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Narrowing the Achievement Gap Through Culturally Responsive Teaching

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NARROWING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Narrowing the Achievement Gap Through Culturally Responsive Teaching

By

Natasha V. Forde

A Dissertation in Practice

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Natasha Forde: Narrowing the Achievement Gap Through Culturally Responsive Teaching

The achievement gap currently persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The purpose of this action research study was to determine how a series of five professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching could ultimately narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students through implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in classrooms to meet the needs of the diverse student population. In addition, this study also examined the teachers' perceptions of the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops to positively impact student achievement with Black and Hispanic students.

The objectives of this study included:

- The identification of Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops to impact teacher use of culturally-relevant teaching practices
- The identification of Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops to encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in classrooms

The population involved in the action research study was voluntary based on:

- Permission to conduct the study was obtained from Lynn University, a public school district in the southeastern United States, and the Title I public middle school's principal
- Permission to conduct and participate in the action research study was requested from forty-eight (48) middle school teachers in a Title I public middle school in the southeastern United States
- Total confidentiality was guaranteed to all consenting participants

- Only consenting participants were given access to the presurvey, postsurvey, and five mini surveys

The action research study was based upon survey results from the presurvey, postsurvey, and five mini surveys. The presurvey, postsurvey, and five mini surveys included Likert Scale questions. The results of the surveys indicate Culturally Responsive Teaching does impact student achievement which can ultimately narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

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Dedication

My family comes from a small island, Trinidad and Tobago. After having a very rough childhood due to losing their mother at a very young age, my aunts and uncle tried their best to provide all opportunities to their families despite having very little education. This Dissertation in Practice is dedicated to my daughter, Paige. You are my strength, inspiration, and the reason I continue to push through the hardest times. You are my most prized jewel, and you can accomplish anything that you put your mind to. My brothers Akmal and Alonso. The both of you are instrumental in my work. My grandmother Veronica. You stood by me and always believed in me and my passion. You were always present at every milestone I encountered and assured me that I can walk anywhere I put my mind to. You never gave up on me. My mother Giselle and father Richard, thank you for everything, even through the hard times. And lastly, all of my cousins. I want you all to know that you can do anything that you put your mind to. We started off with very little with humble beginnings, but as a family, we bonded together and can accomplish anything.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States of America's educational report card reports a significant disparity in achievement scores between Black, White, and Hispanic students on standardized assessments. The observed disparity in scores on standardized assessments is referred to as the achievement gap and has long been a concern of educational researchers and leaders. Some areas that have a significant role in the progression and achievement levels with students include socio-economic status, cultural differences, school factors and practices, and parental involvement. Ensuring all students succeed is a primary focus in schools across the United States to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. Tackling this persistent achievement gap requires educators to teach the whole child, understanding their cultural backgrounds.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law on December 10, 2015, is the United States educational law that hold schools accountable for the success of all students. Under ESSA, all schools are held accountable through specific indicators such as academic achievement, English language proficiency, school quality or student success, and graduation rate for all high schools. Even with these required accountability systems in place, the stubborn achievement gap persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students on standardized assessments. Narrowing or closing the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students remains a priority to advance the nation's vision for educational success.

Background of the Problem

The achievement gap is a multidimensional phenomenon that affects students across the nation. Progress on reducing the achievement gap has been agonizingly slow in spite of the fact that the United States has practiced programs of affirmative action, often offered teachers giving

instruction in the inner cities 20 percent more than they would make elsewhere, and poured countless billions of additional dollars into urban education (Jeynes, 2016). The gap dates back to the first mass-administered achievement tests given by the U.S. Army in World War I (Gardner, 2007). The achievement gap can be referred to as the difference between the academic achievement of linguistic and ethnic minority students, students with disabilities, students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, and either mainstream student population in general or the White student population more specifically (Odekon, 2015).

The achievement gap is also the term commonly used to describe the disparities in academic outcomes and variations on measures of academic ability that tend to correspond to the race and class backgrounds of students (Noguera, 2012). The disparity in scores are observed between Black, White, and Hispanic students on English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments used to determine student proficiency. The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2015, 2017) reading data reveals that 45% - 47% of White students were proficient in reading in comparison to 17%-20% of Black students that were at or above proficient on the NAEP reading assessment (Lewis & Hunt, 2019). The mathematics data on the most recent NAEP reported that 44% of White students were at or above proficiency in comparison to 13% of Black students that were at or above proficiency (NAEP, 2017).

The ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), desegregated public schools across the nation, giving hope that education will be equitable for all students. History shows that advances were made in narrowing the achievement gap, but progression stalled over the past several decades (Barton & Coley, 2010). Studies show that many factors contribute to the achievement gap, such as family and demographic changes, race, school factors, child nutrition, cultural differences, and socio-economic factors. As schools across the nation try to narrow or

close the stubborn achievement gap, schools that have seen an increase in proficiency with Black and Hispanic students have created optimal learning conditions for all students.

As the student demographics of public schools continue to change, minority students, African American/Black or Hispanic/Latino, are now becoming the majority student population. By 2050, almost two-thirds of all American children are projected to be students of color (Goldenberg, 2014). Due to the steady change in demographics with minority students, it is essential that teachers are meeting the needs of all learners. Teachers must engage with diverse students and their cultural backgrounds to effectively narrow or close the stubborn achievement gap. An educational reform focused on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is essential to meet the needs of all learners, ultimately narrowing or closing the achievement gap observed between Black, White, and Hispanic students. By analyzing Culturally Responsive Teaching practices and providing professional development workshops in this arena, teachers and principals can help school systems address stereotypes that traditionally limit opportunities for students (Gay, 2010; Haberman, 1988; Landson-Billings, 2009).

Significance of the Study

In education, the achievement gap refers to the inequalities in academic performance between groups of students generally categorized by socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and gender (Webb & Thomas, 2015). The achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students has been evident since the 1960s and has since been a national priority (Gardner, 2007). Since then, much attention has been made to narrow or close the stubborn achievement gap observed across the nation. New laws such as ESSA places stronger accountability systems for schools to ensure all students are college and career ready, yet the achievement gap still persists.

The achievement gap can be defined as a significant difference in performance on standardized tests when comparing students of different gender, race, socio-economic status, and disability. Throughout most of American history, racial disparities in educational achievement and performance were attributed to innate genetic differences between population groups, and as such, were regarded as acceptable and understandable natural phenomena (Fredrickson, 1981). Given this overview of the history of the achievement gap, there has been many initiatives to narrow or close the achievement gap that persists between Black, White and Hispanic students. Researchers have explained the continuation of the achievement gap as a result of standardized test biases, ineffective reading programs, and a failure to address the other systemic issues contributing to the gap (Mendoza-Denton, 2014).

The student population demographics in public schools are changing. Minority students are now becoming the majority student population in public schools. While students of color are expected to make up 56 percent of the student population by 2024, the elementary and secondary workforce is still overwhelmingly White (Florida Department of Education, 2016). With this steady change in demographics, a disparity in achievement scores persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students. Ensuring that teachers are meeting the needs of the diverse student population is essential. The most recent United States Department of Education Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a nationally representative survey of teachers and principals, showed that 82 percent of public school teachers identified as White (Department of Education, 2016). This action research study will evaluate how Culturally Responsive Teaching may narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. First, it explores how a series of five professional development workshops focused in Culturally Responsive Teaching enables teachers to create an inclusive classroom for all students with different cultural

backgrounds. This study will also examine how Culturally Responsive Teaching allows teachers in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States to understand the diverse student population in their classrooms, making meaningful connections with all students. The professional development workshops given to teachers in Culturally Responsive Teaching will explore the framework behind the importance of understanding various cultural backgrounds and providing equitable instruction to all students. Lastly, this study will examine how Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies impacts student achievement with Black and Hispanic students.

Rationale of the Study

Research and studies reveal that the achievement gap is affected by many factors, including race, demographic changes, socio-economic status, cultural differences, school factors, and health factors. It is critical that educational leaders do what is in the best interest of all students to ensure they are college and career ready. As the demographic changes across the nation, students of color are now becoming the majority student population in schools. For the first time in our history, students of color make up the majority of students enrolled in U.S. public schools (Muniz, 2019). The changing face of society today and purpose of this action research study requires direct attention to the diverse student population to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the nation's educational law, signed into law on December 10, 2015. ESSA outlines clear accountability measures districts and schools must meet to ensure all students are proficient in challenging statewide adopted standards. One indicator under ESSA, student achievement, measures student proficiency on standardized assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. Under ESSA, states

have the flexibility to determine the type of assessment that will measure student proficiency. Although states are granted the flexibility to determine the types of assessment used, the disparity in scores persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The National Assessment of Educational Progress scores consistently report gaps between White and Black students (Lewis & Hunt, 2019).

As academic achievement disparities are observed with Black and Hispanic students compared to their White counterparts on standardized assessments, scholars, policymakers, and educational leaders have called for an educational reform. Achievement and attainment gaps are revealed through a host of schooling indexes, including grade point averages; performance on the district, state, and national achievement tests; rates of enrollment in rigorous courses such as advanced placement and honors classes; and differential placements in special education and gifted-and-talented programs (Noguera, 2012). It is essential that the diverse student population receive equitable instruction that is focused on clear outcomes, challenging standards, and high-quality instruction. Understanding how culture plays a role in education is another critical area that needs to be addressed in all schools to close or narrow the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Increasing the awareness of educators to demonstrate Culturally Responsive Teaching or relevant teaching is critical to reversing underachievement and unlocking the potential of students of color as well as that of other groups of underserved learners (Muniz, 2019). Minority students must have the opportunity to learn and make connections with the curriculum with regard to their culture and teachers must be aware of Culturally Responsive Teaching to impact student achievement. A nuanced understanding of cultural backgrounds is essential to hold diverse students accountable for their learning. Creating culturally responsive classrooms in

culturally responsive institutions may narrow or close the achievement gap due to the changing student population demographics. Researchers for decades have asserted that the academic achievement of students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds would improve if educators were to make an effort to ensure that classroom instruction was conducted in a manner that was responsive to the students' home cultures (Gay, 2002).

