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"So, how real can I get?": opportunities and obstacles for teacher learners enacting culturally responsive pedagogy.

Jonathan P Baize
University of Louisville

"SO, HOW REAL CAN I GET?": OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES FOR

TEACHER LEARNERS ENACTING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

by

Jonathan P. Baize
M.A.T., University of Louisville, 1994
B.A., University of Louisville, 1993

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A Dissertation Approved on

March 25, 2021

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DEDICATION

This dissertation resides at the end of a long road, just before it forks, borne there by more hands than could fit on its manifestation in book form but all of which have touched the work it represents. Of those hands, I dedicate it first to Cheri, my wife, who sees in me what I don't, believes in me what I won't, and never let me quit on this work or myself. She is my everything and the best part of anything we share.

I also want to acknowledge the hands of all the teachers who molded me in my journey through schools like those depicted here—particularly Ms. Livers, Ms. Cole, Mr. Walsh, Ms. Twaryonas—all of whom encouraged me in pursuits I had not previously explored or noticed in me what others had overlooked.

With them are the teachers with whom I taught and from whom I learned the craft and soul of good teaching. The work of this dissertation began with them: Anne, Dee, Tim, Jim, Becky, and Patrick. We loved teaching and loved students in a way I hadn't seen before and haven't seen since. The magic of these people, that English department, was (to paraphrase Hunter S. Thompson) like the energy of a whole generation coming to a long, fine flash, and no mix of words or music or moments can touch the sense of knowing that we were there and alive in that corner of time and the world. As we taught and wrote, we rode a high, beautiful wave, and as I look back now, with the right light I can see that high-water mark, that hallway, where the wave finally broke and rolled back.

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I have been fortunate throughout my educational experience to have had teachers and instructors who provided me support. Mine has been an unconventional journey to research work and doctoral studies, arriving here at the end of an entire career as a secondary teacher. It was often not easy to balance my life, not to mention my identity, in that space and find my sea legs as a Ph.D. student and candidate at the same time.

For helping me do so, I would like to thank Dr. James Chisholm. I don't think it is too bold to say your enthusiasm for your work and for teaching students rivals any other professor's in the university. What I saw in your classes that I took early in my program was a spirit I recognized and one that made me think I could pursue this career and still be me. This is to say nothing of the time and advice you gave me in writing this dissertation, which was considerable. Thank you.

You carved out countless opportunities to include me in scholarly work and provided much needed training wheels as I found my balance.

The same could be said for Dr. Kathryn Whitmore, to whom I also owe a debt of gratitude. She always suffered my misplaced confidence in a way that nurtured me to be worthy of it. Dr. Whitmore, your ability to hear the song in all the noise I might be making as I learned helped me learn to hear it as well. I aspire to your unwavering positivity and your ability to fan a small flame to give heat.

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Finally, I could not be more grateful to Dr. Michèle Foster. You have opened my eyes to my work, and helped me see where to look, in ways I had spent 24 years missing. I have never worked with someone who so naturally blends being a teacher and writer. Your encouragement and enthusiasm for learning is infectious. I am forever changed by that day in your African American English in Schools and Society course where you came into class thinking aloud about the HiTCRiT and welcomed the class to join you in noodling it out. I hope the work in this dissertation, and my work going forward, is worthy of the mentoring I have received from you. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

"SO, HOW REAL CAN I GET?": OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES FOR
TEACHER LEARNERS ENACTING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Jonathan P. Baize

March 25, 2021

In this qualitative study, I examine the experiences of three alternative-certification teachers (teachers who begin teaching as they worked to complete teacher education courses for initial certification) whom I call "teacher learners" (Jacobs & Low, 2017) as they try to enact culturally responsive practices while navigating their first-year of teaching. The teacher learners worked to develop their understanding and capacities to enact a culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) even as they were faced with the obstacles inherent to shifting teaching practices in K-12 schools. Through these challenges, they still furthered their conceptualization of CRP, as evidenced by, and in some ways guided by, their work with a lesson planning template inspired by Foster et al.'s (2020) The Heuristic for Thinking About Culturally Responsive Teaching (HiTCRiT). I situate this study in Vygotskian sociocultural theory, Freire's (1970) work on critical consciousness, and lean heavily on Ladson-Billings's (1995) conceptualization of a "culturally relevant pedagogy" in my analysis of the teacher learners' interviews and work.

I employed qualitative data collection methods of interviewing and the collection and analysis of artifacts from the teacher learners' coursework in an English teaching methods course. I listen to their depictions of attempts to enact CRP and develop their knowledge of it within the generally unaccommodating cultures of practice in their schools, and using discourse analysis, explore those attempts through their work on the HiTCRiT planning template.

The data show that the teacher learners—Jennifer, Janet, and Samantha— expanded their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy as a concept (Smagorinsky et al., 2003), an informed theory of practice. Additionally, the data show that the teacher learners lacked the influence of experienced colleagues prepared to mentor them in CRP and that those colleagues often served as obstacles to this goal. While this situation sheds light on challenge teachers face enacting CRP in K-12 schools, the teacher learners showed, through their work teaching online and away from the wider cultures of their schools during the COVID-19 lockdown, that using the HiTCRiT planning tool allowed them to explore and expand their teaching in cultural responsive ways.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction and Context

Kayla stands with perfect posture in the front of the room. Her chin is set level, gaze straight ahead, her hands are holding each other at her waist, and she breathes in a way that makes it clear an internal dialogue is happening just behind her dark eyes.

I wait from my seat in the desk behind where she normally sits for her classmates to dial into her being ready to begin. She sweeps her head across the room making silent eye-contact with her peers. It only takes a few seconds. Characteristically reserved and quiet sometimes to a fault, when Kayla presents, she is confident in a way that catches me off-guard, but that her classmates seem prepared for.

This is her presentation for a project I added to the curriculum of my English classes, irrespective of grade level, as part of a unit on informational reading where students use the Internet to teach themselves some new skill or learn more about a subject that interests them. Then they present what they have learned, often demonstrating the skill or the product (if there is one) they produced.

Kayla is a member of the school's much-respected drum-line—another interest that belies her quiet voice and shyness—and has decided to use the freedom she has been given to learn, during school hours, something that interests her. She chose to research

improving her dj-ing skills by learning how to pick songs to cross-fade and mix. Behind her is a digital slide presentation with embedded graphs, images of a mixing board, and an audio player she uses to play remixes she created while learning and a final one showing off her new skill. Beyond just showing her classmates the skills she has learned, Kayla details her research and documentation, and how she evaluated the quality of her sources.

The teaching practices I had experienced as a high school student were nothing like the ones I was enacting as the teacher in this classroom. No, how I teach is due to a fortuitous twist of fate. I began my career a few years after the first significant education legislation in decades, The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), was passed in Kentucky. Originally meant to address the inequitable funding of schools across the state, KERA also capitalized on this rare wave of political will to promote higher quality instruction and assessment.

State-wide tests were updated with open-response prompts allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge in science, social studies, English, and math in their own words. The act also established a writing portfolio as a graduation requirement for all Kentucky high school seniors which required five pieces of cross-curricular writing from different genres. It also required a letter of reflection and was scored with a holistic scoring guide. During this time, I fondly remember attending national conferences where colleagues from other states would express their envy at the work I was able to do in my classes.

These reforms represented a departure from long-standing, traditional instruction and assessment practices, a departure which by virtue of creating assessment space for

students' individual voices and valuing process and progress pedagogies would well fit the current calls of scholars (Boud, 2000; Kalantzis et al., 2003) to rethink schools for the 21st century.

Then there was No Child Left Behind.

Then Race to the Top.

In the rush to apply the "market model" (Ravitch, 2010) to schools, wide-spread, standardized testing and school competition around the scores on these assessments began to dictate the curriculum. KERA's reforms were themselves reformed or more accurately, regressed. Open response sections on tests dwindled and eventually vanished; the holistic scoring guide was re-conceived to be quantitative, and then portfolios vanished entirely; finally, from 2015-2019 the only external measure of high school students' performance in Kentucky was the ACT.

Having finished high school just before KERA, I had experienced a K-12 public school education guided by traditional practices, and my teacher education program had leaned heavily on practice, "what" to do, and very little on the "why" or "how" to do it. Thankfully the milieu of this progressive moment in Kentucky education worked to pair me with some exceptional mentors who introduced me to work of Vygotsky, Rosenblatt, Elbow, and Atwell and later Montessori and Freire. I say thankfully because not only did it improve my practice at the time, but as the pendulum swung, the curriculum narrowed, and resources became more focused on quantitative assessments, I was equipped to keep teaching in a way I knew was student-focused and grounded in theories that aligned with my philosophy of teaching and learning.

This experience over 20 plus years worked to make me a teacher who could create the classroom space depicted in the opening vignette of Kayla's dj-ing presentation. One where the students did not pick a topic from a set of school-sanctioned options but from their own interests—ones often relegated to being pursued in their personal time either after or, as is often the case, in lieu of their school work. They also could choose the method for presenting the skills they learned. By the dismissal bell of the class where Kayla presented, students had taught each other about learning computer coding online, doing their nails, getting a time management app to help stay organized, and box-braiding hair for fun and profit.

Several elements of this assignment fit a progressivist frame, but the manner in which it made space for the home lives of the students to become part of the curriculum that typically excludes them and for them to present their learning in ways familiar to them speaks of a theory of practice I learned only after returning to graduate studies at the university.

Through my doctoral studies I realized what was still missing from my understanding and my practice was a recognition of who my students were and how their relationship with the world of school affected their experience in it. While I had approached the students as individuals, it was to connect them individually to the curriculum, not to see what they could add to it. When I provided "choice" the options were often pre-chosen or at least limited. Having not heard of "culturally relevant pedagogy" (Ladson-Billings, 1995) or "culturally sustaining pedagogy" (Paris & Alim, 2014), my "student-centered" teaching, while focused on the students, was not always

including them, and certainly often failed to capitalize on the cultural knowledge and assets they brought with them to class.

Learning more about culturally responsive practices (CRP)—the term I will use in this dissertation to characterize theories of practice like those mentioned above—I was particularly convicted because the bulk of my career has been spent at the current iteration of my city's historically African American school. As such, the classes I taught were typically composed of 85% or more African Americans, and an additional 10% of the students were from immigrant families. Not being aware of how I could make more inclusive spaces for my students of color in what traditionally has been the white, middle-class world of public school, had not allowed me, even in my sincere attempts, to create the kind of assignments and classrooms like the one from last spring depicted above—one that included students' interests *as* the curriculum for learning the skills I'm tasked with teaching.

The experience of these students doing their interest presentations argued the need for the added CRP lens in my practice, both in regards to its positive impact on the students and given who I am as the teacher.

In this assignment was a beginning of that bridge for me to one aspect of more culturally responsive practices. I mention above the students were empowered to choose the topics on which they would focus, but they also were able to present their learning to the class in ways and through modes with which they were most comfortable. This resulted in them creating varied and typically multimodal products that blended linguistic and visual elements, often combined with music, and along with their performance as

speakers and live demonstrations of their skills. Some students even opted to submit videos of their work and presentations.

Many scholars (Emdin, 2016, Ladson-Billings, 1995, Paris & Alim, 2014) of culturally responsive pedagogies argue the need for multiple forms of assessment and flexible modes for students to demonstrate their learning as key to decentering traditional forms of assessment (e.g., tests and essays) and seeing the different ways of knowing students from various cultures bring to the classroom as assets. Additionally, significant scholarship on multiliteracies (Kalantzis, et al. 2003; Kress & Selander, 2012) point to these multifarious and multimodal assessments as key to developing the skills required for 21st century societies and, by extension, those skills which should typify diverse, democratic classrooms, and engage students through developing the communicative skills they already recognize as commonplace.

All of this was true for Kayla's performance. As she presented, all eyes were on her…for the whole presentation. The rapt attention of her peers makes sense. These students had all attended parties and dances that featured DJs performing. The songs Kayla mixed were all familiar to them and by African American artists, which is apt for a classroom of 26 people, 23 of whom are African American. There were two Latina students. I was the only Caucasian in the room. Kayla was the teacher and she had chosen her content and approach to teaching well. Separated from my students both by age and ethnicity, I likely would not have picked as interesting a topic, and my methods of presenting what I chose would likely have made less of a connection with my audience. My lesson on research skills and the importance of evaluating sources would not have been as engaging. Letting my students lead instruction as members in a community of

learners, one tenet of Ladson-Billings's (1995) culturally relevant practices, brought the importance of CRP into sharp focus for me.

How essential CRP is as a theory of practice for contemporary American classrooms was further driven home to me later the same afternoon of those presentations as I stood in front of the English Teaching Methods course I co-taught at a local university. Seventeen students taking their final course before going into the field as student-teachers, filed into the room, and as I observed them and took roll, the contrast with my high school classroom struck me. Only two of these pre-service teachers identified as persons of color (while all of my high school students did), and while 38% of my 10th grade students were male, here only 17% of this class was. The primary, secondary, and even college-level experience of these students likely had been in schools that were built around the language and culture most familiar to them. The cultures of these pre-service teachers' schools likely mirrored the cultures from their home lives, and the teachers who taught them—and under whom they received a tacit apprenticeship for their own teaching (Lortie, 1975)—very often looked like them and shared with them a cultural heritage.

This would not be the case in most of the classrooms where they would be placed the following fall. The average percentage of students of color in the schools where they will be teaching was 54%. My students at the university had not experienced being outsiders in educational spaces privileging, "…explicit assimilationist and antidemocratic monolingual/monocultural educational" practices (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 88) as had over half of the students they would be tasked with teaching. My university class was only

two miles away from where I taught high school, but in integral ways, these two education spaces were worlds apart.

My work with teacher education students at the university convinced me that findings ways to help them bridge the gap between the cultural world of school and the cultural worlds of their future students should be my focus. The pre-service teachers I was working with will enter classrooms of students who are more culturally diverse and less served by traditional teaching methods. However, as mentioned above, the schools have increasingly returned to traditional methods under the pressure of high-stakes testing and assessment-driven instruction. My teacher-education students will not have the experience I did, honing my practice by apprenticing constructivist-minded teaching mentors in an education system committed to more progressivist pedagogies. While there are many avenues new teachers might explore to gain knowledge of more progressive strategies, many scholars (Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2010; Gay, 2002; Rychly & Graves 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zeichner et al., 2015) point to teacher education programs to educate them in these practices.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

As noted earlier, I use the term "culturally responsive pedagogies" (CRP) when referring generally to asset pedagogies aimed at creating the sorts of inclusive classrooms mentioned above and questioning the proposed outcomes and purposes of schools (Paris & Alim, 2014). I choose this term, as subsequent paragraphs will indicate, because while evolving thinking about education for students of color in persistently White and middle-class spaces compels researchers to rename these practices to capture the particular nuance of their focus, their goals and core principles remain fairly constant. The intent of

these principles is to provide a way of thinking about teaching and learning that carves inclusive spaces for all students' cultures in school, specifically those of students of color, and views the ways of thinking and interacting that differ from the dominant culture as assets in addressing some of the most pernicious challenges of educating an increasingly multicultural society.

Additionally, in the wake of wide-spread protests from the summer of 2020 calling for a reckoning on racial justice and a wider recognition of the systemic racism in our country, many school systems have increased their efforts to educate teachers on culturally inclusive practices. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy has been the term widely adopted by these schools, including in the school system in where the participants in this study teach.

Studies (Gay & Abrahamson, 1972; Heath, 1982; Labov, 1969; Piestrup, 1973) have recognized for decades the way in which language and cultural interaction patterns of African American and other students of color differ from the privileged practices of school and acknowledge the challenges this poses for these students. Attempts to address the monolithic culture of American public schools by recruiting more teachers of color—specifically African American teachers—has been going on since the 1980s (Foster, 2018). However, as Foster (2018) noted, "By the 1990s across the United States, the typical teacher candidate was a white, middle class suburban or rural woman, a trend that continues today" (Scholar Strategy Network, Why America Needs More African American Teachers – and How to Recruit and Retain Them, para. 3).

As I relate in my own career experiences, rather than work toward more progressive and inclusive practices, the current education trends have returned to traditional curricula, narrowed by large-scale assessment.

For some time, the challenge of changing "who" is teaching in our schools and the unwavering political love for traditional curricula governing "what" is being taught, has caused many education scholars to delve into "how" instruction might change to be more inclusive. Almost 40 years ago, researchers (Au & Jordan, 1982; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981) chronicled teachers' attempts to include the cultural practices of the students' communities to combat the alienating and hindering effects these persistent realities have on students of color. Ladson-Billings (1994) noted that there have been several theories of practice—*cultural compatibility* (Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1987; Jordan 1985), *culturally appropriate* (Au & Jordan, 1982), and *culturally responsive* (Erickson & Mohatt, 1982)—identified as approaches to create more inclusive classrooms. These approaches by-in-large sought ways to connect with students through their home culture as a means of indoctrinating them into dominant and privileged culture of school. While acknowledging the attempts of these earlier scholars, Ladson-Billings (1995) describes *culturally relevant pedagogy* as follows,

> A next step for positing effective pedagogical practice is a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. I term this pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy (p.469).

For her a pedagogy of truly inclusive classes does not simply use students' cultures as a gateway to assimilation in the valued practices of schools, but allowed the inclusion of their identities in those practices. Students should be able to retain their cultural identities and their cultural traditions and histories are part of school success. Likewise, a culturally relevant pedagogy will challenge teachers' perceptions of success as it is one, "designed to problematize teaching and encourage teachers to ask about the nature of the student teacher relationship, the curriculum, schooling, and society" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.483).

Paris and Alim (2014) expanded on the curriculum and institutional change elements of culturally relevant pedagogy and suggested a change in terms to better emphasize the goal of helping students retain their home linguistic and cultural practices. They offered the term *culturally sustaining pedagogy* or CSP which,

> seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural
> pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling and as a needed response
> to demographic and social change. CSP, then, links a focus on sustaining
> pluralism through education to challenges of social justice and change in ways
> that previous iterations of asset pedagogies did not (p. 88).

Culturally responsive pedagogies, beyond specifically including elements of students' culture either in content or in interaction styles, are typified by what Ladson-Billings (1995) terms propositions: "conceptions of self and others; social relations; and conceptions of knowledge" (p.478). These propositions are manifested in the beliefs and actions she observed during her study, which I compile in Table 1. In brief, these actions and beliefs run counter to traditional ideas about the static nature of knowledge;

transactional, banking model instructional practices; and formal, distant relationships

between students and teachers. Culturally relevant practices then are progressive

practices: valuing socially constructed knowledge, a decentering of the power dynamics

between teachers and student, and critical consciousness (Freire, 1970).

Table 1

Propositions for Teaching Behaviors Designated as "Culturally Relevant"

Propositions	Conceptions of Self and Others	Social Relations	Conceptions of Knowledge
Beliefs and Practices	- believed that all the students were capable of academic success, - saw their pedagogy as art—unpredictable, always in the process of becoming, - saw themselves as members of the community, - saw teaching as a way to give back to the community, - believed in a Freirean notion of "teaching as mining" (1974, p. 76) or pulling knowledge out (p. 478-479).	- maintain fluid student-teacher relationships, - demonstrate a connectedness with all of the students, - develop a community of learners, - encourage students to learn collaboratively and be responsible for another (p. 480).	- Knowledge is not static; it is shared, recycled, and constructed. - Knowledge must be viewed critically. - Teachers must be passionate about knowledge and learning. - Teachers must scaffold, or build bridges, to facilitate learning. - Assessment must be multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of excellence (p. 481).

