

Addressing the Achievement Gap and Disproportionality Through the Use of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

Urban Education

48(4) 585–621

© The Author(s) 2012

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0042085912456847

ueh.sagepub.com



Angela Christine Griner¹ and Martha Lue Stewart²

Abstract

Culturally responsive practices in schools and classrooms have been shown to be an effective means of addressing the achievement gap as well as the disproportionate representation of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students in programs serving students with special needs. While there has been much research discussing these issues, teachers and school staff lack clear examples and tools for best practices toward addressing these issues effectively. This research provides a practical tool to encourage teachers and school staff to engage in reflective, culturally responsive practice as well as highlighting the need to include a range of stakeholders in the process of developing, implementing, and evaluating tools for educational practice.

Keywords

disproportionality, special education, teacher beliefs, achievement gap, best practices, culturally responsive teaching, diversity, parental involvement, culturally relevant pedagogy, school reform, urban education, multicultural schools, policy making

¹University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL, USA

²University of Central Florida in the Department of Child, Family, and Community Sciences, Orlando, FL, USA

Corresponding Author:

Angela Christine Griner, Adjunct professor and education consultant, University of Central Florida, 731 Braidwood Ln., Orlando, FL 32803, USA.

Email: angelagriner@gmail.com

Kozol (1992, 2006, 2008) poignantly illustrates the many injustices that continue to plague our education system. The inequitable distribution of resources, the underachievement of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (RCELD) students, and further, the disproportionate representation of RCELD students in programs serving students with special needs, provides evidence of how far we have to go to realize a more just and equitable education for all of our students. Many researchers posit that a major cause of the underachievement of RCELD students, and the disproportionate representation of RCELD students in programs serving students with special needs, is the divide between home and school cultures.

Schools and teachers who have adopted a culturally responsive pedagogy have the ability to act as *change agents* in their schools to help bridge the divide and encourage more equitable schooling experiences for RCELD students. (Banks, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2000; Kopkowski, 2006; Kraft, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lalas, 2007; Meece, 2003; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005; Montgomery, 2001; Noddings, 2005; Risko, Walker-Dalhouse, 2008). Furthermore, while there has been a recent influx in research discussing culturally responsive practice as a means of addressing inequity in education, teachers and school staff lack clear examples and tools for best practices that will aid them in addressing the achievement gap and disproportionality effectively within their schools and classrooms (Fiedler et al., 2008).

The purpose of this article is to (a) clarify the need for Culturally Responsive Teaching practices in schools, to meet the needs of all students through the use of practical tools for teachers and school staff; (b) stress the importance of including a range of stakeholders in the process of developing tools and strategies for implementing CRT practices; and (c) present a model for how the voices of multiple stakeholders were used to develop, implement, and evaluate a “teacher-friendly” tool to encourage CRT practices in the current study. This tool is also provided in the appendix as a guide for educators to use in their schools.¹

Theoretical Framework: The Need for Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices in Schools

In recent years, the research addressing the issue of culture and education has proliferated significantly. Many in the field of education consider the disconnect between the cultures of RCELD students and the educational institutions

serving them as a fundamental cause of the achievement gap and the disproportionate representation of RCELD students in programs serving students with special needs. The practice of CRT within the literature has been discussed quite extensively as an effective means of addressing this unjust imbalance in education.

Racially, Culturally, Ethnically, and Linguistically Diverse Students

The term racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (RCELD) students is used throughout this study. The RCELD acronym is used to refer also to *historically underserved groups* (Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Ortiz, 2010). Artiles et al. (2010) uses this term to describe RCELD students, but also includes students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who have “experienced sustained school failure over time” (p. 280). For the purposes of this study, the acronym RCELD will include economically disadvantaged groups as well as any group that has been historically underserved by the education system in the United States.

Disproportionality

Disproportionality refers to “the extent to which membership in a given group affects the probability of being placed in a specific special education disability category” (Oswald, Coutino, Best, & Sing, 1999, p. 198). While there have been various arguments over the significance of this problem in education, recent research provides clear evidence that it is, in fact, an issue that must be addressed as we seek to ensure that all students are receiving an equitable education (Klingner et al., 2005). For example, African American children are significantly overrepresented in special education programs, specifically in the categories of mild mental retardation (MMR) and severely emotionally disturbed (SED; Oswald et al., 1999). Students coming from other RCELD groups are also overrepresented in the following categories: mild mental retardation (MMR), learning disability (LD), and emotional/behavioral disorder (EBD; Artiles et al., 2010). As well, RCELD students are underrepresented in gifted programs (National Education Association, 2007).

Students who are inappropriately placed in these programs may suffer many consequences. On identification for programs serving students with special needs, it is likely this label will remain with students throughout their entire education experience. Other consequences may follow: diminished expectations, unequal access to the curriculum, lack of opportunities to

connect with peers that haven't been labeled, and the continued within-school segregation between RCELD students and their peers (National Education Association, 2007). To address this pressing issue, Klingner et al. (2005) argues that there must be collaboration across the three domains of policy, practice, and people. At the policy level, federal, state, district, and school levels can enact guidelines for allocating resources to address disproportionality. Equally, all stakeholders involved in the education of children within specific communities need to work together to determine the types of strategies and resources to use within the school.

The Culture Divide

One of every three students enrolled in either elementary or secondary school is of racial or ethnic minority backgrounds, while nearly 87% of the teachers are White and female (Cross, 2003; Sleeter, 2001a; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). To illustrate the increasing diversity of students and families coming into our schools, a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* reports that the United States is moving toward a *majority minority*.

America's changing face has transformed race relations from the traditional divide of black and white to a more complex mix of race, language and religion. There are new strains on schools and social services, while immigration has emerged as one of the nation's most contentious issues. (Dougherty, 2010, para. 4)

The lack of student-teacher connections, led by the culture divide between many schools and the communities in which they are situated continues to overwhelm the educational community. This divide, specifically between teachers and their students, can lead to devastating learning experiences for students (Anton, 1999; Cho & Reich, 2008). Many RCELD students struggle to make the same connections for learning that may come easier to their peers who belong to the more dominant culture group represented within the institution. This culture divide presents several barriers to RCELD students in adapting to school processes and expectations, which impedes positive learning outcomes and too often leads to inappropriate placement in programs serving students with special needs (Gardner, 2007; Ogbu, 1992).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

For the purposes of this article, *culturally responsive teaching* (CRT) as defined by Gay (2000) is used:

Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them . . . Culturally responsive teaching has the following characteristics:

- It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.
- It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities.
- It uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles.
- It teaches students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages.
- It incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools. (p. 29)

While many teachers who believe that CRT is a vital link in working with diverse populations, teachers and school staff lack clear examples and tools for best practices that will aid them in addressing the achievement gap and disproportionality effectively within their schools and classrooms (Fiedler et al., 2008; Phuntsog, 2001). The problem lies in the gaps between policy, theory, and practice. A common issue in the practice of research in education is the struggle to provide educational practitioners with practical strategies and tools that can be used, beyond the rhetoric of research. Often times, there is a major difference between what researchers and policy makers say works and what is actually being implemented in classrooms (Cohen, 1990; Petrina, 2004; Tabak, 2006). As Klingner et al. (2005) assert, there must be collaboration between policy, practice, and people to merge this gap.