As Black and Hispanic students are now the majority population in schools, it is critical to examine the teaching force in schools. Not only is there a nationwide shortage of teachers, there is also a growing gap in the racial, cultural, and experiential match between teachers and students (Carothers et al., 2019). The demographic makeup of public schools has changed, and in 2014 minority students made up most of the student body in states including California, Texas, New York, and Florida (Aydin et al., 2017) though the teaching force continued to be overwhelmingly White (Lynskey, 2015). Further, a recent study found that children of teachers are more than twice likely as others to enter the teaching profession (Gershenson & Jacinto, 2019), which indicated that the racial/cultural mismatch between teachers and students is unlikely to improve unless more people of color are brought into the teaching profession (Carothers et al., 2019). To narrow or close the achievement gap, White teachers must be culturally responsive to meet the needs of the diverse student population in schools.

Conceptual Framework

This research will examine how Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. This researcher believes that the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students may narrow or close if teachers are more culturally competent. Hence, it is important to know the perceptions of teachers who complete a series of five professional

development workshops created by this researcher that may narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study is to determine how a series of five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching will narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students through implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in classrooms to meet the needs of the diverse student population. In addition, this study will also examine the teachers' perceptions of the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshop to positively impact student achievement with Black and Hispanic students. The achievement gap persists with Black, White, and Hispanic students on assessments used to measure proficiency in English Language Arts, mathematics, and science. With new educational laws in place, the persistent disparity in achievement scores with Black, White, and Hispanic students remains a national priority. As the demographics of the student population in schools change, minority students are now the majority student population in schools. The trend of White females entering the teaching profession is not declining, creating a teacher mismatch. Due to the changing student population demographics in public schools across the nation, delivering a series of five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching is necessary to create culturally competent teachers and schools. This action research study will focus on creating culturally competent teachers, classrooms, and schools through five deliberate and meaningful professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Research Questions

This study is focused on addressing equity and access in a Title I public middle school in the southeastern United States by delivering a series of five professional development workshops to middle school teachers in Culturally Responsive Teaching to narrow or close or the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The two research questions that guide this study are:

RQ1: How do Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops impact teacher use of culturally-relevant teaching practices?

RQ2: How do Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in their classroom?

Assumptions

This action research study includes the research of narrowing the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students with Culturally Responsive Teaching. This researcher has assumptions of how Culturally Responsive Teaching impacts student achievement to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. This researcher is making the assumption that teachers who are culturally competent will impact student achievement, ultimately narrowing or closing the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Critical Race Theory

Race and education have always been an essential element in the way opportunities for learning have manifested in United States schools (Howard & Navarro, 2016). The term Critical Race Theory was originally used in the 1970's by Derrick Bell, a civil rights lawyer and professor, when describing the impact of Western racial history and the conflict of interest in

civil rights litigation (Delgado & Stefancic, 1998). To discuss the achievement gap between White, Black, and Hispanic students and ignore the concept of race and ethnicity race is impossible. Critical Race Theory plays a large role in in narrowing or closing the achievement gap between White, Black, and Hispanic students.

Critical Race Theory is also relevant when examining teacher perceptions on students ability to succeed. Tying to the rurality framework, critical race theory also addresses the issue of school funding, adding to the debate by addressing the issue that more affluent communities even ten to resent paying for school systems that have larger populations of poor, non-White students (Landson-Billings, 1998). Examining how race affects students of color, Black and Hispanic, is critical to narrow or close the persistent achievement gap.

Definition of Terms

Achievement gap. The term used to describe the difference in educational and social outcomes for White students versus African American students. The gap is reflected most clearly in grades, standardized test scores, high school graduation rates, placement in special education and advanced placement courses, and suspension and expulsion rates (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

Culture. A group's individual and collective ways of thinking, believing, and knowing, which includes their shared experiences, consciousness, skills, values, forms of expression, social institutions, and behaviors (Tillman, 2002).

Culturally Competent Teachers. Teachers that believe that culture deeply influences the way children learn and, when given the responsibility of teaching students from diverse backgrounds; their attitudes reflect an appreciation of the cultural, linguistic, and social characteristics of each of their students (Taylor, 2010).

Culturally Responsive Classrooms. Classrooms that specifically acknowledge the presence of culturally diverse students, recognize the need for these students to find connections among themselves and with the subject matter being taught and where teachers recognize the different learning styles of their students and develop instructional approaches that accommodate these styles (Montgomery, 2011).

Culturally Responsive Teaching. Using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively (Gay, 2002).

Equity. Meeting the needs of all students, providing individualized support to ensure all students succeed.

Hispanic. A Spanish-speaking person living in the United States of Latin Descent. Persons from Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico. Central or South America or other Spanish cultures (Flores, 2017).

Minority students. A minority student is one who is either African American/Black or Hispanic/Latino.

Racism. The systematic mistreatment of certain groups of people (often referred to as people of color) on the basis on skin color or other physical characteristics (Weissglass, 2001).

Organization of the Study:

The following outlines the organization of the study:

Chapter 1: Chapter 1 consists of the introduction of the research problem. The chapter includes the background of the study, significance of the study, rationale of the study, conceptual framework, purpose of the study, research questions, assumptions, Critical Race Theory, and definitions of key terms linked to the study.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature. This researcher reviews literature associated with the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and teacher workforce.

Chapter 3: In Chapter 3, this researcher reviews the methodology utilized to develop the two research questions. This chapter includes an introduction of the research problem, setting, population, research design, participants, ethical considerations/risks and benefits, anonymity and confidentiality, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, validity, reliability, limitations, and delimitations.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4 includes the findings of the presurvey and postsurvey. Chapter 4 also includes the results of the five mini assessment surveys from each professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching. Lastly, data analysis for the presurvey and postsurvey and five mini assessment are included in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5: The final chapter in this study, Chapter 5, presents the summary of this action research study and recommendations for future research.

Summary

The focus of this study will examine if Culturally Responsive Teaching narrows or closes the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States. As the demographics of schools are becoming more diverse with Black and Hispanic students and a high White teacher population, this researcher will examine teachers' perceptions in the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops to ultimately narrow or close the achievement gap observed between Black, White, and Hispanic students by implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching instructional strategies in classrooms.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Racial differences in achievement between White and African American children have long been a concern for researchers and policy makers (Morris & Perry, 2016). The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of the history of the achievement gap, examine factors that affect the performance of Black and Hispanic students on standardized assessments, and review the educational law that measures the performance of students. This researcher will also provide an overview of what equitable education is, the current teacher workforce, and review effective teachers and high-quality instructional practices. This researcher will define and examine Culturally Responsive Teaching and its effect on student performance. This researcher has also identified three premises that serve as the foundation for implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching in schools. Lastly, this researcher will review how Culturally Responsive Teaching can address the achievement gap by incorporating the diverse cultural curriculum into classrooms to ultimately narrow or close the achievement gap observed between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

The Achievement Gap

One of the most troubling problems facing education in schools today is the achievement gap, the observed disparity on a number of educational measures in academic performance between different groups of students, especially groups defined by race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status (Clark, 2017). The achievement gap refers to the differences in scores on state or national achievement tests between various student demographic groups (Anderson et al., 2007). The achievement gap can also be referred to as the difference between the academic achievement of linguistic and ethnic minority students, students with disabilities, students from

low socioeconomic status backgrounds, and either mainstream student populations in general or the white student population more specifically (Odekon, 2015). The achievement gap examines the disparity observed in achievement scores on standardized assessments with Black and Hispanic students compared to White students.

The achievement gap has been observed since the 1920s and currently persists. Although slavery and racial oppression were responsible for the astronomical gap in the Black-White literacy rate in 1800, it was nonetheless a major achievement gap that African Americans would struggle to overcome within and beyond slavery (Anderson, 2004). The achievement gap was observed in the first mass-administered achievement test given by the United States Army in World War I (Gardner, 2007). The test administered in World War I measured the achievement gap between black recruiters and white recruiters (Gardner, 2007). Research suggests that due to unequal funding for educating Black and White soldiers, a disparity in scores were observed between the two groups.

Throughout most of history, unequal funding was observed between White schools and schools for students of color. For example, in 1927, South Carolina spent \$2.74 per “Negro” student and \$27.88 per White student (Gardner, 2007). As funding was unequal for Black students in 1929, there was also a disparity in the number of schools for Black students that were observed. Nearing cited 162 kindergartens for White children in eight southern cities, there were just eight schools for Black children, all in Kentucky (Gardner, 2007). The unequal number of schools, unequal funding for Black students, and the segregation of schools were all factors that affected the achievement gap observed between Black and White students.

As much attention was focused on slavery and inequitable education given to Blacks, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruled that racial segregation of children in public schools

was unconstitutional. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) aimed to give Black children access to schools and classrooms where White children studied to help equalize educational resources and academic outcomes (Ferguson & Mehta, 2004). *Brown v. Board of Education* shed light on the educational inequalities in schools across the nation. Now, a half-century after *Brown v. Board of Education*, while progress is evident and many milestones have been achieved, especially in the area of civil rights, policy measures focused on rights, resources, and required testing for students have not achieved their full promise for raising achievement and narrowing gaps between groups of students (Ferguson & Mehta, 2004).

Over a half-century after *Brown v. Board of Education*, although some progress has been achieved, the achievement gap still persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students on statewide standardized assessments such as on The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). The NAEP, a congressionally mandated measure of student achievement, is the only assessment that measures what students in the United States know and can do in various subjects across the nation, states, and in some urban districts and is known as The Nation's Report Card (NAEP, 2019). The first NAEP assessment was given nationally in 1969. Nationally, the NAEP assesses students in reading, mathematics, science, writing, arts, civics, geography, economics, U.S. History, and technology and engineering (TEL). The NAEP differs from other state assessments by using the same assessment in every state, providing educators, policymakers, and parents with a common measure of student achievement that allows for direct comparison among states and participating urban districts (NAEP, 2019).

