

Secondary Teachers' Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Beliefs

A Qualitative Phenomenological Study

by

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Abstract

An increase in the culturally and linguistically diverse student population in the United States requires teachers to prepare to meet students' needs in the changing classroom. Teachers with low self-efficacy beliefs lack the confidence to bridge cultural divides in classrooms and provide rigorous educational opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students. A literature gap exists concerning culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs among certified middle school teachers. The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions of personal abilities to rigorously teach culturally diverse students. Study questions explored culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of certified middle school teachers; lived experiences, which influence teachers' beliefs in the ability to implement culturally responsive teaching in culturally diverse classrooms; and teachers' greatest successes and challenges in implementing culturally responsive teaching. An analysis of 15 teacher interviews and a four-member focus group were conducted using structural and lean coding. Results revealed teachers hold high self-efficacy beliefs regarding maintaining cultural awareness, building student relationships, and providing vocabulary instruction to address test bias. Descriptions of low self-efficacy beliefs involved teachers' perceived ability to integrate students' cultural backgrounds into instruction and to overcome language barriers when communicating with English language learners and parents. Limitations, recommendations, and implications for leadership were discussed.

Dedication

Dedicated to my mother, Monica Keshwattie Sooknandan-Westmorland, for your unconditional love that continues to encourage me to reach for more. You taught me the importance of finding my voice and using it for good. My topic is a tribute to your experiences as a brilliant young girl from the West Indies striving to navigate an unfamiliar and culturally insensitive American school system. I appreciate the lessons you have taught me, admire your bravery, and love you dearly. To my dad, James Caple, I have learned so much about myself through getting to know you and I am blessed to have you in my life.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Culturally responsive teaching is the practice of using students' home cultures to scaffold learning and make meaningful pedagogical connections (Gay, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Implementation of culturally responsive teaching helps students overcome existing gaps in academic achievement (Martin, 2016). Teachers' sense of self-efficacy influences classroom practices such as culturally responsive teaching (Delale-O'Connor, Alvarez, Murray, & Milner, 2017). Limited efforts to prepare culturally responsive teachers have left a gap in opportunities for professional development in culturally relevant pedagogy (Siwatu, 2011). Educational institutions should design professional development to help teachers build robust self-efficacy beliefs based on teacher's confidence levels with implementing culturally responsive pedagogy (Siwatu, Chesnut, Alejandro, & Young, 2016). The qualitative phenomenological study explored certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

The introduction began with background information about the problem, including brief discussions on achievement disparities for culturally and linguistically diverse students, culturally responsive teaching, and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. A statement of the problem and study's significance highlight the relevance and importance of research about teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Qualitative phenomenological research questions were introduced, and the theoretical framework of critical race theory is briefly discussed to establish a conceptual framework to ground the study. The introduction continues with definitions of terms and descriptions of assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and a summary.

Background of the Problem

The United States is experiencing vast increases in culturally and linguistically diverse populations, which necessitates teacher preparation to meet students' changing needs (Kelley, Siwatu, Tost, & Martinez, 2015). Disparities in achievement across racial and ethnic groups are as broad in 2019 as the academic achievement gap over fifty years ago (Bartz & Rice, 2017; Hanushek, 2016). Educational institutions are leaving marginalized students undereducated (Brown & Crippen, 2017). Culturally and linguistically diverse students, when compared to counterparts, receive less rigorous classroom instruction and more punitive and more frequent consequences for behavioral infractions of equal severity (Patish, 2016).

Culturally responsive teaching is a way to make learning relevant and rigorous for culturally and linguistically diverse students through drawing on cultural knowledge and prior experiences, understanding frames of reference, and accepting students' performance styles (Gay, 2015; Kelley et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Culturally responsive teaching is broadly defined and continually evolving as a theory and pedagogical approach (Bennett, Gunn, Gayle-Evans, Barrera, & Leung, 2018). Culturally responsive teaching aids educators with the challenges of developing pedagogical skills to teach students of another culture and overcome existing gaps in opportunity and achievement (Martin, 2016).

Self-efficacy is the belief in the ability to plan and execute processes to accomplish a task (Bandura, 1986). Efficacious beliefs affect thought patterns, which influence the self-appraisal of capabilities (Bandura, 1986). Siwatu et al. (2016) posited self-efficacy is not about skills necessary to perform a task, but a belief in the ability to utilize skills. Teachers' opinions or perceptions of personal competence are closely related to teaching performance (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Cankaya (2018) highlighted the importance of self-efficacy beliefs in relation to

teachers' perceived ability to provide effective instruction, classroom management, and student engagement. Self-efficacy beliefs are critical to the execution of effective culturally responsive teaching (Alaca & Pyle, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Perceptions of self-efficacy affect activities selected by classroom teachers (Unsal, Korkmaz, & Percin, 2016). Teachers exhibiting high self-efficacy develop effective and innovative instructional strategies (Siwatu, 2011). Low efficacious educators rely on direct and whole group instruction (Siwatu, 2011). Less challenging and repetitive curricula focus on Bloom's taxonomy of lower-level cognitive skills (Adams, 2015). Culturally and linguistically diverse students need opportunities to engage in productive struggle to grow brain capacity (Hammond, 2015). Teachers with low self-efficacy beliefs are less likely to create learning environments with rigorous academic processes for student success (Sezgin & Erdogan, 2018).

Siwatu et al. (2016) found preservice teachers reported high self-efficacy in helping students become important classroom members and developing positive personal relationships with students. Preservice teachers were less efficacious in implementing more difficult aspects of culturally responsive teaching, which requires an integration of students' cultural backgrounds into curricula and instruction (Siwatu et al., 2016). A lack of knowledge concerning students' cultural backgrounds and a decreased level of appreciation for diversity among teachers have been found to result in low-performance expectations (Mitchell, 2015). Preservice teachers attributed doubts about culturally responsive self-efficacy to ineffective field experiences, lack of knowledge regarding student diversity and culturally responsive pedagogy, and inadequate exposure to culturally responsive teaching topics and models (Siwatu et al., 2016).

The problem is teachers with low self-efficacy beliefs lack the confidence to bridge cultural divides in the classroom and provide rigorous educational opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Bradshaw, Pas, Bottiani, Reinke, & Rosenberg, 2018; Duncan, 2017). Some preservice teachers stated unpreparedness as an issue with meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Siwatu et al., 2016). Teachers need professional development and support to build strong beliefs in the ability to rigorously teach diverse learners (Bradshaw et al., 2018; Duncan, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions of personal abilities to rigorously teach culturally diverse students. Teachers were found to lack understanding of the relationship between culture and classroom behavior and were inadequately prepared to partake in culturally responsive teaching practices (Siwatu, Putnam, Starker-Glass, & Lewis, 2017). Developing an understanding of a classroom's cultural context has the potential to minimize cultural conflicts (Siwatu & Starker, 2010). Self-efficacy is necessary for individuals reluctant to implement knowledge due to self-doubt regarding the personal ability to carry out successful actions (Siwatu et al., 2016).

The literature presents a positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and teacher quality. Scarce research exists to illustrate preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs related to culturally responsive teaching (Siwatu et al., 2016). Literature regarding culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of certified middle school teachers is limited (Bradshaw et al., 2018). A gap exists in the literature regarding certified teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

Significance of the Study

Understanding teachers' culturally responsive self-efficacy beliefs are important to identify areas in which teachers are most and least efficacious (Siwatu et al., 2016). Qualitative data collection to explore teachers' culturally responsive self-efficacy beliefs are beneficial for designing appropriate interventions to help teachers build robust self-efficacy beliefs (Siwatu et al., 2016). Classroom teachers are the most valuable variable in student achievement (Siwatu, Frazier, Osaghae, & Starker-Glass, 2011). Teachers need support to increase low self-efficacy beliefs or challenge inflated self-efficacy beliefs (Wyatt, 2015). Self-efficacy beliefs are critical to the execution of effective culturally responsive teaching (Alaca & Pyle, 2018).

The qualitative phenomenological study is significant to educators, educational leaders, curriculum developers, and educational institutions aiming to gain knowledge regarding certified teachers' professional development needs. Study results could provide insight into the skills needed to strengthen teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and foster culturally responsive teaching practices. The qualitative phenomenological study's implications highlight the importance of providing certified teachers with self-efficacy-building activities and opportunities to develop confidence in practicing culturally responsive teaching (Siwatu, 2011).

Research Questions

The qualitative phenomenological study uses qualitative phenomenological methods to describe culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of certified middle school teachers. The research explored teachers' perceptions of personal abilities in rigorously teaching culturally diverse students. Research questions to guide the qualitative phenomenological study were:

Research question one: What are the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in a Central Florida school district?

Research question two: What lived experiences influence middle school teachers' self-beliefs when implementing culturally responsive teaching in culturally diverse classroom settings in a Central Florida school district?

Research question three: What do middle school teachers perceive as the greatest successes and challenges with implementing culturally responsive teaching in a Central Florida school district?

Theoretical Framework

Critical race theory provides essential equity literacy to aid in the development of a social justice lens and build teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). The overall goal of critical race theory is to address racism and hegemonic practices, which silence the voices of marginalized groups (Haskins & Singh, 2015). Critical race theory asserts racism is natural and normal in American society, refutes objective perspectives with the use of counter-storytelling, is critical of liberalism, and argues members of dominant culture benefited considerably from progress made during the Civil Rights Movement (Logan, Hilton, Watson, & Kirkland-Holmes, 2018).

An examination of relationships between race and power is essential to educational equity (Walls, 2015). Critical race theorists urge educators to view educational systems through a social justice lens and acknowledge relationships between what happens in school, and institutional and social outcomes (Rector-Aranda, 2016). Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs affect classroom decision-making processes, which could have enduring ramifications for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Logan et al., 2018). Education has the power to either challenge or perpetuate societal injustices (Rector-Aranda, 2016).

Definitions of Terms

Providing definitions ensures a common understanding of concepts and key terminology. Although several terms are widely used, definitions narrow scope of understanding to study's focus. Terms are grounded in peer-reviewed sources on culturally responsive self-efficacy beliefs among teachers.

Achievement gap: Differences between assessment scores of marginalized and/or low-income students and assessment scores of Asian and White peers (National Education Association, 2020).

Critical pedagogy: Critical thinking about educational, social, and philosophical issues (Guilherme, 2017).

Culturally relevant pedagogy: A theoretical model to address student achievement and help students accept and affirm cultural identity through the development of critical perspectives challenging inequities in institutions such as schools (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Culturally responsive teaching: Practice of using students' home culture to scaffold learning and make meaningful pedagogical connections (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy: Belief in personal ability to execute culturally responsive teaching practices (Siwatu, 2007).

Culturally and linguistically diverse students: Students of color, students living in poverty, and English language learners (Cramer, 2015).

Dominant culture: A group of people whose values, language, and ways of behaving are imposed on a subordinate culture or cultures through political or economic power (Logan et al., 2018).

Implicit bias: An individual's response to a certain group based on unconscious attitudes and stereotypes (Hammond, 2015).

Liberalism: A belief in gradual social progress through changes to laws, rather than through revolution (Logan et al., 2018).

Self-efficacy beliefs: Belief in personal ability to plan and execute processes to accomplish a task. Self-efficacy beliefs affect thought patterns, which influence the self-appraisal of capabilities (Bandura, 1986).

Socio-economic status: Class or social standing of a group or individual measured as a combination of income, occupation, and education (Duncan, 2017).

Structural racialization: Incongruities hidden in seemingly harmless institutional practices or structures, which reduce opportunities for economically disadvantaged people, people of color, and immigrants (Hammond, 2015).

Assumptions

Identification of underlying assumptions in research encourages critical reflection on methodological decisions, research design, and thought processes informing decisions (Wolgemuth, Hicks, & Agosto, 2017). Assumptions were made about the qualitative phenomenological study. Participants were presumed to answer interview questions honestly based on lived experiences teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Participants offered authentic reflections on successes and challenges with implementing culturally responsive teaching.

Data collection tools masked participants' identities, and interview questions were written to decrease the tendency of participants to answer based on perceptions of the preferred answer. Although avoidance of bias was difficult, interview and focus group questions were

designed in ways meant to eliminate personal bias. Reflexivity and epoche served to bracket out and suspend personal bias. Survey questions and answers were based only on participants' perceptions.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations refer to conscious decisions to create boundaries for a study using certain theoretical frameworks, objectives, research questions, or study samples (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Qualitative phenomenological methods were used, such as interviews and a focus group, and incorporated purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves a nonrandom selection of participants and implies subjectivity and bias in participant selection (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Subjectivity might impede the ability to draw inferences about the teacher population in selected school districts or nations (Etikan et al., 2016). Bias is possible when participants are chosen from a school district with which one is professionally affiliated. Data collection was limited to a three-month period, during which time participants were contacted; interviews, a focus group, and member checking were conducted; and responses were transcribed and coded to identify trends (Creswell, 2016).

Limitations

Study limitations are uncontrollable restrictions of research design (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The qualitative phenomenological study focused on a small sample of 15 certified middle school teachers. A small sample size increases the possibility of misleading data. Data generated from face-to-face interviews do not necessarily reflect the experiences of other middle school teachers in the same school district or across the nation.

Expansion of the sample into primary school settings, non-public school settings, or to include teachers in schools with less marginalized student populations, has the potential to

provide alternative data to contribute to existing literature. Determination of teachers' culturally responsive self-efficacy beliefs according to teachers' years of experience, and other demographic factors would add to the literature. Qualitative data were collected using a protocol to ensure consistency and precision. Methods of analysis were systematized and made transparent to participants to earn credibility and transferability (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions of personal abilities to rigorously teach culturally diverse students. The introductory chapter contextualized the study's problem, broaching discussions on educational disparities, culturally responsive teaching, and self-efficacy beliefs. Problems concerning teachers' lack of confidence to bridge classroom cultural divides were introduced, followed by an explanation of the qualitative phenomenological study's purpose. Significance, research questions, and theoretical framework of critical race theory were explained. A description of assumptions, limitations, delimitations was provided, as were definitions of relevant terms. The literature review evaluates literature related to certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The United States is experiencing vast changes in culturally and linguistically diverse populations, and teachers need to be prepared to meet students' changing needs (Kelley et al., 2015). Enrollment of culturally and linguistically diverse students in United States public schools increased between 2000 and 2015 (de Brey et al., 2019). In 2015, about 50% of the student population was diverse, but 80% of teachers were Caucasian (de Brey et al., 2019). Bennett et al. (2018) questioned the preparedness of educators to teach a mosaic of racially, culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse students.

Disparities in achievement across racial and ethnic groups are as broad in 2019 as the academic achievement gap over 50 years ago (Bartz & Rice, 2017; Hanushek, 2016). Educational institutions are leaving marginalized students undereducated (Brown & Crippen, 2017). Kelley et al. (2015) argued European-American middle-class norms in schools impede the academic success of marginalized students. The problem is teachers with low efficacious beliefs lack the confidence to bridge cultural divides in classrooms and provide rigorous educational opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Bradshaw et al., 2018; Duncan, 2017).

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study is to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions of personal abilities to rigorously teach culturally diverse students. Teachers unfamiliar with students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences could unintentionally hold low academic expectations and display more punitive disciplinary actions (Mitchell, 2015; Siwatu et al., 2016). Culturally responsive teachers believe all students can learn (Brown & Crippen, 2017) and embrace high expectations for achievement (Bennett et al.,

2018). The following literature review outlines the qualitative phenomenological study's theoretical framework based on established research, uncovers statistics on diversity in the United States, and synthesizes expert perspectives of culturally responsive teaching and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs.

Literature Search Strategy

Relevant peer-reviewed journal articles and books were used in the literature review. The digital database provided by the American College of Education Library was the primary research resource. Journal articles were selected using the online open-access databases of Taylor and Francis, ProQuest, and the Elton B. Stephens Company (EBSCO). Search titles and keywords were related to culturally responsive teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, cultural responsiveness, teacher self-efficacy, culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy, critical race theory, multicultural teaching, social cognitive theory, and equity literacy.

Theoretical Framework

Central to critical race theory is the normalcy of racism in American society (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Frustrations with the slow pace of racial reform in the United States led law professors Derrick Bell and Allen Freeman to develop critical race theory in 1970 (Haskins & Singh, 2015). The purpose was to address hidden, indirect forms of racism in legal systems (Haskins & Singh, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Critical race theory asserts racism is natural and normal in American society, refutes objective perspectives with the use of counter-storytelling, is critical of liberalism, and argues members of the dominant culture benefited considerably from progress made during the Civil Rights Movement (Logan et al., 2018). The overall goal of critical race theory is to address racism and hegemonic practices, which silence the voices of marginalized groups (Haskins & Singh, 2015). An examination of relationships

between race and power, such as between culturally and linguistically diverse students and educational systems, is essential to educational equity (Walls, 2015), and make critical race theory an appropriate framework to inform the qualitative phenomenological study.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate, pioneering scholars on critical race theory in education, argued the lack of knowledge about the effects of racism in education results from the race being undertheorized in education (Walls, 2015). Ladson-Billings and Tate sought to explain how critical race theory is useful in understanding the role of race in social structures (Walls, 2015). A distinct relationship between critical race theory and education is seen in decisions made concerning curricula, instruction, assessment, and public education funding (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Critics question critical race theory's deeply rooted emphasis on race and racism to the exclusion of other factors, such as the culture of poverty (Zorn, 2018). Rojas and Liou (2017) warned against the practice of victim-blaming, such as questioning students' home life.

Paulo Freire sought to liberate oppressed groups with the development of critical pedagogy (Lac, 2017). Freire (1970) rejected the deficit model of teaching, believing education should empower students through teacher-student interactions to generate critical thinking. Such critical pedagogy raises the critical consciousness of inequities and injustices perpetrated in societal structures and systems (Lac, 2017). Culturally and linguistically diverse students benefit from educators who teach with a social justice lens and take precautions against an approach of pity towards teaching and learning (Koonce, 2018). The use of pity, rather than empathy, becomes in some cases an excuse to lower achievement expectations and contribute to the deficit model of teaching (Rojas & Liou, 2017).

Tenets in critical race theory. Critical race theory has several tenets to help situate the role of race in social structures such as the educational system (Walls, 2015). The first tenet declares racism is normalized and embedded in institutional policies and practices (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Educators need to use a critical lens to question norms and examine such norms for racial inequalities (Haskins & Singh, 2015). The second tenet asserts understanding racism is accomplished by listening to the voices of individuals who have experienced racism (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Critical race theory challenges the traditional ideology of colorblindness, denial, and racial neutrality (Walls, 2015). Expressions of personal narratives by students of color enhance teachers' awareness of the existence and harmful repercussions of racism (Mitchell, 2015).

The third tenet affirms liberalism is a belief system based on freedom and equality, and justice cannot consistently be served through the legal system (Haskins & Singh, 2015). A fourth tenet of critical race theory involves the critical view of interest convergence (Haskins & Singh, 2015). Civil rights victories for marginalized groups created social benefits for the dominant racial group (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Walls (2015) highlighted tenets of white privilege, structural racism, and social segregation to underscore the relationship between race and power. Reflection on ideologies represented through critical race theory is necessary for teachers of the dominant culture to connect with students and build a bridge between school culture and students' home cultures (Mitchell, 2015; Patish, 2016).

Critical race theory and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy describes how people judge personal abilities to perform a required task (Bandura, 1986). Effective educators reflect on personal equity literacy and recognize realistic barriers for marginalized student groups (Gorski, 2016). The relationship between teacher self-efficacy and the tenets of critical race theory is

essential to the discussion of educational equity (Lac, 2017). Education has the power to either challenge or perpetuate societal injustices (Rector-Aranda, 2016).