The Need for Multiple Voices in the Process

To fulfill the characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching, as described above by Gay (2000), educators searching for tools, strategies, and curricula to implement to meet the needs of their students, especially those coming from RCELD backgrounds, must seek out and include the voices of parents, community members, and other cultural experts and stakeholders, to understand how to meet the needs of the children represented within their schools and

communities. Petrina (2004) argues that education at any level is a political process. He continues by stating that to create curriculum materials intended to marry the worlds of theory, policy, curriculum design and practice that bring about reforms in education, a *critical curriculum reform rationale* should be adopted. As with critical pedagogy, critical curriculum reform rationale recognizes inequitable power structures that privilege certain voices over others. In line with Klingner et al. (2005), including the voices of policy makers, practitioners, and stakeholders provide opportunities for a more equitable approach to enacting curriculum reforms.

Also, the process of attending to both the educational and sociocultural dimension within the teaching–learning dynamic involving any instructional tool, calls for an *engaged pedagogy* (Hooks, 1994). This type of “engaged pedagogy” (Hooks, 1994) can only be developed through a stance of inquiry (Cochran-Smith, 2004), rather than a set of “best practices.” It involves a humble stance where one is willing to dialogue and share decision-making power with all of those involved in our students’ development as individuals and as members and contributors to our communities (Sleeter, 2001b). The goal is that administrators, teachers, students and their parents, families, and related community members become involved in a broader view of the learning process that involves reflective and reflexive praxis (Duarte & Fitzgerald, 2006; Slattery, 2006). The processes involved with creating and using any educational tool should empower the school community to enact changes addressing the specific needs of their student population (Klingner et al., 2005).

A Model for Including a Range of Stakeholders in the Process of Developing and Implementing a Tool for Culturally Responsive Practice

In my search to create a tool to help teachers and other school staff engage in Culturally Responsive Practice, I began with a model presented by Fiedler et al. (2008) for creating a checklist for addressing disproportionality in partnership with university professors, school district personnel, administrators, and instructional support staff. I added to this model by including parent, family, and community voice in the process, as well as a more structured approach to the content analysis presented in the methodology for the study presented here. To elicit the perspectives of a range of stakeholders, I conducted an expert review and Delphi Study to analyze the content and goals of an initial version of the CRT tool that is presented here.² The expert review was used to garner the perspectives of expert parent, family, and

community members representing students from RCELD backgrounds on the content of the tool. The Delphi Study included researchers and practitioners in the area of CRT, working with diverse populations, and/or special education, to evaluate the content and usability of the tool for use in professional development with teachers. Finally, once the tool was refined, using the findings from the expert review and Delphi Study, the CRT tool was evaluated within the context of professional development, using a mixed-method case study.

The Model

After conducting an extensive review of the literature, Fiedler et al. (2008) created a checklist of best practices. Once the initial items were created, they used focus groups to analyze and discuss items for relevance and importance. Ongoing use of the checklist continued to allow for changes to be made that would best suit the needs of the specific school using it. The adapted procedures used here add to Fiedler et al.'s (2008) model, by including the parent, family, and community voice in the process, as well as a more structured approach to the content analysis. These are the research questions that guided the expert review and Delphi Study: "Does the tool adequately address the key components of culturally responsive practice, according to expert participants in a Delphi study and an expert review?" "What are the factors in the design and layout of the tool affecting usability, according to expert participants in a Delphi study?"

The Expert Review. Participants were chosen for the expert review through a snowball sample procedure. The first person interviewed was the head of a local community youth center in an urban neighborhood. The director of the youth center is also a state-certified counselor. Two parents were interviewed whose children have or still attend her youth center. The last two participants were from a school in the same urban neighborhood area and included the school's family intervention specialist and a parent who regularly attends support group sessions at the family resource center for the school.

The initial version of the tool was used to guide an interview format with participants to gather data about the content. Both the researcher and the participants, side by side, reviewed each critical question and quality indicator. Participants were asked about which questions and quality indicators they thought would best address the needs of students and their families representing RCELD backgrounds. Participants were also asked to provide suggestions, based on their own experiences, for ways to enhance the tool. This involved suggestions for what should be omitted or suggestions on additional

content that needed to be covered. Suggestions made by participants were reviewed to combine repetitious information, compare any discrepancies within participant suggestions, summarize key ideas presented by participants, and omit information as suggested by participants.

The Delphi Study. This portion of the study addressed content as well as the design of the CRT tool to evaluate usability. Turoff (2002) recommends using at least two of the following dimensions as a part of questionnaires to guide participant responses: Desirability (effectiveness or benefits), Feasibility (practicality), Importance (priority or relevance), and Confidence (in validity of arguments or premise). Each dimension can be rated on a 4-point scale. For the purposes of this study, feasibility (practicality) and importance (priority or relevance) were used for evaluating the content of the tool. Participants in the Delphi study were selected based on the following criteria: He or she had to be an experienced researcher or practitioner in the area of culturally responsive teaching, working with diverse populations, and/or special education.

Feedback was collected using online surveys and email.³ For statistical purposes, an initial goal was to receive a consensus from participants of at least 80% stating the tool to be *very important* to *important* (on a scale of 1-4: *very important, important, slightly important, unimportant*), and 80% stating the tool to be *definitely feasible* to *possibly feasible* (on a scale of 1-4: *definitely feasible, possibly feasible, possibly unfeasible, unfeasible*). However, it was also important that the opinions and suggestions of any participant who fell outside the consensus group be considered. It was up to the researcher to analyze the data from both study procedures to determine the most significant changes to make to the instrument for the purpose of future work with teachers.

Participants were asked to provide a total of three rounds of feedback on the tool. The three rounds of the study allowed participants to comment on the design and layout of the tool as well as the content of the questions and critical quality indicators. For the first round, participants were provided with the initial version of the tool and asked a series of questions rating each item for importance and overall feasibility. Quantitative feedback from this first round was summarized according to mean and qualitative feedback was coded for I = factors affecting importance and F = factors affecting feasibility. For the first round of the study, the tool was presented to participants for their review and they were asked to complete an online survey asking questions specifically related to their perspectives on the level of importance of content and feasibility. For the second round of feedback, participants were provided a synthesis of feedback from Round 1 and asked to review the

feedback and complete an online survey again, addressing levels of importance and feasibility. Round 3 was conducted in a similar manner. Once at least an 80% consensus was reached by Round 3, changes were made to the checklist tool to reflect suggested changes. However, it was also important that the opinions and suggestions of any participant who fell outside the consensus group be considered. Participants remained anonymous from one another during and after the study.

Implementing and Evaluating the Culturally Responsive Teaching Tool: A Mixed-Method Case Study. The final portion of this study was conducted using a mixed-method case study design to implement and evaluate the CRT tool in the context of a professional development program. The goal of this portion of the research was to answer the following research question: "To what degree does the use of a culturally responsive tool in professional development impact the beliefs and practice of schools and school staff related to culturally responsive teaching?"

