosing this option. Table 22 includes the complete description of participant responses.

Table 22

Teacher Support for Professional Development Related to Culturally Responsive

Teaching

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	2 (1.82%)	2 (1.82%)	9 (8.18%)	38 (34.55%)	**59 (53.64%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, the mode remained

strongly agree for all grade levels. This included all 110 responses. The complete

description of participant responses is included in Table 23.

Table 23

Teacher Support for Professional Development Related to Culturally Responsive Teaching by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13.34%)	5 (33.33%)	**8 (53.33%)**
3–5	0 (0%)	1 (3.58%)	3 (10.71%)	10 (35.71%)	**14 (50%)**
6–8	1 (2.95%)	0 (0%)	2 (5.7%)	15 (42.85%)	**17 (48.5%)**
9–12	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67%)	7(21.8%)	**22 (68.75%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

The mode remained *strongly agree* for three of the five subgroups when the data were disaggregated by years of teaching experience. The mode for those who taught for 14 years or fewer remained *strongly agree*. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for teachers with 15 to 19 years of total experience with seven (53.85%) respondents selecting this option and for teachers with 20 or more years of experience with 14 (46.67%) responses.

The disaggregated data for years taught in the current district remained with a mode of *strongly agree* for those with four or fewer years (63.82%), 10 to 14 (53.33%) years, and for 15 to 19 years of experience (66.67%). *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those in the district for five to nine years with 12 (46.15%) responses and those with 20 or more years in the district with five (55.55%) responses. Table 24 displays the disaggregated frequency distribution for all 110 responses.

Table 24

Teacher Support for Professional Development Related to Culturally Responsive

Teaching by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (16.67%)	5 (16.67%)	**20 (66.67%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	2 (9.11%)	3 (13.63%)	5 (22.72%)	**12 (54.54%)**
10–14	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (46.67%)	**8 (53.33%)**
15–19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**7 (53.85%)**	6 (46.15%)
20 ≤	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)	**14 (46.67%)**	13 (43.33%)
Experience in Current District					
0–4	1 (2.14%)	1 (2.14%)	6 (12.76%)	9 (19.14%)	**30 (63.82%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	1 (3.89%)	3 (11.5%)	**12 (46.15%)**	10 (38.46%)
10–14	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (46.67%)	**7 (53.33%)**
15–19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (33.33%)	**10 (66.67%)**
20 ≤	1 (11.12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**5 (55.55%)**	3 (33.33%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 9: *My district utilizes a curriculum which informs about and celebrates diversity and culture.* All 110 participants responded to this statement. The mode was

neither agree nor disagree with 44 (40%) respondents choosing this option. Table 25

includes the complete description of participant responses.

Table 25

Overall Teacher Beliefs of Access to District Curriculum Related to Diversity and

Culture

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	9 (8.18%)	16 (14.55%)	**44 (40%)**	31 (28.18%)	10 (9.09%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, there were differences in

the mode among groups. The mode remained *neither agree nor disagree* for teachers of

grades sixth through 12. For those within the sixth through eighth-grade subgroup, 16

(45.71%) respondents selected *neither agree nor disagree.* Of teachers within the ninth

through 12th-grade subgroup, 15 (48.87%) respondents selected *neither agree nor*

disagree. Somewhat agree was the mode for the two remaining groups: kindergarten

through second grade and third through fifth grade with six (40%) responses and 12

(42.85%) responses, respectively. Table 26 contains the disaggregated frequency

distribution of all responses.

Table 26

Overall Teacher Beliefs of Access to District Curriculum Related to Diversity and

Culture by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)	**6 (40%)**	4 (26.67%)
3–5	2 (7.14%)	2 (7.14%)	10 (35.71%)	**12 (42.85%)**	2 (7.14%)
6–8	6 (17.14%)	5 (14.3%)	**16 (45.71%)**	8 (22.85%)	0 (0%)
9–12	0 (0)%	8 (25%)	**15 (48.87%)**	5 (13.63%)	4 (12.5%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by total years of teaching experience, *neither agree nor disagree* remained the mode for four of the five subgroups. The mode was *neither agree nor disagree* for those with 14 years or fewer as well as 20 or more years. For those with 15 to 19 years of experience, *somewhat agree* was the mode with seven (53.84%) responses.

The data for years taught in the current district revealed *neither agree nor disagree* remained the mode for those with experience of four or fewer years and 20 or more years. Those with 15 to 19 total years of experience had six (40%) responses each for *neither agree nor disagree* and *somewhat agree*. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those with five to nine years of experience in the district with nine (34.61%) responses

and 10 to 14 years of experience in the district with six (46.15%) responses. Table 27

contains the disaggregated frequency distribution of all 110 responses.

Table 27

Overall Teacher Beliefs of Access to District Curriculum Related to Diversity and

Culture by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	**14 (46.67%)**	6 (20%)	1 (3.33%)
5–9	0 (0%)	6 (27.27%)	**8 (36.36%)**	6 (27.27%)	2 (9.15)
10–14	1 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	**7 (46.67%)**	5 (33.33%)	2 (13.33%)
15–19	1 (7.71%)	2 (15.38%)	3 (23.07%)	**7 (53.84%)**	0 (0%)
20 ≤	4 (13.33%)	2 (6.67%)	**11 (36.67%)**	8 (26.67%)	5 (16.67%)
Experience in Current District					
0–4	5 (10.63%)	8 (17%)	**22 (46.8%)**	8 (17%)	4 (8.57%)
5–9	2 (7.7%)	5 (19.23%)	8 (30.76%)	**9 (34.61%)**	2 (7.7%)
10–14	0 (0%)	1 (7.7%)	5 (38.46%)	**6 (46.15%)**	1 (7.7%)
15–19	0 (0%)	2 (13.33%)	**6 (40%)**	**6 (40%)**	1 (6.67%)
20 ≤	2 (22.22%)	0 (0%)	**3 (33.33%)**	2 (22.22%)	2 (22.22%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Teacher Perceptions of Preparedness Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching

Participants were presented with four statements focused on preparedness to implement culturally responsive teaching. These statements were centered around RQ2. Two statements focused on the teachers' confidence teaching diverse students at various points in their education careers. One statement was aligned with district-provided professional development tied to culturally responsive teaching. The final statement was tied to the teachers' desire to attend professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement using a Likert-type scale of one to five, with one designated as *strongly disagree* and five as *strongly agree*.

Statement 10: *I currently feel confident in my ability to teach culturally diverse students.* All 110 participants responded to this statement. The mode was *somewhat agree* with 53 (48%) respondents choosing this option. Table 28 includes the complete description of participant responses.

Table 28

Teacher Beliefs of Their Confidence Teaching Culturally Diverse Students

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	3 (2.73%)	8 (7.27%)	22 (20%)	**53 (48.18%)**	24(21.82%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, the mode remained *somewhat agree* for all grade levels. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for teachers in the kindergarten through second-grade subgroup (66.67%), 11 (39.28%) teachers in the third through fifth-grade subgroup, 18 (51.42%) teachers in the sixth through eighth-grade subgroup, and 14 (43.75%) teachers in the ninth through twelfth-grade subgroup. There were 110 respondents for this prompt. Table 29 contains the disaggregated frequency distribution of all responses.

Table 29

Teacher Beliefs of Their Confidence Teaching Culturally Diverse Students by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	3 (2.73%)	8 (7.27%)	22 (20%)	**53 (48.18%)**	24(21.82%)
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	1 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**10(66.67%)**	4 (26.6%)
3–5	0 (0%)	1 (3.58%)	9(32.14%)	**11 (39.28%)**	7 (25%)
6–8	2 (5.8%)	3 (8.5%)	5(14.28%)	**18 (51.42%)**	7 (20%)
9–12	0 (0)%	4 (12.5%)	8 (25%)	**14 (43.75%)**	6 (18.75%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

The data disaggregated based on total years of experience indicated a mode of *somewhat agree* for those with nine or fewer years and 15 or more years of experience. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those with four or fewer years of teaching experience with 18 (60%) respondents choosing this option. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those with five to nine years of teaching experience with seven (31.8%) respondents choosing this option. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those with 15–19 years of teaching experience with eight (61.53%) respondents choosing this option. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those with 20 or more years of teaching experience with 16 (53.33%) respondents choosing this option. The mode was *strongly agree* for those with 10–14 years of teaching experience with six (40%) respondents selecting this option.

The mode remained the same for four of the five subgroups. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those with four or fewer years of experience in the current district with 23 (48.9%) respondents choosing this option. The mode was *somewhat agree* for those with five to nine years of district experience with 11 (42.3%) responses. The mode was *somewhat agree* for those with 10–14 years of experience in the district with five (38.46%) responses, and for those with 20 or more years in the district with 16 (53.33%) respondents selecting this option. The subgroup of those with 15–19 years of experience in the current school district had a mode of *strongly agree* with nine (60%) responses. All 110 responses with disaggregated frequency distributions are shown in Table 30.

