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## **Understanding Cultural Competence Among In-Service Teachers: A Review of the Literature**

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Understanding Cultural Competence Among In-Service Teachers: A Review of the Literature

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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1 May 2020

### **Introduction**

Cultural competence in teaching has been investigated as a tenet of culturally relevant pedagogy and as a requirement for preservice teachers (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). However, a large gap exists in terms of examining the specific outcomes of in-service teachers using culturally competent practices. While varied definitions of cultural competence exist, for the purpose of this paper, I narrowed down certain actions that culturally competent educators use both in the classroom and out of the classroom. Culturally competent teachers engage in honoring children's cultural identities while helping them acquire knowledge about the dominant culture; equipping students with the knowledge necessary for succeeding in an oppressive school system; creating or allowing children to create problems relevant to the children's cultural experiences; examining societal inequalities based on culture as a class; providing culturally relevant literature; facilitating intercultural communication and understanding; building strong relationships with and knowing all children in the class; being self-aware about the attitudes, beliefs, and values the teacher presents in the classroom; engaging in self-reflection about understanding and respect of culture in interactions, beliefs, attitudes, values, and lessons; building relationships with and knowing children's families or care providers; including social-justice topics in lessons; and understanding the cultures represented in the classroom and the differences between those cultures and the dominant culture which may cause discord in the classroom (Aceves & Orosco, 2014; Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009). To create a rough definition of cultural competence from the research findings represented, cultural competence is an individual's understanding of present cultures, the differences between those

cultures, one's own beliefs about those cultures, and how to facilitate children's understandings of both dominant and non-dominant cultures.

Cultivating cultural competence is a necessary goal for educators as the disparity between teachers' and children's racial identities have been increasing since the early 2000s and are projected to continue increasing (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), the percentage of white children attending public schools was 51.7 percent, while the remaining 48.3 percent was comprised of 15.8 percent black, 23.7 percent Hispanic, 5.1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 1.1 percent American Indian/Alaskan native, and 2.6 percent biracial children. These percentages are expected to change to 45.1 percent white, 15.1 percent black, 29.9 percent Hispanic, 5.5 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 1.0 percent American Indian/Alaskan native, and 3.5 percent biracial children (NCES, 2013). However, in another study from the National Center for Education Statistics (2019), the percentage of white teachers compared to non-white teachers has barely changed. In 2003-2004, the percentage of white teachers was 83 percent, with black and Hispanic teachers following at 8 and 6 percent, respectively (NCES, 2019). In 2015-2016, the racial composition of teachers in America was rerecorded at 80 percent white, with 7 percent black, 9 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Asian (NCES, 2019). In both time periods, Pacific Islander, American Indian/ Alaskan native, and biracial teachers comprise 0-2 percent of the total teaching population (NCES, 2019). With an increasing diversity among American children and a relatively unwavering teacher population, teachers must learn how to navigate these cultural disparities in order to connect with children from diverse backgrounds and connect them to one another. I propose that cultivating cultural competence among both teachers and children will

help teachers better teach children with diverse backgrounds, and ultimately improve children's academic success.

I became interested in the topic of cultural competence when searching for a research topic at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Dr. Coleman-King was leading a project on training in-service teachers to increase their cultural competence through a workshop held on the teachers' in-service days, which are days in which teachers develop their professionalism while the children have the day off from school. I joined her project and observed one of the professional development workshops. During this workshop, my job as part of the research team was to observe the participants for signs of resistance. I observed such actions as having whispered conversations with one's neighbor, rolling one's eyes, spending more than sixty consecutive seconds looking at one's phone, uncomfortable shifting during times of participation, and even one person announcing that she believed African Americans were the cause of persistent discrimination against African Americans. These observations piqued my interest in what it takes to be or become culturally competent, and why teachers may not be willing to be or become culturally competent. Based on these observations and the definition of cultural competence and culturally competent actions listed above, my initial understandings of cultural competence are as follows:

- a. Cultural competence requires actions performed both inside and outside the classroom.
- b. Being culturally competent requires examination of one's own attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding cultural diversity.
- c. For one reason or another, some teachers respond to culturally competent training with resistance.

In the remainder of this paper, I will discuss the theories of which cultural competence is a tenet. Then, I will briefly describe the methodologies used to collect the articles examined in this review. I will then discuss teachers' perceptions and practice, as they are both key components of cultural competence discovered in the literature and in my personal experiences. Finally, I will add a discussion and reflection section to discuss the findings from the literature and my new understandings of the importance of cultural competence for in-service teachers.

### **Conceptual Frameworks – Culturally Responsive Teaching and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

Both culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy (also termed “culturally relevant education”) were repeatedly referenced throughout the literature discussed in this article. Cultural competence is explicitly a tenet of culturally relevant pedagogy (Aronson & Laughter, 2016); however, culturally responsive teachers engage in similar actions in which culturally competent teachers engage, such as understanding different cultures and self-reflecting to examine one's personal attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding cultural diversity (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). According to Aronson & Laughter (2016), the difference between the two theories is that culturally responsive teaching aims to develop competencies and teaching methods, while culturally relevant pedagogy seeks to develop attitudes and dispositions toward cultural diversity. I will attempt to further explain both conceptual frameworks briefly below.

#### ***Culturally Responsive Teaching***

According to a seminal article written by Gay (2002), a leading researcher in the field of culturally responsive teaching, culturally responsive teaching is defined as, “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively,” (p. 106). As Aronson and Laughter (2016) indicate, this

framework focuses heavily on developing culturally responsive teaching methods and competencies. Examination of the framework shows that there are six key elements of culturally relevant teaching: engaging cultural strengths in instruction; understanding different cultures, languages, and racial identities; developing self-awareness about one's own culture and multiculturalism; holding high expectations for children; developing critical thinking skills in children; and engaging in social justice education in the classroom (Aceves & Orosco, 2014; Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Some of these elements of culturally relevant teaching, such as developing an understanding of different cultures' languages and racial identities, are similar to the elements of cultural competence described above.

### ***Culturally Relevant Pedagogy***

Ladson-Billings (1995), a leading scholar of culturally relevant pedagogy, describes culturally relevant pedagogy as a theoretical model that helps students achieve and “helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (p. 469). Aronson and Laughter (2016) identify three key tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy that include focusing on long-term academic success, helping both student and teacher develop cultural competence, and developing sociopolitical consciousness. Focusing on long-term academic success refers to treating children from diverse cultures as competent individuals, scaffolding them into their next zone of proximal development, and extending their critical thinking and abilities (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Developing cultural competence in children refers to helping children recognize and embrace their own culture while helping them navigate the more dominant culture (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Finally, developing a sociopolitical consciousness allows teachers to engage in social justice work with children as they attempt to examine and critique relevant social

inequalities (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Ladson-Billings (2009) highlights a description of culturally relevant pedagogues that indicates teachers see themselves as capable, self-reflective, and connected to their children. Similarities exist between the descriptions of culturally relevant pedagogy and cultural competence such as developing a sociopolitical consciousness in order to do social justice work with children, self-reflecting, building relationships with children, and helping children embrace their own culture while still providing access to the dominant culture (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Laughter, 2019, slides 9-13).

Both culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy provide relevant frameworks from which cultural competence evolved, and the similarities are evident. However, cultural competence differs from both frameworks by combining the focus on teaching in culturally responsive teaching and the development of knowledge, attitudes, and dispositions from culturally relevant pedagogy to provide a more thorough culturally oriented framework that teachers can use. Moreover, cultural competence includes some practices that should be implemented in the classroom and others that should be considered both inside and outside the classroom. In this way, cultural competence aims to develop the whole teacher as the teacher works to engage the whole child.