Quantitative Study. Participants in the quantitative portion of the study were selected based on the following criteria: (a) Must be currently employed at an urban elementary school within a district cited for disproportionate representation of RCELD students in programs serving students with special needs; (b) Must hold one of the following positions at the school: administrator, special education teacher, general education teacher, or hold an instructional support staff position. Of the 15 participants, there was 1 administrator, 4 general education teachers, 6 special education teachers, and 4 instructional support personnel.

The Common Beliefs Survey Tool was used to help identify the underlying beliefs that teachers and other school staff members hold that can affect the instruction and treatment of RCELD students in the school setting. The Common Beliefs Survey Tool is a product created by the Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Diverse Students Initiative (TDSI) project. The TDSI site uses this tool to help participants reflect on their beliefs and practices, while providing resources for learning related to each statement on the survey.⁴ A portion of the Levels of Use Survey Tool, a component of the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was used to assess level of practice and implementation. This portion of the research involved evaluating possible changes in beliefs and practices teachers are reporting before and after professional development.⁵

Participants were also assessed using an adaptation of Venkatesh and Davis' Teacher Acceptance Model (TAM 2) Measurement Scale (2000).⁶ The three survey tools were combined and provided to participants to complete online as a single pre- and postsurvey. Participants were provided with

an online module via email to complete the presurvey before the professional development and the postsurvey afterwards. Pre- and posttest scores from the three instruments were analyzed to gain insight into whether or not the program was an effective means of influencing participants' beliefs, level of implementation, and intentions to use the practices covered in the professional development program. To determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, a dependent *t* test was used.

Qualitative Study. There were two qualitative measures used in this phase of the research. One measure included written, open-ended response and the other measure was a set of interviews with select participants. For the open-ended response, all of the participants were invited to respond. For the interviews, a portion of the participants were randomly selected to be interviewed. Participants were asked the following open-ended response questions: (a) Are there any specific quality indicators from the CRT tool that you plan to implement in your school or classroom? If yes, which ones? (b) Create a three- to five-step action plan for implementing one or more of the quality indicators you plan on implementing from the above question. The first question addresses intentions to use the strategies listed. The second question allows participants to create an action plan for implementing those strategies. Research shows that when participants create a plan of action, they are more likely to implement those practices on their own in the future (Hoffman, Dahlman, & Zierdt, 2009).

The second qualitative procedure involved a structured interview with select participants. The interview questions were as follows: (a) How do you feel participation in the professional development module impacted your beliefs about working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? (b) How do you feel participation in the professional development module will impact your practice in working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? (c) What activities from the module were most effective in impacting your beliefs? Why? (d) What activities from the module, do you feel will impact your practice? In what ways? Why? What strategies do you intend to use? (e) Were there any items that you found to be unhelpful in addressing issues related to your beliefs and culturally responsive practice?

The responses were coded based on reported "new" practices that they would be implementing and "confirmed" practices that were already being implemented within their schools and/or classrooms to support any claims regarding the degree of impact participation in the professional development program on participants' practices. Interview responses were coded for

responses related to beliefs and practices. These themes were analyzed with results from the open-ended responses, as well as the surveys.

Results and Conclusions

Summary of Findings

Findings from the expert review and Delphi study led to the final version of the Culturally Responsive Teaching tool (Appendix). While the expert review provided specific insights from parents and local community members on what practices they found to be culturally responsive to their own families and communities to include on the tool, the Delphi Study provided important guidance from researchers and educators on ways to make the tool user-friendly and relevant for use with school staff. Finally, findings from the mixed-method case study showed statistically significant results indicating that participation in the professional development program using the tool had an impact on participants' practices; however, findings indicated little to no impact on participants' beliefs. All interview participants reported that rather than seeing a change in their beliefs, their beliefs were confirmed, validated, or supported by the strategies presented by the tool.

The Expert Review

Three major themes emerged from the interviews with the 5 parent and community representatives who participated in this portion of the study: Outreach, Representation, and Classroom Management. The third theme, classroom management, included suggestions for both discipline and academic matters.

Outreach. By far, comments and suggestions mostly related to outreach from the school to students' parents and communities. Included on the tool in the appendix are several specific suggestions related to ways that school staff can support student success by reaching out to students' families and key members within their communities. One participant shared her story about how, with her first two children, she was afraid and embarrassed to get involved in the education of her children. She expressed feeling uneducated about school processes and unsure of her place in making decisions related to the experiences of her children in school. However, with her two younger children, she was an active member of the school's School Advisory Council (SAC) committee and regularly engaged in other school meetings and activities. She reported that she was also encouraging other parents within her

community to get involved. The difference, she reported, was the type of outreach made by the school staff of her younger children.

Teachers and other school staff came out in plain clothes, knocking on doors . . . I felt like they wanted me to participate . . . Now that I am more involved, I am an expert on IEP processes for my child. Schools must deal with people where they're at. [Schools should] provide a liaison, a person [to stand] in the gap to build school and community partnership.

Other suggestions related to school outreach included holding school conferences and other important meetings in local community centers, communicating with social family members, making regular phone calls and home visits about good news as well as, needed areas of improvement, and providing opportunities to share celebrations and holidays important to each student's community, such as, birthdays, potluck dinners, and other events within the community. There were also comments related to outreach, which involved providing resources to families on supplies needed for school activities, such as winter jackets, funds for field trips, uniforms, and other supplies.

Another parent, who regularly attends support group sessions at the family resource center for her school, reported that her involvement in her children's education came from feeling that "the school treats parents like family." She shared an experience she had earlier that year, when she was able to participate in a community baby shower that some of the school staff annually threw for new and expectant mothers whose children attended the school. "I had never had a shower before to celebrate the arrival of any of my children, until the school threw one for me [and other new and expectant moms]." She shared other activities that the school provided that she felt were important for the success of her children in the school: family nights that foster quality family interaction within the family, as well as between the family and school personnel, consistent positive greetings from all school staff she encountered with every school visit, parent support groups, regular access to the school and school resources, and transportation resources for school functions and meetings.

Representation. The second, most commonly reported suggestions for strategies to include on the CRT tool, related to representation. The first parent, mentioned above as being a member of her school's SAC committee stated, "At the first meeting I attended, I realized that I was one of the only people that looked like me in that meeting." This, she reported, is what motivated her

to begin encouraging other parents from her community to become members of PTA and get more involved in the school. Other participants in this expert review made similar acknowledgements about school committees and clubs, suggesting that schools elicit more representative involvement from parents, family, and community members of students within the school.

While the racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic makeup of the schools within the participants' communities were quite diverse, these participants observed that the makeup of school committees and clubs were mostly from one group, White, middle-class women or their children. Four of the 5 participants suggested that schools make deliberate efforts to include diverse representative on school leadership teams, as well, adding that parents and community members should be able to be involved in decision making related to curriculum and school events.