Table 30

Teacher Beliefs of Their Confidence Teaching Culturally Diverse Students by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67%)	7 (23.33%)	**18 (60%)**	2 (6.67%)
5–9	0 (0%)	3 (13.66%)	6 (27.27%)	**7 (31.8%)**	6 (27.27%)
10–14	0 (0%)	1 (6.66%)	4 (26.67%)	4 (26.67%)	**6 (40%)**
15–19	0 (0%)	1 (7.71%)	2 (15.38%)	**8(61.53%)**	2 (15.38%)
20 ≤	2 (6.67%)	1 (3.33%)	3 (10%)	**16 (53.33%)**	8 (26.67%)
Experience in Current District					
0–4	2 (4.3%)	3 (6.38%)	12 (25.53%)	**23 (48.9%)**	7 (14.89%)
5–9	0 (0%)	3 (11.56%)	4 (15.38%)	**11 (42.3%)**	8 (30.76%)
10–14	0 (0%)	1 (7.71%)	3 (23.07%)	**5 (38.46%)**	4 (30.76%)
15–19	0 (0%)	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.33%)	**9 (60%)**
20 ≤	1 (11.11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**5 (55.55%)**	3 (33.33%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 11: *At the beginning of my first year of teaching, I felt confident in my ability to teach culturally diverse students.* All 110 participants responded to this

statement. The mode was *somewhat disagree* with 41 (37%) respondents choosing this

option. These data are presented in Table 31.

Table 31

Overall Teacher Confidence Teaching Culturally Diverse Students Their First Year

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	27 (24.55%)	**41 (37.27%)**	12 (10.91%)	26 (23.64%)	4 (3.64%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated, there were differences in the mode among

groups. The mode was *somewhat disagree* for those who teach grades three through five

with nine (32.14%) responses and teachers of ninth through 12th with 17 (53.12%)

responses. The mode was *somewhat agree* for those who teach kindergarten through

second grade with nine (60%) responses and teachers of sixth through eighth grade with

12 (34.28%) responses. Table 32 contains the disaggregated frequency distribution of all

110 responses.

Table 32

Overall Teacher Confidence Teaching Culturally Diverse Students Their First Year by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	1 (6.67%)	5 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	**9 (60%)**	0 (0%)
3–5	6 (21.42%)	**9 (32.14%)**	8 (28.57%)	3 (10.71%)	2 (7.14%)
6–8	10 (28.5%)	10 (28.5%)	2 (5.8%)	**12 (34.28%)**	1 (2.92%)
9–12	10 (31.25%)	**17 (53.12%)**	2 (6.25%)	2 (6.25%)	1 (3.13%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

The mode for data related to total years of experience remained *somewhat disagree* for three of the five subgroups. Those with five to nine years of experience (36.36%), those with 10–14 years of experience (60%), and those with 20 or more years (36.67%) indicated a mode of *somewhat disagree*. Those with four or fewer years of experience provided a mode of *somewhat agree* with 10 (33.33%) responses. A mode of *strongly disagree* was indicated for those with 15 to 19 years of experience with five (38.46%) responses. Finally, the participants provided eight (36.36%) responses for both *strongly disagree* and *somewhat disagree* for those with five to nine years of experience.

When the data were disaggregated by years of experience in the current school district, *somewhat disagree* remained the mode for three of the five subgroups. Those with four or fewer years in the district (34.04%), those with 10–14 years of experience in

the current district (69.24%), and those with 15–19 years in the current district (40%)

showed a mode of *somewhat disagree*. Those with five to nine years of experience were

bimodal with modes of both *somewhat disagree* (30.76%) and *strongly disagree*

(30.76%). *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those with 20 or more years of experience

with four (44.44%) selecting this option. Table 33 contains the disaggregated frequency

distribution of all 110 responses.

Table 33

Overall Teacher Confidence Teaching Culturally Diverse Students Their First Year by

Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	4 (13.33%)	9 (30%)	5 (16.67%)	**10 (33.33%)**	2 (6.67%)
5–9	**8 (36.36%)**	**8 (36.36%)**	2 (9.09%)	2 (9.09%)	2 (9.09%)
10–14	4 (26.67%)	**9 (60%)**	0 (0%)	2 (13.33%)	0 (0%)
15–19	**5 (38.46%)**	4 (30.76%)	0 (0%)	4 (30.76%)	0 (0%)
20 ≤	6 (20%)	**11 (36.67%)**	5 (16.67%)	8 (26.67%)	0 (0%)
Current District					
0–4	9 (19.14%)	**16 (34.04%)**	6 (12.76%)	13 (27.65%)	3 (6.38%)
5–9	**8 (30.76%)**	**8 (30.76%)**	2 (7.69%)	7 (26.92%)	1 (3.84%)
10–14	4 (30.76%)	**9 (69.24%)**	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
15–19	4 (26.67%)	**6 (40%)**	3 (20%)	2 (13.33%)	0 (0%)
20 ≤	2 (22.22%)	2 (22.22%)	1 (11.11%)	**4 (44.44%)**	0 (0%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 12: *My district provides appropriate professional development to help teachers better serve culturally diverse students.* Of 110 participants, 109 responded to

this statement. The mode was *somewhat agree* with 41 (37%) respondents choosing this

option. The complete description of participant responses is included in Table 34.

Table 34

Overall Teacher Beliefs of Available and Appropriate District-Provided Professional

Development

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	7 (6.42%)	20 (18.35%)	37 (33.94%)	**41 (37.61%)**	4 (3.67%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, the mode remained the

same for all subgroups but one. Those within the kindergarten to second-grade subgroup

(46.67%), those within the third to fifth-grade subgroup (48.14%), and those within the

ninth through 12th-grade subgroup (40.62%) indicated a mode of *somewhat agree*. The

sixth through eighth-grade teacher subgroup showed a mode of *neither agree nor*

disagree with 17 (35.48%) responses. Table 35 includes the complete description of

participant responses.

Table 35

Overall Teacher Beliefs of Available and Appropriate District-Provided Professional Development by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	1 (6.67%)	5 (33.33%)	1 (6.67%)	**7 (46.67%)**	1 (6.67%)
3–5	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	9 (33.33%)	**13 (48.14%)**	0 (0%)
6–8	4 (11.42%)	6 (17.14%)	**17 (35.48%)**	8 (34.28%)	0 (0%)
9–12	1 (3.12%)	5 (15.62%)	10 (31.25%)	**13 (40.62%)**	3 (9.3%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

The data subgroup based on total years of teaching experience remained with a mode of *somewhat agree* for three of the five subgroups. Those with 10–14 years of total experience (46.67%), those with 15–19 years of experience (38.46%), and those with 20 or more years of total experience (36.67%) yielded a mode of *somewhat agree*. Twelve 12 (41.37%) teachers with four or fewer years and nine (50.9%) teachers with five to nine years of experience yielded a mode of *neither agree nor disagree*.

When the data were disaggregated by years of experience in the current school district, four of the five subgroups had a mode of *somewhat agree*. Those with four or fewer years of teaching experience in the current school district provided 17 (36.95%) responses for a mode of *somewhat agree*. A mode of *somewhat agree* was provided for those with 10 to 14 years of district experience with five (38.46%) responses. Seven

(46.67%) of those with 15–19 years in the current district chose *somewhat agree*.

Somewhat agree was the mode for those with 20 or more years of experience in the

current district with five (55.55%) respondents selecting this option. Those with five to

nine years in their current district had a mode of *neither agree nor disagree* with 12

(46.15%) responses. Table 36 contains the disaggregated frequency distribution of the

109 responses.

Table 36

Overall Teacher Beliefs of Available and Appropriate District-Provided Professional

Development by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	1 (3.44%)	6 (20.68%)	**12 (41.37%)**	10 (34.48%)	0 (0%)
5–9	0 (0%)	4 (18.18%)	**9 (50.9%)**	8 (36.36%)	1 (4.5%)
10–14	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)	4 (26.67%)	**7 (46.67%)**	0 (0%)
15–19	2 (15.38%)	2 (15.38%)	4 (30.76%)	**5 (38.46%)**	0 (0%)
20 ≤	3 (10%)	5 (16.67%)	8 (26.67%)	**11 (36.67%)**	3 (10%)
Experience in Current District					
0–4	3 (6.52%)	5 (19.23%)	16 (34.78%)	**17 (36.95%)**	2 (4.34%)
5–9	1 (3.84%)	5 (19.23%)	**12 (46.15%)**	7 (26.92%)	1 (3.84%)
10–14	0 (0%)	4 (30.76%)	3 (23.07%)	**5 (38.46%)**	0 (0%)
15–19	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.33%)	5 (33.33%)	**7 (46.67%)**	0 (0%)
20 ≤	1 (11.11%)	1 (11.11%)	1 (11.11%)	**5 (55.55%)**	1 (11.11%)

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Statement 13: *If given the option, I would attend professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching in order to feel more confident in my teaching of diverse students.* All 110 participants responded to this statement. The mode was

strongly agree with 49 (44.5%) respondents choosing this option. Table 37 includes the complete description of participant responses.

Table 37

Overall Teacher Desire to Attend Professional Development on Culturally Responsive Teaching

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	1 (0.91%)	6 (5.45%)	10 (9.09%)	44 (40%)	**49 (44.55%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

When the data were disaggregated by grade level taught, there were differences in the mode among groups. The mode remained *strongly agree* for those teaching grades nine through 12 with 20 (62.5%) respondents choosing this option. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for teachers of kindergarten through second grade with five (33.33%) responses and for sixth through eighth-grade teachers with 18 (51.42%) responses. Teachers of grades third through fifth grade provided 11 (39.28%) responses for both *somewhat agree* and *strongly agree*. The disaggregated frequency distribution of all responses is shown in Table 38.

