

6-2022

Centering Culture and Relationships in Learning: Culturally Responsive Teaching in Higher Education

Valerie Vistain
National Louis University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/diss>



Part of the [Educational Methods Commons](#), [Higher Education and Teaching Commons](#), and the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vistain, Valerie, "Centering Culture and Relationships in Learning: Culturally Responsive Teaching in Higher Education" (2022). *Dissertations*. 687.
<https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/diss/687>

This Dissertation - Public Access is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons@NLU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@NLU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@nl.edu.

**CENTERING CULTURE AND REALTIONSHPIS IN LEARNING:
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Valerie Vistain

Higher Education Leadership

Doctoral Program

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
Doctor of Education Higher Education Leadership**

National College of Education

National Louis University

April, 2022

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
in the National College of Education
National Louis University

Valerie Vistain
Higher Education Leadership

Approved:

Ignacio Lopez

Dr. Ignacio Lopez, EdD, Chair, Committee

N. Muller

Dean, National College of Education

Dr. Seema A. Imam

Dr. Seema Imam, EdD, Committee Member

Karen Galea

Dr. Karen Galea, PhD Committee Member

Stuart I. Carrier

Dr. Stuart Carrier PhD, Dean's Representative

04/27/2022

Date Approved

Contents

CHAPTER ONE.....	3
Introduction.....	3
Institutional Overview.....	5
CHAPTER TWO.....	27
Literature Review.....	27
Themes in Research.....	35
Theoretical Framework.....	44
CHAPTER THREE.....	55
Methodology.....	55
Data Collection.....	57
Data analysis.....	59
CHAPTER FOUR.....	62
Findings.....	62
Themes.....	67
CHAPTER FIVE.....	78
Discussion.....	78
Implications.....	83
Recommendations.....	86
References.....	90
Appendix A.....	94
Appendix B.....	95
Appendix C.....	96
Appendix D.....	98

Chapter One

Introduction

Accessibility to higher education has come a long way since its inception in the colonial era. In 17th-century colonial America, education, especially higher education, was only allowed for a select few. These few were generally White, affluent, and male. As time went on educational opportunities opened up for more and more people, though still not the majority of the population. The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed some significant advancements in educational equity. The industrial era led to more women entering colleges as well as the establishment of women's colleges. The GI Bill opened up the door for more non-traditional students, with veterans enrolling in college in droves. Brown vs Board of Education in 1954 demanded integration stating that the "separate but equal" argument was a detriment to Black students as facilities were never equal to those of Whites. In 1972 the Higher Education Act made it so schools were partners in financial aid, opening the door to even more students. (Cohen, 2009). In the 1980s there was a shift to start paying attention to the growing Hispanic population in the US and with that came the advent of Hispanic Serving Institutions in 1994. Career colleges and online colleges have allowed even more people to go to college who already have jobs or are working towards a specific career.

The 2020 census data revealed what so many in education already knew, the student population has changed and is more diverse than ever before. Compared to 2010, there has been a 276% increase in the multicultural population (Chen, 2017). The Hispanic/Latinx/ Latinx population increased by 23% in the last few years. The reality is that the United States has witnessed a significant and steady increase in ethnically, racially, and economically diverse

students. “More than 70 % of today’s college students have one or more characteristics that would label them as nontraditional”(Chen, 2017, p. 41). In 1980, 82.66% of students were White, 9.93% were Black and 4.22% were Hispanic with about 3.1 million women enrolled in college. In 2018, 56.27% were White, 13.82% were African American, and 21.77% Hispanic with 9.4 million women enrolled in college(*College Enrollment and Student Demographic Statistics*, 2019). Accordingly, this is an inverse of the full-time faculty at higher education institutions with 41% White males; 35% White females; 6% Asian/Pacific Islander males; 5% Asian/Pacific Islander females; and 3% each Black males, Black females, Hispanic males, and Hispanic females”(National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Most college students are taught by those of different racial, ethnic, and/or cultural backgrounds.

Over the last 20 or so years, the question of how to effectively teach culturally and linguistically diverse students has been prominent across education scholarship. Scholars such as Gloria Ladson-Billings, Geneva Gay, Sonia Nieto, and Paris Alim have all presented frameworks, ideas, and strategies to support the teaching and learning of culturally diverse students. Culturally responsive teaching has emerged as a viable option to mitigate the issues of inverse representation and to build upon the cultural frameworks of culturally and linguistically diverse students to enhance learning. Despite the emergence of culturally competent educational strategies, there is still a prominent achievement gap between students of color and their White counterparts. Some studies have illustrated that this could be due to the lack of preparation or efficacy educators feel when attempting to engage with culturally responsive teaching (Cruz et al., 2019). Wherever the issues lie it seems imperative that culturally responsive teaching take a stronger hold in educational settings where the student population is linguistically and culturally diverse.

Midwest University has seen the same shift in student demographics as the rest of the country. In many ways, MU's Undergraduate College is uniquely positioned to advance culturally responsive teaching within its practices. Last year (2020) the student body was 78% Pell-eligible, over 75% Latinx, 15% Black/African American, 81% first-generation college students, and over 60% identified as multilingual. As Hammond (2015) aptly points out that it is the responsibility of the educator to "create the right conditions for optimum learning" (Hammond, 2015). If we consider the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, the right conditions can be found in culturally responsive teaching. At Midwest University, culturally responsive teaching is not necessarily systematized, but it exists in pockets throughout the university. Yet, the need for improvement is evident. Instructors laud the necessity for culturally responsive teaching but might struggle with the implementation of such. This paper aims to identify what is being done to advance and support culturally responsive teaching as well as possible areas to introduce or increase its use. It will also examine the strategies that culturally responsive teachers are already using and how those strategies might impact learners. In the end, the hope is that this research will provide instructors with a toolkit of culturally responsive teaching as well as frameworks for constant reflection and improvement.

Institutional Overview

Midwest University (MU) is a four-year, not-for-profit, degree-granting, higher education institution with its main campus in downtown Chicago. Midwest University is a Carnegie-classified community engagement institution. Classifications are given on a five-year cycle and MU submitted for reclassification in 2021 (Carnegie Classification of Midwest University, n.d.). This community engagement classification is elective and requires significant data collection, documentation, and evidence of community engagement (Carnegie Community Engagement

Classification, 2020). MU's focus on community engagement is clear throughout its mission and values. "Midwest University provides access to quality higher education that nurtures opportunity for students through innovative teaching, scholarship, community engagement, and service excellence" (Mission and values, n.d.).

One way that MU pursues this mission is through the Civic Engagement Center (CEC). This center, led by the Vice-Provost of Special Initiatives, is a rotating group of faculty and staff throughout MU that work to promote civic and community engagement. Its mission is aligned with that of MU, "to advance the education of students to become civic-minded, actively engaged, life-long scholars and leaders on campus, locally, throughout the nation and globally." (Civic Engagement Center, 2020). For example, in 2018, 2019, and 2020 the CEC led the Get Out the Vote effort at MU. This consisted of a few key events: Parade to the Polls, Election Day parties, voter registration events, informational sessions, and even a panel of US and State Representatives. Volunteers from the CEC positioned themselves in high-traffic areas during lunch hours and helped students register to vote. All this work resulted in a 12% increase in registered voters at MU compared to the previous midterm election. In 2020 CEC added a Pizza and Perspectives series where speakers from the community come in and discuss civics while students are served lunch. There are usually a few faculty members present that lead interactive lessons or discussions about the speakers' content. Some of the topics include the US census, the Chicago mayoral election, and the roles and responsibilities of a US Representative. (Civic Engagement Center, 2020). With 2020 being a presidential election year, the CEC had even more events planned for its Get Out the Vote effort. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic led to the cancellation of many on-campus events. The CEC members will need to find ways to promote voter registration and information virtually.

In addition to community engagement, Midwest University prides itself in being an institution that fosters educational justice and supports diversity and equity. While this has been a guiding philosophy in different parts of MU for a long time, recently the institution made the call to include a “pillar,” or foundational area of focus, in the strategic plan that focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). MU is in the midst of creating an updated strategic plan to guide the university through 2030. In 2018 MU hired an outside company to review matters of DEI at MU and offer ways to do better. While MU certainly made progress in this area, there is still considerable room for improvement. In early 2019 faculty and staff were called together to collaborate on mission, vision, and ideas for the new strategic plan. Part of this process required faculty and staff to reflect upon the previous plan (2020 strategic plan), critiquing it and considering ideas for improvement. One of the most crucial areas for improvement observed was diversity, equity, and inclusion. It became quite clear that MU needed to do more. Faculty pointed out that there should be a more concerted effort to advance DEI work. For example, more diverse hiring practices, professional development of anti-racist practices, development of culturally responsive curriculum, creation of a culture of inclusion, and development of cultural clubs.

Another indicator of MU’s commitment to diversity and equity is its designation in 2016 as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). “As a recognized HSI, MU prides itself in not only reflecting itself as an HSI through student representation of over 40% Latinx, Hispanic, and Students of Color, but through our practices” (Midwest University, n.d). Midwest University offers a variety of services and support designated to the Hispanic student population. The US Department of Education offers a variety of grants to Hispanic Serving Institutions, one of which is the HSI STEM grant. This grant is designed to increase the number of Hispanic/Latinx

students attaining degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math (Hispanic-Serving Institutions - Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics and Articulation Programs, n.d.). This grant was awarded to MU after it received the HSI designation. At Midwest University, through the HSI STEM grant, there is a significant focus on supporting students in computer science with the long-term goal of increasing the retention and graduation of Hispanic and Latinx students in STEM fields. Through this grant, there have also been some scholarships awarded to students in computer science.

Institutional Peers

Midwest University is unique among the higher education institutions in the Chicagoland area but has a variety of institutional peers. The first is Roosevelt University. Roosevelt is a private not-for-profit, four-year, degree-granting, urban university. Tuition is higher than MU, at approximately \$28,000 a year. MU ranges around \$10,000 for the undergraduate college. Roosevelt has a total student population of 4,457 as of 2017 with over 50% female and about 44% White. Graduate enrollment is about 1,800 and undergraduate about 2,500 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Roosevelt has considerably more programs and degrees than MU but remains a competitor considering its location and the social justice emphasis in both institutions.

Northeastern Illinois University is a public, four-year, degree-granting institution on the north side of Chicago. This institution competes with MU for tuition affordability, student demographics, and its education programs. The student population is much larger, around 11,000 students. The retention rates are much lower than the other three schools, at around 46% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Similar to MU, NEIU has been a commuter school for most of its existence. Recently it added dormitories that greatly increased the out-of-

state student population. Also like MU, Northeastern Illinois University is a designated Hispanic Serving Institution, meaning that at least 25% of the student population identifies as Hispanic/Latinx, though both MU and NEIU have considerably larger Hispanic/Latinx populations, each well above 40%.

Elmhurst University (formerly Elmhurst College) is a four-year, private, nonprofit, degree-granting institution. Unlike MU or Roosevelt, it has a religious affiliation (About Elmhurst University, n.d.). Tuition is considerably higher than both MU and Roosevelt, and over 90% of its students receive financial aid (About Elmhurst University, n.d.). Like MU, Elmhurst's retention rate hovers around 70%. Elmhurst University has a strong education and nursing programs. Its education program competes with MU's, and its nursing program may attract from MU's pool of potential students interested in nursing. Elmhurst University is also a more traditional liberal arts institution that appeals to students who are looking for degrees in the humanities and social sciences or desire a larger array of classes to choose from.

While Elmhurst University is firmly a liberal arts college, Midwest University takes on a more hybrid style, infusing aspects of career education with a liberal one. Career education takes a different approach than the liberal arts. Similar to vocational training, it is designed to train students for a specific field. Students learn about the field through hands-on training and sometimes internships. While this can vary, career education degrees tend to be equivalent to an associate's degree. This shift to a career-focused education has been most prominent in the last 10 years with changes in the job market making it necessary for a college degree. The purpose of this type of education is to put students on a career path quickly and allow them to have more opportunities in that particular job market. "Recognizing these trends, career and technical education reshaped itself as a new kind of pathway: one that includes some form of

postsecondary training. That could mean earning certification or credentials in good-paying fields like cybersecurity or robotics, or it could mean getting an associate or bachelor's degree" (Gewertz, 2018). Students at career colleges tend to be more nontraditional or ones that did not want to go the traditional college route. Career college students have a variety of reasons for choosing this route, ranging from career advancement, vocational goals, cost, online and accelerated programs, as well as the next step after an associate's degree. Faculty members are generally professionals in the field of study. A couple of years ago, some for-profit institutions decided to rebrand themselves as career education schools after low enrollment and scandals at a few schools (Fain, 2016).

At Midwest University career-education is a major part of its model. MU has a Career Bridge that aids students in career preparation, connects students with employers, and helps them to build those connections. (Career Bridge Mission). In the General Education College career curriculum is a major focus starting in the sophomore year. Students are required to take two career courses per quarter through their senior year. Additionally, students have the option to forgo career courses to join Braven. Braven is an education technology company that has a multitude of employer partnerships. Their program is designed to empower underrepresented students with career skills, networks, and experiences to enable them to find impactful careers (Model and Impact, n.d). The General Education College is Braven's founding partner in the Chicago area. As the MU student body is about 95% students of color and 85% Pell Grant eligible, it consists of exactly the students Braven aims to empower (Braven Chicago,n.d.). This partnership has led to many MU graduates obtaining meaningful employment.

Table 1*Institution Comparison Chart*

	Midwest University	Roosevelt University	Elmhurst University	Northeastern Illinois University
Graduation rates	50%	40%	64%	23%
Retention rates	68%	64%	75%	46%
Tuition	\$31,050 (10,000 for Pathways students)	\$48,655	\$35,000	\$11,218
Enrollment (Undergraduate, FT)	1,883	2,117	2,732	4,501
Enrollment (Graduate, FT)	1,268	1,018	150	337
Any financial aid	78%	84%	98%	54%
Pell Grants	60%	43%	35%	48%

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2017)

Mission and Values

Mission statements are ubiquitous in colleges and universities. A mission statement can set the tone for the work of the institution and should reflect the institution's unique culture and properties. Whatever the mission statement is, it should be supported by decisions and actions made by all levels of the institution (Diamond, 2002). The mission of Midwest University is, “Midwest University provides access to quality higher education that nurtures opportunity for students through innovative teaching, scholarship, community engagement, and service excellence” (Mission and values, n.d.) This mission is supported by the core values of MU. (See table 2). These core values are illustrated in the mission of each college at MU as well. (See table 3).

The mission and values of the General Education College are exhibited in the culture of working toward excellence. The college has done much to make sure that they are meeting expectations and responsibilities as well as trying to improve in areas that are lacking. At Midwest University, there has been some success in fulfilling the responsibilities linked to its core values, and areas where improvement is possible. The first responsibility of an institution is to be sure that it is meeting the need of students. “Everyone’s top priorities are making sure the students receive the best possible education, that the college helps students achieve their educational goals, and that it gives students an appropriate return on their investment of tuition dollars and time” (Suskie, 2014, p. 53). Suskie (2014) further explains that some of the ways that institutions can confirm they are serving all students' needs are by offering a variety of programs both accelerated and rigorous as well as online. MU has recently expanded online classes to ensure that all face-to-face classes also have an online component. This allows students to

experience the same content and rigor in online classes. The development of the Pathways Program and later the MU, also exist to serve very important student needs. In this program, students are provided with wrap-around support to guide them through the college experience. Since many of the students are first-generation or have not been college prepared through their high schools, it becomes imperative to meet the need of helping students become college-ready.

