CULTURALLY RELEVANT TEACHING IN ACTION

by

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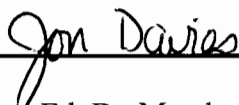2010

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the strategies elementary teachers in public school are using to implement culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms. As the populations of culturally and linguistically diverse people grow in the United States, the presence of the achievement gap between White students and students of color exposes a need for culturally relevant educational practices. An examination of the history of critical theory, postcolonial theory, bilingual and multicultural education uncovers the path educators have taken towards creating education that supports diverse students in the face of a traditional educational system that is designed for White, Anglo-Protestant, and English students. A critical review of the literature shows that teachers are using culturally relevant instructional strategies, classroom management practices and curriculum design with African American, Hispanic, American Indian and European American students. Suggestions for further research are provided to assess the academic impact of culturally relevant practices in elementary classrooms.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The purpose of public school is to ensure that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to reach their potentials and participate in our democratic society. Traditional education uses methods that developed to meet the needs and preferences of mostly White, English-speaking students. Today, the significant growth of non-White populations is changing the demographics of public schools. In 2005, non-White racial-ethnic groups made up 33 percent of the total U.S. population. By the year 2020, the National Center for Educational Statistics predicts that minorities will represent 39 percent of the total population (2007). With pressure from federal educational policies to raise achievement levels of students, teachers need instructional strategies that work for students of every background. The theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) strives to meet this need by revising traditional educational practices to respond to the needs of diverse individuals.

The focus of this paper is on strategies teachers use to apply culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in elementary school classrooms. CRP is based on the premise that since social and cultural backgrounds influence the ways children learn, it is "best facilitated in socioculturally compatible school contexts" (Gay, 2000, p. 155). It is broadly founded in critical pedagogy (Freire, 2006). Pedagogy encompasses a wide range of teacher actions and attitudes. For this reason, this paper will review research that explores teacher beliefs, culturally relevant instructional practices, classroom management and curriculum design.

I will primarily use Ladson-Billings' writings (1994, 1995a, 1995b) to analyze the findings. She studied successful teachers of African American students and grounded the theory of CRP in their conceptions of teaching and classroom practices. The theory includes three main themes: teachers' conceptions of self and other, the structure of classroom social relations, and teachers' conceptions of knowledge.

Teachers' conceptions of self and others refer to how they see the act of teaching and the students they work with. Culturally relevant teachers see teaching as giving something back to the community instead of encouraging school success as a means to escape community, and as "pulling knowledge out" of students instead of "putting knowledge into" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 34). The latter idea refers to Freire's rejection of traditional education as "banking" which doesn't take students' prior knowledge into consideration (2006). CR teachers believe all students can succeed and help students make connections between their community, national, and global identities. This expectation of success is the key to CRP because it inspires teachers to treat all students as capable and offer them enough support and challenging material to reach high levels of achievement.

The social relations in a culturally relevant classroom include an equitable teacher-student relationship that extends beyond the classroom and connects with all students. Teachers encourage a community of learners who work collaboratively, taking responsibility for teaching one another and working for the success of the entire class instead of competitive, individual achievement. These relationships are what make a classroom a safe, exciting place to learn and enable students' social, emotional, and academic needs to be met.

Culturally relevant conceptions of knowledge include the idea that knowledge is "continuously recreated, recycling and shared by teachers and students" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 81). This means that knowledge is not unchanging, but socially constructed from the unique perspectives and ideas of everyone in the class. Knowledge is also viewed critically in this classroom, so students are encouraged to question information. Teachers help students develop necessary skills and see excellence as a complex standard that takes individual differences into account.

In a later article, Ladson-Billings revised her theory to name three major goals of CRP (1995a). These include academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. Academic success is straightforwardly the call for all students to be able to achieve at academic tasks. Cultural competence indicates the teacher's act of drawing on students' cultural knowledge and skills to design pedagogy, which enables students to be successful without subtracting the cultural capital they bring to school from their identities. A critical consciousness requires that students are able to understand and critique the existing social order, including the institution of school (1995b). This last component is the key to teaching students how to take an active role in democratic society and effectively change society to be more just and equitable for all. These are the perspectives and approaches that public school teachers need to raise the achievement levels of all students.

Rationale

Students of color are not demonstrating academic achievement in the public school system. In 2004, non-White made up 42 percent of public pre-kindergarten through secondary school enrollment. In 2005, at the 4th-grade level, a higher percentage

of Asian/Pacific Islander (42%) and White students (41%) scored at or above *Proficient* on the reading assessment than did their American Indian/Alaska Native (18%), Hispanic (16%), and Black (13%) peers (NCES, 2007). Three studies performed by the Northwest Evaluation Association looked at the growth of European American, African American and Hispanic student test scores in reading and math over two years. They found that African American students, Hispanic students, and students enrolled in high poverty schools begin school with lower skills and grow less academically during the school year than their wealthier and European American peers (Northwest Evaluation Association, 2006). These studies impel educators to find effective research-based strategies for meeting students' needs so that everyone, not just a few, can be successful.

Close attention needs to be paid to historically underserved populations, including African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and bilingual students. Despite the diversity of the United States, most teachers are White, middle-class women. The discrepancy between the cultural backgrounds of students and their teachers' knowledge of different cultures may hinder diverse students' chances of receiving a quality education (Song, 2006). How can teachers provide all students with equitable educational opportunities? Equity is a term distinct from equality in terms of education. Equality often means *the same* educational experiences for all students in different learning environments. Equity in education means "teachers are attempting to provide students, regardless of their racial, ethnic, cultural or SES background with what they need to succeed" (Milner, 2008, p. 1585). Different students have different needs, so the definition of an equitable education will be determined by the particular students in the classroom, and there will be no one size that fits all. A culturally relevant theory can

highlight basic principles that facilitate success for all students and guide teachers'
decisions and actions.

Ladson-Billings (1994) began to untangle the puzzle of providing equitable
education with culturally relevant pedagogy. CRP reverses the dissonance between
students' ways of knowing (and acting) and teachers' expectations, and affirms the
strengths students bring to the classroom. She argued that the low achievement rates of
students of color are often a result of educators holding all students to dominant, Anglo
cultural expectations. Content knowledge is no more difficult for students of some ethnic
backgrounds to master than students of others. The key is to present and teach in
culturally relevant ways that don't devalue or exclude diverse students' funds of
knowledge.

As an elementary school teacher, I will have the responsibility of teaching
students from diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in ways that enable all
of my students to experience academic success. Recognizing the potential differences
between home and school norms, Lovelace and Wheeler (2006) wrote, "Teachers must
facilitate new competencies by engaging in practices that are reflective of the diversity
rooted in the racial, cultural, and individual differences of students in their classrooms"
(p. 306). To begin to reflect this diversity, teachers must become bicultural, able to
understand the differences and recognize the strengths of their students as part of their
cultural identities (Klug & Whitfield, 2003). Thus, I believe my research into strategies
for the effective implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy will relate directly to my
capacity to teach diverse students.

Students deserve educational practices that will offer the skills and self-confidence they need to grow into capable, thoughtful citizens. Culturally relevant practices demand academic success for all students, cultivate their culturally specific abilities and knowledge, and develop a critical awareness that can critique social inequities. It is essential that students have teachers who make education a relevant, inclusive, and successful experience. An important part of teaching is being an advocate for students on a systemic or political level. This includes being aware of strategies to counteract racist ideologies that measure minority students' performances against a standard of whiteness (Juarez, 2008), and institutionalized practices, like tracking, that reproduce social stratifications in public schools. Culturally relevant pedagogy acknowledges this social justice dimension of teaching.

The challenge of enabling all students to succeed, especially when their cultural capital does not align with the dominant Anglo culture, belongs to the entire educational community. As Phuntsog (2001) wrote,

> Schools have been slow to adapt and change in culturally responsive ways to meet the needs of new members of society. Yet, in a democratic society, public schools must ensure that all children and youth have equal access to quality education. The ability of schools to achieve this worthy goal will depend to a great extent on the way teachers are prepared to create multiple learning environments for meeting the varying experiences, needs and interests of all students from culturally diverse backgrounds. (p. 51)

This can be accomplished if educators understand and value the cultural characteristics of students. White students also benefit from recognizing and practicing the respect and

collaboration necessary for successful classrooms and communities. In conjunction with the various directions educational reforms are taking, culturally relevant pedagogy may have the capacity to support the success of students from all cultural backgrounds in our public schools.

<div align="center">Controversies</div>

Educational policies and practices have coalesced around the theme of preparing students to be efficient workers and to compete in a global market. The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002 is the most recent in a long line of politicized and controversial federal policies about education. One major goal of NCLB is for schools to show Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) towards all students testing proficient in reading and math. The amount of federal funding that states, districts and schools receive is tied to adoption of standardized testing to measure AYP. A single federal test, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, has shaped the creation of states' tests, contributing to NCLB's effect of enforcing the teaching of a single culture in public schools (Spring, 2005). It also mandated the teaching of English without support for the preservation of minority or native languages. The goals of culturally relevant pedagogy conflict with the effects of these policies, thereby placing culturally relevant teaching strategies within range of the NCLB disputes.

Federal pressure to conform to NCLB standards results in teaching to the test and a de-emphasis of content excluded from tests, including the arts, music, social studies, physical education, and more. Since the tests exclude content relevant to cultures other than the dominant White, middle class culture, teachers aren't motivated to make time to teach culturally relevant curriculum. Also, most standardized curricula that schools and

districts adopt are correlated to the standardized tests and are not relevant to or reflective of characteristics of diverse cultures.  With the pressure of teaching to the test, teachers are losing their autonomy and must make special efforts to include additional content.  Additionally, when low performing schools, which are often schools with high levels of poverty and students of color, do not make AYP, funding is threatened, parents are given the right to transfer their children to different schools, and they ultimately face closure.  When test scores are publicized, families who can afford to choose avoid failing schools, increasing segregation of class and race.  Some aspects of the No Child Left Behind Act seem to work against teachers attempting to make education relevant for students whose cultural backgrounds are incompatible with the dominant culture of public schools.

The debate around bilingual education is salient to the implementation of culturally relevant teaching.  The value that culturally relevant teaching strategies place on students' home cultures and languages often contradicts the policy decisions concerning bilingual education made on federal and state levels.  In California, the anti-bilingual-education initiative Proposition 227 mandates English only education for most English language learners (National Association for Bilingual Education, 2004).  This order ignores existing research that confirms cognitive, emotional and academic benefits for bilingual students who have educational support for both languages (Spring, 2000).  It holds the perspective that education in any language other than English does students a disservice and fails to prepare them adequately for participation in American society.

The effect is that students are taught to devalue their home language and culture and subtract those qualities from themselves in order to succeed in public school.  Far from preparing students for success, these attitudes and perceptions are the root of high

dropout rates and low achievement scores, most visible in Hispanic populations (Valenzuela, 1999). The cause of the contention may lie in the fact that the very nature of bilingual education corresponds with recognizing that diverse cultures and languages have significance in "American mainstream institutions and the everyday lives of people" (Arce, 2004, p. 230). Such an attitude threatens the existing social order and political powers, and the belief that to be "American" means using only English.

The controversy over multicultural education is a war of culture, similar to that of bilingual education. Multicultural education, like culturally relevant pedagogy, calls for including the histories, stories, perspectives, and leaders of people of color in addition to the dominant culture in public education. The opponents of multicultural education want to maintain European traditions as the center of American culture and public education, especially since the United States' system of government and major institutions are a product of those traditions. They argue that multicultural education will cause greater social friction and believe that the values of other cultures threaten the American way of life (Spring, 2000, p. 167). Conservative critics have suggested that students of color benefit little by knowing the race or ethnicity of historical figures (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

However, advocates argue that teaching subjects from a variety of cultural frames of reference enhance a student's understanding of the content (Spring, 2000). Nieto suggested that students from the dominant culture need multicultural education more than others because they are "often the most miseducated about diversity in our society" and may feel that their ways of living are "simply the only possibilities" (1992, p. 214). Culturally relevant teaching strategies often correspond with those of multicultural

education, supporting the inclusion of subject matter on non-European and non-Western topics and drawing the attention of opponents in the education field.

The controversies that CRP agitates relate to some of the most basic differences among people.  It takes a compassionate, unprejudiced person to approach these issues with sensitivity and awareness.  The context of the classroom is a microcosm of the greater society where social structures are either reproduced or disrupted.  The culturally relevant teacher maintains an awareness of the political dynamics affecting education, and questions the "structural inequality, the racism, and the injustice that exist in society" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 128), while always working for the benefit of all students.

Definitions

Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995a, 1995b) has written books and articles describing the parameters, principles and applications of culturally relevant pedagogy, and her work informs the bulk of the analysis in this paper.  Many other educators and researchers have also described instruction that responds positively to the home culture of students, using the terms culturally relevant, culturally responsive, culturally compatible and culturally congruent (Phuntsog, 2001).  Throughout the literature review, I will use these terms interchangeably, often to correspond with the terms used by authors of the studies.  I will also include the work of two other scholars on the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy, Gay (2000) and Osborne (1996), when their descriptions provide more precise insight into the subject.

Throughout my analysis of the research, I will discuss various racial-ethnic and cultural groups of people.  Following authors Klug & Whitfield, I have chosen to capitalize *White* in keeping with capitalization of other ethnicities (2003, p. 5).  Similarly,

I will use the term *Anglo* to refer specifically to people of English heritage and the term *African American* for people of African heritage that live in the US. I may use the term *Black* when race is a salient issue within the context of the research. I will use *Hispanic*, or *Latina/o* to refer to people of Latin American and Caribbean heritage and the terms *Asian American*, *Pacific Islander*, *Native American/Indian* and *Alaskan Native* with a full realization that they are blanket terms for a great diversity of peoples with hundreds of languages, places of origin and cultural values and traditions.

Since the term *minority* has been used historically only "to refer to *racial minorities*, thus implying a status less than that accorded to other groups" (Nieto, 1992, p. 17), I will use the term *people* or *students of color* to avoid the negative connotation. Historical frames of reference and ethnic characteristics are lost when people are grouped together according to similar backgrounds, so I will refer to people by their national origin when possible (p. 18). In the literature review, I will maintain the terminology used by the researchers and authors to acknowledge the context their work took place in.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

This paper will focus on strategies for effective implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy in elementary (K-6) classrooms and schools. I will obtain research from multiple types of school settings with the final objective of considering the potential applications of culturally relevant pedagogy in public schools. The scope of this paper excludes, for the most part, grades 7 and higher, school settings other than public schools, homogenously White student populations, and special education classrooms. I will narrow the literature review to include studies focused specifically on culturally relevant pedagogy, not bilingual or multicultural education.

Summary

This introduction outlined the rationale and scope of this paper.  Culturally relevant pedagogy provides an important opportunity to help teachers support diverse students in public schools.  The pertinent aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy were described, along with significant controversies that influence the application of these strategies.  The following chapter will sketch the brief histories of critical pedagogy, postcolonial theory, bilingual education, and multicultural education.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

The theory of culturally relevant pedagogy was introduced in the previous chapter. I described the importance and possibilities of applying culturally relevant teaching strategies in the classroom and explained the controversies surrounding CRP. With a focus on illustrating the historical contexts of culturally relevant teaching strategies, this chapter will examine the development of theories which inform culturally relevant pedagogy, including critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory. Critical pedagogy teaches students to become active and participatory citizens that have a part in shaping their socio-cultural reality (Moreno-Lopez, 2005). Postcolonial theory approaches stereotypes of the "other" with the objective of exposing their inaccuracy and false foundations (Hastie, et al., 2006). Grounded in these perspectives, the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 18).

I will briefly mark out the history of bilingual and multicultural education as it pertains to culturally relevant pedagogy in public education. Educators' conceptions of the effects and purpose of public education have expanded with each movement. All three grew out of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Bilingual education continues to support the linguistic development of English language learners in schools today, although educational policies do not provide adequate support of such measures. Multicultural education differentiates between the dominant European-American culture and other cultures within the US, and supplements traditional educational content with

the histories and perspectives of dominated and immigrant cultures.  CRP builds on

multicultural education by changing the method of instruction as well as the content to

reflect and value the cultural backgrounds of students.

<div align="center">Critical Pedagogy</div>

The theory of culturally relevant pedagogy grew out of the perspective that

critical pedagogy has on education and the process of learning.  Critical pedagogy was

shaped and propelled by the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, who worked to educate

poor, illiterate and indigenous people in South America who lived under oppressive

governments.  In his influential text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire described and

denounced "banking" education, the process of "depositing" knowledge into students and

regarding them as "adaptable, manageable beings" (2006, p. 73).  Nieto called this

method "education for powerlessness" (1992, p. 80).  Freire justified a problem-posing

education to counteract the banking education, which consists of "the posing of the

problems of human beings in their relations with the world" (Freire, 2006, p. 79).

Problematizing sociocultural realities enables education to relate to students' lives,

requires legitimate acts of cognition, and generates learning in both students and teachers

involved.

The idea of a "problem-posing education" echoes Rousseau's conception of the

child as an active learner and Dewey's theory of education as experience instead of a

transmission of facts.  Freire contextualized education within the sociopolitical realities

that students invariably exist in.  The main goal of a critical educator is "to create

engaged, active, critically thinking citizens, that is to say, political subjects who can

participate as decision-makers in the organization of their socio-cultural realities" (Freire,

1970; Giroux 1992, as cited in Moreno-Lopez, 2005).  When the action and reflection of people are focused on transforming sociopolitical realities, they are active, decision-making citizens in a democratic society.  Giroux argued, "To insert the primacy of culture as a pedagogical and political issue is to make central how schools function in the shaping of particular identities, values, and histories by producing and legitimating specific cultural narratives and resources" (1992, p. 76).  Schools reproduce culture and society.  A truly critical pedagogy problematizes this issue of cultural reproduction to apply a transformative praxis, working towards an equitable society through the dialogic cycle of action and reflection.

Critical pedagogy informs how teachers implement culturally relevant pedagogy by describing the function and focus of the educator's work: to create critically active citizens by guiding students to apply their academic skills to examining existing sociopolitical power structures.  Ladson-Billings named this aspect of the theory "cultural critique" (1995b, p. 477).  She noted that the successful teachers she studied believed in a "Freirean notion of 'teaching as mining' or pulling knowledge out," believed knowledge must be "viewed critically," and were "passionate about teaching and learning (Freire, 1974, p. 76, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 479).  These criteria correlate with Freire's declaration that a critical pedagogy includes teachers who don't just deposit facts, but require cognitive acts of their students, who enable the practice of social and cultural transformation, and who learn from and with their students along the way.  Culturally relevant teaching draws much from critical pedagogy, but is "specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160).

Postcolonial Theory

A culturally relevant practice takes into account the social and historical contexts of public education.  The history of the settlement of the United States is a story of colonization, so postcolonial theory informs the practice of education here.  The term postcolonial generally refers to "the study of the interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized in the modern period" (Bahri, 1996).  European colonizers justified acts of violence and domination by constructing the concept of racial superiority that characterized non-white peoples as inferior.  The American government extended this idea to justify colonizing the West and beyond, as symbolized by Rudyard Kipling in his poem, "The White Man's Burden," which rationalized imperialism as an endeavor for the benefit of the "inferior" colonized people (1899).

Within the context of education, postcolonial theory has emphasized viewing historical and current narratives from the perspective of the colonized.  Crossley and Tikly wrote, "At the most general level, postcolonial approaches share a common commitment to reconsider the colonial encounter and its continuing impact from the perspective of formerly colonized countries, regions and peoples, but within the context of contemporary globalization" (2004, p. 148).  These approaches contextualize the construction of knowledge within the social, economic and political realities that the colonial discourses are rooted in, much like critical pedagogy.  Paying attention to the historical and contemporary influences of colonization on educational processes adds a level of awareness and complexity to teachers' instructional decisions.

At a basic level, the educational system in America has its roots in the colonial era and remains "elitist, [lacking] relevance to local realities and often at variance with

indigenous knowledge systems, values and beliefs" (Crossley & Tikly, 2004, p. 149).

Taking a postcolonial approach to education in American public schools requires a

critical awareness of evidence that "the control of minority groups by dominant groups

continues to occur," and intolerance of "stereotypical (or essentialist) ways of

representing certain cultural groups" (Hastie, et al., 2006, p. 294). For example, the

effect of anti-bilingual education policy to prohibit members of minority language groups

from learning in their native language is evidence of the dominant English speaking

group's control (Spring, 2000).

Postcolonial theory contributes to the evolution of the theory of culturally relevant

pedagogy, which rests on three criteria: "(a) Students must experience academic success;

(b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must

develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the

current social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160). Postcolonial theory informs the

latter two components by identifying where the roots of injustice in the current social

order lie and explaining how the educational system is an extension of the colonizers'

efforts to dominate the 'other' by "reproducing the perceived differences between those

in power and those who are subjugated" (Mangan, 1993, as cited in Hastie, et al., 2006, p.

295).

Recognizing that curriculum "continues to define and perpetuate cultural

perspectives" (Hastie, et al., 2006, p. 295), culturally relevant teaching involves critically

analyzing and going beyond the standard or supplied curriculum in today's classrooms in

an effort to debunk inaccurate and harmful cultural stereotypes. It requires that teachers

include the cultural and linguistic knowledge of their students in the content, instruction

and social structure of the classroom to mediate the dominance of European and English ways of knowing.  Bilingual education also reinforces the value of the linguistic knowledge students bring to class, and its development has supported and stimulated that of culturally relevant pedagogy.

<div align="center">Bilingual Education</div>

America is shaped, propelled and empowered by the millions of immigrants that choose to make their homes here.  US census reports from 2000 counted over 31 million foreign-born individuals living in the US, 52% of who came from Latin America, followed by Asia (26%), Europe (16%), Africa (3%), Northern America (3%) and Oceania (0.5%).  Ten percent are under the age of 18, and that means 3.5 million foreign-born students are enrolled in school, from preschool through high school (US Census, 2000).  The influx of immigrants is fast changing the patterns of languages spoken in the US, too.  There has been an increase in the percentages of families speaking Spanish and Asian languages at home, while European language speakers have declined.  The most striking percentage increases are Chinese (+109%), Vietnamese (+161%), Hindi (+155%), and Korean (+135%) (Spring, 2000).  While the numbers of children speaking these languages are increasing, the numbers of teachers who can speak these languages or who are prepared to teach these children English are low.  Nationally, only 47.3% of teachers with "Limited English Proficiency" students in their classrooms are specifically trained to teach those students, and percentages ranged as low as 11.6% of teachers in the Midwest (Spring, 2000, p. 154).

Large numbers of immigrants moving to the United States have thrust the issues of educating widely diverse ethnic and linguistic groups to the front of political agendas.

The issue of what language to use in schools has been contested in America since the early 1700s when German was the only language other than English that the colonies permitted for use in common schools (Spring, 2005, p. 21). Efforts to provide bilingual education have emerged successfully in more recent history. Since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans and other English language learners have been fighting for public education to provide equitable bilingual services to students, which means teaching proficiency in the use of two languages (Spring, 2000). Their battle engaged America's history of racial and cultural intolerance.

Bilingual education can take various forms, but there are three distinct types. Maintenance bilingual programs are designed to support students' ability to speak, read and write in their native language in addition to becoming proficient and literate in English. Transitional bilingual education provides classes to students in their native languages only until they learn English. From then on, all classes are in English. Two-way bilingual education involves filling a classroom with native speakers of two different languages, and was originally developed in 1963 by immigrant Cubans in Florida (Arce, 2004). For example, if students were a mix of English and Spanish speakers, their daily classes would be taught half in Spanish and half in English. That way, all students would have the benefit of learning a second language (Spring, 2000). Bilingual programs, in themselves, do not have the goal to raise the social consciousness of their learners (Arce, 2004).

Despite convincing research that finds the study of one's native language supports learning English and academic success, conservative political leaders have supported attempts to adopt English as the official language of the United States and other measures

to block bilingual education. In 1998, California voted on and passed Proposition 227 to limit the use of bilingual education to teach English. Political attitudes, instead of educational concerns, influenced voter decisions, with 77% of individuals identifying as Republican and conservative voting in support of the proposition (Spring, 2000, p. 164). Many people believe that "to be 'American' means using only one language (English) and accepting the dominant culture's norms and values" (Arce, 2004, p. 230). This narrow definition of American justifies the exclusion of millions of bilingual public school students from accessing academic resources, experiencing success in school, and becoming active participants in society.

Since language is so inextricably linked to culture, it remains a highly politicized issue. As Giroux said, schools are "cultures that legitimize certain forms of knowledge and disclaim others," and language is at the heart of this contention (1992, p. 14). Hispanic and Native Americans have fought for bilingual education out of a desire to legitimize their languages, cultures and values within the public education system, and to reverse the history of deculturalization programs through the use of English-only schooling. Multicultural education supports similar objectives through the comprehensive alteration of traditional schooling.

<div align="center">Multicultural Education</div>

Like bilingual education, multicultural education was propelled from its roots in educational anthropology to the forefront of public educational practices by the civil rights movement. They both emerged as a "response to inequality in education based on racism, ethnocentrism, and language discrimination" (Nieto, 1992, p. xxviii). Activists,

community members and parents of color began to call for representation of the diverse realities of America in education curricula and hiring practices.

Through the 1970's, various groups organized to work towards social and political human rights. Public education responded by inserting additions and changes to existing curricula, including token famous individuals and adding special units. African Americans, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans organized ethnocentric schools that focused on the history and culture of their specific group and taught from that cultural perspective. Researchers began identifying specific ways to incorporate multicultural content and important dimensions of achievement beyond basic skills, shifting the focus of reform to teacher preparation, and emphasizing instructional strategies that emphasize inquiry, critique, and analysis (Gay, 2000).

