

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: TEACHER PERCEPTION OF CULTURALLY
RESPONSIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT HAVE
THE GREATEST IMPACT ON THE ENGAGEMENT OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDENTS

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and Leadership

This mixed method studied teacher perceptions of culturally relevant teaching practices as a viable methodology to better engage African American male students in the learning process. More specifically, the researcher seeks to identify what components of CRT are most effective in engaging African American male students. The researcher used a modification of Johnny McKinley's teacher perception survey on Effective and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Strategies as the assessment instrument. An in-depth exploration of teacher perceptions gleaned useful and actionable information. This information, in turn, could form the basis of CRT related training programs and staff development aimed at implementing those aspects of CRT perceived as most effective in engaging AA males in the learning process, thereby improving their learning and achievement. The purpose of this study is to identify perceived teacher strategies that best engage African American students using Culturally Responsive Teaching.

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by
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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Stacey, my two daughters, Heather and Brittany and my parents, Walter and Medis. Your unyielding prayers, love and support carried me through this process and for that, I am eternally grateful.

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I would like to thank my family, my colleagues, and my extended village, who kept encouraging me through this academic journey. I give thanks for sustaining power that enabled me to persevere and not quit as I managed life's demands.

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Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

Exploring the challenges that African American males face in their effort to obtain an education is multi-faceted. The U.S. Department of Education issues the “Nation’s Report Card” every year, which repeatedly shows that the achievement of African American male students yields less than average results on a consistent basis in comparison to their Asian and White counterparts (NAEP, 2018). These disparities have been highlighted over recent years and were referred to as gaps” in achievement (Garcia & Weiss, 2017). The achievement gaps listed on the Nation’s Report Card include significant gaps in reading and math, two of the common core subjects that are pivotal to assuring attainment of quality education in the United States. Gaps in achievement are defined by the United States Department of Education (USDE) as the “achievement and opportunity gap” and require pressing educational policy changes to address it (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Research has shown that African American males, compared to their White counterparts, are disproportionately placed in special education and have higher dropout and suspension rates (Kunjufu, 2005; Garibaldi, 2007). School systems nationally are grappling with the “Herculean” task of how to close the achievement and opportunity gap between African American males and their K-12 counterparts (White, 2009).

Historically, the African American-White test-score gap has emerged before children enter kindergarten and has tended to widen over time (Fryer & Levitt, 2004, p. 65). As a result, evidence of disparities or “gaps” in achievement have shown up in test scores, dropout rates, graduation rates, and other relevant indicators of academic performance (Noguero, 2000). Nationwide, African American students graduated at a

rate of 69 percent; Hispanics graduated at 73 percent; Whites graduated at a rate of 86 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data). Universities nationwide show the graduation rate of African American students remains at a dismally low 42 percent (Journal of Blacks in Higher Ed, 2005). Increasing educational outcomes become a priority for educators to reduce the risk factors that affect academic achievement (Tate, 2001). There is a myriad of challenges that hinder African American males with pursuing their education, including the sociocultural barriers that African American male student's battle. Not only do these students confront the daily realities of challenging school environments (Tate, 2001), stereotyping and negative images (Scott & Davis, 2006), they also have to struggle with the psychosocial stressors of abandonment and loss of caregivers (Aguilar-Vafaie et al., 2011; Schwartz, 2010). This study explores the perceptions of professional teachers with the intent of unearthing those culturally responsive pedagogical strategies believed to be more effective in supporting African American students' engagement and, ultimately, student achievement.

A review of the literature relative to improving student engagement and achievement for African American male students revealed culturally responsive Teaching (CRT), and its theoretical foundation as a pedagogical framework worthy of exploration. Thus, the researcher focused the research on what aspects of CRT, based on teachers' perceptions of "best practices" have the most significant impact on the engagement of African American males during the instructional process.

Statement of the Problem

Gaps in achievement often exist in and within student subgroups. However, the vast disparities in communities that are primarily composed of African American males have increased overtime, have reached disconcerting levels, and have prompted education professionals, researchers, and policy makers, alike, to seek means for addressing these discrepancies in engagement and achievement between African American males and just about all other student groups (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Among the many factors contributing to the underperformance of African American males are lack of connection to schools, lack of role models, curriculum, and instruction that is viewed as irrelevant. Some argue that the academic achievement of African American males is suffering due to racial prejudice, compulsory suspension irregularities, testing irregularities, and social and cultural disparities. Research can link the achievement gap to the depravity of African American males that dates back as far as slavery in 1619. Although times have changed, racism in education continues to plague schools and is not limited to the differences in the skin color of teachers and students (Wechsler et al., 2007). Racial and gender stereotypes are hard to avoid in American life. They come from media portrayals as well as from puzzling experiences and social learning over lifetimes. Common stereotypes portray African American males as criminal minded, oversexed, lazy, violent, and unintelligent. Additionally, research shows that educators are not immune to picking up and acting upon such stereotypes. For example, a 2003 report looked at teachers' perceptions of students who move about and hold themselves in certain ways. Teachers said that students who walked in an exaggerated stroll and took "cool" poses were more likely to engage in aggressive behavior and below academic achievers or in need of

special education services than students with standard movement styles and erect posture (Bealmear, 2007). Teachers were making questionably stereotyped generalizations (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Many African American males report that teachers who hold negative perceptions are hostile, indifferent, or fearful toward them.

Purpose of the Study

This study was to examine teacher perceptions of culturally responsive teaching practices as a viable methodology that best engages African American male students in the learning process. More specifically, the researcher sought to identify what components of CRT are most effective in engaging African American male students. The researcher used a modification of Johnny McKinley's teacher perception survey on Effective and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Strategies as the assessment instrument. An in-depth exploration of teacher perceptions gleaned useful and actionable information. This information, in turn, could form the basis of CRT related training programs and staff development aimed at implementing those aspects of CRT perceived as most effective in engaging AA males in the learning process, thereby improving their learning and achievement.

Significance of the Study

The study will require teachers to rank a series of strategies under each domain of Johnnie McKinley's survey on Effective and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Strategies. In doing so, the researcher intends to identify what high yield strategies teachers perceive to have the most significant impact on the engagement of African American male students during the learning process (White, 2009). Based on teacher perceptions of these high yield strategies, the researcher intends to identify

actionable professional development opportunities focused on these strategies at both the district and school level. Hence, this study will highlight the most critical aspects of CRT whereas most students have sought to explore CRT in a more global context.

Furthermore, the study's focus will add to the ongoing academic discourse centered on the merits and theoretical underpinnings of CRT as it relates to improving student achievement for African American male students.

Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework on teaching and learning is best summarized by Ladson-Billings (1992) who explains that culturally responsive teachers develop intellectual, social, emotional, and political learning by “using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 382). In a sense, culturally responsive teachers teach the whole child (Gay, 2000). Hollins (1996) adds that education designed specifically for students of color incorporates “culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content” (p. 13). Culturally responsive teachers realize not only the importance of academic achievement but also the importance of maintaining cultural identity and heritage (Gay, 2000).

Culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2009, 1995; Gay, 2000) serves as the theoretical framework of this study. This section substantiates the reasoning behind the chosen approach. “Culturally Relevant Teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Today the term is interchangeably called culturally responsive teaching; these terms are becoming more

widely known and accepted in the field of education. Several characteristics of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy with regards to instructional practices (Ladson-Billings, 1994) include the following:

- (1) Positive perspectives on parents and families
- (2) Communication of high expectations
- (3) Learning with the context of culture
- (4) Student-centered instruction
- (5) Culturally mediated instruction,
- (6) Reshaping the curriculum
- (7) The Teacher as the facilitator

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The tenets of Ladson-Billings' original conceptual framework were (a) students must experience success; (b) students must become or remain culturally competent, and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Through the knowledge loom, Brown University has created a forum for educators to share and learn together around spotlight topics. Currently, culturally responsive teaching is a focus on a practical interpretation of Ladson-Billings' conceptual framework and speaks to how the theory was moved into practice at the classroom level based on the university's interpretation. The following tenets are Brown University's interpretation of how to make Ladson-Billings' framework applicable (and measurable) for use in the classroom. The characteristics identified in the CRP practices attempt to offer ways to improve academic

performance which could be beneficial for all students. This pedagogical approach appears to be most effective if it is instituted in a systemic framework at the school level (Gay, 2000). A crosswalk has also been conducted to align the six categories from the survey, modified from Johnny McKinley's work to the tenets from Brown University, and they will be synthesized. For the purpose of this study, we will be focusing on the following principles of “Culturally Responsive Teaching” as stated by Brown University (2019):

- (3) Learning within the context of Culture
- (4) Student-centered instruction
- (5) Culturally mediated instruction

Learning with the Context of Culture

Banks (2015) study found the following:

“Children from homes in which the language and culture do not strictly correspond to that of the school may be at a disadvantage in the learning process. These children often become alienated and feel disengaged from learning. People from different cultures learn in different ways. Their expectations for education may be different. For example, students from some cultural groups prefer to learn in cooperation with others, while the learning style of others is to work independently. To maximize learning opportunities, teachers should gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms and adapt lessons so that they reflect ways of communicating and learning that are familiar to the students. (Banks, 2015, p. 4).

Children learn about themselves and the world around them within the context of culture (Marks, 2005). Minority students feel pressured in environments where White people are present to renounce their culture. By assimilating blacks into what others who are not, their race would consider the norm in order to fit into the majority culture socially. Social interference on black culture can interfere with emotional and cognitive development and result in school failure (Sheets, 1999). In order to increase contextual knowledge of culture, Banks (2015) and Brown University (2019) suggests the following:

- Vary teaching strategies
- Use cooperative learning especially for material new to the students
- Assign independent work after students are familiar with the concept
- Use role-playing strategies
- Assign students research projects that focus on issues or ideas that apply to their community or culture group
- Provide various options for completing an assignment
- Bridge cultural differences through effective communication
- Teach and talk to students about differences between individuals
- Show how differences among the students make for better learning
- Attend community events of the students and discuss the aspect of the events with the students

Student-Centered Instruction

Student-Centered Instruction as indicated by banks comes directly through the information that is rooted in the “transfer of knowledge” as students are learning and discovering who they are and their environment (Banks, 2015). The research of Brown &

Obiakor (2015) indicates that this transition from teacher centered to student centered emphasizes the focus of learning from instruction and assessment to self-taught teaching and learning. In this concept, students facilitate and influence their learning process that involves but is not limited to student simulations, role-play, and cooperative learning (Banks, 2015).

Brown University (2019), further indicated that there is a difference in the instruction methods when the teaching

is Student-centered. Student Centered is not traditional, here the learning style is considered more “cooperative, collaborative, and community-oriented” (Banks, 2015). Students are encouraged to direct their education and to work with other students on research projects and assignments that are both culturally and socially relevant to them (Banks, 2015, pp. 5). Students become self-confident, self-directed, and proactive ().

Culturally Mediated Instruction

Researchers at Brown University (2019) found that the teaching methods used during Culturally Responsive Teaching help the African American male student understand the mainstream culture through a lens of recognition and acknowledgment. The research also indicates that in shaping the thinking process, the relationship between culture and classroom instruction shapes and distinguishes optimal learning.

Under the guidelines of being culturally responsive, research states that when culturally mediated instruction is implemented, it allows the incorporation and integrates diversity in student learning. Acknowledging that cultural proficiency shapes the ways of knowing students, understanding, and representing information is crucial to their academic attainment. Encouraging multicultural viewpoints and instruction creates an

environment for the inclusion of knowledge that is relevant to the students (Brown University, 2019). Learning happens in culturally appropriate social situations; that is, relationships among students and those between teachers and students are congruent with students' cultures (Brown University, 2019).

Students must be taught and need to know and understand that there is more than one-way to interpret a statement, event, or action (Banks, 2015). By learning in different ways or sharing viewpoints and perspectives in a given situation based on their own cultural and social experiences, students become active participants in their learning (Nieto, 1999). Hollins (1996) believes that culturally mediated instruction provides the best learning conditions.

Hence, this study will test and advance the merits of the CRT because most students have sought to explore CRT in a more global context. Furthermore, the study's focus will add to the ongoing academic discourse centered on the merits and theoretical underpinnings of CRT as it relates to improving student achievement for African American male students.

Research Questions

This study was a mixed methods approach that entails two research questions. The following quantitative research question guided the quantitative component of this study:

Research Question 1- What are teachers' perceptions of the most impactful aspects of the culturally responsive teaching as those aspects relate to engaging AA male students at the high school level?

The following qualitative research guided the qualitative part of this study:

Research Question 2: Why do teachers perceive that certain culturally responsive teaching practices are more impactful with engaging African American males in the classroom?

Definition of Terms

African American Male: male student who is an American who has African and primarily African American African ancestors (this term will be used interchangeably as African American).

Achievement Gap: is the academic performance difference between and compared to races against students of white race, a comparison of academic disparity between white students and other ethnic groups which extends to English and native speakers and those with disabilities and non-disabled peers. (California Department of Education, 2007).

Educational debt: accumulated deficits that are grounded in historical, moral, socio-political, and economic factors that have disproportionately affected the schooling of African-American, Latina/o, Asian, and other non-White students (Kohli, Pizarro, & Nevárez, 2017).

Educational deficit: shortfall between the educational reality that children experience, the amount of academic achievement a school should failed to achieve with a lack of learning over a period time (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

Effective teaching: “the ability . . . to produce higher than predicted gains on standardized achievement tests” (Good, 1979, p. 53).

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT): Is the ability to teach using practices that value students’ cultural (i.e., personal experiences and interests) and linguistic

resources and view this knowledge as capital to build upon rather than as a barrier to learning that increases student learning success and facilitate further instructional development. (Aceves & Orosco, 2014).

Gender: manner of existence, or sex (male or female, typically used concerning social and cultural differences rather than biological ones).

Learning Experience: any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic settings (schools, classrooms) or nontraditional settings (outside-of-school locations, outdoor environments), or whether it includes traditional educational interactions (students learning from teachers and professors) or unconventional interactions (students learning through games and interactive software applications).

Race: refers to a category of people who share certain inherited physical characteristics, such as skin color, facial features, and stature (Barksan, 2012).

Student Engagement: an educational aspect where student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education.

Teacher Experience: Teacher involvement in the profession as it may vary from individual to individual and in the literature. Teaches with little to no experience is described as “Novice.” Novice teachers are identified as those with little or no classroom experience having less than two years of teaching experience (Gatbonton, 2008). Experienced teachers and administrators might define qualified teachers as those who have taught for many years, are able to motivate students and hold their attention, know

how to manage their classroom effectively, and can change course in the middle of a lesson to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities to enhance student learning (Rodríguez et al., 2010).

Limitations of the Study

With all studies, there will be both positive and negative implications as a result of limitations and delimitations (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The study measures perception; therefore, beyond the control of the researcher there will be factors that influence the study. Study limitations related to the qualitative component of this research study can be but may not necessarily be limited to interview conditions, biases, and personal influences. The measurement of perception on behalf of the teacher and the student /teacher relationship can and will vary based on the sample selected. With regard to the quantitative component of this study, one limitation could be that both culturally responsive and non-culturally responsive teachers will be completing the survey. Culturally responsive and non-culturally responsive teaching could mean that some will have knowledge and mastery in implementing the CRT aspects which are part of the study, and some will not have understanding or proficiency of the various elements.

Delimitations of the Study

As opposed to focusing on every level, elementary, middle and high, the researcher decided to focus on the high school level. Additionally, rather than focus on a specific content area, the research survey collected data from multiple contents. These delimitations may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Summary

Research has shown that teachers who use effective practices such as using the race, cultural and social processes to adapt to the knowledge of students and use those strategies to build a repertoire have a greater change to lead them versus those teachers who lack multicultural training and lack efficacy to embrace cultural norms (Armento, Causey, Jones, Frasher, & Weinburgh, 2001). This pedagogical approach meets their students' needs, culture, interests, learning preferences, and prior experiences (McKinley, 2010). Based on CRT and according to Howard (2003), many teachers have not been adequately prepared to teach diverse student populations in urban settings or schools different from their own. By better understanding, what aspects of CRT honestly and positively influence African American students, school leaders and teachers will be better positioned to focus on those strategies and their successful implementation. Teachers may come to a place in which they accurately assess the “gaps” or deficits in learning and achievement of their students and then develop culturally responsive and relevant strategies to address these “gaps” continuously (Sleeter, 2001).

Expanding the concepts and research on race and the culture of teacher understanding of African American students and how teachers can shape their success is pivotal to their academic success. Teachers' attitudes and expectations shape what they teach and how they teach it, influence the climate of their classrooms, and influence the achievements of their students (Graybill, 1997). Teachers' academic expectations influence student achievement levels while teachers' cultural backgrounds can also affect their perceptions of what is appropriate behavior (Graybill, 1997). Teachers must move beyond the boundaries of their own cultures to educate themselves in the values and

lifestyles of other racial and ethnic communities (Graybill, 1997). Ladson-Billings (2009) emphasized that educators must see racial and cultural differences as positive contributions to efforts to address the needs of African American students for the sake of the future. “While it is recognized that African Americans make up a distinct racial group, the acknowledgment that this racial group has a distinct culture is still not recognized” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 10).

Chapter II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will offer a review of the research literature on culturally responsive teaching (CRT) practices and an exploration of several prominent theories that seek to explain the gaps in achievement and introduce CRT as a means to address the issues surrounding the lack of academic engagement that continues to inhibit AA success in school. The literature not only provides an overview of culturally responsive teaching it further examines the study of examining of the African American (AA) male students and the teacher perception of what CRT strategies can have on (sub)/urban public schools/districts. The following categorical themes emerged during the examination of the literature related to AA achievement and CRT: Achievement gaps and analysis, Contextual theory for Cultural Deficit with African American Males, and Culturally responsive Teaching Pedagogy.

Given the increasingly diverse nature of American public schools, and the concentration of AA male students in urban school settings, it is also essential that educators not only practice such diversity but also acknowledge their own cultural experiences and use their knowledge and that of others to modify and enhance the classroom environment. According to CRT, these are arguably necessary traits of a competent modern educator. The disparities in data or the achievement gap for our African American males has prompted researchers to delve more deeply into researching culturally responsive teaching that serves as the primary focus of this study.

Culturally responsive teaching identifies more than an immediate environment. It is direct information that shapes our communication and how we receive information that will be applied to the shaping of our thinking process. Instruction such as this is known

in the research literature as culturally responsive teaching, which involves culturally congruent compatibility, which is relevant to African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1990).

Culturally responsive teaching classifies preconditions for culturally responsive teaching, its characteristics, and strategies (Ladson-Billings, 1994). In 1992, Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings was the first person to introduce the concept of “culturally responsive teaching.” Culturally responsive teachers enable students to relate course content to their cultural context. Culturally responsive teaching is defined as a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural connections to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Rajagopal, 2011). Culturally responsive teaching (CRT), therefore, is designed to give all students an equal chance at academic success (Irvine, 1990; Nieto, 2000; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2003). Students are able to become active participants in their own learning, as establishing a community of learners, students become active members of the learning process, thus contributing to their academic success. In the meantime, the culturally aware teacher helps the students consider that they can maintain high standards of excellence without compromising their cultural identity (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2004).

Contending with Race and Socioeconomic Status Implications in Education

The race has been, and remains, one of the more intriguing paradoxes of society. As a nation, the United States has explicitly and implicitly subscribed to racial hierarchies for the past four centuries (Bobo & Tuan, 2006). Racial discrimination in education arises from actions of institutions or individual state actions, their attitudes and ideologies, or

processes that systematically treat students from different racial, social, and ethnic groups disparately or inequitably (Mickelson, 2003). The conditions of limited access to rigorous courses, qualified/experienced teachers, discriminatory funding practices, and low expectations surrounding the Opportunity Gap exist to reveal racial disparities for African American and Latino students on a national level (Mickelson, 2003).