During the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, the NAEP showed substantial academic improvement of Black and Hispanic students and a significant narrowing of the Black-White and Hispanic-White achievement gap (Lee, 2002). Although there was a significant narrowing of the

achievement gap between Black-White students and Hispanic-White students, the progress slowed down and showed signs of regression in the 1990s. In 2007, the NAEP results showed that White students consistently outperformed Black and Hispanic students in both reading and mathematics (Bennett, 2011; Benson, 2012). The average score for Black 12th graders on the NAEP reading test matches the average score for White eighth graders (NAEP, 2019). Most current, there is a notable disparity in scores observed between Black, White, and Hispanic students on the 2019 Reading NAEP. Nationally, the average scale score for White students on the 2019 Reading NAEP was 272, compared to 244 for Black students and 252 for Hispanic students (NAEP, 2019).

Factors That Affect the Achievement Gap

It is widely accepted that the achievement gap is a multidimensional phenomenon. Achievement and attainment gaps are revealed through a host of schooling indexes, including grade point averages; performance on district, state, and national achievement tests; rates of enrollment in rigorous courses; and differential placements in special education and gifted-and-talented programs, as well as across behavioral indicators such as school dropout, suspension, and referral rates (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Additional factors that affect the achievement gap include socio-economic status (SES) and parental involvement. Although there is a daunting number of factors that affect the achievement gap, it is critical to find ways to ensure the needs of all learners are met and that they are college and career ready.

An extensive amount of research and literature suggests that a student's SES directly impacts their achievement level. SES describes an individual's or family's ranking on a hierarchy according to access to or control over some combination of valued commodities such as wealth, power, and social status (Mueller & Parcel, 1981). The relationship between family SES and

academic achievement can be referred to as a socio-economic gap because it implies a gap in academic achievement between students of high and low SES families (Caro, 2009). The socio-economic gap implies that low SES students will perform worse in school compared to high SES students, meaning that educational opportunities are unequal among students from different socio-economic backgrounds (Caro, 2007).

Another factor that impact student achievement is parental involvement. Parental involvement in education can be defined as “parents’ interaction with schools and with their children to benefit their children’s educational success” (Hill, 2004). Researchers have conceptualized parental involvement as multifaceted, encompassing school-based and home-based involvement (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2013). School-based involvement includes parent-teacher communication, attendance at school events, and volunteering at school, while home-based involvement includes provision of structure for homework time and leisure time (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2013). Many studies show a positive correlation to parental involvement and student achievement. Increasing parental involvement with minority students is essential to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Every Student Succeeds Act

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law by Barack Obama on December 10, 2015. It is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which was our nation’s original federal legislative effort to demonstrate a longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students, and it replaces No Child Left Behind (NCLB). ESSA maintains the spirit of accountability for states to set high standards for educating all students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Granting states greater flexibility, states determine criteria used to measure achievement with the goal of creating a more holistic

view of student success (Hope, 2007). Under the more holistic approach, ESSA gives state leaders the challenging responsibility of designing systems that can address enduring inequalities in student learning opportunities and outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016).

Shifting a great deal of education authority from the federal government back to the states and local education agencies. ESSA:

- a- Ensures that each state has set high college and career standards,
- b- Enables states to maintain accountability by directing resources towards schools that require improvement,
- c- Empowers states and local education agencies to use appropriate, evidence-based interventions that foster school improvement,
- d- Encourages states to persevere annual assessments as an informing mechanism that does not overshadow teaching and learning,
- e- Increases access to quality preschool programs for more children, and
- f- Secures new resources to identify and investigate promising educational practices and to replicate proven strategies that enhance students' educational outcomes (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2015).

Most significantly, ESSA maintains annual testing and reporting requirements for students in math and language arts in grades three through eight, once in high school, and to test them in science at three different points in time. ESSA also maintains the requirement that states publicly report student test score data for schools and disaggregate it for different subgroups of students such as:

- a- Special education students
- b- English language learners

c- Minority students

d- Students in poverty

States must also continue to have academic standards that are aligned to those tests; the standards are set by each state but they must be “challenging” and connected to college readiness (McGuinn, 2016).

A significant change from the No Child Left Behind Act compared to ESSA is how states identify struggling schools and what states have to do if they are deemed struggling. Under ESSA, states and districts will have to transform their lowest-performing schools, but they will be able to choose their own interventions, as long as the strategies have some evidence to back them up (Klein, 2016). Under ESSA, states still have to submit accountability plans to the United States Department of Education, but states are given much more latitude in picking their own academic goals for schools, though there must be an expectation of progress and schools must be rated somehow on their performance in relation to these goals (McGuinn, 2016). States must include at least four indicators, proficiency on state tests in math and language arts, English language proficiency, and one other such as student growth in test scores. Additionally, states must choose an additional non-academic indicator of school quality, such as a measure of student or teacher engagement, or school climate (McGuinn, 2016). The requirement to include at least one non-academic indicator of school quality is new to federal policy, and it provides new opportunities for validity measuring broader purposes of schools (Penuel et al., 2016).

As the achievement gap persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students, ESSA provides resources as support for students. According to ESSA, students placed at risk for academic failure need special assistance and support to help them succeed in school, and ESSA provides new opportunities for educators to address this student’s need (Zinskie & Ream, 2016).

Under ESSA, states are required to track whether low-income students have equitable access to effective teachers and develop plans to ensure that low-income and minority students enrolled in Title I schools are not served as disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers (Isenberg et al., 2016).

Effective Teachers and High-Quality Instructional Practices

There are underlying themes and topics of interest to examine when attempting to close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. Due to inequitable funding for urban schools and low highly-qualified teacher representation in schools represented with high numbers of minority students, it is critical that minority students are afforded the same opportunity to be successful as White students. It is impossible to narrow or close the achievement gap without highly-effective teachers implementing high-quality instructional practices in schools where minority schools represent the majority student population. Teacher quality is essential to raising student achievement; therefore, students need high-quality teachers (Emerick et al., 2004; Kober, 2001).

Effective teachers can be described as knowledgeable, self-confident, and enthusiastic, with strong communication and management skills, clear instructional focus, and high expectations of self and students (Reed & Bergemann, 1992). Effective teachers are creative, encourage active student participation, make relevant assignments, arrange for plenty of successful engaged time, are skillful in using questions, promote critical and creative thinking, and use wait time when seeking student response (Minor et al., 2002). Effective teachers use various methods to reach students who are not proficient on state standardized assessments, using evidence-based instructional practices. As the achievement gap persists between Black,

White, and Hispanic students, differences in students' socioeconomic status allow for inequitable distribution of effective teachers in schools.

The inequitable distribution of effective teachers in urban schools poses a major problem to minority students. Rather than organizing our educational system to pair minority students with our most expert teachers, who can help them catch up with their more advantaged peers, we actually do the opposite (Peske & Haycock, 2006). All students should be afforded the same opportunity to be college and career ready. Yet, all students are not fortunate enough to have high-quality teachers, in fact, Haycock reviewed data that indicated students of color, regardless of their socioeconomic level, were more likely to be taught by teachers with lower test scores and less academic preparation than White students (Haycock, 1998).

There is a need for highly-qualified teachers to teach minority students to enable them to be successful and proficient in reading, math, and science. Yet, as new standards for students are taking effect, large disparities continue to exist in educational opportunities available to rich and poor students in most states (Hammond, 2004). Highly-effective teachers must understand the curriculum and identify ways to differentiate and scaffold the curriculum and standards to better reach the needs of the diverse student population. High-poverty schools have a greater need to recruit and retain highly-qualified teachers to teach minority students.

Although many factors combine to make a successful school, quality teachers and school principals are among the most important requirements for success, especially when success is defined by the ability of the school to raise the achievement of students (Clotfelter et al., 2006). On average, Black high school students perform four years behind White students in math and reading (Ford & Moore, 2013). This disparity is a major focus in the United States as educational leaders try to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

High-quality teachers exhibit characteristics of commitment to students and learning, knowledge about the subjects they teach and how they teach them, responsibility for student learning, systematic thought, and advocacy for students and the teaching profession (Hopkins, 2004).

The nation has developed an action plan to address this area of need (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000). The action plan created to address the achievement gap observed between Black and Hispanic students, ELL students, and economically disadvantaged students are outlined in ESSA's strategic goals. ESSA's strategic goals are outlined below:

1. Increase the quantity and quality of people teaching in urban districts.
2. Share the content of preparation programs to encourage teacher candidates to pursue and be successful where there are needed most.
3. Improve the recruitment and hiring process.
4. Support teachers' professional growth once working in a district.

Recognizing and acknowledging the need for highly-qualified teachers in urban schools is a priority to effectively narrow or close the achievement gap and meet the needs of minority students.

Teacher Workforce

In 2017-2019, a higher percentage of private school teachers than of traditional public school teachers were White (85 percent versus 80 percent), and both percentages were higher than the percentage of public charter school teachers who were White, 68 percent (United States Department of Education, 2020). The most recent United States Department of Education Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a nationally representative survey of teachers and principals, showed that 82 percent of public school teachers identified as White (United States Department of Education, 2016). As the minority students are now the majority in schools, it is

necessary to create a more diverse teacher workforce that is culturally competent to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

The growing gap in race and culture between teachers and students continues as the teaching workforce is predominately White. This cultural mismatch may have an effect of the stubborn achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. Without critical examination and discussion of racial issues, White teachers have no mechanism to address these challenging issues (Peters et al., 2016). Since White teachers occupy the great majority of teacher workforce in this nation, it is pressing for White teachers to become transformatist educators by developing their authentic transformatist racial identities (Zhu, 2017). As the current workforce continue to be predominately White, it is critical to ensure they are culturally responsive to meet the needs of the diverse student population, ultimately narrowing or closing the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

As the student population is changing, minority students are now becoming the majority student population in schools across the United States. By 2050, almost two-thirds of all American children are projected to be students of color (Goldenberg, 2014). The United States Department of Education states that students of color are expected to make up 56 percent of the student population by 2024 (United States Department of Education, 2016). It is critical for teachers to understand the needs of the minority-majority population in schools and incorporate students' cultures into the curriculum to bridge the connection between teachers and the diverse student population.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is defined as “an approach of teaching and learning that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural

references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Landon-Billings, 1994). Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Millner, 2011). As minority students consistently under-perform White students, teachers must understand the students’ background and culture. CRT involves using the cultures, experiences, and perspectives of African, Native, Latino, and Asian American students as filters through which teaches them academic knowledge and skills (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

CRT is based on three premises:

1. Multicultural education and educational equity and excellence are deeply interconnected;
2. Teacher accountability involves being more self-conscious, critical, and analytical of one’s own teaching beliefs and behaviors; and
3. Teachers need to develop deeper knowledge and consciousness about what is to be taught, how, and whom (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

To make a shift in cultural mindsets, educational leaders and teachers must identify key areas in CRT to generate consciousness of how culture plays a major role in the classroom and how it affects student success. Educational leaders and teachers must create a school culture of acceptance for diverse students.