Emerging in the 1980s, a new body of research expanded the definition and conception of multicultural education, calling for deeper reform in public schools, including policies, teachers' attitudes, instructional materials, assessment methods, counseling, and teaching styles (Banks, 1989). Leaders of the movement strove to empower people of color by including their histories and stories in the curriculum, "providing an understanding of the methods of cultural domination and by helping to build self-esteem" (Spring, 2005, p. 425). They were concerned with reducing prejudice, eliminating sexism, and equalizing educational opportunities.

Multicultural education aims to present information from a variety of cultural perspectives. The main goals of multicultural education include tolerance of other cultures, eliminating racism, teaching the content of different cultures, viewing the world from different cultural frames of reference, and social justice (Spring, 2000). For

example, the history of American Western expansion can be viewed from both the perspective of White settlers and of Pacific Northwest Indian tribes. Advocates, such as Sonia Nieto and James A. Banks, argue that multicultural education will reduce racial and ethnic tensions in the United States by empowering members of dominated and oppressed cultures. They call for the integration of a multicultural perspective into all components of the school, not just language arts and social studies curricula.

Opponents of multicultural education contend that only by rallying diverse students around a common culture, Anglo-American traditions, will America become a unified, harmonious nation. This position reinforces the dominant culture's claims of racial and cultural superiority, dating from the first arrival of English settlers (Spring, 2005). Since the democratic ideals that define American traditions, freedom of speech, law, individual rights, and tolerance of differences, are rooted in English and European values, opponents insist that those are the only values that public schools should teach. The influence of this perspective is pervasive throughout educational policies, slowing the progress of multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy to affect substantial change in public education.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The development of culturally relevant pedagogy grew out of multiculturalism's call for education to integrate cultural and linguistic diversity and expanded to include culturally specific methods of instruction. One of the earliest studies used culturally appropriate communication patterns to teach Hawaiian children reading (Au & Jordan, 1981). From there, research has taken a sociocultural perspective on exploring culturally

compatible approaches for learners of Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, African American, Native American, and Native Hawaiian descent (Santamaria, 2009).

Some authors argue that the difficulty students of color have with education stems not just from the mismatch of home and school culture, but also from "societal conflict and a struggle for power" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 16). Schools are institutions that reproduce the dominant culture's values and ideologies every day and most educational practitioners are invested in maintaining the status quo, either intentionally or unintentionally, through silence and color-blindness. Today, considering the "politics of diversity" that influence education, teachers need to be responsive to their students' cultural variations and become aware of how their own cultural assumptions influence their classroom teaching (Powell, 1997, p. 469). The most important position of culturally relevant pedagogy is the necessity of *not* imposing a cultural hegemony on students through education (Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2000). This requires that teachers have an awareness of the sociopolitical contexts of the classroom and consistently work towards social justice.

In her influential book on CRP, *The Dreamkeepers,* Ladson-Billings (1994) studied the pedagogical practice of eight excellent teachers working with African American students. Her research added to the effort to replace the literature of the 1960s and 1970s which focused on teaching the "culturally deprived and disadvantaged," terms used to describe African American students whose cultural capital did not match that of traditional educators (p. 8). She extended her description of pedagogy beyond surface features to embrace the basic conceptions teachers held that enabled them to teach effectively. These ideologies reconceptualized African American students as culturally

rich and intellectually capable. Existing research suggests that holding these positive conceptions of all students, combined with a recognition and utilization of cultural characteristics, engenders effective teaching strategies and high student achievement with students of all backgrounds. This text, her subsequent articles (1995a, 1995b), and writings by researcher Geneva Gay (1975, 2000) frame most of the research reviewed in this paper.

## Summary

Drawing on a theoretical background of critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory, culturally relevant pedagogy puts teachers at the forefront of the social justice movement. Its motives and challenges are aligned with those of bilingual and multicultural education, to fight for the right of all students to equitable education and democratic inclusion in American society. The next chapter will review literature on the application of culturally relevant education in public schools.

CHAPTER THREE: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The first chapter described the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy as a collection of perceptions and strategies that value the cultural knowledge students bring to school. It also stated the purpose of this paper: to explore how teachers are applying culturally relevant practices to elementary school classrooms. Culturally relevant teachers must hold conceptions of themselves and others as co-creators of knowledge, be able engage in and encourage a community of learners with equitable teacher-student relationships, and use relevant instructional strategies and content. Fostering a critical consciousness of social systems in students is a powerful and necessary component of culturally relevant practice, too. Chapter one also explained the controversies of educational policy, bilingual and multicultural education that influence the current thinking on culturally relevant pedagogy. The second chapter revealed the historical development of theories and educational movements pertinent to CRP, including critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory and the progress of bilingual and multicultural education.

A review of the literature on culturally relevant teaching in practice reveals how teachers are implementing this pedagogy in various elementary classroom settings. The review begins with a look at the state of teacher beliefs concerning CRP because those shape how teachers implement the theory. Next, the bulk of the articles are grouped into three aspects of the classroom: instructional strategies, classroom management, and curriculum design (Marzano, 2007). Finally, a very brief glance at the implementation of

CRP with American Indian, Alaska Native and Canadian Aboriginal students brings this review to a close.

The reason I avoided grouping the studies by the student populations they observed, as much as possible, is because the purpose of this paper is to find aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy that can be used with all students.  A basic assumption of CRP is that education should be designed to relate to students' experiences, and there's no way to generalize the experiences of the millions of students in public schools. Therefore, a practical pedagogy must refine the effective strategies of many teachers to find the universal principles that all teachers can apply.  In Ladson-Billings' work, she wrote that in order to understand the practices of the teachers she observed, it was necessary to "go beyond the surface features of teaching strategies" to uncover how they thought about their work (1995a, p. 162).  The purpose of this research is to see how teachers are thinking about and applying culturally relevant teaching strategies and how it affects students' educational experiences.

<div align="center">Teacher Beliefs</div>

Teachers' beliefs are very important to the implementation of a culturally relevant pedagogy.  Two entire chapters of *The Dreamkeepers* (Ladson-Billings, 1994) focused on the *teacher's* conceptions of self, other and knowledge.  The intellectual state of the teacher influences the practices he or she employs.  Teacher educators have long been calling for more reflective learning activities in teacher education programs.  Howard made an argument for the centrality of critical reflection in a culturally relevant teacher's practice.  Topics of equity, access, and social justice are the heart of both culturally relevant pedagogy and critical reflection.  One of the main facets of CRP is a belief in the

capacity of all students, including those of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds, to achieve academically because students who are treated competently will ultimately demonstrate competence (2003, p. 197). To move away from deficit thinking and other assumptions embedded in the dominant culture, teachers must acknowledge the presence of prejudice and middle-class European values in traditional teaching practices, recognize students' cultural capital as a resource in learning, and critique their own thoughts and practices to ensure they do not fall into patterns of prejudice (p. 198). This is no simple task, and it is fundamental to the realization of culturally relevant pedagogy for all students.

The following studies make brief forays into the current state of teachers' beliefs and the way those beliefs play out in the context of school. Phuntsog (2001) and Song (2006) performed surveys of teachers with interest or experience in linguistically diverse student populations and urban schools, respectively. Love and Kruger (2005) surveyed teachers and then compared their beliefs with the academic achievement scores of their students. Juarez (2008) and Hyland (2005) investigated the practices of teachers working with culturally and linguistically diverse students to uncover the contradictions that existed between teachers' beliefs and their actions. Their findings illustrate the complex relationships between beliefs, actions, and student achievement.

To begin with, two surveys assessed the beliefs of small groups of teachers. Phuntsog (2001) took a survey of teachers' beliefs on culturally responsive teaching to measure how important they thought it was in elementary school contexts. Most teachers responded affirmatively, showing support for the application of the theory. The survey questions were grounded in a literature review of studies on culturally responsive

teaching, although the articles most used in this paper were not included (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Osborne, 1996). They were designed to elicit responses about the importance of culturally responsive instruction for working with culturally diverse students, their perceptions of critical issues and characteristics, and suggestions for improving teacher preparation. The researcher used a quantitative method of analysis by using a Likert-type scale.

The researcher purposively sampled for teachers with Cross-cultural/Language Academic Development or Bilingual Cross-Cultural Language Academic Development certificates in the state of California. The CLAD/BCLAD program helps teachers develop "skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable them to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse students" (p. 54). So few of those teachers returned them, the researcher also sent the surveys to teachers in a Master's of Education summer session program. Of the 33 total respondents, 10 were practicing teachers, 13 were students in the Master's program with CLAD certification, and 10 were in the process of obtaining their certification through the Master's program.

The responses about the importance of culturally responsive teaching were overwhelmingly positive, with 39% rating it "Extremely Important" and 57% rating it "Important." Only one teacher rated it "Moderately Important" and none chose "Unimportant" (p. 55). There was strong consensus amongst all participants with regard to desirable characteristics of culturally responsive teaching. A majority of teachers (67%) strongly agreed with the statement, "encouraging respect for cultural diversity is essential for creating an inclusive classroom environment" and 61% strongly agreed that

"all children must learn that we have a responsibility to change discrimination and prejudice in society against different groups" (p. 56).

Some statements elicited more varied responses. While 39% disagreed with the statement, "a color-blind approach to teaching is effective for ensuring respect for all culturally diverse students," 42% agreed. Similarly, 39% disagreed and 27% strongly disagreed that "children with limited English proficiency should be encouraged to use only English in the classroom," but 33% agreed. This survey took place in 1998, and California's Proposition 227, which basically eliminated bilingual education from public schools, was passed by voters in June of 1998 (Spring, 2000).

The findings are an interesting insight into the state of teachers' awareness of culturally responsive teaching in 1998. The survey questions were grounded in some research, but not all of the critical perspectives that existed at the time (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Osborne, 1996) were taken into consideration. The sample of teachers was purposive to ensure that the teachers would have some background knowledge of working with culturally diverse students, but the sample size was very small and the survey did not describe the actual educational or work experiences of the teachers. It's hard to know if these findings could be generalized to other teacher populations. Also, most of the teachers in this sample had already expressed a commitment to working with diverse students by choosing a CLAD/BCLAD credential, so they may not express the views of teachers without this prior interest.

The responses suggest that the importance of culturally relevant teaching is clear in the minds of these teachers. However, they were divided on important issues of color-blind teaching and bilingual education. According to Ladson-Billings' theory, students'

diverse cultural backgrounds must be central to instructional decisions (1994, p. 49). A culturally relevant teacher incorporates the cultural values, knowledge, strengths and identities of her students into the structure and content of her classroom. This includes recognizing the color and languages students come to school with. Gay (2000) wrote that culturally responsive teaching is "validating and affirming," encouraging students' knowledge of and pride in one's own ethnic identity (p. 30). These results illuminate some of the contentious issues in the midst of the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy.

The next study used a different set of survey questions, and asked urban teachers in the Midwest instead of on the West coast. Song (2006) surveyed 54 pre- and in-service teachers in urban schools to assess their beliefs about teaching, learning and students, and compared the answers of both groups of teachers. The researcher looked for responses that either validated or contradicted culturally relevant pedagogy as defined by Ladson-Billings (1995b). Song found that all the teachers held contradictory beliefs, both deficit-model based and culturally relevant, and that the in-service teachers ultimately demonstrated low expectations for their urban students. The findings highlight the need for a focus on culturally relevant pedagogy in teacher education programs and support for practicing teachers to continue to modify their beliefs about teaching, learning, and students.

The participants included pre-service teachers enrolled in a small teacher education program and student teaching in urban schools. The in-service teachers were teaching in the same schools. The total group of 54 participants consisted of 47 females and 7 males, 12 Caucasian teachers, 40 African American teachers and 2 Hispanic teachers. Half of the in-service teachers did not report holding a certificate, and half of

the pre-service teachers failed the Praxis II teacher licensure exams.  The 26 item survey

was distributed to participants at the school sites for in-service teachers and at the student

teacher seminar site for pre-service teachers.

Song used a survey categorized with a K3P3 model (Kolis & Dunlap, 2004, as

cited in Song, 2006).  The K3P3 model uses three knowledge bases (knowledge of

content, student and learning) and three pedagogical processes (content, student and

application processes).  The survey was a revised version of a Teacher Expectation and

Deficit Assumption Survey developed by Williams (2001, as cited in Song, 2006) and

used Likert-type scales.  Data analysis involved descriptive statistics using frequencies to

describe teacher beliefs, and a *t* test to search for significant differences in beliefs

between the pre-service teachers and in-service teachers, with a significance level of $p <$

.05 (p. 487).

Overall, both groups of teachers responded with culturally relevant and deficit-

model beliefs.  Under the classification of knowledge bases, the majority of teachers

agreed that intelligence is not tied to content knowledge (89%), poor students have the

same capacity to learn challenging materials (82%), students can learn to think

intelligently (90%); they were willing to include English language learners in their

classrooms (82%), and 57% disagreed that students with multiple perspectives are more

intelligent than those with a single perspective (Song, 2006, p. 488).  The majority held

beliefs that contradicted the CR principle that all students can succeed, agreeing that

students without basic skills cannot learn materials that require higher order thinking

skills (57%), low-ability students need to focus on acquiring basic knowledge and skills

before learning challenging materials (54%), and some students cannot learn how to

reason the teacher's way (50%). Although more than 50% of teachers showed their acceptance of the deficit-model perspective that some students come to school without the capacity to succeed, more than 50% also expressed culturally appropriate assumptions, including that "they need to prepare their instruction based on their diverse students' needs" (p. 489).

Of the pedagogical processes, most teachers agreed that intelligence is not a fixed measurement (64%), heterogeneous classes allow higher level achievement (50%), they try to teach in a way not to conflict with students' home cultures (66%), and 74% disagreed that teachers cannot motivate their students. Some of the pedagogical processes the majority supported conflict with the culturally relevant value of building a community of learners. Teachers agreed that grouping based on students' ability is an effective teaching tool (60%), and so is grouping based on reading ability (60%). A thin majority (54%) agreed that they treat their students the same, which could be a sign of color-blindness. Sixty-four percent agreed that all students should receive the same education, which could be a negative because *the same* does not always translate to equitable education.

Song (2006) pointed out the statements that high percentages of participants were unsure about. For example, 37% were not sure if students can learn to reason, 43% were not sure if differences within a cultural group are greater than differences between different cultural groups, and 52% were not sure if successful students from the previous year will probably achieve more this year. Song concluded that the participants "do not have strong understanding on certain areas of pedagogy" (p. 490).

Next, Song (2006) performed a *t* test to compare the responses of pre-service teachers to those of in-service teachers.  Only three of the 26 survey items showed a statistical difference between the two groups.  The in-service teachers believed more strongly in ability grouping for effective reading instruction, placing students with behavioral disorders into a controlled environment, and in the need to adopt hands-on activities for students with special needs (p. 492).  The author observed that the urban teachers in this study "wanted a homogenous ability group with mainstream students only" and apparently did not believe they could develop urban students academically (p. 495).  This perspective contradicts the beliefs of culturally relevant teachers, who do believe that all students, even urban, can succeed academically.

The teachers, both pre-service and in-service, agreed that the knowledge students bring to class could be crucial requisites to learning challenging materials.  If students did not bring knowledge to class, the teachers might not expect them to learn new and challenging materials.  These low expectations for urban students, combined with the lack of preparation evidenced in the number of unsure responses, uncertificated teachers, and unsuccessful Praxis II tests, suggests that the urban teachers and student teachers in this study are not culturally relevant or well-equipped for teaching in urban settings.

This study (Song, 2006) was a well-designed pilot survey of teacher beliefs.  The sample was selected by convenience, so it does not speak for the beliefs of the general population of urban teachers, but simply highlights the need for further research.  There's the chance that the survey prompts may have been misinterpreted, or that participants responded in what they perceived as socially acceptable ways.  Without interviews with each teacher, the accuracy of their responses can't be known.  The findings suggest that

practicing teachers have even more unrealistic expectations that pre-service teachers, since they "still depend on a formula that may work in an artificial school setting where the students are ready to learn any prescribed teaching materials" (p. 496). They demonstrate a mix of culturally relevant and traditional beliefs, with conflicting ideas about students' abilities and learning needs. Other studies (Love & Kruger, 2005; Phuntsog, 2001) also used surveys to assess teachers' beliefs and found similar contradictions.

Given these findings, it seems that all of the teachers held some culturally relevant beliefs, but the in-service teachers held to traditional beliefs that corresponded with prevalent practices in urban schools more strongly than pre-service teachers. Teachers who do not believe in the possibility of success for all students or value the strengths and knowledge students bring to class may hinder efforts to improve the academic success of urban students. Teachers like these make Howard's (2003) call for critical reflection salient because their contradictory beliefs could potentially be unearthed and transformed through a reflective practice.

Searching for a connection between the beliefs teachers hold and the effect they have on their students is a stretch because it skips over innumerable factors that converge in the classroom context, but the following study attempts just that. Love & Kruger (2005) surveyed teachers on their culturally relevant beliefs and compared their responses to the academic achievement of their students. They found that teachers with high achieving students held some culturally relevant beliefs, but also considered their role as disseminators of knowledge and believed in drill and practice. In the first study, the researchers created survey items from Ladson-Billings' (1994) book and sampled

teachers within six urban schools who worked with primarily African American students. In the second study, they correlated student achievement in math, reading and language arts as measured by standardized tests with the beliefs of teachers in two of the six urban schools.

The participants for the first study included 244 teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, principals, instructional specialists, and media specialists from six urban schools in the southeastern US. They self-identified as African American (48%); Caucasian (42%); Latino/Hispanic, Indian, Asian, Biracial (3%); and Not Reported (7%) and 85% were women. Of the 48 statements in the survey, 25 reflected culturally relevant beliefs and 23 reflected "assimilationist" beliefs, also classified by Ladson-Billings (1994), covering six themes: knowledge; student's race, ethnicity and culture; social relations in and beyond the classroom; teaching as a profession; teaching practice; and students' needs and strengths (Love & Kruger, 2005, p. 89).

Two of the six schools from Study 1 were included in the second, descriptive correlational study. Both schools served free- and reduced-lunch to 95% of students, served primarily children of African descent, and placed in the lower 20% of schools in the state (based on student scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills). The researchers correlated the survey items with standardized test scores from the classes of 50 lead teachers, using achievement scores in reading, mathematics and language arts, all from the ITBS. The teachers taught kindergarten (4), first (13), second (10, third (8), fourth (9), and fifth (6) grades. Self classified ethnicity was African American (70%), Caucasian (28%), and Indian (2%) (Love & Kruger, 2005, p. 92).

Findings from both studies are reported together as follows. First, responses from Study 1 are noted. Then, the responses with significant correlations are listed. Of the total respondents, 95% agreed that learning from students is important and 91% agreed that students need to learn to think critically. Teachers consistently agreed that using peer-learning strategies and parent involvement were important (56% and 94%, respectively). However, over half expected students to come to class with content knowledge, which contradicts Ladson-Billings' findings that successful teachers relied instead on using students' existing knowledge (1994). The teachers responded positively to two "color-blind" statements on the survey (61% and 72%), meaning that they avoided recognizing students' color or culture. When teachers don't see culture, they risk not valuing the culturally specific strengths and knowledge students bring to class, or seeing the importance of family practices and values.

The researchers (Love & Kruger, 2005) noted that these findings differed from previous studies in that teachers who held the belief that teaching is the dissemination of knowledge related significantly to students' success in reading and language arts. Reading achievement also correlated with participants who endorsed the use of repetition, drill, and practice. Although most of the total participants did not hold students accountable for one another's success, the teachers in Study 2 who did were likely to teach students with higher reading scores. The teachers who reported that they saw parents involved in the classroom also taught students who scored high on mathematics and reading tests. Teaching as a way of giving back to the community related significantly to reading achievement. Also, the belief that every child is successful at

something had a strong relationship to high math achievement. Not one of the beliefs

about race, culture and ethnicity related significantly to achievement.

In all, at least seven of the nine statements that correlated significantly with

student achievement are similar with the beliefs of successful teachers from prior studies,

according to these researchers. These include (a) ability to connect with students, (b)

interdependence of students on one another for success, (c) seeing and hearing from

parents, (d) teaching as giving back to the community, (e) switching roles with students

in the classroom, and (f) believing in the success of all students (Love & Kruger, 2005, p.

96). The other two statements that correlated positively are (a) teaching is the diffusion

of knowledge and (b) the use of drill, practice and repetition, which contradict the

literature on culturally relevant teaching. The authors suggest that one implication may

be that there are "multiple pathways to teaching African American children successfully;

in other words, successful teachers may hold an eclectic array of beliefs" (p. 97).

The researchers (Love & Kruger, 2005) warn that these correlations do not

establish causal relationships, and other unmeasured variables could have influenced the

results. They also mention that the participants may have responded to the survey in

socially acceptable ways (instead of honestly), that the statements may have been

interpreted in more than the intended way, and that standardized achievement scores are

only one way (and a controversial one at that) to represent student achievement. With the

results from Study 1, the authors noted that the internal consistency within the items on

the survey was not adequate, suggesting that researchers may need to delete or revise

some items for future use. The samples were well-sized (244 and 50, respectively) and

convenience sampled within the purposively sampled schools. The researchers refrain

from claiming any relationships beyond correlational in their discussion and the statistical

significance for all correlations is less than .05 (ranging from $p<.003$ to $p<.047$).

This study offers an assessment of prevalent teacher beliefs, like the other studies

in this section. These educators were working in urban schools with African American

students, resembling the studies by Hyland (2005) and Milner (2008). Some teachers

held beliefs that contradicted the components of culturally relevant teaching, similar to

the findings of Hyland and Juarez (2008). The study suggested that teachers who hold

beliefs that are congruent with culturally relevant pedagogy are likely to teach African

American students successfully. This supports claims that students need culturally

relevant teachers, and that teachers need to be aware of the beliefs they hold about

multiple dimensions of teaching. There seemed to be a correlation between what teachers

believe and how well their students achieve, suggesting that their beliefs influence their

actions in the classroom. Many authors also argued the importance of critical teacher

reflection, especially when teachers are working with students of diverse cultural, racial,

ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, so that teachers can avoid color-blindness, deficit-

model thinking, and other beliefs that lead to inequitable schooling (Gay, 2000; Howard,

2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a).

The next two studies delved into the classroom and school context to see teacher

beliefs in action. Juarez (2008) spent a year observing a half day kindergarten dual

language program known for its emphasis on cultivating educational equity. Lincoln

school (K-6) served a student population of 700 children, 73% of whom were defined as

non-White, "71% identified as low income, and 30% classified as *limited English

proficient*" (p. 235). This context matches those where culturally relevant teaching is

most needed and most often applied, with high cultural and linguistic diversity. She examined how the faculty's various understandings of social differences combined "to racially mark students' identities and incite teachers' practices" (p. 232).

The majority of her research (Juarez, 2008) took the form of participant observation across various settings and interactions, recorded interviews with teachers, administrators and other community members, and video recordings of classroom situations. The teachers of the dual language program included two white, primary English-speaking women, and a Hispanic teaching assistant. Of the 24 students, 12 were white English speakers and 12 were Hispanic Spanish speakers.

Overall, the universalism of teaching practices (in DL and English classes) suppressed differences in language, race and ethnicity among students, reflecting a commitment to equal opportunities, not equal outcomes (Juarez, 2008, p. 239). Teachers were officially expected to maintain a focus on the balanced literacy program, enforcing the standard of equality for all classes, whether they were taught in Spanish or English. This official attitude coincided with teachers' colorblind perspectives of students, manifested in explanations of student readiness for kindergarten that assigned characteristics of inattention, varying levels of motivation and 'at-risk' to all students, including English language learners. The specific challenges faced by ELLs were ignored or marginalized in teachers' discourse (p. 237).

Language minority students' cultural differences were included in curriculum and teaching practices as resources, yet the faculty viewed these differences as creating significant problems for learning and teaching. In the majority of interviews, teachers and administrators expressed a positive outlook on the benefits of cultural pluralism.

Juarez found that students' cultural knowledge was integrated into the curriculum and teacher practices in the DL classroom (2008, p. 240). This was expressed in the use of Spanish texts (poems, rhymes, lullabies) representative of cultural traditions from Mexico, and the use of students' life experiences and spoken language as content for activities prescribed by the balanced literacy program. However, these cultural differences, used as resources in the classroom, were also viewed by teachers as the source of significant problems for students' learning and for teacher's work. The negative effects of inequality were generally explained by the faculty as a result of language barriers, miscommunication and interpersonal misunderstandings rather than an outcome of institutional practices.

Juarez clearly grounded the study in a post-structuralist framework and Foucault's notion of language as discourse (2008, p. 233). She did not explain her relationship to or the geographical location of Lincoln school, or the process by which she selected Lincoln for study. She employed a consistent method of participant observation and described her methods of data collection. She used Foucault's analytics of power as codes to identify themes in the data, with examples of each category (p. 236). Her analysis included triangulation between interviews, videotapes and observations, and incorporated the DL teachers' interpretations of excerpted data. However, there's no evidence of member checking prior to publishing or peer debriefing during the course of study.

The context of a large elementary school serving a diverse student population and incorporating a dual language program suggests the findings could be transferable to similar schools. However, with the relatively small sample size of one class within one school, and the omission of detailed descriptions of certain components of the study, the

credibility of these findings are questionable.  The inconsistencies of teachers' beliefs and actions are similar to those in Hyland's study (2005).

These findings exemplify some of the challenges in implementing a culturally relevant pedagogy.  The teachers' practices incorporated the cultural resources students brought to school, including their Spanish language skills, which are components of the CRP principle of supporting students' cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).  However, they failed to convert their basic perspective of language, culture and social status from deficit to resource.  They continued to assign learning problems and other inequalities to individual misunderstandings without recognizing the institutional structures that affect underprivileged populations in the US.  From the various interviews, Juarez gathered that the faculty felt that "students are 'behind' and 'at-risk' because they have the wrong culture . . . [and] they speak the wrong primary language" (Juarez, 2008, p. 242).  The teachers espoused inconsistencies and incomplete acceptance of culturally relevant tenets, indicating the challenge practicing teachers face in aligning practices and beliefs. The addition of data that reveal the effect that teachers' beliefs had on student achievement would potentially deepen the conclusions and offer incentives for teachers to critically reflect as a way of improving their practice.