Zorn (2018) argued against critical race theory's representation of a racist public education system failing to educate students of color. Critical race theorists urge educators to view the educational system through a social justice lens and acknowledge the relationship between what happens in school and other institutional and societal outcomes (Rector-Aranda, 2016). Culturally and linguistically diverse students can maintain personal cultural norms while learning and adjusting to the dominant culture (Koonce, 2018).

Critical race theory and culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs are interconnected through critical reflection founded on equity literacy and a social justice lens (Appendix A). Critical race theory provides a framework for developing equity literacy and a social justice lens necessary for critical reflection. To become critical in reflection is to uncover and analyze fundamental assumptions (Gorski & Dalton, 2020). Through critical reflection, teachers deepen understandings to strengthen self-efficacy beliefs regarding culturally responsive teaching.

Research Literature Review

Changes in student demographics call attention to the need for culturally responsive teaching (Duncan, 2017; Kelley et al., 2015). The National Center for Education Statistics reported a decrease in Caucasian student enrollment from 62% to 51%, and an African American student enrollment from 15% to 14%, between 2016 and 2017 (de Brey et al., 2019). In contrast, Hispanic student enrollment increased from 16% to 25%, Asian student enrollment increased from three to five percent, and enrollment by students of two or more races increased from two to four percent (de Brey et al., 2019). In 2015, approximately five million public school students

were identified as English language learners, and 78% of English language learning students were Hispanic (de Brey et al., 2019).

According to the United States Census Bureau, by 2050 marginalized groups are estimated to comprise 55% of the American population (Duncan, 2017). Thirty percent of American students were enrolled in public schools in 2015, and a third of the students enrolled in public schools identified with a marginalized student group (de Brey et al., 2019). Growth trends predict the eventual end of a majority racial or ethnic group in the United States (Duncan, 2017).

The number of racially and ethnically diverse students and teachers increased between 2015 and 2016 (de Brey et al., 2019). Educators of marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds were highest in schools with 90% or more marginalized students, and lowest in schools with less than 10% marginalized students (de Brey et al., 2019). Although the increase in diverse teachers is promising, Duncan (2017) stated concerns about the disproportionate growth of marginalized students versus teachers in North America. Teachers need skills and resources to bridge the cultural divide and meet the academic needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Debnam, Pas, Bottiani, Cash, & Bradshaw, 2015).

Defining Culture

Culture is an amalgamation of a group's language, ethnicity, gender, race, and is based on social concepts (Koonce, 2018). Every individual has a culture representative of how the brain makes sense of the world (Hammond, 2015). The human brain and mind are modified, formed, and shaped through active engagement in various sociocultural contexts (Vu et al., 2019). An individual's brain uses cultural information to make meaning of everyday occurrences (Hammond, 2015). Making meaning in the classroom should include cultural connections for the brain to create memory pathways for storing and retrieving information (Hammond, 2015).

Hammond (2015) outlined three levels of culture: surface culture, shallow culture, and deep culture.

Surface culture. Hammond (2015) described surface culture as the least emotionally charged of all cultural levels because change is not required for individuals or groups. Surface culture includes observable elements of a culture, such as food, music, dress, and holidays (Hammond, 2015). Schools find comfort in celebrating cultural diversity at the surface level to alleviate anxiety within the school community (Gay, 2015). Inability to move beyond surface culture inadvertently diverts attention from social inequalities and the challenges of cultural responsiveness (Brown & Crippen, 2017). Ignoring the culture of oppressed students perpetuates academic failures (Freire, 1970).

Shallow culture. Shallow culture, according to Hammond (2015), involves unspoken rules about daily social interactions and norms. Individuals build rapport through mutual agreements about elements such as courtesy, the nature of friendship, concepts of time, personal space between people, nonverbal communication, rules about eye contact, or appropriate touching (Hammond, 2015). Hammond discussed how the strong emotional charge attached to shallow culture creates challenges when working to make connections with individuals of a different culture because violations of nonverbal norms have the potential to cause distress, social friction, or mistrust.

Schools traditionally align with middle-class norms of the dominant culture (Duncan, 2017). Students unfamiliar with norms of the dominant culture are at risk of receiving consequences for seemingly inappropriate behavior or appearance of intellectual inferiority (Childs, 2017). Effective educators work towards understanding the shallow culture of students and forming relationships to avoid offensive behavior (Hammond, 2015).

Deep culture. Deep culture is comprised of implicit knowledge and unconscious assumptions based on an individual or group's worldviews (Hammond, 2015). Hammond (2015) proposed brain processes new information through rules governed by deep culture. According to Hammond, two people from different cultures might receive identical information about an event and have different responses based on meanings associated with inert deep cultural worldviews.

Gay (2015) suggested teachers initiate dialogue with peers and colleagues to understand personal behaviors and improve interactions. Teachers can learn about students' cultural backgrounds by actively listening to students' stories (Mitchell, 2015). A culturally responsive environment is fostered by an understanding of surface and shallow levels of culture (Hammond, 2015). To achieve deep cultural knowledge requires critical reflection and an awareness of ways actions and dispositions are motivated by personal cultural experiences (Cartledge, Lo, Vincent, & Robinson-Ervin, 2015).

Culture of poverty. Socioeconomic status has been a primary concern of multicultural education because a large percentage of the nation's ethnically diverse student population lives below the poverty line (Anthony, 2017). According to Payne (1996), a culture of poverty saturates classrooms just as much as ethnic and linguistic diversity. Anthony (2017) proposed students with multiple risk factors, such as English language learners categorized as socio-economically disadvantaged, need critical attention.

Hammond (2015) introduced a different mindset about the culture of poverty by advocating culturally responsive teaching with rigor. According to Hammond, poverty is not a culture. Many families are trapped in a cycle of poverty but do not embrace deficiency as a way of life or culture. Teachers who pity students in a cycle of poverty are at risk of lowering

expectations for culturally and linguistically diverse students, which is the opposite of what learners of diverse backgrounds need (Hammond, 2015). In some instances, teachers with low expectations for students consider students' home lives and assumed a lack of intellectual ability as causes for low school achievement (Duncan, 2017; Gay, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching is a way to make learning relevant and rigorous for culturally and linguistically diverse students through the use of cultural knowledge and prior experiences enhanced understanding of frames of reference, and acceptance of student performance styles (Gay, 2015; Kelley et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Bennett et al. (2018) posited that culturally responsive teaching is broadly defined and continually evolving as a theory and pedagogical approach. Culturally responsive teaching aids educators in developing pedagogical skills to teach students of other cultures and overcome existing gaps in opportunity and achievement (Martin, 2016).

Hammond (2015) added culturally responsive teaching is a way of learning by making connections within the brain's information processing structures and memory system. For example, students from oral cultural traditions use rhythm or music to form memory pathways to make learning stick (Hammond, 2015). An understanding of student culture allows teachers to utilize effective pedagogy (Lim, Tan, & Saito, 2019). Culturally responsive teaching involves complex and dynamic relationships between students' home cultures, the culture of the school, and the culture of the educational system (Anthony, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Historical perspective. Culturally responsive teaching became popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s due to the rapid increase of diversity in classrooms in the United States (Lim et al., 2019). Interest in culturally responsive teaching developed over concerns about a perpetual

lack of academic success experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse students (Brown & Crippen, 2017). Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay, leading experts of culturally responsive teaching, have common concerns about the negative impact of traditional schooling practices on students of color (Lim et al., 2019).

Ladson-Billings' research focused on the knowledge and practices of effective teachers of African American students (Brown & Crippen, 2017). Culturally relevant teaching, to Ladson-Billings, involves the teacher's use of students' cultural backgrounds to maintain cultural awareness and transcend negative impacts from the dominant culture (Duncan, 2017). Gay (2015) argued enhancing curricula through the inclusion of student backgrounds increases the learning of linguistically and ethnically diverse students. Collectively, both ideologies contribute to a rich and evidence-based view of successful culturally responsive teachers (Brown & Crippen, 2017).

Multicultural education. Martin (2016) suggested that culturally responsive teaching is a tool to accomplish the goal of multicultural education. Multicultural education incorporates cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness to provide instruction to diverse populations and promote positive relationships with students (Cherng & Davis, 2017). The principle of multicultural education is educational equity for all students, irrespective of culture (Cherng & Davis, 2017). Culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education both strive to eliminate barriers to educational opportunities and facilitate success for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Gay, 2015; Patish, 2016).

Educators demonstrate multicultural teaching through multicultural children's literature, book talks, peer reading, and student feedback (Kelley et al., 2015). Culturally responsive teaching requires teachers to understand the personal cultural identities and individual cultures of

diverse students in the classroom (Hammond, 2015). A culturally responsive environment facilitates collaboration and cooperation, increasing students' comfort, confidence, validation, and empowerment (Kelley et al., 2015).

Characteristics of culturally responsive teaching. A pedagogy that recognizes, responds to and celebrates cultures offers equitable access to education for students from diverse cultures (Lim et al., 2019). The pedagogy of culturally responsive teaching recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in teaching and learning (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Although there is no script or formula for culturally responsive teaching because every classroom has unique needs (Bennett et al., 2018), culturally responsive teaching has certain characteristics (Patish, 2016).

Positive perspectives on parents and families. Parents are critical partners in education because parents are the child's first teachers (Bennett et al., 2018). Culturally responsive teachers engage in dialogue with parents to learn about the student and invite parents to aid in communicating high expectations and interest in student academics (Bennett et al., 2018). According to Bennett et al. (2018), parental involvement acknowledges parents' roles in children's lives, recognizes the diversity of values and perspectives in the school community, provides opportunities to build a collaborative problem-solving structure, and increases achievement opportunities for all students.

Communication of high expectations. Culturally responsive teachers hold high expectations concerning academic achievement for all students (Kelley et al., 2015). High expectations require the teacher to become aware of self, other cultures, and counter-narratives to the negative stereotypes associated with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations (Mitchell, 2015). Teachers need to view students as capable of meeting high expectations.

Teachers with high academic expectations scaffold instruction with concrete guidance, corrective feedback, cultural contexts, and information processing opportunities (Hammond, 2015; Kelley et al., 2015). Culturally responsive teachers communicate kindness toward students while simultaneously expecting students to perform to high standards (Hammond, 2015).

Multicultural curricula and instruction. Children from homes in which language and culture are incongruent with school experiences are disadvantaged in the learning process and become alienated and disengaged from learning (Mitchell, 2015). People from different cultures learn in different ways and sometimes have different learning expectations (Hammond, 2015). Some cultural groups prefer cooperative learning, while other cultural groups prefer to work independently (Hammond, 2015). To maximize learning opportunities, teachers should gain knowledge of cultures represented in the classroom and adapt lessons to reflect students' communication and learning styles and maximize the learning opportunities of diverse students (Hammond, 2015). A multicultural classroom environment facilitates collaboration and cooperation where students are comfortable, confident, validated, and empowered (Kelley et al., 2015).

Multicultural instruction integrates and incorporates diverse ways of understanding, knowing, and representing information (Kelley et al., 2015). Learning occurs in classroom environments designed to encourage multicultural viewpoints and incorporate knowledge relevant to students (Anthony, 2017). The curriculum in a culturally responsive classroom includes topics related to students' cultures and backgrounds (Gay, 2015). The curriculum should challenge students to develop higher-order thinking skills and knowledge (Hammond, 2015). Teachers use counter-narratives and storytelling of students' personal experiences to

grow new knowledge and make meaningful connections between school and students' realities (Mitchell, 2015).

Culturally responsive educators teach students to understand multiple ways to interpret an event, action, or statement (Brown & Crippen, 2017). Students become active participants in learning, with opportunities to learn in diverse ways or share perspectives based on personal culture and social experiences (Patish, 2016). In a culturally responsive classroom environment, the number of disciplinary infractions from students frustrated with ineffective instruction tends to decrease (Patish, 2016).

Teacher self-awareness and culturally responsive teaching. Developing an understanding of personal culture builds awareness of deep cultural characteristics (Hammond, 2015). Acknowledgment and understanding of personal cultural identity and perspectives enable educators to recognize the cultural diversity of students (Brown & Crippen, 2017; Gay, 2015). Culturally responsive teachers take time to build awareness of implicit racial biases through critical reflection (Hammond, 2015).

Mitchell (2015) conducted a study in which teachers participated in a workshop to explore personal cultural identity and determine ways to use personal cultural identity with students and colleagues. The teacher-participants learned to apply cultural perspectives through culturally responsive teaching and discovered how to implement culturally responsive teaching strategies in the classroom. Based on the workshop results, Mitchell concluded multicultural self-efficacy beliefs increase when teachers become conscious of personal cultural identity (Mitchell, 2015), and with increased multicultural self-efficacy, teachers become advocates for students from diverse cultures and believe in the ability to create change for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Mitchell, 2015).

Implicit racial bias. Going beyond mere recognition of other cultures, culturally responsive teachers acknowledge personal beliefs, assumptions, and biases to determine potential impacts on classroom interactions (Patish, 2016). Hammond (2015) used neuroscience to describe implicit bias as an individual's response to a certain group based on unconscious attitudes and stereotypes. Engagement in implicit bias is the brain's way of processing information using shortcuts known as stereotypes, based on extended exposure to cultural messages which carve neurological pathways of understanding (Hammond, 2015).

Implicit biases often go unchecked and appear normal and inconsequential to daily life (Patish, 2016). A classroom teacher has the authority and power to penalize students behaving in ways inconsistent with personal cultural views (Anthony, 2017). Anthony (2017) posited educators have a responsibility to evaluate personal positions versus students' position within the majority power structure.

Emotionally conscious educators are aware of interpersonal responses to students based on divergent beliefs (Anthony, 2017). Mapping one's culture is a self-reflective practice necessary for building a critical lens towards teaching and learning (Patish, 2016). Hammond (2015) proposed teachers learn features of individualist and collectivist culture as well as oral and written traditions across cultures. Individualistic cultures value independent achievement, self-reliance, and competition (Hammond, 2015). Collectivist cultures rely on group interconnection and dialogue, interdependence, and collaboration (Hammond, 2015). Individualist students stand to benefit from working independently, while collectivist students are more likely to need to collaborate with a group for academic success.

Contrary communication styles between cultures are an important reference point for reflection (Hammond, 2015). Indirect directives are a common communication style in some

cultures but sometimes confuse students from cultures in which directives are recognized via direct communication (Hammond, 2015). Hammond (2015) posed the following example: If a classroom teacher asks a student whether the student is ready to have a seat and start working, then the teacher could be using a question to indirectly redirect student behavior. A student of a different culture might misinterpret the teacher's directive as optional and face consequences for disobeying the teacher due to cultural miscommunication. Teachers need awareness to develop alternative explanations to avoid misinterpreting behaviors of culturally and linguistically diverse students as defiant or intellectually deficient (Brown & Crippen, 2017; Hramiak, 2015).

Critical reflection. Reflective practice helps educators make connections with students (Mitchell, 2015). Through critical reflection, teachers learn similarities between themselves and students and increase empathy for students, thereby fostering the development of bonds between teachers and students (Brown & Crippen, 2017). Mitchell (2015) and Koonce (2018) presented distinctions between pity and empathy. Pity creates a deficit mindset about culturally and linguistically diverse students. Culturally responsive teachers use empathy to encourage marginalized students to reach full potential through rigorous instruction (Hammond, 2015).

Critical reflection allows teachers to challenge mindsets and assumptions about differences and recognize difference does not imply deficiency (Hramiak, 2015). Teachers avoid a deficit viewpoint by examining and evaluating differences to find an underlying reason for cultural misunderstanding (DeCapua, 2016). Critical reflection on personal culture and conscious self-awareness are essential to culturally responsive teaching (Bennett et al., 2018). Teachers need to understand personal cultural identity and perspectives to recognize the cultural diversity of students in the classroom (Mitchell, 2015). According to Mitchell (2015), cultural self-awareness leads to the awareness of students' cultural backgrounds and creates a safe

learning environment.

Structural racialization. Structural racialization refers to incongruities hidden in seemingly harmless institutional practices or structures that reduce opportunities for economically disadvantaged people, people of color, and immigrants (Hammond, 2015). Structural racialization is connected to where an individual or group lives, which determines opportunities and access to material resources and quality services in healthcare, housing, and education (Gay, 2015). In education, school is a tool to uphold the tenets of critical race theory (Logan et al., 2018). The instructional strategies used by schools presume marginalized students are deficient and rely on assessment tools to justify the deficit perspective relative to the achievement potential of marginalized students (Logan et al., 2018).

Everyday interactions between educators, students, and formal school policies and practices teach students about race, racism, and racial positioning (Lee, Park, & Wong, 2016). Culturally responsive teachers recognize educational trends that reflect discriminatory practices of the larger society (Patish, 2016). A problem lies within the structure and constructs of formal education, which reject knowledge and skills different from the established norms of the dominant culture (DeCapua, 2016).

Marginalized students receive more punitive disciplinary action, which decreases instructional time and hinders the ability to become independent learners capable of performing higher-order thinking tasks (Hammond, 2015; Patish, 2016). Teacher awareness of the structures and practices in educational systems, which disregard students based on race, ethnicity, social class, and home background, is crucial (Patish, 2016). Educators need a critical lens to identify seemingly benign or supposedly well-intentioned policies that negatively reinforce the status quo within institutions (Anthony, 2017).

Caring teachers and culturally responsive teaching. Caring teachers maintain high academic and behavioral expectations for students, have positive attitudes about students' intellectual capabilities and use appropriate academic strategies to help students achieve the highest potential (Patish, 2016). Teachers who demonstrate care for students through rigorous teaching generate greater success compared to teachers who do not show the same expectations for student performance (Cartledge et al., 2015). Self-reflective teachers who understand students' cultural identities and backgrounds hold students accountable for high quality academic, behavioral, and social actions (Hammond, 2015). Showing genuine concern for student well-being is essential to build a culture of care (Hammond, 2015). Learning partnerships are developed in classrooms with a caring culture to help dependent learners become independent learners (Hammond, 2015).

Culturally responsive caring teachers are simultaneously demanding and supportive to create learning environments marked by emotional warmth (Hammond, 2015; Patish, 2016). Teachers who display personal warmth and authentic concern for students earn the right to demand engagement and effort (Hammond, 2015). Warm demanders focus on building rapport and trust, express warmth non-verbally, hold high expectations with emotional support and instructional scaffolding and encourage productive struggle (Hammond, 2015). Critical caring is important when educators and students come from different racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds because students are motivated by authentic care from teachers (Koonce, 2018).

Increasing the level of genuine caring for students in teachers' philosophies and ideologies enhances cultural responsiveness and influences the type of classroom community established (Patish, 2016). Students need to connect with adults who display caring, empathy, generosity, respect, reciprocity, and a genuine desire to know students personally (Duncan,

2017). According to Duncan (2017), students with caring teachers develop resiliency, confidence, adaptive capacity, self-sufficiency, and knowledge of themselves as learners. Patish (2016) argued a changed mindset could improve the ability and desire of teachers to work with students from various backgrounds.