To make progress towards narrowing or closing the achievement gap, schools must become culturally competent. If schools are to close the achievement gap, their leaders must possess the appropriate knowledge, dispositions, and skills to assume critical roles (Johnson & Uline, 2005). Of these critical roles, leaders must allow opportunities for teachers to explore best practices of CRT, set high expectations for minority students, open opportunities for minority

students to enroll in Dual Enrollment and Advance Placement courses, and cultivate environments for diverse students to connect with one another.

Along with creating a culturally competent school, teachers must also become culturally competent. Given that teachers lack awareness of their own limited cultural competence regarding minority and diverse students inhibits the use of effective practices with students and families from diverse backgrounds (Correa et al., 1996). Building cultural awareness and sensitivity will allow teachers to understand social problems facing multicultural students. Once teachers are culturally competent, they will appreciate and value cultural differences among diverse students.

Following teacher cultural competency, classrooms must be culturally responsive. A culturally responsive classroom is one that specifically acknowledges the presence of culturally diverse students and the need for these students to find connections among themselves and with the subject matter and the tasks the teachers asks them to perform (Taylor, 2010). While preparing for a culturally responsive classroom, there are four guidelines teachers should follow:

1. Teachers should conduct a self-assessment to determine the knowledge base of self and others' cultures.
2. Teachers should use varied culturally responsive methods and materials in the classroom, and establish classroom environments.
3. Teachers should respect individuals and their cultures.
4. Teachers should establish interactive classroom learning environments, and employ ongoing and culturally aware assessments (Taylor, 2010).

Preparing for a culturally responsive classroom will allow minority students to have an opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability.

Creating culturally responsive classrooms will ensure the minority student population is proficient in challenging standards. Studies show that a large majority of students of color are being taught by White teachers. It is essential for White teachers to make cultural connections with students of color to narrow or close the achievement gap. White teachers must acknowledge their race and past cultural experiences, assess the issue of race as students are aware of the racial dynamic in the classroom and teachers must be aware of it, internalize the way they see the world, and recognize that students of color have different lenses that encourages them to see what they feel is reality (Goldenberg, 2014). Bridging the racial mismatch in classrooms is of key importance for minority students to be proficient on state assessments.

While CRT is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have a higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2000). CRT fosters positive relationships with teachers, diverse students, parents, and the community while motivating students to learn challenging standards. Minority students are challenged to strive to proficiency and think critically through CRT implementation. As a result of creating CRT schools and classrooms, minority students will have higher student achievement, stronger connections between the students and the teachers in classrooms, schools that reflects cultural acceptance, ultimately narrowing or closing the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Conclusion of Research

While the achievement gap persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students, many researchers have discovered that it is a multifaceted phenomenon. Minority students are now the majority in public schools, and is predicted that they will make up 56 percent of the student

population by 2024 (United States Department of Education, 2016). Additionally, the teacher workforce in public schools identify as White (United States Department of Education, 2016). As this mismatch is observed, the need for culturally inclined teachers is critical. Chapter two reviewed literature associated with the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and the teacher workforce in public schools. To narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students, teachers must be culturally competent, implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching in their classroom and schools.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In education, the achievement gap refers to the inequalities in academic performance between groups of students generally categorized by socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and gender (Webb & Thomas, 2015). The achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students has been evident since the 1960s and has since been a national priority (Gardner, 2007). Since then, much attention has been made to narrow or close the stubborn achievement gap observed across the nation. New laws such as ESSA places stronger accountability systems for schools to ensure all students are college and career ready, yet the achievement gap still persists.

The achievement gap can be defined as a significant difference in performance on standardized tests when comparing students of different gender, race, socio-economic status, and disability. Throughout most of American history, racial disparities in educational achievement and performance were attributed to innate genetic differences between population groups, and as such, were regarded as acceptable and understandable natural phenomena (Fredrickson, 1981). Given this overview of the history of the achievement gap, there has been many initiatives to narrow or close the achievement gap that persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students. Researchers have explained the continuation of the achievement gap as a result of standardized test biases, ineffective reading programs, and a failure to address the other systemic issues contributing to the gap (Mendoza-Denton, 2014).

Research and studies reveal that the achievement gap is affected by many factors, including race, demographic changes, socio-economic status, cultural differences, school factors, and health factors. It is critical that educational leaders do what is in the best interest of all students to ensure they are college and career ready. As the demographic changes across the

nation, students of color are now becoming the majority student population in schools. For the first time in our history, students of color make up the majority of students enrolled in public schools (Muniz, 2019). The changing face of society today requires direct attention to the diverse student population to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the nation's educational law, signed into law on December 10, 2015. ESSA outlines clear accountability measures districts and schools must meet to ensure all students are proficient in challenging statewide adopted standards. One indicator under ESSA, student achievement, measures student proficiency on standardized assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. Under ESSA, states have the flexibility to determine the type of assessment that will measure student proficiency. Although states are granted the flexibility to determine the types of assessment used, the disparity in scores persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The National Assessment of Educational Progress scores consistently report gaps between White and Black students (Lewis & Hunt, 2019).

As academic achievement disparities are observed with Black and Hispanic students compared to their White counterparts on standardized assessments, scholars, policymakers, and educational leaders have called for an educational reform. Achievement and attainment gaps are revealed through a host of schooling indexes, including grade point averages, performance on the district, state, and national achievement tests, rates of enrollment in rigorous courses such as advanced placement and honors classes, and differential placements in special education and gifted-and-talented programs (Noguera, 2012). It is essential that the diverse student population receives equitable instruction that is focused on clear outcomes, challenging standards, and

receive high-quality instruction. Understanding how culture plays a role in education is another critical area that needs to be addressed in all schools to close or narrow the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Increasing the awareness of educators to demonstrate Culturally Responsive Teaching or relevant teaching is critical to reversing underachievement and unlocking the potential of students of color as well as that of other groups of underserved learners (Muniz, 2019). Minority students must have the opportunity to learn and make connections with the curriculum with regard to their culture and teachers must be aware of Culturally Responsive Teaching to impact student achievement. A nuanced understanding of cultural backgrounds is essential to hold diverse students accountable for their learning. Creating culturally responsive classrooms in culturally responsive institutions may narrow or close the achievement gap due to the changing student population demographics. Researchers for decades (Gay, 2002) have asserted that the academic achievement of students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds would improve if educators were to make an effort to ensure that classroom instruction was conducted in a manner that was responsive to the students' home cultures.

As Black and Hispanic students are now the majority population in schools, it is critical to examine the teaching force in schools. Not only is there a nationwide shortage of teachers, there is also a growing gap in the racial, cultural, and experiential match between teachers and students (Carothers et al., 2019). The demographic makeup of public schools has changed, and in 2014 minority students made up most of the student body in states including California, Texas, New York, and Florida (Aydin et al., 2017) though the teaching force continued to be overwhelmingly White (Lynskey, 2015). Further, a recent study found that children of teachers are more than twice likely as others to enter the teaching profession (Gershenson & Jacinto,

2019), which indicated that the racial/cultural mismatch between teachers and students is unlikely to improve unless more people of color are brought into the teaching profession (Carothers et al., 2019). To narrow or close the achievement gap, White teachers must be culturally responsive to meet the needs of the diverse student population in schools. As a result of this, the purpose of this action research study is to increase the awareness of educators to demonstrate Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study are:

RQ1: How do Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops impact teacher use of culturally-relevant teaching practices?

RQ2: How do Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in their classroom?

Context of the Study

This study will be conducted with middle school teachers in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States. This study will be virtual via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Title I public school in a large urban county in the southern United States consists of 782 students. Of the student population at the Title I public middle school, 97 percent are either Black or Hispanic. The remaining three percent accounts for White, Asian, and Multi-racial students. This action research study will examine the perceptions of middle school teachers at this Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States.

Description of Population and Sampling Plan

This study will take place in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southern United States. This county is the sixth-largest school district in the nation, is fully accredited, and has nearly 270,000 students (Broward Schools, 2020). Of these students, 137,886 are White, 107,683 are Black, and 95,464 are Hispanic (Broward Schools, 2020). This county is diverse and serves a large population of English Language Learners (ELL) and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students. The Title I public middle school in a large urban county contains 782 students. Of the student population at the Title I public middle school in a large urban county, 97% are either Black or Hispanic. White and Asian students make up two percent of the school's population. Of the student population, 94% qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch at the Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southern United States.

Sample Population

This action research study will focus on middle school teachers in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States. This researcher will obtain approval from Lynn University's Internal Review Board (IRB) initially, the school district's IRB, and the school's principal (Appendix A). After attaining approval, this researcher will email all middle school teachers (Appendix B) in the Title I public middle school in a large urban county requesting their participation in this action research study. All middle school teachers will be invited to participate in this study. Participation in the professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching will be strictly voluntary. This study will be virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The demographics of the sample population will include Black, White, Hispanic, and Multi-racial middle school teachers. Prior to participating in this study, the sample population must sign the Informed Consent Form (Appendix C). Using an action research

method, this researcher will survey the consenting participants for this study at the initial and end of the study. This researcher will also survey the consenting sample population for this study at the end of each module in the professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching. The presurvey (Appendix E) and postsurvey (Appendix H) will ask qualitative Likert Scale questions.