A second study echoes these findings.  Hyland (2005) explored how closely the practices of white teachers working with students of color represented culturally relevant pedagogy, and found elements of unintentional racism in their work.  Using ethnographic techniques, the author examined how they saw their roles as teachers, how they defined success, and how they understood what they were doing as White teachers.  Over a period of 3 years, Hyland collected data in the form of interviews, classroom

observations and seminar participation with each of the four teachers. The predominantly working class and African American elementary school, Woodson, was connected to the university in a Midwestern US city, and located in the heart of the African American, low-income neighborhood. It served 350 students with 80% qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, 72% Black, 25% White, and 3% Asian, Latino or Native American.

Four teachers participated in the study. Pam was White with 15 years of experience at Woodson; Carmen was White with 3 years of experience on a Navajo reservation and 3 at Woodson; Sylvia identified as White/Ecuadorean with 2 years of experience at Woodson; Maizie was White with 5 years at Woodson. All identified as successful teachers of students of color. The researcher (Hyland, 2005) analyzed interviews and transcripts for the roles they named for themselves as teachers, compared the data with observations of how they acted out those roles, and focused on "central metaphors," employing a constant comparative analysis. This information is a subset of the data she gathered throughout the school, including interviews of 27 teachers, as she led a series of workshops with the faculty on race and racism.

The central metaphors that the four teachers held for themselves as White teachers of students of color included teacher as helper, assimilated White person, intercultural helper, and a radical. Hyland (2005) noted that these words may appear to be positive for students of color, "yet may function to permit beliefs and practices that sustain racism in schools" (p. 455). Every teacher's theory and praxis was embedded with hidden racism in a variety of ways: paternalism, deficiency model, cultural appropriation or a lack of identification with the world view of students.

In the analysis, Hyland (2005) linked each teacher's practice to principles of culturally relevant pedagogy. Pam's actions, while helpful, perpetuated the racist status quo by positioning families of color as needy and in some ways incapable. Culturally relevant teachers hold a respect for and value of students and their home communities (Gay, 2000), but Pam demonstrated a sense of superiority over her students and their families (Hyland, 2005, p. 440). She also saw racism as something people of color needed to stop focusing on, which contrasts directly with culturally relevant practice which sees institutional racism as central to students' experiences and sees teachers' work as a fight against social injustice (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Sylvia identified as White even though she was born in Ecuador to Ecuadorian parents. She saw herself as effective due to her assimilation into White culture, and made clear that her teaching was influenced by her students' race. She held low expectations of them as a result, and often used words such as violent, dysfunctional, uncaring and poor to describe her Black students and Black communities (Hyland, 2005, p. 445). These actions contradict descriptions of culturally relevant teachers, who are identified as working against prejudice, holding high academic expectations, and respecting and valuing students' home communities (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

As an intercultural communicator, Carmen perceived herself as successful because of her capacity to copy culturally specific behavior. She considered culture depoliticized and saw Whiteness as simply different but equal to other cultures. Her mimicry of cultural norms was insincere because she did not adopt a worldview similar to her students. Ladson-Billings noted that the successful White teachers she observed adopted worldviews similar to their Black students (1994). Carmen also believed using

curriculum that emphasized Black culture was detrimental, viewing the standard US curriculum as neutral and failing to see Whiteness as "a construct that can disempower people of color" (Hyland, 2005, p. 450).

Maizie characterized her practice as radical and showed developing qualities of a culturally and politically relevant teacher. While she attempted to create relationships with her students' families, she felt discomfort and frustration with the process, illustrating that she didn't see herself as an ally with the communities of her students. Culturally relevant teachers engage with communities in real and meaningful ways (Gay, 2000; Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Maizie's practice had potential, but was limited in this lack of commitment to the community.

All four teachers fell short of what scholars identify as good teaching for students of color. Hyland found that how the participants saw themselves as teachers was "integrally related to how they understood race and racism" (Hyland, 2005, p. 457). They all had made some progress toward culturally relevant teaching, but also resisted seeing racism and examining Whiteness.

The author (Hyland, 2005) provided a very thick description with potential transferability to teachers working with students of color in US public schools. Strengths include a clear grounding in the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy, member checking, and persistent observation (3 years). She described data gathering and analyzing processes, how the particular participants were chosen, and triangulated data between interviews, seminar discussions, and observations. The findings are consistent with similar studies (Juarez, 2008).

This study described salient difficulties to implementing culturally relevant pedagogy. These teachers identified as successful teachers of children of color, but fell short in multiple ways. Future studies could explore the effect of providing faculty seminars on CRP as a treatment. These findings highlight the necessity of teachers to recognize and critically view racism and Whiteness as a way of realizing the politicized reality of their profession (Delpit, 2006). However, this small case study only analyzed the practices of four teachers, so the findings should be taken as a highly specific snapshot of these teachers in the midst of their professional development.

People's beliefs are an unpredictable and indistinct topic of study. The shortcomings inherent in self-reported beliefs on survey questions made by essentially biased researchers are almost impossible to validate objectively. The first three studies reviewed here (Phuntsog, 2001; Song, 2006; Love & Kruger, 2005) attempt to glean conclusions from the responses from small to medium sized groups of teachers, yet they have the credible weight of a single thermometer dipped in the Pacific Ocean. Nevertheless, they provide a hint of how controversial or convincing the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy appear to teachers working with a variety of student populations. Some of the controversial issues were color-blindness, bilingual education, and ability grouping, signaling a need for more research-based strategies or recommendations. These issues are also likely to be politicized in the media and wider educational communities.

This research on teacher beliefs relates closely to successful strategies for implementing culturally relevant teaching at the elementary level. Accepting the challenge of providing objective data to compare with expressed beliefs, Love and

Kruger (2005) correlated survey responses with achievement data, finding nine statements with significant correlations.  Certain culturally relevant tenets, such as connecting with students, collaborative learning communities, teaching as giving back to the community, and believing in the success of all students, do make a positive impact on student achievement.  Interestingly, two statements that correlate with high achievement disagree with culturally relevant pedagogy by supporting components of traditional education.  This suggests that successful teachers may hold culturally relevant beliefs, but still use basic methods that have been proven to work for skill acquisition, such as repetitive drills.

Finally, the only way to see direct proof of beliefs is to witness them in action as teachers apply their ideas to decisions about instructional strategies, which are measured by the effects they have on student experiences.  Even when teachers hold some culturally relevant beliefs and enact them, such as using culturally specific texts, they can still fall prey to deficit-model thinking that blames cultural characteristics for student failure or unpreparedness and ultimately hinders their ability to provide equitable and relevant education, such as in Juarez's study (2008).  Additionally, as seen in Hyland's work (2005), even when teachers view their practices as successful in terms of traditional or dominant-culture oriented education, their actions may still perpetuate racism.  In cases like these, critical teacher reflection is absolutely necessary for teachers to realize how their "worldview can shape students' conceptions of self" and ask themselves whether their practices contribute to the "underachievement of students who are not like [them]" (Howard, 2003, p. 198).

Culturally Relevant Instructional Strategies

The vast majority of educational research is on effective instructional strategies, and the research on culturally relevant pedagogy mirrors that pattern. Instructional strategies include the decisions and actions of teachers beyond the design of the curriculum content and the basic classroom management strategies they use, and pertain directly to the focus of this paper, the implementation of culturally relevant teaching strategies. Culturally relevant instructional practices are rooted in specific teacher conceptions of self, others and knowledge. They hold three major goals for students: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Culturally relevant instructional strategies are used by teachers working with diverse students, including African American, Latina/o, Asian American, American Indian, Alaska Native and white students. Some teachers in these studies used CRT in more homogenous classrooms with majorities of African American or Latina/o students, while other teachers had more diverse classes.

This section of the literature review includes 12 studies on this topic, 5 with mostly African American students, 5 with Latina/o students, 1 with African Bermudian students and 1 with students in Sweden. These numbers reflect the current ratios of students of color in public education. Of the total percentage of students of color (42%), 17% are African American and 19% are Hispanic (NCES, 2007). I found no studies with a majority of students from Asian American, or Pacific Islander backgrounds. Most articles are case studies, allowing a detailed and contextualized look at the environments and practices teachers employ. The articles are organized in this fashion not to suggest

that the strategies teachers use do not overlap, but to ensure that the findings of each

study can be compared with those of studies in similar contexts.

*African American Students*

Much of the grounding literature on culturally relevant pedagogy was composed

with African American students at heart (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a, 1995b).  The

studies in this section concentrated on similar populations of African American students,

from urban to rural settings.  Ware (2006), Lynn (2006) and Milner (2008) performed

case studies with teachers at elementary, middle and high school levels of public

education.  Their descriptions of teachers included both African American teachers who

shared a cultural background with their students, and a white teacher who was able to

transcend cultural differences without becoming color-blind.  Parsons, Travis and

Simpson (2005) investigated the effect of a culturally congruent teaching style, defined

by the Black Cultural Ethos, on two science classes.  To end with, a qualitative survey of

student voices on the subject of their culturally relevant teachers by Howard (2001) adds

an essential perspective to this review.

Ware (2006) examined the practices of two African American teachers working

with African American students.  Using the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy and

the specific characteristic of being a warm demander (Osborne, 1996), the researcher

analyzed the teachers' instructional practices, compared them to each other, and looked

for evidence that a shared cultural/ethnic background of teachers and students influenced

their practices.  The first teacher, Ms. Willis, was the subject of a pilot study, which

included eight interviews, and three observations.  The second teacher, Mrs. Carter,

became the subject of a comparative case study, including 25 class observations, 27 interviews.

Ms. Willis taught at an elementary school in the lowest socioeconomic community in an urban district and had 30 years of experience. She taught third, fourth and fifth grades with programs specifically designed for students who needed remediation for low test scores or behavioral problems, demonstrating her belief in the principle that all children can learn (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Mrs. Carter, with six years of experience, taught at a middle school in a mixed income neighborhood. The researcher coded all data, triangulating between observations and interviews.

Ware (2006) found that both teachers exemplified the characteristics of warm demanders as authority figures, caregivers, and pedagogues. Ms. Willis was explicit about the importance of homework, and had established a connectedness with her students so that they understood that her authoritative style expressed a level of concern and care for them. Mrs. Carter identified authoritative behaviors in her own disciplinary practice that were similar to the life experiences of many African American students, and although she knew that some students wanted to see her as a powerful, stern figure in the class, she occasionally apologized for authoritarian tones.

Both teachers were caregivers in the classroom. Ms. Willis held high expectations for and positive attitudes towards students, giving her students "tender loving care" and spent time becoming familiar with students to know how to motivate them (Ware, 2006, p. 440). She took strides to build relationships by allowing students to listen to the radio while they worked, providing clothing and toiletries for students' use when needed, and acting as a "cultural bridge" between the middle-class, mainstream

expectations of the school and the lower income communities students came from (p. 445). Mrs. Carter spoke about analyzing and supporting her students to reach their natural desires for academic success, and developed in them a global sense of caring by teaching them to take care of their communities. They both expected students to be successful learners despite the socioeconomic conditions they came from.

As educators, Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter incorporated elements of their students' culture, adapted instruction to meet learning styles, and held high standards. Ms. Willis taught science using an inquiry approach and allowed them to engage in conversations with their peers. Mrs. Carter taught a lesson on the American voting process by using students' interest in rap music and having them vote for their favorite artist. She also engaged students in researching historically Black colleges and universities on the internet. The author documented that the teachers' warm demander pedagogy was influenced by their cultural/racial identity because they were able to use their familiarity with African American heritage to encourage their students.

This study met most criteria for credibility. Although the author did not explain how the particular teachers were chosen, she performed persistent observations, extensive interviews and comprehensive member checking. Ware (2006) triangulated data between observations and interviews, analyzed the findings through the theoretical framework of culturally relevant pedagogy, and gave consistent examples for each category. The study is similar to others that examined African American teachers and students working together (Milner, 2008; Parsons, 2005) and others that performed case studies on culturally relevant teachers (Arce, 2004; Bergeron, 2008; Bondy, et al., 2007; Dutro, et al., 2008; Langhout & Mitchell, 2008; Matthews, 2003; Patchen & Cox-

Peterson, 2008; Powell, 1997). These findings may only be transferable to situations where both teachers and students are African American because of how the teachers' cultural/ethnic identities influenced their practices.

It's clear from this study that teachers who share the cultural backgrounds of their teachers are able to effectually incorporate culturally relevant instructional practices that benefit students. These teachers were warm demanders and infused a "tender loving care" into their work as educators, paying close attention to their students to engage and motivate them. All of their qualities can be found in the literature on CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1994). What remains to be seen is whether teachers like Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter would have the same success with more diverse populations. These teachers were not documented struggling to connect with students, or fighting against the institutional system of schooling, so parts of their experiences may have been left out. Also, there is no evidence of the teachers or students engaging in a critique of social conditions or values, signaling the absence of a critical consciousness.

In the next case study, the author also looked at teachers who share a cultural background with their students. Lynn (2006) examined the teaching practices of three Black men in urban schools to give them a voice in the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy. The author followed the methodology called portraiture, where a researcher provides an artistic narrative that paints the subject in the "best possible light" (p. 2501). Over nine months, he gathered five recorded interviews with each participant and field notes from observing them teach for an average of 20 hours. In a large urban school district in California, the participants included one teacher from each level, elementary, middle and high schools with five, four and twenty years of experience, respectively. In

all three schools, the majority of teachers (65%) and students (75%) were African American. The researcher purposively selected teachers with culturally relevant practices by interviewing and observing them. He found examples of successful culturally relevant teaching in all three classrooms.

The second grade teacher provided support for every student to be successful in his class, helping them develop more confidence in their abilities. He drew his curriculum directly from children's experiences when possible, building on their prior knowledge, and instilled in them an identity as citizens of a global village (Lynn, 2006, p. 2508). The author noted that his students consistently scored well on standardized tests. The seventh-grade special education teacher was committed to making sure his students "felt loved, appreciated and respected in his classroom" with simple acts, such as shaking hands with each of them at the start of class (p. 2510). He also made sure his curriculum was relevant to the lives of his students. The high school history teacher devoted his teaching to developing a critical consciousness in his students by helping them see the "hidden realities of racial subordination in American society," including relevant history such as the African American movement towards political, social and economic inclusion (p. 2516).

The researcher (Lynn, 2006) noted that the three men drew on their cultural knowledge that they shared with students and the surrounding communities to create their culturally relevant pedagogy. They could use their experiences with oppression to help students understand their own daily struggles. All three teachers cared deeply about their students and embraced the cultural and linguistic knowledge and strengths they brought

to class.  These practices express the components of academic success, cultural

competence and critical consciousness as described by Ladson-Billings (1995a).

Lynn (2006) provided a thick description of the participants and their practice.

He triangulated data between persistent observations and extensive interview.  The

participants were purposively selected as examples of culturally relevant teaching.

However, there was no evidence of peer debriefing, or member checking.  The author did

not describe how he analyzed data and did not use a coding system.  There's no way of

guaranteeing that the participants agree with the interpretations he made of their words

and actions.  The findings are consistent with studies that also looked at African

American teachers and students working together (Matthews, 2003; Milner, 2008; Ware,

2006).  The participants were all men without traditional teaching credentials, so their

successes may not be transferable to any teachers unlike them.

This study points out the potential for African American men, deeply involved in

their community, to use culturally relevant instructional practices for African American

students in multiple grade levels.  While the author (Lynn, 2006) did not describe

challenges the teachers might have encountered in their work, together they demonstrate

all three components of CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).  This suggests that, for African

American men, teaching students who they are culturally congruent with is a successful

endeavor made possible by culturally relevant practices.

The third case study in this review explored the work of more diverse teachers in

an urban middle school.  Milner (2008) examined three teachers' experiences and found

many themes throughout their practices and beliefs that align with culturally relevant

teaching.  A focus on the influence of teachers' counter-narratives and experiences in

their urban classroom and how their stories contradict other ways of knowing urban education in the US guided the study (p. 1575). The methodologies of narrative and counter-narrative framed his observations, document analysis and interviews with the teachers. Over two academic years of weekly visits, the researcher collected data on the nature of the teachers and students' culture in the school and observed life outside of the classrooms, providing a thick description of the school atmosphere.

Milner (2008) chose Bridge Middle School for its positive reputation within the urban school district. Located in a large city, Bridge is a Title I school accommodating 354 students, 59.8% of whom are African American, 31.6% White, 5.6% Hispanic American, 2.8% Asian American and .3% American Indian (p. 1579). Of the 27 teachers, 45% were African American and 55% were White. The three teachers the study focused on represented a range of diversity in years of experience, genders and ethnic and racial backgrounds: an African American male in mid-career (Mr. Jackson), a White male in his fourth year of teaching (Mr. Hall), and an African American woman with 35 years of experience (Ms. Shaw). Collecting information through in-depth, transcribed interviews, analyzing teachers' plans and worksheets, and observing and occasionally participating in classroom activities, Milner triangulated data from multiple sources and coded it with inductively developed themes.

The data collected showed multiple instances of culturally relevant teaching present in the teachers' practices and beliefs, and many observations that coincided with Ladson-Billings' work (1994, 1995a). Mr. Jackson is quoted as saying, "The biggest struggle in most urban schools is getting over the 'it's not cool to learn factor'" (Milner, 2008, p. 1580). Ladson-Billings echoed the same perception in describing the culturally

relevant principle of academic success writing, "The trick of culturally relevant teaching is to get students to 'choose' academic excellence" (1995a, p. 160). Mr. Jackson used the power structure within the students and worked to get the popular students to "choose" academic excellence, thereby getting the rest of the students to follow their examples.

In this practice, he also reflected the principle of cultural competence by drawing on the culture shared between students to design his classroom management strategies (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Mr. Jackson used what he knew about his students' world to design curriculum. He created math problems that referenced the school's basketball players, popular video games and rap songs. He included music in his classroom activities that students knew and liked, and this facilitated high levels of engagement in academic tasks and supported students' sense of belonging to the classroom community.

Mr. Hall held positive beliefs about students and worked hard to create strong relationships with them. He espoused a firm belief in the capacity of students to succeed, expressing a component of the principle of academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 44; 1995a). The efficacy of this belief could be seen in the number of grade eight students that passed their secondary science examination (Milner, 2008, p. 1584). Mr. Hall developed relationships with each student inside and outside of the classroom, an essential characteristic of culturally relevant teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1994). He practiced cultural congruence, like Mr. Jackson, by incorporating elements of students' school culture into science activities and sharing parts of his own culture that resonated with students. Mr. Hall's actions took the form of a warm demander (Osborne, 1996) because he refused to give up on students who struggled to master academic content and expressed a desire to "stay on them" to succeed (Milner, 2008, p. 1587).

The responsibility of preparing students to "serve and to 'change' their communities" shaped Ms. Shaw's teaching practice (Milner, 2008, p. 1590). She intentionally introduced successful members of the community to her class to develop a "'mindset' to contribute to community," facilitating both the cultural competence and critical consciousness of her students (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 38; 1995a).

The urban middle school setting, high number of African American students, and work of all three teachers reflected the context and conclusions of Ladson-Billings' theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. The teachers were able to successfully develop the characteristics of academic success and cultural competence in their students, although there was only one example of critical consciousness. These findings demonstrate the possibility of culturally relevant teaching to enrich the practices and experiences of teachers and students in urban school environments.

The characteristics of Milner's (2008) research, including a clear theoretical position, data triangulation, persistent observation, purposeful sampling, and thick description, all suggest a significant level of credibility, despite the lack of member checks to validate his representations of participants' voices. Teachers with these characteristics might be found in other urban schools with a large African American population. The findings are consistent with other studies of teaching in urban contexts (Arce, 2004; Bergeron, 2008; Bondy, et al., 2007; Lynn, 2006; Powell, 1997; Ware, 2006), and add even more examples of using culturally relevant instructional practices.

From this research, it's apparent that teachers of diverse backgrounds and levels of experience are capable of practicing culturally relevant teaching with diverse populations of urban kids, even when they aren't directly familiar with the theory of

CRP.  Notably in this study, the teachers were at a school known for doing positive work with urban kids, and like Ladson-Billings' research (1994), useful themes can be drawn from their example.  However, as in all case studies, the particular details of the research can only be generalized so far and must connect to studies in similar contexts.

These three case studies have portrayed culturally relevant teaching with mostly African American students without much description of the cultural characteristics that define their knowledge or learning styles.  The next study used an established definition of African American culture and then designed science lessons that are congruent.  Inspired by a need to increase African American students' achievement in science, Parsons, et al. (2005) studied two eighth grade science classes to explore the effect of culturally congruent instruction on the academic achievement of African American students.  Using qualitative and quantitative methods, the researchers examined students' self-reported learning preferences, the learning contexts of the science instruction, and patterns in student achievement.  They used the Black Cultural Ethos (BCE) to analyze the learning preferences and contexts.  BCE described several dimensions of "how blacks perceive, interpret, and interact with the world" (p. 184).  The authors found that students in BCE classrooms who also reported a preference for BCE styles of learning had a pattern of higher achievement, demonstrating the success of imparting content through culturally congruent methods.

The participating school met the criteria of a large enrollment of African American students from low-income backgrounds (40%) with 45% Euro-American students.  The study included two teachers, one Euro-American teacher and one African American teacher.  The former had a Bachelor's degree and 11 years of experience and

the latter had a Master's degree and 20 years of experience. The researchers performed qualitative case studies to analyze their practices by observing and video-taping their classroom instruction two days a week, collecting lesson plans and summaries, and taking at least three interviews about their instruction.

For the quantitative component, the students enrolled in each of their classes took a pretest and a posttest comprised of questions taken from the NAEP and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study databases, and a preference questionnaire. Recognizing that culture is a "dynamic repertoire of practices," the researchers presented preferences as dichotomies with BCE values on one end of the extreme and its opposite as the other (Parsons, et al., 2005, p. 186). To ensure validity, they had one class of students complete a feedback sheet on an actual class session that incorporated BCE values and a comparison of responses with the first questionnaire showed 85.5 % confirmations between the two. Also, four students were interviewed six months later on their preferences, and three out of four gave responses that corresponded with their responses on the questionnaire and the feedback sheet.

The first case study, Ms. Ham taught two science concepts to a class of 18 students, 8 African American and 10 Euro-American. The second teacher, Ms. Ness, taught the same two concepts to a class of 22 students, 12 African American and 10 Euro-American. The researchers (Parsons, et al., 2005) taught the teachers about BCE and gave them BCE designed lessons to implement in their classes. Ms. Ham taught force with BCE, but taught electricity in her usual manner, and Ms. Ness taught the reverse. In the qualitative analyses that followed, the researcher and teachers watched videos of the class together and compared interpretations. Two unaffiliated interpreters

also labeled and discussed the teachers' and students' roles to check validity. The quantitative analyses consisted of assigning students scores (1-4) representing the congruency between their preferences and BCE. Then the researchers calculated the percent change in scores between the pretest and posttest and judged the quality of the change. Each student had two changes, one for the intervention (BCE context) unit and one for the non-intervention (non-BCE context) unit.

The authors (Parsons, et al., 2005) report findings for all students combined, then African American and Euro-American students separately. Thirteen of 40 participating students had a congruency score of 4 (high). In the BCE context, 46% of these students had average to good improvement and none had this quality of improvement in the non-BCE context. With a congruency score of 3, more students had average to good improvement in the BCE context versus the non-BCE context. In other words, as the students' became less congruent with BCE, their scores showed less improvement in the BCE context and vice versa.

The researchers (Parsons, et al., 2005) did not treat BCE as a "race-determined construct," and noted that many of the Euro-American students indicated a preference for BCE (p. 194). The fact that both groups (African American and Euro-American) indicated a similar change in performance in BCE contexts is reasonable. The reason for this improvement may be that the BCE contexts did not devalue or exclude the norms, beliefs and practices that did not correlate with institutionalized ones. In non-BCE contexts, lower achievement stemmed from students resisting the dominant culture's devaluation or exclusion of non-white cultures, which detracts from learning. Learning may be disrupted when teachers oppose students' cultures, too. The authors argued that

this resistance can be decreased if teachers view students' cultures as "valued currency to be used in development" (p. 195).

With a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, the authors (Parsons, et al., 2005) painted a very detailed portrait of this study. The qualitative analysis verified the quality of the intervention: BCE learning contexts. They triangulated data between video-taped observations and semi-structured interviews, using extensive member checking and peer debriefing. The quantitative data illustrated a correlation between BCE contexts and higher academic achievement, with multiple validity checks. The researchers used comparison groups to measure the scale of the changes, controlling for history and maturation. They used similar pretests and posttests, controlling for the threat of variations in instrumentation. However, since the questions on both pre and post tests were the same, the pretest may have alerted students to pay attention to certain parts of the lessons and been a contributor to changes in posttest scores in addition to the treatment. The participants were selected for research groups by established classes instead of randomly, and the study included no data on how the two groups were similar or different in science or math skills. Therefore, the results also may have been influenced by selection bias.

The findings of this study highlight a correlation between culturally congruent learning contexts and higher academic achievement in science as measured by standardized test questions. They support the efficacy of culturally relevant instructional practices by first establishing a culturally congruent instructional method, with the use of Black Cultural Ethos qualities, and then recording more academic success with than without that teaching style. One positive feature of the study is the separation of cultural

and racial characteristics, recognizing that culture is a social construction and students of different racial-ethnic groups can benefit from the same style of culturally relevant education. This implies that basic culturally relevant principles can work for students of multiple racial-ethnic backgrounds, and that when student preferences are taken into consideration, culturally relevant teaching results in measurably higher academic achievement. In typical school contexts, it's up to teachers (instead of researchers) to design and use relevant instructional strategies, and it may be a legitimate way of increasing the success of urban students.