Research has shown a consistent disparity in academic achievement among African American male students and their White counterparts. According to the Schott Foundation for Public Education (2008), only 47% of African American male students graduate from high school. In some cities, the graduation rates are as low as 19% (Kafele, 2010). As a result of recent education reforms and the new age of education accountability, NCLB student subgroups must demonstrate proficiency, which forces all educators to reexamine the strategies and practices that are being implemented to raise achievement levels. This challenge is compounded for African American males as they are not classified as a standalone subgroup, but rather as a portion of an African American subgroup that is struggling nationally (Kafele, 2010).

Despite the myriad of “Best Practices” being implemented to drive student achievement amongst African Americans, the data show that African American male students continue to perform low in comparison to all other subgroups of students (Kafele, 2010). Research indicates that only 12% of African American fourth graders reached proficient or advanced levels in reading, and 61% of African American male students performed below the necessary standards on the eighth-grade measure of mathematics attainment when compared to 21% of White students. By the end of high school, African American male students' math and reading skills are comparable to

Caucasian eighth graders (Hoffman & Llagas, 2003). In addition to gaps in performance on achievement tests, deficiencies are found in grades, course selection, advanced placement course participation and test taking, high school graduation rates, and dropout rates (Legler, 2004).

The United States Department of Education (2009) projected that by the year 2050 African American, Asian American, and Latino students would constitute close to 57% of all U.S. students. As the face of demographics continues to change, mostly White, middle-class females will likely teach students of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and social backgrounds. These teachers should and must be able to understand and use the constructs within pedagogical practices that are relevant and have meaning to students' social and cultural realities (Kozuleski, 2010). Socially and emotionally, African American and Latino students have struggled to adjust in U.S. schools and are grossly overrepresented in special education and remedial schooling and less suited for gifted education and advanced placement (Kafele, 2010).

The achievement and opportunity gap will continue to manifest when conditions of the opportunity gap are not addressed or eliminated. Researchers and policymakers contend that the achievement and opportunity gap cannot only be viewed through the lens of racial indicators, but social economic factors must be considered as well. The term socioeconomic status (SES) refers to one's relative standing about income, level of education, employment, health, and access to resources. According to the United States Bureau of the Census (2005), a family that is labeled poor is identified by their income for a year. If the family's income for the entire year is below the amount deemed necessary to support a family of a certain size, they are labeled as poor. The Free and

Reduced-Price Lunch program is frequently used as a proxy indicator of poverty (USDE, 2006). The U.S. Department of Education (2006) suggests that despite efforts across the country to ensure an “equal educational opportunity for every individual,” an achievement/opportunity gap exists for low socioeconomic and minority students (United States Department of Education, 2006). African American and Latino children are disproportionately affected by poverty (Kafele, 2010)

Seventy-one percent of Latino and 70% of African American students in the fourth grade qualified for free or reduced-price lunch programs compared to 23% of White children. In addition to being more likely than White students to be from low-income families, African American and Latino students are more likely to be concentrated in high-poverty schools (Minaya-Rowe, 2004). From a national perspective, in 2003, as the proportion of African American and Latino students increased, so did the portion of students in the school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). Six percent of African American and Latino 4th-graders were in the lowest-poverty schools (with 10 percent or less of students’ eligible) versus 29 percent of White 4th-graders. In contrast, 47 % of African American and 51% Latino 4th-graders were in the highest poverty schools (with more than 75 percent eligible for free and reduced meals) versus five percent of White 4th-graders (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).

Middle schools and junior high schools more often place African American and Latino students in remedial mathematics programs, so they are more likely to learn fewer topics and skills (Oakes, 1990). It is a common practice that African American and Latino students are placed in low tracks even in cases where their standardized test scores

or other measures of talent are equal or better than their White or Asian American peers (Flores, 2007; Love, 2002). In 2000, 32% of White eighth graders were in what teachers considered high ability classes, but only 16% of Latino and 16% of African American 8th graders were in such courses, (Strutchens, Lubienski, McGraw, & Westbrook, 2000). African American and Latino students are less likely than White students to have teachers who emphasize high-quality mathematics instruction, and appropriate use of resources (Flores, 2007).

The participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses assists with college admission, preparation, success, and financing (Santoli, 2002). There is an opportunity gap for minority students in the area of AP class access. African American student enrollment in AP courses is smaller than that of White students (USDE, 2009). In the 2013 College Board Annual AP Report to the Nation, there was an analysis of more than 300,000 students in the graduating class of 2012 who had been identified as having such “AP potential” yet who did not take any recommended AP courses. An examination of these data illuminated striking inequities. In most subject areas, African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students who have the same AP readiness as their White and Asian/ Asian American/Pacific Islander peers are significantly less likely to experience such AP coursework (Brown-Jeffy, & Cooper, 2011).

A major obstacle to federal and state efforts to increase the quality of the teaching workforce and student achievement is the persistent opportunity gap between students in their access to qualified teachers (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007). Classes in schools serving mostly African American and Latino students are twice as likely to be taught by

inexperienced teachers (with three years of experience or less) compared to classes at schools where there is a majority of White students (Wilkens, 2006). Further analysis of teacher qualifications reveals that the least qualified teacher recruits are disproportionately found in under-resourced, hard to staff schools serving predominately low-income and minority students in central cities and poor rural areas. Thus, students who most need highly skilled teachers are least likely to have them, further magnifying inequalities (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Students in both high poverty schools and low achieving schools need the best teachers (Machado, 2008).

From an international perspective, the 2003 trend in International Mathematics and Science study shows student learning gaps and a lack of qualified teachers (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007). Data from 46 countries showed that, although the national level of teacher quality in the United States was similar to the international average, the opportunity gap in students' access to qualified teachers between students of high and low socioeconomic status was among the largest in the world. Cross-national analyses revealed that the countries with better teacher quality produced higher mathematics achievement (Akiba et al., 2007). There exists a significant opportunity gap between high socioeconomic status and low socioeconomic status students in their access to teachers with a subject-specific major in the United States, and this gap is more significant than those of most other countries (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007).

The countries where fully certified teachers, teachers with a mathematics education major, taught higher percentages of eighth graders and teachers with high overall quality achieved scores with significantly higher national average when compared to other countries (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007). This analysis further revealed

that the top achieving states had a higher percentage of students taught by teachers who met their country's criteria for full certification, had majored in mathematics or mathematics education, and had accumulated at least three years of teaching experience (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007). When teachers are adequately trained and or highly qualified, this ensures that, regardless of the specific requirements in that country, its students are likely to achieve higher (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007). Thus, obtaining equity by offering equal learning opportunities to all students is an important policy goal in all countries (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007).

The inequities in access to qualified teachers are likely to play a significant role in the long-lasting achievement and opportunity gap in the United States. The opportunity gap in access to qualified teachers has always been a substantial problem in this country, and the nature of such inequality is well documented; there has been no systematic effort at the federal or state level to address this inequality (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007).

Cultural Deficit Theory in Context to the African American Male

Schools are expanding, and with that different expansion, races are filling the buildings. With different races, different cultures are coming together as one. It is becoming imperative for educators to address culture in the classroom. Through discussing culture in the school in order to address the challenges and opportunities associated with diversity in the school setting, the nation's school systems will gain competence in growing more diverse (Gay, 2000). Over the past decade, researchers have theorized about the benefits of culturally relevant teaching. The research presented a way for teachers to reach and teach students from all cultures (Banks & Banks, 1995; Gay,

2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2001; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter & Grant, 1987; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Ladson-Billings (1995) defined culturally relevant teaching as that which helps “students to be academically successful, culturally competent, and socio-politically critical” (p. 477-78). In her work with effective teachers of African American students, Ladson-Billings (1995) described effective teachers as those who demand and require academic success from their students.

The author defined culturally responsive teaching methods as those that emphasize the use of referents from a student’s culture as a vehicle for learning. In order to help students, build a broader sociopolitical consciousness, Ladson-Billings (1995) stresses the importance of teachers analyzing societal norms and inequities that affect students of color. According to Villegas and Lucas (2002), culturally relevant teaching requires more from teachers than was previously expected. It needs teachers to know and understand the impact of race, class, and culture on students' ways of being. It requires teachers to create environments where diversity is respected, and expectations are held high (Gay, 2000), and it encourages teachers to expand on their teaching strategies to promote depth of content knowledge rather than rote memorization (Banks & Banks, 1995).

Ladson-Billings (1994) noted that critical criteria for culturally relevant teaching start with nurturing and supporting competence in both home and school cultures (Brown University, 2019). The research further indicated that teachers who use best practices with students such as “home cultural experiences” as a foundation are more likely to develop a better sense of knowledge and skills for academic advancement (Brown University, 2019). When culture is used in learning content, the progress is much more

significant to the students and facilitates the transfer of knowledge through what is learned in school to real-life situations (Brown University, 2019). In the role of the teacher as a facilitator during culturally relevant teaching, there are essential strategies and decisions that the teacher makes in order to bridge experiences with students in an effort to work toward cultural competence (Milner IV, 2011). “It is important to include race and race consciousness in the multicultural classroom, especially in environments where race and culture could be dismissed as student deficiency” (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Through culturally relevant teaching, teachers prepare students with skills to question inequity and to fight against the many “isms” and phobias that they encounter while allowing students to build knowledge and to transfer what they have learned through classroom instructional/learning opportunities to other experiences (Milner, 2014). The educational system plans the curriculum for schools, and teachers as their “institutional agents” transfer the prescribed content to their students (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2004). The daily interaction that teachers have with students affords them the opportunity to perpetuate status quo or to profoundly impact not only their achievement but also their life as a whole (Richards et al., 2004). There is a need for culturally responsive teaching to be used as an instructional strategy in the classroom in order for African American students to gain a deeper meaning and contextual understanding. Cultural awareness builds knowledge, communities, and invites students to be lifelong learners, as well as active participatory learners in the instructional process as they take vested ownership in their academic success. Teachers who are culturally proficient serve

as a resource to students and set a standard for learning in their educational journey towards establishing their cultural identity.

Culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy goes further in its focus on participatory social action towards social transformation. In contrast to methods that treat culture as a characteristic of “us” versus “them,” culturally responsiveness and relevance promote the idea that society and communities are interdependent and made better when all of us are included in the discussions, solutions, and visioning of the future (Ladson-Billings, 1992). When African American males are in school, what do they learn about themselves? Proponents of multicultural education maintain that racial/ethnic minority students, regardless of gender, will become more motivated and engaged when they see themselves affirmed in the materials and content (Banks, 2006; Ferguson, 2000; Ford & Harris, 1999; Steele, Perry, & Hilliard, 2004).

It is imperative to recognize how deficit-based notions of minority students continue to permeate traditional school thinking and practices. In order to shift standardized thinking to culturally responsive teaching practices, one must be willing to critique and reflect on their embedded thoughts and practices to ensure he or she does not reinforce prejudice behavior (Howard, 2003).

Ladson-Billings (1994) suggests that many teachers are unprepared to work with students whose culture differs from their own and that this lack of understanding propels these teachers to view certain minority cultures from a deficit perspective. According to Ford, Harris, Tyson, and Trotman (2002), a deficit perspective is held by White educators who view students of color as “culturally deprived or disadvantaged” (p. 53). This

perspective can ultimately keep educators from recognizing the gifts and talents of African American children.

More commonly referred to as the Cultural Deficit Theory, this model contends that minority cultural values that are transmitted through the family generation after generation are deficient and dysfunctional (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Research has shown that insufficient cultural values can include present vs. future time orientation, immediate instead of delayed gratification, an emphasis on cooperation vs. competition, and placing less importance on education and upward mobility (Carter, Segura, & College Entrance Examination Board, N. Y. N. C. S. S., 1979; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2001). Cultural deficit models argue that because parents of color refuse to adopt the values of the dominant culture and transmit those values to their children, they are to blame for the low educational and occupational attainment that continues in future generations (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Deficit thinking could also cause teachers to lower their expectations for African American students (Fergus, 2017).

Researcher Carl White (2015) stated that Whiteness does not refer to biological characteristics, but beliefs, presuppositions, and attitudes derived from the cultural perspective of the dominant culture (p. 155). What's more, these beliefs, presuppositions, and opinions are projected as neutral and universal with little consideration for the worldviews of racially and ethnically different people (Lea & Sims, 2008). Although White is a white male himself, concerning “white privilege,” he offers this insightful analogy: “Privilege, to us, is like water to the fish, invisible precisely because we cannot imagine life without it” (p.12).

The problem with the achievement/opportunity gap amongst African American males is not their inability to do the work, but it is likely for their crisis of self. There is a massive disconnect between the past and present in the African American community that results in children not understanding who they are in a historical and cultural context (Kafele, 2010). As a result of lacking an African-centered cultural identity, many students do not have a solid foundation to reference with governing themselves. The absence of this foundation has stripped many from having a sense of purpose, mission, and vision for their education. Schools become irrelevant to their individual needs, interests, and aspirations because they fail to see themselves in the curriculum and instruction and therefore fail to make the connection between school and their individual or collective growth and development (Carlson, 2011). According to Sleeter and Grant (2007), “the deficiency orientation focuses on what one believes members of another group lack . . . “(p. 40). The deficit-thinking perspective argues that intellect or the lack thereof determines one's station in life. In the classroom, deficit thinking is transferred through a mindset that African American students have impediments to learning (Carlson, 2011). The Triple Quandary theory, Stereotyping, and Oppositional Culture all add a unique perspective on causal factors that may lead to insight around cultural deficit model and the achievement/opportunity gap of African American males (Fordham, & Ogbu, 1986; Steele, 1997; Boykin, 1986).

Theoretical Inhibitors to African American Males Student Success Stereotype

Threat

Stereotype threat is a situational experience in which an individual feels vulnerable and pressured by the possibility of confirming or being judged by a stereotype

(Steele, 1997). This threatening experience leads to performance decrements, even among highly skilled individuals (Smith, 2004). Steele and Aronson (1995) brought the term “stereotype threat” to popular usage; their seminal article on the resulting poor performance of African American students taking the Graduate Record Examination after being informed that the test measured their intelligence helped people understand the impact of race role in stereotyping (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Stereotype threat is the predicament created when an individual, who cares about a given domain-relevant group-stereotype, knows that a stereotype about her or his social group can provide a potential explanation for poor performance in that domain. That is, when an individual is placed in a stereotype-relevant domain, there exists a “threat in the air” propelling the possibility of the individual being treated or judged regarding the stereotype (Smith, 2004). Stereotype threat is one of the contributing factors associated with the cause of the achievement/opportunity gap. Stereotype threat is known first and foremost as a factor that inhibits stereotyped individuals from performing up to their full ability. Second, stereotype threat has been linked to dis-identification from the stereotyped domain. It is important to note that in Steele's study, the experiment was conducted with students of the same ability. They were all skilled, motivated and confident; however, they were impaired by negative stereotypes, which inhibited their performance (Smith, 2004).

The underperformance of specific subgroups in specific cognitive tasks is prevalent for both African Americans and Latinos where there is a perceived belief that these subgroups are less intelligent or where women are viewed as less competent in mathematics and science. The original set of studies by Steel and Aronson (1995) is considered a modern classic in social psychology (Inzlicht & Schmader, 2012), and

stereotype threat has become well represented in textbooks and even in popular media. Sackett and colleagues pointed at many scholarly articles, textbooks, and journalistic accounts, which seemed to suggest that stereotype threat during test taking explains all of the performance differences between men and women or different ethnic groups (Sackett et al., 2004). There is criticism aimed at the finding of stereotype threat more so than at the theory itself. Critics assert that stereotype threat is just one contributing factor to why women and African Americans underachieve in standardized testing. The counter-argument suggests that there is no achievement/opportunity gap in ability, but there is an achievement/opportunity gap in performance. Critics identify a bigger picture based on the assumption that the test-taking situation is only one occasion in which the negative influence of stereotype threat is at work. Not only are stereotyped or otherwise devalued individuals unable to achieve up to ability, but stereotype threat also affects individuals in learning and building abilities in the first place.

One key asset of Steel's contribution is that he consciously separated class from race defeating the notion that middle- or upper-class students who are African American do not suffer from social and educational contexts that permeate negative perceptions about the intellectual ability of African Americans. Steele and Perry argue that the social and psychological features of school contexts are equally crucial as individual academic skills. Steel suggests that the solution rests at three levels. The levels include (a) creating trusting institutional settings, (b) improving pedagogy between teachers and students, and (c) augmenting individual responses to stereotypes (Tierney, Minor, Venegas, & Sackett, 2004).

Oppositional Culture

At least since Coleman (1959), there has been an awareness that specific student peer groups tend to value things other than academic performance, one consequence of which may be a reduction of effort on schoolwork. Researchers have reported that this lower educational effort is particularly prevalent among low-income and ethnic minority peer groups. Ogbu and his associates (Fordam & Ogbu 1986; Ogbu 1974, 1978, 1986, 1999) put forward the “oppositional culture hypothesis” to explain this finding (Ogbu, 2004). Their research focused on low-income African American students who due to discrimination in employment practices saw little value in putting effort into achieving in school. This mindset was called “oppositional” peer-group culture and associated those who put forth effort in academic achievement as “acting White,” and therefore discouraged such behavior.

Oppositional culture theory provides compelling insight into school resistance among African American students; it distinguishes between two types of minorities: voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary minorities consist of immigrant minorities, such as Punjabi Indians and Koreans who voluntarily migrated in comparison to those who had no choice due to enslavement, colonization or conquest and were given a subordinate status. African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexicans are groups that fall into this category (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). These differences of entry into American society result in differences in adaptation and differences in the perception of structural and social barriers usually confronted by new migrants.

Voluntary minorities are more willing to adapt to American society as a means for upward mobility and, indeed, it is argued that in anticipation of possible barriers to

opportunities, they overachieve scholastically (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Voluntary minorities compare themselves to natives of their homeland and have a favorable view of the opportunities available in American society. Involuntary minorities, in contrast, compare themselves to the dominant members in American culture, and they are painfully aware of their disadvantaged status; unfortunately, this comparison tends to produce resentment because they belong to a disfavored group (Ogbu & Simons 1998). Involuntary minorities learn from those around them that they have limited job opportunities. As a direct result of this learned helplessness, they put forth little effort toward success in school. Aforementioned is in part because, as proponents of learned helplessness the explanation contends, there is a reciprocal relationship between the perceived opportunities available to a minority group and the “pattern of linguistic, cognitive, motivational, and other school-related skills they develop” (Ogbu,1978).

Oppositional culture theory makes two inferences that further explain the individual behavior of African American students and the peer culture that exacerbates academic underperformance. One argument is that African Americans develop symbolic devices for protecting their identity and for maintaining boundaries between them and White Americans. Secondly, because of the historical oppression, African Americans develop a sense of collective identity in opposition to the social character of White Americans. To behave in a manner deemed as falling within the White cultural frame of reference is known as “acting White” and is negatively sanctioned by one's peers (Fordham & Ogbu,1986). Perhaps because of its sociological appeal, the resistance or oppositional model has been applauded by a wide range of scholars (Erickson, 1987; Gischer et al., 1996; Foley, 1991; Jaynes, & Williams, 1989), even though the model's

key claims have not received empirical verification. Proponents have failed to specifically compare perceptions of professional opportunity and resistance to schools across involuntary, dominant, and immigrant groups (Spencer, Cross, Harpalani, & Goss, 2003).

According to Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998), the oppositional culture model is based on four hypotheses. First, involuntary minority (African American) students perceive fewer returns from education and more limited occupational opportunities than do dominant (White) students or immigrant minority (Asian American) students. Second, involuntary minority (African American) students exhibit higher resistance to school than do dominant (White) students or immigrant minority (Asian American) students. Third: their peers negatively sanction high-achieving involuntary minority (African American) students for their achievement. Lastly, the resistance to school accounts for the racial gap in school performance between involuntary (African American) students and dominant (White) students and immigrant minority (Asian American) students. The phenomenon remains that if African Americans have an optimistic occupational expectation and positive, concrete attitudes, why does this not transfer to comparable academic achievement. Mickelson poses that researchers measure attitudes with abstract indicators that merely reflect the dominant ideology rather than real signs “rooted in life experience” (Mickelson, 1990). Researchers support the notion that in order to resolve this “paradox” it is worth noting that African American students support education at the abstract level but feel frustrated with schooling at the concrete level and that real attitudes predict students' grades, while general positions do not (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998).