The large urban county in the southeastern United States contains 51.2% White students, 40.2% Black students, 3.9% Asian students, and 0.6% Native American students (Broward Schools, 2020). The large urban county in the southeastern United States also contains 3.7% Multi-racial students (Broward Schools, 2020). Of the student population in this large urban county in the southeastern United States, 35.6% are Hispanic students, and 65.3% are non-Hispanic (Broward Schools, 2020). Additionally, 11.9% of the students are English Language Learner (ELL) students (Broward Schools, 2020). This large urban county in the southeastern United States contains a total of 75.1% minority students, making it a majority-minority population for grades Kindergarten through 12th grade (Broward Schools, 2020).

The Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States contains 782 students. Of the student population at the Title I public middle school, 97% are either Black or Hispanic. White and Asian students make up three percent of the school's population. Of the student population, 94% qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch at the Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States.

Research Design

This action research study examines the perceptions of middle school teachers who complete a series of five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. This

researcher will design and facilitate five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching at a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States virtually via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants who volunteer to participate in the study will attend five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching virtually via Zoom. The professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching will meet bi-weekly. The total time allotted for each professional development workshop should not exceed one hour.

The professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching will consist of five modules (Appendix F) that will focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies. Participants will complete a presurvey at the initial professional development workshop and a postsurvey at the last professional development workshop. Participants will also complete a mini survey at the end of each module in the professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching. The independent variable that guides this action research study is the professional development in Culturally Responsive Teaching. Teachers implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in the classroom is the dependent variable.

Data Collection

The instrumentation that will be used for this study is a presurvey and postsurvey adapted from Validation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching Survey and five mini surveys. The presurvey and postsurvey and five mini surveys will consist of Likert Scale questions each participant will complete via Survey Monkey. The presurvey will solicit information at the initial professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching and the postsurvey will solicit information at the last professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive

Teaching. Analysis of the presurvey and postsurvey will consist of the comparison of the presurvey and postsurvey.

The second instrumentation that will be used for this study are five mini surveys (Appendix I). Participants will complete a mini survey at the end of each module to gauge their perceptions of each module via Survey Monkey. The data from the presurvey and postsurvey will be collected and analyzed to determine the participants perceptions of the professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching. The data from the five mini surveys will be collected and analyzed at the end of each module.

After the study is completed, the presurvey, postsurvey, and five mini surveys will be safely stored in a password protected, secured, and safe environments for a period of two years. Potential participants will be informed of the purpose, procedures, potential benefits, all risks and discomforts, and all methods of confidentiality and anonymity. If voluntary participation is given, participants will sign the provided informed consent form which can be found in Appendix B.

Survey Instrumentation

There are two measurement tools that will guide this action research study. The first measurement tool that will be used in this study is a presurvey and postsurvey that is adapted from Validation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching Survey. Participants will complete a presurvey at the initial professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching. Participants will also complete a postsurvey at the last professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching. Question type on the presurvey and postsurvey will solicit perceptions on cultural competence, creating cultural opportunities in the classroom, and understanding the diverse student population. The second measurement tool with will guide this

action research study is five mini surveys at the end of each module in the professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching. Participants will complete five mini surveys to gauge their perceptions on each module of the professional development in Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Ethical Considerations / Risks and Benefits

Prior to initiating this study, this researcher will obtain approval from Lynn University's Internal Review Board, the school district's Internal Review Board, and the school principal. This researcher will thoroughly discuss the consent and content with each participant. All participants must sign the informed consent form to participate in this study. The participants will be exposed to minimal risks throughout this study, such as participating in collegial discourse on relevant information in the professional development focused in Culturally Responsive Teaching. A level of discomfort may arise as topics are discussed, such as culture and race. The benefits of this study are overarching. Examining Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies may impact student achievement and narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Anonymity/Confidentiality

Participants will complete a presurvey and postsurvey to solicit information on the professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. Participants will also complete five mini surveys at the end of each module in the professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching. To ensure teacher names are protected while completing the presurvey and postsurvey and all five mini surveys, the researcher will generate a pseudonym for each participant such as Participant 1 and Participant 2 to allow confidentiality and anonymity.

After the study is completed, the presurvey and postsurvey and five mini surveys will be safely stored in a password protected, secured, and safe environments for a period of two years.

Identifiable information for all participants will be strictly confidential and will be stored in a separate password protected, secured, and safe environment for a period of two years. After the period of two years, all files will be destroyed. Participants may not be completely anonymous during this action research study. If participants choose to remain anonymous during this study, they will have the option to mask their identity and use their assigned pseudonym.

Quality of Data

The researcher believes the participants will answer the presurvey, postsurvey, and the five mini surveys with fidelity and will be accurate. At no point in the study will the names of any of the participants appear. Confidentiality will be assured at all times during the study.

Data Analysis

This researcher will analyze data collected from the completed presurvey, postsurvey, and five mini surveys from the professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching. On the presurvey, postsurvey, and five mini surveys, participants will be asked to rate the extent to which they agree with the statement on a five point Likert Scale ranging from five (5) *Strongly Agree* to one (1) *Strongly Disagree*. The reliability estimate for items on a Likert Scale will be measured using the reliability method known as Cronbach's alpha (Quansah, 2019). All data will be analyzed using the SPSS Statistics software program. Descriptive statistics (mean, mode, median, standard deviation) will be run and if 30 or more participants are included in the action research study, then sample t-tests will be run to look for statistical significance in the intervention.

Validity

This researcher will collect and analyze data from the presurvey, postsurvey, and the five mini surveys at the end of each module in the professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States. Validity will be measured on the teachers' fidelity in completion of the presurvey, postsurvey, and five mini surveys by Cronbach's alpha.

Reliability

Measuring internal consistency ensures this study is reliable as measured by Cronbach's alpha. This researcher will design and facilitate five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching that can be used in other districts across the United States. Based on the completion of the professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching, other researchers can facilitate the same professional development focused in Culturally Responsive Teaching and collect and analyze data of the perceptions of teachers. The professional development workshops developed as a part of the researcher's work may be used to determine if the instructional strategies given through Culturally Responsive Teaching can ultimately narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students through implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in classrooms to meet the needs of the diverse student population.

Limitations

Limitations are constraints that are normally not under the control of the researcher. The limitations in this study includes:

- This study only examines the perceptions of teachers in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States

- This study only consists of middle school teachers in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States
- This study will be done virtually via Zoom due to the COVID-19
- Teacher fatigue due to all professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching will be facilitated at the end of the school day
- Teachers may not complete all mini surveys via Survey Monkey at the end of each professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Teachers may not complete the presurvey and postsurvey via Survey Monkey

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study which may impact the results include:

- Teachers from one Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States
- Honest responses from participants
- No other teachers in the district will be included in the study

Summary

Chapter three has presented the methodology and procedures for this action research study. The purpose of this action research study is to determine how a series of five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching will narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students through implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in classrooms to meet the needs of the diverse student population. In addition, this study will also examine the teachers' perceptions of the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development to positively impact student achievement with Black and Hispanic students.

This data collected will be from the presurvey, postsurvey, and five mini surveys from middle school teachers in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States. It is assumed that the teachers will have completed the surveys and mini surveys with fidelity, yielding accurate data. The researcher will keep all ethical obligations and ensure the names of participants are not disclosed.

The findings of this study may be useful for all schools across the nation to determine if districts and schools should place a greater emphasis in Culturally Responsive Teaching in schools to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. Educational leaders may need further data, resources, and evidence based on this study to determine if focusing on Culturally Responsive Teaching instructional strategies in schools is the dominant contributing factor that narrows or closes the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The primary purpose of this action research study was to determine how a series of five professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching would narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students through implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in classrooms to meet the needs of the diverse student population. In addition, this study also examined the teachers' perceptions of the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development to positively impact student achievement with Black and Hispanic students. The results of this study reflect the impact of Culturally Responsive Teaching on teaching instructional practices. The data collected focused on the presurvey and postsurvey. The data collected also focused on five mini surveys. Survey Monkey was used to distribute all surveys and analyze the data collected. The Likert Scale questions were analyzed by the researcher.

After obtaining approval from Lynn University's Internal Review Board, the school district's Internal Review Board, and the school's principal, a recruitment email was sent to all middle school teachers in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States. The recruitment email was sent to forty-eight (48) middle school teachers in the Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States. Of the targeted sample population, fifteen (15) participants participated in this action research study focused on Culturally Responsive Teaching. The recruitment email was sent to all middle school teachers in the Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States on September 25, 2020. Two weeks were allotted to recruit middle school teacher participation for this action research study on Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Research Questions

The questions below guided this study.

RQ1: How do Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops impact teacher use of culturally-relevant teaching practices?

RQ2: How do Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in their classroom?

Summary of Analyses

The analyses of the survey indicate that fifteen (15) middle school teachers participated in the professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching (Table 1).

Although the recruitment email was sent to forty-eight (48) middle school teachers, fifteen (15) agreed to participate in this action research study. The professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching met bi-weekly, all not exceeding one hour. The professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching included:

- Module 1: Knowing Your Students
- Module 2: Knowing About Culture and Race
- Module 3: Knowing How to Take Accountability
- Module 4: Knowing How to Connect Culture to Social and Emotional Learning
- Module 5: Knowing How to Make an Impact

Participants completed a presurvey at the beginning of the professional development workshop on Culturally Responsive Teaching and a postsurvey at the last professional development workshop on Culturally Responsive Teaching via Survey Monkey. Participants also completed five (5) mini surveys at the end of each module via Survey Monkey. Cronbach's alpha

was computed for the presurvey and postsurvey. Cronbach's alpha was also computed for each mini survey. Table 1 illustrates the number of participants for each professional development workshop on Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Table 1.