Rationale

Shifting geopolitics, migrating world populations, and globally interconnected

economies have all worked to make the United States a dramatically more diverse

society. Statistics gathered by the Pew Research Center show while students identifying

as "persons of color" make up over 50% of the Nation's public-school student population, teachers who identify the same way make up only 20% of the total teacher population. Likewise, many teachers of color are concentrated in schools with high percentages of students of color. Schools where 25%-49% of students identify as persons of color average only 10% of faculty members would identify themselves similarly (Geiger, 2018). More than just the ethnic group with which they identify, these students represent a rich diversity of cultural practices, dialects, and ways of thinking and knowing quite different from those of their teachers.

Traditional thinking about the problems posed by this cultural gap between students and teachers would be that it was no problem at all. Many researchers (Heath, 1983; Labov, 1972; Smitherman, 1977) have documented that public schools, since their inception, have been structured around, valued, and promoted ways of learning and social interaction consistent with White, middle-class society. An "old world" way of thinking sought to standardize language and education and to assimilate immigrants or indigenous peoples into the practices of this privileged culture (New London Group, 2000), so classrooms staffed with members of that privileged culture teaching diverse learners would seem about right.

Additionally, New London Group (2000) saw classrooms like these—with such clear disparities in social power and interest—as anathema to creating the types of schools needed in our diverse contemporary society. They argued in their *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies* that classrooms that would eschew traditional educational goals of assimilation and homogeneity must attend first to issues of linguistic diversity and adopt a literacy pedagogy that valorizes teaching students to,

negotiate regional, ethnic, or class-based dialects; variations in register that occur

according to social context; hybrid cross-cultural discourses; the code switching

often to be found within a text among different languages, dialects, or registers;

different visual and iconic meanings; and variations in the gestural relationships

among people, language, and material objects. (2000, p. 14)

They see literacy, or "multiliteracies", as the critical site for creating a new paradigm of "civic pluralism" necessary to transform our society to better fit its present and to survive in the future.

Many scholars (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 1993; Peele-Eady & Foster, 2018; Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 1977) agreed with the need to recognize language and language practices of students from non-privileged cultures, specifically African-Americans and speakers of African American English (AAE), as equal to those who speak Dominant American English (DAE) (Paris & Alim, 2014). For them, this is the primary means of gaining educational advantage and social power. Brandt (1998) summarized this point well saying: "literacy, like land, is a valued commodity in this economy, a key resource in gaining profit and edge" (p. 169).

These researchers' focus on African American students is warranted both because these students make up a large portion of the minority populations in public schools and represent the largest gap in ethnicity between students and teachers (Geiger, 2018), but also because while school systems in the United States have adopted programs and enacted policies to address the needs of English language learners from immigrant populations, they continue resisting to do so for students who speak AAE as their first language (Peele-Eady & Foster, 2018). This resistance continues even in the face of

significant scholarship (Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 1977) showing AAE to be a fully formed language and court rulings (*MLK Elementary School Children v. Ann Arbor School District*, 1979) requiring schools to attend to the language concerns of AAL speakers.

With schools not accommodating language diversity and there remaining a gap between the cultural and lived experiences and linguistic repertoires of students and teachers, many teachers and researchers including Ladson-Billings (1995), Lee (1993) and Paris & Alim (2014) have explored and promote *asset pedagogies*—pedagogies that seek to honor linguistic and cultural practices of minoritized and working-class students and view the diverse ways they vary from privileged language and cultural practices as assets—as a way to create more diverse and inclusive spaces in schools. The aims of culturally responsive pedagogies, are consistent with New London Group's (2000) conception of pedagogies of access that lead to pluralistic classrooms. Like CRP, their conception is not of classrooms structured to service minoritized populations, but ones that include those groups' multifarious communicative and cultural practices as equal to any other and beneficial to all learners.

Though culturally responsive pedagogies have become part of the education landscape, that recent texts (e.g., Emdin, 2016; Garcia & O'Donnell-Allen, 2015) have argued for their employ and offered guidance in their practice, indicates a gap between CRP's recognition and its presence in classroom practice. Likewise, much of the research surrounding CRP focuses on articulating the nature of culturally responsive pedagogies and the need for them, rather than identifying examples in practice. Where this latter focus does occur, many articles study practicing teachers in primary schools. Foster

(2001) looked at the way a teacher explicitly incorporated characteristics of AAL —call and response, specifically—to promote vocabulary acquisition and language mastery in her elementary classroom. Some research (Daniel, 2016; Fitchett, Starker, & Salyers, 2012; Young, 2010) focused on teacher education students' experiences learning about and enacting CRP and revealed limited success by their participants. These studies though have not focused in their studies on a deep understanding of their participants' comfort with or understanding of how to enact these pedagogies in a classroom setting. It is important then to research teacher learners' experiences surrounding CRP to better accomplish what Darling-Hammond (2006) saw as a significant goal for teacher education programs, "to help [students] confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and to learn about the experiences of people different from themselves" (p. 305).

Specific to the goal of learning about how teachers and teacher learners conceive enacting culturally responsive practices, is to examine their lesson planning. Through my role co-teaching the English methods course I referenced earlier, I participated in a pilot study with those teacher learners—a term suggested by Jacobs & Low (2017) for capturing the identity of teacher education students while also teaching students, in school, each day—using a lesson plan that contained prompts directing the teacher learners to consider, from cultural perspectives, their students in their planning.

This planning tool evolved from work initiated by Dr. Michèle Foster to develop the Heuristic for Thinking about Culturally Responsive Teaching (HiTCRiT; Foster, Halliday, Baize, & Chisholm, 2020). This heuristic was initially meant to provide a framework for recognizing and discussing practices which typify the work of culturally

responsive teachers in the research. The lesson plan I created operationalizes the realms of the HiTCRiT—text, style, socio-emotional connections, and institutional bridge—through a series of prompting questions related to each realm teacher learners should consider as they plan. Though the HiTCRiT lesson plan retained some elements of standard planning templates (e.g., identifying standards and objectives, procedures, etc.) it sought to foreground students in the process and guide teacher learners to consider all aspects of planning with their students in mind.

Research Questions

The more we know about teacher learners' understanding of culturally responsive pedagogies, the better teacher education programs can address their needs and equip them to enact these pedagogies in their practice. To this end, I engaged in this constructivist, qualitative study of three teacher learners' experiences attempting to enact a culturally responsive pedagogy in their K-12 classrooms with the hope of understanding its persistent absence in those spaces. To this end the questions guiding this inquiry are:

1. What are teacher-learners' understandings of and experiences with enacting culturally responsive pedagogies and what can these experiences tell us about CRP practices in K-12 education?

    a. What does "culturally responsive pedagogies" mean to teacher learners?

    b. What obstacles do teacher learners perceive as affecting their attempts to enact CRP?

    c. What effect does an instructional planning tool that includes student-focused, guiding questions that are informed by CRP have on teacher-learners' perceptions of their practice?

Theoretical Concepts

I conducted this study from a progressivist philosophical stance drawing to varying degrees on two different but related theories: critical consciousness theory and sociocultural theory. Each of these theories has at its core an acknowledgement of inclusion and co-construction of knowledge and reality which are the underpinnings of culturally responsive pedagogies. I will rely heavily on the intersections of critical consciousness as a means of exploring how the participants recognize both the challenges imposed on students of color because of their race and the understanding of how having those inequities illuminated equips them to engage in the collective work of change. Finally, I discuss the sociocultural aspects of creating the beliefs about knowledge that are essential in CRP and this theory's connection to the social semiotic framework of linguistically diverse classrooms.

Critical Consciousness

Through his literacy work in Brazil, Freire (1970) conceived of this theory of intervening with reality in order to create change. The theory emphasizes dialogue among the participants in unequal power dynamics—in the case of this study, teachers in traditionally White educational spaces and students of color—as key to the critical thinking and the co-constructed approach to forming knowledge and classroom culture. Critical consciousness rejects social inequities as morally wrong and argues the need to create a space for students to confront "what is taken for granted" and "perceive social, political, and economic contradictions" (Freire, 1970 p.35) where they exist in curricula. Additionally, critical consciousness recognizes that once identified, these "contradictions" can only be rectified by including those they harm:

No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by

treating them as unfortunates and by presenting them for their emulation models

from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the

struggle for their redemption (Freire, 1970, p. 39).

Success then with moving school culture toward being more culturally multivariate will

be through the constructed knowledge of a community of learners CRP requires.

Sociocultural Theory

I drew also on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory to support my study. He

argued that the social nature of humans drives them both to makes sense of their

environment and change it through interaction with it; "The basic characteristic of human

behavior in general is that humans personally influence their relations with the

environment and through that environment personally change their behavior, subjugating

it to their control" (Vygotsky,1978, p. 51). This to say that through interaction with their

environment, both the person and environment is changed, or "mediated".

Also key in Vygotsky's theory is that sign systems (i.e., language) provide the site

for people's internal change as speech creates a possibility separate from an action, which

allows for variation and planning. In this way, whether intra- or interpersonal, speech

works with material practice to conceptualize and inform the work of constructing their

world. This informs the social semiotic theory which suggests that these sign systems are

reciprocally recognized by and socially constructed through the culture in which they are

used (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). As this study focuses on the

way CRP is enacted in secondary ELA classrooms and the effect on students of inclusive

cultural spaces, sociocultural theory aids in the understanding of the role of language in creating those spaces.

Conclusion

By exploring here my history as a teacher and sharing experiences of my growing practice, I have tried to introduce my positionality as a researcher and reveal the forces and moments that have brought me to this topic for research. My progressivist, constructivist philosophy, as well as my long career as a classroom teacher—most of which was spent in classrooms where students of color were the majority—all informed my work in this dissertation. What I chose to gather as data, and how I approach the analysis of those data sources are all guided by the researcher identity and the theories ground that work.

As the rationale I offer here implies, there is (and long has been) a need to reconsider the very shape and nature of our classrooms and schools in our multicultural society and a need for teacher education students to better understand and enact culturally responsive pedagogies. Grounding the work of this study in critical consciousness and sociocultural theoretical frameworks, I emphasize the transformative and socially constructed nature of this work.

In Chapter 2, I review literature on culturally responsive pedagogy: its conception as a theory of practice for teachers, in teacher education programs, and research on teachers enacting it in schools. In Chapter 3, I present my research methodology, study design, methods and sources of data collection, a description of data analysis, and participant profiles. In Chapter 4, I explore the findings relative to my research questions exploring the data generated for understanding teacher learners' conceptions of CRP;

their perceived obstacles to enacting it; and their interactions with the HiTCRiT lesson plan template. Chapter 5, discusses my learning from my exploration in each section of the findings and draws conclusions based on those discussions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purposes of this study, I was interested in understanding how teacher education students—who I refer to in this study as "teacher learners" (Jacobs & Low, 2017)—experience enacting culturally responsive pedagogy as a theory of practice in their teaching placements and what those experiences might indicate about the rarity of culturally responsive practices in middle and high schools. This literature review examines studies of teachers' and teacher learners' enactments of culturally responsive pedagogy in schools and developing their understanding of CRP through their teacher training programs. My aim s to add to this literature on CRP enactment by presenting the individualized experiences of three, alternative-certification teacher learners as they enact culturally responsive practices in the often-conflicting spaces (Darling-Hammond, 2006 & 2010; Smagorinsky, 2003) of teacher education programs and schools and how those experiences were influenced by the HiTCRiT (Foster et al., 2020) lesson planning template that occupied a liminal space between the two.

I begin with a discussion of empirical studies looking at instances of teachers enacting CRP in K-12 spaces by both experienced teachers and teacher learners. Additionally, I include scholarship on culturally responsive teacher characteristics and discuss how they are developed through teacher training programs. To understand the ways in which these teacher identities are challenged in communities of practice and the

tension between these spaces, I examined studies related to learning in communities of practice. Finally, I explored scholarship on approaches to responding to alternative assessments in regards to the affordances they offered both for evaluating the varied, multimodal and multiliteracy assessment suggested by CRP and for reflection through formative assessment.

I narrowed my survey of the literature to include search terms such as: *culturally responsive practice, culturally relevant practice, culturally sustaining practice, pedagogy, situated learning, formative assessment, alternative assessment, teacher training, and elementary, middle, and high school.*

Enacting Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in K-12 Spaces

Brown, Boda, Lemmi, and Monroe (2019) conducted a study with 9 elementary teachers who taught in a k-5 STEM charter school. They initially interviewed the teachers regarding their knowledge of CRP (referred to as culturally relevant education [CRE] in their work). The teachers then engaged in CRE focused professional development throughout the year, mixed with training on cognitive apprenticeship, to see how their understanding of CRE changed and whether they were able to apply this learning in their teaching. They found in initial interviews that though teachers had "a tenuous awareness of CRE as a construct" (p.798) they did not seem to understand how to enact the theory in practice. After a year of training, the teachers showed significant improvement in conceptualizing and implementing CRE "practices". Of particular note was how their culturally relevant examples in science and math lessons were sustained by their students as they moved from teacher-centered "modeling" to a student-centered "coaching" paradigm. The participants' students continued working with and provided guidance to

their peers with the same examples or culturally relevant examples of their own, drawn from their shared experiences. Brown et al. (2019) argued that the extensive training improved their participants' ability to conceive of and implement CRP practices in their STEM classes. They warned however, that this sort of training is often lacking in schools and that without it the teachers in their study viewed CRP primarily from an ideological stance and one more germane to English instruction. Likewise, they lamented the absence of online resources available to train students in these pedagogies.

Concern of different disciplines is excluded in Puzio et al.'s (2017) research which looked at five language arts teachers and their experiences enacting culturally sustaining pedagogy as articulated by Paris (2012). This study examined these teachers' experiences through narrative inquiry of those participants' stories of what the authors termed "creative failures" in trying to enact culturally sustaining practices.

One of their teacher participant's stories occurred while bush teaching in a community comprised predominantly of Alaskan natives. The participant, in an attempt to be more culturally sustaining in practice, explored using some of the local legends alongside Kipling's *Just So Stories*. According to her narrative, the teacher felt successful at incorporating CSP until later she found out, from a professor who was also native to the area, that she had deeply offended the students because, as an assessment, she had them rewrite a local legend in the style of Kipling—equating stories that compromised their cultural heritage with fiction that could rewritten and made up anyone. Other participants faltered in attempts to offer diverse texts by reading them connected to holiday's and by supplying a European Spanish translation of a young adult novel to students who spoke a Mexican Spanish variation.

From their analysis Puzio et al. (2017) discovered that for their participants incorporation of inclusive texts and a focus on cultural competence was their strongest understanding of CSP, even if they experienced challenges practicing this understanding and learning that how those texts were used was of equal importance as their presence.

Young (2010) also found cultural competence to be the foregrounded tenet of CRP in her study in a metropolitan elementary school which examined the gap between CRP in academic research and scholarship and its presence in classroom practice through her study in a metropolitan elementary school. Her action research case study looked at how the shifting and emerging definitions of CRP impacted teachers' capacities to conceptualize it as a framework for their instruction and actualize its practice in their classrooms. Focusing on a group (eight in all) of elementary educators—both classroom teachers and administrators—as they wrangled with understanding and enacting CRP, her findings located challenges to conceptualizing and actualizing CRP lay in individual cultural bias and structural impediments in regard to school operation and the wider nature of the racism in schools. Young (2010) found in her interview data that of the three elements of CRP: academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2006), her participants only spoke of cultural competence in regards to their understanding of CRP. She interpreted this finding to indicate the persistent challenge teachers faced bridging the gap between their ability to increase their own cultural competence and articulate the value it has in student interactions and their capacity to access that understanding to meaningfully affect student achievement and interrogate sociopolitical norms.

Furthermore, Young (2010) concluded that through the study one of the significant findings was that,

> [D]eep structural complexities in resolving issues of cultural bias among educators, the persistence and prevalence of racism in school settings, and the shortcomings of preservice programs and in-service professional developments to adequately prepare teachers to apply culturally relevant pedagogy to their practice. (p. 258)

This assessment showed that the confluence of challenges from teacher preparation, district expectations, and school culture proved high hurdles for teachers attempting to practice CRP.

Daniel (2016) demonstrated similar findings about what affects the learning of 16 pre-service in their teacher education program vis- à-vis CRP. Using surveys and group interviews, Daniel (2016) examined the emerging attitudes and understanding of this cohort of teacher learners. She then narrowed her population to do a more in-depth interrogation of four of the participants through observations and individual interviews with them working in their field placements. She noted that significant in affecting the teacher learners' ability to enact CRP was what she termed the "two-worlds" problem discussed by many teacher education scholars including, Gay (2002); Jacobs & Low, (2017); Darling-Hammond, (2002); Zeichner et al. (2015). This described the gap between the underlying philosophical tradition guiding the work in many public schools—banking model, transmission-based instruction—and the constructivist, CRP philosophies often valorized in university coursework.

Daniel (2016) found, much like Young (2010) and Puzio et al. (2017), that though the ideational understanding and acceptance of CRP was increased for teacher learners, they still struggled to actualize this understanding in their classroom practice. Additionally, participants in this study tended to see working on inclusion as an activity separate from academic work: "But they're not only there to be part of a community; they're there to learn…[CRP instruction at the university] has been very focused on the socialization of bringing these kids in" (Daniel, 2016, p. 588). She emphasized the effects the community of practice, specifically the influence of their host teachers, had on these teacher learners' as they grappled with their implementation of different aspects of CRP. Daniel (2016) examined how comments like, "I feel like at a school like here, all the teachers, they have said that direct instruction, …[is] one of the best methods to use here because a lot of students don't have the background knowledge" (p. 589). Such comments revealed the negative influence of curriculum toolkits and accepted, transmission-style classroom practices has on her participants' attempts to enact more culturally responsive teaching methods and implied that these aspects of their communities of practice cause them to revert to deficit perspectives on student ability.

Participants in Hinton's (2020) case study explored how teachers' understanding and perceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy, as well as their ability to implement practices associated with CRP indicated that their communities of practice, as well as their lack of training in CRP, limited them. This study was motivated on two fronts; a) by a perceived gap in the teacher practice that indicated an absence of CRP; b) a significant achievement gap as indicated by ACT scores between the populations of European and Asian American students and African American and Latinx students. Through semi-

structured interviews and document analysis of eleven teachers' lesson plans, Hinton (2020) determined that while most of his participants saw culturally responsive pedagogy as a viable approach to improve achievement for students of color, his analysis of their data showed incomplete or misguided understandings of CRP.

Hinton's study was informed by self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) which "refers to an approach to human motivation that explains how extrinsic motivation and social context can be transformed into intrinsic motivation" (p.57) and focused broadly on teachers experience with and relationship to trainings meant to improve their capacities to implement CRP. The key finding related to this aspect of the inquiry were that, teachers were resistant to change teaching with which they were comfortable, particularly without some extrinsic motivation to do so and if it necessitated engaging on race related issues.

Nine of eleven participants indicated limited awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy echoing understanding limited, similar to Young's (2010) participants, to seeing CRP as exhibited by use of inclusive texts. While all of the teachers in this study did incorporate some form of "informal collaborative learning" (Hinton, 2020, p. 68) which is consistent with CRP practices, Hinton pointed out that, like Brown et al. (2019) and Daniel (2016), several of his participant teachers indicated that they saw CRP as more applicable to English and social studies than STEM classes. This study also includes his design of a multiday, professional development session on helping teachers increase their capacity to enact CRP that explores universal design and project-based learning aimed at addressing discipline specific views of CRP.

