

Hamline University

DigitalCommons@Hamline

School of Education and Leadership Student
Capstone Projects

School of Education and Leadership

Fall 2021

Developing Culturally Responsive Curriculum for High School Hmong and Karen ELA Students

Alexandra Bolduan
Hamline University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bolduan, Alexandra, "Developing Culturally Responsive Curriculum for High School Hmong and Karen ELA Students" (2021). *School of Education and Leadership Student Capstone Projects*. 728.
https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp/728

This Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Education and Leadership at DigitalCommons@Hamline. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Education and Leadership Student Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Hamline. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@hamline.edu, wstraub01@hamline.edu, modea02@hamline.edu.

DEVELOPING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM FOR HIGH SCHOOL
HMONG AND KAREN ELA STUDENTS

by

Alexandra Bolduan

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

Hamline University

St. Paul, Minnesota

Capstone Facilitator: Betsy Parrish

Content Reviewer: Lisa Berken

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	4
Introduction	4
Chapter Overview	4
What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?	5
My Interest in Culturally Responsive Teaching	5
Hmong, Karen, and Asian Americans	9
Conclusion	13
CHAPTER TWO	15
Literature Review	15
Chapter Overview	15
Defining Culturally Responsive Teaching	16
Connections to Other Theories	20
Multicultural Education	20
Learning Styles	20
Cooperative Learning	22
Social-Emotional Learning	23
Care Theory	24
Benefits of Culturally Responsive Teaching	26
Preparing Teachers for Using Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Classroom	30
The Brain on Culture	35
Self-Assessment	39
Conclusion	41
CHAPTER THREE	43
Methodology	43
Chapter Overview	43
Description	43
Stage 1: Learning Goals	44
Stage 2: Assessment Evidence	46
Stage 3: Key Learning Events	46
Setting and Participants	48
Timeline	49
Assessment	49
Conclusion	50
CHAPTER FOUR	51

Conclusion	51
Introduction	51
Major Learnings	51
Revisiting the Literature Review	53
Implications	54
Limitations	55
Future research/projects	56
Dissemination: Communicating Results	56
Benefits to the Profession	57
Conclusion	57
References	60

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Chapter Overview

When I think about the current state of education, my thoughts always turn toward the students that I work with every day, and the unique struggles and challenges that they face. I work at a Hmong charter school in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where most of the students are of Hmong or Karen descent. I know that these students come from a wide variety of backgrounds, some were born in Minnesota, others have moved from other states, and many are immigrants or refugees who have only been in the U.S. for a few years before I get them in my classroom. My own background is that of a majority of teachers in the United States: white, middle-class, female. I have always had an interest in being culturally aware and making sure that I have a classroom that is welcoming and reflective of my student's needs. So as I sat to decide on what I would like to research for my Masters in Teaching capstone project, I looked to my students. I thought about the struggles they have had to face in the last couple of years with the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes, distance learning through Covid 19, and recent calls to remove culture and race from the classroom. I decided that what I wanted to do was to begin the process of creating a curriculum for them that is more responsive to their needs as students-- and so my capstone project will be a unit design to replace a current literature unit with one that is more culturally responsive.

In this chapter, I will look briefly at defining what culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is, where my interest in CRT comes from, and why I feel my students will benefit from CRT due to their "Asian" status. In the end, I am seeking to answer the following

question: *How can being culturally responsive to student identities support Hmong and Karen student achievement in the High School English classroom?*

What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

For the purposes of this capstone, I will define culturally responsive teaching using Geneva Gay (2018), who describes CRT as an educational approach that “improve[s] the performance of underachieving students from various ethnic groups.... [t]hat teaches to and through their personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments” (p. 32). I will also use Gay’s definition of *culture* as “a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others” (p. 8). I will also be using “identity” as a part of culture, with identity being defined using Muhammad and Mosely’s (2021) definition of identity as being formed by *us*, (what we believe and what we value) and by other external forces like “systems and structures in society” (p. 190). Identities, Muhammad and Mosley argue, are flexible-- they grow and change with us as we grow and gain new experiences. CRT, then, seeks to promote educational achievement and engagement in the classroom by recognizing, acknowledging, and engaging with the specific cultures and identities of students in a given classroom, while celebrating their unique capabilities, experiences, and other achievements. There will be a more comprehensive review of CRT in chapter two.

My Interest in Culturally Responsive Teaching

The main reason I am interested in culturally responsive teaching is that I work at a school that is more than 90% Hmong or Karen students-- meaning I work with a

majority of minority students. I want to make sure that I am creating lessons that accurately reflect their interests and backgrounds and that are engaging. It is important to me that my students feel welcome to the classroom and that goes beyond classroom management and expectations and extends into the curriculum as well.

My interest in culturally responsive teaching stems from a deep interest in equality and equity that began long before my interest in teaching ever came to the surface. I am sometimes ashamed to admit that teaching was not always what I envisioned myself doing. In fact, when I was in college I would have emphatically said “no” to any suggestion of teaching as a career and I had a lot of growing and maturing to do on my end before I was ready for the classroom.

After a freshman year trying to figure out what I wanted to study and changing my major from Biology to a double major in English and Psychology, I spent much of my college career loving the opportunity to study my subjects through a wide variety of lenses. I took advantage of English courses focusing on American Indian literature, multicultural literature, and literature of the Shoah, subjects that gave me the chance to read and dissect authors from a large variety of backgrounds as well as about subjects that were very different from my own personal and educational experiences. I had the chance to take multicultural psychology and study some of the social sciences’ explanations for why race matters and how it impacts our actions in society.

When I decided that I was going to return to school for my Master’s degree a few years later, I only looked at schools outside of the U.S.: in London, specifically, where I hoped to further my studies into English. I ended up at University College London, studying a Masters of Art in Comparative Literature, a program which lasted just shy of

one year, and which I would find transformative in more ways than originally anticipated, both personally and professionally.

Studying abroad in London gave me a chance to experience education in new and sometimes unexpected ways. The first and most notable difference in my program at UCL was that the program was roughly 90% international students, meaning I was learning alongside students from all over the world. Coming from suburban Saint Paul in Minnesota, where my educational history was majority white and middle-upper class, this was one of the main reasons I selected this program. It was a fantastic opportunity to discuss literature with my classmates who all came from different cultural backgrounds and varied personal experiences.

Having spent my youth at a suburban college preparatory school and my college years in a small liberal arts college located in small-town Minnesota, London was an enormous change. I took the underground (or subway) to class each day, and when I had free time, I had the whole of London and all it had to provide to occupy my time. I ended up spending much of that free time walking along the Thames or strolling through the Victoria and Albert Museum. In terms of choosing a city that would inspire my love of English literature, London could not have been a better choice. Being on my own, separated from my friends and family by the wide expanse of the Atlantic Ocean, I realized that exposing myself to countries and cultures different from my own was not only something I had been sorely missing in my life but something that was making me not only a better student but a better global citizen as well.

Since studying in London, I have done what I can to experience more of the world, and I have made it a priority of mine to save what I can to ensure I will have more

opportunities for international travel in the future. I've traveled to Rome, Tuscany, and the Galapagos. I've seen more parts of the United States, and took a trip to New Zealand a couple of years ago. The Covid outbreak of 2019-2020 put a stop to much of my travel, but I was able to travel to Iceland in the summer of 2021. The interest in international travel that grew out of my experience studying in London was also the driving force behind my decision to complete the student teaching portion of my licensure program at Hamline University abroad in Bologna, Italy.

Returning abroad proved to be an exciting and sometimes stressful experience. During my first few weeks, I was reminded of how much I loved living and working in a large city, being from a suburban neighborhood in a midwestern U.S. state. I was reminded that sometimes a change of setting can be refreshing and that I often find these kinds of transitions (of going from the familiar to something unfamiliar) provide a perfect setting to sit and reflect. Being abroad has always seemed to put things into a kind of perspective for me, and some of the things I thought were important back home became less important. I find myself thinking about how I can use this opportunity as a form of personal growth: I hope that I will find a way to grow, not only as an educator, but as a person, a human being, and a global citizen.

And this takes me back to the topic of culturally responsive teaching. I haven't seen a lot of the world, but I have seen some of it, and I know how important it is for students to feel like they are welcome in the classroom. I know that students need to feel that what they are learning is relevant to their needs and backgrounds in order for them to engage with the material and this is what is at the core of CRT. I know that my current students get a lot of community from being at a school where they are not minority

students, but the curriculum still lags behind, which is where CRT comes in for me. My students are mostly Hmong. There are a few Karen students as well, and those numbers are growing as more refugees arrive from Myanmar due to the ethnic fighting that is going on there. Throughout my research, it was fairly easy for me to find curriculum tailored to black or Hispanic students but where I have found a bit of a gap is when I search for a curriculum designed for my students. I can find “Asian” authors, but the term “Asian” has its own problematic issues; issues that extend far beyond the curriculum, and that will be explored in this chapter as I look further into research around culturally responsive teaching, and, ultimately, with a curriculum designed around my Hmong and Karen students, specifically.

Hmong, Karen, and Asian Americans

One reason why I am eager to create a more culturally responsive curriculum for my students is that they are always lumped into an “Asian” umbrella that does not recognize the differences in background, culture, and beliefs that encompass all of Asia, and the Pacific Islands as well. This section is not intended to be a comprehensive review of Hmong or Karen culture, but to provide context for the learners that I engage with every day in the classroom.