Culturally responsive teaching to minimize cultural conflicts. In a study examining preservice teachers' sense of self-efficacy in resolving a cultural conflict involving an African American student, the authors found teachers felt moderately efficacious (Siwatu & Starker, 2010). According to the results of Siwatu and Starker's study, as preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs strengthened, confidence to resolve a cultural conflict involving an African American student increased. Self-efficacy beliefs are powerful predictors of an individual's expected behavior (Siwatu et al., 2016). The implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices often minimizes cultural conflicts in the classroom (Siwatu & Starker, 2010). Understanding relationships between culture and classroom behavior could influence teachers' decision to implement culturally responsive interventions to resolve cultural conflicts in the classroom (Siwatu et al., 2017).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a concept related to social cognitive theory (Unsal et al., 2016). Social cognitive theory suggests individuals contribute to personal motivation and actions based on environmental influences (Bandura, 1986). According to Sezgin and Erdogan (2018), social cognitive theory aligns with the role of self-efficacy in human behavior because beliefs affect actions and opinions. Bandura (1986), a pioneer of self-efficacy concepts, defined self-efficacy as belief in the ability to plan and execute processes to accomplish a task. Self-efficacy beliefs affect thought patterns, which influence the self-appraisal of capabilities (Bandura, 1986).

Siwatu et al. (2016) posited self-efficacy is not about the skills necessary to perform a task, but about beliefs in the ability to utilize the necessary skills.

Sources of self-efficacy. Four factors affect self-efficacy (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017; Unsal et al., 2016). The first factor is the experience of mastery, in which an individual obtains information about the personal potential for success through positive experiences (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Experience mastery is most crucial to self-efficacy because achievements promote self-efficacy beliefs and failure decreases self-efficacy beliefs (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016).

Vicarious experience, the second factor, refers to observing the achievements of others to generate confidence in the personal ability to achieve the same or similar accomplishments (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017; Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). A third factor is social persuasion, in which self-belief is developed through feedback about success from the surrounding environment (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016; Unsal et al., 2016). The second and third factors bring attention to the need for teacher support and community building among colleagues (Korte & Simonsen, 2018). Physiological and emotional circumstances are the last factor to affect self-efficacy (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Emotional and physical readiness to engage in certain types of behavior helps an individual attempt a task and develop positive self-efficacy (Unsal et al., 2016).

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs. Teachers' opinions or perceptions of personal competence are closely related to teaching performance (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Unsal et al. (2016) found a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and performance. Confident teachers perform in a superior manner to teachers with less confidence (Bandura, 1986). Self-confidence in the ability to provide students with an adequate education is linked to self-efficacy beliefs (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017; Peker, Erol, & Gultekin, 2018). Cankaya

(2018) highlighted the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and teachers' perceived ability to provide effective instruction, classroom management, and student engagement. Teachers' beliefs in instructional practice are related to the productivity of the classroom learning environment (Bandura, 1986).

Teacher performance and motivation. Classroom teachers are the most valuable variable in student achievement (Siwatu et al., 2011). Perceptions of self-efficacy affect the activities selected by classroom teachers (Unsal et al., 2016). Teachers exhibiting high self-efficacy develop effective and innovative instructional strategies, while educators with low self-efficacy rely on direct and whole-group instruction (Siwatu et al., 2011).

Less challenging, repetitive curricula focus on Bloom's taxonomy of lower-level cognitive skills (Adams, 2015). Culturally and linguistically diverse students need opportunities to engage in productive struggle to grow brain capacity (Hammond, 2015). Self-efficacy determines effort exerted towards achieving a task (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Teachers with low self-efficacy are less likely to create learning environments with rigorous academic processes designed for student success (Sezgin & Erdogan, 2018).

Teacher self-efficacy is critical in shaping teacher effectiveness and motivation (Unsal et al., 2016). Self-efficacy is related to performance because beliefs influence behavior and motivation (Siwatu et al., 2011). Callaway (2017) found teachers had moderately low beliefs in the ability to overcome external influences related to educating students. Self-efficacy beliefs influence the motivation needed to exert effort and display persistence and resilience when faced with negative circumstances (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy display more flexibility in teaching and are motivated to help all students (Unsal et al., 2016).

Teacher attrition. Low teacher self-efficacy is a primary motivation for teacher attrition (McKim & Velez, 2015). Korte and Simonsen (2018) linked teacher self-efficacy to career commitment, job satisfaction, retention, and teacher quality. Unprepared or inexperienced teachers have a three to five-year turnaround rate (Siwatu et al., 2011). Teachers increase efficacious thoughts with increased levels of perceived support (Korte & Simonsen, 2018). School administrators need to identify factors negatively impacting teacher self-efficacy to improve retention efforts (Gonzalez, Peters, Orange, & Grigsby, 2016).

Teacher attrition is greater in schools with higher rates of poverty and marginalized students (Siwatu et al., 2011). Cankaya (2018) found student teachers reported less self-efficacy than practicing teachers. Inexperienced teachers are assigned to low-performing schools, while experienced and high-performing teachers receive promotions to high-achieving schools (Harper, 2015).

Support for teacher self-efficacy. Classroom teachers need to perceive support from the administrative leadership and other teachers in the school (Korte & Simonsen, 2018). The educational system has not adopted corporate philosophes and resources for onboarding practices of new or early-career employees (Korte & Simonsen, 2018). In education, unlike other professions, school districts place newly certified graduates in positions requiring the same responsibilities as veteran educators, without organized support (Korte & Simonsen, 2018). Teachers need support to increase low self-efficacy beliefs or challenge inflated self-efficacy beliefs (Wyatt, 2015). Korte and Simonsen (2018) indicated the perceived level of support for teachers from administrative leadership and colleagues predicts teachers' self-efficacy, with high levels of perceived support resulting in more efficacious self-perception and increased probability of career commitment.

In addition to the support from supervisors and coworkers, Korte and Simonsen (2018) describe how various other forms of support increase the likelihood of teacher retention. Personal support from siblings, parents, friends, spouses, and children contributes to teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and motivation to stay committed to teaching. Emotional support includes thoughts of concern, trust, empathy, and love from surrounding individuals. Appraisal support involves constructive feedback and affirmation. Instrumental support helps avoid attrition with tangible materials such as gifts, money, or donations of resources or time. Informational support is the acceptance of advice or suggestions (Korte & Simonsen, 2018).

Student attitudes and engagement. Students' attitudes towards school and classroom teachers are related to teacher self-efficacy (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016; Unsal et al., 2016). A close relationship exists between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and students' attitudes about school (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Self-efficacy is critical for enhancing the quality of instruction and increasing student achievement (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016).

Moreover, teachers influence the development of student self-efficacy (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Students make judgments about personal efficacy based on the evaluations and perceptions of teachers (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Relationship building between teachers and students, a cornerstone of culturally responsive teaching, is imperative to avoid potential damage to students' self-efficacy beliefs (Brown & Crippen, 2017; Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). A failure to perform academically under teachers' expectations often results in decreased self-efficacy perceptions among students (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Teacher-student relationships throughout the learning process significantly affect the perception of self-efficacy (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016).

Students in Duncan's (2017) study indicated positive relationships with adults in school who helped overcome challenges. Lih and Ismail (2019) reported student engagement predicts student literacy. Self-efficacy in teaching motivates and encourages educators to foster an engaging learning environment (Sezgin & Erdogan, 2018). Engaging instructional activities provide students with opportunities to meet teachers' expectations and improve achievement (Callaway, 2017).

Transformational leadership and teacher self-efficacy. Teacher motivation and persistence increase levels of teacher self-efficacy (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). When teachers have efficacious beliefs about the collective capacity to affect the quality of teaching and learning, student achievement rises. Extensive experience and mastery, social persuasion, vicarious experience, and affective states determine teachers' perceptions of self-competence (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Leadership is critical to the collective development of self-efficacy perceptions among teachers and staff (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018).

A significant relationship exists between the characteristics of a school principal and a teacher's sense of self-efficacy (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016). Principals with transformational leadership styles positively affect the school environment, including organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and teachers' job satisfaction (Hetland, Hetland, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2018). When a transformational leader focuses on efforts to increase teacher capacity and motivation, the quality of education improves (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018). A school principal's capacity to influence and intellectually stimulate teachers predicts changes in teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016). Feedback and continuous trainings build efficacy and give teachers encouragement to try new strategies with a fresh perspective (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016).

Leithwood and Sun developed a transformational leadership model to describe four dimensions of leadership (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018). The first dimension involves setting directions, with the leader developing a shared vision, fostering acceptance of group goals, and communicating high expectations. The second dimension involves developing people, including the provision of individualized support and intellectual stimulation (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018). The third dimension is an organizational redesign focused on practices geared towards strengthening school culture, engaging parents and community, and building structures to allow collaboration (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018). The last dimension is improving instructional programs through ensuring sufficient program staffing, providing instructional support for teachers, monitoring school activities, and safeguarding staff from distractions from work (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018). Transformational leaders empower teachers to build self-efficacy and improve student achievement (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018).

Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Beliefs

A gap in the literature exists concerning the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of certified teachers (Bradshaw et al., 2018). Debnam et al. (2015) highlighted a gap in the field regarding the measurement of culturally responsive teaching strategies. Teachers self-report higher rates of self-efficacy than are observed (Debnam et al., 2015). Interpretation of teachers' self-doubting responses on traditional self-efficacy measures is difficult because teachers' perspectives are unclear (Siwatu et al., 2016).

Brown and Crippen (2017) studied the knowledge and practices of six high school life science teachers attempting to implement culturally responsive pedagogy during a professional development opportunity. By the end of the professional development period, the teachers had changed views, from believing poor performance to result from deficiencies among students to

believing poor performance to result from lacking teacher resources. The altered viewpoint led teachers to situate students as leaders with authoritative knowledge, focus on community building, and use culturally responsive pedagogy to create a bridge between students' homes and school (Brown & Crippen, 2017). The research of Ortiz, Capraro, and Capraro (2018) revealed an explicit alignment between culture and mathematics, suggesting the need to change the learning norms of traditional teaching and pedagogical strategies. In another study, Asian and Caucasian students in a mathematics classroom lost interest and lacked participation and motivation when a rap lesson was implemented (Ortiz et al., 2018). Teachers should assess the motivations of all students to increase engagement (Ortiz et al., 2018).

Teacher beliefs about the importance of culturally responsive teaching. The role of cultural diversity in early school years depends on the cultural perspectives of teachers (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). Alaca and Pyle (2018) found prior beliefs and experiences shaped teachers' perspectives on child development and classroom practices in early teaching years. Although five of the six teachers believed children's cultural backgrounds needed to be considered in kindergarten, only three reported regularly implementing culturally relevant practices (Alaca & Pyle, 2018).

The role of cultural diversity in education is critical because children enter school shaped by home culture, and educational experiences have significant implications for future social, emotional, and academic outcomes (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). There are different approaches to addressing ethnicity and race in the classroom (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). A colorblind approach values sameness, allowing educators to ignore racial and ethnic differences among students (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). Anti-bias curricula highlight the significance of celebrating diversity, developing positive self-identities, and countering discrimination (Alaca & Pyle, 2018).

Although young children are naturally accepting of others, York (2016) cautioned against avoiding an acceptance-focused perspective based on misconceptions of young children's inability to recognize differences or understand bias.

Geerlings, Thijs, and Verkuyten (2017) studied teachers' sense of self-efficacy when working with individual students of diverse ethnicities rather than with the entire classroom. Study results showed teachers are less efficacious when working with individual students from ethnically marginalized groups. Moreover, pronounced levels of low self-efficacy when differences between ethnic groups were more salient. Native Dutch teachers in classrooms with a lower proportion of marginalized students reported lower self-efficacy in teaching marginalized students, while teachers in highly diverse classrooms reported greater self-efficacy (Geerlings et al., 2017).

Preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Siwatu et al. (2016) found preservice teachers reported high self-efficacy in helping students identify as important classroom members and in developing positive personal relationships with students. Preservice teachers reported less self-efficacy in implementing more difficult aspects of culturally responsive teaching, which require curriculum and instructional integration of students' culture (Siwatu et al., 2016). Teachers' lack of knowledge concerning students' cultural backgrounds and lack of appreciation for diversity were found to result in low-performance expectations (Mitchell, 2015).

Preservice teachers attributed culturally responsive self-efficacy doubts to ineffective field experiences, lack of knowledge regarding student diversity and culturally responsive pedagogy, and inadequate exposure to culturally responsive teaching topics and models (Siwatu et al., 2016). Siwatu (2011) utilized a mixed-methods research design, collecting quantitative

data, and then conducting face-to-face interviews to examine the nature of preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Preservice teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs practiced more of the skills and tasks outlined in the culturally responsive teacher self-efficacy scale, although the tasks were rarely presented in teacher education courses or practical teaching experiences (Siwatu, 2011).

Culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy instrumentation. Teacher self-efficacy instruments do not consistently assess a teachers' sense of efficacy when teaching in educational settings with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Siwatu & Starker, 2010). A teacher scoring as highly efficacious using the teacher self-efficacy scale might report thoughts of low self-efficacy in resolving a cultural conflict involving culturally and linguistically diverse students (Siwatu & Starker, 2010). To address the gap, the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy scale was constructed using Siwatu's culturally responsive teaching competencies and Bandura's self-efficacy construct (Siwatu et al., 2017). Preservice teachers provided information for the efficacy scale to incorporate teaching practices associated with culturally responsive pedagogy (Siwatu et al., 2016).

The combination of self-efficacy beliefs and culturally responsive teaching is essential to understanding specific teaching practices found to be effective when teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students (Siwatu & Starker, 2010). Instruments such as the Culturally Responsive Classroom Management scale uncover relationships between culture and classroom behavior, assisting teachers in making informed judgments of appropriate and inappropriate classroom behavior (Siwatu et al., 2017). The lack of research on teachers' culturally responsive self-efficacy beliefs is congruent with the scarcity of effective culturally responsive teaching interventions (Debnam et al., 2015).

Culturally efficacious evolution model. Implementation of culturally relevant standards-based curricula and instruction is challenging (Flores, Claeys, Gist, Riojas Clark, & Villarreal, 2015). The application of culturally relevant instruction requires educators to engage in critical pedagogical practices. A teacher remains in a state of being, becoming, and transforming throughout the teaching career, and engagement in critical reflection facilitates the attainment of new understandings (Flores et al., 2015).

Flores et al. (2015) presented the culturally efficacious evolution model, which is based on a social constructivist transformative framework. The model suggests the culturally efficacious evolution of teachers begins with awakening cultural consciousness through the recognition and examination of unexplored personal identity (Flores et al., 2015). In the next step, the teacher acquires cultural competence through acknowledging and understanding cultural displays and honing the ability to function within a foreign cultural system. The teacher develops further cultural proficiency by attaining a deeper understanding of the cultural knowledge of others and applying cultural connections in practice. Following is the actualization of cultural and critical responsivity, in which individuals enact transformative and critical practices to advocate for social justice while promoting empowerment and self-determination. The final step is realizing cultural efficacy and becoming a transformative guide with the responsibility for ensuring practice impacts outcome (Flores et al., 2015).

Chapter Summary

Culturally responsive teaching is a process of creating a relevant and rigorous learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse students through the use of cultural knowledge and prior experiences, an understanding of different frames of reference, and an acceptance of student performance styles (Gay, 2015; Kelley et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings,

1998). The theoretical framework of critical race theory underscores the significance of developing culturally responsive teachers (Walls, 2015). The implementation of culturally relevant standards-based curricula is challenging and requires educators to engage in critical pedagogical practices (Flores et al., 2015). Although research on preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs are available, there is a gap in the literature concerning the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of certified middle school teachers (Bradshaw et al., 2018).

Presented and discussed in the methodology is the research approach. Qualitative phenomenological methods were utilized to describe the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of certified middle school teachers. The purpose, research design and rationale, roles, step-by-step procedures, and plan for data analysis are outlined. The methodology provides a research approach to improve the conceptualization of the impact of teacher self-efficacy beliefs on culturally responsive teaching and incorporate teachers' perspectives into the existing literature.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions of personal abilities to rigorously teach culturally diverse students. Unlike applied research, which solves a problem, curiosity, and desire to expand general knowledge drive basic research (Bentley, Gulbrandsen, & Kyvik, 2015; Sapir, 2017). A basic research approach improves the conceptualization of the impact of teacher self-efficacy on culturally responsive teaching and incorporates teachers' perspectives into the existing literature. The following questions guided the phenomenological study:

Research question one: What are the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in a Central Florida school district?

Research question two: What lived experiences influence middle school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs when implementing culturally responsive teaching in culturally diverse classroom settings in a Central Florida school district?

Research question three: What do middle school teachers perceive as the greatest successes and challenges with implementing culturally responsive teaching in a Central Florida school district?

The qualitative phenomenological study's purpose, research design, rationale, and roles were presented in the methodology. Step-by-step procedures and a plan for data analysis were outlined. Precautions were taken to ensure reliability and validity. Ethical procedures were discussed, and a summary was provided.

Research Design and Rationale

A qualitative phenomenological research design was appropriate for describing middle school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding culturally responsive teaching. A qualitative approach such as phenomenology facilitates the exploration of phenomena and the description of individual experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Phenomenological research reveals and interprets individual perspectives and perceptions concerning a specific phenomenon. Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, suggested using a phenomenological approach to examine a phenomenon objectively (Butler, 2016). The phenomenon investigated was teachers' self-confidence and self-belief in implementing culturally responsive teaching.

A phenomenological design was an appropriate means to understand the essence of participants' perspectives through face-to-face interaction (Creswell, 2016). The methodology aided the discovery of meanings attributed to participants' thoughts, opinions, beliefs, assumptions, and values. Phenomenology allows for an exploration of experiences where knowledge of a phenomenon is limited and participants' perspectives can provide insight (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An understanding of teachers' lived experiences of culturally responsive teaching offers insight on needed teacher self-efficacy support systems and professional development.

Phenomenology has several advantages. Emergent themes from qualitative data provide a deeper understanding of teachers' beliefs regarding the implementation of culturally responsive teaching. Studying and creating meaning from participants' lived experiences might expose misconceptions (Creswell, 2016). Phenomenological methods such as interviews ensure participants' voices are heard. Focusing on how people perceive a phenomenon is valuable to the body of literature.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher was a key instrument in investigating the phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). Implicit epoche and reduction are essential in suspending perceptions (van Manen, 2017). Epoche is the blocking of assumptions and prejudices to examine the phenomenon as presented by participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Bracketing out information, as part of epoche, sets aside experiences and biases which could influence the qualitative phenomenological study's participants or findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A potential conflict of interest was the researcher's position as a certified teacher in the participating district, although the researcher did not work at the participating school. There was no supervisory connection or power over any participants. Judgement of the participants was suspended through epoche, and the lack of relationship between participants and researcher.

Research Procedures

Phenomenological methodology unveils what participants experience and how participants interpret experiences (van Manen, 2017). Flexible and interactive instrumentation, such as semi-structured interviews and a focus group, aided in the gathering of in-depth data on participants' experiences. The following description of the research procedures outlines the qualitative phenomenological study's population, sample selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data preparation.

Population and Sample Selection

Certified middle school teachers from a large urban school district were selected. Purposeful sampling was utilized to recruit individuals who could describe the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2016). The sample size was large enough to yield information about the phenomenon and address research questions.

Population. Participants were certified middle school teachers from the state of Florida in the United States. The participating school district included 38 total middle schools, each of which employed an average of 65 teachers. A list of middle schools was found on the website of the Florida Department of Education. Three schools were selected from the list, and a principal from one of the selected schools agreed to allow teachers to participate.