Table 2:

Core Values of Midwest University

<p>Excellence: We are committed to providing the highest quality educational experience and administrative service to each student. We strive to be the best, and to continually improve our processes and outcomes.</p>
<p>Respect: The MU community and its educational philosophy are built on a high regard for the cultures, backgrounds, experiences, and dignity of each person. We embrace and build upon the strength that comes from a diverse student body, faculty, and staff.</p>
<p>Access: From its founding, MU has provided opportunities for each student. Whether through developmental support for the under-prepared or through a culturally relevant curriculum, each student is brought to a high level of academic achievement, including those who have historically encountered barriers to higher education.</p>
<p>Collaboration: As part of the dynamic creation of ideas and sharing of knowledge, we encourage interdependent learning relationships among students, faculty, and staff, and between the university and its communities.</p>
<p>Passion: We are deeply passionate about the fundamental value and importance of the work we do. An MU education transforms individual lives, organizations, and communities.</p>
<p>Inquiry: We are committed to fostering a love of learning and intellectual inquiry in all its forms. Faculty and student scholarship both enrich the learning experience and inform our larger society.</p>
<p>Innovation: Because we continually seek to understand and address educational challenges in a diverse and dynamic global era, real-world environments are integrated with theory, creative thinking, and a commitment to social justice.</p>

Engagement: We actively reach out to students, schools, businesses, and communities, working hand-in-hand to achieve mutual goals. That deep involvement is also reflected in how MU staff and faculty work collaboratively with their colleagues to provide services and instruction to each student.

(Mission and values, n.d.)

Table 3:

Colleges Missions of Midwest University

General Education College: “Our mission is to provide a rigorous, technology-enhanced, affordable college education in a supportive environment that respects diversity in order to help all students meet and surpass their personal, academic, and career goals.

The undergraduate college at Midwest University aims to be a national leader in closing the opportunity gap in bachelor's degree attainment and employment. Our graduates will achieve upward mobility, leading to positive outcomes for themselves, their families, and communities.” (Mission and Vision of the General Education College, n.a.)

College of Professional Studies and Advancement: “The College of Professional Studies and Advancement's mission is to provide current and aspiring professionals with the innovative and relevant education, hands-on experience and personalized guidance necessary to advance their careers and to improve their own lives and the lives of others. CPSA’s programs are aligned with the needs of employers to better prepare you for your career and create additional professional development and career opportunities for you as a graduate.”

(Mission and Vision of the College of Professional Studies and Advancement, n.d.)

Kendall College: “Kendall College at Midwest University makes its students "ready for the world," preparing passionate professionals who balance creativity and discipline and who contribute to vibrant and thriving communities through a commitment to their professions.”

(Mission and Vision of Kendall College, n.d.)

National College of Education: “The National College of Education's mission is excellence in teaching, scholarship, service, and professional development. Recognizing the importance of life-long learning in a diverse, rapidly changing global society, NCE is committed to developing and empowering all learners.”

(Mission and Vision of the National College of Education, n.d.)

Strategic Plan

The idea of strategic planning originated in the business world, with a strong focus on inputs, outputs, and action. Profit-making is the primary goal in the business world. While most higher education institutions are not for profit, these practices are still as applicable in the world of education. Strategic planning has the potential to guide the institution effectively and set a climate that is reflective of the strategic plan. The research argues that it is important to survive and what the future might bring (Choban, Choban, & Choban, 2008). Midwest University creates strategic plans on a 10-year cycle. For example, MU is in the process of finalizing the 2030 plan in the year 2020. The 2020 plan was created in 2010. These plans are broken down in a few key ways. First, the plan is divided into pillars. In the 2030 plan they are labeled, Pillars for Action. Those Pillars all connect to the vision of the institution. (See table 4)

Table 4:

Strategic plan pillars

2020 Strategic Plan Foundational Pillars	2030 Strategic Plan Pillars for action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Academic excellence: Innovative teaching and learning· Unparalleled student experience: Holistic wraparound support for adult learners· Financial stability: Operational excellence and data-informed planning and action· Partnerships: Bolstering community and professional capacity and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Preparing our students for the world of work· Promoting Students’ personal growth, well-being, and engagement through service· Living our values of diversity and equity: Building a culture of inclusion· Advancing leadership in teaching and learning· Embracing the future

(Strategic Plan 2020)

Development of the strategic plan goes through a multitude of steps before it is finalized, most involving faculty and staff voice. In 2019 staff and faculty were brought together to hear a report on the future of higher education presented by the Education Advisory Board (EAB). This report offered predictions on how the college student might change and what effects that would have on higher education institutions (HEI). This research provided the foundation for what to do differently in the years to come. A committee was formed that gathered feedback and input from all stakeholders. This was done throughout multiple iterations of the process. The resulting data were used to create the Strategic Plan for 2030. The plan is currently going through its last round of feedback and should be announced and implemented soon (2030 Strategic Plan, 2020).

Choban et al. (2008) make a salient point that changes in admissions could result in a very different student body, thus requiring different resources and considerations. It would also

result in program outcome changes and if these are not anticipated, the effects on program outcomes could be negative. There may be a lesson for MU here. So when we look at the students at MU in 2020, we have a much different average student than in 2010. While there were edits and updates to the 2020 Strategic Plan over the last 10 years, the pillars stayed the same and seemed anachronistic to the new students at MU. Figure 4 illustrates how the pillars were shifted for the 2030 Strategic Plan. After significant staff and faculty feedback, the 2030 Strategic Plan pillars are much more about action and seem to consider all MU students while having a strong focus on diversity and equity.

History of Midwest University

Since the first higher education institution was founded in the colonial era, higher education and who it serves has expanded in many different ways. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the United States was amid growing industrialization at rates that were previously unseen, leading to monumental results. Cities developed into economic and industrial centers. Apprenticeships and careers of the colonial era were almost obsolete as unskilled labor in factories started to become the norm, especially in the North. Working conditions were poor and social ills dominated urban life. People were moving west under the guise of manifest destiny, immigrants arrived in droves filling industrial jobs, and slavery raged in the South while the North became an industrial center. While industrialization brought about a massive change in communication and transportation, it also brought about a variety of social ills that threatened society, especially those in the working class. Reformers jumped in and attempted to make real changes in areas like temperance, abolition of slavery, labor, and, most significant, education. As primary and secondary education grew and compulsory education developed as the norm, colleges did the same, springing up all over the expanded United States. The end of the

nineteenth century marked a time when higher education became more accessible to the greater population including women and the formerly enslaved. The development of Midwest University was quite an example of this expansion in education.

Midwest University was founded in 1886 with the purpose of training women to be kindergarten teachers. Elizabeth Harrison, the founder, thought that it was crucial to invest in education and that the path to prosperity in the community was to properly educate the young (History at MU, n.d.). This idea was considered quite radical as very few women were in college at the time. While women's colleges spring up in the United States throughout the 1800s, the number of women that attended was barely a blip on the radar until the 1920s. (Rury, 2015). Proving to be an innovator, Harrison, and her colleagues were able to found a college for women as well as maintain and foster its success. While the mission has changed over the years, the emphasis on teacher training and community involvement has remained dominant at MU. "Today, MU is the outcome of and testament to the vision of our founders. It is a contemporary university committed to innovation and best practices in both undergraduate and graduate education" (History at MU, n.d.).

Throughout the 1900s the college expanded, forming the National College of Education (NCE), and became well known for its teacher training programs. The University expanded to include co-ed students. In the 1980s and 1990s new degrees, programs, and colleges in the area of business and professional studies were created to respond to the changing political and economic times. In 2018, two more colleges were added to Midwest University, the General Education College and Kendall College (History at MU, n.d.). Midwest University currently consists of the Undergraduate College, the College of Professional Studies and Advancement,

Kendall College, and the National College of Education (The Colleges of Midwest University, n.d.).

Today's college students are quite different from those of 1886 when Harrison founded MU. In many ways, MU has followed these shifts and created ways for culturally and linguistically diverse students to succeed. In 2015 a program was formed in response to a report that stated 14,000 Chicago Public School students graduated from high school and did not go to college. These students were primarily Black and Latinx. Across the nation, there was a pattern of underrepresented students that were not going to college or were persisting in college at much lower rates than their White counterparts. Midwest University students that had been traditionally overlooked from the college experience needed their own access to education (S.Pozcos, personal communication, November 14, 2019). In response to this, MU decided to introduce the Harrison Professional Pathways Program (in homage to MU's founder), which served as the first iteration of the Undergraduate College.

The purpose of the Pathways program was to cater to students that had been traditionally overlooked from the college experience due to socioeconomic and racial forces that had left them at a disadvantage. The creators of the program looked at the unstable higher education environment and hoped that the Pathways program would bring a new pipeline for students to MU by meeting the mission of increasing access (S.Pozcos, personal communication, November 14, 2019). At its inception, the program was for freshman and sophomore students and it offered holistic, wrap-around support to help ensure student success. This was done in a few ways. First students were assigned student success coaches to guide students through the college process. About 80% of students in the program identified as first-generation college students so the coach served as a touchpoint for the process. Additionally, coaches are there to assist and offer support

regarding any socioemotional issues that may be impeding student success. The program also created college success courses and co-requisite lab courses that were worth college credit. This eliminated non-credit-bearing prerequisites and their associated tuition costs. The program also added support staff such as writing and math specialists as well as counselors all available to students at no cost. Finally, tuition was set at a rate of approximately \$10,000. This proved to be a draw for students with an expected family contribution of zero. These students are eligible for the federal Pell Grant as well as state MAP grants, which cover the cost of the \$10,000 tuition.

Governance

Governance is a “process for making decisions about the directions and goals of the organization.” (Lightcap, 2014.p. 474). At the collegiate level, this can be done in a multitude of ways. In the last century, most HEIs (both private and public) have established a shared governance model that is frequently codified in constitutions and policy statements. In this model, generally, the constitution will view and protect faculty as “key advisors on a broad array of institutional policies and practices” (Bucklew, 2013, p. 7). In a shared governance model, there is typically a Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate is generally elected and representative, where each college (or entity in an HEI) elects and sends a representative to the Senate. This can be compared to the structure of the US government where the legislative branch consists of elected representatives that are sent to make decisions on behalf of their constituents. Through various committees, in the constitutional model, faculty has a say in curriculum development, degree creation, teaching and learning, strategic planning, as well as promotion and tenure. Faculty input is sought for executive-level appointments. In some cases, faculty approval is needed for the appointment of high-level positions. Additionally, those in senior management positions often meet with the Faculty Senate, seeking input and advice from faculty.

This model of constitutional governance is more predominant in private institutions where state and county legislatures do not control budgets and administrator appointments. Midwest University is an example of constitutional governance. MU is a private institution and has a Board of Trustees. The governing body in the Faculty Senate. Though final decision-making or approval does fall to the Board of Trustees. The Senate has committees that revolve around some of the major functions of an institution, such as curriculum and development, technology adoption, promotion and recognition, faculty standards and development, and learning quality. All these committees and their functions are codified in a constitution that is voted on by faculty and approved by the Board of Trustees. The executive board of the Faculty Senate meets with senior leadership, such as the President, Provost, and the Board of Trustees monthly.

Additionally, the governance of each college is further codified within its own respective constitutions. For example, the General Education College(MU) has two college co-chairs, an Administrative Cabinet, and three college committees. The college co-chairs are elected positions, serving for two-year staggered terms. The MU Constitution states that co-chair positions should be filled by one faculty member and one student success coach or advisor. Student success coaches and undergraduate advisors are all voting members in the MU. This fact is notable as, traditionally, in constitutional governance, only faculty are voting members. This practice was so different that it was challenged by the Faculty Senate. In late 2017 and early 2018 members of the soon-to-be-formed General Education College(MU) wrote the inaugural constitution which developed a governing structure. The MU Constitution Committee had at least one member from each of the colleges in MU. Members of the MU were chosen to lead the committee based on expertise and past experience with college governance. The process was a

lengthy one with multiple drafts and rewrites. It entailed consultation with governance experts in the University, and other colleges in MU, collaboration with MU members, and then approval by Faculty Senate. In this constitution, three committees were established: Faculty Promotion and Recognition, Curriculum and Instruction Committee, and the Student Support Committee.

Bucking the trend of faculty being the only ones involved in college governance, the members of the MU voted to include student success coaches and undergraduate advisors as part of the college's voting membership. Coaches and advisors are also able to serve on the Student Support Committee. It is important to note that these roles in the General Education College are very significant and a primary pillar of the MU's mission. Most notably, student success coaches provide invaluable support to students academically, as advocates, and mentors, and they even provide career guidance. Much of their job also consists of eliminating barriers that so often disproportionately affect culturally and linguistically diverse learners. MU members argued that since coaches and advisors were so crucial to the success of the college and its students, they too should be involved in the governance of the college. After some debate, the MU Constitution was approved by the Faculty Senate and then by the Board of Trustees.

Two years after the General Education College was created, the Constitution has been reapproved by the Faculty Senate. The committees and structures are the same as established in the MU Constitution. In the effort of continuous innovation and improvement, there are quarterly meetings where college representatives report to faculty and staff on committee work, solicit feedback, and encourage faculty and student success coach voice. While decisions used to be made in an administrative silo, now initiatives are brought to the larger group for debate and feedback.

Shared constitutional governance has some challenges and can turn into a cluster of bureaucracy. However, when considering the mission of Midwest University and the integrity of

inclusivity and diversity, shared governance is essential. When propagating an institution's values and showing them in practice, all members should be able to have a voice. This keeps power from being only in the hands of a few, considers those who are traditionally underrepresented, and allows for collaboration and the exchange of best practices and ideas. The challenges of shared governance are not unique to the General Education College or Midwest University. Shared governance has its share of challenges, college committees are highly limited in their scope and powers; constituents are apathetic at times; everyone has different definitions of governance; and there is too much concentration on minutiae, just to name a few. In today's post-recession world, there seems to be a move away from shared governance and more to top-down leadership. A few ways that some of the problems with shared governance could be ameliorated is through effective leadership from the board and college president, representatives from each group of stakeholders that bring voice, student involvement, and a structure for feedback and collaboration.

Faculty

To meet the demands that come with an increased student body, additional faculty and staff were needed. Dozens of full-time faculty and staff were added to the MU population, as well as a large number of adjuncts. Since there had not been much of an undergraduate population before this, the requirements for faculty appointments were that of a research-based, graduate-level university. The requirements for faculty appointments needed modification. One notable change is that the MU faculty members are only required to have a master's in their field, not a terminal degree as was the previous requirement. This is fairly uncommon in liberal art, 4-year institutions. One of the primary reasons for this decision is that teaching, not research, was the focus of the college. The traditional way that faculty has been evaluated in the US is by examining scholarship, teaching, and service. The path to promotion also looks at the same three

prongs. But, due to these shifts in faculty appointments at MU, the criteria for faculty promotion and faculty assessment needed to change.

At Midwest University, there are three tiers: assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor. There are also two main tracks, professional practice, and tenure. When the MU was created it became necessary to include a non-tenured track simply because there is no tenure offered. At MU, adjuncts, or contingent faculty play a large role in educating the students enrolled at MU. This is not unlike higher education institutions across the entire United States. Contingent and non-tenure-track faculty are now the majority in colleges and universities and are on a steady rise. In 2011 approximately 56% of college faculty were part-time or non-tenure-track faculty members. In 2018 reports showed it was closer to 75%. (Wallis, 2018).

Faculty leadership differs slightly in each of MU's colleges, but it follows the same general patterns. Colleges have Deans and Associate Deans. There are also Program and Department Chairs. At the institutional level, there is the Office of Teaching and Learning that aims to support instructors in a variety of ways. They sponsor webinars and workshops that explore key issues and strategies in higher education. The office facilitates forums where instructors can share best practices and sponsors inquiry teams where faculty can collaborate over a shared concern in their own practice. Each college also has a person or department designated to advance professional development and provide instructional support. In the Undergraduate College, Instructional Support Coaches offer support and ideas for development to both contingent and full-time faculty members.