Triple Quandary theory

Boykin's Triple Quandary Theory (Sankofa et al., 2005) is useful in understanding why contextual discontinuities exist. According to the Triple Quandary Theory (Boykin, 1986; Boykin & Ellison, 1995), African Americans are simultaneously part of three cultural realms: the mainstream (White, middle-class), the Afro-cultural, and the minority realms. The mainstream domain reflects White, middle-class values, including individualism and competition. The Afro- culture is an outgrowth of the unique cultural experiences of people of African descent in America. The minority realm reflects the oppression that African Americans have experienced in America. The school setting, and especially an accelerated learning program (also known as “gifted classroom”), typically represents a mainstream realm (Boykin & Ellison, 1995; Rowley & Moore, 2001). Many African American families emphasize communalism and value expressiveness (Boykin, 1986). The expressiveness of African Americans may present a conflict for African American students because high competition and individualism can characterize most classrooms. Research conducted by Hardaway, & McLoyd, (2009) ascertained that Boykin Boykin’s triple quandary theory asserts that very different frames of mind, attitudes, and behaviors are required to function in each realm of theory. Boykin contends that tools necessary to operate in the Afro-cultural field vary immensely from those that are in the mainstream. African American students are subsequently in a puzzle of how to successfully navigate the constructs of each domain. Negative constructs are defined as the challenge of reconciling the cultural differences between contexts and developing strategies that allow you to function in a variety of different environments (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009). Another challenge for African American students is the

ability to demonstrate success in mainstream society while simultaneously maintaining values aligned with African American culture. African Americans are continually navigating this Triple Quandary cultural experience.

The race of a student has always been more complicated than initially suggested as identified by Boykin and Ellison (1995). Many accounts that suggest African American students either must identify with their racial group or with academic achievement, in recent years, have changed. Students' behaviors and interaction styles that are acceptable in the home environment or community may not be acceptable and may be misinterpreted in the school settings (Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 1996).” This kind of cultural incongruity between contexts has been discussed concerning discontinuities between the home and school environment” (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009, p. 251). For example, Boykin (1978) described how African American students’ cultural styles reflect vestiges of West African culture encompassing high levels of activity and communal sharing that sometimes clash with White teachers’ views about appropriate levels of activity, individualism, and competitiveness. This mismatch of styles means, “African American children are bored because school is a relatively unstimulating, constraining and monotonous place, and perhaps relatively more compatible with the more placid existence of suburbia” (Boykin, 1978).

Boykin (1978) found, based on data collected in experiments conducted, that performance of African American students was enhanced when teachers employed activities with “verve inducement and high sensate stimulation.” The strategies mentioned above, or lack thereof speak to the importance of two responsive cultural tenets: Student-Centered Instruction and Culturally Mediated Instruction. Student-

Centered Instruction is embedded in the transfer of knowledge through student discovery (Brown University, 2019). This transition emphasizes the focus of learning from instruction and assessment to self-taught teaching and learning. In this concept, students facilitate and influence their learning process that involves but is not limited to student simulations, role-play, and cooperative learning. The Culturally Mediated Instruction teaching method used during Culturally Responsive Teaching helps the student understand the mainstream culture through a lens of recognition and acknowledgment. The ties between culture and classroom instruction shape the thinking process and recognize and shape optimal learning.

Curtis Linton (2011) developed the equity framework after visiting schools that had been successful with closing achievement gaps. There are four common characteristics of equitable schools that Linton observed (2011):

Expectations set the bar for high achievement. *Rigor* provides the skills and learning the student needs to succeed. *Relationships* help the student believe in the teacher's high expectations, engage with the rigorous curriculum, and respond to the *Relevancy* of the learning.

Linton found that these schools focused on three areas: *culture, practice, and leadership*. In order to achieve equity, Linton (2011) suggests that you must be doing all three at the same time. We use these lenses to reflect on the individual and the collective needs of the school. Included in the framework are three big questions, which help to focus the work in each of the arenas:

- **Culture:** How does the workplace create conditions to ensure that success, engagement, and inclusion are not predictable by race, ethnicity, and culture?

- **Practice:** How does the workplace identify specific strategies, actions, or goals that are designated to eliminate the racial achievement gap?
- **Leadership:** How does the workplace spend time and resources on developing the vision, skills, and accountability of its formal and informal leaders to lead for equity?

Within each of the critical areas, there are three lenses of engagement: *personal*, *institutional* and *professional*. Linton suggests using these three “lenses” to examine different roles within the three areas for equity:

- Using a personal lens means considering each individual’s role of personal responsibilities in enacting equity. The lens through which an individual explores his or her own experience with race and equity and how it influences their work for and with students.
- Using an institutional lens means considering how our collective work either perpetuates or interrupts patterns of inequity. Equity is the lens through which the status quo is combatted.
- Using a professional lens means, we (the individuals and the institution) consider teaching practices, culturally proficient teaching, support mechanisms, and environment that actualize equity. Equity is the lens through which best practices are contextualized.

These efforts through Linton (2011) reflect a research-based understanding of how to improve teaching and learning by encouraging professional learning communities, improving expectations, and monitoring data for specific evidence of student progress.

Teacher Perceptions of the African American Male Student

Our investigation of the extent to which student-teacher demographic mismatch affects teachers' expectations for students' educational attainment contributes to two distinct kinds of literature. First, broad, interdisciplinary literature examines biases in beliefs and their impact on decision-making. Mounting evidence suggests that students' beliefs affect their schooling decisions, that their beliefs are often incorrect, and that their beliefs are malleable. Through a lens of uncertainty and beliefs Wiswall and Zafar (2015) research determined that a high number of college students have incorrect beliefs regarding the distribution of average starting salaries across college majors, that students' meaningful choices are a function of these incorrect beliefs, and an intervention that provides accurate information can correct that biased beliefs. Similarly, experimental evidence in social psychology finds that “buffering interventions,” which aim to reduce test anxiety attributable to stereotype threat, improve the academic achievement of at least some subsets of the student population (Dee, 2015; Spitzer & Aronson, 2015).

Biases in beliefs are primarily of concern if they lead to under investments in human capital. For example, a student may forego college if she overestimates the likelihood of failing to complete her degree. Her decision is suboptimal in the sense that, given unbiased (accurate) beliefs, she would have enrolled. Researchers argue that parents' negatively biased beliefs could lead to underinvestment in their children's education, especially in neighborhoods with few college graduates (Morgan, Leenman, Todd, & Weeden, 2013; Dillon & Smith, 2013).

Teachers are essential inputs in the K–12 education production function who likely shape students' attitudes towards educational attainment (Burgess and Greaves

2013; Dee, 2015). One channel through which teachers likely influence students' beliefs is via grading (Mechtenberg, 2009). Indeed, robust evidence suggests gender, racial, and ethnic biases in how teachers grade exams in a variety of contexts (Burgess and Greaves 2013; Cornwell, Mustard, & Van Parys 2013; Hanna & Linden, 2012; Lavy, 2008). The research completed by Lavy and Sand (2015) showed that grading biases can have long-lasting impacts on academic achievement and course taking in high school. Relatedly, Riegle-Crumb and Humphries (2012) completed research to see how gender, stereotypes and conditional bias shape the basis of how math teachers stigmatize female students.

Teachers also likely affect students' beliefs by directly imparting their expectations to students. For example, protection models hypothesize that teacher expectations "protect against," or counteract, negative expectations created by neighborhood effects or lack of access to educationally successful role models (Gregory and Huang 2013). Indeed, teachers themselves believe that their expectations can affect student outcomes (MetLife, 2009); and students frequently report favoring teachers who "believe in their ability to succeed" (Curwin 2012; Golebiewski, 2012). Teachers' expectations strongly predict students' postsecondary educational attainment, though this is not necessarily a causal relationship, as expectations may accurately measure unobservable student ability (Boser, Wilhelm, Hanna, & Center for American Progress, 2014; Gregory & Huang, 2013). Still, if teachers' expectations are systematically biased, this likely contributes to the persistence of socio-demographic gaps in educational attainment.

Teachers' expectations might affect student outcomes in at least three ways. First, the perception that teachers have low expectations may exacerbate the harmful effects of

stereotype threat, whereby low expectations either cause emotional responses that directly harm performance or cause students to *disidentify* with educational environments (Steele, 1997). Second, stigmatized students may modify their expectations, and in turn, their behavior, to conform to teachers' negative biases (Ferguson, 2003). In each of the first two cases, teachers' stigmatization of information-poor racial minority students could create a feedback loop. Feedback loops serve to function as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Burgess, & Greaves, 2013; Loury, 2009). Finally, teachers who stigmatize certain types of students may modify how they teach, evaluate, and advise them, again leading to poor educational outcomes for stigmatized students (Ferguson, 2003). All three scenarios potentially perpetuate socio-demographic gaps in educational attainment.

The current study also contributes to the literature on teacher effectiveness. Recent research shows that teachers affect critical socioeconomic outcomes including educational attainment, labor market success, and criminal activity (e.g., Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff 2013; Jackson, 2012). However, the mechanisms through which high school teachers affect these outcomes are poorly understood. One possible channel is by shaping students' beliefs and expectations about their ability to complete secondary and tertiary education. In that regard, the current study is related to the literature on the relationship between student-teacher demographic mismatch and outcomes such as student test scores and teacher assessments of student behavior and ability (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor 2007; Dee 2004, 2005, 2007; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015; McGrady, & Reynolds 2013; Ouazad, 2014). These studies consistently find evidence of arguably causal, modest negative effects of demographic mismatch on both academic achievement and teacher perceptions of student ability, behavior, and noncognitive skills,

in both primary and secondary school settings. At the community college level, Fairlie, Hoffmann, and Oreopoulous (2014) find positive effects of being assigned a minority instructor on several measures of minority students' academic success, including course grades, future course selection, and degree completion. However, these studies are typically reduced form in the sense that the mechanisms through which demographic mismatch affects student outcomes are not identified. Teachers' expectations, which may play a particularly important role in shaping the information set used by students and parents to make decisions regarding investments in human capital, are one potential mechanism. The current study investigates this possibility by providing different evidence of the relationship between student-teacher demographic mismatch and teachers' expectations for student educational attainment.

A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy goes further in its focus on participatory social action towards social transformation. In contrast to methods that treat culture as a characteristic of “us” versus “them,” culturally responsiveness and relevance promote the idea that society and communities are interdependent and made better when all of us are included in the discussions, solutions, and visioning of the future (Ladson-Billings, 1992). Proponents of multicultural education maintain that racial/ethnic minority students, regardless of gender, will become more motivated and engaged when they see themselves affirmed in the materials and content (Banks, 2006; Ferguson, 2000; Ford & Harris, 1999; Steele, Perry, & Hilliard, 2004).

This conceptual framework on teaching and learning is best summarized by Ladson-Billings (1992) who explains that culturally responsive teachers develop

intellectual, social, emotional, and political learning by “using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes”

(p. 382). In a sense, culturally responsive teachers teach the whole child (Gay, 2000).

Hollins (1996) adds that education designed specifically for students of color incorporates “culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content” (p. 13). Culturally responsive teachers realize not only the importance of academic achievement but also the maintaining of cultural identity and heritage (Gay, 2000).

Ladson-Billings (1994) studied instruction in the elementary classroom; during her observation, she observed values of cultural competency being demonstrated. During an inspection of these elementary classrooms, she further noted that the students were, in fact, a part of a more collective effort, which was designed to facilitate and encourage academic and cultural excellence. The expectations of cultural competency are clearly expressed through the use of personal relationships, teaching skills, and explicit instruction through using the means of culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Using cultural techniques, the students showed more characteristics of better behavior and felt as though they were more like members of an extended family. The students felt assisted, supported, and they encouraged each other as a direct result increasing their motivation to be a better academic student. Teaching with cultural norms allowed students to be independent while using accountability of their actions and norms of others within a larger group (Gay, 2000). The students embraced and made sure that as an individual member of the group they were cognizant of themselves and that they were successful as a group member and individually (Maisano & Banker, 2013). Promoting

academic standards as a community of learners presents the opportunity to unite teachers and students as teachers respond which creates “a sense of belonging, honored their human dignity, and promoted their individual self-concepts” (Gay, 2000).

A teacher’s expectation became directly related to a student’s educational expectations (Brantlinger, 2001). Flores (2007) describes that “low expectations for minority student achievement most likely occurs when ethnic or cultural background differs from that of theirs. Teachers and these students who experience low expectations are put in situations where the teacher assumes deficits in the students, rather than locating and teaching to their strengths, such as resilience, eagerness, energy, and creativity” (p.33). Teacher beliefs about student capabilities and home environments can lead to a sense of helplessness on the part of the teacher (Flores, 2007). This helplessness can then result in lower expectations, ineffective teaching, and reinforced stereotypes (Reyna, 2000). If teachers have high expectations, their students will be more motivated to succeed. Likewise, if teachers have low expectations, their students will have less motivation to succeed. Teachers often have lower expectations for African American students, particularly African American boys (Garibaldi, 1992).

Teaching is like any other activity performed by humans, through ups and downs the reaction to do so emerges from one's inwardness (Palmer, 1998). As one teaches, it is likely that the teacher will project the condition of their soul onto students. The entanglements one experiences in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of one's inner life. When viewed from a different perspective, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If a person is willing to look in the mirror and not run from what they see, there is an opportunity for them to gain self-knowledge. Knowing thyself

is as crucial to good teaching as knowing one's students and content; in fact, one's self-knowledge sets a strong foundation. If a person does not know himself, it will be a challenge getting to know their students.

If one is viewing students in the shadows of their own unexamined life, they potentially cannot see students clearly and subsequently may not be able to teach them well. Engagement is the apparent outcome of motivation when training with a culturally responsive approach. To be useful in multicultural classrooms, teachers must relate teaching content to the cultural backgrounds of their students. According to the research, teaching that ignores student norms of behavior and communication provokes student resistance, while instruction that is responsive prompts student involvement (Olneck, 1995). There is growing evidence that robust and continual engagement among diverse students requires a holistic approach—that is, an approach where the how, what, and why of teaching are unified and meaningful (Ogbu, 1995). The author suggests that there is a difference in one's motivation based on one's culture. Emotions influence a person's motivation, emotions are social, and emotions socialize the culture of the individual. This means a person's emotions are heavily influenced by a person's lived experiences and what they have learned has a direct result on their culture. Culture also affects language, beliefs, values, and behaviors, which infiltrate every aspect of a person's life. For example, one person working at a task feels frustrated, stops, while another person working on the task feels joy, and continues. Another person, with an even different set of cultural beliefs, feels frustrated at the job but continues with increased determination. What may elicit that frustration, joy, or determination may differ across cultures because cultures differ in their definitions of novelty, hazard, opportunity, and gratification, and

their interpretations of appropriate responses. Thus, the answer a student has to a learning activity reflects his or her culture. Intrinsic systems of motivation can accommodate cultural differences.

Theories of intrinsic motivation have been successfully applied and researched in areas such as cross-cultural, bilingual education, and school, work, and sports studies (Csikszentmihalyi, & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Cummins, 1986; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Ample documentation across a variety of student and regional settings suggests that noncompetitive, informational evaluation processes are more effective than competitive, controlling evaluation procedures (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). Educational models are growing through a variety of theories, constructivism, intelligence, and other intrinsic motivations. Through these models, they take into account the student perspective as it relates to central teaching ideas. These theories are to be applied by all educators within each educational system as for the use of external reinforcement. The theory further minimalizes the effects of cultural indifference where grades and class rank are emphasized. Fortunately, for educators teaching culturally different students, intrinsic motivation is likely to further the engagement and learning process. Cultural responsiveness is designed to create, plan, and refine teaching activities, lessons, and assessment practices that provide a framework with culturally intrinsic values.

Culturally responsive pedagogy recognizes the explicit connection between culture and learning and sees students' cultural capital as an asset and not a detriment to their school success. Useful knowledge of the dynamics of culturally relevant teaching extends itself to differential expectations for students on varying degrees. The effect of teacher expectation on student achievement helps to define a level of motivation to

students that can be successful or disabling. The demonstrating value and respect for all students can prove to be a pivotal point in raising expectations for students both internally and externally.

Teachers should understand students' behavior, considering the norms of the communities in which they have grown (Brown University, 2019; Banks, 2015; Kozleski, 2010). They should respect all students as learners with valuable knowledge and experience (Brown University, 2019). There is a need for all stakeholders within the student's life to be consistent in all deliveries of communications to the student. Teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and other school personnel need to develop a level of best practices with students that facilitate academic success (Brown University, 2019).

According to Minaya-Rowe (2004), learning is a socially mediated process by which children develop cognitively by interacting with both adults and peers that are more knowledgeable. The impact of such interactions allows students to experiment with new ideas while making a hypothesis and receiving feedback about their learning process (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Cosmopolitanism philosophy holds that all human beings feel an inherent need to be responsible for each other in some way; developing a public attitude in the classroom will be a beneficial characteristic that teachers should fulfill when dealing with African American students.

Teaching students to interpret information in multiple ways while understanding different point of views is an expectation for students, students need to realize that there is more than one way to interpret a statement, event, or action (Banks, 2015). Learning to assess information from multiple viewpoints and perspectives, in any given situation

based on his or her own cultural and social experiences, allows students to become greater active participants in their learning (Nieto, 1999).

Awareness extends itself to the differential expectations for students on varying degrees. The effect of teacher expectation on student achievement helps to define a level of motivation to students that can be successful or disabling. Demonstrating value and respect for all students can prove to be a pivotal point in raising expectations for students. Teachers should understand students' behavior in light of the norms of the communities in which they have grown (Banks, 2015; Brown University, 2019). They should respect all students as learners with valuable knowledge and experience (Brown University, 2019). All who are involved in students' academic lives must deliver a consistent message; this consists of teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and other school personnel (Brown University, 2019).

Learning is a socially mediated process (Goldstein, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978). Children develop cognitively by interacting with both adults and peers that are more knowledgeable (Banks, 2015). These interactions allow students to hypothesize, experiment with new ideas, and receive feedback (Darling-Hammond, 1997). It is imperative that students are taught in different ways so that they can interpret events, and actions from different viewpoints; therefore, teachers must be able to give context in various forms to reach all students. By being allowed to learn in different ways or to share viewpoints and perspectives in a given situation based on their own cultural and social experiences, students become active participants in their learning (Nieto, 1999). Hollins (1996) believes that culturally mediated instruction provides the best learning conditions. Too often, educators are afraid to acknowledge that differences exist between

African American males and others (Allen, 2015). The differences are due to a commonly held misperception that educators who acknowledge such differences are in some way advancing a racist agenda.

The culture of fear, stoked by political correctness, only serves to hamper efforts to meet their needs and will inevitably maintain achievement/opportunity gaps (Allen, 2015). Teachers have a responsibility to all their students to ensure that all have an equal opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability (Richards et al., 2004). When instruction reflects the cultural practices and values of only one group of students, then the other students are denied an equal opportunity to learn (Richards et al., 2004).