It is important to understand that the Asian-American population in the United States is incredibly diverse. There are roughly 23 million Asian Americans in the U.S. that come from over 20 countries on the Asian continent, including East and Southeast Asia as well as India. Additionally, Asians add up to about 7% of the total U.S. population currently, and their numbers are expected to almost quadruple to around 46 million by 2060, and, by the middle of the century, they are expected to be the largest

immigrant group in the United States (Budiman and Ruiz, 2021). These population numbers suggest that it is important that educators and administrators recognize and value these populations when they are designing educational curricula and policies. But Asian-American numbers do not tell a complete story, and it is vital that we look at the within-group differences given that Asian-Americans represent a wide variety of peoples from different countries with different customs, backgrounds, socio-economic status, and academic achievements. Since the students I work with are mainly Hmong and Karen, I am looking at these two groups specifically.

Statistics available for Asian-Americans, in general, suggest that the term “Asian” does not draw a detailed picture of the in-group differences between different Asian ethnicities. For the most part, around 72% of Asian Americans are “proficient” in English. In terms of immigration status, almost 95% of U.S.-born Asians were proficient with 57% of foreign-born Asians reaching proficiency (Budiman and Ruiz, 2021). Asians also tend to perform well on measures of economic well-being and experience less poverty than Americans overall, with Asians resting at 10% poverty overall, 9% for U.S.-born and 11% for Foreign-born Asians, compared to 13% for Americans overall, 13% for U.S.-born Americans and 14% for foreign-born citizens. Over half of Asians who are 25 or older have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher, while that number is at 33% for the whole U.S. population of the same age (Budiman and Ruiz, 2021). These statistics would suggest that Asian-Americans, on the whole, are doing fairly well when compared to other Americans in terms of English language proficiency, poverty, and educational achievement. But this does not tell the whole story.

As of 2019, there were roughly 327,000 Hmong in the United States. The Hmong began immigrating to the U.S. primarily after the end of the Vietnam War. Compared with English language proficiency above for all Asians in the U.S., Hmong Americans have 68% proficiency overall. Breaking down the numbers, proficiency rests at 83% for U.S.-born Hmong, and 43% for foreign-born. Poverty rates are also higher for Hmong Americans compared to Asians as a whole, with rates at 17% overall, 17% for U.S.-born Hmong, and 15% for foreign-born Hmong Americans. Hmong Americans are *not* as well-off as their Asian-American counterparts and are more likely to live in poverty and struggle with English proficiency. They are also more likely to be unemployed with Hmong Americans at 6% versus 4% for Asians overall (Budiman, 2021b).

The Karen (pronounced kah-REN) are a very recent population to immigrate to the United States, as they first began arriving to the U.S. from Burma (now Myanmar) in 2004, with the largest numbers settling in Minnesota and others going to California, Texas, New York, and Indiana (*Karen*, 2020). There is not much statistical data on Karen Americans (specifically) available, as they are still being lumped together with all Burmese immigrants. According to the International Institute of Minnesota, there were over 17,000 Karen living in the state as of 2017, and Budiman (2021a) lists 189,000 Burmese in the U.S. as of 2019, a portion of which are Karen. Since the PEW Research Center does not have numbers for the Karen, specifically, it is difficult to find information on English proficiency, but the Culture Care Connection reported that about 30% of Burmese Americans live below the poverty line in Minnesota, while 50% of Karen are below the line. Additionally, roughly 79% of Burmese Americans in Minnesota have not graduated from high school (*Karen*, 2021). There are some general observations

that can be made that are likely to apply to the Karen when looking at Burmese American numbers compared to Asian-Americans. Burmese Americans are about 38% proficient overall in English, with 75% of U.S.-born and 32% of foreign-born Burmese reaching proficiency, respectively. Only about 16% of Burmese Americans earn a bachelor's degree or higher. The poverty rate for Burmese Americans 25 and older is 25% (Budiman, 2021a).

The statistics show that Hmong and Karen Americans are not necessarily as well off as their "Asian-American" counterparts. This distinction is important. Hmong and Karen Americans who live below the poverty line are more likely to also live in poorer school districts (The Commonwealth Institute). They might have less access to educational and professional opportunities. The 2020-2021 school year laid bare many of the disadvantages my students faced as education moved to online learning due to the Covid 19 pandemic: many students had unreliable internet, additional duties at home looking after siblings, and for many older students, responsibilities to earn money for their families. All of these responsibilities often resulted in students who were late or unable to attend class or who could not access online materials or submit large files. The disparity I saw between my students and the more affluent students of teacher friends of mine was stark (Garcia and Weiss). For my part, as an educator who teaches these students on a regular basis, I want to know that my students are receiving an education that is relevant and responsive to their specific wants, needs, desires, and interests. Understanding the population whom I serve is the first step in making sure I am being culturally responsive in the classroom.

Conclusion

Culturally responsive teaching aims to meet students where they are: to create a learning environment that acknowledges their own unique culture, experiences, interests, and achievements. I love working with diverse students and colleagues, and this is something that I have made a priority in my career as an educator and as a citizen of the world. Teaching and learning abroad gave me my first real taste of how wonderful it is to work with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Asian Americans constitute a large part of the American Population and encompass a huge variety of cultures, backgrounds, and histories. I love my Hmong and Karen students and I acknowledge that they might be underserved by districts that lump them together with the millions of other Asian Americans living in the U.S.. My goal, as I set out with this paper, is to answer the question of *how can being culturally responsive to student identities support Hmong and Karen student achievement in the High School English classroom?* Chapter two will begin to answer this question by doing a comprehensive review of current literature of the following: Culturally responsive teaching and related theories, a review of how to train new and existing educators in the use and implementation of CRT, the effectiveness of CRT on student engagement and achievement, and a review of current studies looking at how to engage Asian and especially Hmong and Karen students in the classroom. Chapter three will cover the curriculum design including a detailed description of the unit, the learning goals, assessment evidence, and key learning events. Chapter three will also cover the setting and participants for the unit, the timeline for creation and implementation, and the overall assessment of the unit. Chapter four offers up a reflection of the capstone project. It will look at the major learnings, a revisit of the literature

review from chapter two, the overall implications of the curriculum and any limitations encountered throughout the design or implementation process, some ideas for future research and how this unit can be disseminated to others for use, and the overall benefits this unit can serve to teachers and students.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Chapter Overview

The goal of this chapter is to provide context by defining culturally responsive teaching (CRT), including an extensive review of the theories that preceded and are related to CRT, and to show how CRT can be utilized in the classroom. Much of the research into defining CRT comes from Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay, so this literature review will contain a lot of their research. This chapter will also look at the effectiveness of CRT and how preservice and current educators can implement this kind of teaching in their classrooms. Many of the studies available for the effectiveness of CRT are qualitative in nature, relying heavily on teacher responses on their perceptions of student engagement and achievement following the implementation of CRT practices in the classroom, but there is also a lot of literature available with advice on what new and existing teachers can do to be more culturally responsive in the classroom.

The purpose of this review of the current literature will be to answer the research question: *How can being culturally responsive to student identities support Hmong and Karen student achievement in the High School English classroom?* Defining CRT will help to answer this question by giving a frame of reference for what CRT *is* and how it can be used in the classroom. Looking at the benefits of CRT and advice for implementing CRT strategies into the classroom can help provide some expectations on how to support Hmong and Karen student achievement based on other diverse student learners as well as providing advice for implementing a successful culturally responsive curriculum into the high school ELA classroom.

Defining Culturally Responsive Teaching

This paper and the curriculum planning that will follow are mainly building off of the work of Gloria Ladson-Billings (2001, 2018) and Geneva Gay (1992, 1995, 2014), who coined the term of culturally responsive *teaching* based on Ladson-Billings' research. For the purposes of this capstone, I will use the term culturally responsive teaching (or CRT), sometimes referred to as culturally relevant teaching by other scholars.

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, CRT seeks to promote educational achievement and engagement in the classroom by recognizing, acknowledging, and engaging with the specific cultures of students in a given classroom, while celebrating their unique capabilities, experiences, and other achievements. Muhammad and Mosley (2021) describe a deficit model where schools fail to adjust curriculum and instruction to be responsive to the identities of black boys and when black boys do poorly, their poor performance is “mistaken for inability” (p. 192). The goal is to move away from that “deficit” model-- where poor student achievement is attributed to what students “don’t have” or “can’t do” (Gay, 2018, p. 32). to a model that teaches to student’s *strengths* by acknowledging their unique backgrounds and culture.

Since research into how to respond to an increasingly diverse student population began in the 1970s and 1980s, researchers have used many different terms to describe a pedagogical approach that seeks to match teaching style to the culture and background of students. Defining culturally responsive teaching begins with understanding the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, a theory proposed by Ladson-Billings (1995), which includes three core values: that students need to be able to achieve academic success, that

there needs to be a certain level of cultural competence in the classroom for students, and that students need to develop critical thinking skills in order to challenge the status quo.

In terms of academic success, Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that students all “need literacy, numeracy, technological, social, and political skills in order to be active participants in a democracy” (p. 160). It’s about the “intellectual growth”

(Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 75) that students experience in the classroom. Cultural competency encourages teachers to create an environment where students feel

comfortable to be themselves and to celebrate the cultures that they come from

(Ladson-Billings, 2014). This can be done through teachers incorporating students’ interests into the curriculum or involving parents or other community members.

Encouraging non-native speakers to use their home language for assignments is another way to show cultural competency. And for critical consciousness, Ladson-Billings (1995)

states that students also need to nurture a “sociopolitical consciousness” (p. 162) to

challenge cultural norms, structural racism, and other inequities and to attempt to solve

real-world issues. Similarly, Gay (2018) proposes eight core values for CRT: that CRT is

“validating”, “comprehensive and inclusive”, “multidimensional”, “empowering”,

“transformative”, “emancipatory”, “humanistic”, and “normative and ethical” (pp.