### **Methodology**

To begin this project, I originally found eight articles on cultural competence used in multiple different occupations. Finding limited information relevant to the instruction of in-service teachers, I sought out Dr. Sherry Bell, Head of the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education, and Dr. Mary Jane Moran, Head of the Department of Child and Family Studies, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. They provided me with four papers and a presentation about culturally relevant education, culturally responsive teaching, and cultural

competence. After reviewing these four papers and the presentation, I crafted the list of culturally competent actions that teachers can engage in, which is listed in the introduction section of this paper. Additionally, I was able to identify some search terms to help me find articles that were relevant to culturally competent instruction for in-service teachers.

With my search terms, I consulted with the Child and Family Studies librarian, Donna Braquet, to begin a more robust article search on ProQuest. The full search term is listed in the appendix (see Appendix A) in order for individuals to recreate the search. Initially, we reviewed the first one hundred articles and narrowed the list to twenty seemingly relevant articles. After reviewing the articles, I found sixteen that were especially relevant to cultural competence in regard to in-service teachers. Eventually, I saw a gap in the articles I had reviewed and returned to ProQuest and Teaching Tolerance to look for articles pertaining to social justice instruction with students. Finally, I read eighteen articles and created an annotated bibliography of those I would include in this paper. The annotated bibliography is included in the appendix (see Appendix B), as well. Finally, two themes emerged from the literature – perceptions, including attitudes and beliefs, and practices that teachers draw upon as leading to improved academic achievement for students.

### **Teacher Perceptions and Practice**

Two themes emerged from the literature. Perceptions, such as the attitudes, beliefs and dispositions that one holds regarding cultural diversity, became apparent across multiple articles. Some of these articles also included studies on teachers' practices. Teachers' practices were exemplified by evaluating one's beliefs, changes in instruction or curriculum, building relationships with children and their families, helping children gain knowledge of cultures. Note that it is important to examine both perceptions and practices when discussing cultural

competence because the two concepts are related. For example, according to Brown and Kysilka (2002), experiences inform perceptions, which in turn inform later actions in the classroom.

Guerra and Wubbena (2019) also recognize that beliefs inform practices in the classroom with varying consistency based on internal and contextual factors, such as teaching style and administrative support, respectively. These practices have direct outcomes in children's academic success in the classroom. In the following sections, I will first discuss the different perceptions held by teachers and the outcomes of holding those perceptions as discussed in the literature. Then, I will present the practices and outcomes of those practices presented in the literature. Finally, I will summarize the information presented in this section.

### **Perceptions of Cultural Diversity**

Within the theme of perceptions, researchers identified three subcategories regarding perceptions that helped teachers when teaching culturally diverse students. The first of these three subcategories is self-reflection, which is a practice that directly relates to perceptions. One team of researchers identified self-reflection as investigating one's own beliefs, attitudes, preconceived notions, and internalized untruths about different cultures (Rychly & Graves, 2014). Various other researchers identify this subcategory as a necessary practice to utilize when teaching culturally diverse students to help identify both positive and negative beliefs. Some researchers identified negative or deficit beliefs that teachers held toward children and their families from diverse cultural backgrounds (Guerra & Wubbena, 2019; Murray-Johnson & Guerra, 2018). Other researchers identified specific beliefs to evaluate or hold in order to elicit positive outcomes from children (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Baker, 2019; Wood et al., 2018). Both negative and positive beliefs will be discussed after self-reflection. Finally, many authors identified that teachers cultivate knowledge and an understanding about their own and others'

cultures in order to best serve children from culturally diverse backgrounds. This cultivation of knowledge and understanding will be discussed last.

### *Self-Reflection to Identify Beliefs and Biases*

Some researchers in this review identified the importance of recognizing and evaluating one's beliefs and values when teaching students from diverse backgrounds (Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Esposito & Swain, 2009; Evans, 2018). In a study in which a school was implementing a new social-emotional intervention, researchers held two focus group meetings to discuss teachers and administrator's opinions on how the new intervention influenced their cultural responsiveness (Barnes & McCallops, 2019). In an excerpt from the transcribed meetings, a teacher admits that, even before the intervention is implemented, teachers need to develop a mindset that is geared toward learning with all students regardless of cultural background (Barnes & McCallops, 2019). In a different study, a teacher similarly admits that the culture she ascribes to and the culture of the children in her class are different (Esposito & Swain, 2009). In order to achieve her goal of cultivating children's cultural identities, this teacher recognizes that she must self-reflect on these cultural differences and find ways to utilize the children's cultural backgrounds in order to develop a positive sense of self (Esposito & Swain, 2009). Similarly, in Evans' (2018) case study, the exemplary teacher participating in the study made evident the value of reflecting on her values and beliefs about dual language learners. This teacher, under the pseudonym Laura, credits her self-reflection as being the agent of change in her teaching practices in order to better serve dual language learning students (Evans, 2018). All of the teachers within these studies ascertained that reflecting on their beliefs and values about culturally diverse students led to better learning outcomes for their students (Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Esposito & Swain, 2009; Evans, 2018).

***Negative Beliefs Teachers Held***

While some authors investigated the benefits of engaging in self-reflection, others demonstrated the detriment that follows from *not* engaging in self-reflection (Esposito & Swain, 2009; Guerra & Wubben, 2017; Kidwell & Pentón Herrera, 2019; Murray-Johnson & Guerra, 2018; Rychly & Graves, 2014). In an action research study, two principals attempted to decrease the twenty percent achievement gap between white and non-white students in their school. They asked teachers, children, and parents in their school community to complete a questionnaire regarding the culturally competent practices the teachers were using (Murray-Johnson & Guerra, 2018). Results indicate that teachers self-reported using practices that neither children nor parents could verify. Observations of the classroom showed that teachers were actually not using the self-reported culturally competent practices. Moreover, in informal conversations, the research team reported some teachers referred to culturally diverse students and families as “those kids” and “those people” (2018). In an attempt to bring this information to light, the two principals held a meeting to present their findings to all the teachers in the school, but they were met with heavy resistance from the teachers (2018). In a similarly conducted study, Guerra and Wubben (2019) asked elementary school teachers to complete a survey regarding their culturally competent practices and undergo observations. Again, teachers reported engaging in culturally competent practices, while observations showed that the teachers engaged in practices counter-productive to cultural competence (2019). Moreover, in the open-ended items on the survey, teachers reported that they believed elements of students’ cultural identities were the direct cause of children’s academic struggles (2019). These beliefs were identified by the researchers as deficit beliefs. Taking the time to investigate one’s potential negative or deficit beliefs is hard work as people often experience difficulty in admitting these thoughts to

themselves, but not investigating these beliefs causes teachers to struggle with fulfilling their roles as culturally competent teachers (Esposito & Swain, 2009; Kidwell & Pentón Herrera, 2019; Rychly & Graves, 2014).

### ***Positive Beliefs Teachers Held***

The main beliefs and values that teachers either evaluated or thought were influential to their teaching in the classroom were both general positive beliefs toward diversity and specific beliefs, such as believing a child's culture influences their learning, dual language learners are citizens in the classroom, and a child's home language is integral to a child's identity formation, (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Baker, 2019; Bonner et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2018). Bonner and colleagues (2018) conducted a survey about teachers' perceptions of teaching culturally diverse students in which 430 Californian kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers responded. Results from the survey indicated that teachers believe holding positive beliefs regarding children's diversity and engaging in certain culturally competent practices, such as developing relationships with the children and their families, led to perceived improvements in children's self-image, engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (2018).

In a study of six Canadian kindergarten teachers of dual language learners, teachers were questioned about their beliefs regarding culture during interviews with a research team (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). Five of the six teachers indicated that they believed culture to be relevant to children's learning, while the sixth teacher did not believe that children's culture was relevant to their learning (2018). Subsequently, the teachers who believed children's cultures were integral to their learning engaged in culturally competent practices such as honoring children's culture and integrating children's culture into lessons (2018). In another study of six exemplary teachers, researchers found that teachers who reported strong beliefs about dual language learning children

being valuable citizens of the classroom engaged in culturally competent practices, such as co-constructing curriculum with children, as a direct result of these beliefs (Baker, 2019).