Table 38

Overall Teacher Desire to Attend Professional Development on Culturally Responsive Teaching by Grade Level Taught

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
All	1 (0.91%)	6 (5.45%)	10 (9.09%)	44 (40%)	**49 (44.55%)**
Grade Level Taught					
K–2	1 (6.67%)	4 (26.67%)	1 (6.67%)	**5 (33.33%)**	4 (26.67%)
3–5	0 (0%)	1 (3.57%)	5 (17.85%)	**11 (39.28%)**	**11 (39.28%)**
6–8	0 (0%)	1 (2.85%)	2 (5.71%)	**18 (51.42%)**	14 (40%)
9–12	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (6.25%)	10 (31.25%)	**20 (62.5%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

The disaggregated data for total years of teaching experience revealed *strongly agree* as the mode for three of the five subgroups. Those with four or fewer years of experience provided a mode of *strongly agree* with 17 (56.67%) responses. Those with five to nine years of experience provided a mode of *strongly agree* with 14 (63.63%) responses. Those with 15–19 years of experience provided a mode of *strongly agree* with eight (61.53%) responses. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those who have taught for 10 to 14 years with 11 (73.33%) responses and those who have taught for 20 years or more with 16 (53.33%) responses.

When the data were disaggregated by years taught in the current district, *strongly agree* was the mode for three of the five subgroups. For those with four or fewer years of

experience in the current district (61.7%), those with 15–19 years of district experience (53.33%), and those with 20 or more years of district experience (44.44%) had a mode of *strongly agree*. *Somewhat agree* was the mode for those with five the nine years in the district with 11 (42.3%) responses and those in the current district for 10 to 14 years with nine (69.23%) responses. Table 39 shows the disaggregated frequency distribution of all 110 responses.

Table 39

Overall Teacher Desire to Attend Professional Development on Culturally Responsive

Teaching by Years of Experience

	Selected Response				
	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Total Years of Experience					
0–4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (13.33%)	9 (30%)	**17 (56.67%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	2 (9.09%)	3 (13.63%)	3 (13.63%)	**14 (63.63%)**
10–14	0 (0%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	**11 (73.33%)**	2 (13.33%)
15–19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (38.47%)	**8 (61.53%)**
20 ≤	1 (3.33%)	3 (10%)	2 (6.67%)	**16 (53.33%)**	8 (26.67%)
Experience in Current District					
0–4	1 (2.12%)	0 (0%)	4 (8.5%)	13 (27.65%)	**29 (61.7%)**
5–9	0 (0%)	4 (15.38%)	4 (15.38%)	**11 (42.3%)**	7 (26.92%)
10–14	0 (0%)	(7.69%)	0 (0%)	**9 (69.23%)**	3 (23.07%)
15–19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (46.67%)	**8 (53.33%)**
20 ≤	0 (0%)	1 (11.11%)	2 (22.22%)	2 (22.22%)	**4 (44.44%)**

Note. Boldface type indicates the mode.

Building Principal Interviews

This study also included interviews with four building principals. Building

principal interviews were utilized as the source of qualitative data for this study. The

interviews addressed RQ3. One principal from each district was interviewed, and this included two elementary principals and two secondary principals. Principal 1 and Principal 2 both lead elementary buildings. Principal 3 and Principal 4 each lead a secondary building. Each of the building principals was asked eight interview questions.

Interview Question One

How long have you been an administrator? In your current district?

The years of administrative experience varied for all four principals interviewed (see Table 14). Principal 1 is in the first year as a building leader, with one additional year as an assistant principal and both years in the current district. Principal 2 has been a building administrator for four years, and all four of those years have been in the current district. Principal 3 has nine years of administrative experience with three of those years served at the current district. Principal 4 has been an administrator for five years, including two of those years in the current district.

Interview Question Two

What are the ages of the students in your building?

Principal 1 leads an elementary building with students ages 5–9 years old. Principal 2 leads an elementary building with students 4–13 years old. Principal 3 is the leader of a secondary building serving students ages 14–18 years old. Principal 4 is the leader of a secondary building serving students aged 14–18.

Interview Question Three

How would you describe the demographics of your students and community, focusing on cultural backgrounds?

Principal 1 stated the number of primary languages spoken by students "fluctuates between 10 and 15 different languages and dialects." A large portion of the population is Hispanic. The elementary building also includes a few Guatemalan families and Burmese Chin families.

Principal 2 stated there is a large population of Hispanic families in the community. The overall population includes many families living below the poverty level and in many households. Principal 2 stated there are grandparents raising grandchildren in several households in the community.

Principal 3 stated the building is about "35–40% Hispanic with a growing population of Karen refugees of Burmese heritage." The industry jobs in the community draw a more diverse population, which is reflected in the student population. This change in community population has been occurring for approximately 10–15 years.

Principal 4 stated the district and community are very diverse, with a growing number of minority populations represented. The employment of non-white adults is high in the town. Each school year, the percentage of non-white students increases. In addition, the district and high school buildings have a high percentage of Hispanic students and an increasing number of Pacific Islander students.

All principals described their district and community demographics as "diverse." All districts have multiple languages spoken within the school buildings and throughout the community. Three of the four building principals referenced the growing workforce as a primary reason for the increase in non-white individuals in the community.

Interview Question Four

Do your teachers have a specific curriculum they utilize to ensure culturally rich experiences? If so, please explain. If no, please explain any known reasoning.

Principal 1 stated there was no "top-down" push of curriculum as teacher autonomy is highly valued. While there are conversations about curriculum, it is ultimately teacher choice. Principal 1 stated the educators talk about "windows and mirrors" in curriculum and the value of students seeing themselves in the work they are doing. This principal also stated there are "progressive pockets of teachers who are very intentional" about pulling resources beneficial for diverse students. If a teacher has a lesson or resource that is successful with students from diverse backgrounds, they will share their ideas with others in the building.

Principal 2 stated one of the buildings' Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) indicators targets "socially diverse curriculum to help support the diversity represented in the building." While this is a focus of the building, there is no district-provided curriculum to support this indicator. However, the building does have a math curriculum provided to teachers, which offers some support to diverse student populations.

Principal 3 shared there is no district-provided curriculum; however, there are some strategies shared within the building. The building has several English Language Learner teachers who "come into classrooms and offer support" to students and teachers, as well as share strategies to help bridge the gap. There is an initiative to focus on vocabulary, and this came about due to the high number of English Language Learners in the district. There is also a focus on all teachers providing visuals and models for key

concepts in the classroom and for students to feel represented in what they see in the classroom.

Principal 4 stated there is not currently a district-provided curriculum, but a district curriculum is something they are currently working toward. The district recently added a new position of English Language Development Director. This individual works directly with English Language Development teachers in supporting students whose primary language is not English. There are goals to "provide more diverse curriculum, resources, and professional development for all teachers to better support all students."

None of the four districts provide a full curriculum for teachers to utilize in the classroom. While the level of curriculum access provided varies by district, each district provides some guidance on curriculum. Some of the curriculum supports and strategies were not created with cultural diversity in mind but may provide secondhand support of culturally responsive teaching through a focus on other supports such as social and emotional learning.

Interview Question Five

Do you feel teachers in your building are supported by a climate conducive to teaching culturally diverse students? Explain.

Principal 1 again referenced the importance of teacher autonomy in the building. Principal 1 shared the view of the community not always understanding the value of including culturally diverse lessons in the classroom. The example given was an English Language Arts lesson which included reading a passage from a book with a controversial title. The book title was related to a political movement, but the actual passage used in the lesson was not. As a result, there was an "emotional reaction from the community," so

teachers were asked not to teach that particular piece. Principal 1 concluded, "There is support from the district but not necessarily support from everyone in the community about using culturally diverse curriculum."

Principal 2 stated teachers are supported in their teaching of diverse students. Within this building, professional development centered on teaching diverse students is offered. Principal 2 "encourages and discusses in detail" the climate needed to teach all students. Teachers are also aware of the need and actively work to create a safe climate for all students.

Principal 3 works to provide scaffolded assistance to teachers, helping them get better each day and not asking them to change how they do things overnight. Instead, teachers are encouraged to "pick one more strategy; start out small, find a strategy that is effective, and use it. Then pick one more strategy to add to the toolbox." Professional development is offered to support this concept in the building.

Principal 4 stated the belief that teachers are supported in working with all students in the district, including those from diverse backgrounds. While the ELD coordinator does not work with all teachers, the coordinator does work with all students identified as speaking English as a second language. These students have an ELD plan specific to them. Someone from the ELD department has a one-on-one meeting with each teacher to review the students' EL plans for their classrooms. Teachers submit student artifacts to provide data on student learning during the school year.

All four principals expressed the belief their teachers want to work with culturally diverse students, with some teachers seeking out these districts with diverse student demographics in mind. The building climate is positively impacted by teachers being

invested in working with diverse students. No building or district goals directly related to the creation of a climate supportive of diverse students were provided in any of the interview responses.

Interview Question Six

What supports/resources do you offer teachers when it comes to understanding cultural backgrounds?

Principal 1 stated there is no whole group support provided for understanding cultural backgrounds. The building has offered optional book studies on the topic. Additionally, Principal 1 provides one-on-one support to teachers. When working with an individual teacher, the focus is on culturally proficient instruction and exploring cultural backgrounds. This practice aligns with the suggestion of utilizing observations to identify teachers most in need of additional support (Larson et al., 2018). Principal 1 mentioned the desire to add more whole group professional development to explore cultural backgrounds, but referenced this was the first year as head principal, and due to adjustments from COVID-19, the professional development for the current year was focused on supporting teachers during this unique school year.

Principal 2 stated teachers get personalized professional development from TeacherTube. TeacherTube is an online community for sharing instructional videos as a means of professional development at any time. The building also has a diverse staff population, and there is "open discussion with Hispanic teachers" regarding cultural backgrounds and the importance of including student backgrounds in the learning experience.