Students

At Midwest University until 2015 there was a very small undergraduate population and most students were earning a graduate degree. With the Pathways program in 2015 which led to the MU in 2018 and then the acquisition of Kendall Culinary College in 2018, the student body expanded significantly. In the 2017/2018 academic year, MU had 4,918 total enrolled, 2,518 of which are full-time. Among full-time students, 682 are men and 1,836 are women, this is fairly indicative of the overall national rates of higher education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). When looking at the racial breakdown, about 25% are Hispanic/Latinx, 23% African American, and 41% White. These statistics are from the 2017/2018 school year and in the General Education College of MU there has been a significant increase of Latinx students, so it will be interesting to see this breakdown in the coming years' data. Within the current General Education College, 73% identify as Latinx, 19% as African American or Black, and 80% as first-generation college students. At present, the total enrollment at MU is 9,000 with 4,900 graduates and 4,1000 undergraduates (National Louis University, n.d.) The majority are female, 79%. More than half the student population identifies as African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, and/or Native American (MU at a glance). MU does not have student housing aside from that associated with the recently acquired Kendall College, so most students are commuters. Many of them take public transportation and come from areas in Chicago proper. The first- to second-year retention rate for bachelor's seeking students is 68% for full-time students. According to IPEDS, the largest number of graduates are Latina women. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017)

Many students are drawn to the education programs at MU. Midwest University's National College of Education has had 76 alumni honored by the Golden Apple Foundation of

Chicago with one of the most prestigious education honors in the state of Illinois. This is more than any other school of education in the state (MU at a Glance, n.d.). Additionally, the acquisition has proven to be a beneficial addition to Midwest University as Kendall is ranked one of the top 22 culinary schools in the country (MU at a Glance, n.d.).

Culturally Responsive Teaching at Midwest University

Over the last 30 years, culturally responsive teaching has emerged in response to the increase of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Studies have indicated that there is an achievement gap when comparing the outcomes of culturally diverse students and their White counterparts. While there are many reasons that this gap exists—historical and cultural forces most significantly—one way to mitigate these discrepancies is to address the ways in which teachers teach and students learn. Culturally responsive teaching could have the capacity to improve academic performance among diverse students and create independent learners. Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references/lenses in all modes of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995). It further demands that instructors take the time to interrogate their own biases and cultural frameworks to ensure that biases are not filtering into the curriculum as well as teacher-student interaction.

Chapter two

Literature Review

A note on terminology. Culturally responsive teaching and pedagogy serve as popular terms when discussing culturally and linguistically diverse students, while rooted in the same ideas of cultural capital and social justice, these terms are a bit different. Culturally responsive teaching refers most to teaching practices, which is reflected in the work of Geneva Gay (2018). Culturally responsive pedagogy is reflected in Ladson-Billings's earlier works that look at the way the teaching practices are delivered and the positionality of those teaching. Throughout this study, the term culturally responsive teaching will account for the two strands of cultural responsiveness. While this paper will speak primarily to culturally responsive teaching, it should be noted that the considerations of culture can be found in other teaching and learning terminology, such as multicultural education, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

When defining culturally responsive teaching, one must look to the works of Ladson-Billings (1995), Nieto (2000), and Gay (2018). A theory of culturally responsive teaching should attempt to accomplish three things: “produce students who can achieve academically, produce students who demonstrate cultural competence, and develop students who can both understand and critique the existing social order”(Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 474). A culturally responsive teacher sees their students' linguistic and cultural resources as capital to be built upon rather than a barrier to students' success. Their practice consists of holding all students to high academic standards while providing appropriate scaffolds and supports, building on students'

background knowledge and competence by implementing a curriculum that incorporates their cultural knowledge and cultivating critical consciousness within students regarding power relations (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The last 20 years have shown a massive shift in the racial and ethnic backgrounds of higher education students in the US. The United States has witnessed a significant and steady increase in ethnically, racially, and economically diverse students. “More than 70 % of today’s college students have one or more characteristics that would label them as nontraditional”(Chen, 2017, p. 41). In 1980, 82.66% of students were White, 9.93% were Black and 4.22% were Hispanic with about 3.1 million women enrolled in college. In 2018, 56.27% were White, 13.82% were African American, and 21.77% Hispanic with 9.4 million women enrolled in college(*College Enrollment and Student Demographic Statistics*, 2019). Accordingly, this is an inverse of the full-time faculty at higher education institutions with 41% White males; 35% White females; 6% Asian/Pacific Islander males; 5% Asian/Pacific Islander females; and 3% each Black males, Black females, Hispanic males, and Hispanic females”(National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

To offer a connection to the neurological science around learning, Zaretta Hammond (2015) explores the connection between “brain-based learning and rigorous culturally responsive teaching” (p.3). She identifies the many ways that culturally responsive teaching can promote learning to aid in the closure of the achievement gap. By coupling neuroscience and culturally responsive teaching, Hammond creates a way to understand and organize culturally responsive teaching. Arguing while these are frequently kept separate, notions of how the brain learns have found a place in the works of both Geneva Gay and Gloria Ladson-Billings. Since cognition and higher-order thinking have always been a focus of culturally responsive teaching, it seems

natural to address how neuroscience can illuminate the impact of culturally responsive practices on student learning. Hammond intends to offer practical and applicable concepts and frameworks for looking at culturally responsive teaching as an extension of brain-based learning.

Culturally responsive teaching has emerged as a viable option to mitigate the issues of inverse representation and to build upon the cultural frameworks of culturally and linguistically diverse students to enhance learning. Despite the emergence of culturally competent educational strategies, there is still a prominent achievement gap between BIPOC students and their White counterparts. Some studies have illustrated that this could be due to the lack of preparation or efficacy educators feel when attempting to engage with culturally responsive teaching.(Cruz et al., 2019). Wherever the issues lie it seems imperative that culturally responsive teaching take a stronger hold in educational settings where the student population is linguistically and culturally diverse.

Purpose

In her 2006 Presidential Address to the American Educational Research Association(AERA), Gloria Ladson-Billings called into question the prevalence of the term “achievement gap” to explain the academic gap between minority and disadvantaged students and their White counterparts. Using the idea of national debt to explain her thoughts, Ladson-Billings (2006) states, “we do not have an achievement gap; we have an education debt” (pg. 5). She goes on to explain factors that have contributed to this debt; economic, historical, sociopolitical, and moral. Many of the decisions and policies related to these factors have created an education debt, accumulating over time to create the gap we see in the achievement of students of color. Since the founding of the United States, these factors have created a system

that continues to benefit White students and disadvantaged students of color, particularly Black and African American, Latinx, and Indigenous students. As this system progressed and matured, it became harder and harder for people of color to combat the structural racism so embedded in American institutions (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Educators and researchers have long evaluated these factors, and others, and how they might perpetuate systems of inequality, often offering ideas as to how teaching and learning could be done to alleviate this education debt.

In the last twenty years, the research around Culturally Responsive Teaching has been profound. The need for culturally responsive teaching has been established by many (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Hammond, 2015; Gay, 1995; Nieto, 2000). Gay (2018) offers a noteworthy reason for the need for culturally responsive education. The United States has witnessed a significant and steady increase in ethnically, racially, and economically diverse students (Gay, 2018). Since education is inherently cultural as well as empowering, finding ways to properly educate a diverse student population is “mandatory...in service of the humanity and rights of diverse students.”(Gay, 2018, p. xxxi)

Geneva Gay, in her revered work on culturally responsive teaching, presents major “premises or assertions” that support the argument for culturally responsive teaching. Gay’s assertions contextualize the necessity for and attitudes that surround culturally responsive pedagogy. The first of which establishes the importance of culture, or as Gay asserts, “culture counts” (Gay, 2018, p. 8). Culture is a part of everything. It influences how we think, behave, communicate and perceive the world. Irrevocably, culture influences education (Gay, 2018). It undergirds the ways students will learn and the ways instructors will teach. Additionally, culture is malleable, ever-changing, and complex, requiring educators to understand the nuances and layers of their students’ cultures. Thus by creating educational processes that pay credence to the

“cultural frames of reference of diverse students, (they) will improve school achievement for students of color” (Gay, 2018, p.12)

Gay’s (2018) work rests on the notion that most current proposals with conventional paradigms for improving the achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students are inadequate and will not succeed. The predominant attitude in most of these programs is one of deficit thinking. The focus is on what these diverse students cannot do as opposed to what they can do, or which strengths they bring to the classroom. The ubiquity of deficit-oriented language and action makes it a daunting task to change that narrative.

Deficit Pedagogies

Deficit-oriented language pedagogical practices could shed light on some of the causes for such an achievement gap in the United States. Traditionally, students of color were seen as lacking or that their cultural frameworks were a deficit to their intellectual acumen and academic success. This mentality towards culturally and linguistically diverse students is a detriment and places the burden on these students to rise above the factors contributing to the education debt themselves. At Midwest University there is a concerted approach to belie deficit pedagogies in practice as well as language. Instructors are trained on ways to discuss a student that is not deficit-based. Despite this being an established practice in the institution, there is still pushback as many have been trained in deficit-based ideologies.

A deficit-based approach to teaching has long been evident across education in the United States. The language and cultural ways of those that identify outside of the dominant narrative are seen as a deficit to overcome. Education has long been designed to have students assimilate into the dominant language and culture demanded in schools (Paris and Alim, 2014).

Theories that have found a home in traditional attitudes around culturally and linguistically diverse students such as the “culture of poverty” are deficit in nature. Hammond (2015) and Paris and Alim (2014), tackle previous notions that the only framework to teach marginalized culturally and linguistically diverse students is through the ‘culture of poverty theory. Hammond lays out all the problems that arise from this inaccurate theoretical representation. Similar to the arguments around deficit pedagogies offered by Paris and Alim (2014), the culture of poverty theory is rooted in the idea that students of color have significant deficits to overcome and that poverty is a culture. This ideology can lead to a misinterpretation of what is culture and what is simply coping and survival mechanisms. It ignores the complexity of poverty and places the blame on those that are forced to endure poverty. Some educators distort the idea that poverty is a culture. Hammond (2015) points out that this causes significant confusion and that poverty is not a culture. It can also lead educators to misunderstand students’ academic capability and fail to provide students with critical thinking and problem-solving lessons. “Classroom studies document the fact that underserved English learners, poor students, and students of color routinely received less instruction in higher-order skills development than other students” (Hammond, 2015, p. 12).

Asset pedagogies

As the pitfalls of deficit-based pedagogies became clear, there has been a shift to a more asset-based approach. Asset-based pedagogies naturally influence culturally responsive teaching for a variety of reasons. There is one assertion that is evident throughout most of the literature on culturally relevant teaching: the strength and vitality of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is a strength that can be found in asset theories and not in deficit-based theories. As Gay and other researchers (Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995) show, when social experiences are

incorporated into the curriculum and students were able to use their cultural and linguistic frameworks to solve problems, students become increasingly more engaged and academically successful. Relatedly, Gay shows that assumptions of what incompetence is or isn't, should not be considered all-inclusive or universal. No group is monolithic and competence is contextual and ever-evolving.

Intrinsic motivation

While most culturally responsive scholars argue for an asset-based approach, others have looked to interdisciplinary ideas to undergird the practice of culturally responsive teaching. Wlodkowski & Ginsberg (1995) look to the theories of intrinsic motivation to develop a framework for culturally responsive teaching. Claiming to have developed a comprehensive model of culturally responsive teaching, they argue that the foundation for the “approach lies in theories of intrinsic motivation”(Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 17). Intrinsic motivation speaks to learning for the sake of learning, or simply because you find satisfaction in it. The opposing theory of extrinsic motivation relies on outside incentives, such as grades or awards, to motivate learning.

The success of culturally responsive teaching can be found in the realm of intrinsic (or internal) motivation. Ideally, an educator fosters and encourages intrinsic motivation in a way that students are driven to learn because they want to or because the content is relevant to them. Further, motivation is inseparable from culture. Our emotions are socialized through one's culture and motivation is influenced by emotions (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995; Gay, 2018). Your culture shapes how you see and perceive the world, thus what might cause joy in one culture may cause the opposite in another culture. The way a student responds to actions by their

instructor or a learning activity will be reflective of the culture in which they were socialized. For example, direct eye contact can be seen as a sign of respect in one culture while in another it is seen as aggressive. In a classroom with culturally diverse learners, it is imperative to understand the cultural dynamic in the room and interact with students accordingly. If they feel safe and understood this can lead to enthusiasm for learning. “From this viewpoint, motivationally effective teaching is culturally responsive teaching.”(Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 17).

Four motivational conditions are offered in this culturally responsive teaching framework. The first is establishing inclusion where teachers and students feel respected by one another. This idea is supported all across the literature; a multicultural learning atmosphere is created through respect and understanding of one another. The second is developing attitudes for encouraging student choice and relating teaching and learning to students’ previous knowledge. The third motivational condition is, enhancing meaning. This can be accomplished by providing challenging learning experiences that include problem-solving and critical inquiry. This is an important condition and one that comes up across studies. Zaretta Hammond (2015) points out that the curriculum for culturally and linguistically diverse students tends to be less challenging than that of their White counterparts. It tends to be about repetition and rote memorization with only lower skills assessed. This creates, “an epidemic of dependent learners unprepared to do high order thinking, creative problem solving, and analytical reading and writing.”(Hammond, 2015, p. 12). The fourth is to engender competence. This is when assessment is connected to students’ cultural frame of reference and values. Focusing on only low-level skills and underestimating what “disadvantaged” students are capable of contributes to the achievement gap or education debt(Hammond, 2015).

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence centers on the idea that one if not completely discredits their culture to fit into the dominant culture in education. Ladson-Billings references studies where Black students that were deemed gifted found it necessary to stand apart from other Black students so they were not associated with negative stereotypes attributed to them (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This can make navigating the academic landscape while also maintaining cultural integrity quite difficult. Culturally relevant pedagogy must provide ways for students to express their cultural identity and succeed academically. The final component of culturally relevant pedagogy is cultural critique. Teachers themselves must be able to recognize and educate on social inequities as well as their causes. (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally and linguistically diverse students will benefit from the ability to identify and analyze social, political, historical, and economic underpinnings that drive the inequities that put them at a disadvantage. It can also contribute to their identity development. This is further noted in racial development theory when applied to student populations. When we think about schooling as integral to identity development, it appears that Ladson-Billings (1995) is correct, that cultural competence and the ability to critique culture will not only lead to achievement but better self-perception.

Themes in the research

The literature around culturally responsive teaching has a few themes that are prevalent across the research. These include instructional practice, racial/cultural identity, multicultural awareness, high expectations, critical thinking, and social justice.

Instructional Practice

This is the idea that instructors can look at the cultural practices and frameworks of their students and incorporate them into the curriculum, assessment, and feedback. The instructional practices of a culturally responsive teacher are their toolkit in action, thus, there is significant preliminary work to get to that point. So many times administrators and educators look at culturally responsive teaching and request a list that outlines the instructional practices that would be most beneficial to their culturally and linguistically diverse students. In reality, culturally responsive teaching is just not that simple. This may be why so many teachers feel low self-efficacy when it comes to delivering culturally responsive teaching, despite their belief that it is a viable way to shrink the achievement gap (Cruz, Manchanda, Firestone, & Rodl, 2019).

Multiple studies have looked at teacher preparation programs to incorporate more culturally responsive and inclusive practices into their own programmatic curriculum. Teacher education programs in particular have increased the training and opportunities to learn about culturally responsive teaching. However, these are not always delivered in a deliberate, consistent way and follow-up opportunities are rarely an option, thus teachers' are left feeling underprepared to deliver the practices (Cruz et al., 2019). An examination of many teacher education programs shows that focus on equity, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness are superficial and are not supported within the many facets of a teacher preparation program (Jackson & Boutte, 2018). In higher education, this lack of self-efficacy with culturally responsive teaching is also evident. At Midwest University, for example, the training for culturally responsive teaching has been sporadic and without follow-up or support.