Furthermore, in an attempt to discover the attitudes and practices teachers used to teach Spanish-speaking migrant children, Wood and colleagues (2018) found that teachers who believe a child's home language is vital to their identity formation also believed this viewpoint helped them establish stronger relationships with children and improved the children's engagement. In all studies, teachers perceived their beliefs to directly influence their interactions with children in a positive way, eliciting positive outcomes from these beliefs and interactions.

### ***Developing an Understanding of Cultures***

Multiple authors touched on the importance of developing an understanding and awareness of one's own and others' cultures (Bennett et al., 2018; Bradshaw et al., 2018; Evans, 2018; Hambacher & Bondy, 2016; Rychly & Graves, 2014; Wood et al., 2018). Bennett and colleagues (2018) mentioned in their synthesis that teachers must develop an awareness of their own culture in order to engage in self-reflection and identifying one's potential biases. Evans' (2018) case study participant developed such an understanding of her own culture as a formal Spanish language learner in a predominantly English-speaking community. She also worked to understand the children's culture as English language learners in a predominantly English-speaking community (Evans, 2018). Creating this understanding helped the teacher empower children while assisting them in developing their identities (Evans, 2018). Bradshaw and colleagues (2018) experienced a similar result in their study of 158 elementary and middle school teachers in Maryland. After completing a survey and observation following a professional development training seminar, teachers improved in understanding children and the children's

cultural influence on their behaviors (Bradshaw et al., 2018). This understanding led to a decrease in office referrals of African American children (Bradshaw et al., 2018).

In a similar way, Hambacher and Bondy (2016) indicate that one of their two exemplary teachers examined her own cultural positionality in relation to the children in her class. Becoming aware that she and her students held different social locations in society helped her to adjust her teaching style to value the children's cultural positions and utilize their culture as assets (Hambacher & Bondy, 2016). Rychly and Graves (2014) imply that understanding one's cultural positionality, or cultural worldview, impacts the way that teachers create a sense of belonging and empowerment with children. Finally, teachers from Wood and colleagues' (2018) study claim that being aware of student's cultural and linguistic diversity helped the teachers to better communicate with students who are still learning English. In the way that teachers learn communication differences between cultures, teachers should also create an awareness of differences in learning styles between cultures (Rychly & Graves, 2014). Cultivating this awareness and understanding about cultural differences can have many positive outcomes for students.

### **Practice**

As mentioned previously, practices that teachers use in the classroom have a direct impact on children in the classroom. The practices uncovered in this review of the literature can be categorized into four main categories: self-reflecting about one's beliefs, altering instruction or curriculum, co-constructing curriculum with children, and helping children gain knowledge of other cultures. Given that self-reflection has been presented in the "Perceptions" section of this paper, I will forego reiterating the information here. However, in this section, I will discuss the

individual practices within the aforementioned categories and the outcomes presented in the literature.

### ***Altering Instruction or Curriculum***

The most notable category among the literature is altering instruction or curriculum to incorporate culture (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Baker, 2019; Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Bennett et al., 2018; Bonner et al., 2018; Esposito & Swain, 2009; Hambacher, 2018; Song, 2018; Kidwell & Pentón Herrera, 2019; Torres-Harding et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2018). Authors recounted numerous ways in which teachers in their studies altered instruction or curriculum to incorporate children's culture. Some participants named changes that can easily be done in the classroom with minimal child involvement, such as incorporating multicultural literature (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Bennett et al., 2018). Others noted some changes to their instruction that involved children in moderate ways, such as honoring children's cultural experiences and centering lessons around children's culture (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Baker, 2019; Bonner et al., 2018; Kidwell & Pentón Herrera, 2019; Song, 2018; Wood, 2018). Lastly, some teachers heavily involved children in the alterations to instruction by implementing social justice learning and co-constructing learning with the children (Baker, 2019; Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Bennett et al., 2018; Esposito & Swain, 2009; Hambacher 2018; Kidwell & Pentón Herrera, 2019; Torres-Harding et al., 2018). The outcomes from these modifications varied, but many teachers reported seeing improvements in children's academic achievement and cultural understanding.

**Incorporating Multicultural Literature.** In Alaca and Pyle's (2018) study, one of the six Canadian kindergarten teachers mentioned incorporating multicultural literature in her lessons as a way to spark discussion about differences of surface level culture, such as appearance. Kidwell and Pentón Herrera (2019) also highlight a teacher's use of culture-based

literature when teaching children. The students who are represented in their multicultural books will feel validated and develop a sense of belonging in the classroom (Kidwell & Pentón Herrera, 2019). Moreover, examining multicultural literature allows all students to engage in discussions about more than just surface level culture – they can discuss differences and similarities in race, social class, family structures, and traditions based on comparing representations in the literature to their own experiences (Bennett et al., 2018). Bennett and colleagues (2018) suggest that using evidence-based practices, such as literature circles and guided written and oral discussions, with multicultural literature can lead to children’s greater multicultural understanding.

**Honoring Student’s Cultural Experiences.** Teachers in the studies honored children’s cultural experiences in different ways. Kindergarten teachers in Alaca and Pyle’s (2018) study acknowledged children’s cultural experiences by making accommodations for religious and cultural differences, such as dietary restrictions and having minimal experience with boys or men. In the latter example, the child the teacher mentioned had lived in a culture in which she had not previously been exposed to boys or men, so the teacher accommodated her cultural experiences by pairing her with females until she adjusted to an environment that included more males (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). This study and another also mentioned adapting instruction to better serve children from diverse cultures (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Bonner et al., 2018). In Alaca and Pyle’s (2018) study, a teacher mentioned allowing a child who spoke a different language to take a test in their native language while the child’s mother translated. Moreover, teachers from Bonner and colleagues’ (2018) study indicated differentiating instruction by providing multiple options for completing assignments and searching for connections between students’ prior knowledge and new information. Engaging in these culturally respectful techniques respects the students’ experiences, yet also provides those students with access to the dominant culture. In a

preschool classroom, a teacher differentiated instruction for dual language learners by promoting classroom talk and specifically discussing common classroom materials during whole group discussion, which would not be a necessary practice for most children who speak the dominant language without barriers (Baker, 2019). Knowing that children learning English need tailored support to engage in classroom activities because of their cultural experiences with speaking another language allowed teachers to provide access to the dominant culture for these children via differentiated instruction. Similarly, participants in Wood and colleagues' (2018) study respected students' cultural experiences with speaking another language by incorporating some of that language into instruction and using evidence-based bilingual teaching strategies to convey information. Bridging the language barrier by honoring children's culture allows those children to engage in more academic learning in school because they can better understand the information presented to them (Baker, 2019; Wood et al., 2018).

**Centering Lessons Around Students' Culture.** Two studies included teachers who purposefully created lessons centered around students' cultures (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Song, 2018). In the first study, two kindergarten teachers highlighted a lesson on self-identity that they facilitated with children (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). The purpose for implementing this lesson was to develop with children an understanding of themselves in order for them to be better prepared for discussions about others in the future (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). The participating teacher in Song's (2018) study noted following a similar trajectory, but in a much shorter time span. Over the course of six weeks, the students in this teacher's class completed assignments about assessing one's own culture, then moved into comparing and contrasting cultures represented in the classroom (Song, 2018). The teachers intent behind initiating this project was for children to come to understand bicultural individuals in the classroom and decrease bullying instances

between monocultural and bicultural individuals (Song, 2018). Participants listed the importance of culture-based lessons as making children feel seen and important, as well as allowing for full participation from all students (Bonner et al., 2018; Kidwell & Pentón Herrera, 2019).