The last study in this section gave the microphone to elementary students and recorded their opinions of culturally relevant teachers. Paying attention to the perceptions of students is indispensable to the work of determining best practices. Howard (2001) performed a qualitative survey of African American students about their perceptions of culturally relevant teaching to add their voices to the literature. The research took place with students in four urban elementary schools in the northwestern US as part of a larger case study involving four culturally responsive teachers. The researcher collected data through observations and interviews with students. The data were analyzed and coded into thematic categories, and an outside rater recoded the data for accuracy. The author used a purposeful sample of 17 students, including 10 boys and 7 girls. He chose low-, medium- and high-achieving students to reduce the chances of "glowing" testimonials about their teachers. Each student was interviewed once individually and then in a focus group with classmates.

The study uncovered three salient themes within the students' perceptions: the importance of caring teachers, the establishment of a community/family-type classroom

environment, and education as entertainment (Howard, 2001, p. 136). Students had many

specific examples of how teachers expressed their care. Caring teachers often

encouraged students with pats on the back, verbal expressions of high expectations, and

direct statements about how they felt about students. Some teachers were strict about

having work done and completing tasks, but even when they expressed their concern in

angry tones, students were able to look beyond the situation to see the purpose of

teachers' actions and considered them caring teachers. The combination of caring and

holding high expectations for academic success is the characteristic of being a warm

demander (Osborne, 1996).

Teachers who were able to "make school feel like home" were valued by students.

Teachers used daily rituals and classroom traditions, like morning circles, to build

classroom community. One teacher in particular taught students to think of the class as a

family and realize that their individual actions "could be perceived by others as a

reflection of their teacher, classmates, school, family or racial group" (Howard, 2001, p.

142). Several students commented that the ways their teachers resembled mothers or

other family members made them feel comfortable because their modes of interactions

were similar to the types they experienced at home. Correlated with this "consistency

between home and school was a certain level of trust . . . established between teacher and

student" (p. 143). As a result, students were willing to seek advice, share information

and attempt to gain approval from their teachers in ways they would from their own

parents.

Students enjoyed teachers who were able to make learning fun and exciting.

Some teachers interspersed funny jokes and stories into instruction, inserted students'

names into stories, and acted out characters from stories. The students who mentioned this theme felt this style of pedagogy made a positive difference in their levels of interest, engagement and overall achievement. However, the data were less clear about the role of this pedagogy than the other two themes.

According to students' accounts, these teachers created a schooling environment that was not in conflict with students' cultural backgrounds "through their methods of communication, modes of interaction, and overall cultural knowledge." This cultural congruence is an important component of culturally relevant pedagogy, as is the facilitation of high academic achievement. The students also described teachers' practices that demonstrated their belief that "academic growth was an important goal in their classrooms" (Howard, 2001, p. 145).

Howard (2001) established his article in the theoretical framework of culturally relevant pedagogy, a lengthy literature review, and the value of including student voices in discussions of school reform. The sampling method was purposeful and the data gathering and analyzing processes were described. The author mentioned using an outside rater to recode the data, but didn't report how closely all the ratings corresponded to each other. The observation and interview data were triangulated between 17 different students at four schools about four different teachers. However, the author didn't provide records of member checking, peer debriefing, or progressive subjectivity. The findings correspond with other studies with urban students and with mostly African American students (Hastie, et al., 2006; Leonard & Hill, 2008; Milner, 2008; Parsons, et al., 2005), although this study was the only one to specifically interview students on culturally relevant teachers.

The students' perspectives confirm the positive effects of culturally relevant pedagogy on African American students in urban settings. Culturally relevant teachers are caring, establish strong classroom community, and provide engaging lessons. However, there are complexities to developing instructional strategies for students from similar backgrounds because they also vary individually in their learning preferences. The possibility of these strategies working with diverse instead of homogenous classrooms is yet to be established. Generally, this study (Howard, 2001) supported the idea that culturally relevant teaching requires a range of particular ways of interacting with students in the classroom and the demonstration of the conceptions of self and other that Ladson-Billings wrote about (1994).

The findings in this section reported on the myriad of ways teachers are using culturally relevant instructional strategies with mostly African American students. The constructive effects of these strategies are confirmed by higher science test scores and the positive reviews of elementary school students. Culturally relevant teachers establish connections with their students, become familiar with them to know how to motivate them, expect students to be successful learners, incorporate elements of their students' culture into instruction, and hold high standards. The teachers in these studies recognized how knowledge is constructed and shared by students and teachers as demonstrated in their willingness to build on students' prior knowledge. They viewed knowledge critically, developing their students' critical awareness of their world, and helped them develop necessary skills, holding all students to high standards and providing the support and encouragement they needed to reach excellence.

Cultural relevance is a socially constructed quality and is not necessarily tied to racial-ethnic backgrounds.  Parsons, et al. (2005) showed that when instructional styles matched students' learning preferences, they understood more of the content of the lessons.  This suggests that determining culturally relevant instructional strategies requires that teachers pay attention to the unique individuals in their classrooms and use students' knowledge and preferences to guide their practice.  A theory of culturally relevant pedagogy needs to be grounded in certain universal principles of teaching and learning, but each teacher's interpretation of that theory into practice is necessarily dependent on the needs of their individual students.

Many of these studies observed African American teachers who capitalized on their shared cultural backgrounds to provide relevant instruction to their students. However, these findings don't rule out the capacity of teachers whose cultural backgrounds are different from their students to succeed in applying culturally relevant pedagogy.  The core conceptions these teachers held surpass cultural characteristics and motivate decisions that can benefit all learners.  The elementary students in Howard's (2001) study clearly pointed out how effective teachers infuse their instruction with practices that show students they're cared for, help them feel comfortable in the classroom, and make education fun.  Teachers of any backgrounds can accomplish this when they value students for who they are and what they bring to the classroom.

*Latina/o Students*

Of the five case studies reviewed here, three focus on the work of novice teachers with Latina/o and bilingual students.  Bergeron (2008) and Powell (1997) watched the first years of two white teachers and named the culturally relevant practices that enabled

them to succeed with their students. Arce (2004) followed the work of five new bilingual teachers and pointed out actions that resist the pressure of institutionalized school practices and reflect culturally relevant strategies. The last two case studies specifically compared culturally relevant teaching with other established instructional methods with students of Latin descent. Patchen and Cox-Peterson (2008) analyzed the work of two teachers using social constructivism in science classes, and Santamaria (2009) contrasted CRT with differentiated instruction in two highly achieving urban schools.

Bergeron (2008) explored a white, novice teacher's first year in a culturally and linguistically diverse urban classroom to see if culturally responsive practices could counteract the cultural disequilibrium. She found examples of cultural relevance that made a potentially rocky year successful and smooth for both teacher and students. Bergeron highlighted the impact of cultural and linguistic differences, current policies, and the support this teacher received that enabled her practice to be successful. The researcher taught the participating teacher in her teacher preparation program in the Midwest, and she performed a case study of her first year.

The novice teacher, Christina, was a white, middle-class woman teaching third-grade at an urban school in a poor, predominantly Hispanic neighborhood where most students spoke Spanish as their native language. The school was not meeting adequate yearly progress as a result of low test scores and the principal was focusing on holistic, child-centered practices to raise test scores. Christina had 26 students, two White and the rest Hispanic, with five students classified as limited English proficient. Bergeron (2008) collected data through research journals kept by herself and Christina, twice monthly classroom observations, email exchanges, classroom artifacts, and informal interviews

with other teachers in the school.  Like Powell (1997), the participating teacher and

researcher collaborated on data analysis and interpretation.  Themes were derived from

the research journals, and then triangulated with other data to confirm or disconfirm the

categories.

Christina's practice demonstrated multiple aspects of culturally relevant teaching.

She developed a strong sense of community by forming groups of desks, consistent

routines, and promoting conversational interactions between students.  She accepted

"each child regardless of previous experiences or abilities," allowed them to write in

Spanish or English in journals, and made the effort to learn Spanish and communicate

with her students in their language when she could, sincerely valuing the cultural

knowledge and strengths students brought to her class (Bergeron, 2008, p. 14).  Christina

supported collaborative learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994) by allowing students to help

each other (Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2003), read in low-risk environments with partners,

and translate for each other even while taking tests.  She often integrated literacy

activities with math and science topics, involved student choice in both reading materials

and responses, and met the instructional level and needs of her students (p. 17).  Despite

the state's bilingual ban, she wrote dates and directions in both Spanish and English,

taking first steps toward actively challenging the school system in support of students,

like Ladson-Billings (1994) noted.

Bergeron (2008) made note of Christina's lack of awareness of the broader

implications of current policies, including the emphasis on standardized testing and the

bilingual education ban.  While she focused on the impact they had on her classroom, she

simply did not raise the issues or their consequences for students on a larger scale.  In this

way, she falls short of the culturally relevant teachers Ladson-Billings (1995a) described, who are aware of institutional structures that impact them and point them out to students, developing their critical consciousness.

Bergeron (2008) also noted the effect of the "majority minority" on the only White girl in the classroom, who was generally excluded from activities and friendship with other Hispanic girls. She wrote, "No matter our best intentions, the minority – however that is defined – becomes disenfranchised and disengaged" (p. 18). This may emphasize a shortcoming of culturally relevant pedagogy, that it simply cannot make students part of a 'minority' group totally included. The author suggests that this may mean a culturally responsive classroom is "most effective when there exists a *balance* and rich array of diversity" (p. 26). Finally, she identified four conditions of success that enabled Christina: a multilayered support system, an administrator that supported innovation, a district-wide system of professional development, and herself as an individual willing to take risks (p. 21).

This study took much the same shape as Powell's (1997) case study of a single White teacher working with Latino students. The extensive member checking that took place as researcher and teacher analyzed and categorized data together strongly supports the credibility of the findings. Data were triangulated with observations, classroom artifacts and email exchanges. The researcher persistently observed over the entire school year and gave clear examples for the themes that emerged. This study also found strengths and challenges in the teacher's experience of incorporating culturally relevant teaching. The findings are most likely transferable to other contexts of White teachers working with linguistically and culturally diverse students in urban settings.

Among the case studies, each one is unique in the parts of CRT that are reported as successful, as challenging, and that are not mentioned at all. This study described a teacher who, in her first year, was able to successfully engage her students in a learning community by encouraging culturally relevant collaboration and valuing their linguistic and cultural knowledge. While she has lots of room to grow her practice, Christina's experience is evidence that novice teachers can realize success with culturally relevant teaching practices. However, her practice lacked an awareness of larger policy mandates and a level of advocacy for students on a political level. This was probably a result of her lack of experience, which may be be overcome as she and teachers like her persist in the profession of teaching.

The following study is very similar, but the participating teacher worked in middle and high schools instead of an elementary school. Powell (1997) performed a longitudinal case study on a white, female, middle class teacher, Amy, who demonstrated the capacity to reach students of diverse backgrounds. Documenting her work over five years, the researcher described her beliefs and practices and compared them to Ladson-Billings' description of culturally relevant pedagogy (1994). The research examined Amy's classroom strategies, the political factors that Amy confronted when implementing them, and interactions she had with students which cultivated her awareness of students' various needs (p. 468).

The thick description of Amy included biographical details and profiles of the schools where she taught English over the duration of the study. These included an urban middle school within a low SES neighborhood with English language learners and an urban high school. Data collection included recorded interviews, field notes of biweekly

classroom observations, and a personal journal maintained by Amy. The researcher continuously compared new data with previous, monitored his own developing conclusions, and incorporated Amy's interpretations of the data throughout. The author (Powell, 1997) aligned the data with three elements of culturally responsive teaching: conception of self and others, social relations, and conceptions of knowledge.

The research revealed many examples of how Amy's beliefs and practices were similar to the teachers in Ladson-Billings' study (1994). In her conception of self and others, Amy believed all students were capable of achieving success in school, didn't always measure success with traditional school measures, and believed all students should be challenged at higher levels. She saw herself as part of her students' communities, spent time visiting students' homes to learn about them, and used this knowledge to reconstruct her classroom practice to make their backgrounds central to her lessons (Powell, 1997, p. 479).

Amy's classroom reflected culturally relevant structures of social relations. She made explicit attempts to connect with every student, created an environment where students could approach content from multiple perspectives, and shared power and authority with her students (Powell, 1997, p. 480). Amy conceived of knowledge as being personally constructed, which meant the knowledge she taught had to be culturally consistent with the perspectives of her students. She allowed her students to learn content in their first language, provided students with various options for expressing what they learned, and was constantly critical of the prescribed curriculum and of her own instruction. In all of these characteristics, the researcher found Amy's practice in accord with culturally relevant pedagogy.

Powell (1997) acknowledged the personal biases that necessarily color the collection and interpretation of data, but did not provide details of how the information was coded and excluded or included beyond the fact that the author and participant both reviewed the data and interpretations.  This element of member checking is a strong indicator that the author's interpretations match the intentions of the teacher and accurately describe her practice.  Combined with some data triangulation between observations, interviews and journal entries, the author's progressive subjectivity throughout the persistent observation of five years, and the thick description of Amy herself, the conclusions can be considered credible.  The findings are consistent with studies that also looked at the practice of white teachers in urban classrooms (Bergeron, 2008; Milner, 2008; Parsons, 2001).

These data report that the principles of CRT are practiced successfully by teachers in urban settings.  Importantly, this study found a teacher who not only practiced CRT but held some of the essential teacher beliefs that engender good practice, too.  Most of the literature has documented the use of CRT with African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a; Milner, 2008; Parsons, 2001), while this study included Hispanic American students.  Powell (1997) noted that the qualities that made Amy successful in developing a CRT practice for predominantly Hispanic students were similar to the qualities of successful teachers of African American students, and suggests that these qualities "appear to be transferable across ethnic and racial boundaries" (p. 481).  This study observed only one teacher, so it remains to be seen if larger numbers of teachers with other student populations will successfully implement these practices, too.

While white teachers working with Hispanic students are often inhibited by cultural disequilibrium, Arce (2004) examined teachers who shared a cultural background with most of their students.  The author focused her research on five novice bilingual teachers to understand how new teachers created "*counter-hegemonic conditions – conscious acts of resistance to the dominant ideology* – in their classrooms" (p. 228).  Situated in Giroux's work on the functions of hegemony in schools, she contextualized the work of these bilingual teachers as a form of resistance to the dominant ideology of traditional pedagogies that "appear to benefit only some children" (p. 232).  This perspective aligns with the culturally relevant principle of critical consciousness, which prioritizes developing students' skills to critique and challenge cultural norms and institutions (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).

Arce (2004) used a participatory methodology, which uses dialogue to construct new knowledge, within two school districts (urban and semi-urban) that served a high percentage of linguistically and culturally diverse students.  In addition to dialogue, she triangulated data from interviews, classroom observations, personal histories and interactions between the researcher and children over the course of 15 weeks, visiting each class weekly.  The participating teachers included five Spanish speaking bilingual teachers, three females and two males.  All were new emergency credential teachers, but one teacher had four years of prior teaching experience.  They were purposefully selected because of their "expressed commitment to social justice and issues of equity" (p. 234).  Throughout her work, Arce shared the interpretation of data with the participants to maintain an accurate level of reporting the voices of the group.

Of the five themes uncovered in the study, three are relevant to the principles of CRT: question of power among students, culturally bound pedagogy, and countering the hidden curriculum with critical pedagogy (Arce, 2004, p. 240). Under the theme of the question of power among students, Arce found evidence that the two male teachers were aware of how the Euro-American students benefited from the "entitlement and privilege that keep bicultural students marginalized" (Darder, 1991, as cited in Arce, 2004, p. 238). In their own work, they actively mediated the power structure of the classroom community to make sure all students always had opportunities to participate in group discussions. Culturally relevant pedagogy also pays attention to the way the social relations in the classroom are structured, ensuring a collaborative community where students care about and contribute to each others' achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1994)

Two teachers focused on a culturally bound pedagogy as they held classroom discussions on issues relevant to the Latino students' experiences and knowledge. These projects included collecting folk-wisdom shared by elders, and exploring the immigration of their parents and their native country. The strength of this curriculum rested in the status it accorded students as the teacher and other students in class learned to value their home and cultural knowledge. The practices of these teachers embodied the culturally relevant principle of cultural competence, which maintains students' cultural integrity while facilitating academic excellence (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).

Arce observed critical pedagogy, a grounding theory behind culturally relevant teaching, in action as the teachers used "discriminating lenses to review textbooks," found alternative resources as a result of their analyses, and engaged the students in responding to critical issues through writing (2004, p. 240). These practices began to

meet Ladson-Billings' call for developing students' critical consciousness (1995a). However, they fell short of leading students through critiquing textbooks themselves and learning "how to compensate for the voids these analyses reveal" (Gay, 2000, p. 117).

The research methods Arce (2004) employed met important standards of credibility, including comprehensive member checking, data triangulation, persistent observation, and thick description of the participants, although she provided a limited discussion of the social contexts of the school. She described data gathering procedures and analyzed the data in dialogue with the participants. No coding methods were used, though pertinent examples were given to illustrate the themes. The context of socially conscious beginning bilingual teachers may have limited transferability beyond bilingual education, but the setting of a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom is salient for a large number of US schools because 20% of public school students speak a language other than English at home (NCES, 2007).

Given these characteristics, Arce's (2004) findings paint an image of the successes and challenges of teachers incorporating culturally relevant teaching in diverse classrooms. These teachers demonstrated a capacity to develop students' cultural competence and critical consciousness through culturally bound curriculum and critical writing assignments, although significant components were missing that would be required for a complete application of culturally relevant teaching. What makes these teachers unique, however, is their previous history of community activism and expressed commitment to social justice. These results may not be expected from novice teachers without such a foundation in social activism.

While the context is similar to another study on bilingual teachers (Juarez, 2008), the findings differ because Arce (2004), probably as a result of observing socially conscious teachers, did not uncover a quality of deficit theory in teachers' perspectives on students' cultural backgrounds. A common theme emerged of the complexities of applying culturally relevant principles to diverse classrooms. Culturally relevant teaching is so multifaceted that teachers struggle to apply it in all the possible dimensions, both in the classroom and in their own beliefs about students.

With a much more specific motivation than simply looking at good practices, the next two studies analytically compared and contrasted culturally relevant pedagogy with social constructivism and differentiated instruction. Working with teachers of Hispanic and bilingual students, they found parallels and variations that illumine new perspectives on CRP.

Patchen and Cox-Peterson (2008) conducted a case study of two white women teaching elementary science to inner-city Latino and African American students. The authors were attentive to the intersection of culturally relevant pedagogy and constructivist teaching methods and whether they improved science instruction for diverse students. They asked how constructivist practices can inform and/or support culturally relevant practice in today's increasingly culturally diverse classrooms (p. 1008).

The authors (Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008) selected three themes that are present in both theories: authority, achievement, and affiliation; and observed the two teachers' practices to find examples of each. Authority refers to sharing power through student interaction and shared decision making in the classroom. Achievement is

attained through building on prior knowledge, connecting with the larger community, scaffolding metacognitive development, and making tacit educational processes explicit. Affiliation means valuing students' native languages, establishing relationships in the classroom and extending relationships beyond the classroom. These definitions are the authors' links between social constructivism and culturally relevant pedagogy.

The researchers selected teachers with beliefs and practices that aligned with constructivism by using Expert Science Teaching Educational Evaluation Model (ESTEEM) instruments (Burry-Stock, 1995, as cited in Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008) to survey and observe 65 teachers who attended a science teaching conference. The two teachers that were purposively selected as a result, Veronica and Heather, both taught in diverse classrooms. Veronica taught fourth-grade and her students were all native Spanish speakers (from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico). Heather taught a second- and third-grade multiage classroom with African American and Latino (most of who were English language learners) students. Patchen and Cox-Peterson (2008) observed each teacher 10 times over 6 weeks, and collected video and audio recordings, field notes and interviews. The researchers analyzed and coded the data together, triangulating observations with interview comments.

The authors (Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008) found that the teachers used many constructivist and culturally relevant practices in their classrooms, but fell short of reaching certain goals. For example, teachers referred to students' knowledge and experiences, allotted time during lessons for students to connect everyday concepts to scientific concepts, and asked questions to establish prior knowledge and connect content to students' lives, but there was little evidence that the students understood these

connections beyond their initial responses.  Furthermore, most of the connections were

teacher directed, not student directed.  Within classroom interactions, the teachers

encouraged students' oral participation through questioning and valued their perspectives,

which is necessary for building relationships in CRP, but their questioning structure was

dominated by "what" questions and they infrequently extended student responses beyond

repeating them.  They missed opportunities to ask "how" or "why" questions to develop

students' critical thinking skills, as vital in CRP.  The teachers were clearly aware of the

importance of building upon students' experiences and understandings, increasing student

participation, allowing for students' native language use, and verbally acknowledging

that their students' backgrounds differed from their own and mattered, but fell short of

supporting these goals on deeper, more cognitively effective levels (p. 1009).

The authors (Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008) noted positive results of the

teachers' flexible understandings of time, allowing students to complete more

assignments and extend their comprehension of the content.  Osborne (1996) highlighted

research supporting "using an unhurried pace" as an important component of culturally

relevant classroom management.  They also pointed out what was missing from teachers'

practices from a CRP perspective.  Ladson-Billings (1994) described teachers who

believe that knowledge is "continuously recreated, recycling and shared by teachers and

students" (p.80).  The teachers in this study tended to rely so much on direct instruction

that opportunities for inquiry-based instruction and more student-led instruction were

missed, and knowledge was mostly transmitted from teacher to student.  Ladson-Billings

(1995a) also called for teachers to develop a critical consciousness in their students so

they can critique and challenge societal structures.  The researchers pointed out a

significant absence of discussions or recognition of power relationships inside or outside the classroom in the teachers' practices. Without the teachers taking the lead in pointing out power and authority structures, the chance for students to learn to recognize and critique them was lost.

The authors (Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008) spent ample time describing their purposive sampling procedures, data gathering, analyzing and coding methods, and their theoretical grounding in social constructivism and CRP. They triangulated data between observations and interviews and peer debriefed by analyzing data together. They did not check their interpretations with the participating teachers, restricting the credibility of the findings they report. Also, the researchers were only in the classrooms for a 6 week period, which may not have been long enough to see the full range of the teachers' practices. However, the findings of contradictory practices are consistent with other studies which also performed case studies of elementary teachers in urban settings (Bergeron, 2008; Dutro, et al., 2008; Powell, 1997) and found both the presence and absence of culturally relevant pedagogy. These findings are likely transferable to other urban classrooms taught by white teachers, except that these teachers were clearly aligned with constructivist teaching methods.

The study (Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008) provided a strong description of teachers using constructivist methods with urban students. Using the theoretical framework of culturally relevant pedagogy, the authors offered insight into the aspects of social constructivism that are relevant and those that fail to facilitate the success of urban students. Teachers can use lots of relevant practices, but if they don't make the effort to affect students' thinking on deep levels by showing them how to think critically and

construct their own knowledge by initiating more instructional activities, then the ultimate goal of culturally relevant teaching is lost.  In this case, the teachers had the appropriate practices (and potentially, beliefs), but could not complete the process of empowering students with a critical consciousness and a sense of cultural competence.

Multiple connections and similar strengths are also found when CRT is compared with differentiated instruction.  Santamaria (2009) explored the congruent characteristics of culturally relevant teaching (CRT) and differentiated instruction (DI) in a study on two diverse elementary schools with high levels of academic achievement.  Differentiated instruction has a focus on academic diversity, while culturally relevant pedagogy concentrates on cultural and linguistic diversity.  The two "best research-based teaching practices" have distinctive traits, and each approach can be improved by incorporating aspects of the other (p. 231).  The researcher observed two elementary schools closing the achievement gap with culturally and linguistically diverse learners by using a combination of both teaching practices to see if DI was inclusive of and appropriate for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Both schools were pre-K-5, and were located in the North San Diego County school district in California.  The population Bienvenidos Elementary School served was 41.2% Latino students, with 18.6% English language learners and 32.7% use the free- and reduced-lunch program.  The author spent one day a week here for one school year. The population Xavier Elementary School served is 70.1% Latino students with 43.3% English language learners and 53.7% of students received free- and reduced-lunch. Santamaria (2009) spent four hours a week here over two school years.  Both schools had exceeded annual yearly progress targets on state and national standardized assessments.

Data collection included observations, recorded conversations among teachers, administrators, students and parents, and supporting documents. Analysis involved coding procedures to identify data relevant to DI and CRT.

The researcher (Santamaria, 2009) organized the findings within a DI framework including six guidelines: clarifying key concepts, emphasizing critical and creative thinking, engaging all learners, balance between student- and teacher-selected tasks, and using assessment as a teaching tool. Then, she identified culturally relevant practices based on the framework provided by Ladson-Billings (2001, as cited in Santamaria, 2009), which included academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. The findings support the compatibility of the two practices. Santamaria distinguished elements of CRT in every guideline of DI observed in the classrooms of Bienvenidos and Xavier. Additionally, she pointed out the lack of attention to using assessments as teaching tools in CRT, and the lack of focus on meeting the needs of ELLs in DI practices.

Based on her observations, Santamaria (2009) offered several conclusions. First, both DI and CRT exist because the needs of academically, culturally and linguistically diverse students are not being met in mainstream classrooms. Differentiated instruction complements culturally relevant practices, but teachers need to learn how to distinguish between learning differences and cultural/linguistic differences to accurately meet student needs. The author argued that teachers need to learn more about special education so they can provide support and best teaching practices for diverse students "*without* [italics added] submitting them to special education labels and programs" (p. 241).