36-46).

These may seem like things that all good teachers implement in their classrooms, but the point of culturally responsive pedagogy is to focus on fixing the disparity between what constitutes good teaching and why these things are often lacking in underserved student populations: mainly African Americans and other minority students. Gay (2018) argues that so-called “goodness” in teaching and pedagogy is inseparable from the

influence of culture since every teacher enters a classroom with their own cultural background that influences their own perceptions and opinions that may not be compatible with the culture of that teacher's students (p. 29).

In considering culture, there are aspects that are static, such as membership with a nation-state, religion, or ethnicity. But there are also aspects of culture that are ever-changing (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Ladson-Billings (1992) describes CRT as an “art” form that changes and morphs rather than something that is stationary or prescriptive (p. 109). It is a community endeavor that involves teachers, students, families, and more. Students are “sources and resources of knowledge and skills” that educators should look to in their lessons (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 79). Additionally, Gay (2018) states that CRT seeks to guide students to understand and relate to those who come from backgrounds that are different from their own through what she describes as “relational competencies” (p. 22). The goal is to empower students, to encourage them to think critically and explore their own interests and strengths in the classroom and in their local, national, and global communities.

Finally, Ladson-Billings (2014) more recently argues that CRT cannot be an end, but that it is a progression that will always require reflection and modification: she reframes culturally responsive pedagogy as “sustaining”-- that educators must keep growing and changing, that the work is never done if we hope to continue helping our students achieve academic success and that it is important to not forget the within-group differences with any given group of students or cultures (p. 77). This concept is reiterated with scholars like Paris (2012): that in order to create an environment in the classroom that is not just culturally responsive but *sustaining*, educators need to support

“multilingualism and multiculturalism” in the classroom in both “practice and perspective” (p. 95)-- teachers need to incorporate ways to validate students cultural backgrounds and interests through their practice. Likewise, Ladson-Billings (2014) states that curricula need to grow and change with the ever-changing social and political landscape so students can continue to challenge structural policies and practices that have a direct impact on their lives and the lives of their friends, families, and loved ones. Gay (2018) makes a similar observation about culture, in that there are many different factors that influence and change it, like “time, setting, age, economics, and social circumstances” (p. 10). Ladson-Billings (1992) stresses that CRT is not only for minority students. The purpose of CRT is to be responsive to *all* students, regardless of whether they are minority, non-minority, urban, suburban, rich, poor, or students with special needs; CRT is designed to be responsive to each group of students *as they are* and CRT one year may look entirely different the next year with a new group of students.

CRT is a pedagogy that is designed to engage students’ unique backgrounds and interests while encouraging them to be active participants in society. There are many theories and practices in education that either constitute core components of CRT or that are argued to be similar. While there are many such theories out there, this literature review will focus on four theories that are related to core values of CRT, including multicultural education, student-centered teaching, learning styles, cooperative teaching, and social-emotional learning, each of which will be covered in the next section.

Connections to Other Theories

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is a pedagogy that seeks to “make the curriculum more responsive to the educational needs of all students” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 112), and on the surface, this would seem to be essentially the same as the goals of CRT. These are a few of the core components of CRT, but CRT also encourages students to take an active role in changing the world around them, to take some kind of social action. And it is the social action aspect, the encouragement for students to think critically or try to *change* structural inequalities that separate CRT from “multicultural” education. Additionally, CRT focuses not only on curriculum changes but pedagogical changes as well which seek to be more responsive to the needs of students.

Learning Styles

Learning styles are the ways in which *individuals* process new information (Gay, 2018). Learning styles come in several different forms, such as cognitive, problem solving, thinking, decision making, and more. Ladson-Billings (1992) lists several more, including “levelers” and “sharpeners,” “field dependence and field independence,” “impulsivity and reflectivity,” “satellizers and non-satellizers, and “personality traits” (p. 103). Gay (2018) states that some educators may argue that culturally responsive teaching is just a fancy way of teaching to students’ learning styles, and historically there has been an attempt to connect certain types of learning styles to racial groups. The purpose of this section is not to go into detail about the various proposed “learning styles” that researchers in the education field have come up with, but to show how learning styles may factor into multicultural education, and specifically, CRT. It should be noted, as well,

that while CRT researchers have looked into learning styles as possibly related to CRT, emerging research is also putting into question whether learning styles even exist (Nancekivell, Shah, and Gelman, 2020), and that applying certain styles to specific races can be particularly problematic when trying to implement CRT into the classroom. With that being said, the guiding principles of responding to student needs remains the same, so this paper will still look at learning styles as it relates to CRT.

Gay (2018) argues that learning styles should be considered when attempting to incorporate CRT into the classroom and that educators should consider both individual *and* “ethnic group” learning styles. That understanding, for example, “African American cultural values of communalism, verve, rhythmic movement, and performance” can have a positive effect on student engagement with materials that reflect these values (p. 207), with the understanding that with any given ethnic group there will still be within-group differences depending on the strength of any given student’s affiliation with that group.

One criticism of tying learning styles to race is that it may lead to justifying underperformance of minority students, which could ultimately also lead to lowering teacher standards for specific minority students (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 103-104). Another criticism of the learning styles approach brought up by Ladson-Billings (1992) is that it comes from a Western worldview of celebrating individual differences and individualism while ignoring “cultural and group explanations” (p. 104) for student behaviors and perspectives. In other words, It ignores the influence of the group on students in the classroom. Using a learning styles approach could disproportionately have a negative impact on students from more collectivist cultures, like many Asian or Native

American students. Gay's recommendation of looking at learning styles of "ethnic groups" discussed above may be one way to mitigate some of these negative effects.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a teaching theory that plays a very important role in culturally responsive teaching. Cooperative learning is defined as the "instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (Johnson & Johnson, n.d.). In other words, students work collaboratively in order to achieve academic success that benefits the members of the group as a whole, rather than focusing on one's individual learning alone. Cooperative learning is a theory based on the understanding that without cooperation, societies and humans could not exist. That the survival of our species depends on social cooperation. It came onto the scene as a pushback against social Darwinism or the theory of survival of the fittest that is at the foundation of many individualistic learning theories and has become a very popular method of instruction from elementary schools to universities around the globe. Johnson and Johnson (n.d.) argue that while friendly competition and autonomous work are also important, cooperative learning should be prioritized in the classroom.

The ideas of "cooperation, collaboration, and community" are all important when educating marginalized students, especially "Latino, Native, African, and Asian American" students (Gay, 2018, p. 217). Cooperative learning, therefore, is an important aspect in CRT and learning as well. The research shows that this is particularly true with these marginalized groups of students because collaboration and cooperation are important priorities in their cultures and learning styles, and so it is important to have cooperative learning as a central part of CRT (Gay, 2018). The main difference between

cooperative learning on its own and how cooperative learning is used within the CRT framework is that within CRT it is important that students work with the teacher to determine the guidelines for how groups will be selected and how to hold group members accountable for their contributions. Students are then given choice within those set rules. In other words, the student choices are structured; they are not completely free (Gay, 2018).

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) could very well be a thesis on its own. This is a theory that has been developed from many pioneers in educational psychology like John Bowlby's "Attachment Theory", Erik Erikson's "psychosocial theory of development", Jean Piaget's theory of "cognitive development", and Lev Vygotsky's "sociocultural theory" (Wheeler, 2016, p. 1252). There are several skills involved in the development of students' competence in social-emotional intelligence including the ability to regulate their own emotions, or "self-regulation", the ability to navigate conflict with others, or "conflict resolution", and the ability to create and maintain positive peer relationships (Ponciano, 2016, pp. 1248-1249). According to Weissberg & Cascarino (2013), the main goal of SEL is to "enhance students' intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies so they're optimally prepared for work and life" (p. 9). SEL provides students with the emotional skills they will need to navigate not only school but for life after school. Their emotional competencies provide them with grit, perseverance, and other tools to help them form relationships and to keep a positive mindset, which in turn will help them achieve academic and career success.

Gay (2018) argues that SEL should be a core component of culturally responsive teaching. Although SEL does not specifically target minority or marginalized students, SEL should be something that is prioritized in the education of minority students because of the positive relationship between SEL development and school performance. Gay (2018) argues that because minority students are at particular risk of emotional harm due to “prejudices, discrimination, isolation, alienation, marginalization, and various inequalities,” SEL is all the more important for these learners (pp. 233-234). It is important to note, however, that there has been some current research that critiques the effectiveness of grit and growth mindsets, especially when it comes to working with students of color, and that criticism is one reason that this capstone will focus more on culturally responsive teaching.

Care Theory

Nel Nodding was one of the first to argue that “morality” is centered around interpersonal relationships and that education is at the center of developing those caring relationships (Dunn & Burton, 2013). Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) explore the relationship between CRT and Noddings’s care theory, using the latter as a framework for educators to develop culturally responsive practices in their classrooms. The focus of their study is showing how teachers can use an ethics-based pedagogy (in addition to CRT) and that these ethics-based practices do a much better job of educating urban students. Shevalier and McKenzie make a similar argument to Geneva Gay: that education in a culturally responsive classroom needs to be a morally just exchange that promotes caring and social justice. It is not about specific “take-away points” (p. 1088) but instead promotes a fundamental shift in the way educators interact with and teach

students: that teachers must *reflect* on their own practice and that educators need to not just “care about” their students, but to “care for” them (p. 1089).