The research described here about teachers and teacher learners attempting to enact CRP in their practice in K-12 schools showed that study participants consistently experienced significant difficulties translating their ideas about CRP into culturally responsive classroom practice. The participants in these studies also demonstrated they were most cognizant of the cultural competence tenet of CRP and only some recognition of the need to develop students as a community of learners. Additionally, all of these studies—with the exception of Puzio et al. (2017) which suggested that it was from community insiders that teachers were made aware of their missteps enacting CRP or who presented examples to further their culturally responsive practice—suggested that school structures, district rules, and extant communities of practice served to undermine and discourage new teachers and teachers wanting to employ more culturally responsive practice from doing so.

Most of these studies focused on teachers already working in the classroom. Daniel (2016) studied pre-service teachers as they took courses completing their training programs and completed student teaching. What bears further research given Brown et al.'s (2019) finding that additional training, through professional development sessions, had a positive effect on increasing CRP practice, are research sites and contexts which teachers or teacher learners are engaged with coursework on culturally responsive practices while working as teachers of record in schools.

Teacher Education and Hybrid Spaces

I look next at the literature on the urgency of teacher education programs to form future teachers capable of culturally responsive practice as they provide context for my theoretical lenses of sociocultural theory and critical consciousness. Additionally, I

review existing studies surrounding CRP in regard to teacher education programs and teacher candidates working in field placements.

Many scholars (Darling-Hammond, 2006 & 2010; Gay, 2002; Rychly & Graves 2012; Villegas& Lucas, 2002; Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko, 2015) note that there needs to be significant changes made to teacher education programs if teaching candidates— teacher learners—are to be equipped for the realities for the contemporary demands common in America's classrooms. Not only equipped to teach in the classrooms they enter, but as Darling-Hammond (2010) pointed out, equipped in such a way they will not experience the lack of success that drives the teaching profession's high attrition rate which is almost double that of similar careers and the remarkable statistic that over 40% of teachers leave the profession in the first five years of their career (Darling-Hammond, 2010)

As a shared critique of "early-entry" programs for certifying teachers, Darling-Hammond (2010) and Zeichner et al. (2015) discussed the ways in which these programs fail to provide teacher learners with adequate knowledge of the theories and philosophies underlying the practice of teaching and make those future practitioners poorly equipped to face the demands of the profession. "Early-entry" described both university sanctioned and non-academic organizations (e.g. Teach for America) who seek out college graduates with little or no teacher training and offer them full-time teaching positions after a 3-8 week training course and on-the job mentoring and/or continuing education.

Zeichner et al. (2015) asserted that these programs disregard the social foundations essential to good teaching, and serve only to create,

teachers who can implement teaching scripts, but who have not developed the

professional vision, cultural competence, and adaptive expertise they need to meet

the changing learning needs of their students or to continue to learn in and from

their practice" (p. 124).

They acknowledged these sorts of programs were born out of the need to address a

shortage of teachers and real or perceived short-comings in university teacher education

programs, but create a false and detrimental dichotomy between theory and practice.

However, they also examined the degree to which university-based teacher preparation

were also inadequate for preparing teachers to do democratizing work in the U.S.'s

increasingly diverse classrooms. Zeichner et al. (2015) argued that these programs often

communicate a disrespect for K-12 teachers and fail to access, in any meaningful way,

the expertise of schools and communities that could inform teacher practice.

Using tools from cultural historical activity theory and deliberative democracy

theory, the authors focused their ideas on transforming teacher education around

consideration of "whose knowledge counts in the education of teachers" (p. 123) and how

approaching current areas of conflict as potential spaces for collaboration is essential to

change. They proposed the creation of third or hybrid spaces that exist between university

classrooms and being teacher of record in a school where teacher learners develop their

cultural competency and academic knowledge while working with community-based

partners to inform their practice.

Zeichner et al. (2015) looked at Seidl's & Friend's (2002) collaboration between

the Ohio State University and the Mount Olivet church community as a model for what

they refer as "boundary spaces" (p.128) where candidates were practicing teaching, studying with a university professor, and additionally mentored by community members who were "adamantly frame[d]" as experts in an "equal status, cross-cultural experience" (p.128).

Developing cultural competencies and involving the learner and community voices in curriculum as Zeichner et al. (2015) examined can also be seen in the suggestions offered by Darling-Hammond (2006) and her look at what elements are necessary for teacher education programs to produce equipped and effective classroom teachers. Among her three pillars of effective teacher education programs is that they focus on working with schools that have diverse student populations to "help prospective teachers to understand deeply a wide array of things about learning, social and cultural contexts, and teaching and be able to enact these understandings in complex classrooms serving increasingly diverse students" (p. 302). This she found was too often lacking in many university teacher education programs and "early entry" training programs, which also tended to prioritize implementing pre-packaged and even scripted curricula.

Darling-Hammond (2006) pointed out that this latter focus in teacher training leads to two distinct, but related equally destructive realities. First, over focusing on a narrow and specific set of actions to do as a teacher, particularly in regards to pre-packaged curricula, leaves teachers unequipped for what happens when one particular approach is unsuccessful. She emphasized a need for teacher learners to have a complex knowledge of, "how people learn, and how different people learn differently, teachers lack the foundation that can help them figure out what to do when a given technique or text is not effective with all students" (p. 303).

Second, these types of curricula are often constructed by groups unassociated with the schools where they are being implemented. Darling-Hammond (2006) argued this all but assures difficulty with reaching the students and the instruction being effective and robs teacher learners of the opportunity to collaboratively construct lessons with experienced colleagues and center them on the students they are teaching. She stated that an essential aspect of teacher education is that it must emphasize connecting the learner with the learning and cause each teacher learner to, "confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and to learn about the experiences of people different from themselves" (p. 305). She suggested immersing teacher learners in all of the operations of their placement schools—parent/teacher meetings, committees, home visits, etc.—as a means of entering contexts where these preconceptions can be confronted and relationships built.

Though Darling-Hammond (2006) and Zeichner et al. (2015) aim their evaluative lights from different angles, the illumination overlaps in the language and suggested practices influenced by this study's undergirding theories and those typified in culturally relevant pedagogy. Further, the approaches these studies suggest have potential to spur this progress are underlaid with the theories of critical consciousness—Zeichner et al. (2015) noted community members given "equal status" (p. 128) and positioned as pedagogical partners—as well as sociocultural theory through their emphasis on systems which include multiple voices and cultural context in the teacher education process shown in Darling-Hammond's (2006) professional development schools PDS and Zeichner et al.'s (2015) "boundary spaces".

Smagorinsky et al. (2003) and Grossman et al. (2009) suggested work which might fit for these proposed hybrid spaces, and explored its potential for addressing perceived gaps between knowledge and practice of particular pedagogy. These researchers specifically studied the challenge posed by learning the theory and knowledge underpinning the skills of practice associated with professions (i.e., teaching) concerned with "human improvement". They arrived at similar findings, that separating theory and practice is a false dichotomy which serves to harm professionals' confidence and capacity to enact theory through practice.

Smagorinsky et al. (2003) reviewed case study research conducted on the teacher learners as they made their transition from university teacher education programs to their first classroom teaching positions. They found that, overall, the teacher learners struggled to enact in practice the pedagogies, specifically those centered on progressivist and constructivist theory, at their work sites. As a result, the students in the case studies often abandoned their university training in deference to the practices valorized by the communities of practice in place at their respective schools.

Smagorinsky et al. (2003) examined this challenge of new teachers enacting their university training as practices through the lens of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987) and "Vygotsky's notion of concepts, in which abstract principles are interwoven with worldly experience" (p. 1399). Part of this notion is that "concepts" are informed understandings (e.g. those associated with particular pedagogy) that allow for those understandings to be generalized and enacted with fidelity in various contexts. There are in this notion two types of concepts, spontaneous concepts and scientific concepts. The former, because it is learned solely through daily, personal activity in a particular context

(e.g., the communities of practice in schools) lacks generalizability to other contexts. The latter, scientific concepts, must be learned through formal instruction, like that of university teacher education programs.

However, Vygotsky (1987) admonished that direct instruction alone was insufficient ("a mindless learning of words, an empty verbalism that simulates or imitates the presence of concepts" [p. 170]) unless it "is mediated by activity in cultural practice" (Smagorinsky et al.,2003, p. 1404). In this case, by virtue of having primarily learned their respective teaching theories only through instruction and in abstraction without practicing them, the new teachers in the case study were seen to have developed "complexes" or "pseudoconcepts" (see Table 2, below). This caused them to lack the completeness of understanding needed to enact them in contexts where the culturally practiced activity was in conflict with them. Smagorinsky et al. (2003) concluded by suggesting creating hybrid spaces (e.g., inter-school teacher collaboratives; community partnerships, professional development focused in-service programs, etc.) similar to those suggested by Zeichner et al. (2015) to allow for teacher learners, and practicing teachers looking to enact progressive pedagogies—like CRP—, to develop those concepts in spaces supporting the cultural activity associated with them.

Table 2

Types of Generalization in Developmental Order (Smagorinsky et al., 2003, p.1402).

	Definition	Child's Example	Teacher's Example
Complex	The individual elements are associated with one another but not all are associated according to the same theme or significant traits.	Learning to label a canine a dog and then labeling any other 4-legged creature a dog.	Learning to label a group activity cooperative learning and then labeling any group activity cooperative learning even if students neither cooperate nor learn.
Pseudoconcept	The individual elements appear to be unified but have internal inconsistencies	Learning to label a canine a dog and then labeling any canine-like creature (e.g., fox) a dog.	Learning to label a group activity cooperative learning and then labeling any group activity cooperative learning even if it lacks some critical element such as teamwork, a shared goal, individual and group accountability, and so on.
Concept	The individual elements included in the set are unified by a single theme.	Learning to label a canine a dog and discriminating between dogs and other dog-like creatures.	Learning to label an activity cooperative learning when small, heterogeneous groups of students work as a team toward a shared goal in such a way as to be both individually and collectively accountable for the work, and work in such a way as to show cooperation and concern for one another and thus raise students' confidence and self-perceptions.

Grossman et al. (2009) agreed with Smagorinsky et al. (2003) in refuting the

notion of a theory and practice dichotomy and the need for professionals in practice

which "depends heavily on the quality of human relationships between practitioners and

their clients" (p. 2057) to benefit from purposeful learning in their field mediated through

their opportunities to practice their craft. They conducted a set of qualitative case studies

of eight professional education programs offering preparation for the members of clergy,

clinical psychologists, and teachers. As Smagorinsky et al. (2003) focused their

discussion on the full development of concepts as mediated through associated practices

with them Grossman et al. (2009) delved into the characteristics of how this cultural

activity can best be leveraged by training programs to develop practitioners'

understandings and performances of concepts. From their case studies of these programs,

Grossman et al. (2009) identified three key elements required to effectively prepare

professionals in the fields studied; representations, decomposition, and approximations.

(See Table 3).

Table 3

Concepts for Understanding Pedagogies of Practice (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 2055-2056).

Term	Definition
Representations	[T]he different ways that practice is represented in professional education and what these various representations make visible to novice
Decomposition	breaking down practice into its constituent parts for the purposes of teaching and learning
Approximations	opportunities to engage in practices that are more or less proximal to the practices of a profession

For professionals, like teachers,who work in fields that, "involve complex practice

under conditions of uncertainty (cf. Spiro, Collins, Thota, & Feltovich, 2003), the work is

seldom routine because human beings are notoriously unpredictable, requiring that

novices exercise professional judgment" (p.2058) Grossman et al. (2009) argued that the

"decomposition" of practice, breaking down the actions and thought processes of

complex activity, was indispensable to novices learning their craft, but a support that it's

not often practical to offer them in a context where they are not the professional of

record. They saw as essential then that students in these programs be able to see

competent examples of the practice as well as attempt the practice themselves through

"approximations" of practice in spaces created to offer, "more support and feedback than actual practice in the field allows" (p. 2077).

Informing Capacities for CRP

Through their studies on the key aims of effective teacher education programs Gay (1980, 2002), Rychly and Graves (2012), and Villegas and Lucas (2002) accepted the assessment that developing new teachers' capacities to enact culturally responsive teaching practices is critical. They affirmed how these capacities are informed by the larger theoretical frames of socio-cultural learning and critical consciousness as they discussed characteristics that they deem essential to equipping culturally responsive teachers.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) in fact list "socio-culturally consciousness" as one of their "six salient characteristics" (p. 21) of a culturally responsive teacher along with: has positive views of diverse student populations; sees themselves as change agents; see knowledge as constructed with students; knows about the lives of students; and connects instruction to students' existing knowledge-base. Writing from a position as teacher-educators and from their extensive experience in diverse classrooms, the researchers explored the different forces—teacher-learners' backgrounds, their school placements and students' backgrounds, the privileged, White, male, hidden curricula of most schools—that teachers should be made aware of and what dispositions should be nurtured in them and what skills they need to offset these forces.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) outlined the fifth and sixth strands they hoped to see in teachers' practice—*Learning About Students* (p. 26) and *Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Practices (p. 27), respectively. Here they discuss specifically by way of examples—junior high students whose teacher took their shared belief that water taste different out of different water fountains in the school to create a science and a statistics lesson; a teacher engaging her emerging language learners in an action research project in their community during the English-only movement in San Diego —the practices that might define CRP. They noted that enacting these practices required teachers who were disposed to constructivist teaching practices and had a developed sociocultural awareness if schools are to fulfill their role of educating all students and create a more just society.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) specifically studied teacher dispositions, Gay (2002) focused more heavily on the practices she feels are essential for teachers to master if they are to enact a culturally responsive pedagogy. Long a voice in the conversation surrounding the roles schools play, as Villegas and Lucas (2002) noted, in making more equitable spaces for students of color, Gay wrote 40 years ago on the need to consider the effects race has on student learning and opportunity. She asserts in *Social Education* that despite undeniable progress in the realms of diversity and opportunity for students of color, "to assume that the problems have been resolved is sheer folly" (1980, p. 52). Years before CRP's articulation as a theory, She suggested addressing the culture gap between schools and the students in them as *the* site for improving education in the U.S. saying, "Moreover, ethnicity, racism, and related issues are persistent, pervasive phenomena which affect all aspects of individuals' lives…" (Gay, 1980, p. 52).

Her approach in this article on preparing culturally responsive teachers capable of spanning this gap centered on areas of knowledge these teachers should explore to equip them for practice. Gay (2002) suggests as key components: A "Cultural Diversity

Knowledge Base"; "Designing Culturally Relevant Curricula"; "Demonstrating Cultural Caring"; "Cross-cultural Communications"; "Cultural Congruency in Classroom Instruction" (pp. 106-112). The first two of these areas are about obtaining facts and knowledge about cultures and about incorporating elements of cultures through "symbolic curriculum" and navigating a given society's preconceptions about certain cultures—societal curriculum"—within the mandated "formal curriculum" of schools. For Gay (2002) "Demonstrating Cultural Caring" was the only dispositional concern, though one she specifically highlighted the need for culturally responsive teachers to care deeply about maintaining an expectation of high achievement for students of color.

In the final two areas of knowledge, Gay (2002) articulated the need for teachers to engage in practices most clearly aligned with Ladson-Billings's (1994) concept of CRP. She noted how, "the communication styles of different ethnic groups reflect cultural values and shape learning behaviors and how to modify classroom interactions to better accommodate them" (p. 111) and the benefits to students' learning when material is presented through culturally recognizable protocols. In summing up, Gay (2002) stated that these interactional styles are not innate and likely unfamiliar to many prospective teachers, so it is up to teacher education programs to provide teacher learners with opportunities to learn, practice, and reflect upon them.

Reflection as a process was also taken up by Rychly and Graves (2012), who highlighted their conceptualization of culturally responsive teachers and the need for more of them in U.S. schools. They argued becoming a teacher capable of enacting CRP is a personal journey requiring a "deconstruct[-ing] of one's own cultural identity through reflection" (p. 48). While the authors acknowledged teacher education programs often

require reflection as an element of their assessment of teacher learners' work, they suggested that much of that reflection remains surface-level, focused on reaction to observations and work done. Rychly and Graves (2012) used a definition of reflection offered by Dewey (1910) which suggested consistent interrogation of beliefs or presumed knowledge based on evidence to support it.

From this they describe the characteristics they felt are necessary to see in the reflection of teachers enacting CRP. First among these was that culturally responsive teachers know their students and their thinking is not guided by culturally constructed stereotypes, but grounded in the evidence of who their students are. They noted the need for teachers' thinking to be "flexible and not dualistic"; that is, to recognize answers that are correct even if not aligned with the teacher's thinking, and to be "reflective about their own cultural frames of reference" (p. 48). Additionally, they suggested these reflections must be characterized by teacher learners being able to understand classroom practices from their students' perspectives in order to check their own attitudes towards students and be able to consistently identity for themselves areas for continued learning as they seek to meet the needs of dynamically evolving cultures.

These articles present an array of thought over several decades outlining different ways of characterizing and encouraging culturally responsive teaching practices and arguing their importance in teacher education reforms and in equipping teacher learners. They articulated the ways teachers must be equipped to create more culturally inclusive classroom spaces and offered ways to recognize those teachers. Further, they offered insight for the focus of additional research to understand if and how a teacher is enacting CRP as a theory of practice.

Alternative Assessments: Reflection and Evaluation

As was discussed specifically by Hinton (2020) and Daniel (2016), and referred to in most of the studies that discussed practice in schools, one central sticking point between pedagogies like CRP and the more traditional pedagogical approaches in schools is the concern about the pedagogy's academic rigor and ability to prepare students within the existing evaluation-driven curriculum. Incorporating Ladson-Billings's (1995) call for letting students demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways through assessments which are, "multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of excellence" (p. 481), requires that teachers rethink their approaches to assessment and how to evaluate those assessments in a way that fits the cultural of grading and evaluation reified in schools.

To make existing school spaces and the communities of practice in them more amenable to CRP, they need to become places where teacher learners, coming from university training programs, can develop their practice through cultural activity that is better aligned with their teacher education. This involves addressing concerns of assessment. Several scholars have studied how the move to more culturally inclusive and multiliteracy focused assessments require that teachers reconsider how they evaluate student learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Hung, Chiu, &Yeh, 2013) and how applying existing evaluative structures devalue and negate the inclusiveness of more complex assessment approaches (Towndrow, Nelson & Yusuf, 2013; VanKooten & Berkeley, 2016). Additionally, many scholars researching assessment agreed (Dawson & Siemens, 2014; Hung et al., 2013; Kalantzis et al. 2003; Kress & Selander 2012) standardized testing and verbocentric writing assessments are insufficient for assessing the multiliteracy skills and what are often multimodal products. In terms of evaluating these

types of products, rubric-based assessments (usually seen as capturing a wider, more inclusive and nuanced picture of performance) were also seen as lacking (Curwood, 2012; Towndrow et al., 2013) in their ability to accommodate the complexity of multimodal compositions.

Curwood (2012) and Towndrow et al. (2013) studied instances when teachers made spaces in their curriculum for more flexible assessments for student learning, but struggled to recognize the depth and complexity of that learning through evaluations of their students' products. Curwood's (2012) secondary teacher had students create digital, interactive posters on African American literary figures. This provided a space for students to access the affordances of sound, image, and movement along with words, and to be creative in how they portrayed the figures. However, the teacher had not considered how to evaluate the use of these affordances and the students' learning represented in them. The students' compositions were evaluated on the static product alone, using a rubric which, "privileged written language as the primary carrier of meaning" (Curwood, 2012, p. 241).