Time is the most significant support given to teachers working with Principal 3. Principal 3 stated, "Teachers need to be given time when you ask them to get out of their comfort zone. They don't want to make a mistake. They want to understand their new learning." Principal 3 related that when teachers have some guidance and time, they get a taste for incorporating culture into lessons, and once they "see it, they want to go further." Taking it slow has been of great support to teachers.

Principal 4 again referenced the one-on-one meetings provided by the ELD department. The student plans reviewed during these meetings include interventions to utilize to assist student learning. Additionally, each teacher has the option to reach out to the ELD department for additional support in providing the best learning opportunities for these identified students.

None of the four districts provide whole group supports or resources to all teachers. Each of the building principals referenced one-on-one support available to teachers as needed. Principal 1 was the only individual to mention the goal of adding whole group professional development related to culturally responsive teaching.

Interview Question Seven

Do you feel there are any barriers that stand in the way of implementing culturally responsive teaching in your building? If yes, then explain. If no, then explain.

Principal 1 stated teachers have bought into the need to focus on culture in the classroom. Even teachers who are not utilizing culturally responsive practices recognize and appreciate the diversity of students but need more time growing in the profession to incorporate the work. Principal 1 continued, "Teachers love the kids. They love the community. Lots of our teachers commute to work and continue to do so because they

want to work with our students." Principal 1 referenced some hesitance from the community to fully embrace diversity, which can be seen as a barrier to those in the building.

Principal 2 stated there are no known barriers to implementing culturally responsive teaching in the building. The principal replied there are "too many resources online for teachers to not be able to find and explore different types of teaching." According to Principal 2, teachers have asked for assistance addressing barriers related to diversity.

While time was a *support* listed for Principal 3, it was also a *barrier* for implementing culturally responsive teaching. There is a lack of time to complete the professional development desired to assist with more diverse curriculum. Strategies have been introduced a few at a time as a means to benefit students but not overwhelm teachers. The principal reported that sometimes teachers get "buried in the planning process of getting better at providing more culturally diverse information," and then the concept becomes a barrier in the mind of teachers.

Principal 3 also stated the training of new staff can be a challenge. Teachers both new to the profession and/or new to the district are thinking about what they are going to teach. It can be challenging to break down what teaching will look like for different types of students. There is an extra learning curve for new teachers when considering culturally responsive teaching and all it entails.

Principal 4 expressed there are not any known barriers teachers experience when teaching students from diverse backgrounds. Principal 4 related, "Teachers appreciate the diversity of the minority groups in our building." The district and community are known

for diversity, and some teachers have sought the opportunity to be employed at the district to work with a diverse population of students. Principal 4 does believe teachers would appreciate more training and would take the time and energy to learn about culturally responsive teaching to best support students and the community.

All principals mentioned time as a potential barrier to implementing culturally responsive teaching in the classroom. Even for the teachers who want to learn more about the influence of culture within the classroom, time and guidance are needed to feel sure about what they are learning and not be overwhelmed with too much information. One principal noted some hesitancy within the community to embrace the changing diversity, and this may be a barrier within the school setting.

Interview Question Eight

What type(s) of resources (curriculum, meetings, book studies) do you offer teachers that focus on components of culturally responsive teaching?

According to Principal 1, the use of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum provides some assistance with culturally responsive teaching, as teachers must focus on the whole child. While a true understanding of cultural backgrounds is not incorporated into the SEL curriculum, teachers have still found it helpful for all students. Principal 1 again referenced the desire to provide more curricular resources moving forward. The challenge of the current 2020–2021 school year and COVID-19 was also referenced as contributing to the lack of time to focus on issues other than the pandemic.

Principal 2 suggested breaking down state standards has served as a platform for culturally responsive teaching support. There have been meetings this school year to

discuss different ways standards can be met. This conversation always includes modifications or accommodations for students from diverse backgrounds.

Principal 3 asserted there are several extensive culturally responsive teaching professional development opportunities provided to a limited number of staff. English Language Learner (ELL) teachers attend the annual WIDA Conference to learn about language development resources for academic success. These ELL teachers then share their learning with all building teachers. Several teachers have earned or are currently enrolled in a local university to earn a TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certificate. The TESOL certification process through Missouri State University requires 15 hours of graduate-level coursework and learning for those who already hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Teachers who complete this certificate share their learning and often lead professional development within the building. Principal 3 stated there are also district-provided resources such as signs in multiple languages, signs with symbols, and communications provided in both English and Spanish.

Again, Principal 4 referenced the work of the English Language Development department. This department serves to assist students whose primary language is not English. The students who receive services from this department each have a personalized plan to provide teaching strategies and track learning across the academic career. Outside of the ELD department, there are no additional resources currently available specific to culturally responsive teaching.

As noted before, all four principals stated the school districts do not provide a robust curriculum. Similar to the curriculum details, there are some resources and conversations happening which may support culturally responsive teaching, but culturally

responsive teaching was not the focus or reason to add the resource. For example, Principal 1 referenced the use of a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, selected to focus on the students' social and emotional health at all grade levels. While culture was not a focus when selecting the SEL curriculum, there are components of the curriculum that provide strategies one might select when creating a culturally responsive classroom climate. Two principals referenced having the support of the English Language Learner or English Language Development departments. Staff from those departments may provide teacher supports for working with students who are learning English.

Summary

Over 1,000 K–12 teachers from four public school districts in southwest Missouri were invited to take the survey. In total, 110 teachers completed the survey. All participants provided demographic information in the first portion of the survey. The next section of the survey required participants to rate their level of agreement with statements on a Likert-type scale. These statements specifically addressed the five components of culturally responsive teaching. To answer research questions one and two, data from this section were analyzed by identifying the mode for each statement and by examining the frequency of responses for each statement. The data were also disaggregated by grade level taught, years taught in the current school district, and total years of teaching experience.

Four principals were interviewed, representing each of the four southwest Missouri school districts and all grade levels. The interviews were utilized to answer research question three. Principals were asked to identify any barriers to culturally responsive teaching in the school and community. They were asked to discuss any

provided professional development related to culturally responsive teaching. The data were analyzed by identifying themes for each question.

In Chapter Five, the purpose of the study is revisited. A summary of the survey and interview findings is provided in narrative form. This provides an examination of the level of preparedness for teaching diverse students through culturally responsive teaching. Conclusions are drawn for each of the three research questions based on the analysis of data presented in Chapter Four. Lastly, implications for future practice are offered, as well as recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Culturally responsive teaching is an approach "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2002, p. 29). While most educators consider a base knowledge of content and pedagogy to be necessary for effective instruction, Gay (2002) included base knowledge of student and teacher experiences to this foundation. Teachers must utilize student backgrounds and strengths to promote student success in the classroom (Nash et al., 2019).

Learning and adapting the five core components of culturally responsive teaching can leverage student strengths and increase learning (Gay, 2002; Roe, 2019). Understanding teachers' use of, confidence implementing, and barriers to culturally responsive teaching could provide valuable insight for those districts with high populations of non-white students. The focus of the quantitative portion of this study was to gauge teachers' perceptions of their level of preparedness for teaching diverse students.

The school building and district also play a large part in culturally responsive teaching as a meaningful pedagogy for student success (Auslander, 2018). School building leaders and the practices they put into place must align with the utilization of cultural backgrounds as strengths in the school setting (Gay, 2018). Leaders must provide resources and expect teachers to adopt culturally responsive teaching (Viloria, 2019). The focus of the qualitative portion of the study was to explore building principals' perceptions of resources and supports in place to assist diverse students and the teachers who work with them.

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of teacher and principal perceptions of their level of preparedness for culturally responsive teaching in four southwest Missouri school districts with diverse student populations and to gain an understanding of strategies and procedures in place to meet the needs of diverse students. In this final chapter, the findings are presented and conclusions are discussed as the research questions are answered. Support through corresponding data is shared to frame the outcomes of the study. Implications for practice and recommendations for future research are included.

Findings

Teacher Beliefs of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Analysis of data from the teacher perceptions section of the survey was used to answer research question one: *What are K–12 teachers' beliefs regarding the five components of culturally responsive teaching (base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communication, and cultural congruity in instruction)?* Using a five-point Likert-type scale, participants rated their level of agreement with nine statements.

Teachers overwhelmingly agreed with the first statement on the survey: *Modern learning should include the use of personal experiences and cultural backgrounds.* The mode was *strongly agree* with 71 (64.55%) respondents. When combined with the 36 (32.73%) *somewhat agree* responses, 107 of the 110 teachers selected *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree* in response to the statement. Similar to these results, Lambeth and Smith (2016) found teachers must consider the culture of both students and self when creating learning experiences and challenging belief systems.

Teachers then responded to the second statement: *Curriculum should offer opportunities for teaching cultural diversity.* The survey results indicated 61.82% of the teachers chose *strongly agree* when responding to this statement. When the data were disaggregated by total years of teaching experience and years in the current district, the mode was *somewhat agree* with 16 (53.33%) and five (55.5%) responses, respectively. Patish (2016) found culturally responsive teachers understand the value of integrating multicultural teaching into classroom curriculum, similar to these study results.

Participants indicated overall agreement with the third survey statement: *Teachers should learn about the communication styles of students in the classroom.* A total of 80 (72.73%) teachers selected *strongly agree,* and an additional 26 (23.64%) teachers selected *somewhat agree*. Overall, 106 of 110 teachers supported the need to learn about the communication styles of students. The results align to Adkins' (2012) finding that understanding the communication styles of students is essential when incorporating culture into education.