**Implementing Social Justice Learning.** In this review, strategies for implementing learning vary between two types – social justice projects and integration of social justice learning into preexisting curricula. Social justice projects, or social activism projects, are learning opportunities in which students identify an issue that the community in which they live is experiencing, then study the issue and the community to develop a project that works to solve the issue (Torres-Harding et al., 2018). After the project, or the majority of an ongoing project, is completed, the students discuss the success and impact of their project (2018). In Torres-Harding and colleague's (2018) study, thirty-two primary and secondary school children who each participated in a social justice project with their class explained what they learned from their social justice project. The children from all grade levels presented strong cultural awareness, an understanding of the issue investigated, and a strong sense of community (2018). While social justice projects are great examples of culturally competent teaching, some schools do not allow the time or creative freedom for engaging in such activities. Teachers then have to search for other ways of including social justice learning into their lessons. One teacher reported engaging in critical thinking activities with students to examine the social inequities represented in the children's workbooks (Esposito & Swain, 2009). In their synthesis, Bennett and colleagues (2018) also identify critical of literacy as a way to teach social justice learning. Critical literacy is defined as investigating and constructing knowledge of social inequalities relayed in literature in order to challenge these relationships in society (Bennet et al., 2018). As represented in these

studies, social justice learning allows students to engage in critical thinking, collaboration, and civic awareness.

**Co-constructing Learning with Students.** Similar to social justice learning, co-constructing learning with students occurred in different ways. Two studies mention involving children in the construction of classroom-based policies, such as rules and social-emotionally relevant classroom agreements (Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Hambacher, 2018). One exemplary teacher from Hambacher's (2018) study stated that she also involved children in co-constructing curriculum by helping them establish and meet personal learning goals. This type of involvement creates buy-in toward learning with children (Charney, 2002). On the other hand, two other studies reported utilizing children's interests to develop learning (Baker, 2019; Torres-Harding, 2018). Preschool teachers in Baker's (2019) study harnessed children's interest in superheroes to conduct learning activities about superheroes, while Torres-Harding and colleague's (2018) project approach based social justice projects were entirely spearheaded by the children in each classroom. In summary, these studies point to utilizing children's interests to help keep them engaged and motivated to do the work required of the activity or project (Helm & Katz, 2011).

### ***Building Relationships with Students and Families***

According to Bronfenbrenner's original bioecological theory of human development, individuals and families are situated within multiple contexts: their immediate contexts, such as their family's culture, intersections between those immediate contexts, indirectly related contexts, such as a parent's work space, and the larger societal context, such as their community's culture (Allen & Henderson, 2017). According to Bronfenbrenner, children cannot be removed from their contexts; therefore, one must have an understanding of the child's cultural context in order to truly know the child (Allen & Henderson, 2017). The literature revealed that

knowing students and engaging families helped teachers better instruct children (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Baker, 2019; Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Bennett et al., 2018; Bonner et al., 2018; Bradshaw et al., 2018; Hambacher, 2018; Hambacher & Bondy, 2016; Kidwell & Pentón Herrera, 2019; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2018).

**Knowing the Child.** Most authors that address knowing the child indicate that teachers go about this process by building relationships with children in order to truly get to know them (Hambacher, 2018; Hambacher & Bondy, 2016; Kidwell & Pentón Herrera, 2019; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018). Building relationships had varying outcomes throughout these studies, though. Teachers in Hambacher's (2018) study revealed that they used their relationships with children in order to make them feel comfortable enough in the classroom in order to meet the high expectations the teacher set for all children. Moreover, these teachers utilized the information about children's cultures gleaned from the relationships with children to establish a life-long love for learning in children (Hambacher, 2018). Another way teachers utilized their partnerships with children was by helping children reconstruct their identities of themselves as capable and important (Hambacher & Bondy, 2016). Contrastingly, both Kidwell and Pentón Herrera (2019) and Linan-Thompson and colleagues (2018) identified that building relationships with children can improve children's academic outcomes by allowing teachers to address children's specific learning needs effectively.

Other ways that teachers got to know children were by observing children and learning about their cultures (Baker, 2019; Bonner et al., 2018; Bradshaw et al., 2018). Through detailed observations of children, teachers reported being able to tailor interactions and learning activities to target children's interests and cultivate within children a sense of belonging (Baker, 2019). To address a similar outcome, participants in Bonner and colleagues' (2018) study described

learning about children's cultures in order to respect and value them. Bradshaw and colleagues (2018) concluded that the professional development workshop that teachers attended helped them understand children's unique cultural experiences, which led the teachers to come to know the whole child. As a result of knowing the children, the frequency of office referrals for African American children decreased (Bradshaw et al., 2018). Teachers can come to know children in various ways, but all seemingly lead to better outcomes for children.

**Engaging Families.** Much of the research in this review claimed that engaging families as partners aided in children's learning (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Baker, 2019; Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Bennett et al., 2018; Bonner et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2018). Baker (2019), Alaca and Pyle (2018), and Bonner and colleagues' (2018) participants all mentioned including families as contributors of knowledge in the classroom as parents were often invited to engage in celebrations and share about their cultures. Contrastingly, Barnes and McCallops (2019), Bennett and colleagues, (2018) and Wood and colleagues (2018) all mentioned including parents through practices parents could implement at home. These practices included reiterating at home the social-emotional intervention skills learned at school, engaging in literacy, and maintaining communication about children's learning so parents could contribute in whatever ways they chose (Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Bennett et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2018).

### ***Helping Students Gain Knowledge of Cultures***

As teachers help students gain knowledge about cultures, they employ practices that teach children about their own cultures as well as each other's cultures. The practices that these teachers employ are recognizing cultural identities, facilitating intercultural communication, and equipping students with knowledge for succeeding in an oppressive school system (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Bennett et al., 2018; Bonner et al., 2018; Esposito & Swain, 2009; Hambacher, 2018;

Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Song, 2018; Wood et al., 2018). Some researchers admit that risk is associated with providing students with knowledge to succeed in an oppressive school system as it encourages children to critically examine authority and certain societal structures; however, cultivating this knowledge empowers children to succeed despite barriers that may be hindering them (Esposito & Swain, 2009; Hambacher, 2018).

**Helping Students Recognize Cultural Identity.** In the three articles in which teachers helped children recognize their cultural identities, teachers most often used lessons and discussions to achieve this goal (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Esposito & Swain, 2009; Song, 2018). As mentioned previously, two Canadian kindergarten teachers from Alaca and Pyle's (2019) study facilitated a self-identity unit with children in order for the children to discover their own cultural identities. These discoveries paved the way for future discussions regarding cultural differences and similarities between the individuals in the classroom (Alaca & Pyle, 2019). Similarly, Song's (2018) project approach unit on cultural identities followed the same pattern. The second lesson in the unit, after first watching videos about people from all different cultures, was to interview family members to develop an understanding of each individual's cultural backgrounds. Later in the children's studies, they examined similarities and differences between the symbols used in each other's cultures – specifically, students studied the circle, which represents wholeness and unity (Song, 2018). According to surveys that students completed at the end of every lesson, the children experienced an increase in understanding about diversity, an increase in pride about one's own cultural heritage, understanding of or pride in dual heritage, and a development of interest in each other's cultures through engaging in this unit of study (2018). Esposito and Swain's (2009) participants reported similar outcomes with their students as the teachers and students engaged in culturally relevant exploration in class. The teachers reported that children

felt empowered, seen, and accepted when they engaged in these cultural explorations (Esposito & Swain, 2009).

**Facilitating Intercultural Communication.** Bennett and colleagues (2018) imply that creating a caring classroom, or an environment in which children feel comfortable and confident in their communicative abilities and supports, allows for conversations in the classroom. These conversations are where other teachers indicate they can facilitate intercultural communications (Alaca & Pyle, 2018; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Wood, 2018). Teachers detail such actions as speaking directly to students, speaking slowly and clearly, and using gestures to communicate with students prior to and during these conversations (Wood et al., 2018). Moreover, teachers allow students to use their home language during conversations and classroom activities, but do not overcorrect children's language switching (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). The teachers also help others understand children's messages when there are gaps in communication between the home language and the language used at school (Linan-Thompson et al., 2018). Facilitating intercultural communication in these ways allows children to see themselves as capable contributors to classroom learning.