Towndrow et al. (2013) illustrated this gap between multimodal work being done in schools and teachers' abilities to appreciate it and their capacity to assess it. Their study of "Jeremy," a Singaporean, pre-teen student working on a school-wide, digital story-telling project, examined some of this complexity afforded by digital-media tools. As a response to the assignment the student created a three-minute-long video consisting of a series of hand-drawn images, a voiced-over telling a story related to his and his mother's various travels and living arrangements, and a soundtrack. However, the teacher's assessment of those multimodal products closely resembled those for more

traditional skills. This composition was assessed with a rubric that foregrounded traditional language concerns such as articulation (the clarity with which her students pronounced and annunciated during presentations), expressiveness, and correct grammar. She considered the images and soundtrack only in terms of their appropriateness to the "theme".

Curwood (2012) and Towndrow et al. argued that these approaches to evaluating multimodal/multifaceted assessments missed much of the knowledge and learning demonstrated in them, and that expanding teachers' perceptions and understanding of the various ways in which meaning is constructed and conveyed multimodally is essential to creating more valid and descriptive forms of assessment which, in turn, is key to teachers accepting more multimodal compositions in classrooms.

One specific approach to developing these better evaluative practices is to de-center the product and create evaluation protocols which include the process through formative assessments and reflection (Boud, 2000; Kress & Seelander, 2011; VanKooten & Berkley, 2016).

Specifically, VanKooten & Berkley (2016) looked at the effect of formative assessments, through conferencing and drafting, by following Berkley's experience as a first-year writing instructor leading her students through a video composition unit. Berkeley was motivated to have her students create a video for one of their compositions since they had had more exposure to the genre than to academic writing. One student in her course Berkeley felt was growing in her writing skills, but was unsure whether her student was gaining the capacity to struggle through making compositional choices to improve long term as a writer. However, during the video production unit, Berkeley

noticed that the student changed from fishing for direct advice from Berkley on what to do, to making her wrangle with her own compositional choices, skills the researchers noted endure beyond a specific product to their growth as writers—are what composition instructors want to see from students.

VanKooten and Berkley (2016) argued then for more in-process reflection to illuminate the work students are doing, as much for them as for their instructors. They found in-process, formative assessments raised students' awareness of their own process in ways that would allow them to replicate their choices in the future. Additionally, the importance of reflection as a guide to students' intent with choices they have made, but may not have executed expertly because of a lack of experience in a certain mode, helps to evaluate their learning (Albers, 2007; Townsend et al., 2013) without it being obscured by the quality of execution on the final product.

Conclusion

In this chapter I reviewed research aimed at examining the experiences of teachers and teacher learners enacting culturally responsive pedagogy in their practice sites, as well as literature examining the how that enactment is affected by the forces in their preparation and their classrooms informing their teaching capacities and their conception of CRP as theory of practice.

This research suggested the gap between teachers' and teacher learners' knowledge of CRP and their ability to enact it effectively and with fidelity persists. More study is needed to better assess teachers' understanding of culturally responsive pedagogies, what needs clarifying, and might help them translate this understanding into practice. Teacher learners occupy a liminal space—being both teacher and student—

complicated by often contradicting directions on how best to perform their work. This study seeks to add to this scholarship by focusing on participants who are teacher learners in the truest sense of the term; having gone through an "early entry" program, like those described in Zeichner et al. (2015), they are current new teachers of record, teaching full-time in their own classrooms as well as new teacher education students having their first courses focusing on teaching philosophies and pedagogy. This dissertation seeks to better understand how their positions in this space affect both their dispositions toward and ability to enact culturally responsive practices and by exploring the effect, if any, using an approach to lesson planning informed by CRP has on their abilities to actualize their learning about culturally responsive pedagogies in their practice.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

In this chapter, I provide an overview of my methodology for my inquiry into the experiences of teacher learners (Jacobs & Low, 2017) enacting culturally responsive pedagogy. As part of my conception of teaching CRP, as a pedagogy aimed at empowering long ignored and oppressed students within the very contexts of that oppression, my inquiry is informed by a theoretical framework constructed by critical consciousness and sociocultural learning.

My purpose in this study is to understand the experiences of a few teacher learners from a local university's English teaching methods course as they tried to enact culturally responsive pedagogies in their emerging practice and to explore what these experiences can tell us about CRP practices in K-12 education. As teacher learners, these participants were still forming their teacher identities, and I wanted to learn how they interpreted CRP and how (or whether) they responded to calls in their university course to enact CRP and to create more culturally inclusive classroom spaces.

I am a secondary classroom English teacher with 26 years of experience, and as discussed in the Introduction chapter of this dissertation, I have always sought, with varying degrees of fidelity, to enact a progressive, constructivist pedagogy. Being aware of the challenges I experienced, I wanted to understand the experiences of new teachers attempting to enact a similar pedagogy, one with the specific focus on addressing issues

of race in interaction and socio-political consciousness. I was interested in how the study participants'—Jennifer, Janet, and Samantha (pseudonyms)—integrated what they learned about culturally responsive practices in their English methods class and how their experiences were mediated by the use of a lesson planning tool modeled on the HiTCRiT (Foster et al., 2020).

I conducted this qualitative study with an overall constructivist methodology, in the role of participant observer as the participants' instructor in the methods course and when I conducted and analyzed the interviews. I come to this research with significant personal classroom experience with the cultural divide between teachers and the students they teach, and I agree with many other scholars (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Emdin, 2016; Ladson-Billings 1994; Zeichner et al., 2015) that teachers need to be better equipped to bridge this divide. Additionally, as a current classroom teacher in a school district where I committed 20 plus years and as someone who is preparing prospective teachers to enter that same district, I have a vested interest in exploring their understanding of CRP and how that understanding might grow and affect their practice.

While I discuss other aspects of my positionality later, I wanted to note here that to some extent I am still learning and developing my own understanding of CRP in the classroom. I must recognize that as a continuing secondary classroom teacher, the instructor of record for the participants in their methods course, and a researcher working with the emerging theory espoused by the HiTCRiT, I conducted this study from a number of perspectives. I argue that they are all aligned, but they are different nonetheless and need to be considered when assessing my analysis of the data as reported in the findings and discussion.

Research Questions

In forming the research questions, I was guided by Creswell's (2013) suggestion to think of my study as a whole and form a larger question that captures its intent and then ask sub questions to focus and guide essential lines of the inquiry. Broadly my research explores the underlying influences behind the gap between the scholarship and conversation surrounding culturally sustaining pedagogies and the presence of this theory of practice in classrooms. I examined how this gap might be influenced by the teacher learners' beliefs about teaching and their teacher identities and the culture and mandates of their schools and teacher education experiences. As represented in RQ 1c., I considered an obstacle to be "external" if it related to structural challenges to enacting CRP directly connected to a school or district policy with which study participants were expected to comply; a process in which they had to participate but lacked a voice in creating; or a pervasive, standing, cultural norm for their particular school. I labeled obstacles as "personal" when I understood them to be related to challenges study participants identified connected to their own teaching capacities, preparation for teaching, and their sense of agency in regards to instructional practices as new teachers.

    1. What are teacher-learners' understandings of and experiences with enacting culturally responsive pedagogies and what can these experiences tell us about CRP practices in K-12 education?

        a. What does "culturally responsive pedagogies" mean to teacher learners?

b. What obstacles do teacher learners perceive as affecting their attempts to enact CRP?

c. What effect does an instructional planning tool that includes student-focused, guiding questions that are informed by CRP have on teacher-learners' perceptions of their practice?

Design

Site and participants

This study was centered within an English teaching methods course for prospective middle and secondary ELA teachers at mid-size University in the South (U.S.). The University resides within and provides one of the main teacher education programs supplying teachers for its state's largest school district. The district encompasses the largest and most diverse urban area in the state, and 53% of the district's school population identify as student of color.

The participants for this study were drawn from an English teaching methods course where I served as the instructor of record for the university where the study is conducted. This course is part of the middle and secondary curriculum and is a requirement for students completing degrees in education and/or any person seeking state certification to teach in middle or high schools. In recent history, the students in this course were a mix of three distinct groups: a) those completing their undergraduate degrees in education ("undergrads"); b) those who have an undergraduate degree related to English studies and are completing a Master of Arts in Teaching degree the university offers ("MATs"); and c) those who have undergraduate degrees related to English studies

and are already working as full-time teachers through an "early-entry" program recruiting students with related undergraduate degrees to begin teaching without a teaching certificate, provided they enroll in a university to complete the requirements for certification through an "alternative certification program". All of the participants for this study were drawn from the section of the course I taught which was comprised of students from this latter category, alternative certification or "alt-cert" students.

I decided to focus on three teacher learners for the purpose of this study. This number of participants is appropriate for a qualitative methodology given the complex, unpredictable, and unrepetitive nature of the activities associated with teaching (Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein, 2006). While there was possible merit in studying a larger sample from the 15 students in the alternative-certification section of the course, choosing a smaller number of participants on which to focus allowed for deeper consideration of each individual's experience. I was guided in this decision by Patton's (2015) direction to consider a minimum number of participants to represent the phenomenon being studied and Eisner's (2002) assertion that generalizability need not be achieved through large numbers of statistics. Humans draw from a wealth of past events, reflections, and "canonical images" (p. 213) to draw conclusions more nuanced and complex than those offered by statistics.

These participants were chosen through a process of purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) in order to get a range of experiences—younger and older participants, middle and high school, ethnic representation, etc.—that represents the group as a whole. The decision to draw participants strictly from alt-cert students was made in response to observations of data from a pilot study (Foster et al.,

2020) of students' responses to using the HiTCRiT lesson planning template in a previous iteration of the course. Data gathered in semi-structured focus group interviews in that course indicated that teacher learners who were already working as teachers of record in a classroom had more agency over their instruction, and by extension instructional planning, which led to significantly different experiences than those of pre-service teachers in regards to planning and implementing CRP strategies. Therefore, to better understand how teacher learners at this stage understand and enact CRP, I focused the study on students who were continuing their teacher training even though they already had embarked on their careers. If the presence and implementation of culturally responsive pedagogies is to proliferate in schools, it made sense that teacher learners, who represent the clearest bridge between the academies where CRP is more widely embraced, and the public schools where it remains more aspirational than realized, (Foster et al., 2020) be the population I focused on in this study.

The selection of participants was made through direct invitation to participate after the end of the semester in which they studied with me as their instructor. I invited more potential participants than I had planned to focus on, with the intention of choosing from a group of potential participants those that, "directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information-rich cases" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 97). I received four responses indicating interest in participating, but one of those participants dropped out of the study just after the beginning for personal reasons.

Having reviewed the participants' course work as their instructor, I determined that the three remaining participants, while they limited the study in some ways, offered opportunities in others. The teacher learners in this study do not represent the "typical"

demographic of new teachers (white, suburban, female) discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation as one of the systemic challenges facing the education of students of color. While this will be elaborated on their profiles at the end of this chapter, the demographics of two of the participants, bi-racial African American and white; second-generation Filipino immigrant, set them apart from the statistical norm for new teachers.

I argue though that the perspectives of these participants offer some significant positives for this inquiry as well. First, that they do not fit the mold of the "typical" new teacher, even Jennifer by virtue of coming to the profession in her 40's after previous careers falls outside of the norm, suggests that they may offer insights on the experience of enacting CRP different from those typically studied. Second, as revealed in their profiles, they all received a K-12 education, by virtue of being in "advanced" courses of study which typifies the sort of traditional curriculum that culturally responsive pedagogy calls into question and which gave them a school experience very similar to the "typical" teacher candidates they do not demographically represent. Finally, as will be seen in the data and my analysis of it, they all demonstrated a desire to learn about the enact more culturally responsive practices, so understanding their experiences potentially sheds light on what challenges even teacher with dispositions predisposed to pursue CRP face in doing so.

Timeline & Design Overview

Data collection for this study was carried out in two distinct phases: collection of coursework and interviews with participants. The first phase, the collection and review of artifacts, occurred during the University's spring 2020 semester and consisted of various examples of student coursework. The second phase, was conducted through interviews

with participants at the beginning of June 2020 and in late July and August of 2020, prior

to the beginning of the next school year. All of these interviews were conducted virtually

using either Zoom or Google Meet, which allowed me to record audio and video of our

conversations during the interviews. These timelines were chosen to coincide with the

semester when teacher learners take their discipline-specific methods course and to

accommodate them in their role as teachers by interviewing them during the summer

break and after giving them ample time to reflect on their first years as teachers and the

work conducted in our course. This allowed me to work with these teachers when they

are both received classroom instruction on teaching methods and after having had the

opportunity to apply these methods in their own classrooms. The overall timeline for the

study then was conducted over the course of around six months and is represented in

diagram below (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Cycle of Data Collection and Analysis

The focus for this inquiry—teacher learner's experience learning a concept and

their enacting of that concept as teacher themselves—argued for a qualitative,

constructivist design informed by Vygotsky's (1978) concept of sociocultural learning as

a theoretical frame. This work, studying the emerging understanding of individuals from

different backgrounds and communities as they engage with and seek to understand an

educational theory of practice (CRP) that is itself constantly being developed and revised,

was guided, "by the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing way as they engage in meaning making" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 23). Therefore, my interpretations of the work will arise through, and be mediated by, a process where, "the participants construct the meaning, forged in discussions or interactions with other people (Creswell, 2013, p. 24). Creswell (2013) and Maxwell (2005) concur that this focus on processes is a hallmark of qualitative design and most apt for studying people in cultural contexts.

Additionally, the constructivist nature of my work in this study was guided by Eisner's (2002) discussion on changing beliefs in research. Two of the shifts he notes stuck out to me to offer a final argument for this methodology. First, he discussed the shift away from seeing research as the search for an extant truth concluding, "Knowledge is less a discovery than it is a construction" (p. 211). The second noted change was no longer insisting that research is about finding something that works and then replicating it without regard to context. Both of these argue the constructivist frame and capture some important elements of a study of this nature. There is no "one thing" to be found out; the whole point of studying teacher learners exploring CRP is that they represent different perspectives and are trying to create classroom spaces specifically characterized by the desire to accommodate difference.

Researcher Positionality

My involvement, as the participants' instructor at the site as artifact data were collected and the researcher analyzing that data and the data from their interviews, necessitated that I attend to another aspect of qualitative inquiry generally and constructivist frameworks specifically—researcher positionality. I chose to include this

articulation of my positionality at the head of my discussion on the study's design to foreground my recognition of it and my personal need to have kept it close at mind during my analysis.

A significant amount of the data collected for this study, and my analysis of that data, is centered on the HiTCRiT lesson planning template. I analyze the study participants' responses on two iterations of the template itself and their comments on that work in two interviews. The HiTCRiT template as discussed in Chapter 1, is ultimately a document of my own creation which came out of my collaboration with the other researchers in Foster et al. (2020). While this fact was never overtly expressed in the course of our time together in their methods course, through the natural course of the class, in formal and casual discussions, it is likely the study participants were aware of the role I played in forming the lesson plan template.

It was essential then that I attended the issue of reflexivity, in general but specifically in how it influenced the work around the HiCRiT template as I analyzed and interpreted the data. Reflexivity can be seen, "as awareness of the influence the researcher has on what is being studied and, simultaneously, of how the research process affects the researcher" (Probst & Berenson, 2014, p. 814) which serves as an apt description for my work here. As I considered the data related to the template, I needed to think about how the participants' responses about it in the interviews might be colored or tempered by knowing that I had created it. Additionally, in my data analysis, I needed to check my internal processes of sense making for how they might be being led my relationship to the HiTCRiT lesson plan and not to the data. My approaches to doing this are discussed in detail under data analysis later in this chapter.

Also, as part of a constructivist framework, I needed to acknowledge my cultural and historical background and social positionality, for my perspectives may have guided my attention (Charmaz, 2008) during this study. I am an illustration of the teacher demographics cited in the introduction to this paper. I am a white, male, PhD candidate and middle-aged teacher from a middle-class background. More specific to my positionality in this study relative to my participants is my gender and role as their instructor and experienced teacher, experience directly relevant to central focus of this study. I taught 19 years in a school where the students were 90% African American and 85% of them were from families living below the poverty level. All of my study participants were women, new teachers, my students during a portion of the study, teachers who work in the same district as I, and with the exception of one of them, half my age. I needed to consider the possible unequal power relationship based on cultural traditions around sex, race, and age, but more tangibly as it related to my position as their instructor and potential colleague.

Data

Data for this study will be collected consistent with the qualitative method that Sunstein and Chiseri- Strater (2012) "fieldworking": through interviews and collecting artifacts. Below are the specific sources of data that informed this work.

HiTCRiT lesson plan template

During the methods course, teacher learners were required have their classes observed three times by their principals and an observer from the university. Part of the evaluation of these lessons required them to write up their lesson plans on a specific form

that asks them to note the topic and objective of lesson, texts covered, activities performed, etc.

For the purposes of their lesson planning in this course, students were asked to employ the HiTCRiT Lesson Planning Template (Appendix A). The HiTCRiT template, as described in Chapter 1, incorporates the realms articulated in the heuristic by asking a series of questions about each. The questions are meant to direct the teacher learners to consider "what" they are teaching through the lens of "to whom" they are teaching. The teacher learners articulate their instructional choices in short responses written directly on to the template itself. This data illustrates how the participants interpret the CRP through their lesson planning and provides a window into how they engaged in the reciprocal process of the learning from their own teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Interviews

I conducted two rounds of interviews with the participants: a) the first set of interviews fairly soon after their school-year teaching had ended; b) the second set of interviews after my initial coding of the data from the participants coursework and their initial interviews.

Interviews were the key data source for examining the teacher learner's perceptions of the work they were doing, their experience using the HiTCRiT template to plan their work, and reflection of their growing knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogies. Interviews offered me the opportunity to garner information about lived experiences of the participants in their workplaces to which I was otherwise not privy, and particularly in second interviews, to check my analysis of the artifacts and first

interviews (Maxwell, 2005); they honored the dialogic and recursive nature of collaborative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I formed the interview questions for this study along Kvale's (1996) *traveler metaphor* which positions the interviewer as a traveler who, "wanders along with the local inhabitants [and] asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world" (p. 4)
As part of keeping a check on my positionality, and avoiding them searching for "an answer" I tried keep the interviews conversational, and allow the participants to speak about their experiences at length without interruption (See my interview protocols: Appendices B & C).

I specifically employed this method with my initial question in the first interviews to try and get a picture of the study participants as teachers in their classes by asking them to close their eyes for a few seconds and imagine themselves teaching in their classes and then to open their eyes and describe what they saw. I asked this question for two particular reasons; first to re-center the participants, at least mentally, in the site, their schools and classrooms, the other questions in the interview would pertain to; second, this question offered me the opportunity to search for some data that I was not able to gather as a result of the school shutdowns in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the switch to exclusively online teaching, I was unable to do observations of the study participants teaching their classes at their schools, nor were they all able to capture videos of themselves working with students. While I did not see their recollections of a moment in their classroom as a substitute for the opportunity to do a live observation, it did

provide some insight to how they saw themselves in the classroom and what that said

about their enactment of culturally responsive practices.