Sonia Nieto (2000) tackles this 20 years earlier and argues that teacher preparation programs should learn to be more inclusive by putting diverse students and their needs first. Nieto identifies that teacher education relies too much on deficit theories that perpetuate the idea that students from non-dominant groups are genetically or culturally inferior. If teachers are educating students under this ideology, the effects are detrimental to culturally and linguistically diverse students. At the writing of her article, the percentage of White teachers was 90% whereas Black teachers dropped to 7%. The teaching population has been “monolithic, monocultural, and monolingual”(Nieto, 2000, p. 181). Higher education twenty years later shows similar numbers: 41% White males; 35% White females; 6% Asian/Pacific Islander males; 5% Asian/Pacific Islander females; and 3% each Black males, Black females, Hispanic males, and Hispanic females”(National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

Identity and Multicultural awareness

Currently in higher education classrooms across the United States, most culturally and linguistically diverse students are taught by educators who are White and of European descent. Their identity and cultural frameworks frequently belie that of their students. Educators could work to understand the culture and identities of those that do not identify with the dominant identity. This means that while the curriculum is crucial in emphasizing culturally responsive ideas, it also means that the educator has a responsibility to examine their biases so they do not affect the learning environment. Students need to feel as if they belong to optimally learn. Additionally, culturally responsive educators should interrogate their own biases and aim to learn more about the cultural frameworks of their students(Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) This is supported by Nieto (2000) as she shows that teaching should be promoted as a life-long journey of transformation. This means, that teachers should learn about

racism and their own biases, their students' culture and cultural frameworks, and how all this is replicated in the classroom.

Throughout the 1990s, education researchers offered studies that illustrated the need for a multicultural lens when in service to students. Some smaller studies showed that multicultural students responded well when teachers found ways to relate content to the cultural backgrounds of their students. As the need for culturally responsive teaching became more evident with these studies, so did the need for a framework in which to deliver culturally responsive teaching. Multicultural awareness refers to the level of knowledge and understanding that instructors might have when working with students from various cultural backgrounds. Before Ladson-Billings introduced a theory of culturally responsive pedagogy (1995), anthropologists looked at ways in which teaching could match students' homes and community culture. This was attempted with Native Americans and Native Hawaiian students with compelling results. The studies showed that when the teachers' language patterns were similar to that of a student's home culture, their academic performance improved (Ladson-Billings, 1995). These earlier works indicate that multicultural awareness serves the betterment of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

While an understanding of students' cultural frameworks is an integral aspect of culturally responsive teaching, there is also the need for educators to evaluate and interrogate their own cultural frameworks and potential biases. Teachers should be willing and actively attempt to transform by facing and accepting their own identities and the bias that may come with those identities. The next step would be to integrate that knowledge with brain-based learning to provide a learning environment conducive to culturally and linguistically diverse students (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995) They should also have the ability to foster high-order thinking and problem solving while challenging the societal and racial status

quo that has left minoritized students at a disadvantage. Teachers should aim to develop strong relationships with their students and become learners of their culture and realities.

An important component of recruiting and maintaining a diverse student body is by understanding the culture and identities of those that do not identify with the dominant identity. This is where culturally responsive teaching can be used to aid in the academic success of students of color. Without this culturally responsive lens, the education of culturally and linguistically can be hindered. As Hammond (2015) aptly points out that it is the responsibility of the educator to “create the right conditions for optimum learning.” (Hammond, 2015). This can be accomplished in curriculum, classroom practices, and the way instructors interact with students. This means that while the curriculum is crucial in emphasizing culturally responsive ideas, it also means that the educator has a responsibility to examine their biases so they do not affect the learning environment. When students of color are taught the histories of dominant groups and hegemonic narratives they can feel marginalized and disconnected from the content. When students are unable to apply content to their lives and the real world, it becomes harder to connect with the content and remember it. Students need to feel as if they belong to optimally learn. If a student feels as if they are excluded or are not a part of a community, it can absolutely hinder their learning. Hammond (2015) points out that our “brain’s prime directive is to be safe and happy.” So even if a student is in an environment that is simply unwelcoming or they feel excluded, the brain can produce stress hormones that trigger a sense of danger. This can curb learning.

For example, in predominantly White serving higher education institutions, Black students report feeling disconnected from HEIs at best and actively discriminated against at worst (Karkouti, 2016). In a study of Black, male college students in their first year, findings

showed that Black students experienced significant anxiety when attending institutions that were predominately White (Harper, 2016). Black students reported dealing with discrimination and feeling like any academic failures perpetuated racial stereotypes (Harper, 2016). Or they experienced recurring racial incidents which were distracting to their academics. For some, this proved to be too much and resulted in withdrawing from college entirely. Similar patterns are seen for Latinx students attempting to navigate within predominantly White-serving institutions. The curriculum remains similar to a White dominant narrative and is not ethnocentric, White normative practices remain the norm, and the faculty continues to be predominantly White. (Garcia, 2017).

High expectations and critical thinking

For culturally and linguistically diverse students to be successful, it is crucial that high expectations are maintained. Educators have a duty to provide appropriate scaffolding and support in order to guide students to become more independent learners. Expectations and rigor should not be reduced for culturally and linguistically diverse students, despite the fact that in practice, teachers frequently reduce expectations. “Classroom studies document the fact that underserved English learners, poor students, and students of color routinely received less instruction in higher-order skills development than other students” (Hammond, 2015, p. 12). The reduction of expectations and rigor signal that the students are not capable of meeting the academic standards of students in the dominant identity. In actuality, when the cultural frameworks of students are considered, educators can build upon the previous knowledge of students and create a curriculum with robust expectations as well as methods for meeting those expectations. Students’ previous knowledge and cultural identity should be seen as an asset to learning, not a deficit.

Critical thinking is also an important part of culturally responsive teaching that should be a major aspect of the curriculum. Students need to be taught how to think critically, apply reason, analyze ideas, and challenge the status quo. In culturally responsive teaching this is done while incorporating students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds and promoting high-order thinking and critical inquiry.

Social Justice

Social justice serves as a major component of culturally responsive teaching and is ubiquitous across the research. Most of the research and practices of culturally responsive teaching argue that an element of social justice is imperative to instructional and institutional practices, but also that educators commit to finding meaningful ways to address inequitable structures and beliefs that contribute to issues such as the achievement gap and social inequity (Griner & Stewart, 2012). One of the four motivational conditions identified by (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) deemed necessary for culturally responsive teaching is enhancing meaning where teachers should address real world-issues and encourage critical questioning of the status quo. If teachers are trained in the way that Nieto presents they are much more equipped to "enhance meaning" when in the classroom.

Nieto (2000) presets three ways in which equity can be placed "front and center" of teacher preparation programs. The first is to take a stand on social justice and diversity. She makes an important point that how schools answer the question of diversity can strongly influence a teacher's practice. The answer can lead to assimilation through education or to the use of diversity as an integral tool in the process of learning. Teacher preparation programs should focus on how to promote learning for all students and how to develop "educational

environments that are fair and affirming”(Nieto, 2000, p. 183). The next way that Nieto presents is strongly linked to the first, making social justice ubiquitous in teacher education. This is not only the development of a stand on social justice and diversity but also challenging the inequities in all aspects of teacher preparation. A critical look at school policies, textbooks, recruitment of faculty, parent involvement strategies, and hiring strategies is necessary to find where patterns of inequality are replicated.

Culturally and linguistically diverse students attending predominantly White institutions could argue that their very existence at those schools is a form of social justice. Linder et al (2019) look into student activists that engaged in identity-based activism and resistance. Claiming this study of students serves as a “counter-narrative to the dominant narrative on student activism” (Linder, 2019, p. 527), They identify that much of the current literature on student activism has revolved around cisgender, White, middle-class students, generally from elite institutions. Linder et al (2019) use narrative inquiry, which allows researchers to understand a person’s experience through storytelling. They also combined a critical paradigm approach, highlighting “the role of power in people’s experiences.” (Linder, 2019, p. 529). Their findings show that students saw their existence as activism, had a complicated understanding of activism and that students’ activism is a response to a hostile campus environment. Many students with minoritized identities consider their existence in these dominant, White spaces a type of activism. “Students of Color and trans and gender-nonconforming students described ways their activism was not a choice, but a way of being.” Their minoritized identity presence served as a way of activism, it was a fight that they could not avoid. Additionally, “in a climate not designed for minoritized people, showing up, being themselves, and asking for what they need are significant forms of activism” (Linder et al., 2019, p. 534). Minoritized students deal

with many layers of hostility that further push them into activism on college campuses. These results illustrate that many of these students engage in activism out of necessity, not choice. This adds another burden of those minoritized students to prove or legitimize their space on college campuses. These ways of minimizing or discrediting the concerns of minoritized students is happening all over the country in higher education institutions. Despite the ubiquity of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the language of most institutions, in practice quite the opposite is true. It continues to place the burden on those that are minoritized to prove their worth and make things better, despite the fact that they live in a system that is constantly trying to take that power away.

Linder et al. (2019) state that this article's purpose was to challenge higher education educators to “consider identity-based student activism as a form of engagement and learning and push them to consider strategies for supporting, rather than resisting or ignoring, identity-based student activists.” In this social justice theme, administrators could look to culturally responsive teaching practices to create a more inclusive campus environment. Using the ideas in asset-based pedagogy, students' unique identities should serve as something to be built upon rather than a deficit.

Whiteness

Critics of culturally responsive teaching and multiculturalism may look at higher education and state that the playing field is even, that there is no reason for culturally and linguistically diverse students not to thrive in the current educational environment. Research shows us that this is not an accurate appraisal of higher education, and, in many ways, the current state of higher education belies the successes of culturally and linguistically diverse students. In order to understand Whiteness in the context of higher education, one can examine the origins

of such. Early higher education institutions were for a select group of people, White, affluent males. As time continued there were some strides in the inclusion of more folks gaining access to higher education. But in all reality, the original structures have remained in place. Some may even state, that historically, higher education has been a central mechanism for the reproduction of white supremacy, as well as an area for some of the most visible challenges to the US system of racial oppression (Cabera, 2019). Education serves as a mirror of society (Love, 2019). While society has had its ebbs and flows of progress, the fact remains that Whiteness and its preservation are at the center of society at the political, economic, and institutional levels. By looking at the origins and development of higher education institutions in the United States when considering the term Whiteness, it is important to understand that this is not simply referring to white people. “Rather, whiteness as an ideological, epistemological, and ontological force that functions to support individuals, actions, and appearances deemed ‘white’” (Cores-Zimmerman et al. pg 12). We can look at Whiteness as a racial discourse and then examine the many ways in which Whiteness is perpetuated within higher education as a whole as well as in individual higher education institutions. This is particularly evident in the realm of teacher preparation. While students are increasingly non-white, their teachers are still predominately White and most teacher preparation programs maintain White centered practices and ideologies. Within teacher preparation, there is a call from scholars to decenter Whiteness. “A focus on normalizing a more equitable and just culture in the field begins with honoring and affirming the multiple perspectives and lived experiences of students and families from marginalized communities” (Carter Andrews, Ye He, Marciano, Richmond, and Salazar, 2021). Bettina Love (2019) affirms that teachers should be taught how to question and challenge Whiteness while also examining

how their own emotions, such as guilt or anger, and how all this may impact the classroom. The first step in any progress is to admit there is an issue of Whiteness at the core of education.

Theoretical framework

This research is founded on three theoretical frameworks to position culturally responsive teaching. These include critical race theory, a theory used to support most work on culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education, student development theories, particularly Black identity development, and Latina/o identity development theory.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory establishes the foundational theory of this work and undergirds much of the research around culturally responsive teaching. Critical race theory is a perspective that puts race and racism as well as the challenges of White supremacy at the center. The aim is to evaluate social systems, such as education, through a lens that revolves around the centrality of the race while also challenging the dominant structures that perpetuate racism and racial oppression (Patton, 2016). Roots of critical race theory can be found in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement but were addressed academically when legal scholars, particularly legal scholars of color, observed and challenged the failure of critical legal studies to acknowledge the deep, institutional racism in the rule of law. These legal scholars of color pushed for a nuanced understanding of how race and racism interact with the law (Patton, 2016). This led to critical race theory becoming an important staple in social science research as well as higher education.

Critical race theory is necessary when attempting to understand the “education debt” (Ladson-Billings, 2006) in the United States and why there are such academic achievement

disparities between students of color and their White counterparts. The reality is that racism is so ingrained in the culture of the US that it permeates most institutions, including higher education. The ubiquity of racism has made it difficult for most to identify it happening, especially those in power (Patton, 2016; Solorzano, 1997). Critical race theory has the potential to challenge these systems. Delgado and Stefanić (2017) call critical race theory a movement that is a “collection of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (pg. 3). In higher education, scholars such as Gloria Ladson Billings and Geneva Gay have used critical race theory as a theoretical framework to develop culturally responsive teaching.

Black Identity Development Theory

The most well-known theory for Black identity development was developed by William Cross in the 1970s. Originally presented as a five-stage physiological theory of Nigrescence, the theory has been modified and enhanced over the years, leading to a more contemporary approach that uses a lifespan perspective to center the original Nigrescence theory in the real world and human development (Patton, 2016). The Cross and Fhagen-Smith’s model of Black identity development has six sectors and identifies three main patterns of Nigrescence lifespan. These sectors encompass the integral lifespan moments in an individual’s development. The first sector is infancy and childhood in early Black identity development. In this sector, many factors contribute to the socialization of Black children and at this point, children are likely unaware of racism and racial identity. Next is preadolescence where development is fostered and reinforced by parents and family as well as interactions outside the home. The third sector is adolescence, where real authentication occurs through exploration and the development of their Black selves. This sector is a divergence from previous models that had one’s awareness of Blackness

occurring in adulthood. The fourth sector is early adulthood which results in either conversion to acceptance of Blackness or personalization of such. Sector five is adult nigrescence which entails a race consciousness and a more balanced perception and acceptance of Blackness. The last sector is nigrescence recycling, again reworked from previous models to be more of a life-span model. This is where those that have accepted their Black identity have a robust understanding of it. Recycling occurs as their identity or Black identity is called into question, forcing individuals to constantly examine their self-identity (Patton, 2016).

Cross's original work had limitations but there have been additional models and variations that attempt to fill in the missing pieces. As we can see from Cross and Fhagen-Smith's model of Black identity development modifications were made to allow for a life span type model that influenced three patterns that could encompass the identity experiences of Black people from all backgrounds. The literature points to a few salient critiques of Cross's work. Most interestingly are the analysis of the immersion-emersion stage that develops in adult nigrescence. This stage is seen as incredibly impactful to the development of Black identity. Some actions and feelings in the immersion stage are characterized as intense Black involvement and Anti-White (Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross, Jr, & Worrell, 2001). They postulate that as this stage brings the consumption and learning of Black culture, there can be adverse reactions, such as rage towards themselves, other Blacks, and society. There can also be strong Anti-White feelings that emerge. Cross's original work offers language that would now be perceived as anachronistic as well as the perpetuation of negative racial stereotypes, i.e. angry and thus dangerous Black people. But the reality is that this pejorative language is embedded in many racial identity models. If this is a problem in the theory, then it has the potential to be problematic in the application of these theories to student populations. Furthermore, researchers,

as well as practitioners, should attempt to interrogate their own racial and cultural biases. For example, understanding Black Nationalism has proved to be quite complex and controversial within the variations of Cross's model. One reason it has been so challenging is the way that Black nationalism (or any nationalism) is portrayed in history and in the media. Rarely are the psychological undercurrents of why or how racial tensions emerge, rather the media presents a sensationalized picture of racial/ethnic tensions. The result of this is that all the extreme, sensationalized aspects of Nationalism are exhibited leaving the public with an inaccurate perception of the truth. The portrayal of, assumptions about, and language around Black people and identity should be examined when theorizing racial identity development as well as its application to student populations.