Caring *for* students, according to Shevalier and McKenzie (2012), involves “face-to-face relationships” where the educator “focuses intensely, experiences the issues, sees the consequences, and understands how one’s caring affects others” (1090). This kind of caring goes beyond understanding what issues minority students may be experiencing and requires the educator, or “carer” to form a reciprocal relationship with the “cared-for” where a sense of trust and willingness to reciprocate the cycle of caring exists. This requires a *lot* more work on the part of educators, but it helps students to achieve both academically as well as socially and emotionally. Culturally responsive teaching is, in this case, a care-based teaching methodology as teachers interact with students in order to build these trusting relationships. Shevalier and McKenzie note that according to Noddings, caring is generally learned through “reflexive modeling” (1092), and so teachers *must* teach through modeling-- they need to actually think about and reflect on how their actions affect others.

CRT is a multi-faceted approach to teaching diverse learners that requires teachers to build strong, caring relationships with their students and their students’ communities. Teachers need to understand the cultures of the students they teach, including their values, customs, and beliefs and teach to those differences. There are several other theories that align with CRT, like cooperative learning and social-emotional learning, which help to create educators that care for their students and create learning environments where students feel welcome and comfortable to engage with the curriculum. Building off of a comprehensive understanding of the core elements of

culturally responsive teaching, the next section will focus on how CRT strategies may benefit diverse student learners once those strategies have been used in the classroom.

Benefits of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Several studies have shown the benefits of CRT, especially in response to minority students. Bergeron (2008) notes that CRT can help to counteract what they refer to as the “cultural disequilibrium” (p. 4) often experienced by new teachers if they come from cultural backgrounds that are very different from those of their students. In order to see how CRT can benefit new teachers, Bergeron (2008) conducted a case study looking at a novice teacher, “Christina”, using CRT in the classroom. Christina began by establishing a positive classroom community through acknowledging and validating her student’s wants, needs, and interests while maintaining expectations with consistent routines. She also conducted daily journal reflections on how lessons went. Cooperative learning became a large part of how students interacted and learned with each other and where native languages were encouraged and supported. Overall, Christina’s experience from her first year of teaching was positive, despite some occasional challenges. There was an example of a white girl in the classroom who had become one of only two white students and who responded negatively to becoming a part of a minority: they became quieter and less engaged with their peers. This could suggest that in order for CRT to be successful, there needs to be more balance in terms of the cultural diversity of the classroom. It also may suggest that particular attention needs to be paid to any student that may find themselves in a minority in the classroom-- making sure that they are feeling included and represented as well.

Begeron (2008) also argues that there were four elements that led to the success of Christina's classroom: successful culturally responsive classrooms tend to also occur within school systems that encourage risk-taking, have support for new and returning teachers including professional development, and have administrators that are supportive of their educators. While Christina did a good job of managing behaviors and instructional practices, she was not as engaged with "broader issues that were affecting her students or community" (p. 26), which are elements that are necessary for successful culturally responsive teaching, as established earlier in this chapter. Overall, however, Christina experienced success with engaging a classroom of diverse learners and using CRT techniques to manage behavior and expectations, creating a supportive environment that was responsive and affirming to her student's needs.

Patricia Bonner et.al. (2017) performed a qualitative study in which they interviewed teachers using culturally responsive teaching in the classroom. They surveyed 423 educators on their perceptions of using CRT to teach diverse students. Results from their study showed a positive outcome for students whose teachers had a strong commitment to CRT, including both effectiveness of educators' teaching of students, the learning outcomes, and meeting the needs of students. One other finding is that teachers in this study were also more likely to be motivated to continue to seek out new opportunities to expand their expertise on working with diverse student populations and responsive teaching. A majority of teachers interviewed also had a strong positive opinion and appreciation for having diversity in the classroom. Teachers in this particular study reported a strong sense of self-efficacy with CRT, which Bonner et. al. (2017) posit may stem from the fact that this group of educators surveyed come from diverse

communities and schools and thus may have been more *prepared* to work with culturally diverse students. Teachers reported perceived higher levels of student engagement and achievement and learning. It is important to note, however, that this was a qualitative study and there was no empirical evidence to show actual improvement in those areas.

In a review of culturally responsive education and content area achievement studies, Aronson & Laughter (2016) focused on outcomes across math, science, social studies (or history), English language arts, and English as a second language. Since the final purpose of this capstone project will focus on curriculum design for the ELA classroom, this review will focus on what Aronson & Laughter found with their survey of ELA classroom outcomes. One observation of the 13 studies reviewed is that a culturally relevant curriculum that made connections to students' lives resulted in higher engagement of students in ELA classrooms. One example of such culturally responsive curricula is the inclusion of hip-hop to teach social issues that were relevant to students' lives and communities. According to Aronson & Laughter (2016), "[h]ip-hop can give youth a voice to speak about the tensions and struggles in their communities while increasing sociopolitical awareness. The work of these lyrics can help students increase their cultural fluencies" (p. 188). Hip-hop in the classroom proved an effective way to empower students (especially African American male students) and to give them a voice to draw connections between ELA concepts and their own cultural identities.

Their review of culturally responsive education (Aronson & Laughter, 2016) also found that teachers who engaged with CRT in the classroom were also more often the "top" teachers in their schools, with students performing well in many areas that are used to measure student success (p. 189). While the quantitative data is a bit murky with no

real statistical evidence that CRT improves test scores, there are additional positive outcomes from culturally responsive classrooms in terms of qualitative data, including students' sense of empowerment, positive community relationships between students and their peers as well as students and their teachers, open-mindedness to opposing viewpoints and different cultural backgrounds, but especially engagement in the classroom.

Ladson-Billings (2014) noted that after many teachers began implementing culturally responsive teaching practices to their classrooms, there was a "first wave" of graduating minority students who enrolled in teacher-preparation programs, who came away from their own educational experiences wanting to give back to their communities and become teachers themselves (p. 78). However, many of these minority students were disappointed and left teacher education programs because the teacher preparation programs were still dominated by majority-white, suburban women who still viewed communities of color through a deficit lens. This resulted in several of those minority teachers choosing alternative certification routes to become teachers.

Studies looking into the benefits of CRT are mostly qualitative in nature-- interviewing teachers and their perceptions on how CRT has been implemented and their perceptions of student engagement and achievement in such classrooms. Some studies have shown some increase in student engagement and even interest in becoming future educators themselves. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2021), 76% of school teachers are female while about 24% are male. Furthermore, 79% of school teachers are white compared to 7% black, 9% Hispanic, 2% Asian, about 2% two or more races, and 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native. While the makeup of teacher

preparation programs continues to be dominated by white women, there has been progress in helping teachers learn how to implement culturally responsive teaching, which will be discussed in the next section.

Preparing Teachers for Using Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Classroom

There are a number of available resources in terms of articles and books that seek to help educators understand and implement culturally responsive teaching into their classrooms. This section will rely heavily on Geneva Gay's research and recommendations into this area, given that CRT is her area of expertise and Gay remains one of the most widely cited scholars in the area. There will also be a review of some other researchers' findings on how to implement and use CRT in the classroom.

Gay (2002) argues five main factors that educators need to incorporate in order to create a culturally responsive classroom. Many of these factors are elements that were discussed earlier in this chapter: having a base of knowledge about diverse cultures, caring and creating a community within the classroom, creating effective communication among diverse students in the classroom, and then, ultimately, responding to that diversity with the way curriculum is delivered (p. 108).

Gay (2002) argues that teachers need to know their students' cultural backgrounds just as well as they know their content. Meaning that math teachers should know their students as well as they know Pythagoras or Algebra and English teachers need to know their students as well as they know grammar or critical reading. Villegas and Lucas (2002) make a similar argument: that preservice teachers need to increase their "sociocultural consciousness" (p. 21). This begins with teacher preparation programs focusing on multicultural education or, more specifically, CRT as a cornerstone of

preparing preservice teachers. Gay argues that “explicit knowledge” of cultural diversity (p. 107) is of vital importance in order to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Understanding the cultural backgrounds of students includes an understanding of students’ “values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions, and relational patterns” (p. 107). Gay argues that cultural understanding is important and has a place in *all* subjects, including math and science. Villegas and Lucas (2002) also note a similar need for preservice teacher programs to provide more instruction for new teachers to increase their cultural knowledge. They note that although some preparation programs may have one or two courses on multicultural education or similar, these are often optional or they do not go in-depth enough. Villegas and Lucas favor what is called an “infusion” method (p. 21) where diverse learners are woven into all areas of teacher preparation coursework instead of separated into specialized courses. Teachers need to have more than a superficial knowledge of the cultural background of their students, they need to actively research and search for a deeper understanding of contributions made by high-profile individuals from the same ethnic backgrounds to their content areas.

The next argument that Gay (2002) makes is that teachers need to develop “culturally relevant curricula” for their students (p. 108). This includes formal curriculum that is generally determined and approved by a governmental or educational system and includes anchor standards, “symbolic curriculum” (p. 108), which includes materials available around the room like bulletin boards, wall decorations, and other items displayed around the room, and “societal curriculum”, which includes the “knowledge, ideas, and impressions... portrayed in the mass media” (p. 109). Much of the current curricula in schools tend to favor white, males in both in terms of which authors or

experts are cited in the classroom as well as the cultural backgrounds of white students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002 and Muhammad & Mosley, 2021). In addition to more traditional teaching methods, it is important for educators to learn ways of incorporating alternative items, like “hip-hop lyrics, videos of hip-hop artists, [or] 1960s-era protest poetry” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 79). Educators should think outside the box-- like connecting the art of protest to a science lesson. Preservice teachers should have the opportunity to practice this kind of what Ladson-Billings calls “cross-pollination” (p. 80) so that they can get a taste of what it is like to incorporate student interests into subject curricula. Unfortunately, Gay (2002) acknowledges that when schools attempt to increase multiculturalism in their classroom curricula, many of these formal and symbolic curricula disproportionately seek to focus on “the same high-profile individuals” especially those of African Americans, while “ignoring the actions... of other groups of color” women, race, ethnicity, poverty, and other groups (p. 108). The role of the culturally responsive teacher, then, is to ensure that the classroom’s formal and symbolic curricula accurately reflect the wide range of backgrounds of the students in it.