**Equipping Students with Knowledge for Succeeding in an Oppressive School System.** The studies of Hambacher (2018) and Esposito and Swain (2009) introduced a teaching method called *education for liberation*. One of the exemplary teachers in Hambacher's (2018) study recognized that her students deserved to see themselves as capable, successful individuals that could grow up to become leaders that take charge and speak out against injustices. This teacher emphasized that the learning culturally and racially diverse students required they go beyond typical academia to include the development of their whole selves (Hambacher et al., 2018). A teacher in Esposito and Swain's (2009) article concurred, arguing that students require

education beyond just getting them a diploma and then a job. They need to develop skills that will allow them to confront certain social institutions that work to oppress them (Esposito & Swain, 2009; Hambacher et al., 2018).

### **Summary**

Clearly, there are multiple culturally competent perceptions and practices that teachers can utilize to promote positive learning and social-emotional outcomes for children in the classroom. Such perceptions include reflecting on one's beliefs and attitudes regarding students from diverse cultures, identifying both negative and positive beliefs, and cultivating an awareness and understanding of one's own and others' cultures. These practices include making alterations to both instruction and curriculum by developing culture-based lessons and co-constructing curriculum with students, developing relationships with both students and families, and helping students gain knowledge of other cultures via recognizing cultural identities, facilitating intercultural communication, and equipping students with knowledge necessary for succeeding in an oppressive school system. Outcomes for both perceptions and practices varied; nevertheless, teachers reported perceived improvements in students' self-efficacy, children's understanding of their own and others' cultures, sense of belonging, and even perceived improvements in students' academic outcomes.

### **Discussion and Reflection**

Before reviewing the literature, I stated that my initial understandings of cultural competence were: cultural competence requires actions performed both inside and outside the classroom; being culturally competent requires examination of one's own attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding cultural diversity; and for one reason or another, some teachers respond to

culturally competent training with resistance. For the most part, these understandings were validated. However, new understandings emerged from the process of reviewing the literature.

I now understand that self-reflection and self-examination are necessary components of culturally competent teaching because of the way that a teacher's perceptions influence their actions. I also proposed that cultivating cultural competence within both teachers and children would help teachers better instruct children with diverse backgrounds, and ultimately improve children's academic success. Based on the practices that teachers reported using and the outcomes that teachers perceived from using those culturally competent practices, cultivating cultural competence through both perceptions and practices appears to improve teachers' abilities to instruct children with diverse backgrounds and to improve children's academic success. However, the outcomes of these culturally competent practices also revealed that children's social-emotional development and civic awareness improved, as well. These findings were surprising to me as I had not previously considered the impact that engaging in lessons focused on cultural competence would have on students' social-emotional development or civic awareness. Nonetheless, as Esposito and Swain (2009) state, "teachers are charged with the extremely challenging task of ensuring students thrive both academically and socially," which these results revealed (p. 41).

For current in-service teachers and preservice teachers in their teacher education programs, I believe the most important finding in this research is that teachers must self-reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about children from cultures different from their own in order to adequately serve students from all backgrounds. When reviewing the literature, I found it difficult to tease apart instances when teachers reported their beliefs and actions separately, which attests to the fact that beliefs and actions are interrelated. What a teacher believes about

students from diverse cultures becomes evident in their actions and words, which can either be detrimental for students or beneficial for students. Having negative or deficit beliefs about students from culturally diverse backgrounds can lead to them feeling undermined and incapable as students; however, having positive beliefs about culturally diverse students can allow them to flourish in the classroom and develop the skills that educators want all children to develop.

I admit some limitations in this review of literature. The searches conducted were limited both in number of databases and in the fact that I am a novice researcher. More articles with different information may be present on another database that I did not search. Also, someone with more experience in completing literature reviews or doing research may have found other connections that I failed to mention in this paper. However, despite the limitations to this paper, there are implications for directions for future research.

First, more research needs to be done to connect culturally competent practices to improved academic achievement. Many of the outcomes listed, such as children's improved sense of self and sense of belonging, can lead to improved academic outcomes, but research needs to be conceived and implemented to explicitly connect culturally competent practices to those outcomes. Second, this review was limited in that the majority of the articles discussed either culturally relevant pedagogy or culturally responsive teaching. Very few articles focused solely on cultural competence. Since cultural competence and culturally competent actions are considered vital components of both culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching, more research focused solely on cultural competence needs to be conducted. Finally, the majority of the research evaluated cultural competence utilizing qualitative research methodologies. While this method of research is beneficial and prominently used in social

sciences, the existing literature would benefit from the inclusion of more quantitative research studies on culturally competent or culturally relevant practices.

This review of literature has influenced my personal development as a teacher. In my student-teaching experiences, some practices mentioned above are second nature, such as getting to know children and honoring their cultural experiences. However, I see value in engaging in other culturally competent practices that I had not been provoked to engage in previously. For example, critically examining literature for multicultural inequities is something I never thought to consider before engaging in this research process. I had been taught to examine literature for vocabulary words and how to teach those vocabulary words to children who did not speak English; but, engaging in work that examines literature in a culturally meaningful way is a new lens for me and one in which I see true value. As I progress in my teaching career, I will personally adopt culturally competent practices because I care about all the children that cross my doorway. I want all of the children I teach to succeed both academically and socially, and engaging in culturally competent practices seems to be an appropriate and successful way to ensure that success.

**Appendix****Appendix A***Search Term Used in ProQuest*

(MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Cultural Literacy") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Cultural Education") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Cultural Relevance") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Culturally Relevant Education") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Cultural Enrichment") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Civil Rights") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Social  
Justice") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Caring") OR  
MJMAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Cultural Awareness")) AND  
(MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Classrooms") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Classroom  
Environment") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Caring") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Nonverbal Communication") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Verbal  
Communication") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher Expectations of Students") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Classroom Communication") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher Attitudes") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher Student  
Relationship") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher Behavior") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Classroom Techniques") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher  
Expectations of Students") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher Effectiveness") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher Behavior") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher  
Attitudes") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher Competencies") OR  
MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Self Evaluation (Individuals)") OR

MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Teacher Improvement") OR  
 MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Improvement Programs") OR  
 MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Consciousness Raising") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Individual  
 Development") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Critical Literacy") OR  
 MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Reflection") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Reflective Teaching")  
 OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT.EXPLODE("Parent Teacher Cooperation")) AND  
 rtype.exact("080: Journal Articles" OR "080 Journal Articles") AND la.exact("English") AND  
 lv("grade 2" OR "grade 3" OR "grade 4" OR "early childhood education" OR "grade 5" OR  
 "grade 1" OR "elementary education" OR "preschool education") AND PEER(yes)

**Appendix B**

***Annotated Bibliography***

<p>1. R + P</p> <p>Alaca, B., &amp; Pyle, A. (2018).                  Kindergarten teachers’                  perspectives on culturally                  responsive education. <i>Canadian                  Journal of Education</i>, 41(3),                  753-782.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand how K teachers in Toronto understand and practice CRE in their classrooms. Another aim of this study was to identify what challenges K teachers face.</li> <li>- This study took place between 2016 when the play-based curriculum was initiated by the Ontario school board and 2018 when the study was published. Participants were 6 K teachers from 5 schools located in the greater Toronto area.</li> <li>- Data was collected via 30-60 minute recorded interviews. Researchers coded and categorized responses.</li> <li>- Only 5 out of 6 teachers said they believed CRE was important. 5 teachers reported using structured teaching to implement CRE in</li> </ul>
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	<p>the classrooms. Specifically, structured teaching took the form of celebrations during different cultural holidays and instructional lessons regarding self-identity. Spontaneous CRE was done more as a reaction to a stimulus the child presented as a brief way to resolve a problem. Challenges teachers reported were access to culturally responsive resources, knowledge about culturally responsive practices, and supportive or strong relationships with other staff and parents.</p> <p>- Implications from this study are that teachers need further instruction on CRE, the role that culture plays in play and in instruction, and further examination into their beliefs regarding CRE.</p>
<p>2. R + P*</p> <p>Baker, M. (2019). Playing, talking, co-constructing: Exemplary teaching for young dual language learners across program types. <i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i>, 47, 115-130.</p>	<p>- This study aimed to answer “What teaching practices do exemplary teachers of dual language learners employ?” and “Do instruction practices differ with program type?”</p> <p>- The study took place in 2017 and all participating classrooms were Head Start, private, and public preschool classrooms located in urban Massachusetts. Participants in the study were 6 exemplary teachers nominated by their directors, families, and students from a population used in a larger study</p>