Classroom Management. Many of the comments from parents related to academics and discipline overlapped, which is why I've included them under the single heading of classroom management. All 5 participants used the words, "consistent, clear, or same expectations" when it came to the topic of academics and discipline. Three of the 5 participants stated the need for all teachers and school staff to work together to communicate the same expectations for students related to both academics and discipline. A parent of a child in middle school stated, "Teachers [across content areas] should be together on when homework is due and consider coordinating expectations." Another parent reported the same need for general and special education teachers to work together to coordinate academic and behavioral expectations for her child. "Grades and behavior should be separate," reported one participant, after sharing that although her child was meeting grade-level expectations, due to other behavior issues resulting in incomplete assignments, her child was failing in one class, while succeeding in another.

Other suggestions on how to support the success of their children in both academics and behavior were to provide mentoring programs, which included school staff and members from local communities. Another participant suggested garnering the support and involvement of outside counseling and academic resource centers. Finally, 4 of the 5 participants made suggestions related to professional development for school personnel. Some of the statements from participants related to this were "Include representatives from local communities to provide education for teachers about family needs and cultures." "[Teachers need an] education on parent background." "Provide different trainings on how to deal with diverse students. Include people from [students'] neighborhoods and parents willing to express their experiences."

The Delphi Study. The Delphi Study was conducted with researchers and practitioners in education to evaluate the content and layout of the tool to ensure that it would be “teacher-friendly.” To address the layout of the tool, questions were asked related to “feasibility.” To address content, questions were asked related to “importance.”

Feasibility. The majority of participants commented that the following issues needed to be addressed to ensure that the tool would be feasible or user-friendly for use with school staff members: language consistency, length of time involved to complete, and clear directions. There was also a general consensus that the feasibility of the tool would rely heavily on how it was presented to staff and that there must be buy-in from staff with guidance provided during use.

Importance. Many of the factors affecting the content or importance of items on the tool for encouraging culturally responsive practice also related to how the tool would be presented to school staff and in what context it would be utilized. Some of the statements from participants related to improving the tool included the following: “Questions should allow for schools to include more site-based needs and initiatives.”

Issues with underlying assumptions that focus on traditional roles for special education teachers, as well as participant beliefs, expectations, and attitudes towards students with RCELDT backgrounds need to be addressed. Some questions and quality indicators appear to support surface level integrations of diversity and may subvert the stated intentions of the tool.

The Mixed-Method Case Study

The mixed-method case study was used to evaluate the CRT tool in the context of professional development, to determine the degree of impact using the tool might have on participants’ beliefs and practices. While the interviews from the qualitative portion of the study reported little difference in beliefs, participants did cite specific strategies that they would implement that they hadn’t considered before, or renewed practices related to self-reflection that they wanted to implement. Practices associated with finding more effective ways to facilitate the involvement of RCELDT parents and families into school processes were most commonly reported. Other practices included strategies for implementing culturally responsive curriculum, fostering a more culturally responsive classroom environment, and building a culture of reflection.⁷

Qualitative Findings

Open-ended response. The responses were coded based on reported “new” practices that participants would be implementing and “confirmed” practices that were already being implemented within their schools and/or classrooms to support any claims regarding the degree of impact participation in the professional development program on participants’ practices. Findings for the two open-ended response questions are listed below:

1. Are there any specific quality indicators from the CRT tool that you plan to implement in your school or classroom? If yes, which ones?

The following is a summary of new or confirmed practices included in participant responses to this question (Table 1):

Table 1. Summary of Practices From Participants’ Response.

New practices	Confirmed practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I would like to concentrate on parent/family involvement in the educational process of their child.” • “We are struggling to with how to have our parents involved in the problem solving process. Time is what we need more of. I would like to include parents in the process more.” • “Meeting with parents in the community is a great idea. Often our parents have not had pleasant school experiences and may be reluctant to come to the school.” • “I would like to be more culturally aware during large group academic times. Am I calling certain students more than others?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Our school wide expectations ensure that all students are treated equally and fairly.” • “Yes, we are discussing the logistics of including parents in discussions during our problem solving process.” • “We already use [a program that centers on building relationships with our students].” • “Yes, excessive absences or family mobility are discussed by the instructional team with detailed and incisive analysis of the impact on the continuity of general education classroom instruction for the RCELD students, and recommendations on how to minimize the instructional impact in the future.”

Table 2. Summary of Participant Action Plan Responses.

New practices	Confirmed practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four participant action plans focused on plans for overall parent/family involvement in school processes, such as absenteeism, homework, building positive parent–teacher and parent–child interactions, stronger parent–teacher collaboration with parents of ESE students. • Three participant action plans focused on building a classroom environment based on CRT strategies to enhance teacher–student and student–student relationships. • One participant action plan focused on specific CRT strategies for incorporating students’ cultures into the curriculum • One participant action plan focused on collaborating with instructional support staff to analyze and reflect on potentially biased behaviors during whole class instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One participant set up an action plan based on classroom management strategies already in place at the school site.

2. Create a three- to five-step action plan for implementing one or more of the quality indicators you plan on implementing from the above question.

The action plans recorded by participants ranged from general to specific plans (Table 2). While considering whether or not the action plans incorporated “new practices” or “confirmed practices,” the action plans were also tallied based on specific culturally responsive themes or specific quality indicators that were identified in the CRT tool.

Interviews. Interview responses were coded for responses related to beliefs and practices. These themes were analyzed with results from the open-ended responses as well as the surveys.

The summary of findings for participant responses related to beliefs and practices are listed below (Table 3):

Table 3. Summary of Interview Themes for Beliefs and Practice.

Participant	Beliefs	Practice
1	Beliefs were confirmed. The module information helped clarify my responses to the pre- and postsurveys.	"The questions made me reflect on a more personal level. I'm more aware and sensitive [about my practice.]"
2	Stated that beliefs were supported to help to think more deeply. "I don't reflect as much as I should. Made me question more about what I do in my classroom."	"I'm going to reflect more. I get overloaded. It was good to check off and assess what I was doing. I need to be more collaborative and reflective."
3	Prior beliefs were confirmed. Stated that beliefs have been developed through prior life experiences.	"I would like to see this used with newer teachers. It presents [strategies] in an easy to understand format when they haven't had the life experiences."
4	Beliefs were validated. The pre- and postsurvey responses didn't change much.	Confirmed the need to reflect more. "I need reminders to keep from bad behaviors and old habits that can be comfortable to fall back into."
5	Beliefs were confirmed due to already working in a diverse school. However, stated that "It made me think about some things I need to do."	Focused on wanting to implement strategies to get the community involved and hold parent meetings in community places. "The biggest piece I got from this was how to enhance parent involvement through using local community resources."

Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Addressing Beliefs and Practice

The concept of Cognitive Dissonance (Lidwell, Holden, & Butler, 2010) is an important one for educators to consider as they seek to change teacher and other school staff member's attitudes and beliefs related to

diversity. When people are faced with *dissonance* they will seek to resolve the dissonance by minimizing the perceived risk of the dissonance, integrating more agreeable or “comfortable” ideas with the dissonant ones, or disregarding them altogether. Lidwell et al. (2010) advises that the “probability of changing attitudes and beliefs [relies on the] critical point known as the point of *minimum justification*” (p. 46). Often times, those educators passionate about issues such as the achievement gap and disproportionality, as well as other inequitable educational consequences many RCELD students experience, can bombard preservice teachers with too many dissonant thoughts that challenge previous beliefs and attitudes about difference and diversity. As teacher educators seek to engage in difficult or *dissonant* dialogues with school staff, they must consider this concept if they are to affect change in both beliefs and practice, beyond surface level integrations of diversity in K-12 school and classroom-level multicultural education programs, which can negate the very purpose of such programs (Jay, 2003).

The Tool: A Guide for Culturally Responsive Practice in Schools

The CRT tool is designed to be instructive for teachers as well as to provide guidance for ways to more effectively instruct their students. Davis and Krajcik (2005) use the term *educative curriculum materials* to describe materials that “help to increase teachers’ knowledge in specific instances of instructional decision making but also help them develop more general knowledge that they can apply flexibly in new situations” (p. 3). This tool is intended to be a fluid document that involves people at various levels within the school systems: general education teachers, special education teachers, administration, instructional support staff, parents, family, and related community members of RCELD students. It is intended to promote a way of thinking as well as a means of practice.

I would strongly caution against the use of the CRT tool as a “quick fix” approach to addressing the complex issues of the achievement gap and disproportionality, but rather encourage a “stance of inquiry,” over a staunch list of dos and don’ts related to culturally responsive teaching. Furthermore, the intended purpose of the tool is to help educators engage in reflective practice. It is not to be used as a punitive evaluative measure for schools and teachers who are not addressing all of the quality indicators

listed. It is crucial that authority figures at the state, district, and school levels understand the inherent purpose of the tool as discussed here; otherwise, the tool would lose its intended purpose and essentially become another piece of paperwork to check off on the long to do lists of administrators, instructional staff, and other members of the school community.

Conclusion

Teachers and schools that are armed with the tools to enact a culturally responsive pedagogy are capable of effectively addressing the achievement gap and disproportionate representation of RCELD students in special education programs. (Artiles, Reuda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Banks, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2000; Klingner et al., 2005; Kopkowski, 2006; Kraft, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lalas, 2007; Meece, 2003; Moll et al., 2005; Noddings, 2005; Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2008). As we look for ways to practically implement strategies that meet the needs of *all* students and families, we must also remember that it takes a long-term commitment to issues of social justice in education to find useful and meaningful ways to address the inequitable structures and belief cycles that contribute to issues such as the achievement gap and disproportionality.

The school is not the only setting for change either. There are larger societal structures at work contributing to the devaluation of difference. Developing practical tools for educational practice and providing professional development are two means of addressing these issues. To affect change outside the school system, as well as within, collaboration with local and state community leaders and institutions is also crucial. Each school setting and community has its own context and seeking the voices of parents and families within the local community is a must. The process of reform is multifaceted and is rarely, if ever, an exact science. It is my hope that the culturally responsive tool presented here continues to adapt and change for the specific needs of schools, classrooms, and individual students and their families in the same way that we, as transformative intellectuals and culturally responsive educators, must continue to adapt and change for the specific needs of our schools, classrooms, and individual students and their families.

Appendix

Final Version of the CRT Tool

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

1.

1. Please include your name, school, and position (grade level/subjects taught) below:

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

2. Introduction

This checklist of strategies for culturally responsive teaching was compiled from a review of research in the field, as well as suggestions from expert researchers, teacher educators, administrators, teachers, and parents and community members representing students from diverse backgrounds.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHECKLIST: For each statement below, please do the following: (1)select your level of agreement, (2)select any of the quality indicators listed under each statement that you use or have seen in practice at your school,(3)use the quality indicators to guide you in selecting your response to each statement.

Note: To be as inclusive as possible, references to families within this checklist may refer to biological parents, step-parents, adoptive or foster parents, legal guardians, other family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. and to social family members.

RCELD Students: This acronym refers to students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (RCELD). This term is used to describe RCELD students, but also includes students that come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, that have experienced sustained school failure over time.

(continued)

Appendix (continued)**A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers****3.**

1. My school has a set of guiding principles in place related to addressing the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- ☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

2. Place a check by any of the quality indicators below that you have used or have seen in practice at your school.

- ☐ A significant amount of discussion, professional development, and resources have been designated for these issues on a regular basis.
- ☐ Resources are provided for staff to develop curricula that fosters an appreciation and deep understanding of diversity
- ☐ School staff participate in on-going staff development related to diversity issues: including opportunities for teachers to share and reflect on their own cultural beliefs and biases, opportunities for teachers and staff to become knowledgeable about the various RCELD populations and resources in the surrounding community
- ☐ ESL, special and general education teachers receive common professional development
- ☐ Professional development support is provided to assist all staff in meeting the ongoing needs of RCELD students

Other (please specify)

3. The school staff works collaboratively to support all students.

- ☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

4. Place a check by any of the quality indicators below that you have used or have seen in practice at your school.

- ☐ There is extensive and effective collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff, which includes regular co-planning, co-teaching, and discussions regarding specific staff and teacher roles and responsibilities, with a focus on meeting the needs of RCELD students.
- ☐ Master schedules allow maximum time for shared planning and teaching amongst general and special education teachers and other instructional support staff.
- ☐ Peer support mentors are provided for instructional team members as needed
- ☐ Co-planning and co-teaching occur regularly with a focus on meeting the needs of all students
- ☐ Special education teachers and general education teachers, as well as other instructional support staff participate collaboratively in ongoing analysis of the effectiveness of instruction, particularly with RCELD
- ☐ Paras, parent liaison, teachers and community centers work together
- ☐ Regular and special education teachers share the same expectations for students regardless of ability

Other (please specify)

5. The school staff establishes strong home/school connections by making concerted efforts to reach out to parent/family members of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds by fostering collaboration, mutual trust, and respect.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