School selection was based on school diversity, which was assessed using public-access school demographic information. Schools with a marginalized student population of 40% or more were considered for participation. The racial composition of the student population of the participating school district in the 2019–2020 school year was 43% Hispanic/Latino, 25% White, 24% Black or African American, 5% Asian, < 1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, < 1% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 2% two or more races (Florida Department of Education, 2020). The school district serves a diverse student population from 199 countries and who speak 164 different languages and dialects. The racial composition of the teacher population of the participating school district in the 2019–2020 school year was 60% White, 18% Hispanic/Latino, 16% Black or African American, 2% Asian, < 1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, < 1% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 2% two or more races (Florida Department of Education, 2020). The school district serves a diverse student population from 199 countries and who speak 164 different languages and dialects.

Sample. Qualitative research relies on making meaning from descriptions of a few people who have experienced a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Purposeful sampling helped find participants who met the established requirements and assured the quality of described experiences and perceptions (Creswell, 2016). A principal from a middle school with a diverse student population agreed to allow teachers to participate, and an email was sent to

teachers to invite participation. Teacher certification and years of teaching experience were determined through answers to demographic questions sent in a follow-up email.

A sample of 15 certified middle school teachers from one school participated. Two participants were male and 13 were female. Subjects taught included three social studies, three science, four math, and five English language arts teachers. The years of teaching experience ranged from nearly two to 20 years.

Recruiting and informed consent. Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and permission from the school district, contact with the school principal was made to request permission to contact teachers. Email addresses were obtained through public record access on the school district's website. Subject area and special area teachers were purposefully selected and invited to participate via email (Appendix B). The subjects included were reading, math, science, social studies, art, music, foreign language, and physical education. Interested candidates responded by email.

Potential participants who responded to the email of interest were then sent an email including information about informed consent, answers to questions, and potential dates and times for an interview. An electronic copy of the informed consent form was emailed to participants for signature before the start of each interview (Appendix C). Participants either printed and signed the informed consent forms or signed electronically. The scanned or photographed copies of the informed consent forms were returned through email, placed in a password-protected file, and deleted from email immediately. Participants were encouraged to keep a copy of informed consent for personal records. At the start of each interview, a verbal and visual review of informed consent was conducted.

Instrumentation

Semi-structured interviews and a focus group were the instruments used for data collection in the qualitative phenomenological study. One-on-one interviews encourage participants to offer personal perspectives in a safe environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Focus group sessions facilitate dialogue to help participants elaborate on experiences and perspectives (Creswell, 2016).

Interview questionnaire. Interviews provide an opportunity to ask follow-up questions to gain a more in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). The interview questions were inquiry-based to encourage conversation (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Five open-ended questions and associated sub-questions were developed. Interviews were essential for discovering the types of self-efficacy-forming experiences preservice teachers encountered and the perceived influence of these experiences on the development of culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy (Siwatu, 2011). Siwatu's (2007) quantitative Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy scale, which had been utilized in earlier studies determining pre-service teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy (Siwatu, 2011; Siwatu et al., 2016; Siwatu & Starker, 2010), was used to guide question development. A new instrument was needed to elicit qualitative insight of questions asked on a quantitative questionnaire.

Developed in 1994, the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy scale was suitable as a guide to design qualitative questions (Siwatu, 2007). The scale presents questions to assess teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, lived experiences, successes, and challenges. The internal reliability of the administration of the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy scale has been measured at 0.96, indicating the scale provides instrumental validity for questions developed in the qualitative phenomenological study (Siwatu, 2011). Permission to

use Siwatu's (2007) Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy scale to develop interview and focus group questions was granted (Appendix D).

The modifications of Siwatu's (2007) quantitative Likert-scale included condensation of scale elements into an open-ended questionnaire. Details from the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy scale were used in the development of follow-up questions to encourage interview conversation. The validity of the instrument was established with an interview protocol matrix (Castillo-Montoya, 2016), which aligns research questions with interview questions to ensure face validity (Appendix E).

The interview questionnaire included a detailed protocol (Appendix F). An interview protocol was an instrument of inquiry as well as an instrument for conversation (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Patton, 2015). The protocol included a script, a variety of questions, and follow-up questions. A five-person expert panel of individuals, who did not participate in the qualitative phenomenological study, reviewed the interview protocol, and provided feedback. Revisions of the interview protocol were made based on feedback and according to the Survey or Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel (Appendix G).

Focus group questionnaire. Focus group data were collected to allow participants an opportunity to share experiences and perspectives and expand upon ideas (Creswell, 2016). Seven interview participants agreed to participate in the focus group, and four of the seven teachers attended the session. Questions from the interview questionnaire were used. A protocol similar to the interview protocol was established for the focus group (Appendix H).

Data Collection

Teacher interviews were originally scheduled to be conducted after school in the conference room of a public library. Teacher participants could choose an alternative option to

in-person interviews, such as a video conferencing platform. A more convenient option for participants lowers emotional stress and creates a comfortable environment to collect data (Glesne, 2016). Due to a nationwide pandemic, semi-structured interviews and focus group data were collected in the environments most convenient for participants. The conferencing platform Zoom was utilized for all interviews and the focus group discussion.

Interview data collection. An interview protocol was followed to ask participants questions regarding culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Interviews lasted between 27 and 53 minutes and occurred over 1 week. The one-on-one sessions began with a review of informed consent to ensure participants understood the voluntary nature of participation and the right to rescind offer to participate at any time. Informed consent was displayed on the computer screen during initial portion of Zoom interview for review and discussion. Participants were again asked for permission, granted previously in the informed consent form, to record the interview. Interviews were video recorded using Zoom to facilitate analysis with transcription (Creswell, 2016). Immediately after each interview, the audio of the recording was extracted and saved to a password-protected computer file, and the video was discarded.

A date and time to conduct a telephone debriefing session were scheduled at the end of each interview. During debriefing, the findings were disclosed to each participant to review and provide feedback on how closely related the themes were to participants' perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Each interview concluded with an invitation to participate in a focus group discussion.

Focus group data collection. The synergy of focus group discussions encourages participants to be outspoken and expand ideas on a given topic (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Six

participants were to be selected for the focus group to ensure the manageability of multiple voices (Creswell, 2016). Although seven participants agreed to participate, in the end only four teachers joined the discussion. A single 90-minute session took place using the online conferencing platform Zoom. Informed consent was reviewed with a digital copy displayed on the screen. Participants were asked to consent to a video recording of the session. The established focus group protocol was followed, and findings were disclosed during the debrief session as scheduled after the interview.

Data confidentiality. The informed consent forms and data collected were stored safely and confidentially. Interview and focus group data were captured using Zoom and saved in file folders on a password-protected computer. The researcher had sole password access. An informed consent form interview and focus group transcripts, and debrief session notes for each participant were added to individual computer file folders. Participants' names were masked with a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data and consent forms are preserved for three years and then discarded by deleting the computer files.

Data Preparation

Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) was used to prepare data for analysis. A CAQDAS called NVivo 1.0 was used to transcribe audio recordings and assist with the organization for theme development. NVivo is an international software program designed to aid in the management of large quantities of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities and were recorded in transcription. Transcription was reviewed line by line, using the audio recordings to ensure accuracy. Corrections were made to ensure alignment between transcribed words and participants' spoken words.

Interview and focus group data were transcribed using NVivo and were downloaded as a word document for formatting in paragraph style. Interview questions were established as heading 1, speakers were set as heading 2, and responses remained in normal paragraph style. Paragraph style preparation aided with data sorting in NVivo. NVivo's auto coding by paragraph style functionality helped to sort data by interview questions, with responses from participants organized under each question. Participants' responses were read line by line according to each interview question and were categorized into multiple codes.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the qualitative data involved interpretation of the rich and dense text (Creswell, 2016). Creswell (2016) proposed lean coding as a strategy to turn many pages of text into themes. Lean coding involves reading pages of text line by line to label the segments of information with 30 to 50 codes. Codes were reduced to about 20 as overlapping and redundant codes were removed. The identification of patterns from among the 20 codes helped collapse and group the codes and create five themes.

Lean coding was used in conjunction with in vivo coding. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2016) and Saldana (2016) proposed the use of in vivo coding as a way to capture the participants' terminology and the true essence of participants' beliefs, perceptions, and experiences. The participants' answers were kept as in vivo codes throughout the coding process and were used as block quotations to describe participants' experiences.

Although the NVivo computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software was used to assist with organizing a tremendous amount of text data, themes were developed independently using lean coding. Thirty-eight codes with 322 references attached were created based on the perceptions and experiences expressed by participants. The codes were arranged based on the

frequency of participants' references. Five codes emerged as having significantly more references than other codes. Codes with fewer references were merged with most significant codes based on similarities, and codes with two or fewer references or without a connection to the top codes were not used.

Significant codes were aggregated to include parent and child codes and then printed for review and theme creation. The printed codes were color-coded and grouped multiple times until major themes were evident. Participants' responses to the interview questions were analyzed according to each theme.

Reliability and Validity

The establishment of credibility in qualitative research was critical to the trustworthiness of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Different methods and approaches served to enhance credibility, such as member checking and triangulation (Gunawan, 2015). Interviews, a focus group, and member checking created triangulation necessary for validity. Data triangulation occurred where interview and focus group data were checked and validated by participants who were the original sources of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Member checking increased the dependability of the qualitative phenomenological study findings by allowing participants an opportunity to check the data and ensure thoughts and ideas were interpreted correctly (Leung, 2015). Participants could withdraw inconsistent information or recommend thoughts consistent with personal perceptions and beliefs during debriefing.

Gunawan (2015) suggested a detailed description and systematic plan for coding and research transferability. Thick descriptions included participants' thoughts and experiences in the context of culturally responsive teaching, offering meaningful data, and allowing readers to assess the transferability of data to related interests (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Data were

presented by theme to enhance visualization for clarity and transferability (Hancock, Amankwaa, Revell, & Mueller, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

Policies to protect human subjects were established in 1953 by the National Institute of Health (United States Department of Health, Education, & Welfare, 1979). Researchers are responsible for protecting participants by ensuring respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Information about informed consent was provided and discussed with each participant.

All participants were treated as autonomous agents. Participants were told about the purpose of the research, study procedures, and expected duration of the requested participation. All questions were thoroughly answered at any time before, during, and after the study. Participants could refuse participation or rescind the offer to participate at any time without repercussions.

Beneficence was established through the protection of the participant's identities to ensure the well-being of participants (United States Department of Health, Education, & Welfare, 1979). Re-identification was avoided by replacing participants' names with pseudonyms and excluding information about the participants' school and district association. Participant confidentiality was preserved using password-protected computer files. Justice was upheld through an equitable selection of participants, an avoidance of deception, and measures to ensure minimal risk of harm (United States Department of Health, Education, & Welfare, 1979). The protection of human participants was critical and was attended to throughout the qualitative phenomenological study, from initial contact with the participating school and teachers through post-publication.

Chapter Summary

Phenomenological research design is an appropriate method to understand the perspectives of participants regarding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018), such as culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs among certified middle school teachers. Teachers were selected from a population using purposeful sampling. Semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion were conducted after IRB approval, school district approval, and signed informed consent. Data were prepared and analyzed using the CAQDAS NVivo and lean coding. Reliability, validity, and ethical procedures were established. The qualitative phenomenological study's findings and emergent themes are presented in the research findings, data analysis, and results chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Findings, Data Analysis, and Results

An increase in the culturally and linguistically diverse student population in the United States requires teachers prepare to meet the changing classroom needs (Kelley et al., 2015). Culturally responsive, rigorous teaching makes learning relevant to culturally and linguistically diverse students. Culturally responsive teachers make connections to students' cultural knowledge and prior experiences, understand students' frames of reference and accept student performance styles (Gay, 2015). Cankaya (2018) highlighted the importance of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding personal abilities to provide effective instruction, classroom management, and student engagement. Self-efficacy beliefs are critical in the execution of effective, culturally responsive teaching (Alaca & Pyle, 2018).

Teachers with low self-efficacy beliefs lack the confidence necessary to bridge classroom cultural divides and provide rigorous educational opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Bradshaw et al., 2018; Duncan, 2017). The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions of personal abilities to rigorously teach culturally diverse students. Relevant interviews and focus group data analysis were carried out to answer three research questions.

Descriptions of data collection procedures, including information about informed consent, number of participants, location of data collection, and deviations from the planned methodology, are presented in research findings, data analysis, and results. Data analysis is discussed, including how data were secured, prepared, sorted, categorized, and coded. The results are presented based on identified themes to answer the three research questions. Techniques to enhance reliability and validity are offered, and a summary.

Data Collection

Certified teachers in diverse middle school settings were purposefully selected for participation. A principal of a central Florida middle school in which at least 40% of the student population belonged to a marginalized student group agreed to allow teachers in the school to participate in the study. The email addresses of teachers in the selected middle school were obtained through public records provided by the school district's website. A letter of interest was sent to teachers by email (Appendix B).

Interested candidates responded by email. Correspondences with interested teachers were sent with an attached informed consent form and several possible dates and times in which to conduct an interview. Participants were originally given the option of a face-to-face interview or a video interview for convenience, but due to a national pandemic, all interviews and the focus group were conducted online using the conferencing platform Zoom. Participants returned signed informed consent forms and responded with a confirmed date and time for the interview within one week of receiving the initial email invitation.

Interviews lasted between 27 and 53 minutes and occurred over one week. Interview conversations began with a discussion of the inclusion criteria, participant eligibility, the purpose of study, informed consent, and time was taken to answer participants' questions. An electronic copy of the informed consent form was displayed on the computer screen during the video conference for ease of discussion before the start of the interview (Appendix C). Participants were encouraged to keep a copy of the informed consent form for personal records. Face-to-face video teleconferences using Zoom were recorded for transcription purposes. Participants' provided permission to record on the informed consent form and verbally.

Interviews concluded with an invitation to participate in a focus group. Seven of the

participants interviewed agreed to attend an online focus group session planned for a week after the completion of interviews. Four participants logged into the video conference, which lasted 1 hr 34 min. Data from the focus group served as triangulation to enhance research credibility, but no additional data were used from the focus group to develop new codes or themes in the findings. Participants reiterated personal perceptions and respected the viewpoints of others. A focus group made up of individuals not previously interviewed could have added more substantive data.

Although 17 participants returned informed consent forms, responses from only 15 participants were included in the data analysis. One participant did not respond to the request for an interview after initial contact, and another participant withdrew during the member check session. The participant who withdrew believed their perceptions and experiences were not fully represented in the qualitative phenomenological study findings. Themes of the study were developed using the most frequently referenced codes, or words and phrases, mentioned by participants in the answers to the research questions. The limited representation of the participants' responses in the study's findings was due to the participants' responses being grouped under codes with less references. Clarification on the protocol for coding study results could have been presented at the start of the study.

The 15 participants are listed in Table 1. Each participants' gender, subject taught, and years teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students are represented in the table. All participants were assigned a pseudonym to mask identity and ensure the well-being of the participants (United States Department of Health, Education, & Welfare, 1979). The participants are listed in ascending order according to the number of years teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Table 1

Participants' Gender, Subject, and Years of Experience Teaching Diverse Students

Participant pseudonyms	Gender	Subject	Years Teaching
Tatum	Female	Social Studies	1.5 years
Phoenix	Female	ELA*	2 years
Baylor	Female	Science	3 years
Hayden	Female	Science	3 years
Finley	Female	ELA	4 years
Milan	Female	ELA	5 years
Skyler	Female	Math	5 years
Emory	Female	Science	5 years
Casey	Female	ELA	7 years
River	Female	Social Studies	10 years
Emerson	Female	Math	12 years
Dakota	Female	Social Studies	12 years
Justice	Female	ELA	14 years
Rowan	Male	Math	16 years
Frankie	Male	Math	20 years

* ELA refers to English and Language Arts.

Data Analysis

The protection of participants through data confidentiality was critical to ensure information remains undisclosed to unauthorized persons (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Signed informed consent forms, transcripts, and audio recordings from the focus group and interviews, and debriefing notes from the member check sessions were saved on a password-protected computer. Informed consent was submitted electronically, and paper copies did not need to be scanned or stored. Participants were given pseudonyms for confidentiality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All data and consent forms are kept for three years before being discarded through the deletion of computer files.

Data Preparation

Data from the interview and focus group audio recordings were transcribed using NVivo. Transcriptions were reviewed line by line for accuracy using the audio recordings. Corrections were made to ensure alignment between transcribed words and participants' spoken words. The pseudonym of each speaker was recorded in the transcriptions. Identification of speaker was essential to the organization of data using the NVivo computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software.

Interview and focus group data transcribed using NVivo were downloaded as a word document for formatting in paragraph style. Interview questions were established as heading 1, speakers were set as heading 2, and responses remained in normal paragraph style. Paragraph style preparation aided with data sorting in NVivo. NVivo's auto coding by paragraph style functionality helped to sort data by interview questions, with responses from participants organized under each question. Participants' responses were read line by line according to each

interview question and were categorized into multiple codes. Similar responses were given the same code and some responses were assigned multiple codes.

Coding and Emerging Themes

Thirty-eight codes with 322 references attached were created based on the perceptions and experiences expressed by participants. The codes were arranged based on the frequency of participants' references. Five codes emerged as having significantly more references than other codes. Codes with fewer references were merged with the most significant codes based on similarities. Codes with two or fewer references or without a connection to the top codes were not used.

Significant codes were aggregated to include parent and child codes and then printed for review and theme creation. The printed codes were color-coded and grouped multiple times until major themes were evident. Participants' responses to interview questions were analyzed according to each theme. The following sections outline participants' responses to interview questions, determination of self-efficacy, and present results according to developed themes.

Results

Teachers' responses to interview questions provided insights into teachers' perceived ability to implement culturally responsive instruction, build relationships with students, maintain cultural awareness, and communicate with culturally and linguistically diverse students and parents. Siwatu's (2007) culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy study was instrumental in determining criteria for high and low self-efficacy beliefs. Answers indicating high self-efficacy were positive and followed by specific examples. Answers indicating low self-efficacy admitted to inabilities, expressed the desire for abilities, and were not followed by specific examples.

Interview Questions

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, based on responses to interview questions, are displayed in Table 2. The teachers demonstrated high self-efficacy in defining culturally responsive teaching. Definitions included key components, such as the importance of understanding students' backgrounds in developing instructional scaffolding. Teachers reported high self-efficacy in implementing culturally responsive teaching regularly or increasingly over years of experience. Four teachers described thoughts of not having implemented culturally responsive teaching often enough.

Self-beliefs in the ability to recognize differences between the school culture and students' home cultures were high. Teachers' perceptions of the ability to minimize the effects of cultural differences were mixed. Nine teachers responded with examples of strategies designed to bridge the gap between the home and school cultures of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The other six teachers were not able to provide examples or had not implemented any strategies. Teachers described experiences of not wanting to bring attention to students of diverse backgrounds, or not understanding students' cultures enough to recognize strategies for implementation. Although four teachers reported discomfort with obtaining information about students' home lives, eleven teachers reported being comfortable with obtaining information by forming relationships with students.

The lowest self-efficacy levels involved experiences with preparing instruction to include examples of the cultural contributions of the culturally and linguistically diverse students in the classroom. Four teachers discussed examples of incorporating cultural contributions of different cultures into lessons. Teachers spoke of lessons as either planned or spontaneous. Eleven

teachers had not included the cultural contributions when planning for instruction and did not discuss cultural contributions during academic activities.