Teacher respondents then rated their level of agreement with the fourth statement: *Instructional techniques should match the learning styles of diverse students.* The mode, with 82 (74.55%) responses, was *strongly agree*. When this figure was combined with the 21 (19.09%) *somewhat agree* responses, a total of 103 (93.64%) teachers agreed instruction and the learning styles of diverse students should be aligned. Aligned with these results, Gay (2002) asserted when students' backgrounds are understood and the experiences of students are considered in the classroom, teachers have a better awareness of learning styles most beneficial to students.

Participants rated their level of agreement with the fifth statement: *I am confident in my abilities to teach in a manner that recognizes cultural diversity.* Analysis of the data revealed the mode was *somewhat agree* with 53 (48.18%) responses. Combined with the 29 (26.36%) *strongly agree* responses, 75% of teachers expressed some level of confidence in bringing cultural diversity into the classroom. Those teaching kindergarten through second grades expressed *strongly agree* as the mode with six (46.66%) of the 13 teachers providing this response. Disaggregating the data based on total years of experience, teachers with 20 or more years most often responded *strongly agree,* representing 47% of the population. Teachers with 15 or more years in the current district most often responded *strongly agree* with the statement, representing 43% of the population. The data support the importance of teachers understanding and applying components of culturally responsive teaching to help students succeed (Mensah, 2011).

Teacher participants rated their agreement with the sixth statement: *I actively seek out opportunities to learn more about students' cultural backgrounds.* With 54 (49.09%) teachers selecting *somewhat agree* and 41 (37.27%) selecting *strongly agree*, a total of 95 (86.36%) respondents believed they actively work to learn about students' cultural backgrounds. The survey results revealed teachers are committed to learning about students and their cultural backgrounds, a foundational component of culturally responsive teaching and effective classroom instruction (Ramirez et al., 2016).

The seventh statement was then rated by participants: *I understand that different ethnic groups have different communication styles, and I take this into consideration in my classroom.* The response mode was *somewhat agree* with 55 (50%) respondents selecting this option. When combined with the 39 (35.45%) *strongly agree* responses, 94

(85.45%) of the 110 teachers responded they utilize communication styles of various

backgrounds in the classroom.

The eighth survey statement was rated by teachers: *Teachers should receive targeted professional development on the practical implementation of culturally responsive teaching.* The data revealed the majority of teachers *strongly agreed* there is a need for targeted professional development with 59 (53.64%) responses. Combined with 38 (34.55%) *somewhat agree* responses, 97 (94.19%) teachers expressed a desire for professional development to learn culturally responsive teaching strategies and how to implement these in the classroom. These data could be related to the increased conversation around changing student demographics and the need for education systems, including education preparation programs, to include culturally responsive teaching (Hramiak, 2015).

Teachers then rated their level of agreement with the ninth statement: *My district utilizes a curriculum which informs about and celebrates diversity and culture.* The data revealed the mode to be in the center of the five-point Likert scale, with a mode of *neither agree nor disagree* based upon 44 (40%) respondents selecting this option. A total of 41 (37.27%) teachers selected *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree*. When the data were disaggregated by grade level, the mode for elementary teachers was *somewhat agree* and the mode for secondary teachers was *neither agree nor disagree*.

The data revealed those new to the profession and new to their current school districts do not believe they have access to culturally responsive district-provided curriculum. With three (10%) teachers selecting *strongly disagree* and six (20%) selecting *somewhat disagree*, a total of nine (30%) respondents expressed that they do not

have access to district-provided curriculum. Combining these data with the 14 (46.67%) *neither agree nor disagree responses*, 23 (76.67%) new teachers may not be accessing culturally responsive district-provided curriculum.

The data indicated similar stances for teachers with four or fewer years in their current school districts. With five (10.63%) teachers selecting *strongly disagree* and eight (17%) selecting *somewhat disagree*, a total of 13 (27.63%) respondents espoused they do not have access to district curriculum. Combining these data with the 22 (46.8%) *neither agree nor disagree responses*, 35 (74.43%) teachers new to the district may not be accessing culturally responsive district-provided curriculum. Similar to these results, Viloria (2019) emphasized the need for districts and building leaders to prioritize culturally responsive teaching and to provide professional development to increase teacher efficacy and student success.

Teacher Beliefs of Preparedness.

Analysis of the data from the second section of the survey was used to answer research question two: *What are K–12 teachers' perceptions of their level of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices?* Using a five-point Likert-type scale, participants rated their level of agreement with four statements.

The 10th survey statement was rated by teachers: *I currently feel confident in my ability to teach culturally diverse students.* The data revealed a mode of *somewhat agree* with 53 (48.18%) respondents selecting this option. Teachers must receive support to learn about culturally responsive teaching and to adapt their teaching practices (Vandeyar, 2017).

Participants then ranked their agreement with the 11th statement: *At the beginning of my first year of teaching, I felt confident in my ability to teach culturally diverse students.* The mode was *somewhat disagree* with 41 (37.27%) responses. When combined with the 27 (24.55%) *strongly disagree* responses, a total of 68 (61.82%) teachers identified a struggle with teaching diverse students at the beginning of their careers. When disaggregated based upon grade level taught, the data revealed a mode of *somewhat agree* for those who teach grades kindergarten through second grades (60%) and sixth through eighth grades (34.28%). Similar to the need shown through these results, many postsecondary teacher education programs are beginning to include diversity and equity within the preparation curriculum, but there is still work to be done (Thomas et al., 2020).

Teacher confidence in teaching culturally diverse students during their first year of teaching varied across total years in the teaching profession. The data for those with four or fewer total years of teaching experience provided a mode of *somewhat agree* with 10 (33.33%) responses. The mode was *somewhat disagree* for those with 10–14 years of experience and was *somewhat disagree* for those with 20 or more years of teaching experience (36.67%). Those with five to nine years of experience were bimodal with modes of both *somewhat disagree* (36.66%) and *strongly disagree* (36.66%). The mode was *strongly disagree* for those with 15–19 years of experience.

The 12th survey statement read as follows: *My district provides appropriate professional development to help teachers better serve culturally diverse students.* The mode was *somewhat agree* with 41 (37.61%) responses. Another 37 (33.94%) respondents chose *neither agree nor disagree*. Teachers must be equipped for and

supported in the responsibility of connecting culture and the classroom (Fickel & Abbiss, 2019).

Finally, teacher participants rated their agreement with the 13th survey statement: *If given the option, I would attend professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching in order to feel more confident in my teaching of diverse students.* The mode was *strongly agree* with 49 (44.55%) responses. When combined with the 44 (40%) responses of *somewhat agree*, 93 (84.55%) teachers shared their desire to attend professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching. Teachers are most effective when teaching students similar to themselves; however, to teach all students effectively, teachers must break the barriers of their comfort zones and have the desire to learn more about students from different cultural backgrounds (Lambeth & Smith, 2016).

Principal Beliefs of Teacher Resources and Access to Supports

Analysis from the building principal interviews were used to answer research question three: *What administrative resources and supports are in place to meet the educational needs of diverse students?* To answer research question three, themes were derived from the frequency with which participants mentioned common topics during interviews. Four building principals were interviewed, representing each of the four districts participating in this study.

District-Provided Curriculum. All four building principals interviewed shared their districts do not provide a full curriculum to teachers, and there is no district focus on culturally relevant curriculum. Two of the four principals stated when teachers successfully utilize a strategy with students from all backgrounds, that strategy is shared with other teachers in the building. Common among three of the represented buildings

was the idea of ensuring students of all backgrounds see themselves in daily learning.

Providing the opportunity for students to be reflected in the curriculum and exposed to

diverse representation is essential in meeting the needs of all students (Kibler &

Chapman, 2019).

While a complete district-provided curriculum is not available, all four of the

principals referenced curriculum resources with culturally responsive teaching

components. Principal 1 shared the presence of culture within social emotional learning

resources used in the building. Principal 2 referenced district-provided math curriculum

with support strategies for diverse students. Neither the social emotional learning nor

math resources were purchased for the purpose of culturally responsive teaching; the

inclusion of culture was an added advantage of these resources.

Climate Conducive to Culturally Responsive Teaching. A focus on equity and

diversity must be part of the culture and climate of school districts and buildings (Garcia-

Pusateri, 2020). Leaders must be intentional with the climate created in order to empower

students and their identities (Jones et al., 2016). All of the building principals interviewed

articulated a supportive climate; however, the support looks different in each building.

Principal 1 shared many teachers feel comfortable creating their own resources to

highlight the strengths of students from diverse backgrounds, and there is support within

the building to try new things. According to Principal 2, professional development

focused on creating a safe environment for all students, including those from diverse

backgrounds, is available. Principal 3 asserted teachers are supported through the

administration's flexibility of scaffolding culturally responsive teaching strategies by

implementing a few new concepts at a time instead of all at once. Principal 4 referenced

the personal plan created for ELD students; however, no supports for students of diverse backgrounds outside of the ELD program were mentioned.

Teacher Supports and Resources. Principal 3 and Principal 4 each detailed ELL and ELD programs as examples of supports for classroom teachers. Principal 3 referenced the employment of ELL teachers who provide curriculum support through vocabulary teaching, visual tools, and translations, though these are not the primary responsibilities of these teachers. Principal 4 detailed plans with interventions and supports for students whose primary language is not English.

Support materials for both students and teachers assist in creating a culturally responsive curriculum (Bryan-Gooden, 2019). However, in both districts mentioned, the support is limited to those students within identified programs. Students from a diverse cultural background may speak English as a first language while practicing a different home language (Brown & Crippen, 2016). It is crucial to remember English as a Second Language students are not the only diverse students in the classroom.