Teachers should develop a learning environment that is relevant to and reflective of their students' social, cultural, and linguistic experiences (Banks, 2015; Brown University, 2019). To improve memory, students develop an in-depth understanding of information that helps them improve their education because they learn to use the information meaningfully (Brown University, 2019). Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) examined the historical evolution of culturally relevant pedagogy and noted that Au and Jordan (1981) asserted, "The context of school learning is often different from that of informal learning and often unrelated to the child's culture. Bringing the relevance of the text to the child's own experience helps the child make sense of the world" (pp. 149-150). They further summarized that this illustrates the importance of the teacher as a bridge between home-community and school cultures (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Facilitating plays a significant role in not only communicating and receiving information but also shaping the thinking process. Therefore, in culturally relevant teaching, the teacher plays a crucial role in helping students understand and appreciate

their value in the classroom and how they are viewed in the world. While a student can be guided in many ways, by cultural group identification, his or her means of believing or perceiving can also be influenced by individual understandings and conceptualizations (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). In other words, there must be an emphasis on teaching the whole child while recognizing knowledge, and intentionally acknowledging cultural group behaviors, but also observing and interacting with students as individuals (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Ladson-Billings (1994) indicated that culturally relevant teaching is nurturing and supports competence in both home and school cultures. Research has shown that educational content, which is authentic, is more significant to the students and facilitates the transfer of what is learned in school to real-life situations (Padron, Waxman & Rivera, 2002). In the role of a teacher as a facilitator during culturally relevant teaching, there are essential features and decisions of the teacher and how they can adequately bridge experiences with students, to make crucial decisions on their behalf, and to work toward cultural competence (Milner IV, 2011). It is essential to include race and race consciousness in the multicultural classroom, especially in environments where race and culture could be dismissed as student deficiency (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Teachers have a responsibility to all their students to ensure that all have an equal opportunity to achieve to the best of their abilities (Willis, 2007). These agendas include but are not limited to politics, funding, and fear. Overcoming such said agendas will level the playing field and give African American students and other minorities a success that will show greater promise over the Caucasian student and in turn, which reverses the minority disparity achievement/opportunity gap (Allen, 2015). Developing a learning

environment that is relevant to and reflective of students' social, cultural, and linguistic experiences will always lend itself to increased classroom motivation better self-reflection and greater classroom participation (Banks, 2015).

Identifying the framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching is imperative to the success of African American students thriving to be successful in the 21st century. “Culturally Relevant Teaching identifies preconditions for culturally relevant teaching, its characteristics, and strategies. In 1992, Gloria Ladson-Billings was the first person to introduce the concept of and coin the term “culturally relative teaching” (Diller & Moule, 2005). Culturally relevant teachers display cultural competence skills at teaching in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting. They enable each student to relate course content to his or her cultural context (Diller & Moule, 2005). Culturally Relevant Teaching is a pedagogy as defined by Ladson-Billings (1992) is a method or practice that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (p. 382). The pedagogy is enriched in the belief that the strength that students bring to school are identified, nurtured, and utilized to promote student achievement according to Richards, Brown, & Forde, (2004).

Summary of the Literature Review

In conclusion, the need for culturally relevant pedagogy is imperative to the moral imperative of educating African American males. There is an undeniable consensus that traditional pedagogy that saturates schools is failing when it comes to teaching students from culturally diverse and low-income backgrounds. Current practice data have indicated that underachievement in educational practices and philosophies, especially those that offer intervention for minority students are continually declining.

The educational system plans the curriculum for schools, and teachers as their “institutional agents” transfer the prescribed content to their students (Richards et al., 2007). The daily interaction that teachers have with students affords them the opportunity to perpetuate the status quo or profoundly influence not only their achievement but also their life as a student. Through culturally relevant teaching, teachers prepare students with skills to question inequity and to fight against the many ideologies and phobias that they encounter while allowing students to build knowledge and to transfer what they have learned through classroom instructional/learning opportunities to other experiences (Milner IV, 2011). Given the current cultural and racial demographics of our schools and society, the stakes that we face as a profession and as a nation are too high to fail in this endeavor.

Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a discussion of the methodology utilized to examine teacher perceived impact of culturally responsive teaching practice and effects on the engagement of African American male students in the classroom. As such, the following is a description of the research questions, research design and sample, instrumentation, procedures, and data process. The statistical methods associated with the analysis of data, as well as a summary of the research design is also presented in this chapter.

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceived impact of culturally responsive teaching practice and effects on the engagement of African American male students in the classroom. By conducting this study, the researcher examined teacher perceived best practices of culturally responsive teaching in a suburban/urban public-school system. This study used a mixed method that consisted of both qualitative and quantitative analysis. First, quantitative analysis was used to assess and communicate the research findings. The second approach of the study used is a method called qualitative. This approach provides teachers an avenue to answer open-ended questions explaining their rationale for ranking practices based on what they believed to be most effective. A thematic text analysis was then conducted to frame their explanations.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions that guided this study:

Research Question 1: What are educators' perceptions of the most impactful aspects of the CRT as those aspects relate to engaging AA male students at the high school level?

Research Question 2: Why do teachers perceive that certain culturally responsive teaching practices are more impactful with engaging African American males in the classroom?

Research Design

Used in this study was a mixed method research design. Mixed methods research intends to balance the importance of quantitative and qualitative such as questionnaires and interview questions (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, mixed methods research combines objective and subjective measures in order to create a sounder and more efficient research study (Creswell, 2012). Researchers noted that mixed method research studies are used to support the validity of research findings. Thus, mixed methods research creates additional opportunities for the researcher to utilize the strengths and opportunities of both the qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2012)

According to Creswell (2012), in quantitative research, researchers identify problems that call for an explanation of the trends in a population. By definition when using qualitative and quantitative approaches, quantitative analysis will consist of those aspects of research in which the data can be analyzed concerning numbers. By that same likeness, qualitative research can describe events, persons and so forth scientifically without the use of numerical data. The quantitative analysis differs from qualitative research as its data was directed to its original plans. The results obtained from quantitative data relies on its effects being more readily analyzed and interpreted (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research allows more personal information as it pertains to its subject. Quantitative research is, as the term suggests, concerned with the collection and analysis of data in the numeric form. Quantitative research tends to place more

emphasis on relatively large-scale and representative sets of data; it is often presented or perceived as being about the gathering of facts (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research, on the other hand, is associated with collecting and analyzing information in a variety of forms, primarily non-numeric (Creswell, 2012).

The quantitative data recognized in this study employed detailed stats to describe the data set to determine if significant differences were evident, in order to answer the research questions for this study. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative mixed method approach for data collection and analysis that included a teacher survey and focus group questions. The tool used in the survey was adopted from Johnnie McKinley's (2010) assessment of effective and culturally responsive strategies considered to be important to student learning and within the educators' control (McKinley, 2010). The survey required teachers to rank strategies under each of McKinley's categories with "1" being the highest, which represented the strategy that they perceived to have the most significant effect on African American male engagement in the classroom. The focus group afforded teachers an opportunity to provide context on their rationale for selecting their highest ranked strategy under each category.

Sequential Explanatory Design

The use of sequential explanatory design showed the impact of practice and roles to be used in the design. More sufficient information will allow the advantages and strengths of the data to be more evident (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). In an exploratory design, to drive the development of the qualitative instrument, data were first collected and analyzed; next, the quantitative information is used to further explore the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Since this study was based on a mixed

method methodology approach, it relied on descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages to rate and compare survey responses. Given the design of this research study and its reliance on numeric data with further reasoning to survey responses, a mixed method sequential explanatory design was employed to answer the research questions.

Setting

The nation's 17th largest school system, located in the Northeast region of the country, currently serves more than 156,000 students in 202 schools, including 37 National Blue-Ribbon schools. It is one of the most diverse school systems in the country, serving students from 157 different countries and native speakers of 138 languages. Its students live in geographically diverse areas in urban, suburban, and rural communities across the county's approximately 500 square miles. For the purpose of this study, a small region of the system was surveyed for this research project.

Background

The researcher decided to select this school system for research because their mission is to provide a high quality, excellent education that ensures success for every student through excellence in teaching and learning. Critical to achieving the mission is the systematic and systemic monitoring of student performance of every student in every school so that student achievement is not predictable by race. Classroom teachers, principals, and senior leaders monitor student performance by disaggregating data by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged status. Disaggregating the data ensures that every student's needs are considered when making instructional decisions. Schools and classroom teachers use a

variety of tools and strategies to monitor student performance. At the system level, cross-functional teams study student performance by drilling down to causes and then developing action plans and making recommendations for improvement. Improving employee quality, as well as developing and implementing a strategic plan, is entirely dependent on the leadership, experience, and skills of the school system's workforce. Targeted staff development and training, evaluation, administration, and technology initiatives focus on ensuring that employees have the knowledge, skills, strategies, and beliefs necessary to respond to the needs of a rapidly growing and highly diverse school system. A major priority is responding to the diverse student population in the school system. This entails implementation of standards-based professional development protocols focused on making sure that all staff members understand the essential role of employee performance, attitudes, and expectations and the impact it has on the success of the school system.

Professional development is aligned closely with core values and strategic plan of the system improvement goals. Providing strategic professional development supports the improvements and unification of the school system. These multi-tiered supports are for teachers, administrative leadership, curriculum and instruction, assessment and focused on improving technology integration. These improvements help to create an organizational culture of respect that values what individual staff members believe, know and can do. It further assesses the contributions of all employees in a continuous cycle of support and improved teaching and learning throughout the school system. Essential components of these efforts include the following:

- Developing attitudes and beliefs about race and removing institutional barriers

- Establishing common expectations for student success and organizational reform
- Strengthening teachers' skills in differentiating instruction based on students' needs
- The professional growth system for all employees
- Providing clear standards of evaluation
- Encouraging peer assistance and review
- Providing consulting teachers, principals, and support staff for novice and underperforming employees
- Providing mentors for new teachers
- Strengthening on-site staff development for all teachers

For the last 10 years, the selected school system has intentionally increased its focus on achieving equity for all students, especially for those students of color whose learning needs were not being met. They define equity as the quality of being just, impartial, and fair. Equity must be distinguished from “equal.” In equitable classrooms, students get what they need, which is not the same as everyone else. While they have done a great deal of groundbreaking work that is still being studied throughout the country, achievement is still predictable by race. In order to create a school system where race, culture or ethnicity do not determine success, everyone must look at his or her work through the lens of equity. What this means is they must move away from seeing equity as a separate and singular event and see it embedded as part of their day-to-day work.

The equity lens allows everyone to examine practices and ask the critical question—”Who benefits from our services, curriculum, processes, and procedures? If we can successfully predict those who profit by race, then we should be called to look at the conditions that create the inequity and address it so that the outcomes are no longer predictable by race. The racial achievement gap cannot be closed if educators are unable to talk about race, reflect on practices, policies, and procedures that contribute to the gap and make the necessary changes to eliminate the barriers that perpetuate inequities. This research afforded teachers an opportunity to reflect on their own perceived best practices and may shed insight on implications for change that the system needs in order to execute their work through an equity lens.

Participants

Teachers

Ladson-Billings (1994) maintained that five elements are essential in the facilitation of multicultural education: “teacher’s beliefs and attitudes, curriculum content and materials, instructional approaches, educational settings, and teacher education” (p. 22). Research has asserted that teachers are a significant variable in multicultural education implementation (Alismail, 2016). Teachers are so substantial, in fact, that they influence the four remaining items listed by Ladson-Billings (1995). The researcher sought 100-150 voluntary teacher participants for the survey; they were all over the age of 21. Participants were both male and female, consisted of various races, educational degrees and teaching classifications. All were actively teaching in the designated public-school system. Participants from a local public-school system were asked by their principal to participate in the survey voluntarily. Participants were informed that their

participation was voluntary and that they may terminate their participation at any time before, during or after the administration. Participants had an opportunity to ask questions of the researcher at any point during the study via email, consent forms were signed, turned into their respective principal and forwarded to the researcher. Specific demographic characteristics of the teacher participants are as follows:

As shown in Table 1, seventy-three participants participated in the survey. Eleven or 15.07% were English teachers; eight or 10.96% taught Math; 10 or 13.70% taught Science; 12 or 16.44% taught Social Studies; and 32 or 43.84% represented other content areas. In terms of gender, 45 or 61.64% were female, and 28 or 38.36% were male. When disaggregated by race, 13 or 17.81% were Black or African American; three or 4.11% Hispanic; 2 or 2.74% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; two or 2.74% Asian; 47 or 64.38% White; two or 2.74%, Some other race or origin and four or 5.48% classified themselves as mixed race.

Table 1: Participants by Gender, Subject Taught, and Race/Ethnicity

<u>Gender</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Subject Taught</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>No.</u>
Male	28	English	11	Black/African American	13
Female	45	Math	8	Hispanic	3
		Science	10	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2
		Social Studies	12	Asian	2
		Other	32	White	47
				Some Other Race	2
Mixed Race	4				
Total	73		73		73

Instrument

In an effort to make Ladson-Billings CRT theory measurable, McKinley created a survey based on the theory's central tenets that would assess teachers' effectiveness at implementing culturally responsive teaching and learning strategies. To guide this study's inquiry, the researcher utilized the Assessment of Effective and Culturally Responsive Strategies (AECRS), a survey instrument created by Johnnie McKinley (2010). Johnnie McKinley (2010) gleaned from six comprehensive literature reviews on culturally responsive approaches (McKinley, 2010, pp. 123-124). McKinley used the survey as a teacher and administrative study and conducted 28 videotaped naturalistic classroom observations. McKinley (2010) identified which of the 121 culturally responsive teaching strategies were used with the most frequency. The strategies observed in the classroom were compared with teachers and principals' reports on the frequency of use and effectiveness with African-American students based on the survey's 121 strategies. For this study, the researcher included 52 of McKinley's (2010) 121 variables or relative strategies of effective and culturally responsive strategies.

Survey Questions

There were 15 survey questions included in the survey analysis. For each of the 15 survey questions, there was a corresponding list of strategies that participants were asked to rank from most to least impactful with the number "1" being the most effective.

The questions on the survey were ranked with "1" being the highest ranked strategy under each category in order to gain insight and gather data regarding culturally responsive practices. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used six of the 11

resulting framework categories of the AECRS survey categories and 53 of McKinley's (2010) 121 variables or relative strategies of effective teaching which are as follows:

Category 1: Setting and Maintaining Clear Expectations for Content Mastery

1. Believe in capacity to make a difference in student learning
2. Strengthen teacher skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy through professional learning
3. Hold high academic and personal expectations for every child
4. Ensure that students understand individual role in content mastery and task completion
5. Believe in and promote student self-efficacy, individual ability to achieve and positive self-regard
6. Regularly remind students that learning will be challenging and rigorous
7. Provide instruction and extensive modeling on how to strategize in the face of difficulty
8. Provide equitable access to opportunities to learn regardless of academic gaps or needs
9. Provide resources to meet needs of all children regardless of academic gaps or needs

Category 2: Student and Teacher Social Interactions

1. Are personally inviting and caring
2. Develop positive, personal relationships with students
3. Encourage a sense of family and community
4. Provide mentoring and emotional support

5. Extend relationship with and caring for students beyond the classroom
6. Base interactions on human dignity principles, respect for every person, and an attitude of hope and optimism
7. Treat all students equally well
8. Provide each student with equitable access to learning resources and opportunities to learn
9. Ensure that students and teachers treat each other with civility, gentleness, and support
10. Handle disagreements with discussion and respect for alternative positions

Category 3: Classroom Climate

1. Promote a group-centered collaborative approach toward learning
2. Promote a positive, familial climate
3. Organize students in classroom groups around shared traits to stimulate liking and cohesiveness
4. Create positive relations and meaningful collaboration with parents and community in decision making and educational development of children
5. Promote student concern and interest in what goes on in class
6. Arouse student curiosity about and explain the purpose and practical intent of what is learned
7. Maintain a safe and orderly classroom
8. Use established routines and rituals balanced with excitement
9. Establish a physically inviting classroom

Category 4: Culture of Respect

1. Use appropriate adult/teacher language
2. Temper order and established standards with equal parts respect; are caring yet firm
3. Provide explicit coaching on appropriate behavior
4. Communicate explicitly the roles, expectations, etiquette, and ways of doing things in school
5. Prevent situations where student lose peer respect
6. Respond to misbehavior on an individual basis

Category 5: Teacher Cultural Effectiveness

1. Develop clear goals and standards
2. Design instruction aligned to curriculum and authentic assessment methods
3. Align assessments to the content, format and complexity, or level of difficulty of teaching and learning activities
4. Carefully plan and clearly structure lesson content/each day
5. Clearly structure content and lessons with review of mastered material
6. Carefully plan lesson/day for active student engagement
7. Balance guiding and facilitating student learning with teacher-centered presentations to class as a total group
8. Help arouse student curiosity by helping students understand purpose and practical intent of what is learned
9. Plan activities to meet individual developmental needs of diverse students

10. Structure group tasks to ensure students in groups share important roles and develop expertise

Category 6: Assessment

1. Align instruction and curriculum content to authentic assessment methods
2. Align assessments to the content, format and complexity, or level of difficulty of teaching and learning activities
3. Use continuous, frequent assessments to determine skills and knowledge, provide feedback on goals, and to create interventions

Category 7: Cultural Understanding and Awareness

1. Understand ethnic groups and how race, ethnicity, language, SES, gender, residence, history and cultural experience influence behavior, performance and climate
2. Understand cultural variations and nuances of communication including gestures, timing, and nonverbal cues such as walking, eye glances, dress, and presentation style
3. Understand aspects of own culture that facilitate/hinder communication with own/other cultural group(s)
4. Communicate validation and acceptance of cultural and gender differences
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and gender groups in classroom

Category 8: Curriculum which Reflects Cultural Differences

1. Use curriculum materials that describe historical, social, political events from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives

2. Investigate topics related to ethnicity, gender and exceptionality from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives
3. Help student understand his or her personal perspective, or “self”, as one of many cultural perspectives
4. Help students understand, critique and change social issues, structures, and practices that produce inequities
5. Provide opportunities for students to critique concepts learned, their origins, and their authors’ economic, political, and social perspectives and motivations
6. Help students understand, critique and change social issues, structures, and practices that produce inequities
7. Provide opportunities for students to critique concepts learned, their origins, and their authors’ economic, political, and social perspectives and motivations

Procedures

After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the Morgan State University and the school system where the research was conducted, the researcher forwarded eligible participants an email asking for their participation in an attached survey link. Participation was limited to teachers who were active within a local school system of study. Once participants completed the appropriate consent form, they were able to complete the survey. An email was sent out to high school principals asking them to send an email to their faculty and staff who took the individual survey to see if they would volunteer to serve on a focus group as follow up to the survey. The researcher selected the school of the principal who responded first. A separate consent form was provided for those individuals to sign prior to convening the focus group.

Data Analysis

The dependent variables are nominal and are comprised of components of the AECRS survey. The data were organized in the following manner: (a) organize the data (e.g., enter information into software, transcribe tapes, sort information as it pertains to the study and transforms data into useful groupings), (b) identify patterns; (c) clarify vague details; and (d) compare results to predetermined goals. For each element of the AECRS survey, subsections were created, and the research design solicited the participants' perspective on those factors believed to be most impactful regarding engaging African American students. Survey response data were collected, analyzed, compared, and interpreted based on the research questions, which were grounded in nominal categories. Descriptive data procured from the survey responses were reviewed and presented in contingency tables representing each of the independent variables.

Focus Group Data Analysis:

The researcher took the data collected from the focus group, categorized, and coded the data to be analyzed. Next, the researcher transferred the focus group data into the qualitative software program to analyze the data for common patterns and themes (Patton, 2002). This was done to develop common models and themes from the participants' semi-structured focus group questions. Creswell (2014) noted that the data analysis encompasses a six-step process. The procedures included: (a) preparing the data for analysis by organizing documents from the data collected and transcribing the text; (b) immersing into the data by reading and viewing it to gain the information needed from the interview transcription notes and other data; (c) coding the data into sections of meaningful chunks based on inferred vital concepts; (d) using the coding of the data to

understand patterns and themes from the data; (e) representing the ideas through visual figures, and/or tables; and. (f) interpreting the qualitative data for meaning from the participants (Creswell, 2014).

Summary

The researcher gathered information that uses features of both quantitative and qualitative data collection. This approach afforded the researcher an opportunity to have the qualitative results that illustrate the meaning or context of quantitative statistical results. In chapter IV, the researcher memorializes the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data by conducting an analysis of both datasets.