Table 2

Reported High or Low Self-Efficacy Based on Interview Questions

Interview Questions	Descriptions of SE Responses	#
1a. Based on your experiences, how would you define culturally responsive teaching?	H: Accurate definition	15
	L: Inaccurate or no definition	0
1b. How often do you implement culturally responsive teaching as you have defined it?	H: Often; daily; increased over time	11
	L: As much as possible; less than half; only on certain topics	4
2a. Have you tried to identify ways the school culture is different from your students' home culture? For example, are the norms, values, or practices different?	H: Yes, and discussed differences	15
	L: No; could not provide examples	0
2b. Do you think knowing the differences between students' home culture and school culture can improve achievement?	H: Yes, and discussed why	15
	L: No	0
2c. Have you implemented strategies to minimize the effects of the difference between your students' home culture and the school culture?	H: Yes, with examples	9
	L: Yes, without example(s); no	6
2d. Are you comfortable with obtaining information about your culturally and linguistically diverse students' home life?	H: Yes; more comfortable over time	11
	L: No; sometimes	4
3a. When preparing for instruction, do you include examples about the cultural contributions of your culturally and linguistically diverse students?	H: Yes, with examples	4
	L: No; not when planning; try but subject taught makes it difficult	11
3b. Do you try to identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally and linguistically diverse students?	H: Yes, and discussed biases found	13
	L: No, because nothing can be done; sometimes, but nothing can be done	2
3c. Do you believe that the frequency with which students' abilities are misdiagnosed would decrease if their standardized test scores were interpreted with caution? Why or why not?	H: Yes, with discussion about why	11
	L: No, systems do not recognize bias; no, the test needs to be revised; no, there needs to be a standard	4
4a. In what ways have you communicated with parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students regarding their child's achievement?	H: Concerning achievement	8
	L: Concerning only behavior; lack communication due to language barrier	7
4b. Do you believe that conveying the message that parents are an important part of the classroom would increase parent participation? Why or why not?	H: Yes, and described why	9
	L: No, but wished it would; depends on how message is conveyed; depends on parents' culture; depends on parents' responsibilities	6

Note. Descriptions of teacher responses to determine self-efficacy (SE). Listed as high (H) or low (L) self-efficacy, with the number of participants for each response.

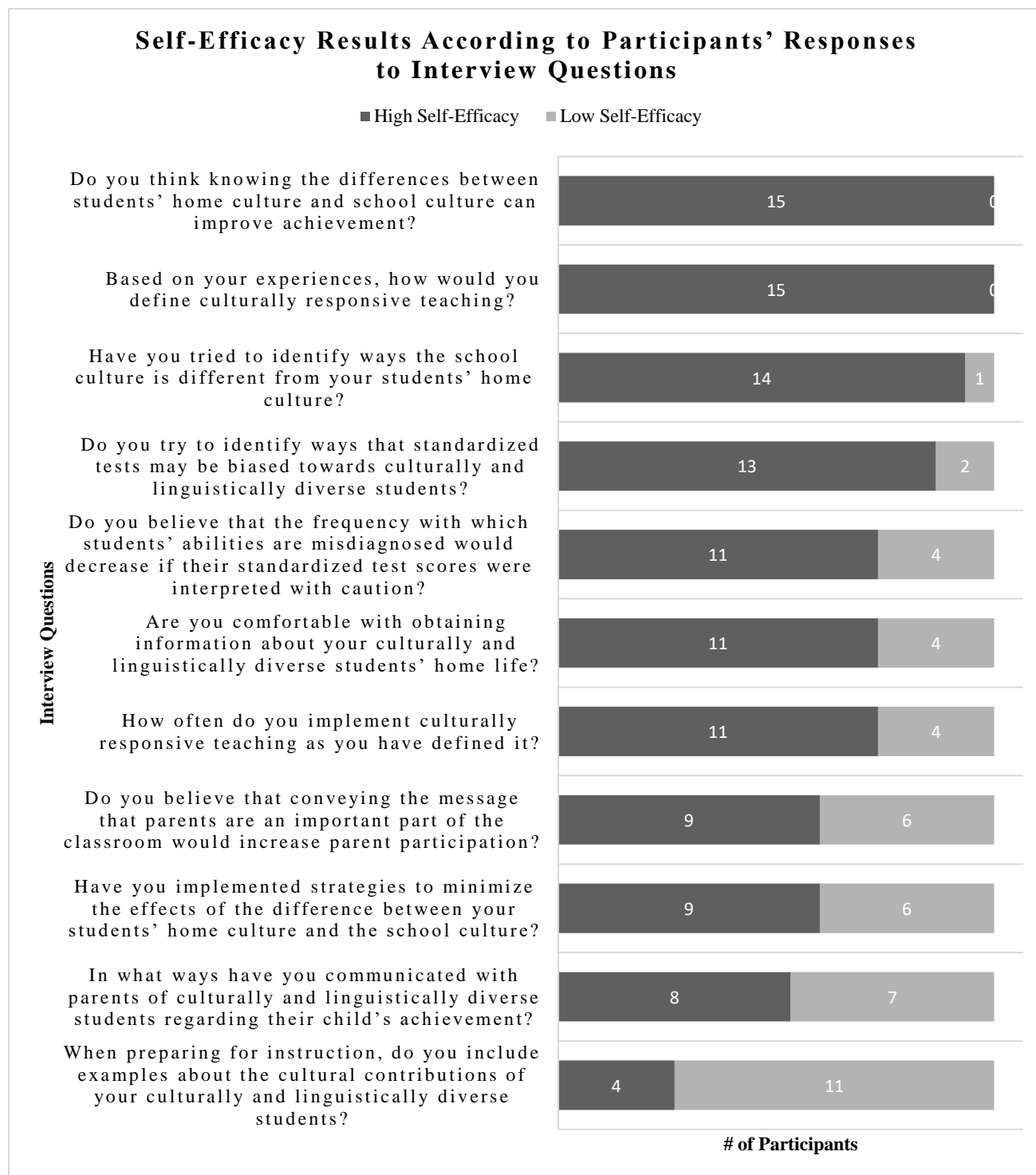


Figure 1. Self-Efficacy Results According to Participants' Responses to Interview Questions

Teachers attributed the lack of cultural inclusion to strict curriculum guidelines, reduced opportunities due to the subject taught, lack of knowledge about other cultures, and lack of consideration about including cultural contributions in lessons. On the other hand, a high percentage of teachers reported recognition of biases in standardized tests and discussed implementing vocabulary strategies to close gaps. Although most teachers recognized bias, less believed recognition would change perceptions of culturally and linguistically diverse students' academic abilities.

Teacher self-efficacy concerning parent communication and perceptions were mixed. Eight teachers described high self-efficacy beliefs in communicating about student academics with parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Seven teachers discussed methods of communication about student behavior, but not about academics. Nine teachers reported believing parent involvement would increase if parents were deemed an important part of the educational process, and five participants believed emphasis on parental importance would not change parental involvement. Teachers suggested different cultures view education differently and parents with increased responsibilities cannot change the level of involvement. Figure 1 outlines the results according to participants' responses to the interview questions.

Themes

Themes were identified from participants' responses to questions developed to answer research question one and research question two. Research question one regarded the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in a Central Florida school district. Research question two was written to inquire about lived experiences influencing middle school teachers' self-beliefs when implementing culturally responsive teaching in culturally diverse classroom settings in a Central Florida school district.

Table 3

Participants and References for Themes

Themes	# of Participants	# of References
Culturally responsive instruction	15	73
Maintaining cultural awareness	15	62
Building student relationships	13	42
Communication and language	15	28
Vocabulary strategies	11	21

Note. The number of participants who referenced each theme and the frequency with which each theme was referenced were analyzed using NVivo.

The themes capture the teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs based on the teachers' lived experiences implementing culturally responsive teaching in culturally diverse classroom settings. Themes describing teachers' beliefs and experiences included culturally responsive instruction, building student relationships, maintaining cultural awareness, vocabulary strategies, and communication and language. Themes derived from the data to answer the first two research questions are presented in Table 3. The table illustrates the number of participants out of the 15 total participants who referenced each theme and the frequency with which each theme was referenced.

Culturally responsive instruction. Teachers described experiences with efforts to apply culturally responsive teaching and instruction. Although eleven teachers reported frequent implementation, only four teachers shared examples of experiences with including students' culture when planning for instruction. Participants discussed aspects of instruction regarding

culturally responsive teaching, including a lack of training, strategies and rigor, time constraints, and making connections to the students' culture.

Lack of training. Teachers described experiences of being unprepared to implement culturally responsive teaching. Participants reported indirectly and unknowingly implementing culturally responsive teaching. "I do some things I think are culturally responsive without knowing," responded Frankie (personal communication, March 31, 2020). When asked about the frequency of culturally responsive teaching implementation, Emory added,

Not frequently enough because I do not know how to properly implement without some sort of training. Definitely not enough. There is no way I could. I do not know how. I cannot think of anything I would know to do. (Emory, personal communication, April 3, 2020)

Hayden described increased knowledge with time and experience:

I think the longer I have taught, I have done it more. It becomes more natural as I learn how to communicate and get to know kids. I started to incorporate things that students can relate to in the lessons and get more involved in their culture. (Hayden, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Strategies and rigor. Other teachers were able to describe efficacious beliefs with strategies implemented in the classroom. Teachers described adaptations and accommodations for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Frankie explained using creativity to engage and hook students on learning:

I have to be very creative, almost like an entertainer. I use jokes, let them talk about themselves, and we may get off task for a minute. Then I bring them right back with the hook activity to get them engaged. Then it is up to me to keep them engaged and keep it

fresh. I think that is a part of planning culturally responsive instruction. (Frankie, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

Participants referred to holding class discussions, making topics exciting, and trying alternative methods to provide academic achievement opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Emory described not knowing how to implement culturally responsive teaching strategies beyond, “just showing students you care for them” (personal communication, April 3, 2020). In addition, Emory shared nonacademic strategies, such as “offering snacks or food as instant gratification rewards for motivation” (personal communication, April 3, 2020).

Although six participants mentioned difficulties with implementation, others described using strategies such as developing relationships with students and using mixed reading groups and differentiated instruction. River (personal communication, March 27, 2020) described disadvantages in student-teacher relationships, stating, “when teachers know too much about students’ home lives, it can impede the expectations of what the student can learn and impact the level of instruction teachers provide.” Finley (personal communication, March 27, 2020) mentioned using strategies to help students build academic confidence. Milan described a frustrating experience implementing accommodations for culturally and linguistically diverse students in the classroom:

The class was working on a culminating task. The text was so long and dense. I let my students use their phones to translate. I got in trouble because someone complained, so students could not use their phones to translate. I was monitoring that they were not on another site, so they were literally just translating for comprehension. My students would have been able to give me a better understanding of their skills or their knowledge, but

now I just have students filling in and choosing an answer because they don't have any idea what the question is saying. There is literally nothing I can do about it. All I can give them is a dictionary. (Milan, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Time constraints. Teachers discussed time constraints, such as district requirements, pacing guides, and the 45-minute period of the middle school classroom schedule, as impediments to the implementation of culturally responsive instruction. One teacher described difficulty getting to know culturally and linguistically diverse students due to requirements to remain within the curriculum guidelines set by the school district. Phoenix recalled experiences trying to obtain approval to use a culturally responsive text outside of the planned curriculum:

We had such extensive planning and such extensive approval that was done to even just bring in a culturally responsive text to inform students about Islam and how their culture is not actually what we perceive it to be, and we still were not given permission. I think aside from discussions, and aside from walking around to groups and talking with students, I am not really implementing cultural responsiveness because of time and because of the district's agenda. You never know when an administrator is going to walk into your classroom, and I have to meet the requirements. (Phoenix, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Frankie (personal communication, March 31, 2020) added, "Remember, we have to do this within 45 minutes and stick to the lesson." Milan (personal communication, April 2, 2020) revealed, "I try, but I'm not always deliberate about culturally responsive teaching because I think my main focus has been on following the curriculum." The implementation of culturally responsive teaching is restricted unless teachers find innovative methods.

Connection to student culture. Culturally responsive teaching is the practice of using students' home culture to scaffold learning and make meaningful pedagogical connections (Gay, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Teachers were asked about including examples of the cultural contributions of the home cultures of culturally and linguistically diverse students when preparing for instruction. Ten teachers, or 67% of the participants, had not included cultural contributions when planning for instruction.

Teachers expressed the desire to make more connections to students' cultures when planning for instruction. Emerson described an experience with strict curriculum guidelines: "We teach to the test, and that is it. We are not teaching anything that helps our kids. I have asked if we can teach financial literacy because although it is not tested, they need that life skill" (Emerson, personal communication, March 27, 2020). In contrast, Frankie described experiences with teaching life skills in a math lesson:

I included the students' community in a math lesson. I asked them questions. Where are you from? How much do you think it cost to live in your community? Why is that? Sometimes you get some raw answers, but it gives me an opportunity to educate them and give them some historical facts about where they are from, what the community used to be like, and what happened to get to this point. Then I share what they can do about it because I cannot just leave them with a bad taste in their mouth. I educate them, and what they do with that and how they take it is up to them. But I still want to give them the full picture. (Frankie, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

Although teachers had not included cultural connections when planning for instruction, teachers acknowledged the importance of making such connections. Teachers expressed a desire to increase frequency of cultural inclusion in instruction. The cultural aspects teachers wanted to

include were students' experiences, family dynamics, lived community, languages spoken, and defining characteristics.

Building student relationships. A second identified theme involved teachers' relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. Study results show commonalities among participants' references to building relationships with students. Teachers discussed relationships as essential to providing instruction, and shared experiences of fostering relationships by learning about students' backgrounds.

Relationships are essential to provide instruction. Teachers recognized a connection between building relationships and providing instruction. Emerson expressed building rapport with students provides insight on ways to help students, "find strategies or things that can meet students' needs" (personal communication, March 27, 2020). Frankie shared experiences with using relationships to impact instruction:

I always try to build a relationship with the kids because if I build that relationship with the students, then my instructional delivery and anything I try to teach them is a whole lot easier than if I didn't have that relationship. (Frankie, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

Learning student backgrounds aid with building relationships. Participants discussed the importance of learning about student backgrounds to foster the student-teacher relationship. Rowan discussed the importance of learning about students to develop a relationship because teachers, "have students for about nine months" (personal communication, March 28, 2020). Baylor described a connection between awareness and fostering student relationships:

I have learned through the years that starting off with an awareness of the different cultures around me really plays an important role in the relationships that I build with

students. I just wanted to teach science and that was it. I didn't know or understand that I would have to learn about the whole person and what influences their culture and all aspects of that person. (Baylor, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Finley described ways for teachers to invest in students, which break barriers blocking development of relationships with students:

The best way to build the relationship is getting to know a child, show interest, and have conversations with them. Make them feel valued. No matter what culture they come from, if they sense that you are investing in a relationship with them, that allows barriers to come down and allows them to be receptive to whatever you have to share. (Finley, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Teachers perceived relationship building as essential to culturally responsive teaching. Justice described relationships as, "the biggest and most important thing in culturally responsive teaching" (personal communication, March 30, 2020). Emory shared experiences providing a safe environment to develop relationships through hosting an informal lunch club:

I enjoy building those relationships through my lunch club...a time when my students can bring friends and watch a popular show or just eat and talk. They share the latest drama in their lives with me or even how the fights happen at school. I give them a safe space to talk things over. (Emory, personal communication, April 3, 2020)

Maintaining cultural awareness. Maintaining cultural awareness was the third theme identified from the data analysis of interviews and focus group. Application of culturally relevant instruction requires educators to engage in critical pedagogical practices (Flores et al., 2015). Teachers expressed awareness of diverse cultures within races, described experiences

related to adapting to cultures through awareness, and shared efforts towards self-awareness and demonstrations of vulnerability as a teacher.

Awareness of diverse cultures within races. When defining culturally responsive teaching, fifteen participants included the need to understand students' cultures and backgrounds. Teachers recognized variations within students' cultures and ethnicities. Milan described experiences recognizing students' cultural diversity:

The demographic of students in my classes include Portuguese speaking, Spanish speaking, and Haitian Creole-speaking students. Then my Latin students are not even the same, and the culture varies between Mexican, Venezuelan, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Guatemalan students. They speak Spanish, but sometimes it is not the same. I feel comfortable interacting with students who speak a language I am used to hearing. I still have to think twice about the differences. Do they say the same thing in Mexico as they say in Venezuela? Then I start to feel uncomfortable with my amount of knowledge or lack thereof. That kind of deters me from being as bold to just start a conversation that has nothing to do with academics to learn more about the student's personal lives. (Milan, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Finley shared experiences identifying characteristics of students from different cultural backgrounds and described how such differences affect relationships between students:

It is an everyday battle because the kids I have from other countries who are still learning the language; they do things differently. They say things differently. Their attitude is different. They interact with people differently. For instance, my two Puerto Rican girls are very, you know, there is an attitude there. But it is just who they are. It is their culture. They say things with passion. They say things with attitude. I have another girl

who is African American, who sees the Puerto Rican girls as having an attitude with her and wants to come right back with attitude. They are constantly head-butting. I try every day to explain that some people's culture is just super in your face. It is just who they are. It is not personal. It is just the way she says things. Then when she says something in Spanish, they are offended again, but her language is her culture too. (Finley, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Adapting to cultures through awareness. When considering students' cultures, teachers described the importance of adapting instruction to meet student needs. An understanding of student culture allows teachers to utilize effective pedagogy (Lim et al., 2019). Baylor described learning to go beyond the mere awareness of diverse cultures and attempting to adapt to those cultures:

I had to learn to adapt and not just be aware. Once the students came into the classroom, I had to adjust to fit where they were coming from and what they were bringing with them. They do not leave their experiences and their culture at the door. I also had to teach them how to take what they were bringing into the classroom and adapt to fit the culture of my classroom. (Baylor, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Frankie described adaptation from the perspective of an athletic coach and teacher:

From an athletic background as a coach, I believe some coaches want you to adapt to their system, but great coaches adapt to their personnel and make them better. As teachers, we cannot control what is coming through the door. We can have certain systems, but when it comes to instruction, you have to adapt and adjust almost every single day, period by period. (Frankie, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

Additionally, adaptation includes demonstrating sensitivity to diverse cultures, as Tatum

explained when relating experiences from a social studies unit including content about slavery:

There is an element of slavery included in my curriculum. It is a topic that I address very carefully. For example, I talk about people being enslaved persons versus being a slave. The idea that being a slave is not their full identity, but that these were people, and this happened to them. The full idea of slavery does not need to be their full identity. I try not to just brush over the traumatic impact of living as an enslaved person and the history of African American students in my classes. Helping all my students recognize that we are all here, but we all got here from very different points. (Tatum, personal communication, March 26, 2020)

Teacher self-awareness. Teachers discussed the need to recognize cultural differences between themselves and the culturally and linguistically diverse students in the classroom.

Milan shared empathy for diverse students based on personal experiences:

I think I am a little bit more sensitive or a little bit more inquisitive because I am from a different culture, and I know what it is like trying to immerse myself into a classroom and what that feels like. I spoke English with an accent, but I cannot imagine not speaking the same language. (Milan, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Baylor added,

I am a Hispanic woman teaching to the majority of black students, and I didn't have that background growing up. In a very Puerto Rican Catholic home, my surroundings, my environment was predominantly Italian and higher socio-economic status community. My teaching environment is the complete opposite. Even though I grew up with privilege, I worked hard, and it is important for me to teach my students how to do that. (Baylor, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Emory described difficulties with learning a different culture, stating,

The schools I grew up in were not exactly diverse. So, it is impossible, obviously, to really know any culture outside of my own very well without diving into the culture. Being culturally responsive is understanding there are differences and that kids' reactions to things or kids' understanding of things are going to be different because of their life experiences. When it is different than mine, sometimes it is hard to translate or work around. Especially when it is a culture that I have no experience with like the Haitian culture. It is completely new to me because I did not grow up around any Haitian people. So, I have to learn about their culture from other teachers, parent conferences, or just being told what their norms and practices are. (Emory, personal communication, April 3, 2020)

Teacher vulnerability. Teachers discussed experiences with being vulnerable with students to build awareness and gain acceptance. Justice developed a family tree project, in which students were asked to interview family members and develop a creative presentation. Justice's vision of the project was to "empower students to know they are great" (personal communication, March 30, 2020). Justice participated in the project and demonstrated vulnerability to earn students' trust. Phoenix (personal communication, April 2, 2020) described showing vulnerability to students by sharing about her own cultural background, and stated, "I was born in America, but my background is different, so I'll bring in examples from my country for discussion."