Barriers. Principal 1 was the only interviewee to reference community influence on teaching strategies for culturally responsive teaching, noting community concern about a selected text. When community members brought this to school leaders, the decision was made to no longer utilize that specific text. This could leave teachers feeling unsupported with relation to utilizing culture in the classroom. Teachers and building leaders must work to bridge the gap between school, home, and community, and must provide knowledge of the work being done in classrooms to support all students (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Others referenced the barrier of time when learning about culturally responsive teaching. These data mirror the findings of Grant and Gibson (2011), who emphasized district-provided time for intentional teaching is a necessary tool for teachers to acquire knowledge of culturally responsive teaching and utilize practices in the classroom. For culturally responsive teaching to work, teachers must receive time for ongoing inquiry, critical thinking, and problem solving related to adapting teaching practices to meet student needs (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Resources Focusing on Culturally Responsive Teaching. Regarding district-provided professional development, all four building principals stated there is no whole group professional development on culturally responsive teaching provided to teachers. Each building provides optional opportunities for this learning, but this looks different in each building. Professional development centered on culturally responsive teaching is imperative for teachers so they can become aware of, gain knowledge of, and practice effective strategies (Bullock & Pack, 2020).

Teachers working with Principal 1 can participate in optional book studies. Additionally, if Principal 1 feels a teacher needs instructional coaching, one-on-one support is provided. Principal 2 shared the option of online professional development available to teachers. According to Principal 3, teachers are provided with time to explore additional learning, such as culturally responsive teaching. Principal 4 described one-on-one meetings between ELD teachers and classroom teachers, detailing students' personalized plans to support their academic careers as students whose primary language is not English. When teachers are informed about students' backgrounds and culture, they can incorporate this knowledge into the educational process (Hollins, 2011). The

availability of professional development should be based on the students' needs and must be a prioritized focus (Lakhwani, 2019).

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of teacher and principal perceptions of their level of preparedness for culturally responsive teaching in four southwest Missouri school districts with diverse student populations and to gain an understanding of strategies and procedures in place to meet the needs of diverse students. All participants work in districts with an above-state-average population of non-white students. For this study, culturally responsive teaching was conceptualized using the five components of base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communications, and cultural congruity in instruction (Gay, 2002).

Teacher Agreement with the Five Components of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching is the practice of utilizing students' backgrounds to create meaningful and effective learning experiences (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Analysis of the data indicated a high level of support among classroom teachers for the five general concepts of culturally responsive teaching identified by Gay (2002).

Overall, the beliefs of teachers in the study cannot be considered a barrier to the utilization of culturally responsive teaching, as a large majority of respondents selected *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree* with the aligned belief statements. According to the data, 97.28% of teachers agreed they should have knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds, 96.37% of teachers agreed there should be an understanding of communication styles, and 93.64% of teachers agreed classroom strategies should match learning styles of students. These data align with Gay's (2002) components of base

knowledge, curriculum, cross-cultural communication, climate, and cultural congruity in instruction. Additionally, 97.27% of teachers agreed curriculum should include cultural diversity, a final component of culturally responsive teaching.

Self-efficacy in terms of culturally responsive teaching is the belief in one's ability to effectively utilize culturally responsive teaching practices and students' cultural backgrounds in the classroom setting (Siwatu, 2011). To understand students, teachers must examine their own cultural identities first (Gay, 2018). This base knowledge of student and teacher cultural experiences is the foundation for culturally responsive teaching. There were indications of classroom teachers having lower confidence in their ability to teach in a manner recognizing diversity. While 97.28% of respondents expressed support of including cultural backgrounds in the classroom, 74.54% expressed confidence doing so. Teachers must learn about students' cultural identities and include this knowledge in strategies used within the classroom (Nash et al., 2019).

The curriculum must be relevant to students, should provide various forms of student engagement and display of knowledge, and should include a variety of communication techniques from the teacher (Larson et al., 2018). An analysis of the data showed 97.27% of respondents agreed with the need for a culturally relevant curriculum; however, only 37.27% believed they have access to district-provided culturally relevant curriculum. The majority of respondents expressed they did not have access to district-provided curriculum supportive of diversity and culture, with secondary teachers revealing less agreement with access than elementary teachers.

An effective culturally relevant curriculum includes selection of materials, teaching of strategies, student collaboration methods, and variations of how students

share evidence of their learning (Peterson, 2014). The curriculum must provide diverse representation, allowing students to be exposed to diverse characters, identities, and situations, as well as visual representations (Kibler & Chapman, 2019). Providing this transformative curriculum for teachers to use would remove the attitudinal barriers identified in this study.

Cross-cultural communication refers to the process of sharing meaning across groups of people from different cultural backgrounds (Adkins, 2012). Teachers must be aware of elements of culture to understand students' actions and behaviors better and to involve the students' families and communities in the educational experience (Gay, 2002). Data revealed 86.36% of respondents sought opportunities to learn more about students' cultural backgrounds. Teachers must understand students' backgrounds to effectively select, create, and provide learning materials effective for all students (Johnson-Smith, 2020). Study results indicated teachers want to understand cultural backgrounds, but support is needed to do so. While the levels of agreement for purposefully utilizing diverse communication styles in the classroom were not as high as the general statement of learning communication styles, one can conclude a high level of support remains for the components of culturally responsive teaching.

With cultural groups approaching learning in various ways, the instructional delivery of lessons with culture in mind is a critical component of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002). This cultural congruity in instruction is a foundational component of culturally responsive teaching (Ramirez et al., 2016). Additionally, a classroom climate that is equally conducive to learning for students from all backgrounds is

essential (Krasnoff, 2016). The school climate must be welcoming of students from all backgrounds (Byrd, 2017).

For students to have success, teachers must be provided with the knowledge of culturally responsive teaching and the support to supply the components of culturally responsive teaching in the classroom (Mensah, 2011). Data revealed 88.19% of respondents agreed professional development related to culturally responsive teaching should be provided. Overall, teachers in the study expressed strong support for the five components of culturally responsive teaching.

Teacher Belief of Preparedness for Culturally Responsive Teaching

While teacher beliefs of culturally responsive teaching components did not appear to be a barrier to implementing aligned components and strategies, there were indications of various levels of preparedness for teaching. The concept of culturally responsive teaching acknowledges schools, teachers, and students are not homogeneous, and school culture and student culture do not always align (Gay, 2018; Hramiak, 2015). Teachers must be prepared to teach students from diverse backgrounds and to understand that culture affects learning (Krasnoff, 2016). The participant responses revealed overwhelming support for teachers needing knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds (97.23%); however, only 70% of the teachers expressed confidence in teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Further, data revealed 61.82% of the respondents did not feel confident during their first-year teaching students from diverse backgrounds.

Analysis of the data indicated those with four or fewer years of total teaching experience and those with 20 or more years of experience in the current school district felt more confident teaching students from diverse backgrounds during their first year of

teaching. Those new to teaching may have more confidence, as many postsecondary education preparation programs include culture and diversity education within program requirements (Thomas et al., 2020). Those who have taught for 20 years or more may be confident in their years of experience within the profession. A lack of opportunities to learn about culturally responsive teaching or opportunities to learn about the backgrounds of students in the district are both barriers to implementing culturally responsive teaching.

A second barrier to culturally responsive teaching appears to be access to professional development centered around this topic. Overall, only 41.28% of participants indicated they receive district-provided professional development on culturally responsive teaching. This aligns with previous work highlighting teachers' expressed desire to know more about culturally responsive teaching with support for learning the components and implementing them in the classroom (Muhammad, 2020).

With 94.55% of respondents agreeing they would attend professional development about culturally responsive teaching if presented with the option, it is clear this is a barrier. Without adequate professional development on the topic, teachers do not have the supports necessary to address cultural barriers and academic gaps (Mason, 2017). Overall, teachers report a desire to learn more about culturally responsive teaching, but they need support and time.

Principal Beliefs of Resources and Supports

Analysis of the data indicated room for improvement with regard to districts providing culturally responsive curriculum and professional development centered on culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching is not currently a focus

within any of the buildings. While all building leaders shared examples of curriculum and professional development support, the referenced supports do not cover the five core components of culturally responsive teaching identified by Gay (2002). Additionally, there was a reoccurring theme of mentioning ELL and ELD programs with regard to all diversity-related questions. While students whose primary language is not English often do come from diverse backgrounds, not all from diverse cultural backgrounds know another language other than English or utilize another language other than English as their primary language (Gay, 2018).

With research showing the benefits of culturally responsive teaching for all students, but especially diverse students, adopting these practices should be a focus in buildings with higher-than-average populations of non-white students (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The data indicated some levels of culturally responsive curriculum are available, but more as a secondary component of a different resource, such as math curriculum or social-emotional learning strategies. The curriculum should be relevant, include varying instruction, and consider the strengths of students based on their backgrounds (Larson et al., 2018). When building leaders assume the responsibility of ensuring all students are learning, they must also assume the responsibility of equipping teachers for this work (Fickel & Abbiss, 2019).

Data from this study revealed building leaders are confident in their ability to provide a climate where teachers are supported when teaching diverse students. A positive climate is essential, as building support is a foundational piece when working with students from diverse backgrounds (Auslander, 2018). Leaders must be intentional with the communication used, the climate created, and the capacity to empower students

and their identities (Jones et al., 2016). If adopting culturally responsive teaching

practices is an expectation of teachers, leaders must begin with intentional leadership

practices (Viloria, 2019).