	<p>- (Qual) The researchers included interviews, observations of instruction, a video recording of a lesson selected by the teacher that was followed up by a debrief of the lesson, children’s work, planning materials, and photographs of the classrooms. After data was collected, the researchers developed codes and used those codes to determine themes among the data.</p> <p>- They found that exemplary DLL teachers 1) viewed bilingualism as an asset, 2) viewed families as resources, 3) established that DLL children are citizens in the classroom, and 4) understood DLL children need tailored support for learning English.</p> <p>- The implications of this study provide support for the notion that general early childhood education can be enhanced through the practices that value and incorporate DLL children’s languages, as discussed in this study.</p>
<p>3. R + P</p> <p>Barnes, T. N., &amp; McCallops, K. (2019). Perceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy in teaching SEL. <i>Journal for Multicultural Education</i>, 13(1), 70-81. doi:10.1108/JME-07-2017-0044</p>	<p>- The purpose of this paper is to examine educators’ beliefs, perceptions, and use of culturally responsive practices during social-emotional learning interventions.</p> <p>- Participants were 5 teachers ranging from PreK to 5th grade, 1 administrator, and 1 school psychologist who had all used this SEL intervention for 2 years prior. The school in which the participants work is located in the northeastern U.S.</p>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The researchers held two recorded and transcribed focus group meetings in which participants discussed the use of the SEL intervention and whether or not the intervention contributed to their use of culturally responsive practices. Researchers used a grounded theory approach to analyze the transcriptions and find 11 interrelated themes.</li><li>- Training for this intervention allowed for story swapping, improvement of previous skill set, teacher peer engagement with the SEL, and staff and parent support. Teachers used the intervention to build new skills with children, develop their own self-efficacy, transfer SEL skills to personal lives, and develop partnerships with families. Teachers discussed successes and challenges for implementing SEL. In terms of cultural responsiveness, teachers stated that having a school-wide goal of cultural responsiveness, examining one's own beliefs and biases, and taking others' perspectives were key elements to implementing culturally responsive SEL interventions.</li><li>- Implications are that schools should implement culturally responsive training before SEL training, and that culturally responsive teachers are needed to meet the cultural differences between teachers and students.</li></ul> |
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<p>4. Synth *</p> <p>Bennett, S. V., Gunn, A. A., Gayle-Evans, G., Barrera IV, E. S., &amp; Leung, C. B. (2018). Culturally responsive literacy practices in an early childhood community. <i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i>, 46, 241-248. doi:10.1007/s10643-017-0839-9</p>	<p>- Authors discuss 5 frameworks of culturally responsive teaching. They then discuss some relevant literature and position the framework in terms of practice in the classroom.</p> <p>- Methods of finding literature and how it was coded or categorized was not discussed.</p> <p>- First Framework: Developing a Culturally Responsive Classroom Community. Teachers have an awareness of their own culture and others’ cultures and know how to build that awareness or understanding with their students</p> <p>Second Framework: Family Engagement. Families’ engagement in literacy has many benefits to children, and teachers can show families how to use their resources to engage in formal and informal activities</p> <p>Third Framework: Critical Literacy within a Social Justice Framework. Critical literacy is a way of analyzing texts with the goal of understanding or implementing social justice. With texts in class, teachers can challenge common assumptions, explore multiple perspectives, examine power differences, and reflect on ways to take action.</p>
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	<p>Fourth Framework: Multicultural Literature. Teachers can introduce multicultural literature as a platform from which to launch discussions about cultural differences.</p> <p>Fifth Framework: Culturally Responsive Print Rich Environments. Print rich environments provoke discussions between children and peers and promote academic success.</p>
<p>5. R + P</p> <p>Bonner, P. J., Warren, S. R., &amp; Jiang, Y. H. (2018). Voices from urban classrooms: Teachers’ perceptions on instructing diverse students and using culturally responsive teaching. <i>Education and Urban Society</i>, 50(8), 697-726. doi:10.1177/0013124517713820</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researchers explored teachers’ perceptions on teaching diverse students and using culturally responsive teaching.</li> <li>- 430 southern Californian K-12 teachers who serve predominantly non-white and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities participated in this study. All teachers taught at large urban schools, serving over 20,000 students altogether.</li> <li>- Participants completed both quantitative and qualitative portions of a survey. Researchers entered qualitative responses into Nvivo and coded the responses using nodes and subnodes. Researchers then analyzed the responses and looked for patterns, which were then condensed and summarized.</li> <li>- Responses indicate that positive beliefs about having diversity in the classroom, honoring and including the child’s culture in instruction, developing relationships with families, differentiating instruction (because schools are not designed to support diverse</li> </ul>

	<p>backgrounds), and teacher self-efficacy led to teacher-reported increases in children’s self-identity, self-esteem, self-confidence, respect for others, engagement, and motivation. These teachers also predict outcomes of higher academic achievement and future societal benefits as a result of these practices.</p> <p>- Implications suggest teachers discuss the importance of examining their own cultural beliefs and attitudes to ensure openness to accepting other cultures. Also, teachers should have supports, like a team of colleagues or spaces to examine one’s beliefs, to help develop cultural competence and awareness.</p>
<p>6. R + P</p> <p>Bradshaw, C. P., Pas, E. T., Bottiani, J. H., Debnam, K. J., Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., &amp; Rosenberg, M. S. (2018). Promoting cultural responsiveness and student engagement through double-check coaching of classroom teachers: An efficacy study. <i>School Psychology Review, 47</i>(2), 118-134.</p>	<p>- Researchers examined whether or not the double-check model of teacher professional development was suitable for influencing more culturally responsive practices among teachers.</p> <p>- 158 teachers across 12 middle and elementary schools in Maryland participated in this one-year project. Of the 158, 100 teachers were randomly selected to undergo the double-check coaching. Demographics between the coaching group were proportional to the demographics of the sample.</p> <p>- Teachers completed surveys regarding their cultural responsiveness, self-efficacy, and stress levels at the beginning and end of the school year. 15 minute observations of teachers in their classrooms</p>

<p>doi:10.17105/SPR-2017-0119.V47-2.</p>	<p>occurred at the beginning and end of the year, as well. Coaching occurred for the coaching group throughout the year. All teachers were invited to attend 5 professional development sessions regarding the Double Check coaching model that were held separately from coaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Results indicated that teachers who underwent the coaching experienced more proactive behavior management skills and could anticipate behaviors better. Also, discipline referrals for black children in classes where teachers were coached declined by the end of the project.</li> <li>- The Double Check model could be a way to improve teachers' culturally responsive behavior management and self-efficacy.</li> </ul>
<p>7. R+P</p> <p>Esposito, J., &amp; Swain, A. N. (2009). Pathways to social justice: Urban teachers' uses of culturally relevant pedagogy as a conduit for teaching for social justice. <i>Perspectives on Urban Education</i>, 6(1), 38-48.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researchers sought to answer how teachers understood the meaning of teaching for social justice. They also wanted to know how teachers taught for social justice.</li> <li>- Participants in the study were seven African American teachers teaching in an urban school in the southeastern U.S.</li> <li>- The researchers conducted interviews and held a focus session with the participants. All of these were transcribed and coded, using the constant comparison method to develop themes.</li> </ul>