Total number of middle school teachers that participated in the professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching

Professional Development Workshop	Number of Participants
Module 1: Knowing Your Students	15
Module 2: Knowing About Culture and Race	15
Module 3: Knowing How to Take Accountability	15
Module 4: Knowing How to Connect Culture to Social and Emotional Learning	15
Module 5: Knowing How to Make an Impact	15
TOTAL NUMBER OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS: 15	

Summary Analysis of Data Survey

An analysis of the survey data is compiled into several data analysis tables. The analysis reflects data collected from five mini surveys given at the end of each professional development workshop on Culturally Responsive Teaching and the presurvey and postsurvey. The presurvey was given at the initial professional development workshop on Culturally Responsive Teaching and the postsurvey was given at the last professional development workshop on Culturally Responsive Teaching. For data analysis purposes, each participant was assigned a pseudonym to analyze each participant's responses from the presurvey and postsurvey.

An analysis of Module 1: Knowing Your Students appears that fourteen (14) participants *strongly agreed* this module was relevant to their teaching practices. One (1) participant *agreed* that module one was relevant to their teaching practices. Fourteen (14) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for collaboration with other teachers and one (1) participant *agreed* that module one allowed for collaboration with other teachers. Fourteen (14) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for reflection and one (1) participant *agreed* that the professional development allowed for reflection. Twelve (12) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom and three (3) participants *agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom. Thirteen (13) participants *strongly agreed* that the activities/approaches used in professional development workshop were engaging. One (1) participant *agreed* that the activities/approaches used in the workshop were engaging and one (1) participant *neither agreed nor disagreed* that they activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.

Table 2.

Mini Survey – Module 1: Knowing Your Students

Survey Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professional development workshop is relevant to my teaching practices.	14	1	0	0	0
The professional development workshop allowed me to collaborate with other teachers.	14	1	0	0	0

The professional development workshop allowed for reflection.	14	1	0	0	0
The professional development workshop provided me with resources I will use in my classroom.	12	3	0	0	0
The activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.	13	1	1	0	0

An analysis of Module 2: Knowing About Culture and Race appears that twelve (12) participants *strongly agreed* this module was relevant to their teaching practices. Three (3) participants *agreed* that Module 2 was relevant to their teaching practices. Fourteen (14) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for collaboration with other teachers and one (1) participant *agreed* that Module 2 allowed for collaboration with other teachers. Thirteen (13) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for reflection and two (2) participants *agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for reflection. Eleven (11) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom and two (2) participants *agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom. Two (2) participants *neither agreed or disagreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom. Twelve (12) participants *strongly agreed* that the activities/approaches used in professional development workshop were engaging. Three (3)

participants *agreed* that the activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.

Table 3.

Mini Survey – Module 2: Knowing About Culture and Race

Survey Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professional development workshop is relevant to my teaching practices.	12	3	0	0	0
The professional development workshop allowed me to collaborate with other teachers.	14	1	0	0	0
The professional development workshop allowed for reflection.	13	2	0	0	0
The professional development workshop provided me with resources I will use in my classroom.	11	2	2	0	0
The activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.	12	3	0	0	0

An analysis of Module 3: Knowing How to Take Accountability appears that thirteen (13) participants *strongly agreed* this module was relevant to their teaching practices. Two (2) participants *agreed* that Module 3 was relevant to their teaching practices. Fifteen (15) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for collaboration with other teachers. Fifteen (15) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional

development workshop allowed for. Thirteen (13) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom, one (1) participant *agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom, and one (1) participant *neither agreed nor disagreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom. Thirteen (13) participants *strongly agreed* that the activities/approaches used in professional development workshop were engaging. Two (2) participants *agreed* that the activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.

Table 4.

Mini Survey – Module 3: Knowing How to Take Accountability

Survey Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professional development workshop is relevant to my teaching practices.	13	2	0	0	0
The professional development workshop allowed me to collaborate with other teachers.	15	0	0	0	0
The professional development workshop allowed for reflection.	15	0	0	0	0
The professional development workshop provided me with resources I will use in my classroom.	13	1	1	0	0
The activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.	13	2	0	0	0

An analysis of Module 4: Knowing How to Connect Culture to Social and Emotional Learning appears that thirteen (13) participants *strongly agreed* this module was relevant to their teaching practices. Two (2) participants *agreed* that Module 4 was relevant to their teaching practices. Fourteen (14) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for collaboration with other teachers and one (1) participant *agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for collaboration with other teachers. Fourteen (14) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for reflection and one (1) participant *agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for reflection. Thirteen (13) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom and two (2) participants *agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom. Fourteen (14) participants *strongly agreed* that the activities/approaches used in professional development workshop were engaging. One (1) participant *agreed* that the activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.

Table 5.

Mini Survey – Module 4: Knowing How to Connect Culture to Social and Emotional Learning

Survey Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professional development workshop is relevant to my teaching practices.	13	2	0	0	0

The professional development workshop allowed me to collaborate with other teachers.	14	1	0	0	0
The professional development workshop allowed for reflection.	14	1	0	0	0
The professional development workshop provided me with resources I will use in my classroom.	13	2	0	0	0
The activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.	14	1	0	0	0

An analysis of Module 5: Knowing How Make an Impact appears that fifteen (15) participants *strongly agreed* this module was relevant to their teaching practices. Fifteen (15) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for collaboration with other teachers. Fifteen (15) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop allowed for reflection. Thirteen (13) participants *strongly agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom and two (2) participants *agreed* that the professional development workshop provided them with resources they will use in their classroom. Fourteen (14) participants *strongly agreed* that the activities/approaches used in professional development workshop were engaging. One (1) participant *agreed* that the activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.

Table 6.

Mini Survey – Module 5: Knowing How to Make an Impact

Survey Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professional development workshop is relevant to my teaching practices.	15	0	0	0	0
The professional development workshop allowed me to collaborate with other teachers.	15	0	0	0	0
The professional development workshop allowed for reflection.	15	0	0	0	0
The professional development workshop provided me with resources I will use in my classroom.	13	2	0	0	0
The activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.	14	1	0	0	0

Cronbach’s alpha was computed for each mini survey for each module on Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops. All fifteen (15) participants completed each mini survey for each module. It appears that Cronbach’s alpha for Mini Survey – Module 1: Knowing Your Students is 4.88. Cronbach’s alpha for Mini Survey – Module 2: Knowing About Culture and Race is 4.8. Cronbach’s alpha for Mini Survey – Module 3: Knowing How to Take Accountability is 4.91. Cronbach’s alpha for Mini Survey – Module 4:

Knowing How to Connect Culture to Social and Emotional Learning is 4.91. Cronbach's alpha for Mini Survey – Module 5: Knowing How to Make an Impact is 4.96.

Table 7.

Cronbach's alpha for Mini Surveys - Module 1, Module 2, Module 3, Module 4, and Module 5

Instrument	Cronbach's alpha	N of Items
Mini Survey – Module 1: Knowing Your Students	4.88	5
Mini Survey – Module 2: Knowing About Culture and Race	4.8	5
Mini Survey – Module 3: Knowing How to Take Accountability	4.91	5
Mini Survey – Module 4: Knowing How to Connect Culture to Social and Emotional Learning	4.91	5
Mini Survey – Module 5: Knowing How to Make an Impact	4.96	5

An analysis of the fifteen (15) participants' surveys shows that question one (1) and question ten (10) had the greatest change in response answer with a level of internal consistency of 1.00. Question seventeen (17) had the lowest change in response answer with a level of internal consistency of 0.01.

Table 8.*Participant 1*

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Agree	Agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Agree	Agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Neither agree not disagree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Agree	Agree

I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Neither agree nor disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Agree	Agree

Table 9.***Participant 2***

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Agree	Strongly agree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Agree	Strongly agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

Table 10.***Participant 3***

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Agree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Agree	Agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Agree	Strongly agree

I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Agree	Strongly agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Agree	Strongly agree

Table 11.***Participant 4***

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Agree	Agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Agree	Strongly agree

I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Agree	Agree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Strongly agree	Agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Agree	Strongly agree

Table 12.*Participant 5*

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Agree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Agree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Agree	Strongly agree

I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Agree	Strongly agree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Agree	Strongly agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Agree	Strongly agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Agree	Strongly agree

Table 13.

Participant 6

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

Table 14.*Participant 7*

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Strongly agree	Agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Agree	Agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Agree	Disagree

I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Agree	Agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Strongly agree	Agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Agree	Agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Agree	Agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Strongly agree	Disagree

Table 15.

Participant 8

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

Table 16.***Participant 9***

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Disagree	Agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Disagree	Agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Agree	Strongly agree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Disagree	Agree

I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Disagree	Disagree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Disagree	Strongly agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Agree	Agree

Table 17.***Participant 10***

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Agree	Agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Agree	Strongly agree

I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Agree	Agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Agree	Agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Agree	Agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Agree	Agree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Agree	Agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Agree	Agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree

Table 18.***Participant 11***

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Strongly agree	Agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Strongly agree	Agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Agree	Agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Agree	Agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Agree	Agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Agree	Agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Agree	Agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Agree	Agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Strongly agree	Agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Strongly agree	Agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree

Table 19.***Participant 12***

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Agree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Agree	Strongly agree

I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Agree	Agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Neither agree nor disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Agree	Agree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Agree	Agree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Agree	Strongly agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Agree	Strongly agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

Table 20.***Participant 13***

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Agree	Strongly agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Agree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Agree	Strongly agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Agree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Agree	Strongly agree

I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Agree	Agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Disagree	Agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree

Table 21.