Santamaria (2009) scrutinized the theories of both DI and CRT for the entire first half of the article. The analysis of both case studies was extremely well grounded in the two theoretical frameworks. The author selected two schools that she already had a professional relationship with, as a consultant, so she was known and trusted in those environments. The schools also had a record of academic achievement with their diverse students, confirming the efficacy of their teachers' practices as reported in this study. Santamaria collected multiple sources of data to triangulate findings, and explained the coding system used to analyze the data. It's unclear whether she used the conversations with participants to check her interpretations or not, so member checking may not have taken place. The elements of CRT found in these case studies match those of other studies concerning mostly Latino students (Arce, 2004; Bergeron, 2008; Juarez, 2008; Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008; Powell, 1997), but no other study in this review considered differentiated instruction in conjunction with CRT. It's likely that the combination of these teaching methods would benefit culturally and linguistically diverse students in other public schools.

Teachers applying culturally relevant teaching strategies are experiencing success. This study showed that a constructive combination of CRT and DI supported the needs of diverse learners, as evidenced by excellent achievement on the adequate yearly progress reports. It's unclear whether the teachers were consciously infusing their differentiated instruction with culturally relevant pedagogy as it's described (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a), or if their best practices just happened to coincide with the literature. Either way, in two diverse, urban schools, teachers were using culturally relevant instructional practices and students were succeeding.

Findings from the first three case studies of new teachers working with Latina/o students reveal successful teachers using many culturally relevant instructional strategies. Even novice teachers are capable of engaging students in a learning community, believing all students are capable of achieving academically, seeing themselves as part of their students' communities, and conceiving of knowledge as being socially constructed. The Latino teachers particularly demonstrated a capacity to develop students' cultural competence through culturally bound curriculum. The more challenging parts of CRP appear to be awareness of larger policy mandates, a level of advocacy for students on a political level, and the critical step of leading students through critiquing social institutions and practices, such as textbook production.

In the comparison studies, researchers found similar challenges to implementing CRP. Constructivist teachers fell short of affecting students' thinking on deep levels by not showing them how to think critically and construct their own knowledge. While teachers also need to learn how to distinguish between learning differences and cultural/linguistic differences to accurately meet student needs, those using CRT in combination with DI are successfully raising student achievement, as evidenced by excellent achievement on the adequate yearly progress reports. Overall, teachers working with Latina/o students are using multiple culturally relevant techniques to structure their classrooms and guide their practices, and students are benefiting academically in some settings.

*Swedish & African Bermudian Students*

These studies were included because they met the criteria of teachers working successfully with diverse elementary school students. Although the student population

and schooling system of Sweden is different from the United States, the findings report teachers using culturally relevant teaching practices to raise student achievement. Likewise, the schooling system of Bermuda is different, too, but the participating teachers demonstrate strong cases of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Damber (2009) investigated the practices within eight third grade classes in Stockholm, Sweden that were overachieving in reading to explore what ways the teacher and classroom setting influence students' successful reading development. The study focused on linguistically and socio-economically diverse student populations for which background factors "would indicate lower expectancy levels of achievement" (p. 43). Eight classes were identified out of a larger study of 1,092 third grade classes as achieving at levels higher than expected, all of which were located in a low income, multicultural district. The study used both quantitative and qualitative measurements and found evidence of practices aligned with culturally relevant teaching.

The researcher (Damber, 2009) used teacher questionnaires, student questionnaires and reading comprehension tests to gather data and statistically controlled for the influence of socio-economic status and language factors. Six educators were interviewed about their practices concerning classroom climate, cooperation, resources, literature, reading acquisition, cross-cultural encounters and "an ordinary week," with follow up questions to ensure accurate interpretation of answers (p. 49). These interviews constitute the majority of the qualitative data, which are categorized into three themes: inclusion, high demands, and high expectations.

The third grade teachers in this study demonstrated a number of culturally relevant practices to create a successful reading program. The teachers' conceptions of

self and others were expressed as they took students into the community to find meaningful text, tailored activities to students' individual language levels, had "faith in the children's competence," and reached out to parents to collaborate on facilitating student success (Damber, 2009, p. 48). Their relevant conceptions of knowledge were demonstrated in the use of dynamic performance-based evaluations, critically selected authentic literature, and diverse scaffolding designed to support all students in high academic achievement.

This study (Damber, 2009) took the theoretical position of investigating resistance to the deficit syndrome. While the researcher used data triangulation between interviews and statistical analysis, and checked interpretations with the interviewees, other aspects of data collection are unclear. There's no detail of whether classroom observations took place, so the qualitative data seem to be exclusively gathered from interviews. The results are questionable if they were not verified by the researcher's observations. Since this study took place in Sweden, it's hard to know how similar the typical schooling practices are to the US, so the contexts may not foster transferability. While the findings are consistent with other studies looking at linguistically diverse classrooms (Arce, 2004; Juarez, 2008; Powell, 1997), no other studies have selected participants based on reading achievement.

The teachers' practices coordinated with the culturally relevant conceptions of self and others and of knowledge, as detailed in the literature (Ladson-Billings, 1994). However, there was no evidence of teachers working to draw on students' home culture and language to create academic content or activities. The researcher did not hold a culturally relevant perspective for data gathering or interpretation, which may explain

that absence of data because the researcher might not have considered it salient to the purposes of the study. The question arises, then, if a practice can be considered culturally relevant if it excludes such a fundamental principle of the theory. Regardless, the high academic achievement of students in reading can be tentatively correlated to the teachers' conceptions as evidenced in their practice.

In the next study, the work of four math teachers in Bermuda reflected their efforts to learn and incorporate CRP specifically into their practices. Grounding his research in culturally relevant teaching and critical theory, Matthews (2003) examined how teachers foster critical consciousness, build on students' cultural knowledge, and "incorporate empowerment orientations toward culture and experience" (p. 65). The participants included four primary teachers chosen from a summer mathematics institute based on their stated interest in incorporating culturally relevant pedagogy into their current math instruction. They included a first year white female teacher, a third year black female teacher, a first year black male teacher, and a black female teacher who also served as deputy principal and had been teaching for 20 years. All four teachers worked with fourth and fifth grade students at schools with predominantly black populations

The researcher used a collective case study design to investigate teacher practices, not the teachers themselves. He collected data by observing each of the four teachers over five months, transcribing interviews, and holding group meetings with all the participants where they analyzed their experiences together. He analyzed the data for "facets" or "complexities" in the teachers' developing understanding of culturally relevant teaching (Matthews, 2003, p. 67). As facets were identified, they became the

focus of subsequent observations, group meetings and conversations.  Four complexities emerged as examples of teachers' efforts to incorporate relevant teaching strategies.

The first complexity the author identified encompassed the use of empowering and intimate relationships in the classroom, which relates to the literature on demonstrating connectedness with students (Ladson-Billings, 1994).  Teaching that built on student's cultural knowledge and experiences fostered critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).  The last two complexities exemplified challenges teachers faced. Sometimes teachers relied on their own *personal* notions of critical thinking instead of culturally relevant types, and built *to* cultural knowledge instead of building on student culture (Matthews, 2003, p. 69).

Examples of teacher actions in this study reflected culturally relevant conceptions of students and fostered connections between their community and global identities (Ladson-Billings, 1994).  One teacher demonstrated her belief in students' abilities by encouraging them to explain their answers and hesitating to intervene when students struggled to figure out math concepts.  One example of the effect these relationships had on students was their tendency to follow her around the classroom, as she seemed a natural and accepted class leader.  She also connected math concepts, such as millions and billions, to international events, such as attacks on the World Trade Center in NYC, prompting students to discuss how such events might affect Bermudian life.

Teachers who struggled with relevant teaching failed to completely connect related ideas to math, so the critical discussions did not ultimately help students comprehend mathematical concepts.  Some teachers felt uncomfortable allowing students to bring aspects of their personal lives into class discussions, so opportunities for them to

use their cultural knowledge and ways of knowing were lost.  Teachers also had trouble

finding effective ways to present cultural information to students because they used very

traditional teaching strategies.  For example, one teacher built *to* student knowledge by

using a menu from a local restaurant, but then did not allow students time to discuss or

explore the activity with their peers.

The researcher found that it was necessary for teachers to rethink the use of

traditional texts, "making use of students' informal ideas and fostering critical

mathematical thinking" (Matthews, 2003, p. 79).  However, he noticed that there was an

absence of critique of societal and schooling structures in teachers' practices, which is an

essential equity component in Ladson-Billings' work (1994).  Finally, he recognized that

teachers most entrenched in traditional practices had the most trouble implementing

culturally relevant teaching, so he recommended that teachers let go of "traditional

perspectives to teaching mathematics" as a prerequisite for applying culturally relevant

instructional practices (Matthews, 2003, p. 80).

The researcher clearly grounded this study in theory.  In the structure of the study,

Matthews (2003) had a supportive relationship with each teacher, facilitating the

collection of honest reflections in the interviews.  He persistently observed them over five

months, and regularly checked his interpretations with the participants in group meetings.

Matthews triangulated the data between interviews, observations and meetings.  The

research was unique in that it took place in Bermuda, and the schooling system was not

described in detail.  The differences in school culture are unknown, and may influence

the transferability of the results to American school settings.  However, it's similar to

other studies that examine the practices of teachers working with African American

students (Bondy, et al., 2007; Hastie, et al., 2006; Howard, 2001; Leonard & Hill, 2008; Lynn, 2006; Milner, 2008; Parsons, et al., 2005; Ware, 2006). Like those studies, Matthews observed successful and challenging attempts at culturally relevant teaching. The findings would likely transfer to other teachers attempting to become culturally relevant teachers and working with African American students.

This study detailed the positive successes of teachers working to make math instruction more culturally relevant. It highlighted many of the struggles teachers encounter, such as changing established teaching habits, building on what students know instead of building to by using their own knowledge, and tying critical discussions back to the content to ensure academic success. There was also a conspicuous lack of attention to critiquing cultural values and societal structures, which characterizes a critical consciousness. However, the teachers were successful at building strong relationships with students and helping them relate mathematical concepts to local and global contexts.

While there is little congruence between the last two studies reviewed here, they both confirm the efforts of teachers who use culturally relevant practices. When teachers hold the belief that all students can succeed, they have a positive effect on student learning, as suggested by the students' literacy success. For teachers who are just beginning to use culturally relevant pedagogy, findings indicate that moving away from traditional teaching practices is an important first step. This move is essential for teachers to be able to truly build on student knowledge instead of shallowly referencing it while still using their own knowledge to direct classroom instruction. It's also necessary that teachers lead students towards a critique of cultural values to develop their critical consciousness. Without this, the application of culturally relevant pedagogy is

incomplete because it doesn't enable students to become critical, thoughtful participants in society.

*Conclusion*

Due to the wide range of teachers and contexts these studies present, the conclusions are varied and complex. Using Ladson-Billings' (1994, 1995a) writings to conceptualize culturally relevant pedagogy, it's useful to analyze these results with her categories in mind. In all the studies on instructional strategies, teachers used at least some culturally relevant strategies, but no one teacher used them all. Most teachers held relevant conceptions of themselves and their students, believing in their abilities to succeed no matter what challenges they faced, and viewed teaching as "pulling knowledge out" by using students' funds of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 34). Teachers also shared the process of constructing knowledge with students by valuing their contributions and incorporating their experiences and perspectives. They all helped students develop necessary skills by supporting them and warmly demanding excellence.

The teachers' practices led to the attainment of CRP's main goals. Academic success was apparent in the studies which measured academic outcomes, finding increased achievement scores on literacy, science and other standardized tests. Cultural competence was supported every time teachers used their students' cultural knowledge and experiences in classroom instruction. The goal that was conspicuously absent from some findings or simply challenging to reach was that of developing a critical consciousness in students. Often, teachers fell back on critiquing knowledge themselves without including students. They also fell back on personal definitions of critical thought

that didn't match the culturally relevant definition, which includes critical perspectives

that challenge inequities that schools perpetuate (Ladson-Billings, 1995b).

<div align="center">Culturally Relevant Classroom Management</div>

An essential component of any pedagogy is classroom management, and the

research in this category of culturally relevant teaching strategies contributes to the

overall goal of this paper: to find what teachers are using in elementary classrooms. The

application of culturally relevant classroom management strategies enhances the structure

of social relations. As Ladson-Billings described it, social relations in a culturally

relevant classroom include equitable teacher-student relationships that extend beyond the

classroom, teacher-connectedness with all students, a community of learners, and

collaborative learning where students are expected to teach and be responsible for each

other (1994, p. 55). The ways social relations are constructed in classrooms are

inherently shaped by the powers at work in the larger social climate beyond the school.

A culturally relevant teacher recognizes these forces, critiques the part school systems

have to play in replicating inequitable practices, and actively challenges the system (p.

128). Four studies in this review referred to components of classroom management and

explored how the teachers enacted a culturally relevant practice in those contexts.

To begin, Langhout and Mitchell (2008) examined how the management

strategies of one teacher were influenced by and perpetuated the hidden curriculum

within the school. This study illustrated the need for and challenges of realizing a truly

relevant pedagogy which, by its nature, is a critique and challenge of the schooling

system that so often marginalizes culturally diverse students. Next, Parsons (2001)

described the practices of a teacher who actively mediated white male privilege, which

threatened the equity of all students' educational experiences, by building a community

of learners and teaching students to care about one another's learning experiences.

Rothstein-Fisch, Trumbull, Isaac, Daley and Perez (2003) reported on two teachers who

constructed a collaborative learning community by incorporating their Latina/o students'

home value of helping one another into their classroom procedures.  Finally, Bondy,

Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007) explored the work of three novice teachers as

they used culturally relevant classroom management within the first few hours of the

school year.

Schools replicate the social forces at work in society through various implicit

practices, termed hidden curriculum.  Langhout and Mitchell (2008) focused on the

hidden curriculum of a low-income elementary school to see if it facilitated academic

disengagement in certain students.  The researchers also looked at how academic

disengagement was mediated by race, ethnicity and gender.  Their findings support the

argument that hidden curriculum institutionalizes racism and controls teacher actions by

equating competence with control over students.  The teacher's work exhibited

components of culturally relevant teaching, but pressure from the hidden curriculum

pushed her actions toward assimilationist methods.

The context of this study was a public K-5 elementary school in a mid-sized

Northeastern town.  The school served 200 students, 66% received free/reduced lunch

and 55% were Black, Latino/a, Asian, biracial or multiracial.  Research was conducted in

a 2nd grade classroom of 21 students: 3 Black, 3 Latino and 5 white boys; 4 Black, 2

Latina and 4 white girls.  Six were labeled as having learning or emotional disabilities, 6

received Title I resources, and 2 were enrolled in the ESL program. The teacher was a young, white woman with 5 years of experience.

The authors (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008) used qualitative and quantitative measures. They followed an ethnographic method of collecting field notes over 3 months of observations, totaling 96 hours, and a structured interview with the teacher. The second author functioned as a participant-observer. The data were analyzed and coded by the second author via open coding and the interview questions were constructed around themes that emerged. The researchers also collected data from the teacher's behavior chart over 4 months and analyzed it via a linear growth model to assess if race/ethnicity and gender could predict name movement, as well as the effects of the chart on subsequent behavior.

Langhout and Mitchell (2008) found that the hidden curriculum at the elementary school was taught primarily through the disciplinary system most teachers used. A behavior chart displayed student names, and students who misbehaved had to move their name to a different color. From analysis of the behavior chart, there were statistically significant ($p<.01$) indicators that both race and gender predicted movement: boys and Black and Latino students were more likely to have their name moved and not a single white girl had her name moved. Also, moving a name on the chart did not increase or decrease the likelihood of that student's name being moved in the future (p. 602). Therefore, instead of redirecting behavior, the effect of the chart was to disengage male, Black and Latino students from academic experiences and send them the "implicit message that their engagement was inappropriate and that learning, and therefore school, was not for them" (p. 603). Findings from observations included that "opportunities to

acquire self-determination, especially for Black and Latino boys, are often unintentionally hindered, and this pattern leads to their disidentification with school" (p. 606). The findings support the argument that hidden curriculum institutionalizes racism, and demonstrate the assimilationist effects of the strategy.

The teacher's beliefs about students aligned with culturally relevant teaching, including believing in their academic ability to succeed and valuing the knowledge and strengths they brought from home (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The researchers note that in two years of working with her, they never heard her use a deficit-based model to talk about children or their families. She frequently made efforts to engage students, for example, by bringing in visitors to the classroom. However, her classroom management practices frequently contradicted her beliefs because of the power of the school-wide hidden curriculum, as manifested in the behavior chart. Observations of the teacher's interactions with components of the school institution (other faculty, administration, procedures) highlighted the influence of other teachers' criticisms and the process of socialization on the teacher's actions. She felt pressured to be "a part of the teacher culture in which all teachers were expected to conform . . . to particular methods" (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008, p. 607). She often received verbal disapproval from other teachers about her lack of rule enforcement and her efforts to make learning fun and engaging were construed as adding to unwanted "chaos" in the school environment.

Rampant and open criticism of the teacher revealed that "rules appeared to receive more attention than academics" (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008, p. 608). The institutional design of the school setting evaluated teaching effectiveness via student discipline and control and the teacher had to respond by acting in contradiction to her beliefs. The

authors concluded that "even teachers are obstructed in their efforts at questioning the hidden curriculum; consequently, it remains invisible" (p. 610). Culturally relevant teachers "work in opposition to the system that employs them" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 128). For this teacher to be culturally relevant, she would have to act true to her beliefs in the face of disapproval and challenge the hidden curriculum directly by ending those practices that rob certain students of positive educational experiences. The findings in this study point out the systemic inequalities that affect both students and teachers. They are challenges on the path to truly critical teaching, but teachers must overcome them and challenge the system to provide culturally relevant education to students.

The study's strengths included a strong theoretical positioning in critical theory and detailed descriptions of the data gathering and analyzing procedures. The researchers (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008) worked with the teacher for 2 years, although the data reported here was collected in a period of 3-4 months, evidencing persistent observation. The authors debriefed with each other, wrote about their researcher bias and progressive subjectivity, and performed a member check with the participating teacher through interviews, adding credibility to the findings. The thick description of the school context implies a level of transferability to schools with similar demographics. The culture of US public schools is likely comparable along socioeconomic lines across the country, recognizing that the individualities of faculty and staff add distinctive qualities to any school's culture and practices. This study's findings highlight the challenges teachers face in applying culturally relevant teaching practices when working with students of color, like other studies (Hyland, 2005; Juarez, 2008; Powell, 1997).

Hidden curriculum appears to perpetuate institutionalized racism through the classroom management strategy described in this study. The findings make a salient and urgent call for culturally relevant teaching strategies to counteract the demoralizing and disengaging effects on boys and Black and Latino students. The pressure teachers experience to conform to certain practices that may conflict with their personal beliefs is not to be underestimated. Meeting the definition of a critical and active culturally relevant teacher is not an easy task. However, becoming aware of hidden curriculums can lead to better understandings of how teacher interactions are related to different student outcomes (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008, p. 610), and challenging them will initiate the practices of a culturally relevant teacher.

The next study observed a teacher who challenged and disrupted the replication of the social force of white male privilege. Parsons (2001) conducted a study on the use of power and caring in an urban elementary classroom. The examples of caring closely follow the description given by Gay (2000) of the power of caring in culturally responsive teaching and relates to Ladson-Billings' call for CR teachers to have a belief in the capacity for all students to succeed. Specifically, Parsons looked at the teacher's approach to "mediating white male privilege, equality, and equity" through specific classroom management strategies at a school in the Southeastern US with a large African American student population (2001, p. 323).

The fourth grade teacher, Angel, volunteered to participate in the case study. Her class was composed of about 50% Black and 50% White students. For seven months, the researcher made weekly visits to the classroom, collecting over 20 observations worth of field notes and performing three interviews with Angel. The coding strategy included

analyzing text segments for similar themes and patterns, and checking credibility via data triangulation with several different data sources.

Findings included evidence of Angel using culturally relevant strategies for structuring social interactions within the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and demonstrating a significant level of caring (Gay, 2000) in her efforts to mediate white male privilege.  Parsons noted, "Angel enables her students to feel emotionally and psychologically safe by maintaining an environment free of degradation" (2001, p. 326). This correlates with the CR component of encouraging a community of learners, which means the students have to care about their classmates (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 69). Angel also believed in "success for all rather than a few children" (Parsons, 2001, p. 332), which aligns with the component of believing that all students can succeed (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 44).

A quantitative component of this study measured the white males' perceptions of the classroom environment on five scales: student cohesiveness, teacher support, student involvement, autonomy and cooperation.  Despite Angel's efforts to limit the white males' access to experiences, they perceived a greater student cohesiveness and student involvement in the classroom than their peers.  On the other three measurements, there was no difference between students' perceptions.  The researcher suggested that the mitigating factor that enabled the white boys to feel positively about student cohesiveness and involvement was Angel's ethic of caring.

As a part of culturally relevant caring, Gay wrote that teachers "model academic, social, personal, and moral behaviors and values for students to emulate" (2000, p. 46). Reflecting this, Angel believed that "her actions taught the fourth-grade students what

was important," and she "prioritized equality, equal access, equity, and fair access as values worth teaching and acted accordingly" (Parsons, 2001, p. 332). She consistently named and dismissed the white males' actions that threatened the equal participation of females or students of color in the classroom, maintaining the fairness of the classroom community. At the same time, she made sure to elicit the participation of those students by calling on them and validating what they had to offer. Her actions, motivated by efforts to mediate the privilege of her white, male students, illustrated the application of culturally responsive teaching strategies.

The researcher's efforts to preserve credibility are supported by data triangulation between observations and interviews, member checking with Angel, detailed descriptions of data gathering and analyzing, and persistent observation over seven months. The strategies the teacher used to construct an equitable learning community could potentially be transferable to other contexts of racially and ethnically diverse elementary classrooms that include white males.

This teacher demonstrated culturally relevant strategies that effectively counteracted the force of white privilege in American society within her classroom. The study didn't mention any influences within the school environment that directly conflicted with her efforts, like the previous study (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). However, she turned her critique of white privilege into an action by challenging it daily in her own class. Culturally relevant classroom management appears to have positive effects on all students, including the students whose cultures already align with the dominant culture of the school. When enacted consistently, these practices can mitigate the effect of white male privilege on the overall classroom community. Although most of

the research that developed CRT involved African American students, the principles can benefit students whose cultures are most often in congruence with institutional school settings.

The next study shifts the focus from challenging school and social systems to embracing students' culture as a resource for relevant classroom management. Rothstein-Fisch, et al. (2003) reported on the process of drawing on student culture to build a collaborative learning community. Pulling information from a five-year study called *Bridging Cultures*, they examined how teachers used their knowledge of Latino students' value of helping others to design test preparation activities that resulted in improved student performance. The teachers' methods were successful examples of cultural competency, where the teacher uses strengths and knowledge students bring from home to design activities, and the collaborative structure of social relations in the classroom, where students are expected to teach and be responsible for each other (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a). However, the latter directly challenges the established school value of individual competition.

This case study was a small part of a larger pre-experimental study with a pretest, posttest and three professional development workshops as treatment. Documented through observations and interviews, the researchers observed each teacher at least twice for two hour segments, held debriefing meetings and performed extensive telephone interviews. Seven elementary teachers, four Latino and three European Americans, representing all grades, K-5, were chosen to participate in the case study based on their "teaching competence and dedication to the success of their students" (Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2003, p. 130). All the teachers worked in schools with more than 95% immigrant

Latino populations in or near Los Angeles. The researchers' findings detailed a variety

of strategies that two teachers implemented as a result of coming to know their students'

cultural strengths, and the effects these strategies had on student assessments.

Drawing on their knowledge of the "collectivistic orientation" of their students,

the teachers utilized the value of helping one another to design and sanction classroom

activities (Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2003, p. 131). Some examples included encouraging a

very vocal student to "whisper the answer to a friend" so another student could answer

questions and feel successful, and redesigning a star chart to focus on the achievement of

the whole class instead of individuals. The latter resulted in a high level of motivation

for group success and all students surpassed the third grade requirement for memorizing

multiplication tables (p. 131).

The teachers used this same knowledge to design test preparation activities. One

teacher gave practice tests individually and then corrected them together. Each small

group was responsible for one question, discussed what the best answer was and then

explained it to the class. The other teacher worked through tests one question at a time,

talking about each question with the entire class and eventually moving into smaller

groups until students were testing alone. Both teachers made the rules about when to

help one another explicit, avoiding confusion. Students came away from group activities

feeling competent, knowing what skills they would need to be successful, and performing

better on standardized tests (Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2003, p. 135).

The culturally relevant strategy of drawing on students' cultural strengths and

knowledge was used to teachers' and students' advantage in these classrooms. The

authors pointed out that the line between *helping* and *cheating* is culturally drawn and

variable, and can become a source of cultural conflict. If teachers view a student's helping behavior as cheating, their actions may reduce learning opportunities, cause internal conflict for a student brought up to value helping others, and create feelings of injustice. Alternatively, when teachers recognize and value the cultural strength of helping that students come to school with, learning opportunities are expanded and students maintain their cultural competency.

The authors (Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2003) grounded their study in the theoretical framework of individualism and collectivism to describe the differences between US school culture and Latino culture, respectively. They provided a clear description of data gathering, a persistent observation of five years in the larger study, peer debriefing with each other, negative case analysis with the uninvolved classroom, and member checks with the participating teachers. The description of schools and teachers was not thick, but the important information (the classroom procedure and the generalized information about Latino culture) implied a level of transferability to other classrooms with Latino students. However, these findings should never be given authority over first hand information of individual students and their families because cultural values may vary within Latino immigrants.