Byrd (2017) discovered a positive correlation between a school climate focused

on equity and diversity and increased student academic outcomes. Creating a climate

conducive to culturally responsive teaching can help meet the needs of diverse students

and can positively impact student success (Lakhwani, 2019). Additional supports and

resources from the building and district are needed to support culturally responsive

teaching.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study will assist districts wishing to implement culturally

responsive teaching for the betterment of students, teachers, administrators, and the

community. First, districts must prioritize culturally responsive teaching and the work of

providing equity through learning experiences (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995). When

asked about support for teachers, no district missions or goals were mentioned by any of

the principals. When cultural supports were referenced, they were explained to be an

extension of a different priority, such as social and emotional learning or English

Language Learner supports. Not all diverse students are part of that population.

Districts must provide teachers with a clear definition of culturally responsive

teaching. The participant responses revealed overwhelming support for teachers needing

knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds (97.23%); however, only 70% of teachers

expressed confidence when teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, districts must explicitly state the strategies teachers may already be

implementing can be further deepened through culturally responsive teaching. Districts must provide teachers with professional development centered around culturally responsive teaching. Only 41.28% of participants indicated they receive district-provided professional development on the topic, although 88.19% agreed professional development related to culturally responsive teaching should be provided and 94.55% stated they would attend professional development on culturally responsive teaching if available. Effective and supportive leadership is essential when working with students of diverse backgrounds and supporting teachers to provide equitable and relevant learning experiences for students (Auslander, 2018).

Another consideration for school districts is the need for support from building leaders, including prioritization of professional development centered on culturally responsive teaching. Teachers are eager and willing to learn more about culturally responsive teaching and how to effectively implement the pedagogy in the classroom. Analysis of the data revealed 97% of respondents overwhelmingly agreed personal experiences and cultural backgrounds should be part of learning, yet less than 48% of respondents felt equipped to do so.

While teachers shared high levels of agreement for the use of the five components of culturally responsive teaching (base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communication, and cultural congruity in instruction) in the classroom (Gay, 2018), 70% of teachers stated being unprepared as a barrier for meeting the needs of culturally diverse students. Additionally, 61.82% of respondents stated they did not feel confident during their first year of teaching students from diverse backgrounds. With increasing student diversity, it is imperative for teachers to understand culturally

responsive teaching and ways to support students in the classroom, and districts and leaders must provide this support (Mette et al., 2016). Most teachers do not have the needed tools and understanding of culturally responsive teaching, but they cannot be expected to do this work on their own (Ramirez et al., 2016).

Data from both teachers and building leaders reveal a gap in professional development opportunities related to culturally responsive teaching. When asked if professional development was available, 24.77% of teachers shared professional development was not available and an additional 33.94% shared they neither agreed nor disagreed with professional development being available. All four principals stated there is no whole group professional development related to culturally responsive teaching provided to teachers.

Building leaders must provide professional development to help teachers build positive self-efficacy beliefs related to implementing culturally responsive teaching (Siwatu, 2011). The vast majority of teachers (94.55%) surveyed stated they would attend professional development to learn more about culturally responsive teaching. Building principals mirrored this need by sharing the belief that the teachers they support would appreciate more professional development on working with culturally diverse students. Similar to these study results, Muhammad (2020) found many teachers express their desire to learn more about culturally responsive teaching practices but do not know where to begin their learning. This must be a priority for public school districts.

Finally, there must be teacher support provided through access to a curriculum centered on culturally responsive teaching practices. When asked if district curriculum related to diversity and culture was available, 22.72% of teachers shared district

curriculum was not available. An additional 40% shared they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement of district curriculum being available.

An effective curriculum includes the materials, teaching strategies, collaboration methods, and assessments necessary to promote cultural responsiveness (Peterson, 2014). Support might consist of a district-provided curriculum to utilize in the classroom, or could include professional development on what culturally responsive curriculum should include, enabling teachers to create their own resources incorporating students' cultural backgrounds. The curriculum must be relevant to students, should vary in how students engage and share their learning, and should vary in how teachers communicate instruction (Larson et al., 2018). Of the teachers surveyed, 97.27% supported the need for the curriculum to include cultural diversity. Each of the four principals shared there is nothing specifically created or purchased to focus on culturally responsive curriculum in all classrooms with all students.

In addition to engagement, instruction, and proof of learning, the curriculum must be representative of all cultural backgrounds. Students must be able to see themselves within the curriculum and see themselves without stereotyping (Glock et al., 2019). Overwhelmingly, 97.27% of teachers surveyed agreed personal experiences and cultural backgrounds should be reflected in the classroom. A culturally responsive curriculum must go beyond the celebration of diverse holidays, and teachers need support in achieving this (Jones-Good, 2015).

Representation of a variety of cultural backgrounds not only allows for students to be reflected in their curriculum, it also exposes all students to diverse authors, characters, identities, and situations outside of their own background knowledge (Kibler &

Chapman, 2019). When students are comfortable and have a positive racial identity, they are more academically and socially successful; however, many teachers need support in understanding the value of a positive racial identity in the classroom (Fink, 2017). Considering the current trends in student populations in K–12 public education across the nation, teachers must learn how to have conversations about current events and issues related to the diversity of the classroom, and they must be supported by the administration in this work (Samuels, 2018; Viloria, 2019).

Recommendations for Future Research

The participants of this study included teachers and principals from four schools in southwest Missouri. It is recommended future researchers replicate this study with a larger group of participants to better understand teachers' and principals' perceptions of willingness and preparedness to implement culturally responsive teaching. While the population for this study included districts with a higher-than-state-average percentage of non-white students, any district would benefit from understanding and utilizing cultural backgrounds with student learning, no matter the number of non-white students in the district. If the survey were to be administered in a variety of districts, the data collected could reveal how aware teachers are of culturally responsive teaching, as well as their receptiveness to learning more and including cultural backgrounds in the classroom to benefit student learning.

For the purpose of this study, culturally responsive teaching was conceptually framed using the five components of culturally responsive teaching as identified by Gay (2002). With additional published research and studies contributing to the concept, researchers could examine other strategies which might be in use within districts to

ensure all students are being provided with relevant learning experiences. Expanding the literature connecting the need for and barriers to the implementation of culturally responsive teaching would allow districts the opportunity to address the needs of teachers, administrators, and students.

Many districts are beginning to implement equity and diversity training. In Missouri, MSIP6 went into effect in February of 2021 and includes rating indicators focused on equity and diversity (MODESE 2020c). Another recommendation would be to include the foundation of culturally responsive teaching within district-required professional development. Future research on professional development is recommended to inform districts of the need, value, and impact of utilizing cultural background to welcome and educate students.

Future research on the impact of culturally responsive teaching is needed. There are many case studies providing evidence of student success with the use of culturally responsive teaching. More research on culturally responsive teaching as a district-wide focus would be ideal to show the impact of these strategies on student achievement. These data would help districts earn buy-in from teachers, administrators, students, and the community. Buy-in could influence administrators to prioritize culturally responsive teaching and provide professional development for teachers.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher and principal perceptions of levels of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching in K–12 public education. Chapter One contained background information and the contextual framework of culturally responsive teaching, specifically the five components of culturally

responsive teaching as identified by Gay (2002). Once the general concept of culturally

responsive teaching and the five components were examined, the benefits of culturally

responsive teaching were outlined along with the rationale of the study, research

questions, and limitations.

In Chapter Two, the five identified components of culturally responsive teaching

were explored more deeply. Each component was analyzed individually to clearly

understand the meaning and research related to the concept. The benefits of using

culturally responsive teaching to create a culturally congruent learning environment for

student achievement were elucidated. Emphasis was placed on the changing

demographics of students across the nation and the need to change education for the

benefit of all students, but specifically students of diverse backgrounds. Barriers to

culturally responsive teaching were also outlined.

Chapter Three included a detailed examination of the methodology and design

used for this study. The purpose of this study was to explore teacher and principal

perceptions of levels of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching. A

mixed-method study was designed including a teacher survey and building principal

interviews. The survey was sent to approximately 1,045 K–12 classroom teachers across

four districts in southwest Missouri, and ultimately 110 teachers participated in the

survey. Four building principals were interviewed, providing representation from each of

the four participating school districts.

Chapter Four included the findings of the study, which indicated a high level of

support for culturally responsive teaching. Teachers shared agreement with the

components of culturally responsive teaching (base knowledge, curriculum, classroom

climate, cross-cultural communication, and cultural congruity in instruction) with very few attitudinal barriers identified (Gay, 2018). There were lower levels of belief of preparedness for implementing culturally responsive teaching, with teachers sharing the need for district-provided professional development and responsive curriculum to improve upon this work. Building principals recognized limited district-provided support related to culturally responsive teaching. Building leaders must prioritize professional development centered around culturally responsive teaching to increase teacher self-efficacy (Viloria, 2019). The professional development and additional coaching provided were geared more to individual and small groups, as needed. Student supports focused on those within an ELL or ELD program only and not all students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

A summary of the survey and interview findings was presented in Chapter Five. The findings were provided in narrative form with related research included. Overall, analysis of the data suggests teachers want to learn more about culturally responsive teaching and how to implement the pedagogy in the classroom effectively. Teachers shared high levels of agreement for the use of the five components of culturally responsive teaching (base knowledge, curriculum, classroom climate, cross-cultural communication, and cultural congruity in instruction) in the classroom (Gay, 2018), yet shared the need for additional support.