6. Please select any of the quality indicators below that you use or have seen used at your school:

- ☐ School hosts events for parents/families of RCELD students on a regular basis (e.g., potluck meals, parent groups).
- ☐ School provides opportunities for parents/family members of RCELD students to participate in regularly scheduled meetings outside the school setting, (e.g., at community centers, through flexible scheduling, consideration of transportation needs).
- ☐ Multiple attempts are made to involve parents/family members
- ☐ School administration promotes staff knowledge of diverse cultures, (i.e. through professional development, partnership with local colleges for participation in course work related to cultural equity, etc.).
- ☐ Problem-solving teams include parents/family members of RCELD students in meeting discussions to formulate instructional and behavioral recommendations.
- ☐ Staff members offer to meet with parents outside the school setting, (e.g., home visits or community sites).
- ☐ Staff develops relationships with surrounding RCELD communities to assist the school with translation, cultural interpretation, and other needs and also to elicit services appropriate to student needs.
- ☐ Parents are encouraged to help their children maintain their native language while learning English.
- ☐ Printed materials (bulletin boards, school publications, etc.) are available in home languages of all children in the school.
- ☐ Home visits/regular phone calls are encouraged to gain insight into students' lives and support systems, as well as to garner parent/family member input in the decision making process.
- ☐ Parents/families/community members are invited regularly into classrooms.
- ☐ School staff regularly reach out to families of RCELD students by involving them in school meetings and problem solving discussions.
- ☐ School staff actively seek the involvement and decision making input of families of RCELD students and are committed to learning about the culture of those families and empowering them to become an active participant in the school and their child's education.
- ☐ School staff makes continuous contact over summer, (phone calls, post cards.)
- ☐ School staff celebrate special events in students' lives, (birthdays, out of school accomplishments).
- ☐ School staff provides voice mails in native languages of who may not be literate in their first language.
- ☐ School staff makes attempts to understand what's important to families during holidays.
- ☐ School staff makes positive contacts with parents first, before problems arise.
- ☐ School staff encourages and provides a space for parent support groups to help parents from RCELD backgrounds become more involved.
- ☐ Professional development allows time for teachers to get to know the communities of their students.

Other (please specify)

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers	
<div></div>	
7. The school staff views students from culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families as assets.	
<div><input type="radio"/> strongly agree</div>	
<div><input type="radio"/> agree</div>	
<div><input type="radio"/> neutral</div>	
<div><input type="radio"/> disagree</div>	
<div><input type="radio"/> strongly disagree</div>	
8. Place a check by any quality indicators that you have seen used at your school:	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> There is clear evidence that RCELD students and their families are viewed as assets. Parents, families, and community members from RCELD backgrounds are invited regularly to share in school processes and to share their knowledge, expertise, and experiences with school staff and students.</div>	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> Staff share realistic and high expectations for RCELD student achievement and behavior.</div>	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> All students, including RCELD students, are regularly recognized and honored for their work.</div>	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> School organizations, committees, clubs, and activities reflect the ethnic makeup of the student population.</div>	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual programming is used to support ESL students</div>	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> School materials translated for non-English speaking families (or translators provided for voice mails and in person meetings).</div>	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> School staff take opportunities to become knowledgeable about the various RCELD populations and resources in the surrounding community.</div>	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> School staff celebrates students' successes regularly.</div>	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> See suggestions from question 3 as well.</div>	
Other (please specify)	
<div></div>	
9. The school staff incorporates culturally responsive materials and content in the curricula and use culturally responsive teaching practices.	
<div><input type="radio"/> strongly agree</div>	
<div><input type="radio"/> agree</div>	
<div><input type="radio"/> neutral</div>	
<div><input type="radio"/> disagree</div>	
<div><input type="radio"/> strongly disagree</div>	

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

10. Place a check by any of the quality indicators below that you have used or have seen in practice at your school.

- ☐ School staff regularly incorporates culturally responsive materials, content, and teaching practices. School staff constantly seek to add to their knowledge of culturally responsive practices and there is ongoing review of the effectiveness of staff practices on RCELD student learning.
- ☐ School staff Validates students' cultural identities in classroom practices (understands and integrates students' family makeup, immigration history and experiences, individual concerns, strengths, talents and interests into the curriculum; utilizes students' native language resources.
- ☐ All students are educated about diversity.
- ☐ School staff promotes equity and mutual respect among students.
- ☐ Students are motivated to become active participants in their learning; encouraged to think critically, strive for excellence, and become socially and politically conscious, (i.e. identifies and extinguishes myths about other cultures).
- ☐ School staff seeks to understand students' prior knowledge and experience with specific subject areas and topics in the curriculum.
- ☐ School staff shows interest and encouragement of students' native language through use of some vocabulary to better communicate with students.
- ☐ Teachers regularly explain how/why students' responses are correct/incorrect. (Timely feedback for error corrections and positive reinforcement).
- ☐ School environment contains regular evidence of contributions/work from individuals with diverse backgrounds, rather than just during a special week or month.
- ☐ A variety of scaffolding techniques are used to enhance instruction.
- ☐ Classroom materials include stories and perspectives from diverse cultures, as well as materials provided in native language represented in the classroom.
- ☐ Classroom instruction is varied (e.g., small group, cooperative learning high teacher-student interaction)
- ☐ High energy and animation in the classroom, real world relevant learning activities, increased teacher-student interactions.
- ☐ Students' differences as well as their commonalities are acknowledged.
- ☐ Homework assignments are adapted to specific needs of RCELD students.
- ☐ Teachers exhibit instructional use of multiple intelligences & various learning styles.
- ☐ Teachers use appropriate technology integration within the classroom.
- ☐ RCELD students receive additional review and practice in difficulty areas.
- ☐ Direct, frequent, and continuous monitoring of RCELD student progress and instruction occurs.
- ☐ Differentiated instruction to address specific needs of RCELD students is used regularly.

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

Other (please specify)

11. The school staff uses culturally responsive behavior management practices by considering the impact of culture on the school performance of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

☐ strongly agree

☐ agree

☐ neutral

☐ disagree

☐ strongly disagree

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

12. Place a check by any quality indicators that you have used or seen in practice at your school:

- ☐ School staff discuss student's culture and conducts systematic analysis of its impact on school performance. The systematic analysis of the student's culture and potential impact on behavior include staff discussions with the family about home expectations and behavior management practices and staff self-assessments of their own cultural expectations and practices.
- ☐ Classroom rules and procedures are accommodating to diverse student learning styles, (all students are actively involved in instruction and other classroom activities to the extent possible; understanding of types of knowledge valued by students' parents/families).
- ☐ Individualized behavior supports to address the needs of RCELD students.
- ☐ Classroom examples of understanding behavioral differences of RCELD students, (e.g., expressed preference for working individually or in groups, seating arrangements balanced by ethnicity and gender, listening and responding style, peer interaction patterns, responses to authority, verbal and nonverbal communication, turn taking behaviors).
- ☐ Individualized behavior plans are created as appropriate.
- ☐ When necessary, RCELD students in classrooms have behavioral management systems that address individual cultural differences.
- ☐ Staff confer with family about home expectations, values, customs, and behavior management practices.
- ☐ Staff engage in self-assessments of their own cultural expectations and practices.
- ☐ General education classroom instructional groupings promote heterogeneous groups of students working together.
- ☐ Teachers implement flexible groupings of students for different purposes.
- ☐ Efforts are made to create positive learning environment where there is a community of learners that assist and collaborate with one another, (i.e. time devoted to social skills instruction and problem solving skills).
- ☐ Classrooms promote conversational interactions between students
- ☐ The use of Reading buddies, Cooperative learning groups,
- ☐ Cross age peer tutoring, and peer teaching is used where limited-English-proficient students can participate and practice English-language skills in small groups.
- ☐ The Instructional Team regularly uses peer supports in classrooms and continuously seeks to empower students to take a more active responsibility for their learning and supporting each other.
- ☐ School has established procedures that emphasize positive behaviors and regularly recognizes students for displaying appropriate behaviors.
- ☐ School staff have been trained in the implementation of a positive behavioral support system.
- ☐ Classroom incentive plans for positive behavior are have been implemented.
- ☐ Administration provides resources for evidence-based social skills instruction.
- ☐

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

- ☐ Issues of intolerance are dealt with immediately according to the school's anti-harassment policies.
- ☐ Classroom time and is devoted to social skills instruction and problem solving skills.
- ☐ The school has implemented a positive behavioral support system for all students, staff have been trained in its use, and school staff regularly discuss the effectiveness of school-wide positive behavioral support interventions.
- ☐ Classroom procedures and routines are actively taught to students with periodic reminders and implemented consistently.
- ☐ Classroom transitions are short and smooth.
- ☐ Teacher-student interactions are positive.
- ☐ Alternatives to school suspension are in place and regularly considered.