The researchers (Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2003) fit the value of helping others into the established framework of individualism v. collectivism, and future studies may need to use other theoretical frameworks to give a generalized context to culturally defined values. This study observed classrooms where teachers incorporated students' cultural values, like other studies (Arce, 2004; Lynn, 2006; Parsons, et al., 2005; Ware, 2006),

and also found that doing so increased student achievement. In classrooms with high levels of cultural diversity, these findings may or may not be replicated.

This study provided evidence that successful teaching strategies draw from and capitalize on the cultural strengths of students to the benefit of all involved. Teachers who know the cultures of their students and change classroom procedures to reflect those cultural values experience higher student performance and engagement. The value of helping others corresponds with the culturally relevant practice of encouraging students to learn collaboratively. When teachers expected students to be responsible for each others' learning, they all reached higher levels of academic success. The value of collaborative learning directly challenged the dominant school value of individual competition, and the results of challenging that value were distinctly positive for Latina/o students.

Finally, the last study in this section explored the capacity of three elementary school teachers to implement culturally relevant classroom management from the very beginning of the school year. Bondy, et al. (2007) studied the culturally responsive classroom management of three novice teachers to explore how they created safe environments for diverse students. They grounded their inquiry in the literature on culturally responsive pedagogy, psychologically supportive classroom environments, and building resiliency. They found that the teachers developed relationships with students, established clear expectations, communicated in relevant ways, and held students accountable for their actions.

The researchers (Bondy, et al., 2003) specifically looked at how the teachers began developing the classroom community on the first day of school. Conducting a

qualitative case study, they gathered video recordings of the teachers within the first two hours of the first day of school and completed interviews later the same day.  Three female teachers participated, each with fewer than 5 years of teaching experience, and were selected because the first two researchers were already familiar with their practice.  They included a European American third grade teacher, an Asian American fifth grade teacher and an African American second grade teacher.  The teachers' schools served free- and reduced-price lunch to more than 90% of students and more than 90% were African American.  All four researchers collectively analyzed and coded data.

All three teachers used culturally relevant classroom management to establish "positive psychological environments that supported student resilience and achievement" (Bondy, et al., 2003, p. 334).  They valued creating personal relationships with students and helping students create relationships with each other because "they perceived relationships to be at the core of a productive learning community" (p. 335).  Each teacher used a variety of methods to explicitly establish classroom rules and procedures, and communicate to students that they expected academic success from all.  By respectfully repeating requests and calmly delivering consequences, the teachers set a pattern of insistently holding students accountable for meeting all the expectations.  Finally, they used a variety of culturally relevant communication methods, including terms of endearment, humor, familiar words and expressions, popular culture, call-and-response interaction patterns and straightforward directives.

All the researchers had worked in the schools, so their presence was not intrusive and they were able to collect reliable data.  They debriefed with each other throughout analyzing the data, and triangulated between observations and interviews.  The teachers

were included in verifying the results of analysis. The authors (Bondy, et al., 2003) explained the data gathering and analyzing procedures transparently, and gave specific examples for each theme. The study's findings are similar to other studies that observed successful teachers using culturally relevant pedagogy with African American student populations (Love & Kruger, 2005; Milner, 2008) and focused on classroom management (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). The actions and procedures these teachers used could potentially be effective with African American students in other schools, but not necessarily in urban settings because the contexts of urban schools and small suburban/rural schools are so different.

The study gave examples of culturally relevant classroom management that fell under the component of structuring social relations in the classroom. These teachers began to build a connectedness with all their students and encouraged a community of learners by playing games that introduced students to each other within the first two hours of the school year. They also communicated their belief that all students can succeed and began to demonstrate characteristics of warm demanders (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Osborne, 1996). The study highlighted the applicability of culturally relevant principles to classroom management, and showed that novice teachers (less than 5 years experience) are capable of incorporating them. If this study followed up with evidence from later in the school year about the classroom climate or academic achievement, correlations might be made with the use of CRP at the beginning of the year.

These four studies delved into the need for and various applications of culturally relevant classroom management. Classroom management is an element of pedagogy that is molded by social and school pressures to replicate characteristics of the greater US

society.  However, since this society marginalizes numerous groups that do not conform to the dominant Anglo culture, such as students of color, teachers must often challenge established structures to truly enact a culturally relevant pedagogy.  These studies represented the practices of multiple teachers that demonstrated cultural relevance with African American and Latina/o student populations.  Langhout & Mitchell (2008) outlined the effects of hidden curriculum on a teacher's practice, and on the experiences of male, Black and Latino boys.  Two (Parsons, 2001; Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2003) showed the benefits for African American and Latino students when teachers challenge established school values and hidden curriculums in their practice.  Bondy, et al. (2007) demonstrated the culturally relevant actions that teachers took with African American students which created a respectful and supportive classroom community.

As seen in these studies, culturally responsive teaching includes classroom management strategies that challenge exclusionary practices, include all voices, encourage students to build relationships and help each other learn, draw on the cultural values and use patterns of interaction students have at home, and hold students accountable for their actions.  These strategies facilitate student success by enabling equitable access to educational experiences, encouraging them to create and rely on collaborative communities, and facilitate academic achievement for all classroom members.

<center>Culturally Relevant Curriculum Design</center>

Too often, students of color feel like they don't belong in a classroom that only teaches content reflecting the dominant white culture of American society.  Linguistically diverse students can feel the same sense of exclusion when the classroom content doesn't

provide adequate scaffolding for English language learners. Negative effects of exclusion include academic disengagement and failure, especially if a lack of linguistic knowledge becomes misinterpreted as a lack of content knowledge. A culturally relevant teacher draws on the experiences and cultural knowledge of students to design curriculum that engages them by relating to their lives, requires them to use their cultural and linguistic strengths, and challenges them to reach academic success and think critically about the social realities they face (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).

The studies in this section illustrate the power of culturally relevant content to engage students in educational activities, succeed academically, and analyze their world critically. Luykx, et al. (2007) drew attention to the need for relevant curriculum design by analyzing the results of linguistically diverse students' science tests and finding numerous examples of cultural interference in their interpretations of and answers to the questions. Hastie, Martin and Buchanan (2006) and Leonard and Hill (2008) explored the effects of designing curriculum that covers topics relevant to the history of African American students. Souto-Manning (2009) and DeNicolo and Franquiz (2006) studied teachers who used multicultural children's literature to initiate critical discussions about racism in culturally diverse elementary classrooms. Finally, Dutro, Kazemi, Balf, and Lin (2008) examined one teacher's effort to have students research their own cultural backgrounds. All six studies discussed elements of curriculum design that have consequences for the potential of culturally and linguistically diverse students to succeed in a school system that prioritizes European-American cultural knowledge.

Luykx, et al. (2007) examined the effect of children's language and culture on their measured performance in science. Recognizing the influence of cultural values and

epistemologies on knowledge, the researchers analyzed students' responses on a science test to find examples of culturally or linguistically rooted misinterpretations of science concepts. They use the term "funds of knowledge" to refer to the prior knowledge and intellectual resources students bring to school. Academic assessments are not free of cultural bias, and when the test writer's funds of knowledge mismatch with students' funds, the test fails to accurately assess content knowledge, instead highlighting those cultural differences. This study focused on "cultural and linguistic interference in the open-ended responses" of third- and fourth-grade students on science tests (p. 904).

The study (Luykx, et al., 2007) included six urban elementary schools, two with predominantly Hispanic students and many English language learners (47% and 19%), two with large numbers of Haitian American and African American students and many English language learners (46% and 26%) and two with mostly native English speakers. In all 52 third- and fourth-grade classrooms, the researchers introduced an inquiry-based science curriculum and gave written tests consisting of structured and open-ended tasks in which students were asked to explain scientific phenomena or their own reasoning. Data included student responses from over 6,000 tests and qualitative analysis ensued with a team of four bilingual and one monolingual researcher developing a coding system for different types of responses.

Findings highlighted three factors of interference: structural linguistic factors, cultural factors and "languacultural" factors, reflecting linguistic differences that are rooted in cultural differences or cultural differences that are encoded in features of a specific language (Luykx, et al., 2007, p. 904). The researchers gathered several important observations from the results. When students haven't mastered the language of

the assessment, their limited language proficiency can appear to be limited content knowledge. They realized that scientific terms have connotations with everyday vocabulary that vary from language to language. The effort to culturally "ground" test items may contextualize them for some students while decontextualizing them for others. Finally, academic assessments invariably contain implicit languacultural knowledge which different groups of students may not share.

The researchers (Luykx, et al., 2007) concluded that cultural and home language influences (students' funds of knowledge) are integral to virtually every aspect of education, though usually unconscious. Only when educators' assumptions contrast with students' do they become visible. These findings suggest that creating culturally relevant assessments is "unrealistic" (p. 917). The efforts to create culturally *neutral* assessments have the same risks as color blind teaching, which excludes the possibility of students using their funds of knowledge. However, test developers cannot be expected to create accurately culturally relevant tests for diverse student populations. The authors recommend that teachers become aware of the conventions that guide the creation of assessments and make sure all students understand these conventions.

This idea echoed the component of culturally relevant teaching that involves developing students' awareness of power structures (Osborne, 1996). Since the schooling system cannot be tailored to the needs of every group of students, it's up to teachers to show students how to use their funds of knowledge and also understand the dominant culture that influences the structure of school. An important part of this process is developing a critical consciousness in students that not only becomes aware of, but also critiques societal values and institutions (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).

The group of researchers who developed and implemented this study brought a diverse set of skills to the task of interpreting the students' test responses (Luykx, et al., 2007). They were able to engage in peer debriefing and extensive coding procedures, and gave understandable examples for each of the coding categories. There were no sources of data other than the test responses, but there were two pretest and two posttest responses from every student, allowing for some triangulation. There's no evidence of checking the interpretations of students' responses with participating teachers. Since the sample size was so large (1,500 students) and diverse, the findings are likely transferable to similar populations of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

As these authors (Luykx, et al., 2007) recognized, cultural bias exists in every form of knowledge, even those that are often construed as culturally neutral, like science. Since expecting test developers to design culturally relevant assessments is unrealistic because of their inability to access the specific cultural knowledge of all potential test takers, teachers have the capacity to help students succeed by incorporating culturally relevant content in their classrooms, and by teaching students to understand parts of the dominant culture that shape standardized assessments.

The next two studies reported on the specific efforts of teachers to reflect students' cultural history in the design of the curriculum. Hastie, et al. (2006) documented the attempts of two Anglo teachers to implement a culturally relevant physical education program with a class of African American 6th grade students. The researchers designed a unit on stepping, a form of dance rooted in the 19th century gold mines of South Africa's apartheid days. Grounding their work in culturally relevant pedagogy and post-colonial theory, the authors noted that the principles of culturally

relevant pedagogy salient to the study included the belief that all students are capable of academic success, the development of a community of learners, and knowledge is about doing, with the addition of a curriculum grounded in African American heritage (p. 295). Hastie and Martin were also the teachers, and the research questions focused on how they, as teachers, perceived student responses to the unit, what the key factors in achieving those outcomes were, and what implications this held for teaching.

Using ethnographic techniques, the researchers (Hastie, et al., 2006) combined the processes of teacher-as-researcher and reflective scholarship. They designed curriculum, conducted lessons, and held debriefing interviews with the independent observer (Buchanan), who took field notes and assisted in reviewing the lessons each day. The study took place at a rural K-6 elementary school with a majority of African American students. The researchers' university had a positive, established relationship with the school. The stepping unit was taught to 42 6$^{th}$ grade boys and girls in their twice weekly physical education class, culminating in a step show at the end of six weeks.

The teachers found themselves questioning their own adequacy and legitimacy due to their limited familiarity with the content of stepping and their cultural position as Anglo teachers. Their Whiteness situated them in the "uneasy position of 'Other'" as they doubted their right to teach an African American style of dance (Hastie, et al., 2006, p. 301). The students, however, accepted their position as teachers and were actively engaged in the content. They quickly formed groups, needed very little direction from the teachers before creating their own steps, and positively encouraged each other in the formation and performance of the dance. The content itself was a motivating factor for the students, facilitated by the teachers' relevant conceptions of the students and of

knowledge (all students can succeed and knowledge is doing). The study does not specifically report on the teachers' strategies for forming a community of learners.

As the time spent at the school increased, the researchers realized that the students "may well have had less in common with an African-American cultural heritage and more with the Coca-Cola generation" (Hastie, et al., 2006, p. 304). This calls into question whether the teachers had reproduced or disrupted a colonizing relationship (White teachers instructing a fundamentally African-American topic). They concluded that for White teachers to successfully realize culturally relevant pedagogy requires that they become aware of their "positionality as members of the dominant group," and take into consideration the potential meanings of their actions in the context of culture and race (p. 304).

The students were chosen by default of the school being near the university the researchers worked with, in the southeast. They didn't explain why they chose the 6th grade class, but all 42 students were from similar rural backgrounds (Hastie, et al., 2006). The authors clearly explained their theory as rooted in post-colonialism and culturally relevant pedagogy. They established triangulation by having the third author independently observe the classes. The data were analyzed through frequent discussions using peer debriefing and member checking (as the researchers were also the teachers). The main finding, that teachers must be concerned about their positionality as members of the dominant group, seems accurate and transferable. The findings are credible, since the teachers/researchers are capable of portraying their own viewpoints accurately. The teachers taught the unit through to completion, culminating in a school-wide performance assembly, satisfying prolonged engagement and persistent observation components. This

study was concerned with African American students (Leonard & Hill, 2008; Milner, 2008; Parsons, et al., 2005) and White teachers working with diverse students (Dutro, et al., 2008; Hyland, 2005; Juarez, 2008; Parsons, 2001; Powell, 1997), with a unique focus on the cultural positionality of white teachers teaching African American content.

This study (Hastie, et al., 2006) made a strong case for the necessary sociopolitical consciousness of teachers as a prerequisite of the successful application of culturally relevant pedagogy. Not just any White teachers, but those who take a serious attitude of accountability towards being a member of the dominant group, can effectually implement CRP. However, more evidence of what the students had to say about the unit might deepen the complexities of that awareness. The findings report a significant amount of engagement on the part of students and the wider school community, suggesting that the relevant content encouraged students to participate. However, there was no control group to validate a causal relationship between the content and student engagement. The authors left out the experiences of the non-performing individuals, and their experiences are needed to understand the success of the unit. These findings suggest that to effectively use culturally relevant teaching strategies, teachers must be aware of privilege (Parsons, 2001) and perhaps eventually become bicultural (Klug & Whitfield, 2003).

The following study also looks at the effect of content that incorporates African American history on the learning experiences of African American students. With the lens of sociocultural theory, Leonard and Hill (2008) studied ways that culturally relevant multimedia support student discourse and learning in diverse classrooms. They used qualitative methods to gather data in two charter schools in Philadelphia and New York

with over 98% African American student population, and 98% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch. In two classes each of third and fourth grade students, the researchers provided teachers with three texts and a computer module about the Underground Railroad. The computer module included questions that assessed students' math and science knowledge.

The researchers (Leonard & Hill, 2008) recorded teachers as they read the texts to their class (audio and video), and transcribed and analyzed the corresponding lessons for general patterns, discourse patterns, teaching strategies and speaking turns. The multimedia component created a file of student scores on the science/math assessment. The two fourth grade teachers were European American and Asian American. The two third grade teachers were Latino and African American. The findings included three major observations on the effect of culturally relevant texts.

Whether the discourse followed traditional or nontraditional patterns, the data suggested that "culturally relevant multimedia engages teachers and students in high levels of classroom discourse" (Leonard & Hill, 2008, p. 39). The authors used the terms "text" and "multimedia" interchangeably, it seems, although here they were probably referring to the written texts that were read aloud in class. No reported findings noted levels of discourse related to the computer module.

The texts provided an anchor for students to learn science concepts that were tested on the computer module. The mean scores of students at both schools were above 90%, implying that detailed discussion about science components in class helped students to retain "culturally relevant science information" (Leonard & Hill, 2008, p. 38). As a

result of these data, the researchers suggested that culturally relevant multimedia may be used to support inquiry.

Finally, they concluded that "culturally relevant texts that deal with issues of social justice influence the norms and discourse dynamics in classrooms" (Leonard & Hill, 2008, p. 39). Students were more engaged with topics of freedom, equality, treatment of slaves, and travel on the Underground Railroad. The authors asserted that students "identified with the literary characters" and engaged with the texts on an "emotional level" (p. 39).

This study (Leonard & Hill, 2008) has the strength of data triangulation between the audio and video recordings and the science assessments from the computer module, and a description of the thorough coding analysis. However, there's a lack of member checks to ensure the interpretations of the discourse accurately represent the voices of teachers and students. Without control groups, there's no way of knowing if the identified characteristics of discourse were actually stimulated by the texts, or were the norm in the class due to teacher-student relationships or other factors. More discussion about how students may have seen themselves or their experiences reflected in the content would deepen the significance of these findings.

While this research headed in a much needed direction of measuring achievement results from using culturally relevant content, the conclusions drawn from this study are very tentative. While the engagement of students is evident, it's still questionable whether the engagement is a result of the cultural relevance of the texts. Like others (Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2003; Hastie, et al., 2006), these researchers focused on teachers incorporating cultural values and content relevant to their students and found increased

academic engagement.  However, this study looked exclusively at culturally relevant curriculum content and omitted any focus on the other qualities of culturally relevant teaching in general.  More studies need to use control groups and replicate these findings before their conclusions are certain, but these findings clearly suggest that culturally relevant content facilitates student engagement.

Two studies concentrated on the use of multicultural children's literature to facilitate critical discussions in elementary school classrooms.  Souto-Manning (2009) used the framework of critical literacy to describe how multicultural books serve as conversation starters for teachers and students to engage in dialogue and uncover social issues in texts.  The findings illustrate the critical consciousness component of culturally relevant pedagogy, where students develop the skills necessary to critique cultural norms, values and institutions.  All three of her specific research questions touched on issues salient to culturally relevant teaching: "How can students consider multiple perspectives without adopting an exclusionary view?  In which ways can we meet the individual needs of children without excluding and/or segregating them?  How can we value students' diversity of experiences and backgrounds as something we can build on, instead of something that needs to be fixed?" (p. 55).

Focusing on diversity and access, the author employed the method of teacher research to record and interpret data collected in her own first grade classroom.  Over two years, Souto-Manning (2009) gathered field notes of classroom interactions, student artifacts and interviews, journal entries and audio recordings of small and large group activities.  Her 19 first grade students from a variety of cultural and SES backgrounds, her teaching assistant, and other teachers were included in the study.  Most of the

students stayed with her as she moved to teaching second grade in the second year of the study. The researcher performed a constant comparative data analysis throughout.

Souto-Manning's (2009) practice reflected culturally relevant constructions of social interactions, facilitating cultural competence and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a). She made students central in the classroom by constructing the curriculum around students' interests and curiosities, including seeking information from families to choose relevant content. Recognizing the need for a collaborative community of learners, she took specific steps to engage students in authentic dialogue to learn about multiple perspectives to challenge the conception of absolute truth. Souto-Manning and her students explored "multiple texts and versions of the civil rights movement and situated instances of racism" by reading multicultural children's literature and media reports of discrimination, unemployment rates, housing, and educational opportunities (p. 57).

They began by reading three different versions of the story, *The Three Little Pigs* to promote the "importance and validity of multiple voices in the classroom" (Souto-Manning, 2009, p. 61). In the resulting dialogue, students began to question their previous assumptions of right and wrong, and "started seeing practices that differed from theirs as equally valid" (p. 63). As the students delved into texts on the civil rights movement, they began to see parallels between the stories and their own experiences in school, especially the pull-out programs that provided special and gifted education. They discovered that all the students in their class receiving gifted education were white or Asian, all the students receiving ESOL services were Asian or Latinos, and all those receiving special education were African American boys. After becoming aware of the

issue, the first graders constructed a solution and petitioned their parents for support. With cooperation from the administration, the following year all the students stayed together and had the resource teachers come to their classroom to provide services. The teacher's use of multicultural texts inspired conversations that eventually led to the students critiquing and challenging the status quo in their own school.

By performing data triangulation and persistent observation, the findings that Souto-Manning (2009) reported are likely an accurate representation of the students, although highly specific to the context of her classroom. Some level of member checking and evidence of peer debriefing would strengthen the claims of this study. While the difficulties of implementing her practice on a wider scale are probably significant, the author was confident "the children's voices would support this model for all" (p. 70). It's hard to transfer the results of a highly motivated and invested teacher's practice to other contexts, but this study provided a situated representation of the effects and possibilities of a culturally relevant pedagogy that facilitated a sociopolitical consciousness in students as young as 6 and 7 years old. Although other studies have documented the use of culturally relevant practices in early elementary education (Damber, 2009; Juarez, 2008), Souto-Manning provided a very thin description of the social and cultural context of the school and her students, so it's unknown whether these findings can relate to specific student populations or schooling contexts.

Souto-Manning's (2009) research provided a sound example of applying principles of culturally relevant teaching to a diverse class of learners. Her practice supported students' cultural competence by tailoring curriculum to meet their interests, and facilitated their critical consciousness by initiating critical dialogue with multicultural

literature that led to a critique of their school's culture. Her relevant construction of social interactions made their productive discussions possible by demonstrating and teaching the value of multiple perspectives. It remains to be seen if the same practices would inspire such powerful responses in other groups of students, or if these 19 students were the exception. Also, Souto-Manning's work did not mention the importance or presence of academic success, which Ladson-Billings included in her theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (1995a).

The second study to use multicultural children's literature also referenced issues of racism. DeNicolo and Franquiz (2006) observed a diverse English language arts class to explore how students drew on cultural and linguistic knowledge to discuss multicultural literature. The study took place in a fourth grade classroom at a bilingual elementary school that served a large Latina/o population in a Midwestern city. The urban school had recently adopted a structured literacy program that prioritized skills and proficiency over critical reading practices (p. 159). The teacher, Mrs. Lynn, chose to supplement the literacy program with discussion circles so students experienced a different style of participation which required them to take up responsibility with designated roles and "access multiple linguistic codes in making meaning of text" (p. 160).

Mrs. Lynn was an African American woman known for her activism within the bilingual school, which included learning Spanish as a second language and immersing herself in the community. The researchers (DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006) wrote that she understood teaching as a sociopolitical role, like the teachers Ladson-Billings (1995a) described. She chose multicultural literature that coincided with the theme of the

required literacy program, represented the students' age and racial/cultural backgrounds, and were available in Spanish.  The researchers used ethnographic methods to collect field notes, interviews, audio and video recordings, student-produced artifacts, such as role sheets, evaluations and written responses.

The purpose of literature discussion in this classroom was "to invite students to use their life experiences as linguistic and cultural tools" to understand the stories they read (DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006, p. 163).  The particular story students read in the study dealt with a young girl experiencing racial insults.  Listening to four girls discuss the story, the researchers observed them critically analyze the concepts of race and racial slurs, and imagine their own responses to a situation like that.  The girls identified as Puerto Rican/African American, African American, Mexican American (proficient in English) and Mexican American (more proficient in Spanish) (p. 157).  The authors concluded that when students see their own lives reflected in a text, "they are more likely to identify critical encounters in their reading outside the classroom" (p. 168).  Additionally, when they're encouraged to discuss with peers, they support one another in the development of a critical lens, "the examination of values, beliefs, and events in personal and collective lives" (p. 168).  The literature offered students an opportunity to understand tensions like these and reflect on a variety of solutions to critical encounters with social issues.

The study (DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006) described only one conversation among four students.  The researchers did not perform member checks or describe data analysis methods clearly.  While data triangulation was used, the authors did not explain why certain data were included or excluded.  While the description of the school and

classroom was thin, many details were given about the teacher. The findings may be transferable to other diverse classrooms, but it's unclear if multicultural literature would have the same effect on homogenous classrooms, or if literature about other issues, besides race, would produce such rich discussions. Like the other studies in this section (Leonard & Hill, 2008; Souto-Manning, 2009), DeNicolo and Franquiz examined the role of culturally relevant curriculum in supporting critical discussions and developing critical consciousness by reflecting student's realities.

Multicultural literature in conjunction with teacher support and modeling helps students develop the critical consciousness that Ladson-Billings named as an important component of culturally relevant pedagogy (1995a). Students need to be empowered with the skills to negotiate, critique and challenge the cultural values and institutions around them. When students see themselves or their experiences reflected in literature, it opens a forum for them to problematize the issues, use their cultural and linguistic knowledge to explore and understand them, and help each other reflect on solutions. In this way, their cultural competence is also supported (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).

The last article in this section presented a situation that elementary school teachers new to culturally relevant pedagogy could see themselves in. Dutro, et al. (2008) examined one teacher's interpretation of culturally relevant pedagogy as she assigned a project requiring students to research their cultural heritage. Her effort to encourage students' cultural competency highlighted the complexities of engaging in issues of culture and race in diverse classrooms. Specifically, the researchers asked how the assignment interacted with children's ideas about their own and others' cultural and racial positioning, and how opportunities for critical engagement with issues of racial and

cultural difference were provided or limited.  This qualitative case study followed typical

data collecting methods of weekly observations and audio recorded class discussions over

one school year.  Additionally, they included the teacher as a co-author of the article.

The urban class of 23 fourth and fifth grade students included representatives of 9

languages, identified as 11 different racial-ethnic backgrounds, 3 major religions

(Muslims, Christians and Buddhists), and came from poor, working-class and lower

middle class households (Dutro, et al., 2008, p. 279).  The teacher's project required

students to research and write a report about one aspect of their cultural heritage that

would be shared with each other, students from other classes, parents, and family

members.  They used books, internet sites, and interviews of family members to collect

information.  In the beginning, students were prone to connecting the definition of culture

with a specific country of origin.  This perspective gradually changed to include personal

or family narratives after they presented their corresponding posters to other students and

families.

The researchers identified these student conceptions as one of the shortcomings of

the assignment.  The teacher's instruction lacked a definition of culture that prevented the

underlying assumption that certain elements (e.g., geography, food, clothing, architecture,

games) were static and consistent within cultural groups (Dutro, et al., 2008, p. 278).