Chapter IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to analyze teacher perceptions regarding the effectiveness of CRT strategies in better engaging African American males in the learning process. To that end, a two-prong approach was employed to gauge teacher perceptions of what aspects of CRT were believed to be most effective in supporting the engagement and learning needs of African American males.

Thus, a survey was administered, and a teacher focus group was conducted. The survey allowed the researcher to determine if specific strategies associated with the various components of CRT were perceived to be most effective by classroom teachers. The focus groups “gave voice” to select teacher participants and afforded the researcher a deeper understanding of these CRT strategies and why or why not these CRT strategies are effective in engaging African American male students. As such, this chapter provides a detailed analysis of the study's findings. In the first part of the chapter, descriptive statistics were used to detail the findings based on the participants’ responses to the survey. In the second part of the chapter, a detailed analysis of the focus group’s discussion was explored, and themes and key findings were presented.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1:

What are teachers’ perceptions of the most impactful aspects of the CRT as those aspects relate to engaging AA male students at the high school level?

The following qualitative research guided the qualitative part of this study:

Research Question 2:

Why do teachers perceive that certain culturally responsive teaching practices are more impactful with engaging African American males in the classroom?

Demographics of the Participants

The participants in the study consisted of 73 teachers. Eleven or 15.07% were English teachers; eight or 10.96% taught math; 10 or 13.70% taught science; 12 or 16.44% taught social studies; and 32 or 43.84% represented other content areas. With regard to the participants' gender, 45 or 61.64% were female, and 28 or 38.36% were male. When disaggregated by race, 13 or 17.81% were Black or African American; three or 4.11% Hispanic; two or 2.74% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; two or 2.74% Asian; 47 or 64.38% White; two or 2.74% Some other race or origin; and four or 5.48% classified themselves as mixed race one or more.

Results of the Data Analysis

Questions used allowed the researcher to examine and interpret data based on participant perception and knowledge of culturally responsive teaching. The results of the collected data are published below and are typical methods used for presenting qualitative and quantitative research findings.

Survey Question Analysis

The steps in the data collection process were as follows: (a) organize the data (e.g., enter information into software, transcribe tapes, sort information as it pertains to the study and transforms data into useful groupings), (b) identify patterns; (c) clarify vague details; and (d) compare results to predetermined goals. For each element of the AERCERS survey, subsections were created, and the research design solicited the

participants' perspective on those factors believed to be most impactful regarding engaging African American students. Descriptive data procured from the survey responses were reviewed and presented in tables representing each of the surveyed questions.

There were 15 survey questions included in the survey analysis. For each of the 15 survey questions, there was a corresponding list of strategies that participants were asked to rank. Ranking was from most to least effective with the number “1” being the most effective. Below are the detailed findings based on teacher perception and the accompanying tables for each of the survey questions?

Research Question 1:

What are teachers’ perceptions of the most impactful aspects of the CRT as those aspects relate to engaging AA male students at the high school level?

The following are the results from the data analysis:

The participants were asked the following: *In terms of culturally responsive teaching, setting and maintaining clear expectations for content mastery, please rank in order the importance of the statements listed below.* As presented in Table 1, strategy three, “hold high academic and personal expectations for every child,” 34.25% of participant responses and strategy one, “believed in the capacity to make a difference in student learning,” at 32.88% of the responses were the most useful aspects of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perception of the second most crucial aspect of this component of CRT, strategies three, “hold high academic and personal expectations for every child” and strategy one, “believed in the

capacity to make a difference in student learning,” again outranked the remaining aspects of CRT with scores of 21.92 and 20.55, respectively.

Table 1: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey question 5: In terms of culturally responsive teaching, setting and maintaining clear expectations for content mastery please rank in order the importance of the statements listed below.*

Survey Strategy #	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Rank 8	Rank 9	Total
Strategy 1	34.25	20.55	13.70	6.85	10.96	2.74	4.11	0.0	8.22	100
Strategy 2	4.11	2.74	6.85	13.70	10.96	16.64	10.96	16.44	17.81	100
Strategy 3	32.88	21.92	6.85	9.59	5.48	9.59	9.59	1.37	1.37	100
Strategy 4	0	4.11	5.48	9.59	15.07	13.70	16.44	24.66	10.96	100
Strategy 5	8.22	12.33	13.70	9.59	17.81	17.81	9.59	8.22	2.74	100
Strategy 6	1.37	2.74	2.74	2.74	5.48	9.59	23.29	19.18	32.88	100
Strategy 7	1.37	5.48	13.70	16.44	12.33	16.44	13.70	15.07	5.48	100
Strategy 8	15.07	13.70	20.55	13.70	10.96	5.48	9.59	9.59	1.37	100
Strategy 9	2.74	16.44	16.44	17.81	10.96	8.22	2.74	5.48	19.18	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of culturally responsiveness of student and teacher social interactions.*

As presented in Table 2, strategy two, “to develop positive, personal relationships with students,” received 47.95% of participants’ responses, and strategy six, “base interactions on human dignity principles, respect for every person, and an attitude of hope and optimism” at 21.92%, were believed to be the most effective aspects of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perception of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategy one, “are personally inviting and caring” received 26.03% of participant responses, and strategy two, “develop positive, personal relationships with students” at 20.55%, outranked the remaining aspects of CRT. Another notable fact while assessing respondents’ perceptions was that neither strategy four nor 10 had any priority rankings.

Table 2: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey question 7: Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of culturally responsiveness of student and teacher social interactions.*

Survey Strategy #	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Rank 8	Rank 9	Rank 10	Total
Strategy 1	9.59	26.03	15.07	6.85	16.44	5.48	9.59	5.48	2.74	2.74	100
Strategy 2	47.95	20.55	5.48	5.48	5.48	6.85	2.74	2.74	2.74	0.0	100
Strategy 3	1.37	5.48	12.33	6.85	9.59	19.18	5.48	13.70	13.70	12.33	100
Strategy 4	0.0	2.74	12.33	20.55	12.33	13.70	13.70	9.59	10.96	4.11	100
Strategy 5	6.85	2.74	4.11	10.96	15.07	9.59	9.59	10.96	8.22	21.92	100
Strategy 6	21.92	12.33	10.96	10.96	5.48	19.18	9.59	2.74	4.11	2.74	100

Strategy 7	4.11	5.48	10.96	13.70	9.59	4.11	21.92	6.85	8.22	15.07	100
Strategy 8	6.85	13.70	12.33	2.74	2.74	9.59	9.59	21.92	13.70	6.85	100
Strategy 9	1.37	9.59	4.11	15.07	15.07	6.85	9.59	13.70	20.55	4.11	100
Strategy 10	0.0	1.37	12.33	6.85	8.22	5.48	8.22	12.33	15.07	30.14	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of culturally responsiveness of classroom climate.* As presented in Table 3, strategy seven, “maintain a safe & orderly classroom” ranked highest at 24.66%. Strategy one, “promote a group-centered collaborative approach to learning” and six, “arouse student curiosity about and explain the purpose and practical intent of what is learned,” (McKinley, 2010) both ranked 16.44% and were believed to be the most effective aspects of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perception of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategy eight, “use established routines and rituals balanced with excitement” at 17.81%. Strategy two, “promote a positive, familiar climate” and five, “promote student concern and interest in what goes on in class” (McKinley, 2010) both ranked at 16.44%.

Table 3: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey question 9: Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of culturally responsiveness of classroom climate.*

Survey	Rank	Rank	Total								
Strategy #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Strategy 1	16.44	13.70	12.33	15.07	13.70	10.96	5.48	6.85	5.48		100
Strategy 2	13.70	16.44	15.07	16.44	13.70	15.07	5.48	1.37	2.74		100
Strategy 3	1.37	4.11	6.85	6.85	9.59	8.22	16.44	20.55	26.03		100
Strategy 4	9.59	2.74	2.74	9.59	9.59	15.07	9.59	23.29	17.81		100
Strategy 5	4.11	16.44	15.07	10.96	16.44	12.33	13.70	6.85	4.11		100
Strategy 6	16.44	9.59	10.96	17.81	9.59	16.44	8.22	5.48	5.48		100
Strategy 7	24.66	13.70	10.96	5.48	6.85	6.85	17.81	10.96	2.74		100
Strategy 8	9.59	17.81	20.55	9.59	8.22	4.11	10.96	13.70	5.48		100
Strategy 9	4.11	5.48	5.48	8.22	12.33	10.96	12.33	10.96	30.14		100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		100

The participants were asked the following question: *In terms of culturally responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate the importance of the items listed below about student discipline?* As presented in Table 4, strategy four, “communicate the roles, expectations, etiquette, and ways of doing things in school” at 47.95%, and strategy two, “temper order and established standards with equal parts respect; are caring yet firm”

(McKinley, 2010) at 31.51%, were believed to be the most effective aspects of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents' perception of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategies three, "provide explicit coaching and appropriate behavior" and one, "use appropriate adult/teacher language" outranked the remaining aspects of CRT with scores of 27.40% and 23.29%, respectively.

Table 4: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey Question 11: In terms of culturally responsive teaching, in what order do you rank the importance of the items below about student discipline?*

Survey Strategy#	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Total
Strategy 1	8.22	23.29	15.07	23.29	12.33	17.81	100
Strategy 2	31.51	19.18	26.03	8.22	12.33	2.74	100
Strategy 3	5.48	27.40	17.81	15.07	16.44	17.81	100
Strategy 4	47.95	9.59	16.44	20.55	28.77	30.14	100
Strategy 5	1.37	6.85	12.33	20.55	28.77	30.14	100
Strategy 6	5.48	13.70	12.33	12.33	26.03	30.14	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of cultural effectiveness of teachers.* As presented in Table 5, strategy one, “develop clear goals and standards” at 27.40%, and strategy nine, “plan activities to meet individual developmental needs of diverse students” (McKinley, 2010) at 17.81%, were perceived to be the most effective aspects of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perception of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategies one, “develop clear goals and standards” at 19.18% and six, “carefully plan lesson/day for active student engagement” (McKinley, 2010) at 16.44% outranked the remaining aspects of CRT. Strategy 3, “align assessments to the content, format, and complexity, or level of difficulty of teaching and learning activities,” (McKinley, 2010) strategy five, “clearly structure content and lessons with review of mastered material” (McKinley, 2010) and strategy ten, “structure group tasks to ensure students in groups share important roles and develop expertise” (McKinley, 2010) received no rankings as a top strategy.

Table 5: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey question 13: Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of cultural effectiveness of teachers.*

Survey	Rank	Rank	Total								
Strategy #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Strategy 1	27.40	19.18	16.44	5.48	8.22	5.48	12.33	2.74	0.00	2.74	100
Strategy 2	4.11	10.96	20.55	15.07	13.70	5.48	15.07	5.48	6.85	2.74	100
Strategy 3	0.00	8.22	8.22	17.81	12.33	12.33	8.22	19.18	10.96	2.74	100

Strategy 4	15.07	17.81	9.59	13.70	15.07	5.48	9.59	2.74	8.22	2.74	100
Strategy 5	0.00	2.74	5.48	8.22	12.33	23.29	9.59	10.96	15.07	12.33	100
Strategy 6	15.07	16.44	9.59	12.33	8.22	9.59	9.59	12.33	4.11	2.74	100
Strategy 7	4.11	1.37	8.22	4.11	5.48	6.85	16.44	15.07	10.96	27.40	100
Strategy 8	16.44	5.48	6.85	13.70	6.85	10.96	8.22	13.70	13.70	4.11	100
Strategy 9	17.81	12.33	9.59	5.48	9.597	9.59	4.11	12.33	13.70	5.48	100
Strategy 10	0.0	5.48	5.48	4.11	8.22	10.96	6.85	5.48	16.44	36.99	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following question: *In terms of culturally responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate the importance of assessment?* As presented in Table six, strategy three, “use continuous, frequent assessments to determine skills and knowledge, provide feedback on goals, and to create interventions” (McKinley, 2010) at 78.08%, overwhelmingly resonated as the most effective aspect of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perception of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategy one, “align instruction and curriculum content to authentic assessment methods” (McKinley, 2010) at 54.79% outranked the remaining aspects of CRT.

Table 6: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey question 15: In terms of culturally responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate the importance of the assessment?*

Survey Strategy #	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Total
Strategy 1	12.33	54.79	32.88	100
Strategy 2	9.59	35.62	54.79	100
Strategy 3	78.08	9.59	12.33	100
Total	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following question: *In terms of Culturally Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rank the importance of the items listed below about cultural understanding and awareness?* As presented in Table 7, strategy three, “understand aspects of own culture that facilitate/hinder communication with own/other cultural group(s)” (McKinley, 2010) at 31.51%, and strategy four, “communicate validation and acceptance of cultural and gender differences” (McKinley, 2010) at 30.14% were believed to be, by far, the most effective aspects of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perception of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategy one, “understand ethnic groups and how race, ethnicity, language, SES, gender, residence, history, and cultural experience influence behavior, performance, and climate” (McKinley, 2010) at 43.84% overwhelmingly outranked the remaining aspects of CRT.

Table 7: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey question 17: In terms of culturally responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate the importance of the items listed below about cultural understanding and awareness.*

Survey	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Total
Strategy #	1	2	3	4	5	
Strategy 1	19.18	43.84	15.07	13.70	8.22	100
Strategy 2	9.59	17.81	32.86	23.29	16.44	100
Strategy 3	31.51	8.22	32.88	13.70	13.70	100
Strategy 4	30.14	13.70	9.59	26.03	20.55	100
Strategy 5	9.59	16.44	9.59	23.29	41.10	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of curriculum on cultural differences.* As presented in Table 8, strategy three, “help students understand his or her personal perspective, or “self” as one of many cultural perspectives” (McKinley, 2010) at 35.62%, and strategy one, “use curriculum materials that describe historical, social, political events from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives” (McKinley, 2010) at 34.25% were believed to be, by far, the most effective aspects of this particular component of CRT. After assessing the respondents’ perception of the second most important aspect of this

component of CRT, two strategies surfaced. Strategy one, “use curriculum materials that describe historical, social, political events from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives” (McKinley, 2010) at 31.51% and strategy two, “investigate topics related to ethnicity, gender and exceptionality from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives” (McKinley, 2010) at 26.03% outranked the remaining aspects of CRT.

Table 8: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey question 19: Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of curriculum on cultural differences.*

Survey	Rank	Total						
Strategy #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strategy 1	34.25	31.51	8.22	6.85	9.59	1.37	8.22	100
Strategy 2	8.22	26.03	30.14	9.59	12.33	6.85	6.85	100
Strategy 3	35.62	5.48	24.66	15.07	9.59	8.22	1.37	100
Strategy 4	5.48	16.44	8.22	30.14	23.29	12.33	4.11	100
Strategy 5	6.85	6.85	10.96	16.44	26.03	23.29	9.59	100
Strategy 6	5.48	6.85	9.59	9.59	15.07	35.62	17.81	100
Strategy 7	4.11	6.85	8.22	12.33	4.11	12.33	52.05	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of meaningful and complex instruction.* As presented in Table 9, strategy two, “engage all students using meaningful, relevant, and challenging curriculum, content, and instructional activities” (McKinley, 2010) at 53.42%, by far, was selected as the most effective aspect of this component of CRT. When assessing the respondents’ perception of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategy one surfaced. Strategies one, “use constructivist approach with student knowledge as basis of inquiry, representing ideas, developing meaning, elaborating, organizing, and interacting with content” and seven, “provide scaffolding to match or link curriculum, materials, lesson format and instruction to students’ home culture, interests, and experience” (McKinley, 2010) outranked the remaining aspects of CRT with scores of 27.40% and 23.29%, respectively.

Table 9: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey question 21: Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of meaningful and complex instruction.*

Survey	Rank	Total						
Strategy #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strategy 1	19.18	27.40	21.92	12.33	8.22	9.59	1.37	100
Strategy 2	53.42	17.81	15.07	5.48	8.22	0.00	0.00	100
Strategy 3	1.37	2.74	8.22	9.59	9.59	21.92	46.58	100
Strategy 4	4.11	15.07	16.44	31.51	16.44	12.33	4.11	100

Strategy 5	4.11	15.07	16.44	31.51	16.44	12.33	4.11	100
Strategy 6	2.74	10.96	13.70	13.70	23.29	23.29	12.33	100
Strategy 7	15.07	23.29	15.07	5.48	9.59	9.59	16.44	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of scaffolding instruction to home culture and language.* As presented in Table 10, strategy one, “demonstrate knowledge of content” (McKinley, 2010) at 54.79% was believed to be, by far, the most effective aspect of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perceptions of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategies two, “understand and use speech and expressions familiar to students” (McKinley, 2010) and four, “incorporate student preferences for active kinesthetic participation” (McKinley, 2010) outranked the remaining aspects of CRT with scores of 32.88% and 20.55%, respectively.

Table 10: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey question 23: Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of scaffolding instruction to home culture and language.*

Survey Strategy #	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Total
	1	2	3	4	
Strategy 1	54.79	17.81	6.85	20.55	100
Strategy 2	15.07	32.88	32.88	19.18	100
Strategy 3	16.44	8.22	32.88	13.70	100
Strategy 4	13.70	20.55	26.03	39.73	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following question: *In terms of Culturally Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rank the importance of the items listed below about responding to student traits and needs.* As presented in Table 11, strategy one, “demonstrate knowledge of content” (McKinley, 2010) with 34.25%, and strategy three, “select and use a variety of instructional methods and interactive strategies” (McKinley, 2010) at 28.77%, were perceived to be the most effective aspects of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perception of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, the following strategies surfaced. Strategies three, “select and use a variety of instructional methods and interactive strategies” (McKinley, 2010) at 28.77%, strategy one, “demonstrate knowledge of content” at

20.55%, and strategy four, “promote student use of multiple intelligences to gain use, and respond to knowledge” (McKinley, 2010) at 20.55%, outranked the remaining aspects of CRT.

Table 11: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey Question 25: In terms of culturally responsive teaching, in what order do you rank the importance of the items listed below about responding to student traits and needs?*

Survey	Rank	Total							
Strategy #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Strategy 1	34.25	20.55	2.74	8.22	6.85	4.11	6.85	16.44	100
Strategy 2	2.74	9.594	21.92	10.96	10.96	9.59	13.70	20.55	100
Strategy 3	28.77	28.77	13.70	8.22	10.96	6.85	1.37	1.37	100
Strategy 4	13.70	20.55	20.55	17.81	17.81	2.74	4.11	2.74	100
Strategy 5	2.74	2.74	10.96	13.70	24.66	28.77	9.59	6.85	100
Strategy 6	4.11	2.74	16.44	15.07	9.59	28.77	17.81	5.48	100
Strategy 7	12.33	12.33	9.59	16.44	9.59	5.48	28.77	5.48	100
Strategy 8	1.37.	2.74	4.11	9.59	9.59	13.70	17.81	41.10	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of group structure composition and environment.* As presented in Table 12, strategy one, “structure environments for cooperative learning and group activities” (McKinley, 2010) at 47.95% was the most effective aspect of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perceptions of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategy one, “structure environments for cooperative learning and group activities” (McKinley, 2010) at 32.88% and strategy two, “create low-high mixed dyads to enhance cognitive and task achievement for students” (McKinley, 2010) at 27.40% outranked other aspects of CRT.

Table 12: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey Question 27: Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of group structure composition and environment.*

Survey Strategy #	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Total
Strategy 1	47.95	32.88	12.33	6.85	100
Strategy 2	13.70	27.40	35.62	23.29	100
Strategy 3	15.07	21.92	42.47	20.55	100
Strategy 4	23.29	17.81	9.59	49.32	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of promoting collaboration and efficacy development of African American male students.* As presented in Table 13, strategy one, “promote a group-centered collaborative approach toward learning” (McKinley, 2010) at 27.40% was believed to be, by far, the most effective aspect of this component of CRT. When assessing the respondents’ perceptions of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, the following strategies surfaced. Strategy one, “promote a group-centered collaborative approach toward learning” (McKinley, 2010) at 17.81%, strategy 4, “promote student interactions to allow students to assist others in most learning tasks” (McKinley, 2010) at 16.44%, and strategy seven, “ensure that all students in groups share important roles and demonstrate their expertise during small group tasks” (McKinley, 2010) at 16.44% outranked the remaining aspects of CRT.