Model of Latino/a Identity Development

The growth of Latinx/Hispanic students in higher education has been overwhelming. In 2019 the US Hispanic/Latinx population reached 60.6 million (Noe-Bustamante, Lopez, & Krogstad, 2020). Latinos make up 18% of the overall US population and are among the youngest racial or ethnic groups in the US. Colleges and Universities are seeing steady growth of their Latinx students and need to be sure that they are considering the best ways to educate this population of students. In order to understand more about Latinx students, student identity development theories can prove to be helpful.

Ferdman and Gallegos (2007) developed a model of student identity development that considered the many facets of Latinx identity, expressing that many of the current racial identity theories as well as the racial constructs of the US do not seamlessly apply to Latinx/Hispanic students (Patton, 2016). While Latinx students have to contend with racial, cultural, and ethnic

distinctions, race is not top of the list. Latinx students can come from a variety of backgrounds and varying mixed heritages. They can represent a variety of skin colors, creating some tensions of colorism in the Latinx/Hispanic community and making it difficult to place Latinx in finite racial categories (Patton, 2016). This translates to self-identify as many Latinx will identify with multiple racial categories constructions or could identify as White. Unlike most Black students, Latinx students usually speak more than one language, creating another cultural aspect to consider. Ferdman and Gallegos attempt to take all this into consideration and create a model of Latina and Latino ethnic-racial orientation.

Ferdman and Gallegos offer a model of identity that considers the ways in which Latinx see themselves in the world while taking into consideration the historical and cultural influences. As with Black identity development theory, the Latino/a model is not linear and Latinx may relate to several of the orientations presented by Ferdman and Gallegos or they could remain in one orientation throughout their lives. The model consists of six orientations: White identified, undifferentiated/denial, Latino as other, subgroup identified, Latino-identified, and Latino-integrated (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007).

The first orientation, White-identified, is aptly titled as it includes individuals that adopt a White racial identity and culturally live as White people. Their lens is constructed by a White culture which can result in exposure to negative stereotypes around Latinx people. Individuals in this orientation may never challenge their identity and aim to remove themselves from situations that may cause them to do so (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007). This conceptual identity orientation relates back to historical social and legal constructs that have placed Latinx in a variety of racial identities, including White. In 1955 there was a US Supreme Court case, *Hernandez v Texas*. This case began with a Mexican-American agricultural worker that was indicted for murder. He

was convicted by an all-White jury because people of Mexican descent were barred from jury duty in Texas. Proponents of this argued that Mexicans were considered part of the White race thus they were not protected as a special class under the fourteenth amendment. Opponents disagreed and argued that groups outside the White/Black racial binary in the US should be protected by the fourteenth amendment. Once this case made it to the US Supreme Court, justices unanimously agreed that the fourteenth amendment was not limited to a racial binary of White and Black, but included protection against other racial groups. This case opened the door for classifications outside of Black and White, which is later reflected in the US census when Hispanic/Latinx was added to the list of racial categories. Up until 1955, there was no legal definition that puts those of Hispanic/Latinx descent in a class apart from White. This classification as White did not allow for the same privileges as Whites, but rather served to create a system that advocated for assimilation and little protection.

The next orientation is one of undifferentiated or denial. Individuals in this identity may adopt a color-blind approach arguing that race, culture, and ethnicity do not really matter. They will generally accept dominant social norms and attribute inequity and barriers to opportunity as the fault of the individual and not a result of institutionalized racism (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007). They may have very little exposure to their culture and heritage resulting in no real attitudes about their identity, neither positive nor negative. Their mindset is an individual one and they likely do not relate to or surround themselves with other Latinas/os. Latino as other orientations also do not see themselves as part of the Latinx community, however, they also do not see themselves as White. Due to the social constructions of race in the US, they are frequently associated with and connected to other people of color, but likely do not center

themselves as Latinx or White (Patton, 2016). At the very least, these categories are more fluid to those in this orientation.

Subgroup-identified orientation is a narrower view as individuals will see themselves in terms of their ethnic or national origin subgroup. They will likely see their own subgroup in a positive light but see other Latinx subgroups as inferior (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007). Their perception of Whites is either as unimportant to their lives or simply barriers to full inclusion. Race is not the way in which they organize their ideas around identity. Rather, they see themselves through the lens of nationality, ethnicity, and culture. These are the guiding contributions to identity. They tend to remain in their subculture and rarely engage with other subgroups. While they may occupy other orientations at the same time, many Latinx maintain this orientation throughout their lifetimes (Patton, 2016).

Individuals in the Latino-identified orientation connect with all Latinos and see themselves in the context of Latinx as a distinct racial category, albeit a broad one (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007). They will see Whites as a separate distinct racial category as well while maintaining a fairly open view of other subgroups. They will usually see Whites as barriers but could also see them as allies depending on their behavior towards Latinx. They also see Latinx issues as broader or “pan-ethnic” (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007, p. 35). In the Latino-integrated orientation, individuals take Latino-identified orientation to a new level. Individuals in this orientation see Latinx identity as integrated with other social identities such as gender, class, ethnicity, or religion (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007). Furthermore, they take on the “widest possible lens” to view themselves, other Latinos, and non-Hispanic Whites (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007, p. 35). With this orientation, individuals will challenge prevailing constructions

of race and inequalities (much like the nigrescence recycling sector in Cross and Fhagen-Smith's model).

A major critique of Latino identity development theory is the lack of racial and ethnic intersectionality (Johnston-Guerrero, 2016). This critique is a common one among racial identity development models. One of the primary reasons there is a lack of ethnic considerations could be due to the "messiness" that comes with attempting to theorize race and ethnicity (Johnston-Guerrero, 2016). Latinx culture is steeped with subcultures that are frequently tied to ethnicity, yet there are minimal ethical considerations in racial identity theories. One scholar argues that, "not recognizing both race and ethnicity in the lives of students reinforces White supremacist norms that essentialize all that is non-White as 'the other'" (Johnston-Guerrero, 2016, p. 43). Commonly, Black/African American is framed as one racial group and Latinx/Hispanic is another racial group. When broken down, the complexities of these racial groups are vast and there is no monolithic experience. As we can see from the subgroup identifying orientation in the Latina/ Identity Development model, Latinx come from many subgroups, or ethnicities and will identify as such (e.g. Puerto Rican, Cuban, Mexican, Ecuadorian). With the increase in immigration from Africa and the Caribbean, the Black/African-American racial group has more and more subgroups that may have a very different experience than those who have been in the US for generations. The Ferdman and Gallegos model is not without merit, however, even when considering this critique. It is a solid basis for which an ethnic identity model could emerge with the various Latinx subgroups considered. Indeed, the subgroup identifying orientation could act as a blueprint for ethnic identity.

Theory and culturally responsive teaching

These various theories all serve a purpose in this work on the relationship of culturally responsive teaching and students' attendance, retention, and sense of belonging. Critical race theory will serve as the primary theoretical foundation. First, it is irresponsible to research Black and Latinx students without applying a critical race lens. Culturally responsive teaching incorporates the various tenants of critical race theory and both consider the role that race and racism play while also seeking to challenge dominant power structures. The timing of this work further illuminates why a critical race lens is so necessary. The year, 2020, has been tough for all, but particularly so for Black and Brown folks. In the summer of 2020, racial tensions reached an apex when police were responsible for the deaths of even more Black men and women. #BlackLivesMatter and other activists went to the streets and protests erupted all over the United States and in some cities the effort has not abated. In Chicago, where most of MU's undergraduate students hail from, violence and increased police presence in predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods have led to constant fear and stress. All in the midst of a global pandemic that has disproportionately killed people of color in the United States, likely due to the many effects of centuries of discriminatory practices and unequal treatment all fueled by institutional and systemic racism. All of these contending factors will likely have an effect on how students learn and navigate their college experience. As established by Zaretta Hammond (2015), high-order thinking and critical thinking occurs when the brain feels safe. This can be quite difficult in a world that seems to do just the opposite based on race. Researching and analyzing the relationship between culturally responsive teaching and students' attendance, retention, and sense of belonging could hardly have validity without applying critical race theory.

Student development identity theories serve another purpose, one that aims to apply these theories to students in order to increase attendance, retain students, and help them feel as if they belong. Black identity development theory and Latina/o identity development theory provide some insight into how most UGC students might be navigating their identity. This provides perspective on how professors could engage Black and Latinx students through culturally responsive teaching. Identity development theories can also offer instructors clues as to what curriculum and support might be most effective. While these are important contributions to the work, it will be necessary to keep the critiques of this work under consideration. These theories offer generalizations and because students will frequently claim more than one identity, using them as fact is too simplistic.

Chapter Three

The purpose of this study is to determine the ways in which culturally responsive teaching is defined, enacted, and perceived in college-level general education classes. Through interviews, observations, and focus groups, this study aims to address the following research questions.

1. What is culturally responsive teaching in higher education in general education?
 - a. How do professors define culturally responsive teaching in their own practice?
 - b. How do professors enact culturally responsive teaching in their own practice?
2. How do students receive and interpret culturally responsive approaches in the college classroom?
 - a. What effect (if any) does culturally responsive teaching have on students' sense of belonging and academic success?

Methodology

The methodological approach to this study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research methods are designed to use text and images as the data to be collected to understand the experiences, concepts, or opinions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study is designed to show the ways that professors and students define, enact, and perceive culturally responsive teaching. The research questions for this study neatly align with a qualitative approach; more specifically, an instrumental, within-site, case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). On a micro level, I will use the Sharan Merriam approach to case study methodology. Under Merriam's definition of a case study, the case can be, but is not limited to, a person, program, group, or specific policy. This provides a broader view of what falls into a case study and represents this study well. The General Education College (GEC) within Midwest University is the program under study, but the view is even narrower. The first two years in the GEC make up a unique program that focuses

on a holistic approach to student learning. This program has a plethora of support structures for students and culturally responsive teaching is surely emphasized in the training of the faculty. Following Merriam's idea, purposeful sampling was done to evaluate this specific group within the GEC. Additionally, the detailed approach that Merriam (1998) presents is followed throughout this study. This involves conducting a literature review, constructing a theoretical framework, identifying a research problem, and selecting a sample.

Setting

This study was conducted at a private, not-for-profit university in a Midwestern urban setting. The university offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Only one college within the university was studied, the undergraduate, general education college. Within that college, freshman and sophomores are part of a program that provides holistic support to students. Participants—both faculty and students—for this study were recruited from that program.

Participants

Participants were approached through email sent to all general education faculty teaching freshman and sophomores to first ask if they would be interested in being interviewed about their culturally responsive teaching. In order to be eligible, faculty participants needed to be full-time and consider themselves culturally responsive educators. The exclusionary criteria specified that those the researcher supervises were not eligible for this study, which excluded the Social Sciences Department and the Science Department in the General Education College. Seven faculty members responded to the email, but only five were considered eligible. Of those that were not eligible, one was part-time faculty and the other was a member of the Social Science Department. The five faculty participants that were chosen come from multiple disciplines,

including English, Art/Humanities, Education, and Language. All the participants identify as women and come from various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Two identify as Black/African-American, two as White, and one as Native American. Participants were all under the age of 45 and had been in higher education for 5-10 years. Each participant was an Assistant Professor and full-time at Midwest University.

Student participants were recruited through a flyer that was shared with them by the researcher and the professors interviewed in this study. Six students participated in the focus group which represented about 100 students. Two additional students signed up for the focus group but did not attend due to COVID-19-related issues. The students were given the choice to attend the focus group in person or over Zoom. Two chose to attend via Zoom and four chose to be in person. The ones that attended in person were provided with lunch and those on Zoom were sent a \$10 gift card for their participation. One of the faculty members interviewed also gave students “extra credit” points for attending the focus group. This was not at the behest of the researcher, but rather their own choice. Of the students in attendance, four identified as women, and the other two as men. Five identified were Hispanic/Latinx and one Black/Haitian immigrant. All were multilingual, speaking at least two languages. Four were under 21 yrs of age and two were a few years older. Students were ensured that their specific responses would not be shared with their professors.

Data Collection

Data was collected in three primary ways. Multiple sources of data were examined to bring coherence and validity to the study (Creswell, 2018). First, five full-time faculty members of the General Education College were interviewed on how they define and enact culturally

responsive teaching in the college-level classroom. According to Creswell (2018), four to five cases within a case study are suggested. Participants were selected based on their professed use of culturally responsive teaching. Each participant responded to the request, expressing interest to be interviewed and observed. An interview time was established and all of the interviews took place virtually, over Zoom. Beforehand, participants received a copy of the questions and an informed consent form. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewee. After the interviews were conducted, the video and audio were sent to a transcription service that guarantees 99% accuracy.

The second way that data was collected was through observations. Each of these professors also shared examples from their classroom practice or allowed the researcher to observe the class live. The one class that was observed synchronously was over Zoom and not face-to-face. The faculty member did announce to the class why the researcher was in attendance and observing the class. During these observations of a class or materials for class, qualitative style, and detailed notes were taken on ways culturally responsive teaching is enacted in the classroom. Throughout these observations, key components of culturally responsive teaching were looked for based on a culturally responsive walkthrough tool derived from the Equity Institute (See Appendix B).

The third stage of data collection was a focus group with students enrolled in the classes of faculty members interviewed. In this focus group, students were asked a series of questions to determine the effects that culturally responsive teaching methods might have on their academic success and sense of belonging (see Appendix C).

Data Analysis

The approach to analyzing the data was one offered by Creswell and Creswell (2018). The first step is to organize the raw data and prepare it for analysis. Audio from the interviews and the focus group were sent to an online transcription service (<https://gotranscript.com/>). This service guaranteed 99% accuracy on their transcriptions. Notes from the observations were typed up. This data was then uploaded to a qualitative data analysis software program, Dedoose. Dedoose came highly recommended and was chosen for the ease it provided in going through the data. It allowed for easy coding, highlighting excerpts, categorizing, and editing codes along the way.

The next step was to read through all the data. While doing so, there were a few themes that immediately emerged. They all aligned with the themes throughout the research of culturally responsive teaching. A sample codebook was developed before the data was collected, but the researcher did not necessarily stick to whatever was in the original codebook. Codes were developed by using both predetermined codes and ones that emerged from the data collected (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). These themes that were expected were then made into parent codes, such as definitions for culturally responsive teaching or examples of instructional practices. After going through the data one time and observing general themes, it was then read through again. This time excerpts were highlighted that correspond with the developed parent codes. It quickly became clear that additional codes, or child codes, should be included to capture all the nuance of the data. For example, there were a few examples of students as co-creators of knowledge. The original parent codes were developed based on the major themes of culturally responsive teaching seen in the major literature. Students as co-creators were not one

of those major themes identified, but it was evident in the data, so a code was added to capture the data on co-creation. See Appendix C for the codebook.

After all the data was coded, the codes and corresponding excerpts were read through again to identify the findings of the study. Notes were compiled and the amount of times themes were mentioned was tallied. From this five major findings emerged that will be discussed further in the next chapter. They are

1. Professors define culturally responsive teaching in a variety of ways with students at the center
2. Building relationships with students is the most common way that culturally responsive teaching is practiced
3. Students both notice and respond positively to the attempts at relationship building.
4. For professors, culturally responsive teaching is an iterative and self-reflective practice.
5. While professors generally feel self-efficacy in their practice, they do desire more programmatic and/or institutional support

Qualitative Validity

A few methods were used in order to ensure trustworthiness. The first was to triangulate the data. Three data sources were collected and examined to ensure validity; interviews, observations, and a focus group. Throughout each step of the process, the researcher conferred with an advisor to ensure that there was legitimacy to the methodology and the findings were clear and would resonate with people beyond the researcher. Another step to ensure trustworthiness consists of member checking or seeking feedback from participants. Once the interviews were transcribed and examined, they were then shared with the person interviewed to gauge the accuracy and provide feedback if necessary. Participants were also provided with the findings of the study to ensure that they were represented appropriately by the researcher.