Two other teachers described showing vulnerability to gain acceptance from culturally and linguistically diverse students. Skyler shared,

Getting them to understand that I care takes a little longer for kids from different backgrounds. I am aware that there is a big world out there and that there are different situations. They might make assumptions about me based on something they see, but they do not know how I grew up or anything about my past. (Skyler, personal communication, April 3, 2020)

Finley shared experiences with answering students' difficult cultural questions:

I remember teaching a lesson during Black History Month. I could never forget, a student actually asked, are you embarrassed by your people's history and the way your own people acted? I was called to the carpet. And the fact that my ethnicity is different than yours being from Mississippi and being white, I definitely had to answer for the history of where I come from and my culture. So that was a real moment that I did not know how to maneuver, but I had to figure out really quickly. Honestly, I think in all cases where things are uncomfortable, just be honest. I get that where I come from, the people in the south did some really crazy, inappropriate, and horrible things. But that is not who I am. I continually have to fight against the perception of who I'm supposed to be and who I am to them. (Finley, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Communication and language. Communication and language are the fourth theme developed from the analysis of experiences and perceptions regarding teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Culturally responsive teachers hold positive attitudes towards parents and families from diverse cultures, communicate high expectations for every student, and integrate multicultural teaching into the curriculum and instruction (Patish, 2016). Participants described experiences with parent communication concerning student achievement,

positive parent communication, and concerns about ways the language barrier in the classroom hinders a teacher's assessment of student achievement.

Parent communication about achievement. Teachers expressed the importance of communicating with parents about student achievement. Although teachers shared experiences with making phone calls early in the school year and e-mailing parents throughout the school year, only a few teachers discussed parent conferences and parent engagement for academic purposes. According to Frankie,

It is very important to let parents know where students are and where they should be academically. The teacher needs to explain to them what they can do to help the child get to a level or exceed the level that they are currently on. Sometimes when you give a student a C, the parent may think it is okay, or you give a D, and the parent is wondering what is going on. It is very important to break down the grade for the parent so they can have a clear understanding of your grading system. (Frankie, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

Dakota (personal communication, March 27, 2020) expressed reluctance to call students' homes, stating, "The language barrier makes having to call home my least favorite thing to do."

Positive parent communication. Teachers agreed positive communication is more effective than constant negative communication. Hayden explained,

It is good if you are not always calling and saying something negative. You can just say I need help with this because I am not really sure. A lot of times, I ask parents what they do at home that works, and if there is something they do to get the student to do this.

(Hayden, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Skyler recalled wanting to have made more positive calls:

I do reach out to parents. If I reach out and say your kid has not done anything, then I try to follow up when their grades improve. I do not really have a chance to reach out to parents of good kids to say I am so happy to get all the work. I just tell the kids in class.

(Skyler, personal communication, April 3, 2020)

Teachers believed parent communication helps build relationship and expressed communication should be empathetic and honest.

Language barriers impede communication. Language barriers place a strain on communication between teachers, students, and parents. Teachers shared experiences with trying to communicate with students and parents who speak a language different from English. Teachers described students who spoke the least amount of English as the most difficult to accommodate. Technologies such as Google Translate and ClassDojo applications serve to bridge the language gap between teachers, students, and parents. Phoenix explained strategies for communicating across languages:

A majority of my diverse learners speak Spanish or Portuguese, and I do not speak the language that the students speak. I use my paraprofessional to communicate with them, I try my best to Google Translate in an email, or I have a really trusted student to help translate a phone conversation with parents. Other than that, it is kind of limited because of the language barrier, and I wish I paid attention in Spanish a little bit more. (Phoenix, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Casey added experiences with communicating with parents of English language learners:

Initially, I do one-on-one communication, and I try to do phone calls. Sometimes, because of the language barrier, I may not be able to convey directly, so I enlist the support of my staffing specialist or aide who is bilingual. I may also enlist the support of

a fellow colleague who shares that learner with me, so we are able to work together, and we make the phone call. Some parents have requested email communication because with e-mail, they can copy and paste the content into Google Translate so they can read it and respond. (Casey, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Emerson discussed difficulties with translation methods when trying to communicate with parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students:

I do not communicate well with the majority of my parents of a different culture because of the language barrier. I would have to get someone to translate the language so that they can understand, but I do not think the message is getting across because someone else is delivering it. When you speak, you speak with your emotions. When you are saying something to someone, and it is not being delivered as such because it is being translated into another language, there is a disconnect. (Emerson, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Language barriers hinder assessment of achievement. Teachers expressed difficulty with assessing students' knowledge accurately because assessments are not given in the students' native language. Difficulty lies in understanding whether test results are an accurate representation of students' academic abilities versus ability to speak English. Frankie shared an experience in which English language learners demonstrated achievement in the native language, but the students' success did not translate when assessed in English:

I had the opportunity to work with students from other countries. They were advanced as scholars, and the only struggle they had was the language barrier. When I gave them my assessment, it took forever and they needed my help, but when I gave them that same assessment in their native language, they breezed through it. We assess in our native

language, English. They struggle with the language. So, we know it is a language problem and not a learning problem. However, I have seen students that did not have the same ability skill level academically, and they struggle in both. (Frankie, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

Milan described frustration regarding restrictions placed on helping culturally and linguistically diverse students succeed academically:

It is frustrating, and I try to think of ways to accommodate students on state assessments. They are given 3 hr for a test they do not understand. They just sit there or sleep for 2 hr. We are not going to get an accurate assessment of their knowledge because they do not know what the words are saying. They need to be at least able to understand what the text is saying and then go from there. They say we want everyone to have the same text and to have the same opportunity, but it really is not the same. Did everyone have the same opportunities to learn strategies, to interact with the text, to annotate the text, or to close read? No, because if a student is just coming into the country, but I am teaching Odysseus and the Sirens, because that is what the curriculum says, they have to just figure it out. My students do not lack the ability or knowledge, they just have not been given the appropriate accommodations. Appropriate could mean, let them translate it in their native language, so we are making sure that they at least understand the question. If students had the opportunity to really and truly be accommodated, they would show everyone how much they know. (Milan, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Vocabulary strategies. Implementing vocabulary strategies to address test bias was the fifth and final theme formed to address the first two research questions. Children from homes in which the language and culture are incongruent with the language and culture used in school

encounter disadvantages in the learning process and become alienated and disengaged from learning (Mitchell, 2015). Participants recognized and described experiences with students' lack of exposure to a rich vocabulary. Teachers discussed students' inability to make academic connections in class and on standardized tests due to gaps in vocabulary development. Frankie explained lack of vocabulary as a deficit, which affects development of reading skills and needs attention at the start of schooling:

There is definitely a deficit. The bias comes from the deficit because minority kids that are on target and learning, they tend to do fine, because they do not have a lack of vocabulary. That is the deficit. The lack of vocabulary hurts comprehension skills. You can only do so much with context clues. However, when kids who struggle with vocabulary increase their vocabulary, it also increases their reading fluency. I think vocabulary is crucial. I really think it starts at about six months old or whenever they start schooling. The vocabulary that they hear every single day starts to develop. That can be a game-changer for our kids. (Frankie, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

Dakota described experiences with English language students struggling to use reading strategies for the lack of rich vocabulary:

When I read questions to the kids, they stop me and say, what is this word? Sometimes it is a ridiculous word that we would never really use. My English language learners could never understand what it is, even if they use all the strategies in the world that we have taught them. They cannot understand what the question is asking because this word is important. They cannot use the strategies that we have asked them to use, and when they look it up in the translation dictionary, it translates to almost the same word. It does not help. (Dakota, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Students struggling with vocabulary, according to participants, have gaps in exposure to common American terms. Emerson shared an experience working with a student unable to comprehend a math word problem for lack of experience with a vocabulary term:

I could not, for the life of me, understand what he was saying. He asked me, “What is a pashio?” The word was p.a.t.i.o. What is a patio? He was Chinese and I had to help him understand what a patio was, but he could not visualize it. Then when he showed me the word problem, it was asking him to find the area of a patio. (Emerson, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Skyler discussed students lack vocabulary due to absence of exposure to terms as early as elementary school,

It goes all the way back to elementary school when tests have an example with a llama, but what if the kid does not know what a llama is? What if the parents never took them to the zoo or read a book to see that? How would they know what animal it is? (Skyler, personal communication, April 3, 2020)

Planning for vocabulary instruction. Teachers discussed methods of intentionally planning instruction to increase students’ vocabulary proficiency. Finley explained the process of including vocabulary strategies in instruction:

Every week in our planning session, we go through our weekly assessments and look at vocabulary that trip up our students just because they are not well versed. There are vocabulary words or phrases that we take for granted, and they would get it completely wrong. Completely wrong. Then when you are talking to them verbally, they tell you they understood the questions, but that is not the answer you chose. They say, oh, I did not understand that word, so I did not pick it. So, every single week, we make a very

diligent effort to identify words, phrases, even content that they might not be aware of or be comfortable with and try to frontload; otherwise, it's just not fair, and you're not getting a true assessment of what they know. (Finley, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Baylor explained analyzing assessment questions to determine gaps in background knowledge needed to make academic connections:

I specifically look and tear apart questions my students may not know. I remember reading a question about snow, and my students are from Florida. They have probably never seen snow. Their environment and culture are different. They need opportunities to assess in different ways to show their understanding. Students can explain to me exactly the concept I wanted them to get, but it doesn't translate to a standardized test based on not knowing specific vocabulary words if I didn't use it while I was teaching or if it was an example of an experience that they didn't have. They do not have the background knowledge and information to make connections to specific content. That is frustrating. (Baylor, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Casey described experiences in instructional planning meetings focused on vocabulary strategies:

We started being more strategic and being more intentional as to how we teach learners to use context clues to figure out unknown words, or how we teach learners different vocabulary that they may not know. They may be able to figure it out if they have some sort of association. It has been very helpful in helping them to become more effective on their assessments. (Casey, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Hayden discussed the importance of modeling vocabulary terms, saying:

My kids have never been to the beach, never seen snow, and some have never been outside of their neighborhood. Sometimes we talk about things, and they have never seen it. I would rather demonstrate than talk about topics as much as I can because you do not know if the kid has experienced that in their home life. (Hayden, personal communication, March 27, 2020)

Rowan addressed using vocabulary strategies with English language learners:

Especially for our language learners, we use a lot of vocabulary strategies, like pictures and repetition. When you look at word structure in Spanish, some of the words are similar in English and French. Looking at some of those word patterns helps. (Rowan, personal communication, March 28, 2020)

Greatest Successes and Challenges

The qualitative phenomenological study's third research question relates to middle school teachers' greatest successes and challenges with implementing culturally responsive teaching. There is a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and manifestations of thriving performance (Unsal et al., 2016). Teachers described successes and challenges with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Greatest successes. Teachers in the qualitative phenomenological study described the greatest success as either rapport and relationships built or observed academic achievements of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Participants shared stories and experiences of pride. Relationships with culturally and linguistically different students were rewarding to participants, who described breaking through barriers and developing lasting relationships. In the same manner, participants discussed experiences with students who made great academic achievements despite obstacles. The participants' greatest successes are highlighted in Table 4.

Table 4

Greatest Successes with Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Building Relationships	Academic Achievement
Justice: Building relationships with students, making them feel valued, and maintaining that relationship even now. (Justice, personal communication, March 30, 2020)	Hayden: Seeing kids who struggled reach the point where they can design their own experiment from the beginning to the end. (Hayden, personal communication, March 27, 2020)
Dakota: Having eighth graders that come to me and say, Miss, can I come to your small group today? (Dakota, personal communication, March 27, 2020)	Emerson: To see a kid take a test and finally understand. The smile that comes upon their face when they say, I did it. (Emerson, personal communication, March 27, 2020)
Frankie: Do your best in class, be respectful, and as long as you do those things, we can keep our relationship. (Frankie, personal communication, March 31, 2020)	River: Working with students in small groups and watching them carry it into the whole group setting. (River, personal communication, March 27, 2020)
Tatum: He knew I cared, and he graduated with more credits than he needed. (Tatum, personal communication, March 26, 2020)	Rowan: Little moments when students push themselves and do not give up. (Rowan, personal communication, March 28, 2020)
Finley: My ability to build relationships with kids from any background. (Finley, personal communication, March 27, 2020)	Milan: When students grasp a concept to the point of respectfully correcting my errors. (Milan, personal communication, April 2, 2020)
Baylor: I feel like my students could come to me because we built that relationship. (Baylor, personal communication, March 27, 2020)	Casey: My learners' accomplishments and growth. (Casey, personal communication, April 2, 2020)
Emory: Learning to build relationships so I could manage a classroom and teach. (Emory, personal communication, April 3, 2020)	Skyler: Seeing the data to support student academic growth, and especially when they are the highest for my subject. (Skyler, personal communication, April 3, 2020)
Phoenix: Building supportive relationships with my team and professional learning group. (Phoenix, personal communication, April 2, 2020)	

Table 5

Greatest Challenges with Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Challenge Category	Participant	Descriptions of Greatest Challenges with Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students
Hard to reach students	Frankie	The kids that I cannot reach. (Frankie, personal communication, March 31, 2020)
	Casey	Giving 95%, and I cannot get 5% in return. (Casey, personal communication, April 2, 2020)
	Skyler	Getting them to accept that I care. (Skyler, personal communication, April 3, 2020)
	Finley	Fighting against the perception of who I am supposed to be and who I am to them. (Finley, personal communication, March 27, 2020)
	Tatum	Not every kid that I try to reach wants to be reached. (Tatum, personal communication, March 26, 2020)
	Rowan	Getting students to show effort. (Rowan, personal communication, March 28, 2020)
Language barriers	Milan	The language barrier, but also not having appropriate accommodations to allow them to succeed. (Milan, personal communication, April 2, 2020)
	Emory	Classroom management for students who do not speak English. (Emory, personal communication, April 3, 2020)
	Hayden	Students who speak absolutely no English. (Hayden, personal communication, March 27, 2020)
	Emerson	The language and kids who do not speak any English. (Emerson, personal communication, March 27, 2020)
Time constraints	Justice	Not having enough time to bridge gaps. (Justice, personal communication, March 30, 2020)
	River	The expectations of teaching to a standard with time limitations. (River, personal communication, March 27, 2020)
	Dakota	I never taught the same thing twice, not once. (Dakota, personal communication, March 27, 2020)
Culture inclusion	Baylor	Bringing their culture apparently into my classroom. (Baylor, personal communication, March 27, 2020)
	Phoenix	Not knowing enough about their culture and their home situation. (Phoenix, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Greatest challenges. The teachers were asked to describe the most significant challenges with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Whereas the greatest successes described by the teachers were similar, teachers reported several different challenges, including hard-to-reach students, a lack of language accommodations, time constraints, difficulties including student cultures into instruction, and difficulties receiving acceptance from students. Hayden (personal communication, March 27, 2020) stated, “students who speak no English are my most challenging to accommodate.” Time constraints, language barriers, and students whom teachers could not reach were the most frequently referenced challenges. In Table 5, the most significant challenge of each participant is highlighted.

Reliability and Validity

Establishment of credibility in qualitative research was critical to trustworthiness of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Different methods or approaches serve to enhance credibility, such as member checking and triangulation (Gunawan, 2015). Interviews, a focus group, and member checking created triangulation necessary to ensure validity. Data triangulation occurred when interview and focus group data were checked and validated by participants as the original source of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Member checking increased dependability of the qualitative phenomenological study’s findings by allowing participants an opportunity to check the data and ensure thoughts and ideas were interpreted correctly (Leung, 2015). Participants could withdraw inconsistent information or recommend thoughts consistent with personal perceptions and beliefs.

Gunawan (2015) suggested a detailed description and systematic plan for coding and research transferability. Thick descriptions included participants’ thoughts and experiences in the context of culturally responsive teaching, offering meaningful data and allowing reader to

assess transferability of the data to related interests (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Data were presented by theme to enhance visualization for clarity and transferability (Hancock et al., 2016). Systematic planning enhanced transferability to other teachers and schools because viewpoints were derived from diverse genders and subject areas and a wide range of years of teaching experience.

Chapter Summary

Middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs were described according to themes identified and developed from interview and focus group data. Research questions one and two were answered with teachers' descriptions of experiences with implementing culturally responsive teaching. Teachers reported highly self-efficacy beliefs in the ability to build relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teachers described highly self-efficacy beliefs in the ability to maintain cultural awareness including the ability to recognize the differences within students' cultures and differences between the teachers' personal culture and the students' cultures. Recognition of test biases and the need to build student vocabulary led to a reported high self-efficacy beliefs in implementing vocabulary instruction.

Although teachers described confidence in developing instruction to build student vocabulary, teachers depicted low-efficacious beliefs in including students' cultures when planning for instruction. Teachers described low self-efficacy beliefs in integrating students' cultural backgrounds into instructional planning. The self-efficacy beliefs of teachers were low regarding dealing with language barriers when communicating with English language learners and parents.

Research question three was answered with teachers' descriptions of successes and challenges with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. The greatest successes described by teachers were experiences building student relationships or observations of student achievement. The greatest challenges, according to teachers, included hard-to-reach students, a lack of language accommodations, time constraints, difficulties including students' cultures in instruction, and difficulty receiving acceptance from students.

A discussion of the findings, with interpretations and conclusions, is presented in the discussion and conclusion chapter. Presentation of the qualitative phenomenological study's limitations and the reliability and validity of the data are given. After recommendations are made, the leadership implications concerning culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs are presented.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Culturally responsive teaching is the practice of using students' home culture to scaffold learning and make meaningful pedagogical connections (Gay, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Implementation of culturally responsive teaching helps students overcome existing gaps in academic achievement (Martin, 2016). A teacher's sense of self-efficacy influences classroom practices, such as the implementation of culturally responsive teaching (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). Limited efforts to prepare culturally responsive teachers have left a gap in opportunities for professional development with culturally relevant pedagogy (Siwatu, 2011). Understanding teachers' confidence in implementing culturally responsive pedagogy could aid in the design of appropriate interventions to help teachers build robust self-efficacy beliefs (Siwatu et al., 2016).

Teachers with low efficacious views lack confidence to bridge the cultural divide in classrooms and provide rigorous educational opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Bradshaw et al., 2018; Duncan, 2017). The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. The qualitative phenomenological study explored teachers' experiences and perceptions of personal abilities to rigorously teach culturally diverse students.

A qualitative phenomenological research design was used to capture participants' experiences and interpretations (van Manen, 2017). Interviews and a focus group provided teachers an opportunity to describe perceptions and lived experiences with culturally responsive teaching. Questions were derived from Siwatu's (2007) Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy scale. Teachers' descriptions of experiences when implementing culturally responsive teaching yielded an understanding of self-efficacy beliefs.

Findings and interpretations are presented in the discussion and conclusion. Limitations

regarding reliability and validity are discussed. Recommendations for future research and change based on conclusions are suggested. Implications for leadership and for the relationship between transformational and culturally responsive school leadership are presented, and a conclusion is offered.

