CRT AND EDUCATIONAL EQUITY: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Saint Paul, MN

December 2018

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Amy Hamernick
Sarah Roiger
THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

“Teachers need to make time to understand who their students are— not who they wish they were, not who they are supposed to be, not who the district says they are, but who they are.”

-Debbie Silver in Education Week Teacher (Fiarazzo, 2014).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ..............................................................................................................................................2
The Purpose ....................................................................................................................................................2
The Process ..................................................................................................................................................3
The Potential ...............................................................................................................................................5
The Impact..................................................................................................................................................6
THE PROJECT ..............................................................................................................................................7
REFERENCES ..............................................................................................................................................9
INTRODUCTION

The Purpose

The creation of the following professional development modules is based off of my own desire to be a better teacher and teach my students in a culturally responsive way. The rapidly changing composition of the student body where I teach is clearly reflected by the concurrently changing dynamics in our country. As cited by Cochrane and as predicted by the U.S. Census Bureau, by the year 2039 more than half of all students in public schools will be minority students with the population of white students declining to under 50% (Cochrane, 2017). In my own classroom I have witnessed the changing dynamics of a changing world as 75% of the students in my level one Spanish classes are non-white. Now, more than ever, teachers successfully trained in cultural responsiveness are needed to help bridge the gap between student home culture and the culture we present in our schools.

Not only is it important to me to have culturally responsive training, but the training must also be effective. In previous inservices the material discussed and the format of the presentation have been anything but stellar. Colleagues have fallen asleep, earned the high score in Candy Crush, and scheduled their next hair appointment. While these are accomplishments in their own right, they are not positive byproducts of an effective professional development (PD). Within the process of a rewarding professional development lie the concept of andragogy, the importance of reflection, and the content of the PD. According to Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017), there are seven measures of an effective staff development session which include being content focused, incorporating active learning, supporting collaboration, modeling of effective practices, providing coaching, offering opportunities for reflection practices, and lastly, consisting of a sustained duration.
With these key experiences in mind I began to research the ways in which I could produce an effective staff development for myself and my colleagues. The goal in mind was to increase teacher efficacy in the field of culturally responsive teaching through engaging and meaningful professional development modules in a way that is feasible and practical for full-time teachers.

My extensive research allowed me to glean a plethora of knowledge surrounding andragogy, culturally responsive teaching, effective staff development, as well as the importance of reflection throughout the entire process. I have read and reread articles and books from experts such as Landsman (2009), Darling-Hammond, et al (2017), Ladson-Billings (2009), DuFour (2014), and Marzano (2008) to develop a reserve of knowledge in relation to my capstone project. In the midst of my research I would consistently ask myself what kind of professional development I could develop to meet the needs of all the research I had discovered as well as be centered around the topic at hand, cultural responsiveness. The staff development I have created is an amalgamation of all I have learned and experienced.

The Process

This professional development is to occur during the hour and ten minutes of time allotted to Professional Learning Communities every Wednesday morning and is to be facilitated by the department leader of each PLC. In the past, our school has attempted to facilitate professional development in CRT as a large group, which has not worked well in terms of discussion, sharing, or honesty. Teachers are more comfortable having open and honest conversations with the colleagues they work with the most. Rarely will a teacher stand up and voice their opinion in front of 200 other teachers without making sure their opinion is the “right” opinion. The first 30-40 minutes of PLC will be spent working on the professional development outlined here, and then second half of PLC will be spent working on department specific needs.
Due to this professional development being centered around adult learning, it was imperative that the presentation and method in which this is used correlate with best practices for teaching adults as outlined by Knowles (1977). Through my research in adult learning it became clear that adults need to be involved in the planning of their learning, the instruction needs to be task-oriented, objectives need to be clearly defined, and there should be many opportunities for interactive learning (Smith, 2002). In the creation of these staff development sessions all four of Knowles’ components were taken into consideration through allowing the adults to take each module on a self-guided basis, assigning specific tasks for each module, giving clear objectives for each module, as well as incorporating as many interpersonal learning activities as possible. The final product is a Google document which makes it accessible from virtually anywhere as well as easily used for collaboration.

In terms of creating an effective professional development, Darling-Hammond (2017) as well as Bates and Morgan (2018) identified seven characteristics. The first of which is that the session is content focused, this is clearly evident in the professional development created as it is all to do with culturally responsive teaching as well as its’ uses and implications. The second characteristic is that it incorporates active learning. Throughout the sessions there are many learning activities that involve discussion, reflection, and presentation. Effective professional development should also support collaboration and includes models of effective practices. Within each module of the professional development teachers are asked to collaborate with their colleagues and are given examples of best practices through the introduction of videos, and lesson plans. The provision of coaching is also outlined by Darling-Hammond (2017) as well as Bates and Morgan (2017). The inclusion of coaching can at times present a challenge as it usually requires experts in the field, which can become costly. Realizing the state of educational funding, I incorporated coaching that can be fulfilled by training teachers to analyze a lesson for CRT and then allowing them to review their colleagues lessons. Lastly, effective PD offers time for reflection and is ongoing. Within each module of the PD created there exists an opportunity for
self-reflection of practices, views, or self-assessment. The PD lasts 20 weeks and is equivalent to about 15 hours depending on the pace and depth of each PLC.

One of the most important facets of adult learning, effective PD, and culturally responsive teaching is the concept of self-awareness and reflection. According to Gay and Kirkland (2003), in order for teachers to truly reflect, teachers need to develop a sense of who they are as people, an understanding of the contexts in which they teach, and the ability to question their assumptions and basis of knowledge. Reflection is incorporated into each module of the professional development as a tool to enhance meaning as well as promote critical thinking skills.