Participant 14

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Neither agree nor disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Agree	Agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Agree	Agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree

I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Agree	Agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Agree	Agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Disagree	Disagree
I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Disagree	Disagree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

Table 22.*Participant 15*

Survey Item	Presurvey Response	Postsurvey Response
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	Agree	Strongly agree
I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	Agree	Strongly agree
I learn words in my students' native languages.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	Disagree	Agree
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	Agree	Agree
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	Disagree	Agree
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	Disagree	Strongly agree

I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	Disagree	Agree
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	Agree	Agree
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	Disagree	Strongly agree
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	Agree	Strongly agree
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	Disagree	Strongly agree

Cronbach’s alpha was computed for each survey item in the presurvey and postsurvey on Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops. It appears that the presurvey mean for “*I include lessons about the acculturation process*” mean is 3.60 and 4.60 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for “*I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes*” for the presurvey is 4.07 and 4.60 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for “*I ask students to compare their culture with American culture*” is 3.93 and 4.80 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for “*I make an effort to get to know my students’ families and backgrounds*” is 4.53 and 4.87 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for “*I learn words in my student’s native language*” is 4.27 and 4.87 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for “*I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work*” is 3.73 and 4.60 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for “*I use peer tutors or student-led discussions*” is 4.13 and 4.67 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for “*I use surveys*”

to find out about my students' classroom preferences" is 3.67 and 4.13 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for *"I elicit students experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities"* is 3.67 and 4.33 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for *"I encourage students to speak their native languages in class"* is 3.07 and 4.07 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for *"I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities"* is 3.40 and 3.87 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for *"I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students"* is 3.93 and 4.47 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for *"I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias"* is 3.40 and 3.93 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for *"I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events"* is 4.07 and 4.60 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for *"I ask students for input when planning lessons and activities"* is 3.40 and 4.33 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for *"I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material"* is 3.73 and 4.40 for the postsurvey mean. The presurvey mean for *"Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students"* is 4.20 and 4.33 for the postsurvey mean.

Table 23.

Cronbach's alpha for survey items on the presurvey and postsurvey in the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops

Survey Item	Presurvey Mean	Postsurvey Mean
I include lessons about the acculturation process.	3.60	4.60
I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.	4.07	4.60
I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.	3.93	4.80

I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.	4.53	4.87
I learn words in my students' native languages.	4.27	4.87
I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.	3.73	4.60
I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.	4.13	4.67
I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.	3.67	4.13
I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.	3.67	4.33
I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.	3.07	4.07
I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.	3.40	3.87
I spend times outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.	3.93	4.47
I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.	3.40	3.93
I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.	4.07	4.60
I ask for student input when planning lessons and activities.	3.40	4.33
I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.	3.73	4.40
Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.	4.20	4.33

Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha was computed for each of the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops for those participants who completed the presurvey and postsurvey. The Culturally Responsive Teaching presurvey and postsurvey were reliable. The levels of internal consistency for the presurvey and postsurvey is reported in Table 24.

Table 24.

Cronbach’s alpha for the presurvey and postsurvey in the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops

Instrument	Cronbach’s alpha	N of Items
Presurvey	3.81	17
Postsurvey	4.44	17

RQ 1: How do Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops impact teacher use of culturally-relevant teaching practices? This question explored how a series of five professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching impact teacher use of culturally-relevant instructional teaching practices to impact student achievement with minority students to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The results indicate that Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshop does impact teacher use of culturally-relevant teaching practices. Results from the postsurvey indicate an internal consistency of 4.44, an increase from the presurvey.

RQ 2. How do Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in their classroom? This question explored how a series of five professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in

their classroom to impact student achievement to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The results indicate that the series of five professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching does encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in their classroom. Results from the presurvey indicate an internal consistency of 3.81. Results from all five mini surveys indicate an internal consistency of 4.89.

Summary of the Analyses of the Research Study

The summary of the analyses of the research study concluded that implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching instructional strategies does narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. All participants completed a mini survey for each module and Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each module. Results from all five mini surveys indicate an internal consistency of 4.89. As all participants responded to the presurvey and postsurvey on the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops, Cronbach's Alpha of these means were calculated at 3.81 on the presurvey and 4.44 on the postsurvey, revealing appropriate levels of internal consistency for data analysis.

Survey item number one (1) and ten (10) revealed the highest mean change of 1.00. This suggests that after attending the professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching, participants included lessons about the acculturation process and encouraged students to speak in their native languages. Survey item seventeen (17) revealed the lowest mean change of 0.13. This suggests that after attending the professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching, participants did provide rubrics and progress reports to students whenever possible. The data collected and analyzed from this action research study suggests that a series of five Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops does impact teacher

use of culturally-relevant teaching practices to impact student achievement to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. Lastly, the data collected and analyzed from this action research study also suggests that the series of five professional development workshops created by this researcher on Culturally Responsive Teaching does encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in their classroom.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

As the student demographics of schools are changing, minority students are now becoming the majority student population in schools. Although the majority student population is predominately Black and Hispanic students, the teacher workforce is predominately White teachers. This teacher and student mismatch may affect student achievement, making it critical that teachers are culturally competent. The achievement gap dates back to the 1920's and is still observed between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

The purpose of this study was to explore how providing teachers who teach a diverse student population with a series of five professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching will impact student achievement to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The research explored how Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development impacted teacher use of culturally-relevant practices and how Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in their classrooms to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. This action research study documents the importance of creating culturally responsive teachers to meet the needs of the diverse student population to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Summary of Results

Throughout this action research study, fifteen (15) middle school teachers participated in five professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching virtually via Zoom. When teachers are culturally competent, they are able to meet the needs of the diverse student

population in the classrooms, ultimately narrowing or closing the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The data collected and analyzed from this action research study suggests that implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in the classroom does impact student achievement, which may narrow or close the achievement gap. Of the fifteen (15) teachers that participated in the professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching, 100% either *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that the professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching is relevant to his/her teaching practices. This data suggests that Culturally Responsive Teaching is needed in schools to impact student achievement, ultimately narrowing or closing the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Review of Methods and Variables

An action research design was used to determine the impact of creating culturally competent teachers to impact student achievement. Participants included fifteen (15) middle school teachers in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States. Participants attended five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching virtually via Zoom. The completed a presurvey and postsurvey and five mini surveys at the end of each module. The questions on the presurvey and postsurvey and five mini surveys consisted of Likert Scale type questions soliciting information on perceptions on cultural competence, creating cultural opportunities in the classroom, and understanding the diverse student population. The data collected from the surveys were presented in tables and a brief synopsis of overall results.

Discussion of the Results

The results of the presurvey and postsurvey indicate that the Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshop does narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. In my current role as a Curriculum Facilitator, this researcher agrees with the participants who believe that learning about students' culture is important and can impact student achievement. As minority students are projected to be the majority student population in schools, it is critical that teachers are meeting the needs of the diverse student population by implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching instructional practices in their classrooms to impact student achievement.

The data collected and analyzed from this action research study suggests that Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops does impact teacher use of culturally-relevant teaching practices to impact student achievement with minority students to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The data collected and analyzed from this action research study also suggests that Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development workshops does encourage teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in their classroom. Creating culturally competent teachers in schools is not only critical to meet the needs of the diverse student population in schools today, but it is also necessary to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Limitations

The conclusions of this action research study were based on the presurvey and postsurvey and five mini surveys from the participants who attended all five professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching. Although forty-eight (48) middle school teachers received the recruitment email, fifteen (15) middle school teachers agreed to participate in this

action research study. Teachers may have been hesitant to participate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other limitations included teacher fatigue due to all professional development workshops on Culturally Responsive Teaching occurring at the end of the school day and only including middle school teachers at one Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the results of this action research study, several recommendations for future research can be made. Recommendations for future research includes:

- Conduct professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching that include elementary and high school teachers
- Conduct professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching for non-Title I schools
- Conduct professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching for district staff, instructional coaches, and all support staff in schools
- Incorporate professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching during professional learning communities and teacher planning days that are embedded in the school calendar throughout the school year to eliminate teacher fatigue
- Private consulting to other educational sectors to facilitate professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching, including but not limited to:
 - Charter schools
 - Private schools
 - Before and after-school programs
 - Tutoring programs

- Create a Culturally Responsive Teaching application that has a clear focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching instructional strategies
- Use student standardized achievement data to determine the impact of Culturally Responsive Teaching instructional strategies

Summary

In conclusion, educators around the world are passionate about ensuring all students are successful. Despite the passion of educators, the achievement gap still persists between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The student population is becoming more diverse, making it critical for educators to become culturally competent. Although there are many factors that affect the achievement gap, it is clear that a focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching is necessary due to the changing student demographics.

This action research study reviewed the literature on the achievement gap, the factors that affect the achievement gap, the Every Student Succeeds Act, effective teachers and high-quality instructional practices, the current teacher workforce, and Culturally Responsive Teaching. The researcher then created and facilitated five professional development workshops, all based on current research. After surveying the consenting participants, the data was analyzed to determine if Culturally Responsive Teaching does narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. The data from the presurvey, postsurvey, and mini surveys suggests that Culturally Responsive Teaching does narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

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Appendix A: Permission Letter From School Principal

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
Lauderhill 6-12 STEM-MED Magnet School

Ryan T. Reardon, Ph.D., Principal

June 29, 2020

Natasha V. Forde,

Thank you for your request to conduct your research study at Lauderhill 6-12 STEM-MED Magnet school for the 2020-2021 school year. I approve your request to conduct your research facilitating professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching to middle school teachers. I look forward to you facilitating professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching.