Findings, Interpretations, and Conclusions

Findings of the qualitative phenomenological study are discussed according to emergent themes regarding middle school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. The themes were developed from interview and focus group data, which were collected to answer three research questions.

Research questions one and two are discussed together because participants described lived experiences while answering questions concerning culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Successes and challenges are discussed to address the third research question.

Interpretations of study findings are organized by themes to answer the research questions.

Research Questions One and Two: Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Experiences

To answer research question one and research question two, themes were derived from the frequency with which participants mentioned common topics during interviews and a focus group. Teachers expressed high self-efficacy beliefs regarding developing cultural awareness, building student relationships, and providing vocabulary instruction to address test bias. Low self-efficacy beliefs were expressed concerning teachers' perceived abilities to integrate students' cultural backgrounds into instruction, implement culturally responsive strategies beyond relationship building, and communicate with English language learners and parents due to language barriers. Participants were confident about abilities to enhance cultural awareness and build relationships but lacked confidence in applying culturally responsive pedagogy.

High self-efficacy beliefs in culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy refers to the belief in one's ability to execute culturally responsive teaching practices (Siwatu et al., 2016). Participants demonstrated high self-efficacy beliefs through the provision of examples and strategies. Highly self-efficacious beliefs were related to developing cultural awareness, building relationships with students, and recognizing test bias to prepare specific vocabulary instruction.

Maintaining cultural awareness. Teachers described high self-efficacy beliefs in developing cultural awareness. Patish (2016) affirmed the need for teachers to be aware of student cultural backgrounds to interpret and develop alternative explanations for student behavior. Participants expressed confidence in ability to identify differences between school culture and students' home culture. Discussions about identifying differences led to descriptions of students' ethnic and racial diversity. Teachers demonstrated knowledge of variations in ethnicities within student races and of the importance of acknowledging differences when interacting with students. Cultural awareness builds a social justice lens and helps remove stereotypes of culturally and linguistically diverse student's behavior as defiant or intellectually deficient (Brown & Crippen, 2017; Hramiak, 2015).

In addition to behavior management, cultural awareness is necessary for student achievement. The teachers believed recognition of variations in norms, values, and practices between school and the students' home cultures could improve achievement. Similarly, Campbell (2018) found getting to know students helps teachers respond to students' needs. Although the teachers believed knowledge of culture would improve achievement, the teachers reported not integrating cultural knowledge into instruction. Cultural awareness, for participants,

was a means of building relationships with students while expecting students to become motivated to learn and increase achievement.

Teachers expressed an awareness of the differences between personal worldviews and the students' cultural backgrounds, with some making comparisons between personal childhood experiences and the childhood experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students. In addition to recognizing personal uniqueness, the teachers described ways students identified diversity between themselves and teachers. For Cartledge et al. (2015), achievement of deep cultural knowledge requires critical reflection and awareness of the ways actions and dispositions are motivated by personal cultural experiences. High self-efficacy beliefs in cultural awareness, such as the recognition of differences between the world views of students in the classroom and the teachers' worldviews, were related to the teachers' relationship building abilities.

Building student relationships. Teachers described high self-efficacy beliefs regarding relationship building. Fostering relationships between teachers and students is a cornerstone of culturally responsive teaching (Brown & Crippen, 2017; Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016).

Strengthening teacher-student rapport was expressed as one of the greatest examples of success participants had experienced teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Siwatu (2007) found teachers reported high self-efficacy in developing positive personal relationships with students and helping students become important classroom members.

Participants expressed the importance of building relationships to create a safe learning environment where students felt comfortable asking questions, describing such an environment as a bridge to academic achievement. Although teachers acknowledged relationships as essential to teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students effectively, teachers described minimal experiences incorporating cultural information learned through relationships into classroom

instruction. Flores et al. (2015) encountered challenges when building teachers' capacity to develop relationships with students while simultaneously cultivating students' academic potential. Teachers' reliance on relationships overshadowed the need to infuse cultural connections into instruction.

Providing vocabulary instruction to address test bias. Teachers expressed high self-efficacy beliefs regarding recognizing test bias and providing instruction to build vocabulary. Participants provided examples of ways students' lack of rich vocabulary hinders achievement. Melloma, Straubhaarb, Balderasc, Ariaild, and Portesa (2018) found regular classroom discussions help increase both vocabulary and conversation skills. Teachers discussed strategies for providing vocabulary accommodations for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Hammond (2015) proposed strengthening student vocabulary by redirecting instruction from list memorization to the development of vocabulary sorts and games to allow culturally and linguistically diverse students to process new information with collaboration and teamwork. Culturally and linguistically diverse students who come from collectivist-oriented communities create meaning through cooperative learning and relationships (Hammond, 2015). Participants discussed high self-efficacy beliefs and regarded vocabulary instruction as essential to academic development of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Low self-efficacy beliefs in culturally responsive teaching. In answering some of the interview and focus group questions, participants demonstrated low self-efficacy beliefs, providing neutral or adverse answers without describing personal experiences or strategies concerning culturally responsive teaching. Low self-efficacy beliefs were expressed as low levels of confidence among teachers in integrating students' cultural backgrounds into instructional planning and dealing with language barriers when communicating with English

language learners and parents. The qualitative phenomenological study results correspond with Siwatu et al.'s (2016) study, in which preservice teachers' recognized the value and benefits of culturally responsive classroom practices but doubted ability to implement culturally responsive teaching successfully. Teachers need the skills to implement culturally responsive teaching, and support systems to encourage and build confidence.

Culturally responsive instruction. Teachers described low self-efficacy beliefs in integrating students' cultural backgrounds into instructional planning. Although 11 teachers reported implementing culturally responsive teaching frequently, four teachers were able to describe strategies for making cultural connections to instruction. Alaca and Pyle (2018) reported similar results, in which five of six teachers believed children's cultural backgrounds needed consideration, and three reported implementing culturally relevant practices regularly. Participants of the qualitative phenomenological study attributed scarcity of implementation to gaps in knowledge about students' cultures, time constraints, and lack of reflection about culture during instructional planning. Alaca and Pyle (2018) reported teachers had difficulty finding and accessing resources needed to provide culturally responsive education.

Teachers need resources and support systems to develop culturally responsive teaching skills and strategies for instructional implementation. Participants agreed culturally responsive teaching was essential but lacked the skills to fulfill the instructional aspects. Siwatu (2007) found preservice teachers reported less efficacious beliefs regarding implementing the more challenging aspects of culturally responsive teaching requiring instructional integration of students' culture. The point of culturally responsive teaching is to use students' home culture to scaffold learning and make meaningful pedagogical connections (Gay, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Participants expressed a desire to use cultural connections and an understanding of the

need to adapt instruction to fit the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teachers learn to continually adapt culturally sensitive practices with ongoing professional development (Hramiak, 2015).

Communication and language. Teachers expressed low self-efficacy beliefs when navigating language barriers when communicating with English language learners and parents. Similarly, Kelley et al.'s (2015) findings described teachers as less confident when communicating with parents whose primary language was not English. Strengthening culturally responsive efficacy involves learning about student cultures through making connections to students' home lives. The language barrier inhibits opportunities for teachers to challenge biases by building strong relationships with students' families and communities.

Teachers reported mixed beliefs about ways to increase parental involvement. Culturally responsive teachers engage in dialogue with parents to learn about students and invite parents to aid teachers in communicating high expectations and interest in student academics (Bennett et al., 2018). Although eight teachers described communicating with parents regarding student academics, seven teachers discussed parent communication concerning behavioral issues without attention to student achievement. The eight teachers who communicated with parents regarding student academics expressed gratitude to the parents for the students' positive behavior. The middle school teachers reported contacting parents more frequently for behavioral issues, which could be a warning to watch for potential academic challenges or a discussion about the nature of teaching middle school students.

Research Question Three: Successes and Challenges

In answer to research question three, participants shared greatest successes and greatest challenges in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. The teachers' descriptions

of success and challenges were related to existing literature regarding culturally responsive teaching and teacher self-efficacy. Understanding successes and challenges provides insight into areas of high and low confidence regarding the ability to implement cultural responsiveness.

Successes teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teachers' successful experiences involved building relationships with students and observing student achievement. In some instances, participants related building relationships to increase student achievement. Teachers expressed breaking through emotional barriers with students to form relationships, which eventually helped students achieve academic success. Instructional practices to cultivate relationships with students positively affect teacher self-efficacy (Brown & Crippen, 2017). Positive experiences build confidence in implementing culturally responsive teaching, and implementation supports the development of culturally responsive teaching skills and further strengthens efficacious beliefs. High self-efficacy reporting regarding frequency of culturally responsive teaching implementation was related to teacher's confidence in the relationship building component of culturally responsive teaching.

Although participants reported not implementing culturally responsive pedagogy, nearly half of the participants described pride in observing the academic achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teachers wanted to help students become independent learners but were unsure how to connect students' culture to classroom instruction. Culturally responsive teaching entails identifying ways to help students process information and does not need to be race specific because academic success can result from understanding the most suitable learning styles to create authentic learning experiences (Hammond, 2015).

Fostering positive relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse students is an essential aspect of culturally responsive teaching. Teachers' confidence in the ability to cultivate

relationships demonstrates implementation of a key component of culturally responsive teaching. Descriptions of pride in successful breakthroughs in students' academic achievement shows teachers care about building cognitive capacity of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Efforts to build rapport and celebrations of student academic success are representative of culturally responsive teaching. Teachers demonstrated high confidence regarding relational aspects of culturally responsive teaching.

Challenges teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teachers described challenges with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students, including hard-to-reach students, lack of language accommodations, time constraints, inability to include students' cultures in classroom instruction, and difficulty receiving acceptance from students. Teachers' challenges reflected teachers' inability to simultaneously cultivate student relationships and navigate obstacles to help students succeed academically. Six teachers expressed great concern for students who were hardest to reach. Teachers had difficulties with the ability to develop a relationship with students or encourage students' efforts towards positive academic achievement.

Language barriers posed the greatest challenge for four participants, who described diverse views of difficulties. A perceived inability to communicate with students and parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students, and English language learners in particular, presented challenges with instructional accommodations, classroom management strategies, and consistent and positive communication with students and parents having minimal English language proficiency. In addition to language barriers, teachers described difficulties with including students' cultures when lesson planning. Teachers with gaps in knowledge about cultures different from personal culture expressed obstacles with cultural inclusion in instruction.

Time constraints exacerbated limitations resulting from hard to reach students, language barriers, and cultural inclusion struggles. Although three teachers expressed time constraints as the greatest challenge, additional teachers discussed concerns for time restrictions. State, district, and local expectations for student achievement require teachers to commit to a designated learning path and schedule. Teachers discussed difficulties with finding time to plan for the inclusion of students' cultures, time during instruction to make connections outside of the prepared curriculum, and creating a balance between bridging the gap between home culture and school culture while teaching standards within the allotted timeframe of a middle school classroom setting. Teachers would benefit from inclusion of culturally responsive teaching components infused in the mandated curriculum.

Teachers described culturally responsive teaching as a method for overcoming challenges experienced with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Acknowledging culturally responsive teaching to resolve challenges showed teachers' understand the importance of providing quality instruction, developing cultural awareness for instructional integration, and engaging parents in communicating high academic expectations. Teachers need support systems and professional development to build self-efficacy to address the identified challenges. Teachers' perceptions of self-competence are developed through experience and mastery, social persuasion, vicarious experience, and an affective state (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016). Leadership is vital to the development of self-efficacy perceptions among teachers and staff (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018).

Limitations

Although reliability of the qualitative phenomenological study was achieved with member checking and triangulation, there were limitations to qualitative phenomenological

research. Triangulation, through a focus group discussion, introduced the possibility of data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The focus group was a way to obtain various perspectives on the topic (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010). The size of the group was appropriate for all members to talk and share thoughts, but selection of participants possibly hindered elicitation of divergent perspectives. Credibility could have been increased with the range of participant selection for the focus group discussion. Selecting qualified participants from outside the pool of previously interviewed participants could have added new perspectives. Questions asked during the focus group session could have been adjusted to dig deeper into emergent themes.

Transferability of the research findings is limited. Study participants were selected from the same middle school. Although diverse viewpoints were derived from diversity in genders, years of teaching experience, and subjects taught, the sample was too small to generalize to all middle school settings. Moreover, inherent bias can cause teachers to report higher self-efficacious beliefs. Siwatu and Starker (2010) and Debnam et al. (2015) both discovered teachers reported higher levels of self-efficacy than observed measures regarding culturally responsive teaching. In addition to sample selection, the unavoidable online platform might have impacted development of conversation and ability to build rapport with and between participants.

The results contribute to an understanding of culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of certified middle school teachers in settings with a student population of more than 40% culturally and linguistically diverse students. The qualitative phenomenological study focused on a population for purposive selection of teachers with experience teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Future research should include schools with populations of student diversity less than 40% to expand perspectives in the literature. The withdrawn teacher's perceptions were outliers within the group of participating teachers in the same school setting.

The experiences of middle school teachers within a school can vary. Unfortunately, the teacher who withdrew did not understand the coding system in reporting answers to the interview questions. Future researchers should consider adding the protocol for coding to informed consent and ensure all participants understand the procedure for coding results.

The qualitative phenomenological study's results were confirmed in a study conducted with preservice teachers (Siwatu et al., 2016). Preservice teachers reported high self-efficacy in helping students become important classroom members and developing positive personal relationships with students (Siwatu et al., 2016). Teachers in the study were less efficacious in implementing more difficult aspects of culturally responsive teaching, which requires an integration of students' cultural backgrounds into curricula and instruction (Siwatu et al., 2016). While the qualitative phenomenological study responds to a gap in the research regarding the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of certified teachers, the differing study populations leave the literature with an ongoing gap.

Recommendations

The study findings provided several implications for future research. Using the same research parameters, a study should be conducted to include a focus group of participants independent of the previously interviewed participants, or with newly developed questions to delve deeper into emergent themes. A mixed-method research methodology should be utilized to provide quantitative data using Siwatu's (2007) Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy scale. The qualitative phenomenological study added certified middle school teachers' perspectives on confidence in implementing culturally responsive teaching to the body of literature. Although quantitative data were not necessary to answer the research questions, a comparison between teachers' described perspectives and empirical data could have introduced

diverse themes.

A disaggregated comparison of teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs according to gender, years of teaching experience, and subject taught would provide insight on specific professional development needs. Self-efficacy beliefs vary according to gender and years of experience (Unsal et al., 2016). Future researchers should replicate the qualitative phenomenological study but exclude the topic of relationship building to determine teachers' level of culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy without relational factors. The teachers made strong connections between building relationships and culturally responsive teaching, which overshadowed the pedagogical aspects of culturally responsive teaching.

Results of the qualitative phenomenological study show teachers need confidence, knowledge, and resources necessary to implement instructional strategies for rigorous academic achievement among culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teachers would benefit from professional development to learn strategies to incorporate the cultures of culturally and linguistically diverse students into lessons when planning classroom instruction. Departments of curriculum and instructional development should consider focusing on rigorous instruction with attention to vocabulary strategies specific to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Curriculum development teams should consider connections between culturally responsive teaching, critical pedagogy, and the impact of globalization on the 21st century classroom.

Implications for Leadership

Transformational leadership is positively related to teacher self-efficacy beliefs (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018). School administrators influence teachers' self-confidence through the communication of high expectations, verbal persuasion, offering vicarious experiences, and

providing individualized support. The quality of education improves when a transformational leader focuses on efforts to increase teacher capacity and motivation (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018). The ability of school principals to intellectually stimulate teachers predicts changes in teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016). Continuous training and feedback build efficacy and engage teachers to try new strategies with a fresh perspective (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016). Transformational leaders empower teachers to build self-efficacy and improve student achievement (Ninkovic & Floric, 2018).

Culturally responsive school leadership emphasizes the significance of critical self-reflection to broaden personal worldviews, contribute to culturally responsive teaching and curricula, promote a culturally responsive school environment with inclusionary practices, and engage the community in cultural responsiveness (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). The implementation of culturally responsive school leadership extends achievement implications beyond culturally and linguistically diverse students. A transformational leader who implements culturally responsive school leadership casts a net for innumerable possibilities, including achievement for children with disabilities, deaf and hard-of-hearing students, and refugee youth (Khalifa et al., 2016). Culturally responsive school leadership equips leaders to increase cultural responsiveness and help all children reach full potential.

Conclusion

Culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy is the belief in one's personal ability to execute culturally responsive teaching practices (Siwatu, 2007). The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions of personal abilities to rigorously teach culturally diverse students. Understanding teachers' perceptions

regarding teaching students of diverse cultural backgrounds adds to the existing body of literature on the topic of culturally responsive teaching and fills a gap regarding teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. Although the literature has focused on the culturally responsive teaching preparation of preservice teachers, the qualitative phenomenological study presents the perceptions of certified middle school teachers. Similarities in the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of the two groups indicate certified teachers need the same training as preservice teachers.

Teachers demonstrated high self-efficacy beliefs in building an alliance with students. The teachers related culturally responsive teaching and cultural responsiveness to the ability to build relations with culturally and linguistically diverse students. While teachers perceived relationship development as a bridge to achievement, confidence in the ability to provide academic rigor through cultural connections was less pronounced. Teachers were confident regarding the ability to build relationships with students and recognize student diversity, but teachers expressed the need for resources to develop confidence in providing culturally responsive pedagogy and communicating with English language learner students and parents.

The next step is building self-efficacy beliefs in using the cultural context of students' lives to develop cognitive challenges and increase the intellectual capacity of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Once the culturally responsive teacher nurtures relationships, the teacher should use cultural contexts to move students towards critical thinking and independent learning. Educational leaders should provide professional development and support systems to strengthen teachers' beliefs in the ability to prepare culturally and linguistically diverse students to release learner dependency, rebuild an academic mindset to act on feedback, and recognize personal progress as an independent learner (Hammond, 2015).

Critical race theory supports the development of deep cultural awareness when implementing culturally responsive teaching. Achieving deep cultural knowledge requires critical reflection and an awareness of the ways actions and dispositions influence personal cultural experiences (Cartledge et al., 2015). Although teachers described high self-efficacy related to cultural awareness, cognizance is not the absence of implicit bias. Recognition of test bias and cultural diversity among students was not an indication of changes in personal bias, which could impact teachers' perceptions of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Critical race theorists urge educators to help culturally and linguistically diverse students maintain personal cultural norms while learning and adjusting to the expectations of the dominant culture (Koonce, 2018). Although there is no blueprint for culturally responsive teaching because of the unique compositions of individuals between classrooms, teachers need continued confidence in the ability to cultivate relationships, maintain high expectations, and make relevant connections to learning for all students including the culturally and linguistically diverse.