Another way to validate this work is to clarify or disclose potential researcher bias. Creswell and Poth (2018) point out that the researchers' past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations certainly shape the way that data is interpreted, thus it is important to be clear about those influences and how it could affect research. The researcher is both an assistant professor and a doctoral student in the university under study. The students in the program examined in this research are primarily Latinx and Black/African-American, 80% are first-generation college students and the majority are Pell-eligible. Their instructors in this program, however, are predominately White with little shared experience with their students. The researcher is one of those White instructors that primarily teach students of color from cultures different from their own. Despite this inverse representation, their academic career has been dedicated to improving the outcomes of culturally and linguistically diverse students. They strive and study to be an equitable, culturally responsive teacher who honors and builds upon the strengths of culturally and linguistically diverse students, making it a priority to investigate and implement culturally responsive teaching practices to teach students in the most equitable, relevant way possible.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this study is to determine the ways in which culturally responsive teaching is defined, enacted, and perceived in college-level general education classes. This section illuminates the findings to answer these research questions.

1. What is culturally responsive teaching in higher education general education classes?
 - a. How do professors define culturally responsive teaching in their own practice?
 - b. How do professors enact culturally responsive teaching in their own practice?
2. How do students receive and interpret culturally responsive approaches in the college classroom?
 - a. What effects (if any) does culturally responsive teaching have on students' sense of belonging and academic success?

Method and data collection

The methodological approach to this study is an instrumental, within site, case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018) These findings were derived from three methods of data collection. First, five full-time assistant professors were chosen as a representative sample of the college. In the college, there are approximately 35 full-time faculty members, so this sample represented just under 20%. Their participation was voluntary and based on their professed use of culturally responsive teaching practices. Each of these professors also shared examples from their classroom practice or allowed the researcher to observe the class live. These observations played a role in verifying the methods that participants explained in their interviews. Lastly, a focus group for students was conducted to see how these expressed practices translated to the student experience. A sample size of six students participated, representing approximately 100 students. The gender and racial/ethnic breakdown of the students were fairly representative of the student

population. For example, the General Education College is 79% Hispanic/Latinx and 19% Black/African American.

Table 5

Participant Characteristics

<u>Characteristics</u>	Faculty participants	Percentage	Student participants	Percentage
Gender identity	5 Female	(100%)	2 Male 4 Female	(33%) (66%)
Racial/ethnic identity	2 AA/Black 1 White 1 Native American	(40%) (40%) (20%)	1 Black 5 Latinx/Hispanic	(16%) (84%)
Status in Higher Ed	5 Assistant Professors	(100%)	6 Full-time students	(100%)
Age range	1 30-35 yrs of age 4 40-45 yrs of age	(20%) (80%)	4 18-20 years of age 2 21+ years of age	(66%) (33%)

Interviews and the focus group were recorded with the consent of the participants and the audio was sent to a transcription service that guaranteed accuracy. Field notes from the observations were originally handwritten and then typed up by the researcher. All transcripts and notes were uploaded to research software called Dedoose. This program is affordable and used to assist in qualitative and quantitative research. This particular application was chosen because it allowed the researcher to analyze the qualitative data through codes and tagging. Codes were developed that aligned with the major themes of culturally responsive teaching and topics of the interview questions (See Table 3). After careful analysis of the transcripts, child codes were added to further delineate elements of culturally responsive teaching.

Figure 1

Comparison Demographics

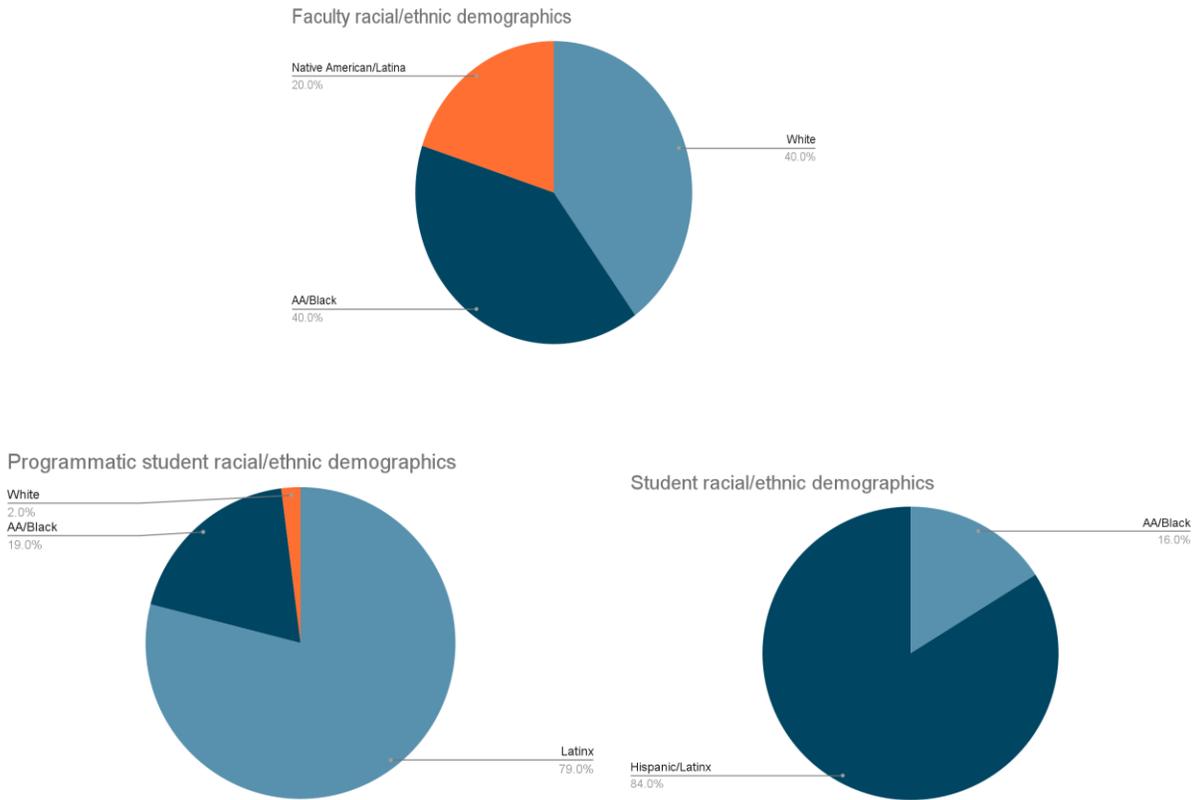


Table 6a

Research and Interview Questions (Part 1)

Research Questions -Faculty	Interview questions-Faculty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is culturally responsive teaching in higher education general education classes? ● How do professors define culturally responsive teaching in their own practice? ● How do professors enact culturally responsive teaching in their own practice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is culturally responsive teaching an important part of your teaching praxis? ● What is culturally responsive teaching to you? ● What are some ways that you are culturally responsive in your teaching? ● Are these methods are connected to your own research or your lived experiences? Please explain ● How knowledgeable are you of the various cultures of students in your classroom? ● Do you recognize and value the cultures represented by your students? ● If you are not otherwise knowledgeable about a culture in the classroom, do you take time to learn about it? ● Do you examine your own cultural influences and how they might affect your teaching? ● How? Why or why not? ● Do you feel self-efficacy with culturally responsive teaching? ● How might you feel more supported by the college in culturally responsive teaching?

Table 6b

Research and Interview Questions (Part 2)

Research Questions -Students	Interview questions-Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do students receive and interpret culturally responsive approaches in the college classroom? ● What effects (if any) does culturally responsive teaching have on students' sense of belonging and academic success 	<p>Does your instructor....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make an effort to get to know students' background ● Use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairings in group work ● Examine class materials for appropriate images and themes ● Encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material ● Spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of students ● Use peer tutors or student-led discussions ● Learn words in students' native languages ● Supplement the curriculum with lessons about international current events ● Use student surveys to learn about students' classroom preferences ● Ask for student input when planning lessons and activities ● Students work independently, selecting their own learning activities ● Include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias

Table 7

Codes

Parent codes	Child codes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CRT Define ● CRT Unclear ● CRT InstPrac ● CRT Research ● FacCulture ● CRT MultiCult ● CRT SelfReflection ● CRT Self-Efficacy ● Needs ● Train ● CRT Student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student Culture ● Student Critical Thinking ● Student Build Relations. ● Student Identity ● Student Co-Creators ● Student High Expec. ● Student Social Justice 	

Themes

The following section expounds upon the key findings of this research. Each theme is explained while including excerpts from the interviews and focus group to further illuminate how these themes were interpreted. Five main themes were discovered:

1. Professors define culturally responsive teaching in a variety of ways with students at the center
2. Building relationships with students is the most common way that culturally responsive teaching is practiced
3. Students both notice and respond positively to the attempts at relationship building.
4. For professors, culturally responsive teaching is an iterative and self-reflective practice.
5. While professors generally feel self-efficacy in their practice, they do desire more programmatic and/or institutional support

1) Professors define culturally responsive teaching in a variety of ways with students at the center

Even amongst the research, culturally responsive teaching is defined in a variety of different ways. The central tenants remain the same; holding all students to high academic standards while providing appropriate scaffolds and supports, building on students' background knowledge and competence by implementing a curriculum that incorporates their cultural knowledge, and cultivating critical consciousness within students regarding power relations (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Participants defined it in similar ways while emphasizing that students are at the center and without understanding or applying students' cultural frameworks and backgrounds to the classroom, professors are not effective in their teaching practice.

While participants consistently emphasized the student-centered nature of their practices, they also contend that culture and understanding culture is crucial. Research also illuminates that culture is at the center of everything, particularly in education. It influences how we think, behave, communicate and perceive the world. Culture influences education in the same ways. It undergirds the ways students will learn and the ways instructors will teach. Culture is malleable, ever-changing, and complex, requiring educators to understand the nuances and layers of their students' cultures (Gay, 2018). Participants looked at the culture of their students as an asset, not a deficit. Thus by creating educational processes that pay credence to the “cultural frames of reference of diverse students, (they) will improve school achievement for students of color” (Gay, 2018, p.12). The following excerpts highlight the ways that participants viewed culturally responsive teaching and the impact of culture. The term whiteness comes up in some of the excerpts, when considering this term, look to the explanation of whiteness within the literature review.

“It is a way of thinking that affirms my own identities while also causing me to think about the identities of my students and to really-- Then unpack any biases that I or they might have. It also means developing cultural humility where I am thinking about culture in ways that offer empathy, that promote dignity, that also promote unlearning. I think a lot of times we talk about culturally responsive teaching as learning. I think a big part of it is unlearning and while also giving students, giving myself the ability to set goals for themselves. If I think of culturally responsive teaching, I think of it as a disruption of Whiteness, because Whiteness sets this and we talked about this standard of individuality that lacks the collective nature that I feel is essential to certain oppressed groups, ways of thinking in me and knowing. Culturally responsive teaching is a way to get to that collective knowledge and to ensure that there is no inferior within that realm of practices.”

“I would describe culturally responsive teaching as putting students' culture and home lives and knowledge and experiences at the forefront of my teaching practice. It's not only incorporating students' cultural backgrounds and their home languages and their lived experiences but prioritizing those things. Incorporating and prioritizing and keeping

those things top of mind as I'm planning, as we're discussing goals for the course. Really keeping their home lives top of mind.”

“I think the responsive part is key and it's about being really aware of your role and the culture you're bringing, and being really aware of the ways that you're bringing that to your students, and then also being really aware of the variety of cultures that they identify with, and are bringing as a place to form community, share resources, and just constantly be aware of that dynamic of teaching that there is. Especially being a language teacher, you think about how often language teachers are used to force cultural assimilation”

2) Building relationships with students is the most common way that culturally responsive teaching is practiced

After the data was collected and coded, it was discovered that of the themes related to culturally responsive teaching—instructional practices, social justice, multiculturalism, critical thinking, identity, high expectations, and relationship building—relationship building was the most common way that culturally responsive teaching is practiced. This is represented in table 4. The theme of building relationships with students as well as the methods to do so were present in every interview, and observation, and mentioned by every student in the focus group. In one interview in particular, the participant emphatically mentioned relationship-building over 20 times. This is best illuminated by the following excerpts:

“if you're showing up in a classroom space and we're agreeing to learn together and learn about one another, the relationship has to be there, or there isn't really a purpose for the space. That's arguable for sure, I think the relationship piece is so valuable and it's really easy to do, to learn about one another. Relationships are what life is about. It's like why are we even here? [laughs] I think relationships are really, really, really important.”

“Every time I can interact with you, I want to know about you and who you are as a person because if I know who you are and what you value and what you know, I can help you learn, I can help you get to your learning goal. If I don't know anything about you, I can still present the information, I think it's just going to be really empty.”

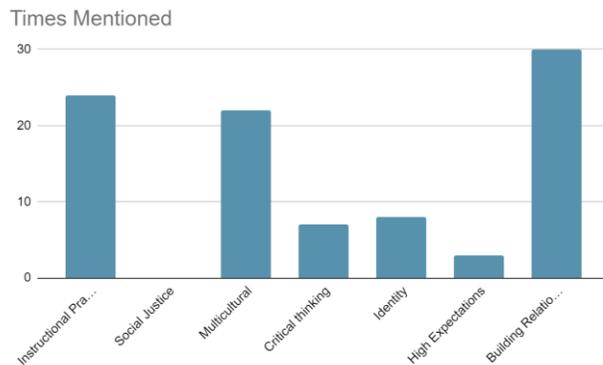
This was further demonstrated in the classroom observations. There were clear indications of relationship-building in all examples. Professors showed that they knew each

student and knew real details about them and the ways in which they learned effectively. In one synchronous Zoom session of class, the professor greeted everyone by name and asked them how they were while referring to something that they knew about the student. For example, one student had a job interview later in the day and the instructor asked them how they were feeling about the interview. In another example, the teacher had conversations about students' cultural backgrounds and provided them with art examples that were representative of them and their culture. The observation took place during week five of a ten-week term. Meaning, that the professor had at least five weeks of interaction with students before the observation took place. This is ample time to develop positive relationships with students. If observations took place in the first two weeks of the term, this relationship-building may not be as evident yet.

In another example, the lesson that the instructor prepared was also a way of building relationships with students while also incorporating their culture. The lesson was on narrative writing. She introduced this by having students identify a song they liked that told a good story or taught a lesson. Students then shared these songs and the class went through each of the songs' lyrics to determine how it told a story. Then the instructor transitioned into narrative writing and how they could use these songs as examples. Students were very engaged and seemed excited to share songs that they liked. One student even mentioned that it was "cool" to be able to talk about the music they liked at the literary connection. It was clear that intentional relationship building had made this lesson a success and that students engaged when they were able to share parts of their culture.

Figure 2

Themes of CRT mentioned



2) Students both notice and respond positively to the attempts at relationship building. In a focus group, students were asked questions that aligned with different practices of culturally responsive teaching (see figure four). The responses illuminated that they were benefiting from the culturally responsive practices that might be taking place in their classrooms. Students shared examples of the many ways that professors attempted to get to know them and understand their cultural and educational backgrounds. What was striking was the appreciation that students had for the ways in which professors attempted to build relationships with them and how professors aimed to understand students' cultural backgrounds. Students further expressed that they were relieved professors did not assume their various identities based on their last names or the ways that they looked.

“Like when she would show me an example, she showed me gender fluid Latinos or non-binary Latinos. It's like different type of Latinos. She didn't just assume I was a heterosexual Latina, but other teachers they would have just, like, with the last name, so assume I'm Hispanic. Like, "Oh, here, this is one article that you could relate to." I was like, "It could be like the most stereotypical article ever.”

“ I was having some trouble. I don't know why, but it was just important to me that she didn't just assume that I was Hispanic. She said, "Oh, what's your background?" I told her and she came up with a lot of ideas to help me. It wasn't stereotypical Hispanic stuff. It was different varieties of, "Here's different topics related to the kind of Hispanic you are.”