If you should have any questions about this approval to conduct your study at Lauderhill 6-12 STEM-MED Magnet School, I can be reached at any time at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ryan T. Reardon
Lauderhill 6-12 STEM-MED Magnet School
1901 NW 49th Avenue
Lauderhill, FL 33313

Appendix B: Email to Recruit Middle School Teachers

Panthers,

I am currently working on my doctorate degree and I am very excited to share what I am working on with you! The purpose of my study is to explore how providing teachers who teach a diverse student population with five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching will impact student achievement to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. This study will focus on creating culturally competent teachers, classrooms, and schools through deliberate and meaningful professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please feel free to reply to sender and I will give you more details. I look forward to working with you if you choose to participate! We will have a great time learning... I promise!

Regards,

Natasha Forde

Appendix C: Teacher Consent Form

Informed Consent

Study Title: Narrowing the Achievement Gap Through Culturally Responsive Teaching

Researcher: Natasha V. Forde

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Susan Saint John

Researcher's Statement

I am inviting your voluntary participation in my dissertation study regarding Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in the classroom. Please read the following information below, and if you choose to participate in this study, please sign on the appropriate line below.

The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide if you will participate in this study. You may ask questions about the purpose of the study, risks and benefits, expectations, and duration of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how providing teachers who teach a diverse student population with five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching will impact student achievement to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. As the demographics of the student population in school change, minority students are now the majority student population in schools. This action research study will focus on creating culturally competent teachers, classrooms, and schools through deliberate and meaningful professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching to narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Study Procedures

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a series of five virtual professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching via a confidential Zoom link. The professional development workshop will last for five weeks. We will meet bi-weekly for each professional development workshop. Each professional development workshop should not exceed one hour. You will be asked to complete a presurvey and postsurvey that should take

roughly 15 minutes to complete via Survey Monkey. The presurvey will be given at the initial professional development workshop and the postsurvey will be given at the last professional development workshop. You will also be asked to complete five mini surveys at the end of each module via Survey Monkey. The presurvey, postsurvey, and mini surveys will be confidential, as you will be given a pseudonym.

Duration of Participation and Compensation

The total duration of your participation will last for five weeks, meeting bi-weekly. The total time allotted for each professional development workshop should not exceed one hour. There is no compensation for your participation.

Risks, Stress, or Discomfort

There are no risks associated with this study. A level of discomfort may arise as topics are discussed, such as race and culture. This study may make you feel emotional and vulnerable due to the content in Culturally Responsive Teaching. You may remove yourself from the workshop or withdraw at any time without consequence.

Benefits of the Study

The potential benefits of this study are overarching. Examining various Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies may impact student achievement, and narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students. Increasing the awareness of educators to demonstrate Culturally Responsive Teaching may bridge the gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students academically.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study without any consequences.

Confidentiality / Anonymity

Your responses to the presurvey and postsurvey will be collected and stored safely. After the study is completed, the presurvey and postsurvey will be safely stored in a password protected, secured, and safe environment for a period of two years. Your personal or identifiable

information will be strictly confidential and will be stored in a separate password protected, secured, and safe environment for a period of two years. After the two year period, all files will be destroyed. In addition to the confidentiality, the survey will be conducted with the highest level of professionalism and ethics, and there will be no dissemination of the data to anyone. You may not be completely anonymous during this study. If you choose to remain anonymous during the virtual professional development workshops, you have the option to mask your identity on video and use your assigned pseudonym. There will be participants in this study who may recognize you, hear your stories, and hear your experiences. At no time will any professional development workshop be recorded for audio or visual content.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the research study, you may contact Natasha Forde (phone: [REDACTED]). For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call Dr. Patrick Cooper, Chair of the Lynn University Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects at pcooper@lynn.edu.

Participant's Statement

This study has been explained to me and I volunteer to participate in this study. I have had a chance to ask questions. I will not share any identifying information about the other participants or names of other instructors/students that are brought up in the workshop sessions. If I have questions later about the research, or I wish to no longer participate, I can contact Natasha Forde. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

By signing this consent form I am attesting that I have read the information provided above and freely give my consent to participate.

Consent Agreement

Participant

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Researcher

Printed Name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix D: Presurvey Informed Consent Form

Presurvey Informed Consent Form

Study Title: Narrowing the Achievement Gap Through Culturally Responsive Teaching

Researcher: Natasha V. Forde

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Susan Saint John

Researcher's Statement

I am inviting you to complete the presurvey in my dissertation study regarding Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in the classroom. Please read the following information below, and if you choose to participate in this survey, please sign on the appropriate line below.

The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide if you will participate in this survey. You may ask questions about the purpose of the survey, study, risks and benefits, expectations, and duration of the study.

Survey Procedures

If you choose to participate in this survey, you will be asked to complete a presurvey in Culturally Responsive Teaching via Survey Monkey. You will be given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. The presurvey should take roughly 15 minutes to complete. The presurvey will be given at the initial professional development workshop.

Duration of Participation and Compensation

The total duration to complete the presurvey should take no longer than 15 minutes. There is no compensation for your participation.

Confidentiality/Anonymity

Your responses to the presurvey will be collected and stored safely. After the study is completed, the presurvey will be safely stored in a password protected, secured, and safe environment for a period of two years. Your personal or identifiable information will be strictly confidential and will be stored in a separate password protected, secured, and safe environment for a period of two years. After the two year period, all files will be destroyed. In addition to the

confidentiality, the survey will be conducted with the highest level of professionalism and ethics. At no time will any survey be recorded for audio or visual content.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the research study, you may contact Natasha Forde (phone: [REDACTED]) For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call Dr. Patrick Cooper, Chair of the Lynn University Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects at pcooper@lynn.edu.

Participant’s Statement

The presurvey has been explained to me and I volunteer to participate in this survey. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, or I wish to no longer participate, I can contact the researcher listed on the first page of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

By signing this consent form I am attesting that I have read the information provided above and freely give my consent to participate.

Consent Agreement

Participant

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Researcher

Printed Name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix E: Presurvey

Culturally Responsive Teaching Professional Development Workshop

Presurvey

Likert Scale Questions:

1- I include lessons about the acculturation process.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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2- I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

3- I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

4- I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5- I learn words in my students' native languages.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

6- I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairing in group work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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7- I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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8- I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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9- I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

10- I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

11- I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.

Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------------------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

12- I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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13- I include lessons about anit-immigrant discrimination or bias.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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14- I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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15- I ask for student input when planning lessons an activities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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16- I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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17- Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Appendix F: Description of the Professional Development Workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching

This researcher will design and facilitate a series of five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching at a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States. Each professional development workshop in Culturally Responsive Teaching will meet bi-weekly. Each professional development workshop should not exceed one hour. There will be five professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching. The five modules will be:

- 1- Knowing Your Students
- 2- Knowing About Culture and Race
- 3- Knowing How to Take Accountability
- 4- Knowing How to Connect Culture to Social and Emotional Learning
- 5- Knowing How to Make an Impact

The professional development workshops in Culturally Responsive Teaching will challenge middle school teachers in a Title I public middle school in a large urban county in the southeastern United States to examine how Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies impact learning and student achievement to ultimately narrow or close the achievement gap between Black, White, and Hispanic students.

Appendix G: Postsurvey Informed Consent

Postsurvey Informed Consent Form

Study Title: Narrowing the Achievement Gap Through Culturally Responsive Teaching

Researcher: Natasha V. Forde

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Susan Saint John

Researcher's Statement

Now that you have participated in my research study, I am inviting you to complete the postsurvey in my dissertation study regarding Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies in the classroom. Please read the following information below, and if you choose to participate in this survey, please sign on the appropriate line below.

The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide if you will participate in this survey. You may ask questions about the purpose of the survey, study, risks and benefits, expectations, and duration of the study.

Survey Procedures

If you choose to participate in this survey, you will be asked to complete a postsurvey in Culturally Responsive Teaching. You will be given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. The postsurvey should take roughly 15 minutes to complete. The postsurvey will be given at the last professional development workshop.

Duration of Participation and Compensation

The total duration to complete the postsurvey should take roughly 15 minutes to complete . There is no compensation for your participation.

Confidentiality/Anonymity

Your responses to the postsurvey will be collected and stored safely. After the study is completed, the postsurvey will be safely stored in a password protected, secured, and safe environment for a period of two years. Your personal or identifiable information will be strictly confidential and will be stored in a separate password protected, secured, and safe environment

for a period of two years. After the two year period, all files will be destroyed. In addition to the confidentiality, the postsurvey will be conducted with the highest level of professionalism and ethics. At no time will any survey be recorded for audio or visual content.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the research study, you may contact Natasha Forde (phone: [REDACTED]) For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call Dr. Patrick Cooper, Chair of the Lynn University Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects at pcooper@lynn.edu.

Participant’s Statement

The postsurvey has been explained to me and I volunteer to participate in this survey. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, or I wish to no longer participate, I can contact Natasha Forde. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

By signing this consent form I am attesting that I have read the information provided above and freely give my consent to participate.

Consent Agreement

Participant

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Researcher

Printed Name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix H: Postsurvey

Culturally Responsive Teaching Professional Development Workshop

Postsurvey

Likert Scale Questions:

1- I include lessons about the acculturation process.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

2- I examine class materials for culturally appropriate images and themes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

3- I ask students to compare their culture with American culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

4- I make an effort to get to know my students' families and backgrounds.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

5- I learn words in my students' native languages.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

6- I use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairings in group work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

7- I use peer tutors or student-led discussions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

8- I use surveys to find out about my students' classroom preferences.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

9- I elicit students' experiences in pre-reading and pre-listening activities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

10- I encourage students to speak their native languages in class.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

11- I have students work independently, selecting their own learning activities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

12- I spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of my students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

13- I include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

14- I supplement the curriculum with lessons about international events.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

15- I ask for student input with planning lessons and activities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

16- I encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

17- Whenever possible, I provide rubrics and progress reports to students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Appendix I: Mini Survey

1- The professional development workshop is relevant to my teaching practices.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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2- The professional development workshop allowed me to collaborate with other teachers.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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3- The professional development workshop allowed for reflection.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------

4- The professional development workshop provided me with resources I will use in my classroom.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5- The activities/approaches used in the professional development workshop were engaging.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	-------------------