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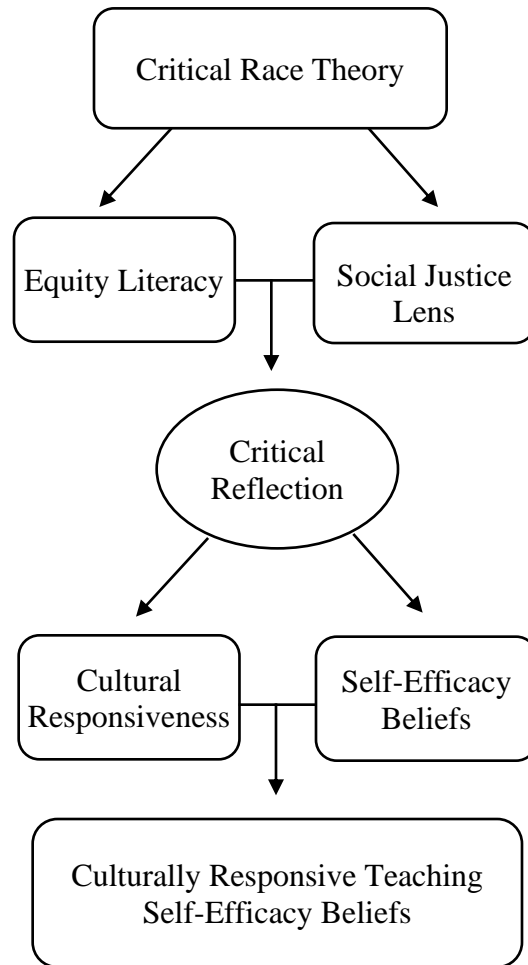
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Appendix A: Theoretical Framework Diagram

Critical Race Theory and Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Beliefs



Appendix B: Email Transcript from the Letter of Interest Email

Dear Potential Study Participant,

My name is Nandie Little. I am a doctoral student at American College of Education. I am conducting research for my dissertation, and you have been identified as a possible participant for my study.

The purpose of the research study will be to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. The study seeks to explore teachers' perceptions of their confidence level in teaching students of diverse cultural backgrounds. Participation involves an interview that may last up to one hour, and your participation in the study is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in the study, you may decline or withdraw at any time. At the end of the interview I will invite you to participate in an hour long focus group session.

I may publish the results of this study; however, I will not use your name or share any information you provided. Your information will remain confidential.

While there may be no direct benefit to you, the potential benefit of your participation is that it will offer a greater understanding about certified teachers' beliefs and experiences with culturally responsive teaching to better understand how teachers can be supported with classroom implementation of culturally responsive teaching. In this research study, there are no known risks to you.

I greatly appreciate that you have taken the time to review this email. If you are certified and willing to participate or would like more information, please respond to Nandie Little at one of the following:

Email: nandielittle@gmail.com

Call or text: 407-729-2271

Best Regards,

Nandie Little

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Prospective Research Participant: Read this consent form carefully and ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

Project Information

Project Title: Secondary Teachers' Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Beliefs A Qualitative Phenomenological Study

Researcher: Nandie Little

Organization: American College of Education

Email: nandielittle@gmail.com

Telephone: 407-729-2271

Researcher's Faculty Member: Dr. Katrina Schultz

Organization and Position: American College of Education, Dissertation Chair

Email: Katrina.Schultz@ace.edu

Introduction

I am Nandie Little, and I am a doctoral candidate student at American College of Education. I am doing research under the guidance and supervision of my Chair, Dr. Schultz. I will give you some information about the project and invite you to be part of this research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them then.

Purpose of the Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study which will assist with describing certified public middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. The study seeks to understand teachers' perceptions of personal ability to rigorously teach students of diverse cultural backgrounds. Through the investigation of teachers' experiences with culturally relevant teaching, this research may provide support to increase professional development in a Florida school district.

Research Design and Procedures

The study will use a qualitative methodology and a phenomenological research design. The informed consent form will be distributed to certified middle school teachers within a Florida school district. The study will comprise of 17 participants, selected based on the criterion of working in a school with a diverse student population. The study will involve 60-minute interviews and an optional 90-minute focus group session to be conducted at a site most convenient for participants. After data collection and analysis, a debrief session will occur. Participants will be given the opportunity to review interview transcriptions for accuracy.

Participant selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because of your experience as a certified teacher in a diversely populated school who can contribute much to the understanding of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching, which meets the criteria for this study. Participant selection criteria: Certified teacher who is teaching in a school with a diverse student population.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate. If you choose not to participate, there will be no punitive repercussions and you do not have to participate. If you select to participate in this study, you may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures

I am inviting you to participate in this research study. If you agree, you will be asked to share your experiences and perceptions of culturally responsive teaching to understand your beliefs in your ability to rigorously teach culturally diverse students. The type of questions asked will range from a demographical perspective to direct inquiries about the topic of culturally responsive teaching.

Duration

The interview portion of the research study will require approximately 60 minutes to complete. The optional focus group portion of the research study will require approximately 90 minutes to complete. If you are selected to participate in this study, the time expected will be a maximum of 60 to 150 minutes. If you are chosen to be a participant, the time allotted for the interview will be 60 minutes and the time allotted for the focus group will be 90 minutes at a location and time convenient for the participant. A follow-up debriefing session will take 30 minutes.

Risks

The researcher will ask you to share personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion if you don't wish to do so. You do not have to give any reason for not responding to any question.

Benefits

While there will be no direct financial benefit to you, your participation is likely to help us find out more about teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive teaching. The potential benefits of this study will aid the school district and educational community in providing support systems for teachers in the implementation of culturally responsive teaching.

Confidentiality

I will not share information about you or anything you say to anyone outside of the researcher. During the defense of the doctoral dissertation, data collected will be presented to the dissertation committee. The data collected will be kept in a locked file cabinet or encrypted computer file. Any information about you will be coded and will not have a direct correlation, which directly identifies you as the participant. Only I will know what your number is, and I will secure your information.

Audio-Recording of Interview

Interviews may be recorded using audio recording to assist with the accuracy of your responses. You have the right to refuse the audio recording. Please select one of the following options:

I consent to audio recording: Yes _____ No _____

Sharing the Results

At the end of the research study, the results will be available for each participant. It is anticipated to publish the results so other interested people may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Participation is voluntary. At any time, you wish to end your participation in the research study, you may do so without repercussions.

Questions About the Study

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact Nandie Little. This research plan has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of American College of Education. This is a committee whose role is to make sure research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to ask questions of this group, email IRB@ace.edu.

Certificate of Consent

I have read the information about this study, or it has been read to me. I acknowledge why I have been asked to be a participant in the research study. I have been provided the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I certify I am at least 18 years of age. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study. Nandie Little, the researcher, has explained to me the purpose and benefits of her research study and has also explained to me that:

1. My participation is voluntary.
2. I can withdraw from the study at any time.
3. I am assured my information is confidential.
4. I am assured I will remain anonymous, and my name will not be shared with any other organizations.
5. She expects to publish the study, and the findings of the research study will be managed so the sources of information cannot be identified.
6. I can contact her at nandielittle@gmail.com or (407) 729-2271.

Nandie Little has not asked me to sign any other agreements. This is the only consent and confidentiality form. I understand the terms of my participation, and I give consent to voluntary participation in the research study.

Participant Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

I understand that I will be recorded by the researcher. These electronic recordings will be kept by the researcher on a password protected smartphone and an encrypted computer file. I understand that only the researcher will have access to these recordings and that they will be destroyed by [*provide date including month and year*].

Participant Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily. A copy of this Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

Lead researcher: Nandie Little Signature: _____

I have accurately read or witnessed the accurate reading of the assent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm the individual has freely given assent.

Lead researcher: Nandie Little Signature: _____

Signature of faculty member: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Appendix D: Permission to Use Instrument(s)



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
College of Education™

Permission to Use Instrument(s)

Dear Researcher:

You have my permission to use the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale, the Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectations Scale, and/or the Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale in your research. A copy of the instruments are attached. Request for any changes or alterations to the instrument should be sent via email to kamau.siwatu@ttu.edu. When using the instrument(s) please cite accordingly.

- **Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale**
Siwatu, K. O. (2007). Preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 1086-1101.
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectations Scale**
Siwatu, K. O. (2007). Preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 1086-1101.
- **Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale**
Siwatu, K. O., Putnam, M., Starker, T. V., & Lewis, C. (2015). The development of the culturally responsive classroom management self-efficacy scale: Development and initial validation. *Urban Education*. Prepublished September 9, 2015.

Best wishes with your research.

Sincerely,

Kamau Oginga Siwatu, PhD
Professor of Educational Psychology

Box 41071 | Lubbock, Texas | 79409-1071 | T 806-834-5850 | F 806-742-2179
An EEO/Affirmative Action Institute

Appendix E: Research Questions and Interview Questions Alignment Matrix

Research Question One (RQ1): What are the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in a Central Florida school district?

Research Question Two (RQ2): What lived experiences influence middle school teachers' self-beliefs when implementing culturally responsive teaching in culturally diverse classroom settings in a Central Florida school district?

Research Question Three (RQ3): What do middle school teachers perceive as the greatest successes and challenges with implementing culturally responsive teaching in a Central Florida school district?

Research Questions Aligned	Interview Questions
<p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ1</p>	<p>Interview Question 1:</p> <p>1a. Based on your experiences, how would you define culturally responsive teaching?</p> <p>1b. How often do you implement culturally responsive teaching as you have defined it?</p>
<p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p>	<p>Interview Question 2:</p> <p>2a. Have you tried to identify ways the school culture is different from your students' home culture? For example, are the norms, values, or practices different?</p> <p><i>If yes, can you give an example of a difference you identified?</i> <i>If no, what experiences or beliefs have kept you from identifying differences?</i></p> <p>2b. Do you think knowing the differences between students' home culture and school culture can improve achievement?</p> <p><i>If yes, in what way can this knowledge improve achievement? Share an experience.</i> <i>If no, do you have an experience to share to lead you to your beliefs?</i></p> <p>2c. Have you implemented strategies to minimize the effects of the difference between your students' home culture and the school culture?</p> <p><i>If yes, can you share your experiences with implementing strategies?</i> <i>If not, what experiences do you think have kept you from trying strategies?</i></p> <p>2d. Are you comfortable with obtaining information about your culturally and linguistically diverse students' home life?</p> <p><i>If yes, can you share an experience in which you obtained such information?</i> <i>If no, is there anything that could help you become comfortable?</i></p>
	<p>Interview Question 3:</p>

<p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ1</p>	<p>3a. <i>When preparing for instruction, do you include examples about the cultural contributions of your culturally and linguistically diverse students?</i></p> <p><i>If yes, can you share an example of a including a contribution in instruction? If not, what would help you to include contributions in your instruction?</i></p> <p>3b. <i>Do you try to identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally and linguistically diverse students?</i></p> <p><i>If yes, what has been your experience with identifying bias in standardized test? If no, what is your understanding of test bias?</i></p> <p>3c. <i>Do you believe that the frequency with which students' abilities are misdiagnosed would decrease if their standardized test scores were interpreted with caution? Why or why not?</i></p>
<p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ1</p>	<p>Interview Question 4:</p> <p>4a. <i>In what ways have you communicated with parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students regarding their child's achievement?</i></p> <p><i>What are your experiences with parent communication? If none, what support do you think you would need to increase communication?</i></p> <p>4b. <i>Do you believe that conveying the message that parents are an important part of the classroom would increase parent participation? Why or why not?</i></p>
<p>RQ3</p> <p>RQ3</p>	<p>Interview Question 5:</p> <p>5a. <i>What has been your greatest success with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?</i></p> <p>5b. <i>What is or has been your greatest challenge with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?</i></p>

Appendix F: Interview Protocol and Questions

Interview Protocol for the Study on Teachers' Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Teaching	
Participant Pseudonym	Start Time:
Date:	End Time:
<p>Script prior to interview: <i>I'd like to thank you (participant's name) once again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of my study. As I have mentioned to you before, the purpose of my research study will be to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. The study seeks to understand teachers' perceptions of personal ability to rigorously teach students of diverse cultural backgrounds. The aim of this research is to document your beliefs and experiences with culturally responsive teaching to better understand how teachers can be supported with classroom implementation of culturally responsive teaching. Our interview today will last approximately one hour. I will be asking you about your teaching background, experiences with culturally responsive teaching, success and challenges with culturally responsive teaching, and ideas that you may have about your role as a culturally responsive teacher, your purpose for implementing culturally responsive teaching, and the approach you have taken or would like to take regarding culturally responsive teaching.</i></p> <p>[Present a paper copy of the informed consent form. Read informed consent. Answer questions. Have participant sign informed consent.]</p> <p><i>In the informed consent you indicated that I have your permission (or not) to audio record our conversation. Are you still ok with me recording (or not) our conversation today? ___Yes ___No</i></p> <p><i>If yes: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.</i></p> <p><i>If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation. Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions?</i></p> <p><i>Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions]</i> <i>If any questions (or other questions) arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.</i></p>	
<p>Interview Question 1: 1a. Based on your experiences, how would you define culturally responsive teaching? 1b. How often do you implement culturally responsive teaching as you have defined it?</p>	
<p>Interview Question 2: 2a. Have you tried to identify ways the school culture is different from your students' home culture? For example, are the norms, values, or practices different? <i>If yes, can you give an example of a difference you identified?</i> <i>If no, what experiences or beliefs have kept you from identifying differences?</i></p>	

2b. *Do you think knowing the differences between students' home culture and school culture can improve achievement?*

If yes, in what way can this knowledge improve achievement? Share an experience.

If no, do you have an experience to share to lead you to your beliefs?

2c. *Have you implemented strategies to minimize the effects of the difference between your students' home culture and the school culture?*

If yes, can you share your experiences with implementing strategies?

If not, what experiences do you think have kept you from trying strategies?

2d. *Are you comfortable with obtaining information about your culturally and linguistically diverse students' home life?*

If yes, can you share an experience in which you obtained such information?

If no, is there anything that could help you become comfortable?

Interview Question 3:

3a. *When preparing for instruction, do you include examples about the cultural contributions of your culturally and linguistically diverse students?*

If yes, can you share an example of a including a contribution in instruction?

If not, what would help you to include contributions in your instruction?

3b. *Do you try to identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally and linguistically diverse students?*

If yes, what has been your experience with identifying bias in standardized test?

If no, what is your understanding of test bias?

3c. *Do you believe that the frequency with which students' abilities are misdiagnosed would decrease if their standardized test scores were interpreted with caution? Why or why not?*

Interview Question 4:

4a. *In what ways have you communicated with parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students regarding their child's achievement?*

What are your experiences with parent communication?

If none, what support do you think you would need to increase communication?

4b. *Do you believe that conveying the message that parents are an important part of the classroom would increase parent participation? Why or why not?*

Interview Question 5:

5a. *What has been your greatest success with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?*

5b. *What is or has been your greatest challenge with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?*

Appendix G: Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel - VREP©

By Marilyn K. Simon, with input from Jacquelyn White

<http://dissertationrecipes.com/>

Criteria	Operational Definitions	Score				Questions NOT meeting standard (List page <u>and</u> question number) and need to be revised. <i>Please use the comments and suggestions section to recommend revisions.</i>
		1=Not Acceptable (major modifications needed)	2=Below Expectations (some modifications needed)	3=Meets Expectations (no modifications needed but could be improved with minor changes)	4=Exceeds Expectations (no modifications needed)	
		1	2	3	4	
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The questions are direct and specific. Only one question is asked at a time. The participants can understand what is being asked. There are no <i>double-barreled</i> questions (two questions in one). 					
Wordiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are concise. There are no unnecessary words 					
Negative Wording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are asked using the affirmative (e.g., Instead of asking, "Which methods are not used?", the researcher asks, "Which methods <i>are</i> used?") 					
Overlapping Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No response covers more than one choice. All possibilities are considered. There are no <u>ambiguous</u> questions. 					
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The questions are unbiased and do not lead the participants to a response. The questions are asked using a neutral tone. 					
Use of Jargon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The terms used are understandable by the target population. 					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no clichés or hyperbole in the wording of the questions. 					
Appropriateness of Responses Listed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The choices listed allow participants to respond appropriately. • The responses apply to all situations or offer a way for those to respond with unique situations. 					
Use of Technical Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of technical language is minimal and appropriate. • All acronyms are defined. 					
Application to Praxis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The questions asked relate to the daily practices or expertise of the potential participants. 					
Relationship to Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The questions are sufficient to resolve the problem in the study • The questions are sufficient to answer the research questions. • The questions are sufficient to obtain the purpose of the study. 					
Measure of Construct: A: Self-Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey adequately measures this construct. • Belief in ability to plan and execute processes for accomplishing a task • Selected instructional strategies 					
Measure of Construct: B: Culturally Responsive Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey adequately measures this construct. • Practice of using students’ home culture to scaffold learning and make meaningful pedagogical connections. • Knowing students, engaging in reflective teaching, and identifying resources • Creating a caring environment and supporting students 					

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Comments and Suggestions

Appendix H: Focus Group Protocol and Questions

Focus Group Protocol for the Study on Teachers' Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Teaching	
Participant Pseudonym _____ Participant Pseudonym _____ Participant Pseudonym _____ Participant Pseudonym _____ Participant Pseudonym _____ Participant Pseudonym _____	Start Time: End Time: Date:
<p>Script prior to interview: <i>I'd like to thank you (participant's name) once again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of my study. As I have mentioned to you before, the purpose of my research study will be to describe certified middle school teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs. The study seeks to understand teachers' perceptions of personal ability to rigorously teach students of diverse cultural backgrounds. The aim of this research is to document your beliefs and experiences with culturally responsive teaching to better understand how teachers can be supported with classroom implementation of culturally responsive teaching. Our interview today will last approximately one hour. I will be asking you about your teaching background, experiences with culturally responsive teaching, success and challenges with culturally responsive teaching, and ideas that you may have about your role as a culturally responsive teacher, your purpose for implementing culturally responsive teaching, and the approach you have taken or would like to take regarding culturally responsive teaching.</i></p> <p>[Present a paper copy of the informed consent form. Read informed consent. Answer questions. Have participant sign informed consent.]</p> <p><i>In the informed consent you indicated that I have your permission (or not) to audio record our conversation. Are you still ok with me recording (or not) our conversation today? ___Yes ___No</i></p> <p><i>If yes: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.</i></p> <p><i>If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation. Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions?</i></p> <p><i>Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions]</i> <i>If any questions (or other questions) arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.</i></p>	
<p>Interview Question 1: 1a. Based on your experiences, how would you define culturally responsive teaching? 1b. How often do you implement culturally responsive teaching as you have defined it?</p>	
<p>Interview Question 2: 2a. Have you tried to identify ways the school culture is different from your students' home culture? For example, are the norms, values, or practices different? <i>If yes, can you give an example of a difference you identified?</i></p>	

If no, what experiences or beliefs have kept you from identifying differences?

2b. *Do you think knowing the differences between students' home culture and school culture can improve achievement?*

If yes, in what way can this knowledge improve achievement? Share an experience.

If no, do you have an experience to share to lead you to your beliefs?

2c. *Have you implemented strategies to minimize the effects of the difference between your students' home culture and the school culture?*

If yes, can you share your experiences with implementing strategies?

If not, what experiences do you think have kept you from trying strategies?

2d. *Are you comfortable with obtaining information about your culturally and linguistically diverse students' home life?*

If yes, can you share an experience in which you obtained such information?

If no, is there anything that could help you become comfortable?

Interview Question 3:

3a. *When preparing for instruction, do you include examples about the cultural contributions of your culturally and linguistically diverse students?*

If yes, can you share an example of a including a contribution in instruction?

If not, what would help you to include contributions in your instruction?

3b. *Do you try to identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally and linguistically diverse students?*

If yes, what has been your experience with identifying bias in standardized test?

If no, what is your understanding of test bias?

3c. *Do you believe that the frequency with which students' abilities are misdiagnosed would decrease if their standardized test scores were interpreted with caution? Why or why not?*

Interview Question 4:

4a. *In what ways have you communicated with parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students regarding their child's achievement?*

What are your experiences with parent communication?

If none, what support do you think you would need to increase communication?

4b. *Do you believe that conveying the message that parents are an important part of the classroom would increase parent participation? Why or why not?*

Interview Question 5:

5a. *What has been your greatest success with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?*

5b. *What is or has been your greatest challenge with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?*