As noted, the individual interviews were semi-structured and conducted with the

intent to spur reflection from participants through discussions of their work. As suggested

by Mannay (2010), using an artifact to elicit participant responses allows them time to

reflect and generate thoughts not directly in response to the researcher "which can be

advantageous when the researcher is an insider who aspires to make the familiar strange"

(p. 107). My analyses of the interviews was guided by Gee's (2014) broad conception of

language as what, "we are saying, doing, and being" (p. 17). Allowing participants to

select the stories they told from their placements or hearing their responses to guide

questions about their coursework offered a prime means to explore their understanding of

CRP and their experiences enacting them in their teaching.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Interview Transcripts

To begin data analysis, I downloaded the teacher learners' coursework and video

captures from the recorded virtual interviews into a central, secure disk location. I then

transcribed all of the interviews. A significant amount of the data analysis for this study

came from multiple readings of the data gathered from the transcripts of the interviews.

I transcribed the data from the interviews as a script, with each line going from

margin to margin of the page, and I initially analyzed with line-by-line coding. I

employed gerund coding (Glaser, 1978) as it "preserves the fluidity of their

[participants'] experience and gives you new ways of looking at it" (Charmaz, 2014, p.

121). Gerund codes accommodated my positionality as a researcher and mirrored a stated

focus of the study—to study the teacher learners enacting CRP. Each line of the transcripts or the relevant sections of the templates served as the unit of analysis.

Open coding was most appropriate to my goals because, as mentioned, I did not begin my analysis with pre-conceived codes to fit the data to. The research questions sought to understand the participants' experiences with enacting CRP and using the HiTCRiT template in their planning, and this coding method supported that. Additionally, this method encouraged close connection to the data as I was required to read the data closely to determine how I to describe what I saw occurring.

The data I analyzed pertains to a profession I share with the participants and a set of roles I also must choose how to play. Choosing to code with gerunds forced me to better focus on their stated actions—allowing codes where possible to arise from their words and not from my projected perspective. Thematic coding here likely would have reduced the richness of their data and reflected more my understandings than theirs.

Focusing, even at the coding level, on analyzing the participants' data from a perspective of what they were doing or expressing honored the central goal of this study: understanding the gap between their learning about CRP and ability to put it into practice. Gerund coding, at face value, what participants do in performing their work provided me clear insights into their experiences. I employed this method of open, gerund coding to the interview transcripts and the HiTCRiT lesson planning template.

Category and Sub-Category Coding

Once the initial coding was complete, I revisited the coded data and began to work back through the data with a set of focused codes structured around the research questions and informed by the scholarship (Emdin, 2016; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Gay,

2002; Ladson-Billings's, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2014) on the central tenets of CRP to create categories. The choice to code for categories was guided by Saldaña's (2016) insistence that themes arise from or are outcomes of data analysis, not something which can be coded for. I recognized the following categories: Enacting/Understanding CRP; Obstacles to CRP; HiTCRiT template. I organized the initial gerund codes into these larger categories.

After focusing the data into sections based on these codes, I returned to gerund codes within each category to further consider these initial codes within their categories and created subcategories with a phrase recognizing something specific in the data relevant to my questions (Saldaña, 2015, 2016). As I began to code within the "Enacting/Understanding CRP" category, after encountering a number of gerund codes like "Creating relationships", "Seeing relationships as important", "Learning about students" I generated the sub-category "Student/Teacher relationships" (See Table 4 below). Understanding this to be a phrase that likewise categorized a set of culturally responsive practices, I returned to the literature cited above and created four additional sub-categories ("culture competence", "co-constructed learning", "sociopolitical consciousness", and "academic development") that I then used to guide my remaining analysis within this category.

Table 4

Sub-categories for Data Related to "Understanding CRP"

Category Code: Enacting/Understanding CRP	
Initial Code (examples)	Sub-Category Codes
"Showing skepticism of 'standard language'" "Identifying white gaze in curriculum"	Culture Competence
"Acknowledging desire to change to facilitator role" "Positioning students as teachers" "Validating student language"	Co-constructed learning
"Learning about students" "Creating relationships"	Student/teacher Relationships
"Acknowledging systems of oppression to students" "Helping students see themselves in classroom/ world"	Sociopolitical Consciousness
"Conflating 'academic language' w/ 'how to write'"	Academic Development

Since the HiTCRiT template itself is specifically meant as a site for the study

participants to capture their planning and demonstrate how that planning was guided by

culturally responsive pedagogy, I used same sub-categories to analyze data from the

template and section of our interview discussions related to participants work with lesson

plan. I completed initial line-by-line coding with gerunds describing the actions, either

explicit action ("Choosing a different type of text") or suggested by their description

("Creating opportunity for self-directed learning"). The initial codes were then sorted by

into the five sub-categories informed by CRP theory, for these examples "Cultural Competence" and "Co-constructed Learning", respectively. I applied the initial gerund codes to each line of the teacher learners' responses, for the interviews and for their responses on the template, so I also coded examples of instructional choices which did not seem to represent CRP principles. In subsequent, sub-category coding, I coded data like this as associated with the categories to which they seemed to run counter. For instance, the gerund code, "Seeking to avoid debates in class", from a moment in Samantha's data where she chose to focus on writers' rhetorical strategies in persuasive speeches as means to "diffuse any political debates" (LP#1) indicated a choice that steered students away from directing the learning in class or choosing what they wanted to focus on in the texts, which even though it is opposed to the principles inherent in "Co-constructed learning", was placed under that code.

Table 5

Sub-categories for Data Related to "HiTCRiT Template"

Category Code: HiTCRiT Template	
Initial Code (examples)	Sub-Category Codes
"Choosing a different type of text" "Choosing text based on text features"	Culture Competence
"Creating Space for Student Personal Response" "Seeking to avoid debates in class"	Co-constructed learning
"Responding to perceived student emotional need"	Student/teacher Relationships
"Interrogating traditional instruction's effect on Students" "Acknowledging the racial short-coming in curriculum" "Drawing learning from current events"	Sociopolitical Consciousness
"Allowing for student learning through self-assessment" "Encouraging student critical thinking"	Academic Development

The second round of coding only generated two sub-categories: "Focus on students" and "Guiding decisions". However, in both of these categories to some extent, but primarily the latter one, the initial codes indicated the study participants saw the template as addressing them ("Focusing me on students"; "Asking for intent"). Returning to the data again, I grouped data consistent with these ideas thematically as "Mentoring".

I then examined this data more closely through discourse analysis for what it may reveal about the participant's interactions with the HiTCRiT template in their practice.

Finally, for the data grouped into the second-round category "Obstacles to CRP", I returned with the intent of creating sub-categories from short explicit phrases to capture the teacher learners' perspectives. As the length of the findings and discussion sections guided by this category will attest, there was significant amount data surrounding what the study participants saw as obstacles to their enacting culturally responsive practices. To that end, I ended up collapsing some codes, for example, multiple codes denoting discipline related issues under the code "Discipline policies" and codes for different concerns participants had about knowing how to enact CRP under "CRP capacity".

Table 6

Sub-categories for Data Related to "Obstacles to CRP"

Category Code(s): Structural		Personal/Internal Obstacles	
Initial Code (examples)	Sub-category Codes	Initial Code (examples)	Sub-category Codes
"Questioning school focus--academic" "Seeing disconnect: school focus/student need" "Having teaching choices Limited"	PLC/ Instructional Culture	"Feeling unqualified to criticize" "Seeing problem w/ narrow personal focus" "Emphasizing overwhelming demands on teachers"	Capacity & Resources
"Seeing a lack of compassion" "Questioning school focus-behavior" "Defaulting to authoritarian interaction"	Discipline Policies	"Assessing Freedom to be Honest" "Expressing concern of non-conformity as new teacher" "Doubting knowledge as new teacher"	Lacking Agency
"Questioning objectification of students" "Conflating behavior w/ desire to learn" "Fearing becoming jaded" "Feeling pressure of collegial attitude"	Collegial Culture	"Doubting teachers are being equipped" "Imagining self w/ outpersonal experience to guide" "Seeing conflict between teacher learning and practice"	Gaps in Teacher Training

Memo Writing

While the coding for the perceived structural challenges ("PLC/Instructional",

"Collegial culture", "Discipline policies") were sufficiently described through their sub-

categories, I explored the data within the personal challenges with memos based on

thematic grouping of the initial gerund codes like "Assessing freedom to be honest" and

"Not Speaking". The memo, "Not Saying it Out Loud", (See Figure 2, below) associated

with these codes as well as ones on "Conforming" and "Being the New Teacher",

significantly developed my thinking as I discussed the findings on the obstacles the study

participants saw to their enactment of CRP.

Figure 2

***Memo Arising from Codes in "PLC/Instructional" & "Collegial Culture" Sub-
categories***

Memo: Not Saying It Out Loud

"How real can I get?" Janet says when I ask her whether or not schools are
creating spaces where all students can succeed—like she is asking my permission or
wondering whether this is a safe space to be honest. For a fleeting moment I feel like
this is strange because though I was her instructor in the spring, I should really fit more
squarely in the colleague role, an equal, just another teacher. Almost immediately
though, I recognize the place this comes from and begin to wonder what insight it
holds on the challenges of enacting CRP in the school setting.

My familiarity with this place comes from years teaching in public schools,
implementing progressive, student-centered practices in my classroom and promoting
them to other teachers, administrators, and district leaders.

More often than not promoting, specifically with "superiors", ended up looking
more like arguing and typically ended with little change. This meant that if I, or other
constructivist-minded teachers, wanted to do student-centered teaching, it would have
to be in varying degrees of contradiction to what the district wanted and what
administrators were expected to direct. So, we would dutifully sit through meetings
where we listened to how we were expected to teach, then return to our classrooms and
teach how we wanted to teach. We learned quickly to do only what we needed to, to be
left alone, and to be strategic about speaking out so as to not be reprimanded.

This is the space these new teachers inhabit in their schools as well. Janet's
need for affirmation could be dismissed as a quip in response to question, but she
follows it up with, "I just want…just like affirmation before I really go off," suggesting
what she is going to say is critical and that she's adamant about it. More so it suggests,

she sees this as something she is not supposed to do. Maybe she even sees it as risky to say it to me because I was an instructor in her graduate program or an experienced teacher who might repeat this information to others and hurt her professionally.

It also feels real because its genuine-ness is echoed in responses from Jennifer and Samantha as well. Jennifer asks me for some guidance with workshop teaching to supplement a year-long PD cohort she's joining on the topic. She wants my help because she questions the experience, knowledge, and expertise of the teacher leading the cohort, but before she does she says, "Yeah, I know, I know. We'll talk about that when we're not recording" …"and the people who are leading it, have never I believe...um...you know what I'm saying?" She leans into the camera and laughs knowingly at this statement. She positions me more as a colleague here, one who also may not want to be recorded speaking freely.

Samantha's discussion of her PLC also alludes to her recognition of the effect of power structures in schools. Her depiction of the effect having her principal be the supervising administrator (important distinction here) had on the group dynamic: "[the principal's presence] added another reality to the way in which we talked to her, the way in which we interact with...that was a hot mess" suggests fear of being judged. In this exchange, Samantha even seemed reluctant to be specific in her criticisms to me.

This is makes me consider a departure point in my experience and those of these new teachers: the absence of like-minded colleagues. I keep thinking about their responses in the interviews:

> Janet: "[I] tend to interject, but also, "They're like this!" (smiling, upbeat tone), you know? But I always feel like I'm kind of looked at weird like this like greenhorn you like doesn't know how it is yet, you know
> Samantha: "even if I voiced, maybe a disagreement or I pushed back a little bit, it wasn't really received or reconciled"
> Jennifer: "I don't like to get educat… or excuse me...administrators involved and stuff like that because of the disciplinary choices or the way the system is setup."

In these, I see not only a fear of how they would be perceived by superiors, but by their colleagues. In every one of these statements there is an implied sense of being an outsider, and to some degree alone, in a job where having support is so important for success and longevity. They either experience "push back" (presumably on instructional choices) being ignored or being patronized for "not knowing how it is yet". Perhaps most concerning, is knowing that to lean on the support of their administration, is to encourage an approach to discipline they see as biased and toxic (see memo on behavior).

It seems the participants have learned to be silent as a defense mechanism for inhabiting spaces that don't support their ideas about education or their attempts to enact the ideas they are learning in their teacher ed programs. The difference between their experience and mine though, is they aren't fortunate enough to have a community of colleagues who can sharpen their skills and with whom they learn, grow, and be supported. They are keeping their thoughts from everyone. Further, as new teachers, they don't have they repository of skills and breadth of knowledge needed to

confidently perform CRP, and so rely on provided curricula. Janet sums this up beautifully in with her reflection:

> It's just a weird like hive mind that kind of happens, and it's like and I just don't even realize that I've adopted that weird mentality, about my kids and I'm just like, "How? What?" but it's not my mentality it's like it's just it's so weird to not think what everyone around you thinks, if everyone thinks that. So, I try to break that rhetoric sometimes, but gosh sometimes I just become what I don't like. I don't like that.

Analysis of HiTCRiT Lesson Plans

I took two distinct tacks in my analysis of the HiTCRiT lesson plan template. The first, described earlier in the *Interviews* section, was to do line-by-line coding of participants' written responses in the same way that I had coded the interview transcripts. From the initial, gerund codes of these responses, I categorized the codes into the CRP tenet categories I used in the analysis of data related to the participants' knowledge of CRP.

My analysis of the lesson plan template after open, gerund coding seemed to indicate shifts in the participants' teaching toward more culturally responsive practices. I was prompted by this perceived shift, and my analysis of the teacher learners' interview responses about the template serving as a guide or mentor in their planning process, to reexamine the HiTCRiT templates to explore these shifts and better understand what they indicated about the teacher learners' developing concept of CRP.

For this second round of analysis on the lesson plans, I chose to the focus on the participants' first plans, submitted in the first four to six weeks of the semester we were in the English methods course together, and their final submitted lesson plans. I analyzed these two sets of plans using principles of discourse analysis.

Gee's (2014) conception of discourse analysis as looking at language for how it communicates what we want to say, who we are, the power we perceive ourselves having, and how we see ourselves relative to others, make it essential to the analysis of these data. I examined the participants' language for how they engaged in the "building tasks" of, "Practices", "Relationships", and "Connections" (Gee, 2014, pp. 140-141) to understand their developing connection to CRP practices and their positions to and relationships with the students and the curricula they were expected to teach.

Discourse analysis also allowed me to attend to the intertextual connections the participants were making which might reveal their thinking on CRP, and explore how they engaged with the larger, big "D" (Gee, 2014, p. 25), discourses in our culture to see their thinking on the systemic change called for by CRP researchers (Brandt, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2014).

For this analysis, as can be seen by the example sections from Samantha's lesson plans in the subsequent chapter, I focused specifically on the participants' use of pronouns and verbs in their descriptions of their lessons. Gee (2014) argues that attentiveness to linguistic detail is an important aspect of validity in discourse, so considering what these two linguistic elements demonstrated about the teacher learners' relationships to their students and their planned practice, were good indicators of their developing understanding of CRP. Attending to the pronouns lent insight into how the participants positioned themselves and students in the classroom (as co-learners or more traditional teacher/students) and who have agency over the curriculum and the choices of texts and responses. Likewise, an examination of the verbs in these descriptions provided insight to the nature of the work being conducted; specifically, whether it engaged

students and the teacher learners in constructing knowledge or whether it directed the students' work toward guessing at predetermined "answers" for evaluation.

Throughout my discourse analysis, I sought to attend to "Convergence", the degree to which my analysis of the discourse is echoed in my analysis of other data, and "Agreement", whether other readers, in this case the participants themselves, came to similar conclusions on the data (Gee, 2014, p. 142) as a means of maintaining its validity.

Participant Profiles

To preface the findings and discussion of the data generated by them, and the conclusions drawn from that data, I offer brief profiles for each of the study participants. The profiles present a picture of the learners these teachers were themselves, how they remember their school experiences, and where they teach now. I sought here to provide context for these teacher learners' voices in the data and for the experiences depicted by those voices.

As teachers in the local district's alternative certification program, all the participants are in their first year of teaching at their respective schools. The district is in the top 30, by total student population, in the US. Students are assigned to their schools via a complex system of magnet programs, where they live, and various demographic markers seeking to mitigate the lingering vestiges of Jim Crow and Southern segregation policies. As such, though the participants' schools span a wide geographic sample of the county, what that means for their population varies.

While each of the participants are at the same point—in their first year in the classroom—in their teaching careers, they vary in age, cultural identity, and range of experience. I offer these profiles as a means of understanding the teachers behind their lived experiences being new to the classroom and trying to enact more culturally responsive teaching practices.

Included are descriptions of their teaching contexts and, at the end of each narrative profile, a quote taken from the various data sources. These profiles and quotes, without commentary, aim to allow the reader to round-out their understanding of the voices in the study and better understand the perspectives from which they approach enacting CRP.

Jennifer:

A native of the city where she still lives and now teaches, Jennifer works primarily with 11th graders in a range of English and ELA related classes (specifically a course called "Reading Intervention", designed to help students who are perceived as being "behind" in their skills "catch-up" to grade-level). Age 42, Jennifer came later to teaching than most of the teacher learners in our methods course. She took a circuitous professional path, reminiscent of her varied performing arts skills and education, to becoming a teacher. Jennifer worked in public relations for a time before returning to school to study health and wellness. This led to both teaching courses on the subject at a local private college and leading programs on health and self-care in-house for large local companies.

With these companies, Jennifer began to identify what she saw as a compliance culture: the company stated a commitment to providing health and self-care training, she created and led this training, but company support for employees trying to implement the practices she was teaching and recognition of the principles more broadly in office culture were non-existent. This led Jennifer to start her own business offering these trainings on a consulting basis to different groups.

One of these groups was the high school where she now teaches. Riverway High School had obtained a grant to offer self-care and mindfulness training for students, and

after year working with students in that capacity, the principal approached Jennifer about a job and suggested she pursue certification. She recalls the decision this way: "…it just didn't make sense to not to be teaching. Yeah, I was a little reluctant going into it, but I finally have come to the realization that I am supposed to be here." Chief among her reasons for "being here" in education is a commitment to truth and desire to create individualized spaces in her classroom to discuss, "the oppressive systems that can happen"..

Jennifer's school is situated on a far side of the county, in what is generally characterized as white, lower- and working-class. The school's population reflects this for the most part. The largest demographic group is White students (52.6%), followed by African-Americans (20.9 %), and Hispanics (22%). This diversity in the student body does not carry over to the staff however. Only 8% of the faculty identify as persons of color. Additionally, 76% of the students at the school qualify for free or reduced lunch, (68% at the free lunch level). While her students' experiences do not mirror her own public school history—she was identified as gifted and ability-tracked in elementary school and attended the performing arts arm of the district's most highly-regarded (also least diverse and wealthiest) magnet high school—, she credits her involvement in the arts (beginning at age three), to her arts education, and her upbringing for making her comfortable with and desirous of working with diverse colleagues and students.

She recalls fondly how her middle school was located closer to the downtown (more culturally and ethnically diverse) area of the city and how her love of dance opened up opportunities for friendship with people who were different than she, "I joined the dance team—only white chick on the dance team." Further her family life and life as

a performer widened the scope of her experiences with others, "…we were around all kinds of people. We would go to Black church sometimes because there was a Black church next door to where my mom worked, so we would go there. I grew up back stage in a theatre, so I saw it all as far as diversity goes."

Jennifer remembers her public school student experience positively. She characterizes herself as "a high-performer, independent, mature": a student who valued education but struggles to pick something that excited her. She says that her experience in school was guided by her valuing education, but she recalls, "…there were some things where I was just complicit and did what I was supposed to do; I can't tell you there was something that necessarily excited me."