The third argument made by Gay (2002) is that teachers need to demonstrate “cultural caring” and build a community around learning (p. 109). This goes beyond simple curriculum changes and “best practices” to implement what Gay refers to as “cultural scaffolding” (p. 109) or a way of caring *for* students, in the same way as discussed with care theory earlier in this chapter. CRT treats caring as a “moral imperative” (p. 109). Villegas and Lucas (2002) argue that while it is important to recognize the value and place white, middle-class culture plays in society, culturally responsive teachers also need to acknowledge, affirm, and prioritize different ways of

thinking and the cultural diversity of their students. Brown (2004) echoes this sentiment, arguing that teachers who successfully implement CRT in the classroom do so by building positive, caring relationships with their students. They avoid being punitive, relying instead on relationships and cooperative learning environments. In order for teachers to successfully implement CRT in their classrooms, they need to care for their students and create a learning environment that promotes community and engagement, where students feel welcomed and safe to share their experiences and engage in cooperative learning. In order to do this, a teacher must have an extensive and deep understanding of the backgrounds, needs, and interests of their students.

Fourth, Gay (2002) argues that teachers need to develop “effective cross-cultural communication” (p. 110). This means that teachers need to understand the cultural background from which they are teaching, in other words, their own “cultural influences” (p. 109). Teachers must reflect on what they teach and how they teach it as well as what *students* know, can do, and accomplish. Teachers must understand the cultural backgrounds of their students well enough to decode the socialization students have had in order to then teach them more effectively. For some successful teachers using CRT, this meant being assertive when necessary with explicit classroom expectations for behavior (Brown, 2004). Teacher preparation programs, then, need to instruct preservice teachers in “the communication styles of different ethnic groups” and how they “reflect cultural values and shape learning behaviors” (p. 110). Teachers must then adapt classroom procedures and behavior management strategies to accurately reflect the communication styles of their students.

Finally, Gay (2002) discusses what she refers to as “cultural congruity in classroom instruction” (p. 112). Gay argues that since culture is “deeply embedded in any teaching” teaching, then, must be “multiculturalized (p. 110), or creating teaching techniques and classroom procedures that are responsive to the learning styles of diverse student populations in the classroom. In many cases, this may need to occur at not just the classroom-level, but also matching the learning styles of a student body to the school culture overall. This can be accomplished through the previous four requirements for CRT discussed earlier in this section. Creating a multicultural teaching environment should be habitualized, something that occurs regularly at all levels of education and especially in the high-stakes content areas like reading, writing, science, and math. Villegas and Lucas (2002) echo this sentiment, that teachers need to “act as agents of change” (p. 24), that they need to be committed to transforming classrooms into culturally responsive spaces where students can achieve in the classroom and out, that students’ backgrounds, needs, and interests are inextricably linked to how teachers think and perceive them, and that those backgrounds and needs should be woven into procedures, curricula, and positive expectations for student achievement.

In addition to the essential elements of CRT above, Gay (2018) argues that teachers simply having good intentions is not sufficient when it comes to being culturally responsive to students. She argues that “[g]oodwill must be accompanied by pedagogical knowledge and skills as well as the courage to dismantle the status quo” (p. 13). Siwatu (2011) used quantitative analysis to measure preservice teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs followed by face-to-face interviews with the same educators during a teacher preparation program. Siwatu wanted to find out the kind of self-efficacy training teachers had

received in their classroom preparation programs and compare that to the teacher's perceptions on their actual capabilities in implementing CRT strategies and practices in the classroom. While many teachers self-reported that they were confident in their ability to integrate general teaching practices of CRT, the later interviews showed that many teachers were *actually* not successful at implementing more *specific* tasks associated with CRT. Siwatu argues that "teacher preparation should include a variety of self-efficacy-building activities... [such as] demonstrations, video case studies, role-playing, field experiences, and simulations" (p. 368). The specific purpose of those activities in preservice programs is to build "competence and confidence" in future teachers so that they have more concrete preparation for implementing specific CRT strategies into their classrooms. Essentially, teachers who wish to be more culturally responsive need to be willing to challenge established practices and norms in order to promote achievement and engagement in the classroom. Educators need to not only understand *how* to implement what are generally accepted as "best practices", but to also know how to reflect on what they do. Teaching in this sense is deeply rooted in a sense of ethics, per Nel Nodding's "care" theory discussed earlier in this chapter.

The Brain on Culture

In her book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*, Zaretta Hammond (2015) argues that culturally responsive teaching is a teaching method that is uniquely equipped to accommodate learning as it relates to the human brain. Hammond argues that understanding how culture programs the brain can aid teachers in accommodating learning and classroom management processes for diverse learners. That understanding how the brain functions will also help teachers recognize how one understands the world

around them. Hammond describes this as the brain being the “hardware” while culture is the “software” and that all humans have a default setting that seeks to protect them from harm. Culture is a method through which we perceive our world and our values, beliefs, and norms allow us to recognize any threat to that sense of security (p. 37). Hammond gives a brief overview of structures of the brain and the roles they perform. These structures include the “reptilian region” or “lizard brain” (p. 37), the “limbic region” (p. 38), the “neocortex” (p. 40), and the “nervous system” (p. 44). This section will summarize Hammond’s research into the brain and how it impacts learning through a cultural lens.

The first structure in the brain that influences learning is the reptilian region, otherwise known as the “lizard brain”. This area includes the brainstem and cerebellum. The reptilian region is designed to act instead of think, with the main function of recognizing danger and keeping one alive. This region is responsible for all automatic body functions like breathing, heartbeat, blood pressure, etc. It also contains the “reticular activating system”, or RAS, which “is responsible for alertness and attention” (Hammond, 2015, p. 38). The RAS decides when to pay attention, which is critical in the classroom in order to begin a task.

Next comes the limbic region, which only exists in mammals. The limbic region is also known as the emotional brain (Hammond, 2015). This region is imperative in building memories and learning as well as emotional regulation. The limbic region remembers whether past experiences were positive or negative in nature, instructing a person on what threats they should avoid or what rewards they should seek out. The limbic system contains three structures: the *thalamus*, responsible for interpreting sensory

information and acts as a communication, the *hippocampus*, which is where memories are located including short term, working, and long term memory, and the *amygdala*, which is our “fear system” (p. 40) where emotions are processed. The amygdala allows one to instantly react to threats and can bypass or “hijack” the thalamus in stressful situations, leading to the “fight, flight, freeze, or appease” reaction (Hammond, 2015, p. 40).

The next area of the brain is the neocortex, which houses the executive functions or acts as the “command center” of the brain (Hammond, 2015, p. 40). The neocortex is in control of our “thinking... working memory... planning, abstract thinking, organization... self regulation... [and] imagination” (Hammond, 2015, p. 40). The neocortex has almost no limit to what it can learn, as long as the reptilian and limbic systems are not interfering.

Some additional brain structures worth noting include *neurons*, which are cells that make up *brain matter* or *gray matter*. *Neuroplasticity* is the brain’s ability to grow new neurons and gray matter, which occurs when neurons communicate with each other through finger-shaped limbs called *dendrites*. This is when learning occurs (Hammond, 2015). If a person does not revisit or review new information, the brain decides that the new information was not important enough to keep and will “prune” those dendrites, leading to that information being difficult to recall (Hammond, 2015, p. 41). The limbic system requires that we connect new learning to information already known. To make new learning “stick” (Hammond, 2015, p. 49), teachers need to scaffold learning around existing knowledge to allow the brain to physically build those connections.

Finally, Hammond discusses the nervous system, which is the “social” function of the brain and is involved in picking up information from the environment and has three

main branches: the *parasympathetic* nervous system, the *sympathetic* nervous system, and the *polyvagal* nervous system (Hammond, 2015, p. 44). The parasympathetic nervous system focuses on a person's needs and on keeping them relaxed and stress-free. This system mainly focuses on core needs like "food, shelter, social relationships, and sex" (Hammond, 2015, p. 44). The parasympathetic nervous system produces our pleasure hormones or endorphins like dopamine and serotonin. The sympathetic nervous system manages alertness and readiness for stress responses. It is responsible for releasing adrenaline and cortisol for quick muscle reactions. The polyvagal nervous system works to keep connections with others. It is where our "desire to be with other people" comes from (Hammond, 2015, p. 44). Those with collectivist cultural backgrounds have additional social reinforcement of this social desire. Oxytocin is released in the brain through this system when one interacts with others. It also influences our perception of threats and the stress response when around trusted or untrusted individuals. It tells the amygdala to "stand down" (Hammond, 2015, p. 45) when we feel safe.