Other (please specify)

13. The school staff uses data from these multiple sources drive instructional decisions: formal and informal assessments, observations, analysis of data from previous school years, ongoing progress monitoring data, information from family about students' home and family culture, language, and social history to drive instructional decisions.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

14. Place a check by the quality indicators that you have used or seen in practice at your school:

- ☐ School staff have implemented a systematic, problem solving process that includes all of the above sources to drive instructional decisions.
- ☐ Academic expectations for individual students are based on multiple data sources and individual ability rather than broad-based assumptions.
- ☐ Staff encourage high rate of observable, measurable students responses.
- ☐ Problem-solving teams are active and engaged in problem solving discussions on a regular basis.
- ☐ Student progress-monitoring data is used to track performance and evaluate school practices.
- ☐ Examples of problem-solving teams implemented interventions with data on targeted behavior(s) of a RCELD student for a reasonable amount of time.
- ☐ Problem-solving teams provide follow-up support and monitoring of planned interventions.
- ☐ Multiple data sources are used to evaluate student learning: i.e. standardized tests, informal assessments, observations, verbal and written assessments, assessment data from years prior.
- ☐ Families encouraged to participate in problem solving discussions to include information about students home and family culture, language, and social history.
- ☐ Data from general education classroom interventions designed to provide academic and/or behavioral support to a RCELD student.
- ☐ Classroom examples of informal, curriculum-based, authentic assessments on academic performance of RCELD students are regularly used.
- ☐ The instructional team considers working with other agencies is needed, such as mental health clinics for professional development and partnership on mental health issues that may be affecting student performance.

Other (please specify)

15. The school staff actively seeks to identify other possible explanations for RCELD students' behavior or learning difficulties rather than automatically assuming student deficit or disability? Reasons such as: family mobility, insufficient instruction, limited English proficiency, family risk factors, or cultural differences between school and home expectations, home/school communication barriers, and/or students' access to resources?

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

16. Place a check by any quality indicators that you have used or seen in practice at your school:

- ☐ School staff have implemented a problem solving process that includes a thorough analysis of student's home and instructional environment and an extensive array of classroom interventions are implemented prior to special education referral, possible retention, or other academic or disciplinary decisions.
- ☐ School and classroom environmental assessment is conducted to determine possible explanations for the problems experienced by the RCELD student.
- ☐ There is regular, systematic use of curriculum-based assessment and error analyses data.
- ☐ Problem-solving teams' recommendations focus on positive behavioral interventions & student strengths.
- ☐ Delineated and comprehensive referral process is in place.
- ☐ If applicable, the instructional team discusses a RCELD student and his/her excessive school absence or past history of mobility.
- ☐ The instructional team reviews and discusses number of excused, unexcused absences, truancies, and tardiness and its effect on students' learning, behavior, or other difficulties.
- ☐ Strategies to increase attendance have been documented.
- ☐ Student and family support from school staff for attendance issues.
- ☐ Home visits occur often.
- ☐ Excessive absences or family mobility are discussed by the Instructional Team with detailed and incisive analysis of the impact on the continuity of general education classroom instruction for the RCELD student, and recommendations on how to minimize the instructional impact in the future.
- ☐ Additional, culture-specific assistance is sought to provide appropriate instruction before referring RCELD students to next tier of intervention.
- ☐ Life stressors are assessed, (i.e. divorce, death of a family member).
- ☐ Team discusses family risk factors (i.e. exposure to toxic substances or violence/abuse) and the effect on students' learning, behavior, or other difficulties.
- ☐ Team discusses environmental, social, economic, and cultural factors to be considered.
- ☐ Issues of insufficient instruction are explored, (i.e. review of previous interruptions of instruction in prior classes).
- ☐ Students' parents/family have an equal voice in problem-solving and decision making to determine reasons for students' learning, behavior, or other difficulties.
- ☐ Analysis of problem behaviors are regularly conducted to assess RCELD students.
- ☐ Informal, curriculum-based, authentic assessments on academic performance of RCELD students is regularly used in the classroom.
- ☐ Parents are consulted to gain a better understanding of parent expectations for the student.
- ☐ Mentoring programs have been implemented school wide.

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

A Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist for Schools and Teachers

☐ There are consistent discipline expectations for all students.

Other (please specify)

17. Are there any specific quality indicators that you plan to implement in your school or classroom? If yes, which ones?

18. Create a 3-5 step action plan outline for implementing one or more of the quality indicators you plan on implementing from the above question.

(continued)

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The research was funded, in part, by a small grant from the Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute of the University of Central Florida.

Notes

1. Please contact the author if you would like to use the tool provided here. Feedback and use are welcome and will help enhance the tool for future practice.
2. The initial version of the CRT tool was created from several resources. The template began from Fiedler et al.'s (2008) work. Through an extensive review of the literature related to culturally responsive teaching, policy affecting disproportionality in education, and the merger of Lue Stewart's (2009) inventory and *Considerations for Culturally Responsive Teaching*, this tool was analyzed, edited, adapted, and expanded.
3. For inquiries related to these surveys and specific questions used, please contact the author.
4. For the purposes of this study, an adapted version of the Common Beliefs Survey Tool was used. This adapted version was piloted before being used in this study to assess validity.
5. However, change in both areas take extensive time and support (Loucks-Horsley, 1996). The framework for CBAM, when used holistically, includes three areas for measuring implementation of practices participants have been trained to use in professional development over time so that facilitators can provide ongoing support for changes implemented (Roach, Kratochwill, & Frank, 2009). The three areas measured are Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, and Innovation Configurations. Due to the design and limited timeline available for this study, the Levels of Use Survey was used to assess where participants identified themselves on the survey. For the purposes of this research, the following levels were used: 0 = Have little or no knowledge of what culturally responsive teaching (CRT) involves; 1 = Have recently received information about CRT practices and am considering how strategies might be used in my school or classroom; 2 = Have made the decision to begin implementing CRT practices in my school or classroom, establishing a time to begin; 3 = Am implementing CRT practices in my school or classroom, but have had little time to reflect and integration is mostly surface level; 4 = Am routinely using CRT practices in my school or classroom; 5 = Am collaborating

with colleagues to achieve a collective impact on students through the use of CRT practices; and 6 = Am examining latest developments in the research on CRT practices and have begun exploring new strategies to use, based on the specific needs of the students at my school and within my classroom.