“At the start of the term basically, she did a lot of learning about our culture. It was very much like learning about ourselves. I don't really remember if it was talking about it in class, but it was more of so we can think about it to ourselves, and seeing ourselves in different forms of artwork, seeing our culture. A big thing about her was not being so focused on paintings from White people. It was very like, ethnic groups and opening up to that. I never really realized how many artworks were made that are Latino.”

Students went on to explain that they felt comfortable in the classroom, making it more conducive for learning. Not only were their professors attempting to get to know the students and understand them, professors also were affirming and validating students' participation in the class, enhancing the trust and rapport of the classroom. Hammond's (2015) work on culturally responsive teaching and the brain, shows how the brain responds to this trust as positive, opening up the brain to real learning. Trust and positive rapport equal cognitive insight (Hammond, 2015) Even a simple thank you after a student shared had quite an effect on the students in the focus group.

“I wanted to say that the professor does make us feel very comfortable, and she does in fact-- What's it called? She's very engaging. Whenever we talk or we have a conversation, she always says thank you. She appreciates when we have something to discuss. It makes us feel nice because even though it may not be something that someone could say you would agree with 100%, she does appreciate when someone has an opinion. She always tells us, "You guys are more than welcome to disagree or to agree, or to even have a conversation on why you feel this way.”

“ A little, just something small. She acknowledges that you answered it. Most of the time, she'll be like, "Oh, thank you. Thank you for whatever" That feels nice”

3) For professors, culturally responsive teaching is an iterative and self-reflective practice.

Without exception each professor that was interviewed shared strong self-reflective practices that informed their practices. Each identified that no matter how comfortable they might feel enacting culturally responsive practices, they knew that it was a constant, iterative process to be a culturally responsive educator. One participant called it a process of unlearning. They stated as they attempt to understand their biases and teaching methods, they are constantly unlearning the ways that they have experienced education. Most of the participants in the study (80%) were educated at primarily White institutions with Eurocentric practices. In order to be culturally responsive educators in the present, they are constantly reevaluating the ways in which they teach. They could not just look at the ways they had been taught over the years and mimic those practices. Some pointed out that most of the practices they had been taught were actually detrimental to culturally and linguistically diverse students because a 'one size fits all' model did not account for the variety of culture, cultural influences, and home lives of students.

Research further exemplifies that culturally responsive educators should interrogate their own biases and aim to learn more about the cultural frameworks of their students (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). This is supported by Nieto (2000) as she shows that teaching should be promoted as a life-long journey of transformation. Meaning, that teachers should learn about racism and their own biases, their students' culture and cultural frameworks, and how all this is replicated in the classroom. While an understanding of students' cultural frameworks is an integral aspect of culturally responsive teaching, there is also the need for educators to evaluate and interrogate their own cultural frameworks and potential biases. Teachers should be willing and actively attempting to transform by facing and accepting their own identities and the biases they may come with those identities. Participants in this study did

just that. When asked about their self-reflective practices, participants all had a well-thought-out response. The following excerpts represent their ideas well.

“I think one of the biggest ways is through self-reflection. I'm constantly questioning myself how I am not only instructing but how I'm presenting who I am because I think that authenticity then leads to authenticity for students. I think it leads to authenticity in instruction and assessment. One of the other ways I think is through the disruption of normed discussion. In any environment, I think we have a responsibility to discuss cultures and discuss identities and so whatever class I'm teaching, that is going to be a part of our discussion. I'm constantly looking for opportunities to bring in different cultures and identities into the classroom.”

“I know a lot of people think so for instance, I grew up on southeast side of Chicago and it would be easy for my teachers to have only instructed me about what Black excellence looks like but I live in a global society and I think it's important to also understand the various cultures that exist. Not only presenting my students with mirrors that reflect their own identity but windows and also sliding glass doors that provide them opportunities to look out at other cultures and then to better understand themselves as well as others.”

“I said I should always be seeking information from art, that I should always be seeking information from educators, that I should always be seeking information from my own experience as a person of color who has had trauma through colonization, and is relearning some practices like observing myself. How do I relearn these practices? How do my groups like me relearn their practices? These things are all always informing each other and giving new questions. That's also what keeps being an educator really exciting and interesting for me, as well”

“I think we need to also examine ourselves and how we treat ourselves and each other within the workplace, and what structures we have so that we're leaving it not just in our classrooms but behind the scenes.”

“Often we do an amazing job of making sure our students are supported and highlighted and spot-lit. We are thinking about and asking all these great questions for what happens within the classroom, and I think we need to really expand that and examine ourselves in the rest of our professional lives and how are we leaving this out, and proving that it's actually something we hold valuable in "the real world" outside of this idealized classroom setting.”

5) While professors generally feel self-efficacy in their practice, they do desire more institutional support.

Professors all claimed a level of self-efficacy with culturally responsive teaching while maintaining that this has come from consistent self-reflection and seeking ways to learn—or unlearn in some instances—more. They further illuminated that they could feel more support in their departments, programs, and higher education institutions. This theme was also prevalent in research on culturally responsive teaching (Cruz, Manchanda, Firestone, & Rodl, 2019). Cruz et al (2019) show that pre-service teachers felt efficacy in building relationships and trust in particular. They also felt that much of the work was done individually and not necessarily supported in their programs and colleges. This is evident in this study as well. In some instances, professors were critical of how the practices of culturally responsive teaching were not foundational to the college culture and thus not exemplified in leadership. They desired a more encompassing approach where culturally responsive teaching was foundational. The excerpts below exemplify their concerns, They also understood that there were societal and political forces at play that were impossible to ignore.

“ I think one of the ways I always feel more supported is if it were clearly rooted in all the classes that we teach, and all the programming that we have. I know that MU has a number of pillars. If it{culturally responsive teaching} were just clearly denoted as foundational to who we were, that this was our expectation, and then our students understood that, that it wasn't just instructors that this was part of the DNA of MU, then maybe when I came in as this Black woman, myself and the students wouldn't have had this tension.”

“Because we're both coming from understanding the place that we were in. I think that would be a way of being supported. I also think support for me would-- Maybe it's not for me, maybe I'm going outside, but I'll say it anyway. I think we have a lot of amazing individuals in MU and a lot of amazing teams in MU. Feel like this is very much a

grassroots-from-the-ground-up initiative. I would really like to see this embraced at higher levels not as, "This is a good goal," but "This is standard."

“Everyone is well-intentioned and they mean well. I do believe that every single person I have encountered at MU cares about our students. That's important because I have been in spaces where that was not the case. What I also know is that there's a lot of lip service that happens, and there are a lot of things that are beyond our control that are tied to funding. There are things that can't change because we're not in control.”

“Those most well-intentioned of us are not in a place to really prioritize what we would hope to prioritize. That's a really politically correct answer, but I think, one, you can read between the lines, but two, even if we rip apart the program, it's not going to matter. That kind of thing. We're really well-intentioned culturally responsive teachers in our hearts and minds, but it may or may not happen in every class, it may or may not be a priority realistically because there's funding, there is you get more money when you don't focus on race and culture. Our country is what it is, our society is what it is.”

“That doesn't have anything to do with MU exactly. It is our society, it's how we operate. We are a divided society, we will always have race conflict. Culture has been excluded intentionally for the gain of some and for the oppression of others. It will always be like that. MU is not outside of that. MU has nothing to do with it, it's just who we are as a people in this society, we are divided by culture and race and we always will be. Do the educators who show up day to day, are we attempting to change that? Sure. We may even make small strides, we may make progress in the areas, but I do think MU is not outside of that trap.”

Conclusion

The findings illuminate the many ways in which professors strive to be culturally responsive educators. It is heartening to hear how much professors care about the outcomes of students and how they see themselves as those responsible for providing culturally responsive ways to guide students in meeting those outcomes. Their perceptions of students and their ability are strength-based in nature as they see the culture and home lives of students as an asset. It is further evident that students respond positively to the approach of the professors. While much of this study shows positive correlations to culturally responsive teaching, there is undoubtedly more that could be investigated, particularly at the institutional level. The reality that professors

do not feel fully supported by their institution in these efforts to be culturally responsive educators is one to be explored in future work. Students appear to feel this in some way too as they expressed they did not necessarily feel like they belonged outside the classrooms in question. This could be examined in future studies. While this study shows that the work is being done, there is always more that can be done. It is noble and important work that should and can be supported. Most importantly, this work is crucial and effective to support the learning and dignity of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The strategy of building relationships with students in order to effectively employ culturally responsive teaching practices is addressed all across the literature, albeit under different names, Zaretta Hammond (2015) refers to this as learning partnerships while Geneva Gay (2018) defines it through caring as a major pillar of culturally responsive teaching. In all of the examples, the key is to develop trust and rapport between professors and students. In fact, Hammond (2105) presents a “Ready for Rigor” framework that illuminates the practice of “reframing and repositioning student-teacher relationships as the key ingredient in helping culturally and linguistically diverse dependent learners authentically engage” (pg 73). At the core of these is trust. Trust between teachers and students is a key component of effective learning. Simply put, our brains cannot learn most effectively if a person feels unsafe. “Neuroscience tells us when the brain feels safest and relaxed when we are connected to others that we trust to treat us well” (Hammond, 2015, p. 73)

It can be surmised that without elements of trust in the teacher-student relationship, students may not be able to apply cognitive insight and critical thinking elements of the content being taught. Trust is the first stepping stone that can lead to a good rapport, an alliance, then real cognitive insight. Hammond (2015) explains that trust is a building process that starts with “a pedagogy” of listening (pg 77). Participants of this study argued the same. They all provided examples of how they simply listened to their students, what they wanted, who they were, and from where they came. This was seen as a sign of respect and interest from the perception of students. Professors expressed that they needed to listen to students and ‘hear ’ what they were

saying, even if the communication was nonverbal. Throughout their interactions with students, they worked to develop trusting relationships where they could ask students what they were feeling and get candid responses. For example, they paid attention to potential nonverbal cues that illuminated how a student was feeling. According to professors, they tried never to assume. Students reiterated that professors made them feel safe and recognized when they did not assume a student's background or what a student needed. There was an aura that students did not want to be stereotyped and professors in this study were very aware of this concern and attempted to avoid all assumptions. In the focus group, students expressed the appreciation that they were not simply seen as Latinx, and that the instructor attempted to understand their specific ethnic or national origin. Students referred to other instances where teachers had assumed that they were all the same as a Latinx monolith. They explained they were frequently stereotyped and presented with stereotypical examples—if any examples outside of the traditional white, eurocentric lens—of their received culture. A few mentioned that it was very important that they were not seen as simply Hispanic or Latinx. Latino/a identity development theory offers this as a stage of identity development. Subgroup-identified orientation is a narrower view as individuals will see themselves in terms of their ethnic or national origin subgroup (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007). Race is not the way in which they organize their ideas around identity. Rather, they see themselves through the lens of nationality, ethnicity, and culture. These are the guiding contributions to identity. This kind of identification was important to the students at MU.

Claude Steele (2010) addresses the idea of stereotype threat and its impact on people from marginalized groups. His extensive research shows that on every level, even with the stereotype 'in the air' and not explicitly pointed out, there is the constant concern that one would be judged, treated accordingly, and, most concerning, the fear that they would confirm the

stereotype (Steele, 2010.) Stereotype threat can threaten how students see themselves and what they are capable of, which can negatively affect their academic identity as well as their intellectual performance. Hammond (2015) also points out that this negativity and feeling like an outsider can cause the brain to shut down its cognitive ability. The professors interviewed all alluded to this idea and explained how they try to mitigate these stereotypes by listening to students, building trust, and affirming and validating their identities.

A core practice of developing trust and rapport is affirmation and validation (Hammond, 2015). This study illuminates how impactful this core practice can be. Students felt affirmed and validated when professors asked them about their cultural and linguistic background as opposed to assuming. Students felt affirmed when professors thanked them for their contributions to class, especially when sharing things about themselves. Students further appreciated it when professors did not succumb to cultural stereotypes and make assumptions about a student's ability. They all expressed feeling safe and comfortable in the classrooms of the professors interviewed. This is noteworthy not just because they felt safe, but because they also expressed not feeling the same safety and trust in other classrooms at the same institution. Some students even stated that they did not feel like they belonged at MU, even when they felt they belonged in the classroom in question. One even emphasized that the classroom in question served as a haven when compared to the rest of the college.

Research offers many ways that trust can be developed in teacher-student relationships. This study showed prime examples of these ways to enhance trust. Hammond (2015) shares "trust generators" that are designed to build rapport and positive relationships with students. In the chart below these trust generators are shared along with the ways the research illuminates the use of these trust generators in various forms

Table 8

Methods to enhance trust

Trust Generators (Hammond, 2015)	Caring in Action (Gay, 2018)	Examples in data
Selective Vulnerability	Providing spaces and relationships where ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected, valued, seen and heard	Sharing one’s own struggles in education Sharing challenges with identity Sharing aspects of one’s life that are relevant to the class, content, or student
Familiarity	Knowing culturally diverse students thoroughly, personally and academically	Learning about a student and recognizing their learning styles and cultural frameworks
Similarity of Interests	Cultivating a community where students feel inclined to share and relate to you	Finding out students' interests and finding common ground
Concern	Acquiring knowledge of and accepting responsibility for culturally diverse students that goes beyond the classroom	Socio-emotional check-ins
Competence	<p>Acknowledging social, cultural, ethnic, racial, linguistic differences among students without perjorative judgement</p> <p>Providing intellectually challenging and personally relevant learning experiences</p>	<p>Learning about other cultures in the context of teaching and learning</p> <p>Understanding one’s own biases</p> <p>Consistent self-reflection</p>

Studies (Cruz, Manchanda, Firestone, & Rodl, 2019) have shown that teachers can struggle with efficacy when it comes to culturally responsive teaching. There was some evidence of this in this study as well. What is interesting is that this study showed that professors only felt a lack of self-efficacy in relation to the higher education institution they serve. In some ways, they expressed feeling siloed in their work. While they worked hard to be culturally responsive educators and were aware of other faculty members doing the same, they did not think that the institution fully supported their practices, or that the institution did not see culturally responsive teaching as foundational to the values of the college. While instructors appeared to have a robust understanding of culturally responsive teaching and may feel self-efficacy in their individual practices, there was some concern that they were not more supported in the development of culturally responsive teaching at their institution.

Participants were clear that self-reflection, as well as self-interrogation, were major pillars of their culturally responsive teaching praxis. Theory and empirical research further contend that this is a necessary aspect of culturally responsive teaching. While an understanding of students' cultural frameworks is an integral aspect of culturally responsive teaching, there is also the need for educators to evaluate and interrogate their own cultural frameworks and potential biases. Teachers should be willing and actively attempt to transform by facing and accepting their own identities and the bias that may come with those identities. The next step would be to integrate that knowledge with brain-based learning to provide a learning environment conducive to culturally and linguistically diverse students (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Considerations

While this was not a central focus of the interviews or observations, it should be noted that the application of students as co-creators of knowledge made an appearance throughout the data. Two professors mentioned that they attempt to do this in their classes and students responded that this was a strategy that was appreciated. Students as co-creators is a notion that has been tried in a few researched examples. One study asked, “How might understandings of culturally sustaining pedagogies be enhanced if they were informed by teaching practices developed, implemented, and refined by students themselves” (Irizarry, 2017)? In this example, Latinx students had significant voice and agency in choosing the curriculum, examples, language usage, and assignments. The results were impressive; students reported feeling more connected to the content, excited to learn, and felt their identities were honored as opposed to being subdued. The MU professors expressed their own ideas of how to bring students in as co-creators of classroom knowledge. While this was only mentioned in a tertiary sense among student participants, what they did say was also promising. They responded well to the inclusion of their voice. They liked when professors asked what they wanted to do or what examples they thought were good. They stated how different that was then the educational systems they grew up in. This could be considered and evaluated further. What does co-creation look like at the college level?