Table 13: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey Question 29: Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of promoting collaboration and efficacy development of African American Male Students.*

Survey	Rank	Rank	Total						
Strategy #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Strategy 1	27.40	17.81	20.55	9.59	5.48	4.11	5.48	9.59	100
Strategy 2	4.11	13.70	10.96	16.44	16.44	15.07	13.70	9.59	100
Strategy 3	12.33	15.07	13.70	21.92	9.59	16.44	9.59	1.37	100
Strategy 4	9.59	16.44	8.22	19.18	20.55	9.59	12.33	4.11	100

Strategy 5	9.59	6.85	13.70	6.85	23.29	15.07	13.70	10.96	100
Strategy 6	15.07	6.85	9.59	10.96	9.59	27.40	10.96	9.59	100
Strategy 7	13.70	16.44	12.33	12.33	6.85	1.37	26.03	10.96	100
Strategy 8	8.22	6.85	10.96	2.74	8.22	10.96	8.22	43.84	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of presenting information and ideas between prior knowledge and new learning/scaffolding.* As presented in Table 14, strategy four, “provide modeling and cognitive scaffolding between prior knowledge and new learning” (McKinley, 2010) at 38.36%, and strategy one, “use a variety of modes of representing information and ideas” (McKinley, 2010) at 35.62% were perceived to be the most effective aspects of this component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perceptions of the second most important aspects of this component of CRT, strategy four, “provide modeling and cognitive scaffolding between prior knowledge and new learning” (McKinley, 2010) at 30.14% and strategy one, “use a variety of modes of representing information and ideas” (McKinley, 2010) at 28.77% outranked the remaining aspects of CRT.

Table 14: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey Question 31: Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of presenting information and ideas between prior knowledge and new learning/scaffolding.*

Survey Strategy #	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Total
	1	2	3	4	
Strategy 1	35.62	28.77	27.40	8.22	100
Strategy 2	21.92	26.03	24.66	27.40	100
Strategy 3	4.11	15.07	32.88	47.95	100
Strategy 4	38.36	30.14	15.07	16.44	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The participants were asked the following question: *In what order do you rate the importance of the items listed below about ensuring rigor and appropriate task difficulty for African American males when they are processing new content?* As presented in Table 15, strategy five, “engage students in multiple ways,” (McKinley, 2010) with a score of 42.47%, was selected as the most effective aspect of this component of CRT, and strategy one, “help students process and internalize information presented” (McKinley, 2010) at 16.44%, outranked the remaining aspects of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perceptions of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategies one, “help students process and internalize information presented” (McKinley, 2010) with a score of 22.44%, and strategy two, “create tools to help students

understand information from readings, multimedia resources, site visits and guests”
 (McKinley, 2010) at 19.18% outranked the remaining aspects of CRT.

Table 15: *Ranking Percentage Statistics for Survey Question 33: In what order do you rank the importance of the items listed below about ensuring rigor and appropriate task difficulty for African American Males while they are processing new content?*

Survey	Rank	Rank	Total									
Strategy #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Strategy 1	16.44	20.55	16.44	19.18	8.22	9.59	2.74	2.74	1.37	2.74		100
Strategy 2	2.74	19.18	21.92	13.70	12.33	9.59	5.48	6.85	6.85	1.37		100
Strategy 3	12.33	13.70	12.33	12.33	9.59	10.96	5.48	8.22	8.22	6.85		100
Strategy 4	2.74	6.85	2.74	8.22	19.18	12.33	12.33	10.96	12.33	12.33		100
Strategy 5	42.47	6.85	12.33	6.85	12.33	6.85	4.11	2.74	4.11	1.37		100
Strategy 6	10.96	12.33	6.85	4.11	8.22	15.07	16.44	9.59	8.22	8.22		100
Strategy 7	1.37	0.00	2.74	1.371	4.11	13.70	28.77	21.92	10.96	15.07		100
Strategy 8	5.48	8.22	15.07	9.59	6.85	2.74	9.59	20.55	15.07	6.85		100
Strategy 9	2.74	9.59	9.59	17.81	8.22	9.59	6.85	13.70	20.55	1.37		100
Strategy 10	2.74	2.74	0.00	6.85	10.96	9.59	8.22	2.74	12.33	43.84		100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		100

Focus Group Results

Qualitative research, in the form of a focus group, was used to explore research question two. Patton (2002) describes qualitative research as an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness. Qualitative research methods allow for the collection of open-ended data with the intent of developing themes from the data (J. Creswell, 2003). “Qualitative inquiry is an umbrella term for various philosophical orientations to interpretive research” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 9). Qualitative methods are being used more in educational research.

Research Question 2: Why do teachers perceive that certain culturally responsive teaching practices are more impactful with engaging African American males in the classroom?

The researcher conducted a focus group with 10 participants on responsive teaching practices to engage African American males in the classroom. The researcher asked the participants five general questions concerning overall culturally responsive teaching practices for African American males. This focus group was guided by the following interview questions:

1. What characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching best engages African American Male students?
2. How important is it for teachers to have a cultural understanding and awareness when teaching African American Male students?
3. Does teacher mindset play a role in the engagement of African American male students?

4. What role does promote collaboration and efficacy have in the engagement of African American Male Students?
5. What effective instructional strategies engage African American male students?

The focus group data analysis process generated five themes critical to the interview questions, namely, (a) ways culturally responsive teaching engage African American students, (b) teachers' understanding of cultural awareness issues, (c) teacher mindset to engage African American students, (d) collaboration and efficacy, and (e) instructional strategies.

Theme 1: Communication of High Expectations

Awareness extends itself to the differential expectations for students on varying degrees. The effect of teacher expectation on student achievement helps to define a level of motivation to students that can be successful or disabling. Demonstrating value and respect for all students can prove to be a pivotal point in raising expectations for students both internally and externally.

What: All students should receive the consistent message that they are expected to attain high standards in their schoolwork (Banks, 2015). All that are involved in students' academic lives must deliver this message. This includes "teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and other school personnel. Teachers should understand students' behavior in light of the norms of the communities in which they have grown. They should respect all students as learners with valuable knowledge and experience" (Brown University, 2019).

Why: Effective and consistent communication of high expectation helps students develop a healthy self-concept (Rist, 1970). It also provides the structure for intrinsic

motivation and fosters an environment in which the student can be successful (Banks, 2015).

How: Communicate clear expectations, “be specific in what you expect students to know and be able to do. Create an environment in which there is genuine respect for students and a belief in their capability, encourage students to meet expectations for a particular task and offer praise when standards are met” (Banks, 2015).

The overall expressions for the teachers to support the theme ways culturally responsive teaching engage African American male students is for teachers to hold high expectations for students. They felt this was critical because it demonstrated that they care about their students’ future and them as a whole. Additionally, it was articulated that setting high expectations for student subgroups prepares them for the real world that they will face upon graduating from high school.

Participant 1 stated: “So, again, hold high academic and personal expectations for every child. Let's just deal with that right now since that was the first one, number one thing you do.”

Participant 4 stated: “I think students have a perception that when we believe in them, then they respect that and start believing in themselves. If we set high standards, they will come up to that standard.”

Participant 2 stated: “It is evident that no matter the focus which was established in the classroom, it all begins and ends with high expectations. Students have to “Believe” in what it is they are expected to do. Establishing clear, high expectations are vital but even more important is providing students with the opportunity to build their capacity no matter their background.”

Participant 3 stated: “Not that that is the African American male but any child whose misbehaving that you must have that common expectation, and everybody must see that in the room. They must know that you are asking the same thing of everybody because I think it can send a negative message if you let somebody behave otherwise.”

Participant 7 stated: “We also need to make sure African American male students meet the school district and the state standards for their grade level and ensure that they meet the same expectations that as with other students in the school.”

Participant 10 stated: “It is imperative that adults have high expectations for students in order for them to have high expectations for themselves in hope of developing beliefs and skills that will promote success.”

Participant 8 noted: “I want to say, I think that if kids have a perception that we believe in them then they respect that, and they start believing in themselves. Therefore, I think it is important for us to convey that we believe that they can do the work and that is our expectations. We keep that standard, and then they will come up to that standard.”

Theme 2: Teachers’ Understanding of Cultural Awareness

The teaching method used during Culturally Responsive Teaching helps the student understand mainstream culture through a lens of recognition and acknowledgement. The ties between culture and classroom instruction shape the thinking process, recognize and shape optimal learning.

What: “Instruction is culturally mediated when it incorporates and integrates diverse ways of knowing, understanding, and representing information. Instruction and learning take place in an environment that encourages multicultural viewpoints and allows for inclusion of knowledge that is relevant to the students. Learning happens in

culturally appropriate social situations; that is, relationships among students and those between teachers and students are congruent with students' cultures" (Banks, 2015; Brown University, 2019)

Why: "Students need to understand that there is more than one way to interpret a statement, event, or action" (Banks, 2015). By being allowed to learn in different ways or to share viewpoints and perspectives in a given situation based on their own cultural and social experiences, students become active participants in their learning (Nieto, 2010). Hollins (1996) believes that culturally mediated instruction provides the best learning conditions.

The overall expressions from the teachers to support the theme of teachers' understanding of cultural awareness issues revealed that the teachers noted the need to encourage student and help students seek ways that can benefit them at school. The teachers also noted that there is a need for them to listen to students' issues and help them to overcome the issues to be effective in their classroom assignments.

Participant 8 noted: "We understand cultural issues by encouraging our kids and make them feel that they are wanted, and a part of the community and so I think that that's something that benefits all students, especially the African American males."

Participant 5 stated: "I think the stereotype threat is definitely something that we are seeing dependent upon gender or race, but in the African American male community. We know that based on some of the things that are happening outside of the school for years now; they do bring those ideas into the classroom, into the way they interact with people. And it's wonderful when a teacher, administrator, the adults in the building encourage the student to achieve more academically in their classes."

Participant 9 stated: “Yeah, I mean it goes hand in hand ... It drives what we do as far as what we expect in all students and what students can become. Some of the messages are, maybe we are not there yet but again, it reinforces that we are in progress and we are working towards just becoming well-rounded people, regardless of race.”

Participant 2 noted: “I think that some of our students have outside factors that we can't control, but when they come in here, by holding them to higher expectation also coincides with a structure in the classroom that they might not get. When they come in, I think they thrive on that structure whether they really want to admit it or not. We need to understand those issues and help the student to solve some of the outside issues they bring to the classroom.”

Participant 4 noted: “We can understand issues with students by listening to their problems whether they are school issues or outside issues because of all of the effect their performance in the classroom.”

Participant 10 stated: “I think one of the things that we know is happening in our world today is that our young people are very aware of politics, social media, and the world around them outside of the classroom. So, I thought last week, and earlier in the summer we talked about stereotype threat, and I think that that's so important because I think all our teachers agree ... We have students who at times don't achieve or don't do their best because they feel like they want their teacher to notice them or sometimes it's a little bit more helpful to have someone in their corner.”

Participant 3 stated: “We must see our students as people - not just kids who sit in classrooms. We MUST educate the whole child, see the whole child, and be accommodating to the whole child. That starts with trying to know who they are inside

and outside of the classroom. Many times, those outside forces interfere with what goes on inside the classroom. If I do not know what those forces are and consider them, I cannot effectively teach and work with the whole child.”

Theme 3: Teacher as Facilitator

To improve learning, students develop an in depth understanding of information that helps them improve their education because they learn to use the information meaningfully. Facilitating plays a major role in not only communicating and receiving information but also shaping the thinking process.

What: “Teachers should develop a learning environment that is relevant to and reflective of their students' social, cultural, and linguistic experiences. They act as guides, mediators, consultants, instructors, and advocates for the students, helping to effectively connect their culturally- and community-based knowledge to the classroom learning experiences” Banks, 2015).

Why: Ladson-Billings (1995) notes that a key criterion for culturally relevant teaching is nurturing and supporting competence in both home and school cultures. “Teachers should use the students' home cultural experiences as a foundation upon which to develop knowledge and skills” (Banks, 2015). Content learned in this way is more significant to the students and facilitates the transfer of what is learned in school to real-life situations (Padron et al., 2002).

Participant 2 stated: “Students can benefit greatly by following a model of how to approach the learning and it helps them to see how their prior thinking and new learning connect.”

Participant five stated: “Forethought must be given before the lesson is even attempted. Cultural awareness and competency start with making sure material is appropriate, approachable and relevant. There are only so many books about and by dead White men that kids should read.”

Participant 6 stated: “To engage each student and make learning meaningful, instruction has to tap into what they know, what they need to develop, and what steps are going to be taken to make the material accessible.”

Participant 9 stated: “Understanding student culture should help an educator understand behaviors and learning styles; thus, helping the educator to successfully differentiate the learning for each student.”

Theme 4: Collaboration and Efficacy

Teachers recognized that they could not work with every student all the time and subsequently it is necessary to facilitate a classroom environment where students can get respectful help from each other through peer assistance and student discourse.

The classroom should be a place where students are empowered to uncover new knowledge. This means that they are working collaboratively and with support from a group. Establishing those group norms is critical, but relies on the routines and structures that set the expectations and remove any confusion about “How does this class work?” By regularly mixing student groups both homogeneously and heterogeneously, students learn to work, communicate, and interact with individuals who may not look, sound, or learn like them. It is important that students have discourse with each other about the progress of their work and be able to analyze their own work as well as the work of others. They need to be self-sufficient and independent learners. Teachers expressed their

intentionality with structuring the environment so that there are multiple opportunities for cooperative learning. When mistakes are made, students can get assistance from peers in a non-threatening environment; hence, creating an instructional environment and climate where through that interdependence, students were more engaged and motivated.

The overall expressions from the teachers to support the theme collaboration and efficacy reveal that the teachers felt that African American male students needed to understand the importance of taking ownership for their learning. The role of the teacher is to appropriately provision for students by setting a safe, risk free environment where they work collaboratively and engage in student discourse in order to be vested in their own learning.

Participant 9 noted: “I teach in a classroom where many of my African American male students distract one another when they are working in groups. I think that it is important to stress to each student that they are responsible first for their mastery of the content and then to their group work. They have to individual ownership of their learning before they can work together in a group.”

Participant 6 noted: “Before helping others, the student needs to first understand what they need to do to master the content and complete a task. When they have a good understanding of what they are learning, collaborative learning can then take place.”

Participant 4 stated: “Students do better if they see themselves as a part of the process rather than as passive recipients of the process. By promoting a collaborative toward teaching as well as learning, students can play a part in a democratic classroom, as well as feel as though their experiences and opinions are important.”

Participant 2 stated: “Allowing students to use their thoughts and voices in a safe environment (groups or pairs) allows them to feel more comfortable working towards participation individually. When classmates are seen as a support system and helpers instead of judges ideas flow more easily and are shared more willingly.”

Theme 5: Student Centered Instruction

Student-Centered Instruction is imbedded in the transference of knowledge through student discovery. This transition emphasizes the focus of learning from direct instruction and assessment to student interdependent teaching and learning. In this concept, students facilitate and influence their own learning processes that involve but are not limited to student simulations, role-play, and cooperative learning.

What: “Student-centered instruction differs from the traditional teacher-centered instruction. Learning is cooperative, collaborative, and community-oriented. Students are encouraged to direct their own learning and to work with other students on research projects and assignments that are both culturally and socially relevant to them. Students become self-confident, self-directed, and proactive” (Banks, 2015; Brown University, 2019).

Why: Learning is a socially mediated process (Goldstein, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978). “Children develop cognitively by interacting with both adults and peers that are more knowledgeable” (Banks, 2015). These interactions allow students to hypothesize, experiment with new ideas, and receive feedback (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

How: “1) Promote student engagement. Students generate lists of topics they wish to study and/or research. Allow students to select their own reading material. 2) Share responsibility of instruction, initiate cooperative learning groups (Padron et al.,

2002). Have students lead discussion groups or reteach concepts. 3) Create inquiry based/discovery-oriented curriculum, create classroom projects that involve community. 4) Encourage a community of learners, form book clubs or literature circles (Daniels, 2002) for reading discussions. Conduct student-directed sharing time (Brisk & Harrington, 2000). Use cooperative learning strategies such as Jigsaw” (Banks, 2015; Brisk & Harrington, 2000).

A common thread through the various narratives derived from participants was their implicit or explicit references to the fact that students do best when they feel empowered and are responsible for their own learning. This meant that teachers needed to give students the opportunity to have an active voice in the teaching and learning process and promoted a “culturally responsive classroom as teachers developed culturally responsive learning opportunities” (Aceves et al., 2014). Students should have a say in resources and materials used to frame the new learning through student-generated ideas, background knowledge, values, communication styles and learning needs. Teachers felt that if students had ownership in the process, that they would be more vested in their learning and that if a student strongly believes in his own ability to achieve and has the willpower and patience to solve any problem he/she may encounter, then he/she will be able to create paths and opportunities for themselves. Teachers expressed that this was optimized when students stopped waiting for teachers to create these opportunities and started advocating for themselves by giving teachers feedback on what works best for them as they engage in the learning process. It was articulated that teachers found that students want an opportunity to do their best. They want to be judged by their teacher on their merit. Students did not want their performance to be based on other factors such as

their reputation or demographic characteristics. It was communicated that when students see teachers' actions as fair and honest, they have greater success working with students with diverse backgrounds. Teachers repeatedly emphasized that they believed that student centered classrooms help students learn from each other. Students tend to be excited about what their peers have to say. The more diverse the learning groups are in abilities, race, sex, etc. the more students are engaged in the learning process.

Participant 1 stated: "I have found that when students are interested in the topic and the class are more attentive and buy in to the approach I use. With history, I am fortunate to have interesting stories to share with them that often hooks them into the content. When I show the students how what we do matters to them, I believe they see the benefit and provide the "buy in" that I think is critical in every classroom."

Participant 3 stated: "Students need to see / understand why a topic / objective is being presented. If the goal / objective is one that a student can connect to / apply within their life and / or purpose for mastering, then the class becomes of interest to a student; the desire to know more is created. It encourages the student to "rise" to the next level of their learning."

Participant 8 stated: "I want my students to feel they are a part of family / group that accepts them and is willing to listen to them. The right group encourages one to share, take a risk in becoming involved and willing to "agree to disagree!" I want them to learn from each other, not just me, as I also learn from them. It is an opportunity to take one's "blindness" off and listen. This is how a classroom becomes a working community for a lifetime."

Summary

There were 15 survey questions included in the survey analysis. For each of the 15 survey questions, there was a corresponding list of strategies that participants were asked to rank from most to least effective with the number “1” being the most effective.

The focus group data analysis process generated five themes critical to the interview questions, namely, (a) communication of high expectations (b) teachers’ understanding of cultural awareness issues, (c) teacher as facilitator, (d) collaboration and efficacy, and (e) student centered instruction.

In chapter 4, results from the survey were analyzed and presented. Key findings from the focus group discussion were also presented. Both the survey responses and focus group findings are critical to understanding CRT. In chapter 5, these findings will be explored and interpreted in detail.

Chapter V: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Summary of the Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions of culturally relevant teaching practices as a viable methodology to better engage African American male students in the learning process. More specifically, the researcher sought to identify what components of CRT are most effective in engaging African American male students. The following are the results from the CRT survey and corresponding literature review on the study.

Research Question 1

What are educators' perceptions of the most impactful aspects of the CRT as those aspects relate to engaging AA male students at the high school level?