When asked to name a specific moment from her educational experience she returned to discuss her first-grade teacher whom she had lauded at the beginning of our follow up interview for the amount of freedom and individuality she had permitted the students. Here though she offered a telling prologue to that story:

I was in that glorious first grade class, but before that I was in this class and I got moved out. This teacher…we sat in rows; I'm seven years old. She sat and screamed the whole time and screamed and screamed and screamed, and I hated it. I was a sensitive little…I was so sensitive and I hated it. I also had an art teacher at that school who screamed at me all the time, so I never did art. I cut art class, I never did visual art until I was probably 36 years old, I started getting into visual arts. I had a piano teacher who was always good at seeing me as an individual; really, I had several teachers who could, and those are the teachers

that stand out to me, the ones who could see we as an individual and allow me to

flourish.

Janet:

A new arrival in the southern city where she attends graduate school and teaches,

Janet grew up the daughter of a Filipino emigrant, single mother. Janet characterizes

school as a very solitary pursuit for her; one she saw as, "holding up her end of

the immigrant bargain". She worked really hard to get straight As, while her mother

worked really hard to support the two of them.

This hard work showed in her being put in advanced, or gifted, classes early in

her school years, and though Janet found connections with her teachers and saw school as

a welcoming place, she did not set out to become a teacher in her university studies.

Beginning as a neuro-biology major and then music major, she changed course a second

time in her senior year to graduate with her bachelors in English. She took a couple of

years off after her undergrad before beginning to work in daycare where she had the

opportunity to teach pre-K and kindergarten children. She talks about the inspiration she

found in this time, "Teaching kids to read, like 'holy crap! You couldn't read last week,

and now you're reading to me'".

More than academics, Janet cherished working with students on interpersonal and

social skills: not making fun of a classmate's hair texture or learning about the ills of

prejudice and discrimination with these children. She recalls, "I was like, wow! School is

so much more than getting an 'A' on something. How could I do this as a career? How

could I get into teaching as fast as possible? So, I joined the alt-cert program."

Her leap into teaching landed Janet in teaching 7th grade ELA classes at a middle school in the south-central part of her county. The school is situated about twelve miles due south from the city's center and just west of the interstate that locals use as short-hand for describing the relative social standing of neighborhoods: east of the interstate equals more desirable, west of the interstate, less so. The neighborhood is a central area for the logistics industry which, as a whole, is the largest employer in the metropolitan area. The school draws its students from older working-class subdivisions and a nearby mobile home park.

Lansing Middle has around 1,000 students and while white students make up the largest single demographic (44.4%) in the school they are fewer than the combined Latinx (24.6%) and African American (23%) populations. Eighty-four percent (84.4%) of students are considered to come from economically disadvantaged households. However, even with this ethnically diverse population, only 15% of the faculty (eight African American, one Asian, and one Latinx) identify as teachers of color. Janet represents one of those teachers, and one who might identify as well with occasionally challenging economic issues, but she points out that her early admittance in advanced/gifted and talented classes made her school experience quite different from those of students: "I know the students I have now are not the student I was or the kids I went to school with."

Janet characterizes her experience with school as a positive but solitary one. Since her mother worked and was a recent immigrant to the United States, time and language constraints didn't allow for her to be overly involved in Janet's schooling. So, she sought those relationships at school with her teachers, and finding them, grew to love school and was quickly put into gifted education classes.

She suggests this designation may belie the depth of the learning taking place in these classes though. Her presence in these classes, Janet says, was more about that unspoken deal with her mother, one she says she shared with her peers who were also children of immigrant parents, that her job was to get As. She says about her experience in elementary and secondary school, "Don't know if I remember anything I learned. It was I need this grade, so I get this right; it wasn't about learning. Learning doesn't become important to me until the end of undergrad or grad-level classes."

Still, Janet recognizes the series of advantages being tracked into these classes gave her, not the least of which was the opportunity to attend a newly built high school which served the gated community suburbs as well as students from in town. This school offered advanced placement classes from the moment of its opening. The teachers tended to be more experienced, though all the AP teachers were white, and the facility was well-resourced and new. Her recognition of these advantages and the opportunities they afforded her also played into her decision to enter teaching:

> "I can only speak for my experience; I don't know the experience of non-gifted program students. Which I like working with my students now because I don't assume to "know" their experience. Working with the kids in the kindergarten and pre-k programs made me realize I want make things better for everyone around me who doesn't have it as well I had it."

Samantha:

Also a native of the county and a product of the public school system in which she now teaches, Samantha spent her first year in the classroom teaching what her school would categorize as comprehensive 11th grade English classes, classes where students

have not been ability-tracked into accelerated or advanced placement classes. Though she is the youngest participant in the study, much like Jennifer, Samantha also did not initially pursue teaching as a career.

In fact, she intentionally avoided a degree in education on principle. She was committed to studying English in college, but, "Every time I told someone I was studying English, they were like, 'So you're going to be a teacher', and I was like "No! that's not all you can do! I'll show you!. So I did, and I got into nonprofit work." She began with this group as an intern during her final year of college, which turned into a full-time job writing stories and social media posts for the organization. Her tenure with them was short-lived. While she believed in the organization and enjoyed the team with whom she worked, she hated her job. Though she could intellectually understand the role of social media in the larger organization, "The work we were doing was in Africa, and I was doing social media posts and could not connect in my brain how what I was doing mattered, "she recalls. "I was not impacting anyone directly and I hated that."

What the job did allow Samantha was flexibility and significant time to volunteer with her church where she began working in their children's ministry as a teacher in their kindergarten Bible studies classes. The woman heading the ministry was a career teacher in the public schools and gave her and the other volunteers guidance on structuring lessons and setting up their classrooms. Samantha remembers this teaching providing her the connection she was missing in her day job, "I loved it. I loved preparing the lesson for the kids. I loved, even the discipline with the kids. I realized I was gifted as a teacher and felt like I was doing something useful." Wanting then to get into education, she recalls

exploring, "How do I get into the classroom as quickly as possible and without having to do an entire under-grad degree? That's when I found the alt-cert program."

This program led her to Spruce River High School outside of the city center. The community around the high school has a varied make-up. Even today the area teeters on the edge between suburbs and what many might think of as rural, including expensive planned communities, many traditional 50's and 60's subdivisions, but also several family-sized farm properties and some low-income housing. Spruce River's neighborhood maintains a sense of community pride stemming from its beginning as a town separate from the city and the fact that many residents from that time, or the next generation of their families, still live there. However, the socio-economic variety of the homes and the families occupying them does not necessarily carry over into the school's demographics. A district student assignment plan which allows for many options at the high school level, including a complex magnet school system, and a robust parochial school system, results in many students with more academic support at home opting to attend other high schools.

Spruce River has a student population of 1,700: 38.1% of the students are African American, 37.4% White, 14.5% Latinx , and 10% other nationalities or ethnicities. However, only 8% of the faculty (12 of 105 total teachers) identify as persons of color and 70% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged. While Samantha is biracial herself, in her own words she expresses why relating to this diverse student population is a challenge:

> " I am multiracial and I grew up pretty privileged. I would say like, upper middle
> class, and so I went to the nicer, better schools that are here. Who I relate to and

how I relate to school truly, tends to be that of white culture. Uhm…just in

general and so, although I am, African American, and would identify as such,

well really identify as mixed race. Nonetheless, I'm a person of color who

identifies culturally not necessarily with those of color, and so I'm teaching a lot

of students, I don't culturally relate to very much."

She also notes how the home influence on her education stemmed from her parents'

individual experiences being born to poor parents, being the first in their families to

attend college, and valuing education as a means to a better life.

Samantha remembers that she enjoyed school because she was good at it and in

her house achievement—in the form of straight As—was assumed as the expectation. "I

got selected through the lottery for the Traditional Program, so I had a path there through

high school with those schools."

The county's "traditional program" is a school option for parents to send their

students to a set of specific schools in a district that has over 120 different facilities.

Teachers and administrators at these schools commit to delivering a school experience

that pays homage to what is considered "traditional education" in American schools.

Students wear specific uniforms and are given a significant amount of homework; the

teachers present a "basics" curriculum through a transmission style pedagogy with little

to no differentiation.

Samantha stayed in the traditional program until high school when she applied to

the district's most highly-regarded (also least diverse and wealthiest) magnet high school and

was accepted. There she remembers the school having a student body where everyone

had similar academic ability and says, "It was super rigorous and competitive. All of high

school felt like a competition." She notes that it was in her AP classes in English, where she loved the discussions on literature, that she first considered majoring in English in college, but conceded that in general, "... a lot of education had to do with achievement for me, and it wasn't until later in college, where I got to choose what I studied that I valued education for the sake of enjoyment and enrichment rather than just achievement."

This explains her consternation with the teacher she mentions as a memorable moment in her education. Samantha couches her memory within her discussion that as she matured as a student, she became more confrontational toward teachers she saw as not teaching or hindering her desire to achieve. She recalls a pre-calculus teacher whom she characterizes as focusing more on pushing a learning skill than teaching math:

> I remember raising my hand and saying, 'When are we going to learn math? When are you going to teach us stuff? Because he had just lectured about something that, to me, was unnecessary. I remember being frustrated in that class because I wanted to learn math. I enjoyed math; I was good at math, and I wanted to prove I was good at math, and (in that class) there wasn't much space to do math. It was more discussing why it's important to sit and struggle through a problem instead of just going to him for help. While I would probably agree with some of the sentiment of his pedagogy, now, I think the way he was expressing that as a teacher to the students was not effective for me as a learner.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented a detailed discussion of this study—its scope, participants, and data—and the methods I employed and in my analytical

approaches. Following a constructivist frame, I described how my interview protocols sought to elicit the participants' stories of their experiences in the classroom and as they enacted or struggled to enact CRP. The open-endedness of my questions led to interviews which took on the character of conversations among colleagues more than rigid, question-and-answer sessions, and lasted an hour or more with each participant and during both rounds.

Additionally, I provided in this chapter a discussion of my positionality and detailed participant profiles which further illustrate the ways in which my collegial connection with the participants informed my analysis and provided insights into the data. This combined with my description of the coding process and how it helped me to stay close to the language of, and led me to follow up with, the participants, argue my confidence in the findings I explore in the next chapter.

In the following chapters, I present the findings from my study with the three teacher learners—Jennifer, Janet, and Samantha—and through discussion of those findings offer what I have come to understand about their experiences trying to enact culturally responsive pedagogy as first-year teachers.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Teacher Learners' Knowledge of CRP

In reviewing the data for findings on the participants understanding of culturally

responsive pedagogy, I relied heavily on Ladson-Billings's (1995) articulation of the key

criteria in culturally relevant teaching and other scholars' (Au & Jordan, 1982; Emdin,

2016; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Paris & Alim, 2014) discussions of its practice. I

discussed the propositions Ladson-Billings saw as guiding her theory of culturally

relevant teaching earlier in this paper, but I turned to her summation of its key criteria in

discussing the findings of the participants' knowledge on CRP. She says, "culturally

relevant teaching must meet three criteria: an ability to develop students academically, a

willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a

sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (p.483). Additionally, Gay's (2002) assertion that

CRP is a pedagogical frame imbuing every aspect of instruction and not an isolated unit

or approach to a specific part of the curriculum and Paris's and Alim's (2014) emphasis

on culturally sustaining practices of cultural pluralism and inclusion of diverse texts and

interaction styles, were key in my analysis of the data. These guides focused me to

examine the degree of understanding each participant had about CRP and its need to

"problematize teaching and encourage teachers to ask about the nature of the student

teacher relationship, the curriculum, schooling, and society" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.483).

My analysis began with gerund coding of participants' decisions in their planning and of their responses in interviews. Interview questions directed participants to recall their experiences over the previous year as teachers and teacher learners, focusing on their work in those two capacities. As I collapsed those initial codes under the category "Understanding CRP", it became clear that a more nuanced and accurate analysis required I code for five sub-categories (see Table 4; Chapter 3) These sub-categories fit the Ladson-Billings criteria driving my analysis and created a better-informed picture of the participants' understandings of CRP.

Cultural Competence

Each of the participants' responses to interview questions on the nature of CRP and how it differed from other pedagogies they had been exposed to, mentioned including texts representative of the students' cultures and ones that would be relevant to those students.

Janet expressed this in terms of what she saw as a deficit in her school's curriculum: "I know we're not racial equitable. We don't teach enough like, racially equitable material, and I know a lot of the material that we teach doesn't reflect the students that we teach." (Int. #1) She additionally challenged a misconception about the universality of themes and perspective taking that she sees as hindering more inclusive texts:

…my classes aren't inherently white, so why would they care about reading this? Where's their pull? They can't put themselves in, not saying they can't put

themselves into the character or can't put themselves into the story, but it's like we

ask kids of color and black kids all the time to put themselves into things that

aren't them. (Int. #1)

Janet's comment here demonstrated an understanding that these more inclusive texts need

to be integrated throughout the class and not "exoticized" as texts by others (Ladson-

Billings, 1995) at particular times or events. She mentioned that there are at times a

chronological progression to texts, but that texts by African American writers are often

relegated to Black History month. She noted, "I don't want to teach literature by black

people only in February… I'm pretty sure black people were writing back then [referring

the time periods covered in the chronologically organized curriculum], but okay. I'm

pretty sure like women were writing." (Int.#1)

Her recognition of CRP as including culturally diverse texts went beyond

discussion in the interview and can be seen in the analysis of her HiTCRiT lesson plans.

Janet's first lesson plan was submitted during Black History Month and prior to schools

moving exclusively to remote learning in response to the Covid-19 global pandemic. This

lesson centered on Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech: a ubiquitous text

for this grade-level at this time of year and indicative of the practice Janet noted of

focusing on African American writers only during certain times of the year. However, her

final lesson plan for the year occurred during her time teaching online, a time that

participants universally characterized as one when their individual class curriculum was

less dictated by institutional oversight and more left up to them to develop. Janet used

that freedom to do a unit on visual art, specifically paintings, from the Harlem

Renaissance. In this choice, and the way she discussed it in response to the focusing

questions of the HiTCRiT planning template, she showed not only an understanding of the cultural competence aspect of CRP in regard to the ethnicity of her students, but more widely in recognition of her students' cultural identity related to their age.

Janet's response to the template's prompt on how her choices and practices honor the communities her students represent by noting that for her students, reading online texts—ones that are often multimodal and interactive—was more common than reading physical, hardcopies of books. She emphasized this when she said it,

is a reality of the digital age that we're in. So, presenting students with something other than print felt like an acknowledgment of that reality and a means of expanding the horizons of how we interact with what are perceive as texts (Int.#1).

Combined with focusing on cultural competency through her choice of Harlem Renaissance artists ("we haven't read many texts that have been composed by anyone who wasn't white." [Int.#1]) she recognized that this expansion of the perception of "texts" is meant to "tap into those comfortable spaces of communicating without the pressure of being analyzed and assessed, just saying what they think and why they think it" (Int.#1). Janet indicated this approach aimed to expand students' capacity to analytically discuss texts in the non-academic and less formalized interaction styles common to their communities.

Jennifer first indicated she recognized cultural competence and inclusive texts as an element of CRP by echoing—through a sarcastic observation in her interview— Janet's observation about the infrequency with which texts by writers of color are included in a curriculum. "I don't know if that's unusual or not, but I am hearing that it

may not be" (Int.#1) Jennifer said with a knowing laugh after sharing that during one of

her first observations/collaborations with high school students prior to entering the alt-

cert program, she joined with an English class as they read *The Hate U Give*—a young-

adult novel about the social and personal fallout from a police killing of a black teenager.

She acknowledged she was not aware of the term CRP entering the classroom, but shared

similar thoughts about its cultural competency component through what she would expect

to see as a student in a culturally inclusive classroom: "The first thing as a

student…being able to see myself in the curriculum and being able to see myself in the

books that I am reading" (Int. #1). She used the metaphor of the shared dinner table

where students "bring our foods we like and let's share and let's enjoy that and be

represented" (Int. #1) and said she saw culturally responsive teaching as including shared

voices. This is something she noted as particularly important for the large number of ELL

students she teaches who need to, "have the opportunity to see and share about their

culture and…reflect on where they came from" (Int.#1).

Samantha echoed this focus on students' culture in her comments extending it

beyond just texts and beyond a focus on students' cultural competency alone. She

included considering students' cultures in how lessons are structured and taught as well

as allowing them to influence the content. Additionally, she expressed that developing

cultural competency was important for her as a teacher as well:

> I think it means being involved in student culture…uh whether that's your culture
>
> or not . It means explicitly and intentionally thinking of the way your kids would
>
> think and regarding that and how you construct your lesson plans. It would mean
>
> communicating and in a way your students understand…culturally (Int.#1).

Samantha showed her understanding of that here, and echoed Janet's and Jennifer's thoughts on inclusive content: "integrating things that the students are familiar with or might be familiar with or are written by or created by people from their cultures" (Int.#1).

Co-constructed Knowledge

The participants often connected CRP's tenets of a shared need for cultural competence between students and teachers and intentional inclusion of texts created by members of the students' cultures, likely to be different from teachers' cultures, with a recognition of the instructional styles and practices necessitated by this inclusiveness.

> Samantha: "A student could draw a picture and then write a paragraph about it, or we could just write an entire paper and 'cuz they like to write, or a student could write a poem…I would say allowing like, assignments that allow multiple types of responses so that students can express themselves, their answer, or their conclusion…" (Int. #1).

> Jennifer: "…the assignments I gave them lended themselves to explore their own selves, explore their own personal journeys; students should have agency and choice, and that is based on my own personally experience of being in the classroom--the type of learner I was" (Int. #1).

> Janet: "I just feel like we need to be a little bit more humble in terms of how we are culturally responsible or how our teaching's culturally relevant, if we're not including the students' input. And I feel like kids especially like, at their age and especially in middle school, they're not given enough agency or enough room" (Int. #1).

These comments illustrated the teacher learners' perspectives on students' positions in the classroom as collaborative participants in the learning process with them. However, participants also discussed (as will be seen in the findings on obstacles to CRP implementation) how practices informed by these theories were not common in many classrooms and were de-incentivized by standard school policies.

Knowing that they saw developing more equal classroom relationships with students as co-learners provided a helpful background to other examples in the data of how the least experienced participants, Samantha and Janet, demonstrated their understanding of CRP's focus on co-constructed learning. Their acknowledgement of this focus was seen through their expressed desires to change their current practices and attempt to find operational models of it to emulate.

They discussed that the short training programs (typically 6-8 weeks) alternative certification teachers attended before entering the classroom focused on managing and instructing classes in traditional, teacher-centered paradigms. Samantha expressed a desire to move way from this paradigm in hopes it would engage her students and make the class more relevant for them:

> Something that I want to get better in at as a teacher is allowing class periods to be me as more of the facilitator role… I am ready—we've talked about this—to like relinquish control to an extent, give the students more autonomy, and therefore more responsibility for what they should be doing" (Int. #1).

This dovetailed with her comments on making space for inclusive content and showed a recognition of collaborative learning as an aspect of CRP.

Janet's observations of other teachers' classrooms also acknowledged a recognition of the need for de-centering the teacher. As a "floating" teacher she would have to move from classroom to classroom, like the students, which gave her a glimpse, as new teacher, into other teachers' instructional approaches as communicated through the physical space of their classrooms. She noted seeing classrooms with every desk facing forward, pointing toward the teacher podium and set up for what she called "authoritative style teaching" that her school favored. Of one observation, Janet recalled, "Like one of the classes is a well-oiled machine, but I couldn't tell if they were like getting it" (Int. #1).