Only when students raised issues of race and identity in classroom dialogues did they

begin to develop the critical consciousness that Ladson-Billings calls for (1995a).  As

certain biracial students expressed their frustration with students who did not accept their

self-identifications with certain ethnicities because of the way they looked, the class

discussion turned to exploring the socially constructed boundaries of race.

Initially, most students had little hesitation in choosing a country to research. Twelve of the students were "born in another country, immigrated to the US by the age of 5, or had parents who were born outside of the US" (Dutro, et al., 2008, p. 286). Two students focused on Native American tribes, and most of the White children readily chose a European country of focus. Of the three biracial students, two chose to focus on their non-White heritage. The prevailing practice of choosing a country outside the US (besides the Native American students) meant that White students were expected to follow suit instead of claiming American heritage. The researchers noted, "Whiteness was tied to Europe and . . . to be 'from' the United States was not viewed as legitimate" (p. 287). The legitimacy of the biracial students' claims of racial identities was also challenged when questioned by other students in the school.

Following the presentation of their research, the biracial students asked to hold a whole-class discussion on the subject. They began to call the meaning of racial categories into question after encountering students who judged their backgrounds based on appearances instead of on the information they presented. One student argued that "color is an insufficient marker of racial identity" (Dutro, et al., 2008, p. 289). As the discussion continued, the teacher supported students' encounters with and critique of the social constructions of race. They pointed out the complexities of racial categories and argued that identity is how one views oneself, noting how a category such as White is incomplete, often masking difference (p. 292).

The teacher's culturally relevant construction of social interactions made the depth of these classroom conversations possible. Her practice was generally student-centered, focusing on group work and problem-solving activities that valued everyone's

input in whole-class and small-group settings.  She held high academic expectations of all her students, and was known in the school for "transforming kids considered 'difficult' into positive, valued members of the classroom community" (Dutro, et al., 2008, p. 280). Beyond this assignment, her practice reflected valuable tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy.

From the example of her attempt at creating a culturally relevant project, the researchers gleaned important considerations to be taken in ensuring that all students are provided with meaningful encounters with their cultural backgrounds.  First of all, defining *culture* is important to avoid simplistic associations (such as, with countries) and to highlight implicit conflations (such as, with race).  This will enable students with detached connections to places of ancestry to find more relevant definitions of their cultural or racial-ethnic identities.  An explicit focus of inquiry into these topics is necessary for pedagogy to be relevant and facilitate the development of students' critical consciousness.  This teacher's example shows how openness to students' feelings and perceptions is required to create opportunities for critical reflection.

This study (Dutro, et al., 2008) emerged as a subset of a larger, two year study, so the teacher and researchers had long-term experience with these students.  The authors clearly related their theoretical positioning by referencing the work of established researchers in the fields of critical race theory, culturally responsive pedagogy, and others.  They described how they gathered and analyzed data, although they didn't give tangible examples of the coding themes they derived.  While the length of the case study was about 3 weeks, the researchers spent two years in the classroom, so they were very familiar with the contexts students were speaking in. They referenced the responses of

colleagues to the study as part of their findings, illustrating peer debriefing. Member checks with the teacher were included in biweekly research meetings, and interviews were conducted with the students after the project to ensure their accurate representation in the article. Students' perspectives were triangulated between informal talk, formal talk about the project, and the text of the posters themselves.

Culturally relevant curriculum design has the potential to engage elementary students in meaningful dialogue about their perspectives on racial-ethnic and cultural identities and to involve them in critical analysis of the cultural norms that define them. The previous two studies (DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006; Souto-Manning, 2009) provided similar examples of fostering critical dialogue in elementary school classrooms and of children's experiences with race and culture. The conclusions from this teacher's initial attempts to design a relevant project are useful for other teachers new to CRP. Teachers need guidance and examples of how to sensitively facilitate student inquiry in issues of culture and race, which are salient to culturally relevant teaching and the sociopolitical contexts of the classroom. Given that this level of inquiry happened in an extremely diverse classroom, it remains to be seen if a more homogenous class would have the knowledge or experiences necessary to engage with these subjects so insistently. Without another class to compare, it's hard to know if the dialogue's progression to critical analysis was a unique quality of this collection of students, or if it was more dependent on the teacher's attention and willingness to support engagement with these issues.

This section on the culturally relevant design of classroom curriculum analyzed six articles that studied the importance and consequences of using content that reflects the

backgrounds and knowledge of students. Luykx, et al. (2007) highlighted the need for

attention to this subject by reporting on the cultural bias and linguistic interferences that

limited the accuracy of a science test to measure student knowledge. Taking the cultural

bias of knowledge into consideration, teachers can make curriculum more relevant by

drawing on students' funds of knowledge and developing their critical consciousness of

the dominant culture's influence on school. Hastie, et al. (2006) and Leonard and Hill

(2008) studied teachers' efforts to incorporate relevant content knowledge, and Souto-

Manning (2009) and DeNicolo and Franquiz (2006) detailed the role of multicultural

literature in facilitating students' critical consciousness. Dutro, et al. (2008) synthesized

the two approaches by assigning a research project on individual cultural backgrounds

which resulted in a critical discussion of race and whiteness in an elementary classroom.

These studies drew attention to the complex factors at play in curriculum design.

First of all, it's clear that conflict between the culturally specific knowledge of school

(via the standardized curriculum or test designer) and that of students can inhibit the

learning process by generating miscommunications and misinterpretations. When

teachers compensate for the monoculture of public school by designing a culturally

relevant curriculum, students are more engaged in learning. Using multicultural

children's literature, which is relevant curriculum as far as it reflects elements of

students' lives, can initiate critical discussions that analyze the social realities students

face, facilitating the development of the critical consciousness Ladson-Billings called for

(1995a). A successful curriculum design relates to students' lives, uses students' culture

as a vehicle for learning, and enables them to critique and challenge the dominant social

values and institutions. However, no studies confirmed increased academic performance.

Perhaps a relevant curriculum by itself is not enough to produce academic excellence in students, but must happen concurrently with relevant classroom management and instruction.

<div style="text-align:center">Culturally Relevant Teaching for American Indian Students</div>

Progress towards culturally relevant education for Native American students has frequently taken the form of curriculum design and community schools (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002).  For example, Adams, Adam and Opbroek (2005) analyzed the effects of a math unit designed with Yup'ik culturally specific knowledge that significantly increased student achievement in a rural Alaskan school.  Culturally relevant teaching also influences school related factors which affect student achievement.  Baydala, et al. (2009) measured Canadian Aboriginal children's self-beliefs and behavioral development and found that certain characteristics correlated to higher achievement.  Powers (2006) surveyed urban American Indian youths and discovered correlations between students' perceptions of the school climate and positive educational outcomes.  In a culturally relevant school environment, teachers support students' cultural strengths and knowledge, creating a supportive, caring atmosphere where students can feel that they belong.

Adams, et al. (2005) described the successful implementation of a culturally relevant math unit with Alaska Native and Caucasian students in rural Alaska.  The math unit was created with the help of a Yup'ik elder from Akiachak, Alaska.  The study recorded a qualitative description of the lesson itself, and quantitative data from pretest and posttest scores.  The students in this rural class outperformed all other classes involved, including rural and urban control and treatment groups.  The findings suggest

that culturally relevant content for Alaska Native students combined with culturally relevant pedagogy of the teacher can produce academic success.

The curriculum, a module from Math in a Cultural Context (MCC), used Yup'ik elders' methods of measuring between objects at a distance as a basis for understanding angles and measurements. The teacher, Ms. Opbroek, was a Caucasian woman in her seventh year of teaching, including five years in rural Alaska. The rural town of 549 residents included a mixture of Athabaskan Indians and non-Natives. The student population consisted of 50% Athabaskan, 49% Caucasian, and 1% African American and Asians. About 55% of students received free or reduced lunches. In the fifth- and sixth-grade multiage class, 3 students were Athabaskan and 13 were Caucasian. The qualitative data included videotaped classroom observations, teacher interviews, and transcriptions of discussions among consultants during video analysis. Twelve consultants viewed the lessons and made comments that were included in the discussion.

The teacher demonstrated culturally relevant teaching strategies that stemmed from her use of constructivism and supported the success of students with the relevant math content. Ms. Opbroek structured the class so that students felt comfortable sharing their ideas and responding to other students, building a classroom community (Ladson-Billings, 1994). They used their own knowledge to pose questions and offer answers about the content. The teacher spoke patiently and waited for students to think and respond (Osborne, 1996). She used guiding questions and gave students ownership of the lesson and the knowledge, demonstrating a conception of knowledge as recreated, recycled and shared (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The Yup'ik consultants pointed out her pattern of interaction, stepping in and out of conversation and allowing students to carry the momentum, as strikingly similar to the way Yup'ik elders teach. Evidence of a collaborative community of learners appeared as each individual student acted as part of the whole group. All students were aiming for the same end result of understanding even as they challenged and contradicted each other in discussions. The test scores from this class increased by 15 percentage points from pretest to posttest, reaching a posttest score of 82.5%. At the top of the list of all classes pre- and post-tested, this class scored 14.25 percentage points higher than the second most successful class. The authors noted that considering the majority of Caucasian students that excelled with this curriculum, it appeared that all students can learn from math curriculum designed within Alaska Native cultural contexts.

Adams, et al. (2005) collected a solid amount of data for this study. Although they didn't explain why this class was chosen to implement the curriculum, they engaged in data triangulation between interviews and video-recordings, described analysis procedures, peer debriefed with the group of twelve consultants, and member checked with the teacher, Ms. Opbroek. The context of this study may be similar to other rural schools, with a majority of Caucasian students and some Native American or Alaska Native students. The study was unlike others in this literature review in its focus on Alaska Native students, but echoed the efforts of other teachers to incorporate culturally relevant content into their classrooms (Hastie, et al., 2006; Leonard & Hill, 2008).

The findings in this study demonstrated a successful application of culturally relevant pedagogy. They raise the question of what cultural congruence existed between the Yup'ik content and teaching style (the Yup'ik elders identified the teacher's method

as relevant), and the Caucasian students in the class. The teacher's work showed congruence between culturally relevant pedagogy and constructivist teaching, like Patchen and Cox-Peterson (2008), which might explain the success of the Caucasian students. These findings suggest there may be universally relevant practices present in the classroom that facilitate success for both Caucasian and Alaska Native students beyond the content of the curriculum.

Since culturally relevant teaching includes teacher practices beyond curriculum design, it also strongly influences the atmosphere of comfort and support students experience in school. Specifically, a culturally relevant teacher "uses student culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17). When a student's culture is valued and accessed in school, students can be themselves more, are likely to form stronger friendships with others, and feel like the school's climate is inviting and supportive. The following two studies assess very different populations of native students, but both highlight the positive effects of culturally relevant pedagogy on student success.

Baydala, et al. (2009) surveyed Canadian Aboriginal students in a small charter school to explore factors contributing to school success. The researchers, recognizing the low correlations between academic achievement and intelligence test scores among Canadian Aboriginal and American Indian students, chose to examine how self-beliefs and behavioral development relate to academic achievement. They found that culturally appropriate pedagogy that supports student relationships and teaches leadership and study skills may facilitate academic achievement.

The participants of this study included students grades 1 through 8 who attended a small, rural charter school in Alberta, Canada, totaling 69 students and their teachers and primary caregivers. Fifty-eight students reported speaking one or two of six different native languages at home. The charter school was the first indigenous children's charter school in Canada. The programs were based on an indigenous approach to teaching and learning, including language instruction in both Cree and Stoney. Thirty percent of the teachers and staff were of indigenous ancestry.

The three surveys used included the SPPC, a measure of self-belief, the BASC, a measure of behavioral and emotional development, and the WIAT II, a measure of academic skills. The SPPC consisted of six to nine subscales, Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, Behavioral Conduct, Global Self Worth, and for grades 7 and 8, Job Competence, Romantic Appeal, and Close Friendships. Teachers and caregivers completed the BASC for each student. The WIAT II yielded scores for Reading, Mathematics, Written Language, and Oral Language. The researchers performed a comparative analysis of all test scores.

The authors (Baydala, et al., 2009) found a few statistically significant correlations. Students who made positive judgments about their own behavior on the SPPC had significantly higher scores on the WIAT II written and total composites. This suggests that children's positive perceptions of their behavior function as an academic enabler. For students in Grades 7 and 8, significant positive correlations were found between the SPPC Close Friendships subtest and academic achievement, but the sample size is so small these findings are cautious. They signify that a child's sense of belonging at school may support academic achievement, which is facilitated by the school's

incorporation of children's language and cultural beliefs, making friendships more easily established. The strongest correlations were found for Teacher BASC ratings of Leadership, Study Skills, Learning Problems, and Attention Problems, which accounted for variability in WIAT II total composite scores. The authors focused on Leadership and Study Skills, suggesting that culturally appropriate interventions that develop these may facilitate academic achievement. However, care must be taken to ensure the ways in which these skills are defined within the Aboriginal community are considered in any intervention.

The researchers (Baydala, et al., 2009) performed statistical analyses and limited themselves to defining only correlations and suggestions, keeping in mind the small sample size of the study. The conditions of an indigenous charter school in Canada are very specialized, limiting the generalization of findings to other American Indian students. The findings would be even less relevant to urban students than rural students in the US. The correlations are not strong enough to warrant making educational decisions. However, the findings are similar to other studies (Powers, 2006), which noticed an increase in academic achievement when the school climate included culturally relevant programs facilitating feelings of belonging at school.

In this charter school, culturally relevant pedagogy benefited students because it provided a welcoming school environment that enabled them to view their own behavior positively and make close friendships more readily, both of which are indicators of academic success. This correlates to Powers (2006), who found that students' perceptions of school climate, influenced most by the presence of supportive personnel, had a considerable effect on educational outcomes.

Powers (2006) explored factors that contributed to the academic success of urban American Indian students. Using survey data from 240 students taken from a larger study, the author compared students that identified strongly with American Indian culture and those that did not. Powers found that universal principles of learning were relevant to American Indian students, and the American Indian cultural programs facilitated success by enhancing conditions that led to school success for all students. These findings suggest that culturally relevant school programs that draw on the history, language and values of American Indian students enable more students to succeed in urban schools.

Specifically, Powers (2006) asked if culture-specific programs contributed more than "universally accepted predictors of school success" and if an individual's cultural identification influenced the effects of culturally relevant programs. She used survey data from 240 American Indian students, primarily Ojibwa, Lakota, or Dakota, ranging from 9 to 18 years old. The data had been collected as part of the Indian Youth Resiliency Impact Study. The students were divided into two groups: 134 students were highly oriented toward their Native culture, and 106 were less affiliated (p. 38). Powers used structural equation modeling to determine the effect of latent variables (e.g., cultural programming, school climate, family income, etc.) on observed variables, such as educational outcomes including achievement, presence and participation, and school completion (p. 36).

The study found school climate had the largest total effect among all of the variables, and cultural programming had larger effects on students who were strongly affiliated with their Native culture. Personnel supportiveness was the major factor in

students' perceptions about their school's climate. The culturally compatible programs may have worked indirectly by increasing access to sound teaching and learning practices. However, culturally relevant programs were more associated with the positive school outcomes of students strongly identified with Native culture. Perhaps strongly identified students chose cultural programming, or the programs facilitated cultural maintenance. Native cultural identification correlated with students' presence and participation at school and their intention to complete school, but not with achievement.

The researcher (Powers, 2006) noted that the sample may limit the findings of the study. The results may not be generalizable to students on reservations, other minority populations, or other Indian nations besides the three Midwestern tribes included. None of the survey items addressed affiliation with the majority culture. They were constructed to meet the needs of the IRIS project, so some factors relevant to this study were excluded. Also, the self-reported data could not be triangulated with student grades, attendance or quality of instruction they received. All significant correlations had a *p* value of <.05, but the correlations do not unequivocally support the suggested causalities.

These findings support the use of culturally relevant pedagogy, and they call into question the activating agent on student success. The powerful factor could simply be the support and inclusion students feel when they experience their culture reflected in school curriculum instead of the curriculum content itself. Either way, these findings showed a positive influence on all students, not just those strongly identified with Native culture, suggesting the presence of certain universally accepted predictors of school success. In this study, that predictor appeared to be the students' perception of the school climate, influenced by supportive personnel. Like Adams, et al. (2005) found, culturally relevant

teaching practices can influence academic success in students of varying cultures or cultural identities.

Although the populations in the last two studies are very different, both point to the conclusion that culturally relevant teaching, which values the cultural knowledge, values and languages that students bring to school, facilitates a positive school environment that enables success. When school personnel are supportive, accepting and valuing students' culture, students' perceptions of themselves and of school are positive which facilitates positive school outcomes.

All three studies (Adams, et al., 2005; Baydala, et al., 2009; Powers, 2006) focused on native students, Alaska Native, Canadian Aboriginal, and American Indian, respectively. Adams, et al. found increased achievement due to relevant curriculum and teaching style. Baydala, et al. found correlations between students' academic achievement and their positive self-perceptions, supported by a culturally relevant charter school. Powers found correlations between supportive school climates with culturally relevant programs and academic achievement, presence and participation, and school completion. When students experience an education that reflects their cultural values and draws on their strengths, they participate and achieve more in school.

Summary

This chapter provided thorough descriptions of how culturally relevant pedagogy is filtered through teachers' beliefs, enacted in multiple areas of classroom practice, and applied with Native student populations. The procedures were critiqued and the findings were summarized and analyzed. The research was reviewed to determine how

elementary school teachers are implementing culturally relevant teaching strategies in their classrooms.  The review of literature on Teacher Beliefs highlighted the challenges teachers face in accepting the tenets of CRP, especially over controversial subjects, such as color-blindness, bilingual education, and ability grouping.  The research on Culturally Relevant Instructional Strategies indicated that teachers meet some, but not all, CRP goals by employing a wide range of methods.  In the section on Culturally Relevant Classroom Management, research suggested that teachers are using practices that support respectful learning communities and demonstrating cultural relevance with African American and Latina/o students.  The research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum Design indicated that students were more engaged when the curriculum related to their culturally specific background knowledge and interests.  Finally, the research on Culturally Relevant Teaching for American Indian Students addressed disparate populations, yet all highlighted the positively engaging effect of education that reflected students' cultural values.  The following chapter will note significant patterns in the findings and underscore the unresolved questions that persist in the field.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

Introduction

I've spent the last three chapters exploring the question of how teachers are incorporating culturally relevant pedagogy into their elementary school classrooms. The topic of cultural relevance strikes a chord in multiple social and political contexts. Critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory inform how educators conceptualize the process of serving diverse students in ways that increase social justice and fight societal inequalities. Education that builds on prior knowledge uses students' firsthand experiences as the content of teaching, facilitating the development of academic skills, cultural competence, and a critical awareness of society. Cultural identities and their linguistic elements motivate people to fight for bilingual and multicultural programs in public education. The push for culturally relevant education has been evolving since the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Since then, opponents have argued in favor of an educational system that teaches only European American cultural values, exclusively in English, with the intent of unifying America by homogenizing its peoples. This motive is furthered by educational policies like NCLB that tie federal funding to performance on standardized tests that favor White, middle-class cultural knowledge and language. In acknowledgement of the fact that those traditional, mono-cultural educational practices push large proportions of students of color towards academic disengagement and failure, culturally relevant pedagogy alters instructional practices to provide equitable opportunities for all students. Chapter three analyzed and critiqued studies falling into five categories: Teacher Beliefs, Culturally Relevant Instructional Strategies, Culturally Relevant Classroom Management, Culturally Relevant Curriculum Design, and

Culturally Relevant Teaching for American Indian Students. The research was reviewed to examine the strategies that elementary teachers are using to implement culturally relevant pedagogy. The following chapter concludes this paper and revisits the question of how elementary teachers are implementing culturally responsive teaching by summarizing research findings from the literature review and highlighting the implications for my own classroom practice. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future research on the use of culturally relevant pedagogy in elementary school classrooms.

## Summary of the Findings

What are strategies for effective implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy? What are teachers in elementary school classrooms doing to create a culturally responsive practice? These questions guided the literature review. The importance of this topic stems from the current achievement gaps between White and Anglo-European students and their non-White, culturally diverse classmates. Public schools use instructional methods that correspond to Anglo-European culture and often conflict with and devalue other cultural ways of knowing and acting. Culturally relevant pedagogy strives to mediate this conflict by valuing and responding to the cultural characteristics of all students.

*Teacher Beliefs*

As Ladson-Billings (1994) wrote, the conceptions a teacher holds of self, other and knowledge directly influence his or her teaching practice. Most prevalent in traditional education are conceptions that she terms "Assimilationist," such as seeing teaching as banking, or putting knowledge into the minds of others, and the belief that

failure is inevitable for some students (p. 34). Culturally relevant teachers hold beliefs that help them successfully teach diverse students, such as teaching is an art, knowledge is recreated and shared by teachers and students, and all students are capable of success. The research reviewed in chapter three found that practicing teachers hold beliefs about their practice, some of which are congruent with CRP and some that conflict.

Phuntsog (2001) measured bilingual teachers' perceptions of the importance of culturally relevant teaching. The study found a strong consensus among the participants that culturally relevant practices are important. However, the teachers were divided on issues such as color-blindness, which a majority believed was an effective way to ensure respect for all culturally diverse students, putting them at risk of denying their students' unique cultural strengths. Juarez (2008) and Song (2006) documented characteristics of deficit-model, or assimilationist thinking in practicing and pre-service teachers' beliefs, which included the ideas that students without basic skills cannot learn materials that require higher order thinking skills and that students' non-English linguistic backgrounds were barriers to their success in school.

Love & Kruger (2005) found that teachers holding culturally relevant beliefs were likely to successfully teach African American students. This was the only study that correlated teachers' beliefs with student achievement. Specifically, the belief in all students' abilities to achieve academically correlated significantly to students' academic success, although that success was measured only by standardized tests. However, as Hyland (2005) found, even teachers who consider themselves effective with students of color may perpetuate racism if they don't critically consider their own actions. The four teachers in this study were making progress towards a culturally relevant practice, but fell

short of embracing the conceptions of self, others and knowledge that generates effective pedagogy.

All studies found inconsistencies in teachers' ideas about students' abilities and learning needs and identified conflicts over issues of color-blindness, bilingual education and ability grouping.  Phuntsog (2001) had a very small sample size, all participants had a bilingual education focus or endorsement, and a third of them were not yet certificated teachers, so the findings may not transfer to the majority of classroom teachers.  Song (2006) also had a small sample size and included pre-service teachers.  While the findings draw attention to general inconsistencies that characterize current thinking about culturally relevant pedagogy, the cultural and professional backgrounds of the participants in these studies do not reflect the majority of public school educators, so these findings may not accurately portray the conceptions that most teachers hold about themselves, others, and knowledge.

The ideas of critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory help inform teachers who are changing their conceptions about themselves and others.  They point out the assumptions embedded in dominant American society about people of color, and dominated and colonized peoples.  Realizing the sociocultural and political contexts of education, including the act of teaching, the content of curriculum, and the processes of classroom management, is a step towards developing a culturally relevant perspective on students and the act of teaching.  These conceptions also influence the position teachers take on issues of bilingual and multicultural education.  Ultimately, these findings indicate that critical reflection may be an important part of any teacher's practice to

unearth and resolve any contradictory conceptions of self, other and knowledge in order to apply a culturally relevant pedagogy.

*Culturally Relevant Instructional Strategies*

In this section of chapter three, I reviewed literature on culturally relevant instructional strategies to uncover how teachers were implementing a pedagogy that met the three goals of CRP: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. All students can become academically successful with the support of a culturally relevant teacher. Students deserve to become competent in their own culture and that of the mainstream society, and to develop a consciousness that analyzes and critiques society in general. The teachers in these twelve studies used a wide array of strategies to meet some of these goals in their classrooms.

This section of the literature review began with teachers working with African American students at elementary, middle and high school levels. Ware (2006) observed two female African American teachers and recorded their ability to cultivate cultural competence in their students by sharing a cultural background, acting as warm demanders in the classroom, holding high expectations for all students, drawing on students' culture as a resource for designing lessons, and using culturally appropriate methods of inquiry approach and classroom discussions. Lynn (2006) observed three male African American teachers working in urban schools using their shared cultural background to connect with students, valuing the cultural and linguistic knowledge they brought to class, and using relevant curriculum to raise students' critical consciousness (in a history class). Milner (2008) recorded the practices of three teachers in an urban middle school (two African American and one White). These teachers used culturally relevant

classroom management, such as playing popular music during work times, designed relevant instructional materials, including math problems that referenced school basketball players, and cultivated cultural competence by introducing successful members of the community to students.  Parsons, et al. (2005) performed an experiment on two middle school science classes composed of mostly African American students with the Black Cultural Ethos to analyze learning preferences and design the curriculum. Findings suggested that when the instructional strategy used closely matched students' cultural preferences, academic performance increased.  The students' cultural preferences were not tied to their racial-ethnic identity, and both an African American and a White teacher were able to implement the BCE lessons.  Howard (2001) surveyed elementary African American students about the cultural relevance of their teachers and found that students preferred teachers who cared about them, established a community in the classroom, and made learning entertaining by including them in instructional practices.

Findings from the studies by Ware (2006), Lynn (2006), and Milner (2008) are particular to teachers who share a cultural background with students.  Ware and Milner used credible methods and their findings are validated by persistent observation and data triangulation.  Lynn's study did not include methodology to ensure credibility, so his findings are highly specific and potentially biased.  Parsons, et al. (2005) combined qualitative and quantitative data gathering, data triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking to produce credible findings.  Howard (2001) grounded his survey firmly in existing CRP theory, but did not implement credible methodology and used a small sample, indicating that his findings are specific and not necessarily transferable to other student populations.