The important take-aways from understanding the structures and functions of the brain is especially helpful with marginalized groups because those who have been marginalized for race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other reasons will have brain structures that have been impacted by their past experiences. There are structures in the brain that have been built or reinforced by their perceptions and memories of perceived safety or threats. Understanding previous experiences and the functions of the structures of the brain can help educators foster relationships with students that "signal to the brain a sense of physical, psychological, and societal safety so that learning is possible" (Hammond, 2015, p. 45). Positive relationships help the

amygdala produce oxytocin, which can keep a student calm and their brain primed and open to learning new information. In terms of CRT, cultures with strong oral traditions also have brains that learn more effectively when the polyvagal system is activated through the use of music, stories, or conversation. Oral traditions also need the RAS to be primed in order for learning to occur with attention-grabbing techniques (Hammond, 2015).

Echoing Gay, Ladson-Billings, and Villegas and Lucas, Hammond (2015) argues that it is a teacher's responsibility to learn about actions or situations that may lead to a student feeling unsafe and understand that one's own definition of safety may not be the same as their students. Hammond also cautions against teaching culturally diverse students from a deficit model, since the brain quite literally grows through figuring out new or challenging situations. For this reason, it is essential that culturally responsive teachers avoid teaching from a deficit model that "water[s] down" content (Hammond, 2015, p.49). In order to grow new neurons and gray matter, the brain needs to be challenged outside of its comfort zone. It is about empowering and challenging students with higher-order thinking.

Self-Assessment

In addition to discussing many of the aforementioned aspects of culturally responsive teaching from the definition section, Hammond (2015) discusses the importance of teacher self-assessment. Hammond argues that teachers need to teach with *intention*, that they need to be "mindful and present" and they need to reflect on their process (p. 53). Teachers need to unpack their implicit biases (p. 54). They need to step back and reflect and recognize when the lizard brain is keeping them from straying

outside of their comfort zones. One recommendation to calm the stress response from the lizard brain is to take a stroll through nature when this happens. Hammond (2015) notes that “neurobiology proves that [spending time in nature] reduce[s] the fight or flight hormones” that are released when the brain feels threatened (pp. 54-55). Once a fight or flight response has been stemmed, it is important for the educator to then reflect on what caused such a response and to think about why their body responded in that way and how they can prevent such a reaction in the future. Schools that are able to provide adequate space and time for students to take a walk are at a unique position to help reduce fight or flight responses in students. Additionally, Hammond (2015) argues that teachers need to do a fair amount of self-examination, to understand their own cultural identity and their own “cultural frames of reference” (p. 56) or the structures, categories, and experiences that influence how one perceives and interprets the world around them.

Teacher preparation to add culturally responsive teaching into the classroom is as multifaceted as culturally responsive teaching in itself. Teachers need to be willing to participate in and engage with the core values of CRT, including creating a comprehensive base of knowledge around cultural diversity, modeling caring for their students and creating positive learning communities, communicating with students that are ethically and culturally diverse, and being responsive to that diversity in how they deliver instruction. Educators should also have a basic understanding of how the brain works and how culture influences brain development and subsequent reaction to everyday activities in the classroom. Teachers need to be able to reflect on their practice and have an understanding of their own cultural background which forms the framework from which they make daily decisions on how to engage with students and the classroom

curriculum. With these elements in mind, teachers can more effectively create classroom environments that are culturally responsive.

Conclusion

This chapter included a comprehensive literature review seeking to look into the question of *how can being culturally responsive to student identities support Hmong and Karen student achievement in the High School English classroom?* The literature review included a detailed look at defining culturally responsive teaching, including a review of similar theories that are either often compared to CRT, or which are important components of CRT in diverse classrooms. One thing that is important to note is that the version of CRT that I want to implement exists at a point of intersectionality-- it encompasses race and ethnicity, but also all the other aspects of culture and identity that are formed by the individual and also shaped by society at large. Using CRT can help Hmong and Karen students by engaging with and teaching to their culturally diverse backgrounds. CRT seeks to empower students by acknowledging their unique beliefs, customs, and histories and encouraging students to be socially-conscious citizens that question the status quo.

CRT also encourages teachers to reflect on their own practice, and there is evidence that the way the brain itself is formed and changed through cultural experiences suggests that educators should be cognizant of how culture can also impact a student's ability to engage and feel safe in a classroom environment. There are several qualitative studies that show increased student engagement and success in classrooms built around a culturally responsive pedagogy, and this review also discussed specific culturally responsive strategies that new and existing teachers should focus on in order to create

culturally responsive classrooms and curricula. Utilizing the information gathered from the literature review, the next chapter of this capstone will provide the overview of a culturally responsive ELA curriculum designed to be responsive to the Hmong and Karen students in an 11th-grade classroom. Chapter 3 will focus on the curriculum that is being designed with my Hmong and Karen students in mind. The unit will focus on culturally responsive teaching by allowing students the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the readings chosen for the class, multiple opportunities to have a choice in what they read or interact with throughout the curriculum and in their personal narrative projects that will culminate at the end of the unit.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Chapter Overview

The main goal of chapter three is to provide a detailed description of an autobiographical novel and personal narrative writing unit guided by the question: *How can being culturally responsive to student identities support Hmong and Karen student achievement in the High School English classroom?* This chapter will look at the design of this unit, which is intended for a group of Hmong and Karen learners through a description of the unit itself, the main goals and assessments of that unit, the background of student learners and the school in which this project will be taught, the timeline for design and implementation of the unit, as well as how the project's success will be measured.

Description

Students in this 11th grade English class will read selections from *The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston, participate in literature circles for autobiographical graphic novels, analyze autobiography in music, and create personal narrative projects to explore their own identities. The design of this project will use Wiggins and McTighe's (2011) *Understanding by Design* backward design approach, particularly focusing on these key questions:

1. "What should students learn as a result of this unit?",
2. "What assessment evidence will show that the students have achieved stage 1 goals?", and

3. “What key learning events will help students reach the goals and be successful on the assessments?” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011, p. 43).

In addition to the backwards design model from Wiggins and McTighe (2011), the design of this unit will also use best practices for culturally responsive teaching as described in chapter two, including (but not limited to) teaching to and through cultural backgrounds and experiences and identities, providing opportunity for students to explore identity, using prior knowledge and experience to shape lessons and analysis, scaffolding lessons and activities for differing interests and reading levels, and providing structured choice for students in reading materials and activities.

Stage 1: Learning Goals

The target for student learning is the Reading (4) standard from the new Minnesota ELA Standards, which states that students will “[r]ead critically to comprehend, interpret, and analyze themes and central ideas in complex literary and informational texts” (Minnesota English Language Arts Standards Committee, 2020, p. 89). The new MN ELA Standards are still in draft form, so there is a chance these standards may have changed since the writing of this paper. The anchor standard has several benchmarks that are associated with it, but for the purposes of this unit, I will focus on two, the first being that students will be able to “[d]etermine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and synthesize their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex synthesis” (Minnesota English Language Arts Standards Committee, 2020, p. 89), and the second being that students will be able to “[a]nalyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate the elements of a story or drama, in a literary text.”

(Minnesota English Language Arts Standards Committee, 2020, p. 90). The final anchor standard that will assess student learning will be part of a narrative writing assignment, where students will need to show the ability to “[w]rite narratives, poetry, and other creative texts with details and effective techniques to express ideas” (Minnesota English Language Arts Standards Committee, 2020, p. 94). Wiggins and McTighe (2011) note that the end goal for stage 1 is *acquisition*, or that the students “acquire *knowledge* and *skill*” (p. 21). The specific skills that students will acquire for this unit are the standards listed above. I have chosen these standards because of the mixture of truth and myth in the story as well as the fact that this novel has had some criticism of Kingston’s portrayal of Chinese culture.

Much of the unit will revolve around essential questions about truth and reality: What does it mean to write an autobiography? What is truth in personal experience? How can we give an authentic representation of our own culture or experiences? Wiggins and McTighe (2011) note that an important part of understanding comes in the form of *transfer*. Transfer is the idea of using what one has learned in one context in other contexts. Essential questions represent one way that we can get to and reinforce transfer “by pushing us to look for familiar patterns, connect ideas, and consider useful strategies when faced with novel challenges” (Wiggins and McTighe, 2011, p. 15). Essential questions will guide inquiry for this unit. Essential questions will also help students as they seek to find meaning in the unit as well. These essential questions will guide students to consider the genre of autobiography and authentic stories.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

The second stage for unit planning in Understanding by Design is the “assessment evidence [that] will show that the students have achieved stage 1 goals” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011, p. 43). For this, students will create personal narratives that address the essential questions listed in stage 1 along with answering how do we tell our own stories in a way that is engaging and accessible? Throughout the unit, students will be exposed to several different genres and styles of narrative writing, from selections from an autobiographical novel, selections from autobiographical graphic novels to autobiographical songs. There are also some suggestions for extensions to the unit where students also can look at what autobiography looks like in film or theater. For their own personal narrative projects, then, students will be able to choose the method of delivery: they can write a straight narrative story, they could submit a graphic novel or other art project, they could submit music or poetry. However they decide to explore their own personal identities is up to them.