6. The test measures four areas, using a 7-point Likert-type scale, to predict teachers' use of particular tools and practices within their classrooms. The four areas measured are perceived usefulness, ease of use, attitude, and intention to use. This measure has been used and improved on over the past 25 years in the area of instructional technology and has been proven for predictive validity (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).
7. For tables or a more detailed discussion of findings and limitations, please contact the author.

References

- Anton, M. (1999). The discourse of a learner-centered classroom: Sociocultural perspectives on teacher-learner interaction in the second-language classroom. *Modern Language Journal*, 83, 303-318.
- Artiles, A., Kozleski, E., Trent, S., Osher, D., & Oriz, A. (2010). Justifying and explaining disproportionality, 1968-2008: A critique of underlying views of culture. *Exceptional Children*, 76, 279-299.
- Artiles, A., Reuda, R., Salazar, J., & Higa-reda, I. (2005). Within-group diversity in minority disproportionate representation: English language learners in urban school districts. *Exceptional Children*, 71, 283-300.
- Banks, J. A. (2007). Approaches to multicultural curriculum reform. In J. A. Banks & C. A. Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 247-269). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road: Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Cohen, D. K. (1990). A revolution in one classroom: The case of Mrs. Oublier. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 12, 311-329.
- Cross, B. (2003). Learning or unlearning racism: Transferring teacher education curriculum to classroom practices. *Theory into Practice*, 42, 203-209.
- Davis, E. A., & Krajcik, J. S. (2005). Designing educative curriculum materials to promote teacher learning. *Educational Researcher*, 34(3), 3-14. Retrieved from <http://edr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/short/34/3/3>
- Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Dougherty, C. (2010, June 11). U.S. nears racial milestone: Whites are on verge of becoming a minority among newborns in long-expected shift. *Wall Street Journal/U.S.* Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704312104575298512006681060.html>

- Duarte, F., & Fitzgerald, A. (2006). Guiding principles for a reflexive approach to teaching organization studies. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 2(3), 15-23.
- Fiedler, C. R., Chiang, B., Van Haren, B., Jorgensen, J., Halberg, S., & Bereson, L. (2008). Culturally responsive practices in schools: A checklist to address disproportionality in special education. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 40(5), 52-59.
- Gardner, D. (2007). Confronting the achievement gap. In K. Ryan & J. M. Cooper (Eds.), *Kaleidoscope: Contemporary and classic readings in education* (pp. 154-159). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, & practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hoffman, P., Dahlman, A., & Zierdt, G. (2009). Professional learning communities in partnership: A 3-year journey of action and advocacy to bridge the achievement gap. *School-University Partnerships: The Journal of the National Association of Professional Development Schools*, 3(1), 28-42.
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to transgress*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jay, M. (2003). Critical race theory, multicultural education, and the hidden curriculum of hegemony. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 5(4), 3-9.
- Klingner, J. K., Artiles, A. J., Kozleski, E., Harry, B., Zion, S., Tate, W., . . . Riley, D. (2005). Addressing the disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education through culturally responsive educational systems. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13, 38. Retrieved from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v13n38/>
- Kopkowski, C. (2006, November). Culturally responsive teaching. *NEA Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/home/14439.htm>
- Kozol, J. (1992). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Kozol, J. (2006). *Shame of the nation*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Kozol, J. (2008). *Letters to a young teacher*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Kraft, M. (2007). Toward a school-wide model of teaching for social justice: An examination of the best practices of two small public schools. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 40, 77-86.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dream-keepers: Successful teachers of African American children* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lalas, J. (2007). Teaching for social justice in multicultural urban schools: Conceptualization and classroom implication. *Multicultural Education*, 14(3), 17-21.
- Lidwell, W., Holden, K., & Butler, J. (2010). *Universal principles of design*. Beverly, MA: Rockport.
- Loucks-Horsley, S. (1996). Professional development for science education: A critical and immediate challenge in R. Bybee (Ed.), *National standards and the science curriculum*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

- Lue Stewart, M. S. (2009). *Creating culturally responsive learning environments in classrooms serving Haitian and Haitian American students*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Meece, J. (2003). Applying learner-centered principles to middle school education. *Theory into Practice*, 42(2), 109-116.
- Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez (2005). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a Qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. In N. Gonzalez, L. Moll, & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 71-88). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Montgomery, W. (2001). Creating culturally, responsive inclusive classrooms. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 33(4), 4-9.
- National Education Association. (2007). *Truth in labeling: Disproportionality in special education*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Noddings, N. (2005). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Ogbu, J. (1992). Understanding cultural diversity and learning. *Educational Researcher*, 21(8), 5-14.
- Oswald, D. P., Coutinho, M. J., Best, A. M., & Singh, N. N. (1999). Ethnic representation in special education: The influence of school-related economic and demographic variables. *Journal of Special Education*, 32, 194-206.
- Petrina, S. (2004). The politics of curriculum and instructional design/theory/form: Critical problems, projects, units, and modules. *Interchange: A Quarterly Review of Education*, 35(1), 81-126. Retrieved from <http://www.springerlink.com/content/ut34092p3u18lk12/fulltext.pdf>
- Phuntsog, N. (2001, April). Culturally responsive teaching: What do selected United States elementary school teachers think? *Intercultural Education*, 12(1), 51-64.
- Risko, V., & Walker-Dalhouse, D. (2008). Tapping students' cultural funds of knowledge to address the achievement gap. *Reading Teacher*, 61(1), 98-100.
- Roach, A. T., Kratochwill, T. R., & Frank, J. L. (2009). School-based consultants as change facilitators: Adaptation of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) to support the implementation of research-based practices. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 19, 300-320.
- Slatery, P. (2006). Gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity in a multicultural and diverse milieu. In P. Slatery, *Curriculum development in the postmodern* (2nd ed., pp. 143-186). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Sleeter, C. (2001a). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 94-106.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2001b). An analysis of the critiques of multicultural education. In J. A. Banks & C. A. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 81-94). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Tabak, I. (2006). Prospects for change at the nexus of policy and design. *Educational Researcher*, 35(2), 24-30.
- Turof, M. (2002). The Policy Delphi. In H. Linstone & M. Turof (Eds.), *The Delphi method: Techniques and applications* (III.B. 1.; An e-text published by Instructional Systems, an organization of New Jersey's Science and Technology University). Retrieved from <http://is.njit.edu/pubs/delphibook/>
- Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science*, 46, 186-204
- Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 20-32.

Author Biographies

Angela Christine Griner is currently serving as adjunct professor and education consultant for the University of Central Florida. Her research work centers on culturally responsive teaching, as well as building meaningful service learning projects that contribute to school reform and broader community development initiatives.

Martha Lue Stewart has been working in the field of Exceptional Education Education, and Urban and Multicultural Education for almost 30 years. She is a professor in the Department of Child, Family, and Community Sciences at the University of Central Florida and is responsible for developing the first graduate certificate program in Urban Education at the University of Central Florida.