The creation of CRT and Education Equality: Professional Development at the High School Level has fully taken into consideration the research guiding the principles of culturally responsive teaching, adult learning, effective professional development, as well as the concept of reflection and self-awareness. Best practices, latest research, and feasibility have all been taken into account in the structuring of this professional development in order to make it effective and intriguing for the participants.

The Potential

The end goal of this professional development is to increase the cultural responsiveness of the school and its teachers. Each teacher should have a goal of improved performance in the area of culturally responsive teaching, and hopefully, through the 20 modules each teacher can reach their goal. Ladson-Billings (1995) defined culturally responsive teaching as a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning. This professional development provides research based best practices that will help to grow and develop each teacher’s status as a culturally responsive teacher no matter what level they enter in or what level they wish to be.
The Impact

This project has the capacity to inform and change the way teachers at the high school level interact with students of color and also the achievement levels of students of color. According to Moule (2012), “In our increasingly global and diverse world, the ability to work with people whose backgrounds and and lived experiences are different from our own has become a necessary skill” (p. 23). The impact of the material learned through the professional development modules will be seen in classroom interactions, observations, relationships, and student data. Cultural responsiveness is not a tangible object and therefore the evaluation of achievement reached will be subjective and cannot be measured. While it cannot be measured, a culturally responsive school can be felt throughout the halls, seen on classroom walls, and heard in the interactions between staff and students. Personally, I will know that these professional development sessions have been effective from the feedback I receive from my colleagues as well as, hopefully, a change in the general climate and atmosphere within the school.
## THE PROJECT: 10 Modules Towards Cultural Responsiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Learner Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1</strong></td>
<td>1. I can identify terms related to culturality.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. I can assess my own abilities regarding my cultural competence.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. I can identify basic assumptions and ground rules for discussing culture.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 2</strong></td>
<td>1. I can analyze my own culture for biases.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. I can define the concept of culturally relevant pedagogy.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. I can connect the concept of culturally relevant teaching to my classroom and the world around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 3</strong></td>
<td>1. I can connect the concept of culturally relevant teaching to my classroom and the world around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I can identify characteristics of culturally competent teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 4</strong></td>
<td>1. I can identify characteristics of culturally competent teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I can identify culturally relevant teaching practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 5</strong></td>
<td>1. I can identify culturally relevant teaching practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 6</strong></td>
<td>1. I can design lesson with cultural responsiveness in mind.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. I can assess a lesson for its use of culturally relevant instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 7</strong></td>
<td>1. I can assess a lesson for its use of culturally relevant instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I can design a culturally responsive lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 8</strong></td>
<td>1. I can assess a lesson for its use of culturally relevant instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 9</strong></td>
<td>1. I can assess a lesson for its use of culturally relevant instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I can identify resources within the community where I teach.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 10</strong></td>
<td>1. I can identify culturally relevant teaching practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I can design a culturally responsive lesson.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Module 10  
Weeks 19-20 (1 hour 20 min)  

1. I can identify resources within the community where I teach.  
2. I can identify ways in which I can impact the cultural responsiveness of my school.  

Looking to learn more? Visit the sites below!  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Teachers to Reflect on Race</th>
<th>Brown University CRT</th>
<th>Making CRT Manageable</th>
<th>A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching</th>
<th>Diversity Within Unity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An article written for the National Education Association detailing the necessity of teachers to examine their own racial, cultural and gender identities prior to engaging in CRT.</td>
<td>The faculty at Brown University goes into detail on the “what?, why?, and how?” of each of the components of CRT.</td>
<td>This article by Zarretta Hammond touches on the importance of collectivism in the classroom as well as reframing student-teacher interactions.</td>
<td>This article, from Educational Leadership, discusses the link between motivation and CRT. The article also identifies 4 conditions necessary for CRT.</td>
<td>This article breaks down what has been learned about teacher and student learning in the area of culturally responsive teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Culturally Responsive Teaching</th>
<th>4 Steps to Becoming a Culturally Responsive Teacher</th>
<th>Kentucky Department of Education Resource List</th>
<th>CRT Activities</th>
<th>Make it Meaningful</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Several articles and ideas shared to inspire and help create culturally responsive classrooms. Provided by Edutopia.</td>
<td>The journey of an English teacher who switched schools during her seventh year teaching and what she did to connect with her students using 4 simple steps.</td>
<td>Provides publications surrounding CRT, lesson planning resources, lesson plans/activities, as well as videos.</td>
<td>From the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession. A pdf with many examples of CRT related activities for adaptable use in the classroom.</td>
<td>A brief powerpoint which explains 4 aspects of CRT, as well as practical teaching ideas related to the 4 aspects.</td>
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| Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Promising Approach- Bust 'Evidence Based'? | Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------||
| Some of the challenges in proving the positive effect of CRT in the classroom. | Ladson-Billings shares her insights into the necessity of CRT. | |

| Culturally Responsive Teaching | Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------||
| | Ladson-Billings shares her insights into the necessity of CRT. | |
REFERENCES

Introduction


**Module 1**


**Module 2**


https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=nGTVjJuRaZ8

Module 3
(2012). Reality pedagogy: Christopher Emdin at TEDxTeachersCollege. Retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Y9tVf_8fqo


Module 4


https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/cultural-responsiveness-starts-with-real-caring

Module 5

Module 6
https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/culturally-responsive-teaching-strategies/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1U6wj-5K1I

Module 7
Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website:
http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/

Module 8

Module 9


Module 10