Implications

This study could be considered for any institution that has a large culturally and linguistically diverse student population, particularly if the faculty is inversely representative of the student population. Future researchers should look to expand upon this study and incorporate a larger sample of faculty members and students. This particular study did not show much in the

practices of social justice and high expectations in culturally responsive teaching. This is not to say that participants of this study do not exemplify these practices, they simply did not emerge as the center of this study. Future research could examine those practices in particular. There could also be some additional research on how these culturally responsive teaching practices could affect students in higher education. Does culturally responsive teaching lead to higher retention and attendance rates among students? Does cultural responsiveness help a student to feel a sense of belonging in the college classroom? How does this compare to students that do not have culturally responsive teachers? All these questions could add to the extensive research on culturally responsive teaching.

Delimiters

This study was conducted at the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022. This is significant to point out because the events of 2020-2022 have had a profound effect on society and education. First, the study was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic. This led to many classes converting to remote as opposed to face-to-face to mitigate the spreading of the COVID-19 virus. This meant that all interviews had to be conducted over Zoom as well as observations of the class. In some instances, professors simply shared lessons and materials from their online classes since they did not meet synchronously in a way that could be observed.

There was also some difficulty in recruiting students to participate. Some students bowed out at the last minute due to COVID-19-related issues. Students in this study all come from populations that have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths have been higher amidst communities of color. Students at MU are part of these communities and experienced many pandemic-related tragedies such as losing

family members and friends to the virus. Some students had to then take on the role of providing for their families and taking care of younger siblings all while trying to earn a college degree.

The pandemic was not the only challenge of the last few years. There has been a rise of racial tensions where some are identifying this as a time of racial reckoning. In 2020 the murders of Black men and women at the hands of police officers and vigilantes brought about new levels of activism as so many people took to the streets to protest this treatment. Many of the participants of this study were involved in a variety of activism and political participation. Or if not directly involved, were directly affected by the events. Suffice to say, the last few years have been tough. It cannot be ignored that while this study took place all these events remained a reality that likely affected students' and professors' reality and responses. In some ways, it seems the timing of this study led to a louder cry for the necessity of culturally responsive teaching. As more light is shed on the treatment and lack of opportunities provided to BIPOC youth, the need to reframe education in a way that allows culturally and linguistically diverse students to thrive is glaringly evident. The timing of the study further illuminates why the use of critical race theory as a theoretical framework for this work is so necessary. We cannot study students of color without being clear about the insidious ways that race and racism affect them.

The age of the professors interviewed should also be noted as a limitation in this research. All participants were under 45 years of age. The General Education College at MU skews towards a younger faculty population. The majority of assistant professors within the college are under 50. While this faculty sample was fairly representative of the college under study, the reality is that this is not representative of college professors nationally. If anything, reports identify that there is an aging population of college professors, with at least 37% over 55 years of

age as compared to only 23% of the general working population (Flaherty, 2020). Future studies could include more representative examples of other age groups of faculty.

This study was designed to gain naturalistic generalizations on a very limited group of general education professors and their students. Participants were limited to full-time instructors in the General Education College at MU that had expressed they were culturally responsive teachers. Participants were from the Humanities and English departments. Due to the affiliation with the researcher, the Social Sciences Department and Science Department were excluded from this study. Additionally, only one institution is represented, with only one college within that institution. Lastly, the findings are largely based on the interpretations of the researcher and the experiences of selected participants

Recommendations

The findings of this study engender a variety of recommendations that higher education educators and administrators can examine for their own institutions. First, it would behoove higher education institutions to understand and support culturally responsive teaching practices within their various programs and colleges. The participants of the MU study all expressed that they desired a more supportive department, program, and/or institution. Instead of these practices being individual, how can higher education institutions look to make them foundational?

That foundation could extend into the leadership of the institution as well. Some participants identified that leadership was often the antithesis of cultural responsiveness. The relationship building piece of culturally responsive teaching could filter up to institutional leadership, where those in charge make efforts to understand their faculty, staff, and students through a culturally responsive lens. One professor mentioned that even when people at their

institution led trainings or workshops on culturally responsive teaching, it was done in a traditional, Eurocentric way. She contended that there could be other ways that are rooted in Indigenous practices that could be more impactful. For example, trainings that extended over longer periods of time that allow for reflection, collaboration, and group-centered development. So often current methods of professional development are individualistic, and ephemeral, and do not provide space for reflection and growth, This could be another avenue for research, an action research project that looks to more culturally responsive options. Lastly, should develop or enhance already developed mechanisms of iteration and reflection at both the programmatic and institutional levels. All throughout the interviews in this research faculty expressed that they were focusing on self-reflection and growth while the institutions remained somewhat stagnant despite their claim of innovation. Just as participants in this study had a variety of ways to self-reflect, interrogate their own biases, and be iterative in their curriculum development, institutions could and should do the same.

Culturally responsive teaching has been applied and researched much more in K-12 education. This study illuminates that not only is culturally responsive teaching practiced in pockets of higher education but that students respond well to it and faculty members desire support in advancing their culturally responsive practices. Higher education institutions could look to this study as a guide to evaluate and implement cultural responsiveness in their institutions. In Illinois, for example, the State Board of Education recently adopted the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Standards. These eight standards are all derived from the vast research and literature on culturally responsive teaching and were developed by culturally responsive educators. While they are designed for K-12 at this point, these standards could certainly make their way to higher education. The reality is the same in higher education as it is

in K-12, culturally and linguistically diverse students now make up the majority of the student population while those that are educating these students are generally White. The achievement gap—or education debt, as Gloria Ladson-Billings calls it—between White and BIPOC students affects higher education too. Higher education could have similar practices and systems in place that will allow culturally and linguistically diverse students to thrive and perform well academically. As higher education institutions consider this, they could use the methods of this study to evaluate what is already being done by faculty and educators, then look to some of the methods used in K-12, like the Illinois Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Standards.

Conclusion

This study aimed to evaluate how college professors at MU approach culturally responsive teaching. A culturally responsive teacher understands the culture of their students and how those cultural frameworks impact learning (Hammond, 2015). They can integrate that knowledge with brain-based learning to provide a learning environment conducive to culturally and linguistically diverse students (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995). They should also have the ability to foster high-order thinking and problem-solving while challenging the societal and racial status quo that has left minoritized students at a disadvantage. As the majority of the student population at MU is culturally and linguistically diverse, this setting serves as an appropriate place to evaluate how culturally responsive practices are used. This work has the potential to aid instructors in their understanding and application of culturally responsive teaching. The study shows what is effective and what might need refinement, leading to potential improvements and professional development in culturally responsive teaching in the Gen Ed College at MU. It could also extend to other institutions where demographics are similar. As Geneva Gay points out, as the student

population is increasingly non-white, there is an inherent duty to ensure that education is in the “service of the humanity and rights of diverse students” (Gay, 2018, p. xxxi).

References

- Abe, J. (2019). Beyond Cultural Competence, Toward Social Transformation: Liberation psychologies and the practice of cultural humility. *Journal of Social Work Education, 1014*.
- Brown, S. (2019). Nearly Half of Undergraduates are Students of Color. But Black Students Lag Behind. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Cabrera, N. L. (2019). *White Guys on Campus: Racism, white immunity, and the myth of 'post-racial' higher education*. Rutgers University Press.
- Carter Andrews, D.J., He, Ye., Marciano, J.E., Richmond, G., & Salazar, M.(2021) Decentering Whiteness in Teacher Education: Addressing the questions of who, with whom, and how. *Journal of Teacher Education 72(2)*, 134-137.
- Chen, J. &. (2017). The effects of financial aid on college success of two-year beginning nontraditional students. *Research in Higher Education (58)*, 40-76.
- College Enrollment and Student Demographic Statistics*. (2019). Retrieved from Educationdata.org: <https://educationdata.org/college-enrollment-statistics/>
- Cores-Zimmerman, C., Thomas, D., & Canberra, N.L. (2021) Historical scaffolds of whiteness in higher education. In Roth, K.R. and Ritter, Z. S. (eds.), *Whiteness, power and resisting change in US higher education: Palgrave studies in race, inequality and social justice in education* (pp.9-31), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57292-1_2

- Cruz, R., Manchanda, S., Firestone, A., & Rodl, J. (2019). An examination of teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 1-18.
- Cuellar, M. (2018, January 29). *Understanding Latinx college student diversity and why it matters*. Retrieved from HigherEd Today:
<https://www.higheredtoday.org/2018/01/29/understanding-latinx-college-student-diversity-matters/>
- DuBois, W. (1903). *The souls of Black folk: essays and sketches*. Chicago: A.G. McClurg.
- Ferdman, B., & Gallegos, P. (2007). Identity orientations of Latinos in the United States: Implications for leaders and organizations. *The Business Journal of Hispanic Research* 1(1), 26-41.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice (3rd ed)*. Teachers College Press.
- Griner, A., & Stewart, M. L. (2012). Addressing the achievement gap and disproportionality through the rise of culturally responsive teaching practices. *Urban Education* 48(4), 585-621.
- Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. London: Corwin.

- Jackson, T., & Boutte, G. (2018). Exploring culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy as praxis in teacher education. *The New Educator*, 14(2), 87-90.
- Johnston-Guerrero, M. (2016). Embracing the messiness: Critical and diverse perspectives on racial and ethnic identity development. *New Directions for Student Services* 154, 43-57.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal* 32(3), 465-491.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational Researcher* 35(7), 3-12.
- Love, Bettina. (2019). *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). Retrieved from IPEDS National Louis University:
(<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/InstitutionProfile.aspx?unitId=acafb2b0aeb>).
- Nieto, S. (2000). Placing equity front and center: Some thoughts on transforming teacher education for a new century. *Journal of Teacher Education* 51(3), 180-187.
- Noe-Bustamante, L., Lopez, M. H., & Krogstad, J. M. (2020, July 7). *US Hispanic population surpassed 60 million in 2019, but growth has slowed*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/>

- Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review* 84(1), 85-100.
- Patton, L. R. (2016). *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Jossey-Bass.
- Quintana, C. (2020, May 23). More Latino students than ever are trying to get their degree, but it's fraught and costly. *USA Today*, <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/nation/2020/01/06/more-hispanic-students-than-ever-go-college-but-cost-high/2520646001/>.
- Rury, J. (2015). *Education and Social Change: Contours in the History of American Schooling*. Rutledge.
- Soloranzo, D. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly (Summer)*, 5-20.
- Steele, C. (2010) *Whistling Vivaldi: How stereotypes affect us and what we can do*. WW Norton and Company.
- Wlodkowski, R., & Ginsberg, M. (1995). A framework for culturally responsive teaching. *Educational Leadership*, 17-21.

Appendix A:

Faculty Interview Questions

- Is culturally responsive teaching an important part of your teaching praxis?
 - Why or why not?
- What is culturally responsive teaching to you?
- What are some ways that you are culturally responsive in your teaching?
 - Are these methods connected to your own research or your lived experiences?
Please explain
- How knowledgeable are you of the various cultures of students in your classroom?
- Do you recognize and value the cultures represented by your students?
 - Can you provide examples of this?
- If you are not otherwise knowledgeable about a culture in the classroom, do you take time to learn about it?
- Do you examine your own cultural influences and how they might affect your teaching?
 - How? Why or why not?
- Do you feel self-efficacy with culturally responsive teaching?
- How might you feel more supported by the college in culturally responsive teaching?
- What else might you want me to know?

Appendix B:

Culturally Responsive Walkthrough tool from the Equity Institute

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE WALKTHROUGH TOOL

1. Classroom culture/environment: How do I create an inclusive environment?		
Indicators	"Look Fors" in the Classroom	
	Teacher Practice	Student Practice
The environment is socially and intellectually safe for all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers uses language that validates multiple identities, encourages questioning and builds discourse. Teacher instructs and models a growth mindset Teachers emphasize effort Teachers creates expectations and criteria for peer collaboration and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take risks in their learning. Students engage cooperatively and collaboratively in their learning. Students engage in exploration, discovery and hands-on learning activities. Students admit when they need help or don't know something
Rituals and routines have been established that reinforce self-directed learning and academic identity (Who am I as a learner?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher provides an opportunity for verbal and written reflections Teacher embeds self-evaluation into lessons. Teacher creates learning groups in which all students learn to work collaboratively and independently.** Teachers give timely feedback on student work Teachers familiarize students with how they learn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students reflect on their learning Students exercise voice and choice in their learning. Students are able to provide feedback on lessons. Students can process feedback with the teacher Students are able to work for appropriate periods of time without direct teacher directions.
The classroom has been organized so that the physical landscape includes images, materials, and resources that reflect a wide range of diverse people and perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher has several classroom areas (reading corner, class library, shared meeting space). Teacher includes images and visuals that are reflective of diverse student identities. Teacher makes problem-solving visuals noticeable and accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students know how to use each area of the classroom. Students know how and when to use visuals provided around the classroom. Students contribute to creating images that are reflective of their identities.
Key concepts and facts are interrogated across subject areas to account for multiple perspectives and representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher uses lessons that represent differing viewpoints. Teacher encourages all students to see, question, and interpret concepts from a variety of perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to cite multiple points of view on a given topic Students engage in critical conversations about complex topics

Appendix C

Codebook

Code	Definition/when to use
1.CRT/Define	Use this code for definitions of culturally responsive teaching
2. CRT/InsStr	Use this code when examples of culturally responsive teaching are given, specifically examples of instructional practices /strategies. For example, lessons in the classroom, developing relationships with students, setting high expectations
3. CRT/SelfRef	Use this code when examples of instructors evaluating and/or interrogating their own cultural frameworks and potential biases. For example, language around self-reflection should fall in this code or examples of instructors actively attempting to transform/identify/face/accept their own identities and the bias they may come with those identities.
4. CRT/MultiCul	Use this code when examples of multicultural awareness are given. For example, understanding of different cultures and/or actions to understand cultures of students
5. CRT/Unclear	Use this code when there is lack of clarity on what CRT is or how it is being implemented in the classroom. For example, little or no definition of CRT, little or no examples, and/or not answering the question

6. CRT/Resrch	Use this code when specific research on CRT is mentioned such as studies, scholars, and/or texts
7. CRT/Student	Use this code when students are referring to culturally responsive practices
7a. Child codes for CRT/Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student Culture ● Student Critical Thinking ● Student Build Relations. ● Student Identity ● Student Co-Creators ● Student High Expec. ● Student Social Justice 	Use these codes when students refer to the specific practice listed. For example, if a student mentions high expectations that would fall under the child code Student High Expec.
8. Train	Use this code when there is any mention of training about CRT, either trainings attended or desired
9. StuDem	Use this code whenever student demographics are mentioned such as age, race, ethnicity, gender
10. SelfEff	Use this code when instructors discuss their level of comfort with delivering culturally responsive practices, this could also include their lack of comfort
11. Needs	Use this code when instructors discuss what they need or want their institution to do to support development of CRT
12. FacCul	Use this code whenever the instructor is referring to their own demographics, culture, language, racial or ethnic identity

13.GenResrch

Use this code whenever instructors mention research that they use that is not directly CRT. For example, if they state that they consider fixed/growth mindset or asset pedagogies as influential in their teaching practice

Appendix D

Focus Group Student Questions

Does your professor.....

- Provide rubrics and progress reports to students
- Ask students to compare their culture with American culture
- Make an effort to get to know students' families and background
- Use mixed-language and mixed-cultural pairings in group work
- Examine class materials for appropriate images and themes
- Encourage students to use cross-cultural comparisons when analyzing material
- Spend time outside of class learning about the cultures and languages of students
- Use peer tutors or student-led discussions
- Learn words in students' native languages
- Supplement the curriculum with lessons about international current events
- Include lessons about the acculturation process
- Use student surveys to learn about students' classroom preferences
- Ask for student input when planning lessons and activities
- Students work independently, selecting their own learning activities

- Include lessons about anti-immigrant discrimination or bias