	<p>- Themes that emerged from this research are in two categories. First are challenges, in that teaching for social justice requires teachers to take risks in breaking the status quo regarding cultural teaching, time in planning for resources and discussions, and self-reflection about diverse cultures and diverse learners that is often difficult for many people. Second are how teachers defined teaching for social justice - teaching critical thinking skills, empowering students, helping them achieve academically, and helping them see themselves in relation to others.</p> <p>- Implications are that curriculum employed in schools needs to be framed around critical thinking in order to combat societal reproduction. Also, teaching for social justice may lead to teacher attrition because of the risks and time associated with it.</p>
<p>8. R+P - case study</p> <p>Evans, L. M. (2018). A case study examination of exemplary literacy teaching in a cross-linguistic, cross-cultural learning environment. <i>Literacy Research and Instruction</i>, 57(4), 330-350.</p>	<p>- The researcher sought to discover what cross-cultural and cross-linguistic relationships the teacher in the study had with her students and how they could inform teacher education.</p> <p>- This study took place in an urban school district in the midwest of the U.S. As part of a larger study, the researcher asked local bilingual education administrators to nominate exemplary bilingual English literacy teachers. The subject of this case study was the only non-Latina teacher out of the nominees for the larger study.</p>

<p>doi:10.1080/19388071.2018.1482033.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The researcher performed this case study through naturalistic in-class observations and 90 minute follow-up interviews over the course of four months. The researcher and teacher discussed field notes and teacher self-recorded notes during the interviews. Reviewing the transcripts of these notes and interviews yielded common themes.</li> <li>- Three culturally competent practices employed by the subject stuck out as practices that separated her from other non-Latina bilingual educators: continual self-reflection on language and culture, strong commitment to understanding bilingual identities, and being grounded in both action and advocacy.</li> <li>- Implications lead to suggestions for teacher education programs. Teachers need opportunities to deeply explore and critically reflect on their biases and cultural relationship to students in the class. Teachers should have opportunities to explore sociological conditions that shape the identities of diverse learners.</li> </ul>
<p>9. T Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i>, 53(2), 106-116.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This article is a seminal article that outlines culturally responsive teaching and the actions teachers must take to engage in such practice.</li> <li>- First, teachers should develop a knowledge base of diverse cultures by understanding the cultural characteristics and</li> </ul>

<p><a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003">https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003</a></p>	<p>contributions of different ethnic groups and learning factual information about different cultural groups.</p> <p>- Second, teachers need to have a solid understanding of culturally responsive curriculum. This means that teachers need to be able to discern prejudice within formal curriculum, be aware of the cultural messages displayed via symbolic curriculum, and critically analyze how people of non-white ethnicities are presented in the media in societal curriculum.</p> <p>- Third, teachers should build a culturally caring learning community. Teachers can do this by using children's cultures to scaffold their learning, seeing children as capable learners, setting high expectations for them, and helping them develop their whole selves.</p> <p>- Fourth, teachers need to be able to facilitate multicultural communication. This means that teachers need to be aware of the different ways that children from diverse communities may engage in conversation and classroom activities.</p> <p>- Finally, teachers need to engage in teaching styles that are culturally congruent to the cultural learning styles present in the class. Teachers should identify what teaching styles may work best</p>
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	<p>for the children and find ways to assess their learning in a culturally responsive way.</p>
<p>10. R + P</p> <p>Guerra, P. L., &amp; Wubbena, Z. C. (2017). Teacher beliefs and classroom practices: Cognitive-dissonance in high stakes test-influenced environments. <i>Issues in Teacher Education</i>, 26(1), 35-51.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The researchers aim to identify what beliefs teachers hold about culturally diverse students, what practices these teachers employ, and the relationship between their culturally proficient beliefs, deficit beliefs, and classroom practices.</li> <li>- Participating teachers came from two Southwest elementary schools that intended to improve test-outcomes for their “at-risk” populations. School 1 was about 50% white, 50% non-white while School 2 was 50% hispanic, 50% non-hispanic. From the first school, 49 teachers participated with 44 being white and 5 being hispanic. From the second school, 19 teachers participated with 16 being white and 3 being hispanic.</li> <li>- All 68 participants completed a self-reported survey about their beliefs about culturally-diverse children. Then, the researchers conducted in-class observations of 14 participating teachers. Responses from the survey were coded and analyzed against data from the observations.</li> <li>- In surveys, teachers reported employing culturally relevant practices. However, many teachers reported deficit beliefs in their open-ended questions. Observations of classrooms suggested that</li> </ul>

	<p>teachers’ deficit beliefs played out more in the classrooms than did their culturally-proficient beliefs. Observed teachers did not devote extra planning-time for children with whom they expected to have problems, did not engage in relationship-building conversations or instances with children, and few provided opportunities for children to share their personal experiences.</p> <p>- Implications suggest teachers could benefit from professional development that allows them to consider the classroom context and whether or not it promotes cultural responsiveness, culturally proficient and deficit beliefs and practices, and the role of cognitive dissonance. This professional development could help teachers understand contradictions between their beliefs and practices.</p>
<p>11. R+P</p> <p>Hambacher, E., &amp; Bundy, L. (2016). Creating communities of culturally relevant critical teacher care. <i>Action in Teacher Education</i>, 38(4), 327-343. doi:10.1080/01626610.2016.1226206</p>	<p>- This study aims to identify how elementary teachers engage in culturally relevant critical teacher care with children of color.</p> <p>- Participants in this study were two exemplary fifth grade teachers. Participants teach at an urban elementary school that has a high population of children of color, a moderate population of ELLs and a high population of families with low income.</p> <p>- Researchers interviewed both teachers three times and conducted fourteen two-hour observations over the course of three months in</p>

	<p>order to retrieve data for this study. Data from the interviews were triangulated with data from the observations to achieve results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four main themes from this data revealed that the two teachers nurtured the whole child, reconstructed students' identities as capable and valuable, held high expectations for children while working to remove barriers to their success, and engaged in instruction urgency so that students were engaged throughout the day.</li> <li>- This study has implications for teachers and administrators to use a social justice mindset to open the door for children's success.</li> </ul>
<p>12. R+P</p> <p>Hambacher, E. (2018). Resisting punitive school discipline: Perspectives and practices of exemplary urban elementary teachers. <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i>, 31(2), 102-118.</p> <p>doi:10.1080/09518398.2017.1349958</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This study asks what are the perspectives and teaching strategies of exemplary urban elementary teachers who don't use punitive discipline.</li> <li>- Participants in this study were two exemplary teachers from a low-income, K-5 school. These two teachers were recommended by their principal for having high expectations for children and rarely sending children to the office for disciplinary measures.</li> <li>- Findings were that these teachers got to know the children in their class, helped children meet the high expectations they set for the children, empowered children by collaborating with them in</li> </ul>

	<p>teaching and learning, taught through social restoration (liberation), “othermothered” children, and facilitated engagement.</p> <p>- Implications for this study are that teachers need to be vigilant about seeing their implicit biases and commit to improving children’s lives.</p>
<p>13. LR</p> <p>Kidwell, T., &amp; Pentón Herrera, L. J. (2019). Culturally sustaining pedagogy in action: Views from Indonesia and the United States. <i>Kappa Delta Pi Record</i>, 55(2), 60-65. doi:10.1080/00228958.2019.1580982</p>	<p>- The authors aim to provide new perspectives of culturally sustaining pedagogy by indicating three core practices and how they can be used in examples.</p> <p>- This study reviews two vignettes from data from previous qualitative studies - one from Indonesia and one from the U.S.</p> <p>- From the vignettes, the authors identified knowing the children, integrating children’s cultures into learning activities, and examining one’s own assumptions about diverse cultures as culturally sustaining practices.</p> <p>- As evidenced from the vignettes, engaging in these practices improved children’s engagement and learning.</p>
<p>14. T</p> <p>Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. <i>American</i></p>	<p>- This is a seminal article highlighting the development and emergence of culturally responsive pedagogy.</p> <p>- Ladson-Billings discusses studies she conducted, then explains four themes from her studies that successful teachers of African</p>