Survey question: *In terms of culturally responsive teaching, setting and maintaining clear expectations for content mastery please rank in order the importance of the statements listed below.*

The results of the study indicated that strategy one reflected 34.25% of the participants believed that capacity to make a difference in student learning and strategy three at 32.88% hold high academic and personal expectations for every child were believed to be the most effective aspects of this particular component of CRT. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents' perceptions of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, strategies for the students outranked the remaining aspects of CRT with scores of 20.55 and 21.92, respectively. The results are aligned

with the theoretical framework of Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992) who explains that culturally responsive teachers develop intellectual, social, emotional, and political learning by “using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 382). In a sense, culturally responsive teachers teach the whole child (Gay, 2000). Hollins (1996) adds that education designed specifically for students of color incorporates “culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content” (p. 13). Culturally responsive teachers realize not only the importance of academic achievement but also the importance of maintaining cultural identity and heritage (Gay, 2000).

Survey question: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of culturally responsiveness of student and teacher social interactions.*

The results of the study indicated that 47.95% of participants noted the need to develop positive, personal relationships with students, and 21.92%, noted McKinley (2010) noted that there is a need to “base interactions on human dignity principles, respect for every person, and an attitude of hope and optimism” (McKinley, 2010, pp. 35). Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perceptions of the second most crucial aspect of this component of CRT, 26.03% of the participants noted the importance of “being personally inviting and caring,” and 20.55% emphasized the need to “develop positive, personal relationships with students”. Researchers noted that Culturally Relevant Teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Castagno & Bray boy, 2008).

Survey question: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of culturally responsiveness of classroom climate.*

The results of this question indicated that 24.66% of participants believed that “maintaining a safe and orderly classroom” was the first priority. McKinley (2010) explanation for the power of making explicit directions revealed that “promoting a group-centered collaborative approach to learning” and “arousing student curiosity about and explain the purpose and practical intent of what is learned” (McKinley, 2010, pp. 73,135). The next highest at 16.44%. Furthermore, when assessing the respondents’ perceptions of the second most important aspect of this component of CRT, participants reported that “using established routines and rituals balanced with excitement, promote a positive, familiar climate” at 17.81% (McKinley, 2010, pp 42-46,52-53,134,159). Both “promoting a positive, familiar climate” and “promoting student concern and interest in what goes on in class” (McKinley, 2010, pp.56) were 16.44%. Culturally responsive teaching classifies preconditions for culturally responsive teaching, its characteristics, and strategies (Ladson-Billings, 1994). In 1992, Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings was the first person to introduce the concept of “culturally responsive teaching.” Culturally responsive teachers enable students to relate course content to their cultural context. Culturally responsive teaching is defined “as a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural connections to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 382). Culturally responsive teaching (CRT), therefore, is designed to give all students an equal chance at academic success (Irvine, 1990; Nieto, 2000; Weinstein, Curran & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). “Through establishing a community of learners, students become active members of the learning

process, thus contributing to their academic success” (Hill, 2012). In the meantime, the culturally aware teacher helps the students consider that they can maintain high standards of excellence without compromising their cultural identity (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Weinstein, Curran & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2004).

Survey question: *In terms of culturally responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate the importance of the items listed below about student discipline?*

The results of this question indicated that 47.95% of participants believed “the need to communicate the roles, expectations, etiquette, and ways of doing things in school explicitly” was the first priority. Additionally, 31.51% of participants also stated that there was a need to “temper order and establish standards with equal parts of respect; that are caring yet firm.” Researchers noted that Culturally Responsive Pedagogy takes into account the importance of all students including recognizing the importance of including students' aspects of learning and more importantly their (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The tenets of Ladson-Billings' original conceptual framework were “(a) students must experience success; (b) students must become or remain culturally competent, and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (Hill, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2015(1995), pp. 160).

Survey question: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of cultural effectiveness of teachers.*

The results of the study indicated that 27.40% of participants believed the need to “develop clear goals and standards” and 17.81% believed in the importance to “plan activities that meet individual developmental needs of diverse students” were the most effective aspects of this particular component of CRT. There is a need to plan lesson/day

for active student engagement carefully. It must also be noted that teachers need to use complexity and levels of difficulty to align the assessments to the student's level of learning, and cultural competencies to meet the needs of all the learners (McKinley, 2010). Researchers noted that students learn about themselves and the world around them within the context of culture (Brown University, 2019). Minority students feel pressured in environments where White people are present to renounce their culture to assimilate into what others who are not their race would consider the norm in order to fit into the majority culture socially. Social constructs, however, can interfere with their emotional and cognitive development and result in school failure (Sheets, 1999).

Survey question: *In terms of culturally responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate the importance of assessment?*

The results of the study indicated that 78.08% of the participants noted the need to “use continuous, frequent assessments to determine skills and knowledge in order to provide feedback on goals, and to create interventions” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This strategy overwhelmingly resonated with participants as the most effective aspects of this particular component of CRT. According to Villegas and Lucas (2002), culturally relevant teaching requires more from teachers than was previously expected. It needs teachers to know and understand the impact of race, class, and culture on students' ways of being. It requires teachers to create environments where diversity is respected, and expectations are held high (Gay, 2000), and it encourages teachers to expand on their teaching strategies to promote depth of content knowledge rather than rote memorization (Banks & Banks, 1995).

Survey question: *In terms of Culturally Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rank the importance of the items listed below about cultural understanding and awareness?*

The results indicated that 31.51% of the participants believed that “understanding aspects of own culture that facilitate/hinder communication with own/other cultural groups (s)” was a priority (McKinley, 2010). In addition, 30.14% participants indicated that “communication, validation and acceptance of cultural and gender differences” (McKinley, 2010) was believed to be the most useful aspects of this particular component of CRT. Additionally, 43.84% of the participants noted that “understanding ethnic groups and how race, ethnicity, language, SES, gender, residence, history and cultural experience influence behavior, performance and climate” (McKinley, 2010) is a necessity in the classroom for CRT. Researchers recognize the need to promote student engagement and recommend that teachers

- 1) Have students generate lists of topics that they wish to study and/or research.
- 2) Allow students to select their reading material.
- 3) Share responsibility for instruction, initiate cooperative learning groups (Padron et al., 2002).
- 4) Have students lead discussion groups or reteach concepts.
- 5) Create inquiry-based/discovery-oriented curriculum, create classroom projects that involve the community.
- 6) Encourage a community of learners, form book clubs or literature circles (Daniels, 2002) for reading discussions, conduct student-directed sharing time (Brisk & Harrington, 2000), use cooperative learning strategies such as Jigsaw (Brisk & Harrington, 2000).

Survey question: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of curriculum on cultural differences.*

The results indicated that 35.62% of the participants believed that there is a need to “help students understand his or her perspective or “self,” as one of many cultural perspectives.” In addition, 34.25% of participants believed that teachers should “use curriculum materials that describe historical, social, political events from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives” (McKinley, 2010) was believed to be the most effective aspect of this particular component of CRT. Researchers reported that when instruction is culturally mediated, it allows the incorporation and integrates diversity in student learning. Acknowledging that cultural proficiency shapes students’ ways of knowing, understanding, and representing information is crucial to their academic attainment. Encouraging multicultural viewpoints and instruction in an environment allows for the inclusion of knowledge that is relevant to the students (Brown University, 2019). Learning happens in culturally appropriate social situations; that is, relationships among students and those between teachers and students are congruent with students' cultures (Brown University, 2019).

Students must be taught and need to know and understand that there is more than one-way to interpret a statement, event, or action. By being allowed to learn in different ways or to share viewpoints and perspectives in a given situation based on their own cultural and social experiences, students become active participants in their learning (Nieto, 1999). Hollins (1996) believes that culturally mediated instruction provides the best learning conditions.

Survey question: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of meaningful and complex instruction.*

The results of the study indicated that 53.42% of the participants reported that there is a need to “engage all students using significant, relevant, and challenging curriculum, content, and instructional activities,” by far, was selected as the most effective aspects of this particular component of CRT. Participants also believed that teachers should “use the constructivist approach with student knowledge as the basis of an inquiry, representing ideas, developing meaning, elaborating, organizing, and interacting with content” (McKinley, 2010). Additionally, teachers should “provide scaffolding to match or link curriculum, materials, lesson format and instruction to students' home culture, interests, and experience” in CRT. Researchers noted that teachers also likely affect students’ beliefs by directly imparting their expectations to students. For example, protection models hypothesize that teacher expectations “protect against,” or counteract, negative expectations created by neighborhood effects or lack of access to educationally successful role models (Gregory & Huang, 2013). Indeed, teachers themselves believe that their expectations can affect student outcomes (MetLife, 2009), and students frequently report favoring teachers who “believe in their ability to succeed” (Curwin, 2012; Golebiewski, 2012). Teachers’ expectations strongly predict students’ postsecondary educational attainment, though this is not necessarily a causal relationship, as expectations may accurately measure unobservable student ability (Boser et al., 2014; Gregory & Huang, 2013). Still, if teachers’ expectations are systematically biased, this likely contributes to the persistence of socio-demographic gaps in educational attainment.

Survey Questions: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of scaffolding instruction to home culture and language?*

The results of the study indicated that 54.79% of participants believed the need to “demonstrate knowledge of content” was the most effective aspect of this particular component of CRT. In addition, teachers should “understand and use speech and expressions familiar to students” and “incorporate student preferences for active kinesthetic participation” (McKinley, 2010) were the most important aspects of this component of CRT.

These differences of entry into American society result in differences in adaptation and differences in the perception of structural and social barriers usually confronted by new migrants. Voluntary minorities are more willing to adapt to American society as a means for upward mobility, and indeed, it is argued that in anticipation of possible barriers to opportunities, they overachieve scholastically (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Voluntary minorities compare themselves to natives of their homeland and have a favorable view of the opportunities available in American society. Involuntary minorities, in contrast, compare themselves to the dominant members in American culture, and they are painfully aware of their disadvantaged status; unfortunately, this comparison tends to produce resentment because they belong to a disfavored group (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Involuntary minorities learn from those around them that they have limited job opportunities. As a direct result of this learned helplessness, they put forth little effort toward success in school. The aforementioned is in part because as proponents of learned helplessness the explanation contends that there is a reciprocal relationship between the perceived opportunities available to a minority group and the

“pattern of linguistic, cognitive, motivational, and other school-related skills they develop” (Ogbu, 1978).

Survey Questions: *In terms of Culturally Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rank the importance of the items listed below about responding to student traits and needs?*

The results of the study indicated that 34.25% of the participants believed the need to “demonstrate knowledge of content” and “select and use a variety of instructional methods and interactive strategies” (McKinley, 2010) were the most effective aspects of this particular component of CRT. In addition, there is a need to promote student use of multiple intelligence to gain usage and respond to knowledge outranked the remaining aspects of CRT. The United States Department of Commerce (1996) projected that by the year 2050, African American, Asian American, and Latino students would constitute close to 57% of all U.S. students. As the face of demographics continues to change, mostly White, middle-class females will likely teach students of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and social backgrounds. These teachers must be able to construct pedagogical practices that have relevance and meaning to students' social and cultural realities. Socially and emotionally, African American and Latino students have struggled to adjust in U.S. schools and are grossly overrepresented in special education and remedial schooling and less suited for gifted education and advanced placement.

Survey Questions: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of group structure composition and environment.*

The result of the study indicated that 47.95% of the participants believed that teachers need to “structure environments for cooperative learning and group activities”

(McKinley, 2010) was the most effective aspect of this particular component of CRT. Additionally, teachers should “create low-high dyads to enhance cognitive and task achievement for students” in CRT. Researchers such as Ladson-Billings (1994) indicated that culturally relevant teaching is nurturing and supports competence in both home and school cultures. Research has shown that educational content, which is authentic, is more significant to the students and facilitates the transfer of what is learned in school to real-life situations (Padron et al., 2002). In the role of a teacher as a facilitator during culturally relevant teaching, there are essential features and decisions of the teacher and how they are able to bridge experiences with students, to make important decisions on their behalf, and to work toward cultural competence (Milner IV, 2011). It is essential to include race and race consciousness in the multicultural classroom, especially in environments where race and culture could be dismissed as student deficiency (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Teachers have a responsibility to all their students to ensure that all have an equal opportunity to achieve to the best of their abilities. These agendas include but are not limited to politics, funding, and fear. Overcoming such said agendas will level the playing field and give African American students and other minorities a success that will show greater promise over the Caucasian student and in turn, which reverses the minority disparity achievement/opportunity gap (Allen, 2015).

Survey Question: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of promoting collaboration and efficacy development of African American Male Students.*

The results of the study indicated that 27.40% of the participants noted the need to encourage a group-centered collaborative approach toward learning. Furthermore, “promote student interactions to allow students to assist others in most learning tasks and

ensure that all students in groups share important roles and demonstrate their expertise during small group tasks” (McKinley, 2010). Researchers noted that teachers’ expectations might affect student outcomes in at least three ways. First, the perception that teachers have low expectations may exacerbate the harmful effects of *stereotype threat*, whereby low expectations either cause emotional responses that directly harm performance or cause students to *disidentify* with educational environments (Steele 1997). Second, stigmatized students may modify their expectations, and in turn, their behavior, to conform to teachers' negative biases (Ferguson, 2003). In each of the first two cases, teachers' stigmatization of information-poor racial minority students could create a feedback loop, that functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Burgess & Greaves 2013; Lounsbury, 2009). Finally, teachers who stigmatize certain types of students may modify how they teach, evaluate, and advise them, again leading to poor educational outcomes for stigmatized students (Ferguson, 2003). All three scenarios potentially perpetuate socio-demographic gaps in educational attainment.

Survey question: *Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of presenting information and ideas between prior knowledge and new learning/scaffolding.*

The results of the study indicated that 38.36% of the participants believed the need to “provide modeling and cognitive scaffolding between prior knowledge and new learning” (McKinley, 2010). Additionally, 35.62% of participants believed teachers should also “use a variety of modes of representing information and ideas” (McKinley, 2010). These strategies were perceived to be the most effective aspects of this particular component of CRT. Furthermore, “providing modeling and cognitive scaffolding between prior knowledge and new learning” (McKinley, 2010) at 30.14% and “use a

variety of modes of representing information and ideas” (McKinley, 2010) at 28.77% outranked the remaining aspects of CRT. Researchers noted that identifying the framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching is imperative to the success of African American students thriving to be successful in the 21st century. “Culturally Relevant Teaching identifies preconditions for culturally relevant teaching, its characteristics, and strategies.” In 1992, Gloria Ladson-Billings was the first person to introduce the concept “culturally relative teaching” (Diller & Moule, 2005). Culturally relevant teachers display cultural competence skills at teaching in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting. They enable each student to relate course content to his or her cultural context (Diller & Moule, 2005). Culturally Relevant Teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 382). The strengths that students bring to school are identified, nurtured, and utilized to promote student achievement (Richards et al., 2004, pp. 3).

Research Question 2: Why do teachers perceive that certain culturally responsive teaching practices are more impactful with engaging African American males in the classroom?

The focus group data analysis process generated five themes critical to the interview questions, namely, (a) communication of high expectations (b) teachers’ understanding of cultural awareness issues, (c) teacher as facilitator, (d) collaboration and efficacy, and (e) student centered instruction. The following is an interpretation of the results.

The overall expressions from the teachers to support the theme *communication of high expectations* in order to engage African American male students is that no matter the focus which was established in the classroom, it all begins and ends with high expectations. Students have to “Believe” in what it is they are expected to do. It is imperative that adults have high expectations for students in order for them to have high expectations for themselves in hope of developing beliefs and skills that will promote success. Participants felt that clear and high expectations are vital, but even more important is providing students with the opportunity to build their capacity no matter their background. Participants felt that students’ ability to attain academic success was all grounded in having high expectations for their students.

The overall expressions from the teachers to support the theme of *teachers’ understanding of cultural awareness* revealed that the teachers noted the need to encourage students and help them seek ways that can benefit them at school. The teachers also noted that there is a need for them to listen to students’ issues and help them to overcome the issues to be effective in their classroom assignments. “Instruction and learning take place in an environment that encourages multicultural viewpoints and allows for inclusion of knowledge that is relevant to the students” (Banks, 2015, pp. 6).

The overall expressions from the teachers to support the theme *teacher as facilitator* reveal that the teacher felt to improve learning, students must develop an in depth understanding of information that helps them improve their education because they learn to use the information meaningfully. Facilitating plays a major role in not only communicating and receiving information but also shaping the thinking process.

The overall expressions from the teachers to support the theme *collaboration and efficacy* for African American male students revealed that the teachers felt their intentionality for structuring the environment so that there are multiple opportunities for cooperative learning. When clarity is needed, students can get assistance from peers in a non-threatening environment, which created an instructional environment and climate where through that interdependence students were more engaged and motivated.

The overall expressions from the teachers to support the theme *student centered instruction* revealed implicit or explicit references to the fact that students do best when they feel empowered and are responsible for their own learning. This meant that teachers needed to give students the opportunity to have an active voice in the teaching and learning process, which assists with promoting a culturally responsive classroom as teachers develop culturally responsive learning opportunities. Students should have a say in resources and materials used to frame the new learning through student-generated ideas, background knowledge, values, communication styles and learning needs.

Researchers noted that schools are expanding, and with that expansion, different races are filling the buildings. With different races, different cultures are coming together as one. It is becoming imperative for educators to address culture in the classroom. Through discussing culture in the school in order to address the challenges and opportunities associated with diversity in the school setting, the nation's school systems will gain competence in growing more diverse (Gay, 2000). Over the past decade, researchers have theorized about the benefits of culturally relevant teaching. The research presented a way for teachers to reach and teach students from all cultures (Banks & Banks, 1995; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2001; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter & Grant, 1999;

Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Ladson-Billings (1995) defined culturally relevant teaching as that which helps “students to be academically successful, culturally competent, and socio-politically critical” (p. 477-78). In her work with effective teachers of African American students, Ladson-Billings (1995) described effective teachers as those who demand and require academic success from their students. The author defined culturally relevant teaching methods as those that emphasize the use of referents from a student’s culture as a vehicle for learning, which helps students, build a broader sociopolitical consciousness. Ladson-Billings (1995) stresses the importance of teachers in analyzing societal norms and inequities that affect students of color.

Limitations of the Study

With all studies, there will be both positive and negative implications as to its limitations and delimitations (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The study measures perceptions; therefore, beyond the control of the researcher there will be factors that influence the study. Study limitations can be but not necessarily limited to conditions, biases, personal influences, and other varying results. The measurement of perception on behalf of the teacher and the student /teacher relationship can and will vary on the sample selected. One of the major limitations could be that both culturally responsive and non-culturally responsive teachers will be completing the survey. This could mean that some will have knowledge and mastery in implementing the CRT aspects that are part of the survey, and some will not have understanding or mastery of the various aspects.

Additionally, as with the research methodology analysis, the following limits and problems are as follows: (a) implying cause rather than association. (b) overestimating

the importance of a finding, especially with large sample sizes, (c) failure to recognize spurious relationships and, (d) nominal variables only (both IV and DV).

Implications for Practice

Awareness extends itself to the differential expectations for students on varying degrees. The effect of teacher expectation on student achievement helps to define a level of motivation to students that can be successful or disabling. The demonstrating value and respect for all students can prove to be a pivotal point in raising expectations for students both internally and externally.

“Teachers should understand students’ behavior in light of the norms of the communities in which they have grown” (Brown, 2019; Banks, 2015, pp. 3). They should respect all students as learners with valuable knowledge and experience (Brown University, 2019). All that are involved in students’ academic life must deliver a consistent message; this consists of teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and other school personnel.

Learning is a socially mediated process (Goldstein, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978). Children develop cognitively by interacting with both adults and peers that are more knowledgeable (Banks, 2015). These interactions allow students to hypothesize, experiment with new ideas, and receive feedback (Darling-Hammond, 1997). The cosmopolitanism philosophy holds that all human beings feel an inherent need to be responsible for each other in some way. Developing a cosmopolitan ethos in the classroom is a responsibility that the teacher should have and must fulfill with African American students.