The literature review also included studies on teachers working with a majority of Latina/o students. Bergeron (2008) performed a case study on a new White teacher working with Hispanic ELLs and found that she was able to use multiple culturally relevant strategies. She built a community of learners by forming desk groups and promoting conversation among students, valued their cultural and linguistic knowledge by encouraging them to write in Spanish or English in journals, and supported collaborative learning by allowing students to help and translate for each other. Powell (1997) observed a White teacher working with ELLs for five years and recorded her use of culturally relevant strategies, including holding high expectations, connecting with her students' communities, sharing power in the classroom, allowing students to learn content in their first language, providing multiple methods of assessment, and critically analyzing the prescribed curriculum and her own practice. Arce (2004) studied new teachers who shared a cultural background with their Hispanic students. She found them using strategies that supported the cultural competence and critical consciousness of their students, such as making sure all students were able to participate equally in discussions, designing projects that incorporated students' home cultures, and engaging students in responding to critical issues through writing.

Turning the attention back to White teachers, Patchen & Cox-Peterson (2008) observed two women using constructivist methods to teach elementary science to Latino and African American students. The authors found that the teachers used some culturally relevant strategies, such as referring to students' prior knowledge, connecting content to students' lives, valuing students' perspectives and encouraging participation through questioning, but failed to reach culturally relevant goals due to their dependence on direct

instruction.  Their implementation of these strategies fell short of supporting culturally

relevant goals on cognitively effective levels because the connections they made were

teacher-directed instead of student-directed and the questions they asked were dominated

by "what" questions which rarely extended student thinking.  Santamaria (2009)

identified culturally relevant strategies in every guideline of differentiated instruction

observed in the classrooms of two high achieving elementary schools working with

Hispanic populations.  She found that the two instructional strategies corresponded on

almost every level and, based on her observations, concluded that teachers that are able to

distinguish between learning differences and cultural/linguistic differences can accurately

meet students' needs with both culturally relevant pedagogy and differentiated

instruction.

The studies by Bergeron (2008), Powell (1997), and Arce (2004) produced

credible findings by using extensive member checking, data triangulation and persistent

observation.  Patchen & Cox-Peterson (2008) used data triangulation and peer debriefing,

and although they did not check their findings with the participating teachers and only

observed for six weeks, their findings align with other studies that highlighted the

challenges some teachers face in implementing culturally relevant strategies.  Santamaria

(2009) worked in schools that had a record of academic achievement and used data

triangulation and a clear coding system to produce credible results.

Two more studies described teachers using culturally relevant practices in

elementary school classrooms.  Damber (2009) investigated third grade classrooms in

Sweden that were achieving well in reading and found that the teachers took students into

their communities to find meaningful text, tailored activities to students' individual

language levels, held high expectations for all students, and collaborated with parents to create relevant curriculum. Matthews (2003) worked with teachers in Bermuda who were learning to implement culturally relevant strategies into their math instruction. He found that teachers successfully demonstrated a belief in students' abilities by encouraging them to explain their answers, and connected math concepts to important international events. However, they also struggled to completely connect the related ideas to the math content, felt uncomfortable allowing students to bring aspects of their personal lives into discussions, used teacher-directed (instead of student-directed) methods of bringing student culture into the classroom, and failed to give students time to discuss activities with their peers. Both studies reported here used data triangulation and member checking, and Matthews additionally used persistent observation over a period of five months. Although the findings are fairly credible, they may not be able to transfer to educational contexts within the US.

Of the credible studies in this subsection, four (Milner, 2008; Parsons, et al., 2005; Santamaria, 2009; Damber, 2009) identified teachers whose culturally relevant strategies resulted in higher academic achievement for their students. Two studies (Santamaria, 2009; Damber, 2009) found high student achievement in programs providing support for all levels of student ability (academic and linguistic), including the use of differentiated instruction in combination with CRP. Three studies found examples of teachers successfully building on students' prior knowledge (Bergeron, 2008; Powell, 1997; Arce, 2004), while two gave examples of the difficulties some teachers have (Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008; Matthews, 2003). Teachers working with all different combinations of students of color developed their students' critical consciousness

(Matthews, 2003; Lynn, 2006; Milner, 2008), although some teachers found it challenging (Arce, 2004; Powell, 1997; Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008).

Many of the culturally relevant instructional strategies described here relate directly to the bilingual and multicultural education movements and ultimately support the social justice goals of both movements. Some teachers in these studies practiced a form of bilingual education by allowing students to use and learn content in their first language and valuing their linguistic knowledge. Similarly, some teachers practiced principles of multicultural education by including content that related to students' lives and integrating the cultural knowledge they brought to school. As culturally relevant strategies develop students' cultural competencies and critical consciousnesses, they further the goals of multicultural education that include eliminating racism, viewing the world from different cultural frames of reference, and social justice (Spring, 2000).

*Culturally Relevant Classroom Management*

In a culturally relevant classroom, the teacher maintains an equitable student-teacher relationship that connects with all students within and outside the classroom, and creates a community of learners who work collaboratively, taking responsibility for each others' success. These relationships establish a culture of respect and safety that allow all students to have their academic, emotional and social needs met. Studies that focused on classroom management found teachers building relationships with their students by greeting students with smiles, hugs and handshakes, using caring methods (Gay, 2000), such as nurturing, encouraging, assisting and supporting students (Parsons, 2001), and sharing information about themselves (Bondy, et al., 2007). Parsons observed a White, female teacher who enabled her students to feel emotionally safe and maintained a

standard of respectful interaction in the classroom by consistently naming and dismissing students' actions that threatened the equal participation of others and by calling on students and validating what they had to offer.  In a similar study, Bondy, et al., found three novice teachers who created safe classroom environments by developing relationships with students, establishing clear expectations, communicating in culturally relevant ways, and holding students accountable for their actions.  Both studies' findings are credible because they used data triangulation and member checking, and provided a detailed description of data gathering.

Langhout & Mitchell (2008) illustrated the detrimental effects of a teacher using a classroom management strategy that led to male, Black, and Latino students' disengagement and disidentification with school.  They found that despite the teacher's culturally relevant beliefs and practices, the school culture forced her to use a disciplinary system that violated all students' rights to a safe and nurturing classroom.  Researchers Rothstein-Fisch, et al. (2003) documented the academic and social success of students experiencing culturally congruent social interactions.  The participating teachers incorporated their Latina/o students' cultural value of helping each other into the structure of the classroom, encouraging them to help each other study, read and complete work, which resulted in high academic achievement in math and high levels of motivation.  Both studies produced credible findings by using persistent observation, data triangulation, and member checking.

Culturally relevant classroom management also progresses towards the goals of multicultural education by mediating and modeling classroom interactions to establish justice, kindness, respect and strong community connections.  In the four studies

reviewed above, most teachers implemented culturally relevant classroom management strategies that enabled diverse students to feel safe and learn successfully.  One teacher was pressured by the teachers around her to use a system of discipline that punished Latino and African American males unfairly, giving an example of the institutional racism that multicultural and culturally relevant education are working to resolve.

*Culturally Relevant Curriculum Design*

We've reviewed the literature on Teacher Beliefs that influence how teachers implement culturally relevant pedagogy, the culturally relevant instructional strategies they use, and the ways teachers build culturally relevant classroom management approaches.  Now, the focus of the literature review addresses culturally relevant curriculum design, the actual content that is taught in the classroom, distinct from the instructional strategies.  Culturally relevant curriculum reflects the cultural and racial-ethnic backgrounds of students, and makes sure that the content is relevant to students' daily lives.  It responds to the needs and interests of students by taking a student-led approach to designing curriculum.  The following six studies analyzed the implementation of culturally relevant curriculum in diverse classrooms.

Luykx, et al. (2007) alerted educators to the risks of inaccurately assessing students' content knowledge when measuring with tests written from an incongruent cultural context.  The researchers examined diverse students' responses on a science test and found linguistic and cultural factors that interfered with their ability to understand and correctly answer test items, suggesting that students' culture and first languages significantly impact their ability to communicate their content knowledge on written assessments.  The findings reported here carry credibility through data triangulation,

extensive coding and peer debriefing, and a large sample size (four tests from each of 1,500 students).

Multiple studies described teachers' efforts to use culturally relevant curriculum, ranging from history (Leonard & Hill, 2008) to dance (Hastie, et al., 2006), and cultural heritage (Dutro, et al., 2008).  Hastie, et al., designed a physical education unit about a type of South African dance for sixth grade African American students which resulted in a high level of engagement and a successful school-wide performance.  Leonard and Hill used a combination of texts and computer media about the Underground Railroad to teach African American students science concepts.  Students' mean scores on the science assessment were above 90%, so the researchers concluded that the culturally relevant curriculum helped them retain the science content knowledge.  Dutro observed a teacher who required a diverse class of students to research their own cultural backgrounds and found that, as a result of the project, students began to think critically about race as a social construct and participate in meaningful discussions as a class.  All three studies used persistent observation, peer debriefing and data triangulation to give their findings credibility.

Souto-Manning (2009) and DeNicolo & Franquiz (2006) inspired critical discussions with their elementary students through the use of multicultural children's literature that reflected experiences in their own lives, such as racism and segregation. Their studies reflect the aspect of culturally relevant curriculum that cultivates a critical consciousness in students without necessarily reflecting their cultural backgrounds directly.  Souto-Manning read three versions of *The Three Little Pigs* folktale to her first grade students to introduce the validity of multiple perspectives, and then examined many

texts about the civil rights movements. She found an increased level of critical consciousness in the class discussions they held about each book, which resulted in the students motivating to change some of the classroom structures they viewed as unfair. In DeNicolo and Franquiz's research, fourth grade students used their own cultural and linguistic knowledge to analyze multicultural literature about a young girl experiencing racial insults. While these two studies suggest important possibilities that may arise from the use of multicultural texts, the findings are not significantly valid. Souto-Manning only reported on her own experience with a class of 19 students and the results are not easily transferable without a more experimental structure. Similarly, DeNicolo and Franquiz wrote in detail about a conversation between only four students, provided a thin description about the students and classroom context, and omitted a description of their data analysis methods and member checking. Ultimately, it's unclear if the use of multicultural literature would have these effects on a wide range of students.

The bilingual and multicultural education movements inform these culturally relevant curriculum applications. Recognizing the influence of students' home languages on their abilities to communicate what they know, such as in Luykx, et al. (2007), and reflecting their cultural histories and contexts in the curriculum has precedents in maintenance and two-way bilingual programs. In contrast, transitional bilingual programs eventually use only English, inhibiting the cultural responsiveness of the program by enforcing single language use in the classroom. Multicultural education's goals of developing tolerance of other cultures and eliminating racism are potentially supported by culturally relevant curriculum design, but the studies in this review that used multicultural literature are not credible enough to validate this suggestion.

*Culturally Relevant Teaching for American Indian Students*

In chapter three, I organized the three studies that gathered data on American Indian and Canadian Aboriginal students separately because the majority of the studies in the review did not include data on students of these backgrounds. Representing one percent of all public school enrollment (not including members of Asian or Pacific Islander cultures), American Indian, Alaskan Native and Canadian Aboriginal students must be enabled and supported by educational practices (NCES, 2007). In the following studies, researchers take a look at elements that foster academic success for these students.

Adams, et al. (2005) described a culturally relevant math curriculum designed for Alaskan Native students of the Yup'ik tribe and taught by a Caucasian teacher who used culturally congruent methods of instruction. They found that the participating students, including some Caucasian students, scored higher on the math assessments than the control groups, suggesting that students of diverse backgrounds may benefit from the Yup'ik instructional style and perspectives. The researchers engaged in data triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking to give their findings validity.

Baydala, et al. (2009) surveyed Canadian Aboriginal students in a small charter school and found that culturally appropriate pedagogy that supports student relationships and teaches leadership and study skills may facilitate academic achievement. They only surveyed 69 students, and the data are relevant specifically to the Canadian Aboriginal cultures those students belong to, so the findings may not transfer to students in American public schools. Powers (2006) recorded positive educational outcomes, such as participation in and completion of school, in urban Native American student

populations that experienced culturally relevant educational programs. Using survey data from 240 students, the researcher found that a positive school climate, including personnel supportiveness, and culturally relevant curriculum had the largest total effect among all the variables. Powers only collected data on three Midwestern tribes of Native Americans in urban schools, so the findings may not be transferable to members of other tribes or students on reservations.

These three studies do not provide much information about strategies that teachers are using to apply culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom, but Adams, et al. (2005) and Powers (2006) suggest meaningful goals for teaching students of American Indian and Alaskan Native backgrounds, such as maintaining a supportive school climate and incorporating the cultural perspectives of the students into curriculum design. The challenge remains to meet the needs of these students when they represent only a small fraction of a diverse classroom.

## Recommendations for Classroom Strategies

In the Summary of the Findings section, I reported the findings from 30 articles that I analyzed to find out what strategies teachers are using to implement culturally relevant pedagogy at the elementary level. This section describes the strategies I will use in my own practice as found in the studies reviewed above. The strategies fall into four topics: critical teacher reflection, culturally relevant curriculum, social relations in the classroom, and academic skill development.

### Critical Teacher Reflection

As a teacher, I will engage in the critical reflection that enables me to know and understand the moral, political, and ethical contexts of teaching, along with issues of

equity, social justice and access (Howard, 2003). Through honest self-reflection and critique of my own thoughts, behaviors, and teaching strategies, I will avoid the deficit-model thinking, color-blindness and hidden racism that teachers may perpetuate unknowingly, as Phuntsog (2001), Song (2006), Juarez (2008), and Hyland (2005) found. Delpit argued that teachers who do not understand the potential of their students "will underteach them no matter what the methodology" (2006, p. 175). Love and Kruger (2005) supported this conclusion with their findings that the students of teachers who held this belief performed strongly on standardized tests. Additionally, Powers (2006) found that urban, Midwestern, American Indian students who experienced a positive school climate with supportive personnel were more likely to finish school. Therefore, I will maintain a steadfast belief in the capacity of all students to succeed, no matter their backgrounds, and work to support their success throughout my practice.

*Academic Skill Development*

In the classroom, I will develop academic skills in students of varying learning and cultural differences by using culturally relevant instructional practices to meet their needs, using characteristics of warm demanders, and building on prior cultural, linguistic and content knowledge. Warm demanders are characterized by their expectations of high levels of academic performance, their presence as authority figures, their sincere interest in motivating and caring for students, and their insistence on holding students accountable for their actions (Ware, 2006; Bondy, et al., 2007; Osborne, 1996). Equitable education means providing diverse students with what they need to succeed academically even when those needs are quite different from another (Milner, 2008; Santamaria, 2009). Meeting the needs of culturally diverse students can include teaching

in ways that are congruent with their cultural preferences and backgrounds (Parsons, et al., 2005).

I'll hold as a high priority the development of cultural competence and critical consciousness in my students so that they will be able to move proficiently through their own cultural worlds and the dominant culture of the United States, critique social values and institutions, and actively participate in our democratic society (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Many studies illustrated the strategies teachers used to support their students' cultural competencies, such as requiring African American students to research historically Black colleges (Ware, 2006), incorporating parts of students' culture into the classroom (Milner, 2008), designing projects that incorporated students' home culture (Arce, 2004), taking students into the surrounding community to practice their reading skills (Damber, 2009), and allowing students to learn content in their first language (Powell, 1997) and use it in class (Bergeron, 2008). Teachers also used strategies to encourage the development of critical consciousnesses in their students, including requiring them to write critically about issues (Arce, 2004) and introducing them to successful members of their community as a way to encourage them to contribute to their community (Milner, 2008).

Some studies highlighted challenges and pitfalls teachers may meet in their efforts to develop these culturally relevant capacities in students, so I take these as warnings for my own practice. Patchen and Cox-Peterson (2008) and Matthews (2003) noticed teachers failing to connect content to students' lives on a meaningful level and relying too heavily on teacher-led direct instruction for students to legitimately use their own cultural knowledge or practice critical analysis with the content. Matthews also observed

teachers attempting to include students' cultural knowledge in class, but feeling too uncomfortable to allow them to share their personal experiences in discussions. Arce (2004) saw teachers using a critical perspective in their own work, such as analyzing textbooks for use in the classroom, but falling short of including students in that process. These studies serve as reminders that implementing a culturally relevant pedagogy can be a difficult process and may require me to step out of my comfort zones as a teacher and include students at a decision-making level more and more.

*Social Relations in the Classroom*

I will construct social relations and build relationships with the students in my classroom to create a community of learners. As Delpit states, teachers need to have knowledge of their students' lives outside of school in order to recognize their strengths (2006, p. 172). It will be my responsibility to care for children as *students* and as *people* by disrupting inequitable social structures and mediating students' actions within my classroom. Arce (2004) and Parsons (2001) observed teachers making sure all students participated equally in class discussions by limiting students who infringed on others' abilities to contribute and calling on students and validating what they had to offer.

I will reflect students' cultural values and home interaction patterns to the best of my ability without disrespectfully copying styles that do not belong to me, like a teacher in Hyland's (2005) study. Teachers who share a cultural background with their students are able to use this congruence to structure interactions and instructional styles in the classroom, as found by Ware (2006), Milner (2008), Arce (2004), and Matthews (2003). However, teachers who have a different cultural background from their students are also able to reflect cultural values and home interaction patterns (Rothstein-Fisch, 2003;

Bondy, et al., 2007).  For example, Adams, et al. (2005) reported that a Caucasian teacher was able to use culturally congruent styles of interactions with her Yup'ik students, such as stepping in and out of conversation and allowing students to carry the momentum of the discussion.

To create a truly collaborative community, I will hold students responsible for helping and teaching each other, and celebrate group successes over individual successes, like teachers in the study by Rothstein-Fisch, et al. (2003).  In my own practice, I will have to be aware of when the dominant culture of the community or the school may conflict with culturally relevant practices, such as the teacher in Langhout and Mitchell's (2008) study who was pressured to use a disciplinary plan that unfairly punished Latino and African American males.

*Culturally Relevant Curriculum*

In my classroom, I will alter curriculum to reflect students' cultural values, histories, traditions and ways of knowing, taking care not to just superficially add to an existing monoculture curriculum (Spring, 2000).  Some examples of content teachers have designed culturally relevant curriculum for from the literature review included history (Leonard & Hill, 2008), dance (Hastie, et al., 2006), and cultural heritage (Dutro, et al., 2008).   In order to avoid using language to "limit students' potential" (Delpit, 2006, p. 163), I will help students understand the "power realities in this country" (p. 40) by explaining the linguistic and cultural conventions governing standardized curriculum and tests, as justified by Luykx, et al.'s (2007) findings.  I may use multicultural children's literature to engage students in critical discussions and help them "understand the world they actually live in" (Lewis, 2003, p. 85), although the two studies I reviewed

are not compelling indicators of the value of doing so (Souto-Manning, 2009; DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006).

<div style="text-align: center;">Suggestions for Future Research</div>

In the following section, I will suggest ideas and directions for future research to provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of culturally relevant pedagogy. Using Ladson-Billings' three goals, I recommend that research examine whether CRP is fulfilling its purposes of increasing students' academic achievement, cultural competence, and critical consciousness.

*Academic Achievement*

Does culturally relevant pedagogy successfully close achievement gaps? Does it supply students with "literacy, numeracy, technological, social, and political skills" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160)? So far, studies have correlated teacher beliefs to test scores (Love & Kruger, 2005), culturally congruent teaching styles to posttest scores (Parsons, et al., 2005; Adams, et al., 2005), classroom management strategies to academic progress (Rothstein-Fisch, et al., 2003), and examined teacher practices in excelling schools (Santamaria, 2009; Damber, 2009). Research needs to provide compelling proof that culturally relevant pedagogy correlates to, if not causes, higher academic achievement in all students, not just students of color. Educators need to know if using CRP to provide equitable educational experiences will effectively close the achievement gap.

Future studies could isolate parts of CRP and use control groups to verify strong correlations between strategies and test scores in various disciplines and with different student populations, using qualitative analysis to verify teaching strategies and

quantitative analysis to determine change in student knowledge as measured by tests. One challenge of assessing academic achievement is that written tests don't always measure what students actually know (Luykx, et al., 2007). Opening up the idea of assessment to include alternate tools could complicate the ability of researchers to produce consistent results, but may become a necessary step towards refining the accuracy of the research.

*Cultural Competence*

Does CRP actually affect students' abilities within their own cultural contexts and skills, and support their self-perceptions and identities? Does it teach them that what they have and where they come from is of value (Ladson-Billings, 1995a)? So far, studies have just noted teachers' use of culturally relevant content and programs (Adams, et al., 2005; Arce, 2004; DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006; Dutro, et al., 2008; Hastie, et al., 2006; Juarez, 2008; Leonard & Hill, 2008; Lynn, 2006; Matthews, 2003; Powell, 1997; Santamaria, 2009; Souto-Manning, 2009), with unclear data on how they affect students' self-perceptions and cultural identities (Baydala, et al., 2009; Powers, 2006).

Future studies could use tests similar to those used by Baydala, et al., (2009) to measure self-beliefs, behavioral and emotional development, and other psychological aspects of students in CRP classes and compare them to students in traditional education. Qualitative methods could be used to verify teaching strategies, and quantitative methods for comparative analysis of the test results between groups of students with and without culturally relevant educational experiences. Most importantly, studies should include demographically representative samples, with both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups, to ensure the transferability of findings.

*Critical Consciousness*

Does CRP effectively facilitate the skills and awareness that students need to critique society and participate in democracy? Does it help them "develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 162)? So far, studies have identified teachers who have a critical awareness themselves, but don't impart it to their students (Arce, 2004; Powell, 1997; Patchen & Cox-Peterson, 2008), and teachers who attempt to develop those skills in their students (Matthews, 2003; Lynn, 2006; Milner, 2008; Souto-Manning, 2009; DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006; Dutro, et al., 2008). However, studies so far have not evaluated the effectiveness of culturally relevant pedagogy to actually increase students' critical consciousnesses.

How do you measure critical thought? Researchers could measure the change in students' thinking skills by qualitative and quantitative analysis. In class discussions, observers could note the types and frequencies of critical comments made by students. They could pretest and posttest students' critical awareness by using surveys with Likert-type scales to perform a quantitative analysis.

Another important aspect is the critical consciousness of teachers. Not only do students need to benefit from CRP, but research needs to prove that teachers can learn how to think in critical ways, too. Future studies need to examine if and how workshops on culturally relevant pedagogy can affect teachers' conceptions of themselves, their students, and their position as cultural workers (Giroux, 1992). If teachers are positively

affected by such workshops, researchers need to investigate how their practices change to reflect the new ideas and how their students are affected, too.

If culturally relevant pedagogy is a viable and effective way of teaching, then studies will show students and teachers from all backgrounds experiencing more success in school, both academically and personally. With continued professional attention and research, culturally relevant pedagogy may prove effective, and be implemented across public education as research based best practices.

## Conclusion

Culturally relevant pedagogy offers perspectives and strategies to successfully teach students of all cultural backgrounds, and this paper examined how elementary teachers are implementing these strategies in their classrooms. Chapter one explained that the rationale for examining this topic is the achievement gap between White students and students of color in public schools coupled with the projected growth of populations of color in the United States. It described the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy as explained by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994; 1995a; 1995b) and the controversies surrounding the pedagogy as informed by the No Child Left Behind Act, bilingual education, and multicultural education. Chapter one also outlined the definitions and limitations for the rest of the literature review. Chapter two recounted the history of theoretical and educational movements that pertained to culturally relevant pedagogy, including critical pedagogy, postcolonial theory, bilingual education, and multicultural education.

Chapter three reviewed the research on culturally relevant pedagogy and was organized into five subjects: Teacher Beliefs, Culturally Relevant Instructional Strategies,

Culturally Relevant Classroom Management, Culturally Relevant Curriculum Design and Culturally Relevant Teaching for American Indian Students.  The research reviewed in the Teacher Beliefs section found that although many teachers held culturally relevant conceptions of themselves and students, they were divided on controversial issues such as colorblindness, bilingual education, and ability grouping.  The research relating to Instructional Strategies found a multitude of strategies that teachers used with homogeneous groups of African American, Hispanic and American Indian students, as well as heterogeneous groups including White students.  The research reviewed about Classroom Management reported teachers structured social interactions by building positive relationships with students, mediating the relations students had with each other, and using the cultural values students brought to class, such as helping each other.  The section on Curriculum Design reviewed research that described culturally relevant lessons in history, dance, and cultural heritage, and found that teachers used multicultural literature to provide relevant content.  In the final section, three studies examined the culturally relevant educational experiences of urban American Indian students, rural Alaskan Native students, and Canadian Aboriginal students.  The research was considered to find out how elementary school teachers are implementing culturally relevant educational strategies, and chapter four summarized the findings, suggested classroom implications, and provided recommendations for further research.  The research on culturally relevant teaching provides examples of successful and challenging implementations in various contexts, but does not conclusively prove its efficacy.  Future research needs to assess how well culturally responsive pedagogy meets its goals with diverse student populations.

Education isn't just about test scores, as the No Child Left Behind Act would have us believe. Truly wholesome education is about nurturing, protecting and strengthening students' identities, self-concepts, and abilities to think critically and contribute positively to their communities. Teachers working with this conception of education are using culturally relevant teaching practices to enable students of all backgrounds to be successful. When students come from racial-ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from White, Anglo-Protestant, and English, the cultural disconnect is too often barrier separating them from obtaining the education they have a right to receive, and reaching their potential. Bilingual and multicultural education are movements that strive to meet these students' needs, but are fighting against hundreds of years of traditionally White and Anglo educational practices. Culturally relevant teachers who challenge traditional education in order to teach all students equitably will also face this fight. Hopefully, the hearts of teachers and the results of research will align and pave the way for every student in the United States to receive a liberating and empowering education.

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