Conversely, she regretted not being able to observe, in action, a teacher whose classroom communicated a different paradigm. She characterized this teacher as loved by their students and one whose students were very successful learners and said of her classroom:

> Her class is just kind of designed like her, the way her seats are designed everyone is looking at each other and that's the only class, where it looks like that. There's art all over their walls, not art, but like their different assignments… I don't see a lot of classrooms where it looks like the students own it or co-own it (Int. #1).

Janet indicated here a recognition of the potential for student learning in CRP's focus on student ownership of educational spaces and co-constructed learning.

Student/Teacher Relationships

The findings in the previous sections argue that the participants were seeing their students as co-owners and equal learning partners and indicate shift in relationship

dynamics between teachers and students. Rather than the traditional "teacher as authority and controller of the classroom" CRP tenets assert these relationships should be "fluid"; focused on "developing a community of learners"; and "demonstrate a connectedness with all students" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 480).

Participant interviews and lesson planning (as the semester progressed) indicated that they understood the need for more "fluid" and personal relationships in effective, culturally responsive teaching as much as the need for inclusive content. Jennifer referred to these relationships as "the sweet spot" for teaching; Janet noted of all her interactions, "…either it was me building relationships…or talking about wild things that somehow relate to the work" (Int. #1); and Samantha said, "'Knowing their [students'] names and knowing what is going on in their lives'"(Int. #1) was key to navigating her teacher role. In their individual interviews, the teacher learners discussed their positionality and approaches with students, they foregrounded close relationships with students as an achievement or an aspiration and noted the value they placed on them as part of effective teaching.

This value was evident in Jennifer's clearest image of her interaction and success with students as relationships. She said, "There was a real respect...it felt like a family. That is really what is most salient to me when I think about it, are those relationships that are developing is what stands out to me" (Int. #1). Likewise, she emphasized the importance of relationships in lamenting the challenge exclusively on-line classes presented for them. Her school operated on a trimester schedule where students rotated classes every 12 weeks which began just a couple weeks before the Covid-19 pandemic caused her district's switch to online learning. Just as Jennifer saw family-like

relationships as a key achievement in other terms, she saw their absence as the most regrettable aspect of the term when she taught solely online, "I wasn't in a space yet to develop the really deep relationships I like with the students…we hadn't quite built a community." (Int. #1).

Samantha emphasized the role close relationships with students played in her ability to manage class and encourage students to complete work. She noted that during observations, her supervisor lauded the fact that students followed her directions or did tasks she asked of them. As a new teacher, Samantha admitted surprise that this was apparently not the norm and credited it to her focus on relationships:

> I would say that that has to do some with the fact that like, I knew their name; I sought to get to know them; and they at least respected me enough to like take out what I was asking them to take out (Int. #1).

Janet revealed her understanding of the importance of relationships in registering her concern with attitudes which marginalize them. She said of the classroom where she saw the "well-oiled machine" where she couldn't tell if students were learning or not, that she also could not determine if anyone "liked each other" or not. Unfortunately, she saw this as prevalent in her school in things like the advice often given to new teachers, "Don't smile until Christmas."

> I don't know how it'd feel if my teacher never smiled at me. I wouldn't feel like I was wanted there, that I belong there or that this was like a space that I could co-inhabit with my teacher and my classmates to progress and do things together if they don't smile at me for three months (Int. #1).

Both Janet and Samantha showed an understanding of how close relationships with their students, a key tenet of CRP, permeated the work in their classrooms and informed their roles in them. Samantha saw having developed these relationships with students as creating a space for her authentic identity and for students to achieve: "I felt like I could be Samantha and Ms. Baker at the same time and not have to like just assert 'Ms. Baker' all the time and could joke with them" (Int. #1). This freedom she saw as being created by relational collateral, where her relationship building made for a more open and productive learning environment.

Similarly, Janet recognized that close relationships allowed her to better understand and incorporate students' ideas and positioned them as co-teachers: "I try to put myself in their [the students'] shoes off as often as I can; that kind of informs a lot of my teaching" (Int. #1). Additionally, through reading their journals and interacting casually, Janet learned about their personal interests and slang which she used as a gateway for students to assume the role of teacher. She would reference a show or video game or ask about a popular social-media slang term. She recalled, "I'm on social media too, I don't let them follow me obviously, but I was asking about these phrases I hear them use. I'll be like, 'So what does that mean?' It can be an attempt to validate their language in like a language arts space" (Int. #1).

Each of the participants seemed to embrace non-traditional student/teacher relationship models that are called for in culturally responsive practices, and used them as a means of developing a community of learners, de-centering the teacher as the only knowledge authority, etc. There existed in their responses on this topic a clear recognition

of the significance of these relationships and the need for intentionality in enacting them in the otherwise more traditional spaces of their schools.

Socio-political Consciousness

During the second round of coding, where I employed guiding CRP tenets to create categories for the initial codes, raising students' socio-political consciousness was not as universally acknowledged by participants as an essential goal. While each teacher learner mentioned the potential of texts by writers of color and from different countries and traditions to provide unique perspectives, neither Janet nor Samantha indicated incorporating in their curricula opportunities for students to confront and question existing social structures (e.g., systemic racism, patriarchy, etc.). Specifically, Samantha's responses to interview questions centered primarily on using culturally responsive instructional practices as a means for students to acquire institutionally validated knowledge.

Janet did discuss her internal struggle with how some elements of the endorsed curriculum she was asked to teach conflicted with the aims of CRP or even serve to replicate systems she felt are unjust. As a seventh-grade teacher, a focus of her ELA curriculum is grammar, and she expressed being unsure if she feels comfortable teaching it: "I don't know if were ready, as educators to have the conversation about what are we telling kids when we tell them to speak 'academically'? Is grammar racist? Is grammar erasure?" (Int. #2). This comment indicated a socio-political issue, one focused on education, on which she could engage with students during the grammar lessons she was motivated to teach. However, Janet's recognition of this systemically valorized approach

to language instruction as counter to CRP tenets is teacher-facing only; she did not suggest it as a topic to delve into with students.

Unique among the participants in acknowledging CRP's call to raise students' social consciousness was Jennifer, who saw wrestling with difficult social issues as a motivating factor in her teaching. She recalled again her experience working with students as they discussed systemic racism during their reading of *The Hate U Give* as the kind of work that she is "fired up" to teach. Her first comment, when asked to articulate what she had come to understand as culturally responsive teaching was, "I want them to see themselves in the classroom and the world. I want them to know, I was writing about this this is morning, about the system that oppresses them" (Int. #11). Jennifer expressed that she sees socio-political consciousness as key for CRP because it affects students of color even within their learning institutions. She mentioned the need for transparency in the disciplining of students of color in school and in the process of forming curriculum.

Students' Academic Development

While participant data suggested that they believed student learning was hindered by the general absence of the other various tenets in the practice happening in their schools, none of them specifically noted pushing students' academic development as a goal or disposition they associate with CRP. Specific references to CRP promoting student achievement were absent from the data, and the only specific discussion of its possible effect on high-level achievement was Samantha's concern that honoring students' cultural language practices might hinder their preparation for post-secondary spaces.

She confessed to an internal struggle with not knowing how to honor students'

language and interaction styles and still work to teach them what she terms "academic

writing".

Samantha lamented,

> "I'm supposed to teach you [students] this "standard" (she air quotes this word)
>
> English; that may not be how like culturally you express yourself and that's not
>
> how you write, so then how do I balance…? Sure, I can give I guess different
>
> assignments, but if a kid wants to go to college, the reality is they've got to
>
> understand and learn academic language" (Int.#1)

Her comment indicated that in enacting some of the other aspects of CRP it was possible

that students would not be able to learn the skills she was charged with teaching.

These findings on the participants' knowledge of CRP showed that they were

familiar with and committed to enacting practices consistent with its tenets of culture

competence, co-constructed learning, and student/teacher relationships. One of the

participants, Jennifer, specifically recognized promoting sociopolitical consciousness

with her students as essential to her culturally responsive practice, and though she did not

discuss directing students toward the issue, Janet indicated she recognized how a

systemic educational practice might run counter to culturally inclusive teaching. Finally,

none of the participants directly acknowledged fostering academic development as a

specific criterion for culturally responsive pedagogy.

Teacher Learners' Perceived Obstacles to CRP

The findings in this section focus tightly on this dissertation's driving question:

why are culturally responsive teaching practices so rare in elementary and secondary

schools relative to the prevalence of teaching and conversation about them in teacher education programs? Given the participants' acknowledged familiarity with many aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy (though not necessarily prior to the course where this study occurred) and their dispositions towards working to implement practices consistent with this pedagogy in their classes, many times in their interviews they intimated there existed a number of obstacles to their attempts to enact those practices.

Obviously, there are participant differences: their personal education experiences, their paths to teaching, and their different placements offered challenges unique to them as individuals, but the data shows several common impediments in their path to being more culturally inclusive teachers. As I returned to the initial gerund codes, I looked for instances in the data where the teacher learners indicated that their attempts to enact some aspects of CRP were inhibited (see Table 4.1) and coded them initially into the category "Obstacles to CRP" and through subsequent readings into the sub-categories or "Institutional Structures" and Personal Capacities".

Within the code "Personal Capacities", I noticed consistent patterns in the types of challenges for which I identified themes and explored themes through memo writing (e.g., "Hiding Honesty", "Being a New Teacher"). These memos helped focus my understanding of the nature of these challenges and how the participants identified these obstacles to enacting CRP.

The findings in this section are organized by the two larger categories: Structural Challenges (relating the common or statutory polices of school) and Personal Capacities (knowledge, sense of agency, and time and resources). Within these categories the nature of the obstacles varied, and I present them within sub-sections based on the themes which

arose from my analysis of what the participants saw as hindering their ability to enacting culturally responsive practices.

Structural Challenges

I considered data to identified structural challenges to enacting CRP if the participants' characterization of an obstacle was directly connected to a school or district policy with which they were expected to comply; a process in which they had to participate but lacked a voice in creating; or a pervasive, standing, cultural norm for their particular school. Additionally, my analysis of structural challenges biases realms of practice over which teachers could have more individual agency—assessments, curriculum, and instructional approaches—to make them more consistent with CRP. Though mentioned in participant interviews, I did not analyze large scale realities of public schooling (e.g., school start times, discipline codes, students' mental/socio-emotional health, etc.). Though significant topics I address later as areas of need for further research, I only analyzed them tangentially as they affected participants' efforts to enact the tenets of CRP as identified in the previous findings section.

Judgement of Colleagues and Superiors. A fear of scrutiny by superiors or colleagues was expressed by the participants and essential to understanding how the weight of institutional structures might work to obstruct teachers in general, and new teachers specifically, from enacting progressive pedagogies. Participants indicated in the interviews they were concerned about dismissal or reprisal for suggesting implementing these practices or much less criticizing their absence. Both Jennifer and Janet, early in their respective interviews, intimated that they may need to self-censor some responses to me. At the very beginning of our interview, Jennifer asked about me sharing some

resources related to teaching in a reading/writing workshop classroom because she had joined a district cohort reading a text on the process but did not have faith in the expertise of the people leading it. Before expressing this though, she said, "the people who are leading it, have never I believe...um...you know what I'm saying (*laughs knowingly*). So…I know...we'll talk about that when we're not recording." (Int. #1) We had talked about this progressive classroom structure in the course I taught, so Jessica knew I had significant experience with the instructional style. Once I assured her it was fine to go on, she added, "'Cause I'm diggin' it, but I would rather learn from someone who's done it and maybe understands my student population" (Int. #1).

Similarly, in her interview, responding to the question about whether she believed that schools (specifically her school) were an inclusive space created to allow all students to succeed, Janet began her answer with, "Um, so…how real can I get?" (Int. #1). Again, after reminding her I was looking for the most honest answers and likely to agree with her, she finished, "Yeah, I know that's true. I just want to have, like, just like to have affirmation before I just like really go off…" (Int. #1). Additionally, she mentioned an expectation that teachers conform to the established systems and rituals of the school and shared how when she tried to subvert or question those structures, she was made to feel less than for being a new teacher, a "greenhorn" (Int. #1)—implying she was too inexperienced to make judgement calls in her PLC.

Samantha related this fear of sabotaging herself professionally even more directly in her recount of experiences working with a team of teachers who all taught the same course. She reported feelings similar to those Janet expressed about how efforts to push back on instructional or text choices were not received well by colleagues or dismissed

by them as naïve. She also mentioned having her head administrator be a part of this team increased the stress she felt over disagreeing: "because my principal is my supervising admin and would come into our meetings, that added another...reality to the way in which we talked to her; the way in which we interact with...that was a hot mess" (Int. #1). Samantha's pauses in this comment show that even in retelling it, she was reluctant to say exactly what she wanted to and that specifically noted that this principal is her "supervising admin" suggested a tangible fear that pushing for changes in instruction or texts, informed by her understanding of CRP, might cause negative actions by her supervisor.

PLCs and Persistent Practices. The grade and course level groups referred to above by Samantha and by other participants elsewhere in the data are Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (Dufour & Eaker, 1998). PLCs are meant to provide teachers who are teaching the same subject or age-level students with a team of teachers with whom they can work, share materials and expertise, and discuss common needs of their students. Within the schools these groups are typically required to meet weekly or biweekly, almost always outside of the workday, and report out their work to administrators.

While ostensibly a space for teachers to share their knowledge and support one another in furthering their practice and addressing students' needs, participant data indicated that in practice, PLCs often functioned as a mechanism to standardize texts, instruction, and assessment across classes in response to the goals valued by the administration and district. PLCs were Samantha's first target in response to my direct question on possible obstacles to CRP in her school. She suggested that the academic

freedom teachers are supposed to be guaranteed through their contracts and union support are subverted by the PLC system:

> They'll always be like, "Oh we can never tell you what to teach," but it's always implied that we are telling you what to teach. It makes more sense if we're working as a team as a PLC that we are teaching the same text, so if three out of four of us agree to teach this one text that's probably the text that we should be teaching. And that's just an obstacle in that like, cause if I don't agree with that, I can teach something else, but I'm also on my own little island (Int. #1).

Samantha saw this particularly as an obstacle because in deciding on a common text or common assessment, "even if I voiced, maybe a disagreement or I pushed back a little bit, it wasn't really received or reconciled" (Int. #1). In a space where her developing knowledge of CRP might be able to influence pedagogical choices or where more experienced teachers might be helping to refine her knowledge and practice, she expressed that her voice was not being heard and the group defaulted to replicating instruction with which they were more comfortable. She was then left enacting curriculum and assessments she did not necessarily see as culturally responsive or even perhaps effective, out of practical (time constraints) and professional (the collegial scrutiny discussed above) concerns. Samantha noted: "That's the way that I'm having to teach right now... I'm trying to trust teachers who have taught a whole lot, but I'm learning that is not always good because even those teachers don't really know how to teach sometimes" (Int. #1).

Janet similarly targeted the PLC as an obstacle to moving schools and teaching practices to be more culturally responsive. Her responses brought out the challenges

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inherent in the pressure to work cohesively even though class populations and personalities might vary significantly. She pointed out that her PLC seemed to function more as a means of making teachers conform to a curriculum without questioning if that curriculum is best suited for the students. In discussing the chronological organization of her 7th grade reading curriculum, she noted how it started in the 1800's and focused on American legends and eventually poets, and that these poets and legends were by writers who were exclusively white and almost exclusively male. Janet lamented these choices, "Like, I'm pretty sure black people were writing back then, but okay. I'm pretty sure, like women were writing" (Int. #1), and expressed her frustration with the resistance from her PLC to her pleas to not just teach black writers in February, during Black History Month. As a new teacher, she credited the PLC with a jaded sense about the potential for progress: "I feel like that's, like the mantra of education just based in my brief experience with it is like, 'This is what we've always done,' right?" (Int. #1).

In some ways Samantha's and Janet's discussions also suggested the way in which PLCs, because they are a focused space for perpetuating existing practices, exacerbated this effect for new teachers. As acknowledged by participants in the above section, new teachers, because their employment is more open to jeopardy than tenured faculty, are reluctant to question and push back against existing practices for fear of negative evaluations. This would be equally true if they were to work outside of or against the decisions of their PLC.

Janet conveyed in her interview the sense that the PLC structure not only seemed to stifle her input, as a new teacher, on CRP focused changes in teaching, but worked to draw those near her into the existing structures and ways of thinking. She was dismayed

at the way her PLC discussed students. She saw them passing judgment on students only

against the standard of their performance in classrooms that students had no input in

creating and where they were seen as targets of a curriculum rather than the co-

constructors of it—a key aspect in Janet's understanding of CRP. She abhorred the idea

that she would fall into this way of thinking, but suggested the structure of the PLC drew

her toward doing just that:

> We're all sitting there in like our team or something and they all say that 'He's
>
> really unmotivated', wink, wink. Then I find myself using that language as well
>
> and I'm like, 'Wait, what?' So, then when I go home, and I'm like did I really say
>
> that, do I actually think that? It's just a weird like hive mind that kind of happens,
>
> and I just don't even realize that I've adopted that weird mentality about my kids.
>
> It's just it's so weird to not think what everyone around you thinks, if everyone is
>
> thinking that (Int. #1).

This comment showed the overlap of the PLC as a specific structure in schools with the

power of the unofficial school culture created by persistent practice and ways of thinking.

Janet saw herself internalizing the school's culture—its ideas of instruction and how

students are viewed—and then being forced to collaborate in a system meant to provide

support for her learning as a teacher, but which only served to ossify existing practice.

Participants also reported that persistent focus on testing and assessment results

was a common driver of the work in PLCs and, by extension the instruction in their

schools. Jennifer and Janet spoke in their interviews about how students were de-centered

from instructional choices by this focus on testing and the desire of their superiors for

"improved scores". They saw these demands by school authorities as distracting from

essential aspects of CRP like developing a community of learners, connecting with students, or offering multifaceted assessments. Jennifer lamented, "I also understand that they need numbers and data and I can do that, but for learning it's just to meet students where they are" and discussed how the pace and demands for these numbers hindered her efforts to connect with and include students in their learning, "…[their] curiosity and asking them where they are coming from, hearing their stories is very important" (Int. #1).

Janet's comments similarly noted how the school's desire—informed by district and state expectations—to move students through a set curriculum, hitting specific standards and seeking specific performance levels, impeded her ability to accommodate students' socio-emotional needs and their inclusion in the work: "I don't know if we're building relationships, but I feel like I wish there was more time in the day for students and not just focus on hitting a standard; there's just not enough time in the day to get kids what they need and get them what the State needs them to know" (Int. #1).

Additionally, both Jennifer and Janet questioned their schools' or district's commitment to shifting from schools' cultures toward promoting culturally responsive pedagogies and furthering CRP informed practices among teachers. They each described their experiences with their institutions' enactment of this commitment as "box checking" behavior. On validity of her district's publicly announced commitment to address racial equity issues and the efficacy of their professional development session for teachers on doing so, Jennifer wondered, "I'm observing and taking data in and thinking, 'is this truly a part of the culture or is this just helping the bottom line? Are they checking a box or is it really a part of our culture?'" (Int. #1). Janet expressed the same observation at her

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school level with their compliance approach to showing the school was including racially inclusive/equitable instruction. She recalled a conversation with a colleague on the school's committee on racial issues who related to her that adopting practices more closely related to CRP was an afterthought, teachers had rushed to include some version of at the end of the school year to satisfy anyone evaluating them. She related her conversation with the colleague saying, "It's again like, 'Aw crap! we have to check this box by the end of the year. Did we do that?' Instead of going into the school year, going to every school year, every day with that in mind" (Int. #1).