Stage 3: Key Learning Events

The important aspect of stage 3 in Understanding by Design is that stage 3 “encourages designers to think through the likely trouble spots and how to monitor and adjust for them in the unit before it’s too late” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011, p. 25). The key learning events for this unit will also revolve around the elements of CRT listed in chapter two of this capstone: to be flexible and culturally responsive to student needs and will essentially revolve around a few central literature items. *The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston will be read aloud as a class. I have chosen this novel to act as the catalyst for this unit because, as stated in chapter two, CRT curricula seeks to

recognize, acknowledge, and engage with the specific cultures of students in a given classroom, while celebrating their unique capabilities, experiences, and other achievements. While *The Woman Warrior* is not by a Hmong author, it is by an Asian author and the experiences described in the two selected chapters very closely mirror many of the experiences of my students. My students have Hmong classes and interact with Hmong authors like Kao Kalia Yang often, so having a Hmong author, specifically, was not a central goal for the design of this unit, instead, I decided on this novel mainly for content and the connection between autobiography and truth that are relevant to my students. Similar to Kingston, many of my students are immigrants or children of immigrants who are walking the line of their own cultural heritage and American culture. Additionally, the second chapter that will be addressed in class, “Shaman”, deals with a story of calling a spirit back, which is an important part of many Animist cultures like the Hmong and Karen. The goal, then, is for this literature selection to acknowledge my students’ unique backgrounds and culture so that they can see themselves reflected in the literature. Throughout the reading, we will pause and have think-pair-shares while reading to check for understanding. There will be daily reading assignments to check for understanding as well. Daily assignments will also ask for students to think about themes that they might be seeing in the reading or specific stylistic choices made by the author. There will also be a few other possible discussion topics and formative assessments to help with understanding, including, but not limited to, opportunities for students to draw connections between Kingston’s storytelling and their own lived experiences, point-of-view (POV), oral stories vs. written stories, Kingston’s choice to call this novel “non-fiction” despite fictionalized elements, caricature and stereotype, truth and reality -

Kingston's critics and her response, and possible opportunities to write mini myth-truth stories from their own experiences.

In addition to the novel that begins the unit, students will also spend time looking at other forms of autobiographical narratives, including graphic novels and music. As mentioned in chapter two, it is important to note that culture extends beyond racial or ethnic background and also includes “cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives [and] the lives of others” (Gay, 2018, p.8) While my class does have a majority of Hmong and Karen students, I do have a handful of students that are of mixed backgrounds or other races entirely, so a unit focusing primarily on Asian authors would not reflect their cultural backgrounds in a balanced fashion. Allowing students choice in which graphic novel they read and which piece of autobiographical music they analyze will help to accommodate a wider variety of the other aspects of culture and identity.

Setting and Participants

The intended audience is 11th grade primarily Hmong and Karen ELA students, but the unit design could be modified for any 11th or 12th grade English classroom with minor tweaks. Because culturally responsive teaching is about accommodating the current learners in a given classroom rather than focusing on specific cultures, the intended audience could be changed or modified when needed.

The setting of this project will be a college preparatory charter school located in an urban area of Minnesota. There are roughly 2300 students. According to the District website, the school has over 165 licensed teachers, 20 paraprofessionals and 45 district or administrative personnel. The school is mostly made up of Hmong and Karen students at

97% Asian, 0.6% Hispanic/Latino, 0.4% Black/African American, and 1.2% two or more races. There is a strong sense of culture at the school and even celebrated with a world culture day where students and staff are encouraged to celebrate their own culture and heritage. There is an interesting dynamic at play since classes are mostly minority students, so in some ways, diverse, but also they are majority-minority with 97% being Asian, so there is some homogeneity and integration of culture in the school there as well. The goal is to be responsive to this collection of students in terms of the chosen curriculum materials and delivery.

Timeline

In the timeline for this project, development will occur between August 2021 and December 2021. The goal will be to be able to implement the unit into the quarter 3 curriculum, which will begin late January 2022. While the unit is being designed for 11th grade ELA students, the first time it is taught will be with 12th grade ELA students. This is because it fits better within the timeline for a literature unit with their curriculum schedule rather than the 11th graders. Additionally, working with an older set of students will aid in ironing out any wrinkles in the unit design that may come up in practice. The unit will last until the end of quarter 3, which occurs early in the spring of 2022.

Integration into the 11th grade curriculum will occur Fall of 2022.

Assessment

Data to evaluate the effectiveness of the project will come in the form of daily and weekly formative assessments, the final summative essay assessment that comes at the end of the unit, as well as frequent polls for student feedback. Students will be asked to provide feedback on the level of difficulty in reading the text, their understanding of the

text and the themes discussed as a class, their response to the additional resources that give context to the book, as well as their own opportunities to share their own experiences throughout the unit. Successful engagement with each stage of the unit will be seen as a successful unit design. Challenges with student engagement or understanding will show areas for improvement or change.

Conclusion

Chapter three looked towards the design of a capstone project which seeks to answer the research question: *How can being culturally responsive to student identities support Hmong and Karen student achievement in the High School English classroom?* The description section of this chapter includes a description of the intended project, the goals that are planned for the unit, the research that is guiding the development of the project, and the desired outcomes for students participating in the unit created for this project. Chapter three also discussed the context and makeup of the learners who will be using the unit. Looking ahead, chapter four will include a reflection on the design and implementation of this culturally responsive project including the introduction, literature review, and project details.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Introduction

Throughout this capstone process, I have focused on the same research question: *How can being culturally responsive to student identities support Hmong and Karen student achievement in the High School English classroom?* This chapter will look at several different aspects of the curriculum design process including: the major learnings about curriculum design and as a writer and researcher, a revisit of the literature review, policy implications around this project, limitations encountered during the design and implementation process, ideas for further research, communicating results of the curriculum designed, and finally, the benefits that this project capstone might have for other professionals.

Major Learnings

The major learnings from this capstone process have been varied and span everything from curriculum design, to reflection and research. I came into this capstone project with only having had a couple of other opportunities to do a full curriculum design. The only other extensive curriculum designing I did was for the EdTPA after student teaching. Most other lesson planning and curriculum design has been more piecemeal and as-needed, so one of the major learnings for me was in detailed unit and lesson planning. Using the *Understanding by Design* framework (Wiggins and McTighe, 2011) helped me to make sure that I was including all the important components of unit and lesson design from content objectives, essential questions, to learner outcomes and assessment. The curriculum design process also gave me an opportunity to collaborate

with colleagues including my content reviewer and other English language learning professionals who gave me advice and feedback on the scaffolding of lessons and activities to be responsive to my English language learner student needs. It was also fun to start with a wide variety of optional texts to use with my students and to read through those, deciding on which texts to use for the unit for whole-class read throughs as well as the student-focused graphic novel lessons and autobiographical music selections. I have known for a long time that lessons that are culturally responsive to student needs will inevitably be more varied due to the wide variety of student interests, and it was very gratifying to design a unit that has such a wide variety of genres and styles of personal narrative for students to engage with.

There were several opportunities throughout this process to reflect on and improve upon the project during its development. As a writer, one thing I struggle with is proofreading and the overall editing process, so having opportunities to share my research and unit design with content reviewers and peers throughout the design process has been very helpful. In addition to using and adapting feedback, it improved my time management skills as I needed to have something to review or discuss that was drafted with enough time to receive feedback and make edits where necessary.

From a research perspective, it was also great to approach the designing of curricula from a culturally responsive perspective. While research is something I have done quite a bit in both academic and professional settings, I do not often get to put “theory into practice” as they say. This was a fantastic opportunity to not just research best practices with minority students, but to also then put those methods into practice

with curriculum design, and I will discuss the aspects of my literature review that proved to be most useful in the next section.

Revisiting the Literature Review

The biggest part of my literature review that proved to be the most important for my capstone was having a good definition of what “culture” means. One of the most common reactions I received when I mentioned I was designing curriculum for Hmong and Karen learners was whether I had heard of Kao Kalia Yang and if I was going to use her novels for the unit. I understand this reaction, and many of my students have read Yang’s works in some capacity or another, and I would highly recommend her to anyone looking for a great read, but it was important to me that I go beyond just race and ethnicity when I designed the curriculum for my students. I wanted to make sure I also looked at the other important aspects of culture as mentioned by Gay (2018) which include “social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others” (p. 8).

I do have mostly Hmong and Karen students. I also have some black students. Christian students, muslim students, non-religious students. I have immigrants, children of immigrants, and third or fourth-generation students. I have students that like rap and hip hop and others that like Kpop and jazz. I have students that love anime and Korean dramas and superhero movies. I have students who are really independent and others who value cooperative learning. Students who are passionate about wanting to learn and change the world. If I were to focus my curriculum solely on race and ethnicity, I would be ignoring other aspects of culture that also have a huge impact on personal identity. For this reason, it was important to me that I listen to the research that argued the importance

of focusing on the student as a whole-- considering their race, ethnicity, and all the other aspects of culture that help us define who we are and how we approach the world. Much of this also comes from multicultural education as discussed in chapter two. Since multicultural education seeks to make “the curriculum more responsive to the educational needs of all students” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 112) it was important to me that I created a curriculum that was responsive to all of my students, not just the Hmong and Karen students. Focusing the curriculum design this way also makes it easier to be adapted for other groups of students by any educator who may be interested in using this curriculum in their classrooms.

I also borrowed quite a bit from the cooperative learning aspects of CRT discussed in Gay (2018). I have students that value group work, having the opportunity to discuss their answers with group members and have the feedback of their peers as they work through the close reading of literature. It is also a way to group up students with similar interests so that they can work together. Using small groups as part of the curriculum was also integral to creating a unit that was responsive to my ELs’ needs as well, so that I can effectively scaffold reading and assignments to meet them where they are so they can be successful with the learning outcomes.

Implications

As I worked through the project design process, one implication that seemed to crop up frequently was the fact that many high schools still have curricula that focus heavily on white, male authors. While it is true that this is shifting as more schools add in authors of color and other genders, there are also more recent confrontations against multiculturalism in schools, which has been covered by many news publications about

recent school board meetings in 2021 where parents threaten schools that they perceive are teaching “Critical Race Theory” or a perceived anti-white curriculum. In some ways, the curriculum I designed for this project was intended to push back against the idea that multiculturalism does not belong in schools and that it is possible to have a curriculum that is both reflective of and responsive to diverse learners of any background. I also like to think that designing this curriculum in this way will encourage my coworkers to redesign other units that we are using at my school that are no longer reflective of the students in the classroom.