<p><i>Educational Research Journal</i>, 32(3), 465-491.</p>	<p>American children use. Teachers use concrete experiences, use dialogue to assess knowledge, care about the development of the whole child, and hold themselves accountable for their beliefs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers must use culturally relevant pedagogy to help children succeed academically, become competent about their own cultures, and critically examine cultural inequalities.</li> <li>- Characteristics of teachers of successful African-American children were that teachers had a high self-efficacy and positive perceptions of others; they built relationships with the children and developed a classroom community of learners; and teachers viewed learning knowledge as a continual, growing process.</li> </ul>
<p>15. LR</p> <p>Linan-Thompson, S., Lara-Martinez, J. A., &amp; Cavazos, L. O. (2018). Exploring the intersection of evidence-based practices and culturally and linguistically responsive practices. <i>Intervention in School and Clinic</i>, 54(1), 6-13.</p> <p>doi:10.1177/1053451218762574</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This study describes culturally and linguistically responsive practices as compared to traditional classroom practices.</li> <li>- After reviewing articles that document vignettes about teachers' culturally responsive practices, the authors identified instructional, linguistic, social, and cultural-knowledge-oriented practices that could improve children's learning.</li> </ul>

<p>16. R + P</p> <p>Murray-Johnson, K., &amp; Guerra, P. L. (2018). Ready for change? Emotions and resistance in the face of social justice leadership. <i>Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership</i>, 21(3), 3-20. doi:10.1177/1555458917739047</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The purpose of this article was to provide alternative solutions to a failed action research project.</li> <li>- The action research took place within a suburban elementary school with a growing population of non-white children. Two principals led the project with a team of willing teachers to collect anecdotal notes from other teachers in the school. Teachers, parents, and students completed surveys regarding how they feel they are treated or respected in the school and teachers' use of culturally responsive practices. 10 teachers were then observed to see if anecdotal notes and survey results matched teacher practice.</li> <li>- The research team collected student achievement data and found that there was a 20% achievement gap between white and non-white children. While teachers self-reported culturally responsive practices, parents and children felt their culture was not appreciated or valued by the teachers. 10 observations of different teachers showed that teachers did not employ many culturally responsive practices in the classroom.</li> <li>- When presenting their findings to the rest of the school, the two principals were met with resistance from teachers. The authors of this paper then discuss how to address deficit beliefs, how to enact</li> </ul>
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	<p>social change, and the type of emotional resistance they are likely to meet in these conversations about race.</p>
<p>17. LR</p> <p>Rychly, L., &amp; Graves, E. (2012).          Teacher characteristics for culturally responsive pedagogy. <i>Multicultural Perspectives</i>, 14(1), 44-49.          doi:10.1080/15210960.2012.646853</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The authors reviewed literature on culturally responsive pedagogy to describe how teachers can be culturally responsive.</li> <li>- The literature included in the review comes from EBSCOhost and ERIC. The authors excluded articles written before 2000 and those written about multicultural education, as it is defined differently than culturally responsive teaching. One unique article from 1998 is included.</li> <li>- Authors found four key characteristics of teachers that are necessary for implementing culturally relevant pedagogy. Teachers should be empathetic and caring in that they should hold children from diverse cultures to just as high of standards as other children. Also, they should be reflective about their own beliefs of other cultures in order to determine possible biases and deficit beliefs. Teachers should be reflective about their own cultural frames of reference, as well, to avoid undermining children. Finally, teachers should be knowledgeable about other cultures in order to adjust instruction to better meet children’s needs, if necessary.</li> </ul> <p>In order to gain these characteristics, the authors suggest teachers engage in reflection as a process.</p>

	<p>- Implications for this review are that teachers need to do the hard work of reflecting and possibly changing some practices in order for all students to excel.</p>
<p>18. R+P</p> <p>Song, Y. (2018). Fostering culturally responsive schools: Student identity development in cross-cultural classrooms. <i>International Journal of Education and the Arts</i>, 19(3), 1-23.</p>	<p>- This study hopes to identify what kinds of activities lead to children’s cross-cultural understandings, how teachers of bicultural children can help those children embrace their home culture, and how teachers can develop a cross-cultural curriculum.</p> <p>- This study takes place in a rural South Korean K-6 school. Participants were 26 students, 11 of whom were bicultural (South Asian), in grades 4-6, 1 multicultural education teacher, the principal, and several other staff members.</p> <p>- Children in the study did a project with 5 major activities as a way to understand each others’ cultures Data was collected from the students based on the teacher’s and researchers’ observations and field notes, students’ work, and student-completed surveys that were given once before the project started and then again after each activity.. Researchers also interviewed students’ families.</p> <p>- By observing children’s work during the activities, children’s discussions and activity productions regarding diversity took increasingly positive and inclusive outlook. Results from survey showed that children gained a better understanding of diversity, a</p>

	<p>stronger appreciation for dual cultures and own culture, reduced resistance to interracial peers, and increased interest in others' cultures. These results emerged most definitively when children had the opportunity to look for similarities between cultures and use a popular art form (manga) to express their thoughts and ideas about inclusivity and cultural awareness.</p> <p>- Implications for this study are that project work that incorporates artistic activities could produce optimal learning outcomes, especially in relation to abstract concepts like diversity.</p>
<p>19. R+P</p> <p>Torres-Harding, S., Baber, A, Hilvers, J., Hobbs, N., &amp; Maly, M. (2018). Children as agents of community and social change: Enhancing youth empowerment through participation in a school-based project. <i>Education, Citizenship, and Social Justice</i>, 13(1), 3-18. doi:10.1177/1746197916684643</p>	<p>- This study examined whether or not elementary-aged children were able to fully understand, participate in, and produce the steps required to do a grassroots campaign (i.e. social justice project). They also sought to understand what the children thought about the project.</p> <p>- Participants were 32 children from a K-8 school that were divided into groups of 4-7 based on their age/grade-level. All children participating in the study were either African-American, Latinx, or biracial.</p> <p>- In the focus group, children answered questions regarding the process of creating a social justice project and their understanding of the issue, how the project worked, and the outcome of the</p>

	<p>project. Researchers recorded and transcribed the group meetings, then coded the responses for themes used to identify results.</p> <p>- First, results showed that children were very capable of discussing their engagement in the projects as well as how the project impacted them. Children articulated project set-up, goals for the project, an understanding of the issue the project addressed, challenges in implementing the project, and the impact it had on community partners. Children also revealed their excitement and enthusiasm about engaging in the project, their new sense of belonging to their community, their perceived responsibility to make social change regarding the issues that affect their community, and finally, a sense of pride, accomplishment, and empowerment toward the work they did.</p> <p>- Implications from this research are that allowing time for activism projects to take place can foster children’s sense of activism and their cultural awareness for children in grades even as low as kindergarten.</p>
<p>20. R + P</p> <p>Wood, C., Wofford, M. C., &amp; Hassinger, A. (2018). Acknowledging challenges and</p>	<p>- In this article, researchers hoped to discover what attitudes teachers in the study held toward teaching linguistically diverse children and what innovative supports helped them teach linguistically diverse children.</p>

<p>embracing innovative instructional practices in response to cultural and linguistic diversity. <i>SAGE Open</i>, 1-13. doi:10.1177/2158244018771110</p>	<p>- 22 teachers with Spanish-English speaking children from migrant families attending a low-socioeconomic school were recruited to participate in 20-30 minute interviews with the researcher. Questions in the interview were open-ended, and the interviewers allowed the teachers to lead most of the conversation.</p> <p>- Results found that teachers who saw children’s home language as integral to the child developing a self-identity and created environments that supported children’s identities believed these two teaching strategies helped develop relationships with the children and bolstered the children’s engagement. Results also found two culturally competent general practices that teachers reported as helpful were: a.) to facilitate communication between ELLs and teachers as well as other students and b.) embracing and honoring cultural and linguistic diversity. Both of these practices contributed to the relationships between the student and teacher</p> <p>- Researchers suggest school boards consider in-service training to facilitate multilingual awareness among teachers.</p>
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