Students need to understand that there is more than one way to interpret a statement, event, or action (Banks, 2015). By being allowed to learn in different ways or to share viewpoints and perspectives in a given situation based on their own cultural and social experiences, students become active participants in their learning (Nieto, 1999). Hollins (1996) believes that culturally mediated instruction provides the best learning conditions. Too often, educators are afraid to acknowledge that differences exist between African American males and others. This is due to a commonly held misperception that educators who acknowledge such differences have in some way a racist agenda.

This culture of fear, stoked by political correctness, only serves to hamper efforts to meet their needs and will inevitably maintain achievement gaps (Allen, 2015). Teachers have a responsibility to all their students to ensure that all have an equal opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability (Banks, 2015). If instruction reflects the cultural practices and values of only one group of students, then the other students are denied an equal opportunity to learn (Banks, 2015).

Teachers should develop a learning environment that is relevant to and reflective of their students' social, cultural, and linguistic experiences (Banks, 2015; Brown, 2019). To improve memory, students develop in depth an understanding of information that helps them improve their education because they learn to use the information meaningfully (Brown University, 2019). Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) examined the historical evolution of culturally relevant pedagogy and noted that Au and Jordan (1981) asserted: "The context of school learning is often different from that of informal learning and often unrelated to the child's culture; while bringing the relevance of the text to the child's own experience helps the child make sense of the world" (Brown-Jeffy, &

Cooper, pp. 149-150). They further summarized that this illustrates the importance of the teacher as a bridge between home-community and school cultures.

Facilitating plays a major role in not only communicating and receiving information but also shaping the thinking process. Therefore, in culturally relevant teaching, the teacher plays a key role in helping students understand and appreciate their value in the classroom and how they are viewed in the world. While a student can be guided in many ways by cultural group identification, his or her ways of believing or perceiving can also be influenced by individual understandings and conceptualizations (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). In other words, there must be an emphasis on teaching the whole child while recognizing, understanding, and intentionally acknowledging cultural group behaviors, but also observing and interacting with students as individuals (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends three areas for future research on the use of culturally responsive teaching practices for African American male students at the high school level. One area for future research is to examine a larger sample population within the state of Maryland or across multiple states including both the east and west on high school teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive teaching practices and the need to provide strategies for African American male students. By examining a larger population of high school teachers, future researchers would have a better understanding of the experiences and perceptions of high school teachers on their knowledge and experiences as it relates to providing adequate culturally responsive teaching practices to African American male students in the classrooms. The results may be used to build a positive

relationship between the students, parents and the school administration concerning the need to provide more culturally responsive teaching practices at the high school level.

In addition, future research could balance the results of this study with a quantitative analysis with an experimental design to provide statistical evidence of the benefits of proven strategies and techniques on culturally responsive teaching practices at the high school level. There is also a need to gather quantitative responses and compare them to the qualitative responses of the high school teachers. This could also provide insight into whether the current themes garnered should be changed or expanded with additional sub-themes in the research study.

Finally, there is a need to examine the experiences and perceptions of administrators, and parents and students at the high school level in order to ascertain their perceptions of culturally responsive teaching. Comparing the various responses and themes from administrators, students and parents and matching the responses with teachers' responses may provide insights on the views of administrators, students, parents and teachers at other high schools to improve professional development training for the aforementioned stakeholder groups on culturally responsive teaching strategies. It is recognized that everyone is at a different place in his or her work and understanding of Cultural Proficiency. Some overarching questions would be as follows:

How can individuals and organizations apply the knowledge and skills regarding cultural proficiency in a way that provides all students the opportunity for rigorous learning that is supported through affirmation and validation?

How can individuals and organizations reframe their beliefs so that racial and cultural differences are not seen as a problem to be solved but as an asset to the organization/environment?

How do individuals and organizations create a culturally proficient mindset so that the examination of current systems, structures and practices lead to changes that ensure healthy and effective responses to diversity?

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions of culturally relevant teaching practices as a viable methodology to better engage African American male students in the learning process. More specifically, the researcher sought to identify what components of CRT are most effective in engaging African American male students. The researcher used a modification of Johnny McKinley's teacher perception survey on Effective and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Strategies as the assessment instrument. An in-depth exploration of teacher perceptions will likely glean useful and actionable information. This information, in turn, could form the basis of CRT related training programs and staff development aimed at implementing those aspects of CRT perceived as most effective in engaging AA males in the learning process, thereby improving their learning and achievement. This chapter provides a summary of the study including conclusions drawn from analysis of this research study. The conclusions were followed by a brief discussion of the limitations of the study, and the chapter concludes with recommendations for practices, and recommendations for future research.

The findings from the study indicated that teachers noted the need for incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices in their high school for African American male students. In addition, many teachers expressed that all students and teachers can benefit from a school where all parties practice culturally responsive teaching strategies because it can benefit students in increasing their academic achievement. It is important for schools to embrace and build a strong relationship with students and their families in order to develop a culturally responsive school environment.

Culturally responsive teachers enable students to relate course content to their cultural context. Culturally responsive teaching is defined as a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural connections to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Brown University, 2019). Culturally responsive teaching (CRT), therefore, is designed to give all students an equal chance at academic success (Hill, 2012). Through establishing a community of learners, students become active members of the learning process, thus contributing to their academic success (Hill, 2012). In the meantime, the culturally aware teacher helps the students consider that they can maintain high standards of excellence without compromising their cultural identity (Hill, 2012).

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Appendix A

Survey Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Project Title: Teacher Perception of Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies That Have the Greatest Impact on the Engagement of African American male students.

Researcher: Brian W. Scriven

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Warren C. Hayman

Introduction:

The study will require teachers to rank a series of strategies under each domain of Johnnie McKinley's survey on Effective and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Strategies. In doing so, the researcher intends to identify what high yield strategies teachers perceive to have the most significant impact on the engagement of African American male students during the learning process (White, 2009). Based on teacher perceptions of these high yield strategies, the researcher intends to identify actionable professional development opportunities focused on these strategies at both the district and school level.

Please read this form carefully before deciding whether or not to participate in this study.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine if there is a perceived teacher correlation between cultural responsive teaching and the Engagement of African American male students in a public school classroom setting(s). This study will explore the effective practices of the teacher(s) and their cultural responsive approach to teaching African American male students. Furthermore, this study will seek to deepen the understanding on teacher's perceive cultural responsive instructional best practices that have the greatest impact on the engagement of African American male students.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey and participate in a focus group. The survey will be open for 5 months. Your identity will be kept anonymous, as the survey/open-ended questions will not ask for your name or other personal identifiers.

Again, the university sponsored research team are the only person(s) who will have access to this information. This information will be kept in a password-protected computer file and locked file cabinet for three years. After completion of the study, collected data and information obtained during the study will be destroyed.

Risk/Benefits:

By using Survey Monkey, risks will be considerably reduced because there is no human to human contact. There will be no risk for embarrassment or humiliation in front of another person. Since the survey is computer-based there will be no concern for handwriting recognition. "I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study." As a participant you will not be in any physical, psychological or legal danger and are required to be 21 years or older. Filling out the survey and open-ended questions online is voluntary and none of the participants will be at risk. Thus, no safeguards are necessary. There are no direct benefits from your participation, but the results from this research will help other educators learn more about culturally responsive teaching strategies and practices and their impact on the academic engagement of African American male students.

There are no benefits, but there are indirect benefits to you as a professional educator. As teachers in a demanding profession we hope to learn more about African American male student Engagement.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participation in this study; however, your time and input is valued and appreciated beyond measure.

Confidentiality:

Your answers will be kept confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file and only the researchers will have access to the records. All records of this study will be kept private and after a three year storing period the researcher will destroy all the information/notes from the surveys and open-ended questions. In any sort of report we make public, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify participants as they are anonymous.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

We are hopeful that you will find time to complete this survey in its entirety. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you would like to participate, please check the box on the bottom of the page that says, "I consent to participate." Even if you give consent to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent at any time.

Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QL9KHS>

Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Brian W. Scriven by email or contact the faculty sponsor at the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Warren C. Hayman.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and I consent to take part in this study. Please check the box to indicate your consent and to verify that you are 21 years of age or older; sign, date and leave the consent form with your principal. A copy

of the link to access the survey and open-ended questions is available for you to take on PG. 3.

I consent to participate and I am 21 years of age or older

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

Signature of person obtaining consent _____ Date **January -
March, 2017**

Printed name of person obtaining consent **Brian W. Scriven** Date **January -
March, 2017**

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.

Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SQL9K>

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

The header of the survey instrument features a blurred background of warm, bokeh-style lights in shades of yellow, orange, and red. A dark grey horizontal bar is overlaid on the bottom of this image, containing the title "Revised - 'Exploration of Teacher Perception'" in white text. In the top right corner of the blurred image area, there is a small, light-colored button with the word "Exit" written on it.

Revised - "Exploration of Teacher Perception"

Exit

Greetings Educator

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Brian W. Scriven for doctoral dissertation. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a professional, reflective, and an effective practitioner that endeavors to meet the needs of all students within your classroom.

The purpose of this study is to explore the effective practices of the teachers and their approach to teaching African American Male students. There is no compensation for participation in this study and all information will be anonymous. Information will be stored for period of time and then destroyed.

Filling out the survey is voluntary and you as a participant will not be at risk; thus, no safeguards are necessary. If you agree to participate in this study, your consent will be based on your survey completion. The survey is comprised of 33 short answer and ranked questions; additionally, you will be asked to answer three demographic questions relating to years of teaching experiences, age and race.

The time for completing the survey is approximately 15- 20 minutes (can vary with your responses).

The purpose of this study is to explore the effective practices of the teachers and their approach to teaching African American Male students. There is no compensation for participation in this study and all information will be anonymous. Information will be stored for period of time and then destroyed.

Filling out the survey is voluntary and you as a participant will not be at risk; thus, no safeguards are necessary. If you agree to participate in this study, your consent will be based on your survey completion. The survey is comprised of 33 short answer and ranked questions; additionally, you will be asked to answer three demographic questions relating to years of teaching experiences, age and race.

The time for completing the survey is approximately 15- 20 minutes (can vary with your responses).

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this study, your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Best Regards,
Brian Scriven

1. What subject area do you teach?

* 2. What is your Gender?

Female

Male

* 3. What is your race?

* 3. What is your race?

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Asian

White

Some other race or origin

Mixed race one or more

* 4. How many years of experience in teaching do you have?

0-3

4-9

10 or more

* 5. In terms of culturally responsive teaching, setting and maintaining clear expectations for content mastery please rate in order the importance of the statements listed below?

1 Strengthen teacher skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy through professional learning

2 Believe in capacity to make a difference in student learning

3 Hold high academic and personal expectations for every child

- 0-3
- 4-9
- 10 or more

* 5. In terms of culturally responsive teaching, setting and maintaining clear expectations for content mastery please rate in order the importance of the statements listed below?

1	Strengthen teacher skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy through professional learning
2	Believe in capacity to make a difference in student learning
3	Hold high academic and personal expectations for every child
4	Ensure that students understand individual role in content mastery and task completion
5	Believe in and promote student self-efficacy, individual ability to achieve and positive self-regard
6	Regularly remind students that learning will be challenging and rigorous
7	Provide instruction and extensive modeling on how to strategize in the face of difficulty
8	Provide equitable access to opportunities to learn regardless of academic gaps or needs

9	Provide resources to meet needs of all children regardless of academic gaps or needs
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* 6. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for setting and maintaining clear expectations for content mastery, question 5?

* 7. Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of cultural responsiveness of student and teacher social interactions?

1	Are personally inviting and caring
2	Develop positive, personal relationships with students
3	Encourage a sense of family and community
4	Provide mentoring and emotional support
5	Extend relationship with and caring for students beyond the classroom
6	Base interactions on human dignity principles, respect for every person, and an attitude of hope and optimism
7	Treat all students equally well
8	Provide each student with equitable access to learning resources and opportunities to

- Treat all students equally well
- Provide each student with equitable access to learning resources and opportunities to learn
- Ensure that students and teachers treat each other with civility, gentleness, and support
- Handle disagreements with discussion and respect for alternative positions

* 8. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for cultural responsiveness of student and teacher social interactions, question 7?

* 9. Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of cultural responsiveness of classroom climate?

- Promote a group-centered collaborative approach toward learning
- Promote a positive, familial climate
- Organize students in classroom groups around shared traits to stimulate liking and cohesiveness
-

- Create positive relations and meaningful collaboration with parents and community in decision making and educational development of children
- Promote student concern and interest in what goes on in class
- Arouse student curiosity about and explain the purpose and practical intent of what is learned
- Maintain a safe and orderly classroom
- Use established routines and rituals balanced with excitement
- Establish a physically inviting classroom

* 10. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for cultural responsiveness of classroom climate, question 9?

* 11. In terms of Cultural Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate importance of the items listed below about student discipline?

- Use appropriate adult/teacher language

* 11. In terms of Cultural Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate importance of the items listed below about student discipline?

⋮	⬇	Use appropriate adult/teacher language
⋮	⬇	Temper order and established standards with equal parts respect; are caring yet firm
⋮	⬇	Provide explicit coaching on appropriate behavior
⋮	⬇	Communicate explicitly the roles, expectations, etiquette, and ways of doing things in school
⋮	⬇	Prevent situations where student lose peer respect
⋮	⬇	Respond to misbehavior on an individual basis

* 12. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for student discipline, question 11?

* 13. Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of cultural effectiveness of teachers?

⋮	⬇	Develop clear goals and standards
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* 13. Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of cultural effectiveness of teachers?

⋮	⬇	Develop clear goals and standards
⋮	⬇	Design instruction aligned to curriculum and authentic assessment methods
⋮	⬇	Align assessments to the content, format and complexity, or level of difficulty of teaching and learning activities
⋮	⬇	Carefully plan and clearly structure lesson content/each day
⋮	⬇	Clearly structure content and lessons with review of mastered material
⋮	⬇	Carefully plan lesson/day for active student engagement
⋮	⬇	Balance guiding and facilitating student learning with teacher-centered presentations to class as a total group
⋮	⬇	Help arouse student curiosity by helping students understand purpose and practical intent of what is learned
⋮	⬇	Plan activities to meet individual developmental needs of diverse students
⋮	⬇	Structure group tasks to ensure students in groups share important roles and develop expertise

* 14. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for cultural effectiveness of teachers, question 13?

* 15. In terms of Cultural Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate importance of the assessment?

⋮	<input type="text" value="1"/>	Align instruction and curriculum content to authentic assessment methods
⋮	<input type="text" value="2"/>	Align assessments to the content, format and complexity, or level of difficulty of teaching and learning activities
⋮	<input type="text" value="3"/>	Use continuous, frequent assessments to determine skills and knowledge, provide feedback on goals, and to create interventions

* 16. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for assessment, question 15?

* 17. In terms of Cultural Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate

* 17. In terms of Cultural Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate importance of the items listed below about cultural understanding and awareness?

⋮	<input type="text" value="1"/>	Understand ethnic groups and how race, ethnicity, language, SES, gender, residence, history and cultural experience influence behavior, performance and climate
⋮	<input type="text" value="2"/>	Understand cultural variations and nuances of communication including gestures, timing, and nonverbal cues such as walking, eye glances, dress, and presentation style
⋮	<input type="text" value="3"/>	Understand aspects of own culture that facilitate/hinder communication with own/other cultural group(s)
⋮	<input type="text" value="4"/>	Communicate validation and acceptance of cultural and gender differences
⋮	<input type="text" value="5"/>	Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and gender groups in classroom

* 18. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for cultural understanding and awareness, question 17?

* 19. Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of curriculum on cultural differences?

- Use curriculum materials that describe historical, social, political events from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives
- Investigate topics related to ethnicity, gender and exceptionality from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language perspectives
- Help student understand his or her personal perspective, or "self", as one of many cultural perspectives
- Help students understand, critique and change social issues, structures, and practices that produce inequities
- Provide opportunities for students to critique concepts learned, their origins, and their authors' economic, political, and social perspectives and motivations
- Help students understand, critique and change social issues, structures, and practices that produce inequities
- Provide opportunities for students to critique concepts learned, their origins, and their authors' economic, political, and social perspectives and motivations

* 20. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for curriculum on

- Teach concepts and skills using integrated, holistic, interdisciplinary lessons
- Provide scaffolding to match or link curriculum, materials, lesson format and instruction to students' home culture, interests, and experience

* 22. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for meaning and complex instruction, question 21?

* 23. Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of scaffolding instruction to home culture and language?

- Demonstrate knowledge of content
- Understand and use speech and expressions familiar to students
- Incorporate student preference for oral, verbal expressiveness
- Incorporate student preferences for active kinesthetic participation

* 24. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for scaffolding instruction to home culture and language, question 23?

* 25. In terms of Cultural Responsive Teaching, in what order do you rate importance of the items listed below about responding to student traits and needs?

⋮	⬇	Demonstrate knowledge of content
⋮	⬇	Understand and use speech and expressions familiar to students
⋮	⬇	Select and use a variety of instructional methods and interactive strategies
⋮	⬇	Promote student use of multiple intelligences to gain, use, and respond to knowledge
⋮	⬇	Incorporate student preference for oral, verbal expressiveness
⋮	⬇	Allow students to express visual, tactile, emotional, auditory preferences
⋮	⬇	Provide materials and learning centers for varied styles and modalities
⋮	⬇	Incorporate student preferences for active kinesthetic participation

⋮	⬇	Incorporate student preferences for active kinesthetic participation
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* 26. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for responding to student traits and needs, question 25?

* 27. Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of group structure composition and environment?

⋮	⬇	Structure environments for cooperative learning and group activities
⋮	⬇	Create low-high mixed dyads to enhance cognitive and task achievement for both students
⋮	⬇	Regularly place students in groups mixed by race, gender, and ability
⋮	⬇	Balance guiding and facilitating student learning with teacher-centered presentation to class as a total group

* 28. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for group structure composition and environment, question 27?

* 29. Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of promoting collaboration and efficacy development of African American Male Students?

⋮	<input type="text"/>	Promote a group-centered collaborative approach toward learning
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Build lesson format on student preference for cohesive group participation
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Provide small group instruction in cooperative, problem solving groups
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Promote student interactions to allow students to assist others in most learning tasks
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Use a variety of oral and written communication patterns, including responding in unison, in pairs, and in teams after group collaboration
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Ensure students understand individual roles in content mastery and task completion
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Ensure that all students in groups share important roles and demonstrate their expertise during small group tasks
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Provide scaffolding through reciprocal teaching – a cognitive apprenticeship in which students gradually assume the role of teacher, helping their peers construct meaning from text

* 30. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for promoting

* 30. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for promoting collaboration and efficacy development of African American Male Students, question 29?

* 31. Please rank in order of importance your priority in terms of presenting information and ideas between prior knowledge and new learning/scaffolding?

⋮	<input type="text"/>	Use a variety of modes of representing information and ideas
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Use global (big picture) as well as analytical (step by step) organizers to describe tasks
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Use graphic organizers and advance organizers
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Provide modeling and cognitive scaffolding between prior knowledge and new learning

* 32. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for presenting information and ideas between prior knowledge and new learning/scaffolding, question 31?

* 33. In what order do you rate importance of the items listed below about

* 33. In what order do you rate importance of the items listed below about ensuring rigor and appropriate task difficulty for African American Males while they are processing new content

⋮	<input type="text"/>	Help students process and internalize information presented
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Create tools to help students understand information from readings, multimedia resources, site visits and guests
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Use culturally responsive strategies such as: call and response, KIVA (inside-outside discussion circle), visual imagery, storytelling
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Use accelerated learning techniques with students at all ability and performance levels, including: Music as a memory aid and Memory association maps
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Engage students in multiple ways
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Actively engage students in tasks a great deal of time
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Frequently call for extended, substantive oral and written student responses
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Call on every student regularly
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Maintain active participation by randomly calling on students
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Maintain active learning using questions and recitation

* 34. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for ensuring rigor and

⋮	<input type="text"/>	Maintain active participation by randomly calling on students
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Maintain active learning using questions and recitation

* 34. Briefly state why you chose your highest ranking for ensuring rigor and appropriate task difficulty, question 33?

1/1  100%

Done

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