Limitations

The scope of this unit plan is limited by the amount of time students have for in-class instruction at my school, which is 50 minutes per class, 5 days per week, and the amount of time that can be allotted to this unit, about one quarter in my context. Having longer class periods or block scheduling can make for deeper discussions of the material that are hard to achieve with shorter class periods.

After a full year of distance learning for the 2020-2021 academic year, I find myself also thinking about the limitations this unit design might have for online learners, especially the small group discussions and presentations. The good news is that the majority of readings that I have selected for my class are available as online resources (as a PDF or similar) and with some minor adjustments, the unit could still work in an online environment with the expectation that students would have access to technology and reliable internet access in order to participate in daily activities.

Future research/projects

There are other ways to extend upon the curriculum from this project with different groups of students. For example, one extension that I did not design but I would like to implement in the future is to have a lesson around autobiography in film. That lesson would cover some basic film vocabulary (like different kinds of shots, use of color and sound, and other aspects unique to film) and it would give students the opportunity to see how autobiographical content can also be represented on the screen.

Another similar extension would be incorporating more autobiographical poetry or even an autobiographical play or monologue. There are many other forms of autobiography that could be used as examples to explore for this unit that I did not have time to design, but which would make wonderful extensions to the base unit plan. Specifically, I am already considering an extension with watching either the film version of *Barefoot Gen* by Keiji Nakazawa or *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi-- both of these films are based on graphic novels. *Barefoot Gen* is of particular interest because it is also in an anime style, which would be reflective of many of my students' interests as many of them read manga and watch anime.

Dissemination: Communicating Results

At its core, this curriculum was designed with the students at my school in mind, so my first goal in disseminating the results is to use this unit with my current 12th-grade students (and eventually my 11th-grade students). Then I would like to communicate the successes and challenges of implementing the unit with my content team at my school. I hope that we will be able to adjust more of the curriculum in the future to better reflect

the cultural identities and needs of our students, and that this can act as a kind of springboard for that.

Likewise, if the unit performs well, I would also like to possibly publish the unit design on a teacher curriculum sharing website (like Teachers Pay Teachers or similar) so that other teachers can also have access to the unit to modify and incorporate with their students. I have designed the unit with the specific intention that it can be changed to fit any group of students, regardless of race or other cultural backgrounds.

Benefits to the Profession

This project has quite a few benefits to the profession. For one, it was created with the specific intention of designing a unit around personal narratives that could be adapted for many different groups of learners. It provides students with the opportunity to do some self exploration and to figure out who they are.

The curriculum as it is designed was also created to be responsive to the needs of my ELs, so there is also the added benefit of having a curriculum that can be scaffolded and used with learners that are at a wide range of reading and writing levels. There are opportunities for group work and I also incorporated opportunities for students to practice speaking and listening skills as well, which are often forgotten when it comes to language skills in the high school classroom.

Conclusion

Chapter four focused primarily on my reflection of the capstone process. When thinking about my research question of *how can being culturally responsive to student identities support Hmong and Karen student achievement in the High School English classroom*, I found that the unit that I designed utilized several of the aspects of CRT,

specifically the intersectional nature of the theory. This intersectionality encourages educators to look at all aspects of culture when designing curriculum that is responsive to student interests and needs. I also discussed borrowing from cooperative learning as well to help scaffold for my cooperative learners and ELs, who may benefit from the opportunity to work with peers. Also discussed was using CRT to make sure that all students in the classroom are able to engage with the material regardless of their interests or racial or cultural backgrounds.

In terms of limitations, the curriculum designed does have a narrower scope due to the limited class time with short class periods and how much time out of the year that can be spent on this unit. There were also some possible limitations for how this curriculum might be used in an online learning environment if there is limited access to technology or the internet for students. Future extensions to this unit might involve including other aspects of autobiography whether that be film, poetry, plays, or more, and could very easily be added into the unit at any point. After implementing and sharing this unit with my department at my school, I intend to also share this unit plan on other teaching platforms. Finally, I discussed benefits to the profession: it is always beneficial to have personal narrative units that encourage and help students to express themselves in meaningful ways that explore their own identities.

The overall reflection that was done in chapter four has helped me to think about the benefits and limitations of the current unit design and how to best implement and disseminate it for greater use. In the end, this capstone project has helped me to become a better teacher-- to think more deeply about my students and to create lessons that are

really responsive to who they are. I look forward to implementing this unit into my own curriculum plan and to modify and extend on the lessons as needed for my students.

References

- Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant Education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(1), 163-206. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315582066>
- Bergeron, B. S. (2008). Enacting a culturally responsive curriculum in a novice teacher's classroom. *Urban Education*, 43(1), 4-28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085907309208>
- Bonner, P. J., Warren, S. R., & Jiang, Y. H. (2017). Voices from urban classrooms: Teachers' perceptions on instructing diverse students and using culturally responsive teaching. *Education and Urban Society*, 50(8), 697–726. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124517713820>
- Brown, D. F. (2004). Urban teachers' professed classroom management strategies: Reflections of culturally responsive teaching. *Urban Education*, 39(3), 266–289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085904263258>
- Budiman, A. (2021a, June 16). *Burmese: Data on Asian Americans*. Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-burmese-in-the-u-s/>
- Budiman, A. (2021b, June 16). *Hmong: Data on Asian Americans*. Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-hmong-in-the-u-s/>

- Budiman, A., & Ruiz, N. G. (2021, May 27). *Key facts about Asian Americans, a diverse and growing population*. Pew Research Center.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/>
- Dunn, C. P. & Burton, B. K. (2013, October 1). *Ethics of care*. Encyclopedia Britannica.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethics-of-care>
- Garcia, E., & Weiss, E. (n.d.). *Covid-19 and student performance, equity, and U.S. education policy: Lessons from pre-pandemic research to inform relief, recovery, and rebuilding*. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved November 8, 2021, from
<https://www.epi.org/publication/the-consequences-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-for-education-performance-and-equity-in-the-united-states-what-can-we-learn-from-pre-pandemic-research-to-inform-relief-recovery-and-rebuilding/>.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College.
- Gay, G. (2001). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2), pp. 106-116.
https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A83732906/GPS?u=clic_hamline&sid=bookmark-GPS&xid=d17d25e6
- Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin, a SAGE company.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (n.d.). *What is Cooperative Learning?* Cooperative Learning Institute. <http://www.co-operation.org/what-is-cooperative-learning>.

- Karen*. (2020, February 20). International Institute of Minnesota.
<https://iimn.org/publication/finding-common-ground/minnesotas-refugees/asia/karen/>
- Karen*. (2021, April 27). Culture Care Connection.
<https://culturecareconnection.org/cultural-responsiveness/karen/>.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Culturally relevant teaching: The key to making multicultural education work. In C. A. Grant (Ed.), *Research and multicultural education*, (pp. 106-121).
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that is just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice*, 34, 161-165.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1476635>.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A.k.a the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74-84.
<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.p2rj131485484751>
- Minnesota English Language Arts Standards Committee. (2020). *Minnesota English Language Arts Standards Draft #3 August 2020*. Minnesota Department of Education.
- Muhammad, G. & Mosely L. (2021). Why we need identity and equity learning in literacy practices: moving research, practice, and policy forward. *Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, 98(4), pp. 189–96.
- Nancekivell, S. E., Shah, P., & Gelman, S. A. (2020). Maybe they're born with it, or maybe it's experience: Toward a deeper understanding of the learning style myth.

Journal of Educational Psychology, 112(2), pp. 221-235.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/edu0000366>

National Center for Education Statistics. (2021, May). Characteristics of public school teachers. Retrieved November 8, 2021, from

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/clr>.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93–97.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244>

Ponciano, L. (2016). Social-emotional competence. In D. Couchenour, & J. Chrisman (Eds.), *The sage encyclopedia of contemporary early childhood education*, 1248-125. SAGE Publications, Inc,

<https://www-doi-org.ezproxy.hamline.edu/10.4135/9781483340333.n375>

Shevalier, R. & McKenzie, B.A. (2012). Culturally responsive teaching as an ethics- and care-based approach to urban education. *Urban Education*, 47(6), 1086-1105.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912441483>

Siwatu, K. O. (2011). Preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy-forming experiences: A mixed methods study. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 104(5), 360-369.

Educational Research, 104(5), 360-369.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2010.487081>

The Commonwealth Institute. (2021, April 13). *Unequal opportunities: Fewer resources, worse outcomes for students in schools with concentrated poverty*. The

Commonwealth Institute. Retrieved November 8, 2021, from

<https://thecommonwealthinstitute.org/research/unequal-opportunities-fewer-resources-worse-outcomes-for-students-in-schools-with-concentrated-poverty/>

Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 20-32.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053001003>

Weissberg, R., & Cascarino, J. (2013). Academic learning + social-emotional learning = national priority. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(2), 8-13.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23617133>

Wheeler, E. (2016). Social-emotional development. In D. Couchenour, & J. Chrisman (Eds.), *The sage encyclopedia of contemporary early childhood education*, 1252-1255. SAGE Publications, Inc,

<https://www-doi-org.ezproxy.hamline.edu/10.4135/9781483340333.n376>

Wiggins, G. P., & McTighe, J. (2011). *The understanding by design guide to creating high-quality units*. ASCD.