Both teachers and principals agreed professional development is needed for culturally responsive teaching to be implemented in their school settings. Building teacher self-efficacy related to culturally responsive teaching will empower them to best support students from all backgrounds, especially culturally diverse backgrounds

(Hammond & Jackson, 2015). Knowledge of culturally diverse teaching will also create an understanding that culturally diverse student populations extend past students whose primary language is not English.

With the increasing diversity of student populations and the predominately White teacher population across the United States, the need for culturally responsive teaching is evident (Weisberg, 2018). Public schools must adjust to meet the needs of all students within an education relevant to their backgrounds and experiences (Jones-Good, 2015). Although there is no blueprint for culturally responsive teaching due to the unique experiences of students, teachers, administrations, and communities, work toward utilizing the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of all students must be a priority for every school district.

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Appendix A

Teacher Survey

Demographics

How many total years have you taught prior to this school year?

0–4   5–9   10–14   15–19   20+

How many years of teaching experience do you have in your current school district?

0–4   5–9   10–14   15–19   20+

Which option best describes your current grade level position?

K–2   3–5   6–8   9–12

Teacher Beliefs

On a scale of 1–5 with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree, to which extent do you agree with the following statements?

- Modern learning should include the use of personal experiences and cultural backgrounds. (RQ1: Culturally Responsive Component 1)

- Curriculum should offer opportunities for teaching cultural diversity. (RQ1: CRC2)

- Classroom climates should be conducive to learning for ethnically diverse students. (RQ1: CRC3)

- Teachers should learn about the communication styles of students in the classroom. (RQ1: CRC4)

- Instructional techniques should match the learning styles of diverse students. (RQ1: CRC5)

- I am confident in my abilities to teach in a manner that recognizes cultural diversity. (RQ1: CRC1)

- I actively seek out opportunities to learn more about students' cultural backgrounds. (RQ1: CRC3)

- I understand that different ethnic groups have different communication styles, and I take this into consideration in my classroom. (RQ1: CRC4)

- Teachers should receive targeted professional development on the practical implementation of culturally responsive teaching. (RQ1: CRC5)

- My district utilizes a curriculum which informs about and celebrates diversity and culture. (RQ1: CRC2)

- I currently feel confident in my ability to teach culturally diverse students. (RQ2)

- At the beginning of my first year of teaching, I felt confident in my ability to teach culturally diverse students. (RQ2)

- My district provides appropriate professional development to help teachers better serve culturally diverse students. (RQ2)

- If given the option, I would attend professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching in order to feel more confident in my teaching of diverse students. (RQ2)

Appendix B

Building Principal Interview

1. How long have you been an administrator? In your current district?

2. What are the ages of the students in your building?

3. How would you describe the demographics of your students and community, focusing on cultural backgrounds?

4. Do your teachers have a specific curriculum they utilize to ensure culturally rich experiences? If so, please explain. If no, please explain any known reasoning.

5. Do you feel that teachers in your building are supported by a climate conducive to teaching culturally diverse students? Explain.

6. What supports/resources do you offer teachers when it comes to understanding cultural backgrounds?

7. Do you feel there are any barriers that stand in the way of implementing culturally responsive teaching in your building? If yes, then explain. If no, then explain.

8. What type(s) of resources (curriculum, meetings, book studies) do you offer teachers that focus on components of culturally responsive teaching?

Appendix C

Invitation Email to Superintendents

Date:

Greetings,

My name is Katie Kensinger, and I am an Educational Leadership doctoral student at Lindenwood University through the southwest Missouri cohort. The research focuses on teacher and building principal perceptions of their level of preparedness to work with diverse students. This work is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Brad Hanson with Lindenwood University. I am contacting schools with a higher-than-state-average enrollment of non-white students.

I am seeking permission for all K–12 teachers and one building principal to participate in the study and to allow me to utilize the data in my research. To gather the data needed for the research, I would need the following:

1) I would like permission to email all building principals the teacher survey, which they will then forward to all teachers in their buildings. As a participant in this study, teachers would be asked to complete a brief online survey. The amount of time required to complete the survey is approximately 10 minutes. Teachers will not be asked to provide personally identifiable information.

2) I would like permission to interview one building principal from the (insert elementary or secondary) level. All information provided will be treated strictly as confidential and purely for academic purposes.

To notify me of your district's permission to participate in this study, please respond by emailing me at ██████████████. I look forward to your favorable response. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Katie C. Kensinger

Appendix D

IRB Approval Letter

IRB-21-28 - Initial: Exempt - Approved

irb@lindenwood.edu <irb@lindenwood.edu>
Wed 10/14/2020 1:59 PM

To: BHanson@lindenwood.edu <BHanson@lindenwood.edu>; KENSINGER, KATIE C (Student) <KCK073@lindenwood.edu>; kgrover@lindenwood.edu <kgrover@lindenwood.edu>

Oct 14, 2020 1:59 PM CDT

RE:
IRB-21-28: Initial - Perceptions of Southwest Missouri Public School K-12 Teachers and Building Principals in Regard to Preparedness of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Dear Katie Kensinger,

The study, Perceptions of Southwest Missouri Public School K-12 Teachers and Building Principals in Regard to Preparedness of Culturally Responsive Teaching , has been Approved as Exempt.

Category: Category 1. Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

The submission was approved on 2020-10-14.

Here are the findings:

Regulatory Determinations

- This study has been determined to be minimal risk because the research is not obtaining data considered sensitive information or performing interventions posing harm greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

Appendix E

Letter of Participation to Principals

November 2, 2020

(Insert Title and Address)

Dear (Insert Principal's Name):

My name is Katie Kensinger. I am presently pursuing my Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership through Lindenwood University. The research I am completing focuses on teacher perceptions of their level of preparedness to work with diverse students. Permission has been granted by **(insert superintendent's name)** to distribute my survey to all K–12 classroom teachers in **(insert district's name).**

Data will be collected and analyzed in an attempt to identify levels of preparedness when working with diverse students. The information gained may assist leaders in better identifying teacher needs regarding culturally responsive teaching.

I am hereby requesting that you forward the accompanying attachments (letter of participation and research information sheet) to all of the certified teachers your building. The data will be gathered in a confidential manner with no identifying information asked.

In addition, I will be recruiting several building principals to participate in an eight-question interview regarding preparedness in working with diverse students. If you have an interest in participating in this interview process, please respond by emailing me at ███████████████. Then, we can set a day and time for the interview, which may be conducted via telephone or Zoom.

Your assistance with this is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time, and please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Katie C. Kensinger

Appendix F

Letter of Introduction to Teachers

November 2, 2020

Greetings!

My name is Katie Kensinger, and I am an Educational Leadership doctoral student at Lindenwood University through the southwest Missouri cohort. The research I am completing for my dissertation focuses on teacher and building principal perceptions of their level of preparedness to work with diverse students.

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a brief online survey. The amount of time required to complete the survey is approximately five minutes and consists of Likert-type statements. The information gathered may assist leaders in identifying needs regarding culturally responsive teaching. You will not be asked to provide personally identifiable information; therefore, all responses will be anonymous.

If you are a K–12 teacher and you are willing to participate in the study, please read the attached research information sheet and click on the link to complete the survey. Your consent is acknowledged if you complete the survey. The survey link will be open for two weeks for you to respond.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Katie C. Kensinger

Link to survey:

Appendix G

LINDENWOOD

Research Information Sheet for Teachers

You are being asked to participate in a research study. We are conducting this study to determine the perceptions of southwest Missouri public school K–12 teachers and building principals with regard to preparedness for culturally responsive teaching. During this study you will complete an anonymous survey. It will take about five minutes to complete this study.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time.

There are no risks from participating in this project. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

We will not collect any data which may identify you.

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data include members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, and representatives of state or federal agencies.

Who can I contact with questions?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Katie C. Kensinger, █████████████████████

Dr. Brad Hanson, █████████████████████

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director – Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu. If you would like additional information regarding your data, your rights as a data subject, or the privacy policy of Lindenwood University, please visit the following link: http://www.lindenwood.edu/academics/support-resources/information-technology/privacy-policy/

Appendix H

LINDENWOOD

Research Information Sheet for Principals

You are being asked to participate in a research study. We are conducting this study to determine the perceptions of southwest Missouri public school K–12 teachers and building principals with regard to preparedness for culturally responsive teaching. During this study, you will participate in an eight-question interview. It will take about 20–30 minutes to complete this study.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time.

There are no risks from participating in this project. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

We will not collect any data which may identify you.

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data include members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, and representatives of state or federal agencies.

Who can I contact with questions?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Katie C. Kensinger, ████████████████

Dr. Brad Hanson, ████████████████

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director – Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

Vita

Katie Kensinger currently serves as the Coordinator of College and Career Readiness with Springfield Public Schools in Springfield, Missouri. As the Coordinator of College and Career Readiness, Katie works with Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers for grades 6–12 to create curriculum, provide professional learning, and ensure state accountability measures are reached. Katie also works with dual credit for all five high schools in the district, writes grants to support CTE programs with necessary equipment, and assists in the work of College and Career Academies at two high schools. Before becoming the Coordinator of College and Career Readiness, Katie served as the Coordinator of Site Interventions for two middle schools within Springfield Public Schools. In this role, Katie supported teachers and students as an extension of the administration team. Prior to transitioning into these leadership roles, Katie was a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher at the secondary level. Katie sponsored Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America and Educators Rising while in the classroom. She earned a Bachelor of Science in B–12 Family and Consumer Science Education in 2012, a Master of Education in Early Childhood and Family Studies in 2015, and a Specialist in Educational Administration in 2016.