Discipline Policies and Cultures of Control. As noted at the beginning of this section on the theme of Structural Challenges, my discussion sticks closely to the experiences of the participants in their respective work placements and to the activities over which they could exercise some control. Many scholars (e.g., Fasching-Varner et al., 2014; Ferguson, 2001; Jacobsen et al., 2019; Morris & Perry, 2016, 2017; Thompson, 2016) have examined issues like the "school-to-prison-pipeline" and the effects of zero-tolerance discipline policies, and how those issues disproportionately affect African American students and damage students academically as well as emotionally and physically. However, exploring the wide-scale ailments of public education's approach to discipline, specifically as it pertains to students of color, is not within the scope of this dissertation. Instead, these findings focus specifically on participants' responses in their interviews noting how discipline policies and cultures of practice in their schools serve as obstacles to enacting certain tenets of CRP at the classroom level.

Common to all of the participants was the acknowledgment that the discipline structures in their schools either specifically discouraged or implicitly promoted seeing

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students as subjects to which curriculum is administered in controlled environments rather than as active co-learners with teachers. Instead of seeing students as equal partners in the learning process, the participants reported these things about how the school culture directed teachers to see students or students to see themselves:

> Janet: "weird robots [referring to students] that you just put numbers into to hit the standard" (Int. #1); "it's all control, control, control" (Int. #1); "the kids are [on] this weird conveyer belt, you know? It seems the kids since have been kind of scared or like suppressed or oppressed" (Int. #1).

> Samantha: "the escort then has to actually come to your classroom, escort that student to the bathroom and allow them to [use the restroom]. It's tough for them cause they feel like they're in a prison" (Int. #1).

> Jennifer: "not treating them, I'm always thinking about black boys and black girls, not treating them like animals, or [like] they should be disciplined in a different way" (Int. #1); "there is this illusion of control that some people with a crowd of students in front of them believe that they have or that they think they should act a certain way. I don't believe that; I believe that we're working with human beings" (Int. #1); "that 'children being seen, not heard' mentality is still pervasive in our education system" (Int. #1)

These sorts of comments appeared throughout the data as participants discussed obstacles to class policies on behavior or interactional styles they wanted to explore with their students.

Samantha reflected in one of her responses about the disparity between her educational experience and that of students she teaches. She remembered how if she were struggling on a given day or moment during class, she would ask to leave class to be by herself for a few minutes to stretch and clear her head and return to class refreshed. She noted of her students, "They don't really have that option at our school, in particular" (Int. #1). As mentioned in her quote above, leaving the class even for a restroom break requires a security escort, something Samantha saw as positioning students as "prisoners" and causing her to wonder, "So the structure of school, I think really impacts their behavior, their ability to learn" (Int. #1).

In relating this story, she also revealed how expected teacher compliance with discipline policies kept her from skirting them in order to challenge the power inequity creating a barrier between her and her students. She related that if she does let a student leave class on their own, "…we get yelled at for not following instructions" (Int. #1). This feeling of being forced to comply was echoed by Janet who noted the pressure put on teachers by administrators, "I feel like the way the behavior stuff is kind of approached is as, if we don't all do it, then it doesn't work" (Int. #1). These responses implied the unequal power dynamics expressed between staff and students extended to the teacher/administrator relationships, reinforcing the barriers to CRP posed by the schools' approaches to discipline. They seemed to suggest a lack of even the professionals in the buildings being viewed as equals in the educational process, further complicating the creation of a school culture of collaborative learning.

A more specific look at how participants saw codified ideas about behavior in schools directly refuted the CRP tenet of honoring students' cultural interaction styles

was revealed in the data as participants discussed their schools' policies on students talking and the expectation of their silence. While her comment about students being "seen and not heard" is likely meant in the larger, idiomatic sense, Jennifer mentioned several times in her interview how students are not given space to express themselves or are sent for disciplinary correction for being disruptive. She proposed that teachers (and students) would be better off if, "I think everyone would just benefit from just sitting and listening to these students… and then realizing what are they bringing to the table— they're really cool kids" (Int. #1). Janet noted in discussing factors of students' lack of investment in school, "They're supposed to be level zero [silent] in the hallway, and they're at level zero in the classroom" (Int. #1). Samantha made a similar comment that, "…for the most part, that they're sitting down and in desks all day and asked to be silent is a huge factor in how they act in my class" (Int. #1).

Another comment of Samantha's suggested that teaching in a school culture that saw silence as a desirable behavioral trait for learning was directing her to conflate silence and studiousness. Samantha noted about what she called one of her more challenging classes, "I had a lot of challenging students who were incredibly apathetic…, and students who did want to learn were the quieter ones" (Int. #1). Even though she had discussed (see the findings on participants' knowledge of CRP) a desire for more student agency and to move to more of a facilitator role in the classroom, Samantha was moved to validate behaviors antithetical to both of those goals. Along with being more likely to receive punitive disciplinary action when they fail to comply with strict behavioral expectations that run counter to expressive and frequent verbal communication, Samantha's response here suggested this bias toward silence prevented her from creating

spaces for those cultural interactional styles often common among her majority African American student population.

Personal/Internal Obstacles

While the first overarching theme focused on the work places participants entered as new teachers and the existing structures they found there that hindered their ability to enact practices consistent with culturally responsive pedagogy, this section focuses on the participants themselves and obstacles they identified related to their own capacities, preparation for teaching, and their sense of agency and identity as new teachers. There is, of course, overlap in these findings with those on the structural obstacles. Participant data suggested they were often inversely related: a low level of confidence in being equipped to enact alternative assignments alone diminished even more with high levels of collegial pressure working within the PLC, which caused these teacher learners to default to existing curricula.

These findings are organized around participants' perceptions of their knowledge and capacity to enact CRP, the resources to do so, and the limited sense of agency they felt as new teachers. The larger theme and subsequently the sub-themes, arose from initial codes beginning with "Questioning", "Doubting", or "Acknowledging" followed by a perceived gap or failing in their ability to enact a particular practice. As I mentioned in the introduction to the challenges section, how participants perceived these obstacles was informed by their own educational experiences and placements—which were presented in the Participant Profiles. Understanding their unique experiences provided nuance and complexity for understanding the gap between CRP scholarship and its practice in schools.

Gaps in Their Teacher Training. The participants in this study were all brought to the teaching field through an alternative certification program which affected the sequence and nature of their teacher education program, but they consistently pointed out in the data an absence of direct mention of CRP as a theory in their early teacher preparation courses and even less instruction on enacting the progressive practices that embodied the theory. The course—English Teaching Methods—during which I was their instructor, and after which these interviews were conducted, fell in the second half of the 2020 school year. So, these teacher learners had already worked as a teacher of record in their respective placements for the first semester of the year; however, Jennifer, Janet, and Samantha all related in their responses that it was during this course where they first heard "culturally responsive pedagogy" or any of its related names.

Samantha revealed this as I responded to her question about the overall nature of the research I was conducting. She reacted with surprise and sardonic laughter when she learned that Ladson-Billings's seminal paper on her theory of culturally relevant pedagogy was published in 1995. The same was true for Jessica who mentioned seeing practices she termed CRP during her first experience observing in a classroom although she did not have a term to describe them at the time. Like Samantha, she acknowledged being incredulous at this fact: "I mean this stuff's been around forever, right? It's not a new conversation. I don't know what is the age on it, I wonder is there something we forget in the teaching program" (Int. #1). Janet expressed frustration at not learning about CRP and its associated practices until this point of her teacher education program saying, "I mean the most I've learned was out of your class, and I'm just like why [not]

have us do this one first, because we're kind of teaching the ding-dang subject anyway, or at least like in the fall" (Int. #1).

This comment arose within Janet's larger critique expressing uncertainty about the value of her university courses thus far. She related feeling a sense of contradiction between her personal beliefs about and classroom experiences with teaching; what has been modeled in her previous university courses; and at her placement. Janet described this tension as being like "a weird rubber band" pulling her between what she believes, what she has been taught, and what she sees in daily experience. How she found this problematic is captured in her description:

> …what I've been told, and what's been modeled to me, and what I believe based on my experiences based or what I've read in my classes tend to clash. Because what I'll see, and what I'm told often contradict at the worst times (Int. #1)

Jennifer expressed similar ideas in her "wondering" if discussion of CRP has been lost in teacher education programs and her, suggestion that she would not have been prepared to enter her teaching position successfully if it were not for her personal history and experiences. She reflected,

> I am thinking about my program; I'm going to pretend I like I never worked in an urban school. I don't know if it would have prepared me to go into the classroom and to look at different people. My life experiences helped me with that; I don't think my education program necessarily has (Int. #1)

She continued, echoing her comments from the *Judgement of Colleagues and Superiors* section above, about her mistrust of receiving training from instructors if she doesn't know their expertise.

Finally, though lesson planning tools will be discussed at length in the following findings section, each of the participants noted that they found the required lesson planning templates in their previous courses unhelpful for informing their work in culturally responsive and student-focused ways. They pointed specifically to the focus of the University required template as an obstacle to planning culturally responsive practices:

> Samantha: "All I've used before is the University's lesson plan, yech, which is just awful. Ways in which I'm asked to plan… is just strictly focusing on what's required institutionally" (Int. #1).

> Janet: "[using the University's template] I might just be looking at State standards and going to like 7.8 and making sure I'm hitting that, or am I actually like being inclusive of what my kids are dealing with, what they are talking about?" (Int. #1).

> **Jennifer**: "What I turned in for the University or the State or whomever I am turning it in for, none of that is taken into account, style/socio-emotional, none of it in a lesson template" (Int. #1).

Lesson planning templates are the site where students' pedagogy—the nexus of practice and theory—is articulated. These responses in the data highlighted to some degree a

disconnect the participants perceived between their learning in teacher education courses and the practices valorized by the same program.

Lacking Agency as New Teachers. Whether perceived through their experiences with or actions of colleagues or through an internalized sense of the role they should play during their first year in the classroom, the teacher learners felt a lack of agency as new teachers—they felt they lacked the experience and expertise to contradict colleagues or go off on their own—and saw that as a barrier to enacting CRP. I discussed this aspect of their challenge to adopt more inclusive practices in relation to the structures of PLCs and collegial relationships earlier in the findings. However, the data suggested that in altering the perspective from how they were seen as "new teachers" by their colleagues, to how the participants themselves perceived this identity of being a "new teacher," offered insight on this issue as an obstacle.

Their awareness of being new to the profession and how they saw this identity of "new teacher" as affecting their ability to enact culturally responsive practices run throughout the participant data:

Samantha: "I have no comparative basis being a first-year teacher" (Int. #1); "I'm a first-year teacher, [and I] haven't figured out how to fully teach them" (Int. #1).

Janet: "I know you're not supposed to do things your first year of school" (Int. #1); "a first-year teacher should probably just follow the mold" (Int. #1).

Jennifer: "I don't know if that's unusual or not, but I am hearing that it may be" (Int. #1); I can't say definitively answer that because I've only been in this school system for like three years…maybe I'm naïve" (Int. #1).

These comments suggested a sense the participants shared, an unease with their role as new teachers, that exacerbated the challenges of gaps or contradictions in their training and the instructional practices expected in their jobs.

Particularly, Samantha's and Janet's accounts of their work within their schools and their smaller teaching teams (PLCs) indicated the pressure they perceived being put on them as new teachers, and they did not sense they had the agency to challenge practices with which they may not agree.

Samantha expressed a sense of overarching doubt about evaluating the practices she encountered or found were expected of her by her colleagues specifically because she was new noting, "I have no comparative basis being a first-year teacher" (Int. #1) when she was surprised that her work was complimented by a supervising principal. This reference to being a "first-year" teacher permeated her language and expanded on the struggles she found in moving her practice forward. To explain not seeing success in things she wanted to achieve, Samantha used phrases like: "I just haven't mastered that skill totally yet" (Int. #1) and "I don't think I have been educated in a lot of texts that I would consider are culturally responsive to my students" (Int. #1). As discussed in the section on *PLCs and Persistent Practices*, when Samantha raised concerns about a text or instructional approach, she found her opposition was ignored or went unreconciled. Her response to this obstacle suggested she lacked a sense of agency because of her newness to the profession: "I was just taking into account what other teachers said to teach. I would choose something that I wanted to teach, but because I'm a first-year teacher, haven't figured out how to fully teach them" (Int. #1).

Likewise, when Janet found herself differing from the practices and the persistent views of students held by her colleagues, she questioned whether her disagreements were valid or a result of her lack of experience. In discussing potential changes, informed by CRP, she would like to see happen, Janet quickly dismissed her thinking as, "this is like a pipe-dream" (Int. #1). In thinking about her response to a behavior expectation for students in class she noted, "I don't follow that formula which is really not good because I'm a first-year teacher and should probably just follow the mold" (Int. #1). Each of these comments suggested that, as a new teacher, Janet questioned her agency in making decisions: unconvinced they would be effective or that they would leave her open to consequences.

She further demonstrated both of these tensions in a retelling of her experiences working with colleagues when she felt the language they were using to discuss students was deficit-focused and counter to CRP's identifying students as partners in the learning process. She recalled,

> …when I come across this weird, jaded language, I'll at least, when we're talking about kids, tend to interject, but also, "They're like this!" [she says smiling and in upbeat tone], you know? But I always feel like I'm kind of looked at weird like this like greenhorn who like doesn't know how it is yet (Int. #1)

Here Janet indicated that her thinking was counter to that of the experienced teachers', which she sees as "jaded", but in recognizing their reaction showed an uncertainty as to whether this is connected to being new in the profession.

Capacity and Resources to Enact CRP. Completing the theme of *Personal and Internal Obstacles*, I analyzed limitations to enacting culturally responsive practices identified in the data by participants in relation to their perceived capacities as teachers or resources in their present context. Analyzed here are instances when the participants recognized a need for or a way they might engage in more progressive or culturally responsive practices, but felt unequipped in regards to their knowledge or resources to do so. In some ways this sub-category unites, and will show overlap with, the challenges analyzed in the two previous sections, but also focuses on an understanding of the challenges to CRP at the point of practice.

Of all the participants, Jennifer demonstrated the fewest instances where she questioned her capacity to enact culturally responsive practices and to instruct in culturally inclusive ways. She is the oldest of the participants and, as discussed in her Participant Profile, has a background in professional training, focusing on self-care and mindfulness. Her data did suggest though that for new teachers wanting to deepen their knowledge and move their practice forward, there was lack of resources. "I can't just read a book and be the teacher of the year, that's just not how you do it" (3), she said in her discussion on the cohort she had joined in her district and as part of our longer discussion of her mistrust that currently practicing teachers are qualified to teach more culturally informed practices. Jennifer's data showed the majority of her challenges to be external. As she said, her life experiences helped her more than her teacher education program, but in trying to refine and inform her practice in her specific discipline, she found the resources questionable.

Janet made several comments that questioned her capacity to manifest culturally responsive practices in her classrooms, and though she identified several tangible limitations to resources that might help her, she did not focus on them as the highest barriers.

One of the tangible resource barriers for Janet was her position as a "floater", discussed earlier in this chapter, and not having her own room. This excluded her from the opportunity to create a shared space with students by posting their work on the walls of the room or rearrange the furniture to de-center the teacher and promote cooperative learning—both aspects of CRP she acknowledged understanding. Related to her status as a "floater" Janet pointed out the absence of quality model teachers and the opportunity to observe them was a missing resource she noted as hindering her ability to learn to teach in ways she really wanted to. Though she was only able to observe teachers on her "team,"—which were not doing CRP or related practices—she was able to see other teachers' classrooms, and she said of one teacher, one whose classroom she noted as a physical manifestation of CRP,

> I wish I had a chance to observe [them] just because I would have loved to see how they do it. Because their kids love them, and they do really well. I just want to know how they do it because I have no idea what the right way is" (Int. #1).

Other data coded as pertaining to capacity and resources for Janet were encapsulated in the last sentence in the quote above. Janet related multiple times in the data that even as she saw places where she wished practices in her school were more culturally inclusive, she questioned her capacity to be the person to effect those changes:

"It feels weird to criticize something if I don't have any alternatives. I get irritated with people who just like, have a lot of complaints but that have no other proposed ways of like doing it differently" (Int. #1)

"I feel like I just have a lot of different ideas, I don't know how to implement them or I wouldn't know what they would look like" (Int. #1)

"I try to abide by the things that I believe, but it's hard to maintain them when everyone around me doesn't" (Int. #1)

"I want it [CRP]to be something that comes naturally, and I want it to be like part of like the way I teach" (Int. #1)

These quotes revealed Janet's positive disposition toward being a culturally responsive teacher. However, they also indicated questioning what she sees as her present capacity to enact CRP and that she felt discouraged by the lack of operational examples from which she could build that capacity. She summed up her frustration in a quote that touched on teacher preparation, what she's asked to do daily in her class and there not being more teachers enacting CRP,

Probably because they [more experienced teachers] don't have the resources or the support or the space in which to do it. Also, they always frame everything [as] we're not hitting the standard we're not doing our job, but it's like there's so much more ...you, you, you put us in this box or tell us to do all these things, don't tell us how to do it, don't support us, learning how and like figuring out how to do it (Int. #1)

Janet revealed her uncertainty about gaps in her knowledge and experience with what CRP would look like in practice. She perceived this as a significant obstacle to her pursuing these practices or advocating for them with her colleagues. Though I would argue her comments throughout her interview suggested she was led by a sincere desire to be a culturally responsive teacher, she indicated she struggled knowing how to do so or even how to advocate among her colleagues that should they learn how together.

Samantha's data on her capacities as a teacher and resources further showed the obstacle to CRP caused by the stasis of traditional practice Janet discussed above and how the demands of being a new teacher limited her ability to explore individual resources. Perhaps most telling in Samantha's data was her discussion of the perils associated with straying from the work suggested in her PLC described earlier.

Not yet addressed in that analysis was why she felt so unequipped, even though she had a bachelor's degree in English, to strike out on her own and work with texts that might be more appealing for her students. At one point she said, "I'm only 24, and I've been in school for most of my life, so I just haven't read a ton of things to pull from on my own" (Int. #1), and when I asked her to clarify why, if she had been in school and studying English for her whole life, why that had not given her a deep well of books to draw from she responded, "I have been in school, and I have read a lot, but I have read a lot of what is the traditional canon of literature. Which tends to be a lot of old white men" (Int. #1). She suggested that she was not exposed to writers of color during her secondary education, and added that her college course work as an English major focused more or less on British and Irish literature, leaving her lost when searching for alternative texts. She explained this saying,

I don't think I have been educated in a lot of texts that I would consider are

culturally responsive to my students. Like very few of them, I think, want to read

The Bostonians with me, and I don't ever want to read *The Bostonians* again, so I

know they won't want to read it (Int. #1)

Additionally, her responses suggested it is hard to address gaps in personal

capacity as a new teacher because of constraints on time and the amount of work

involved. She described this challenge as being exacerbated by being an alt-cert student

and having to take a college class along with teaching full-time,

I also think the fact that I'm in school now and teaching, is just a reality that I

have to function within, and so instead of maybe having the free time to read a

new book for my next unit, I don't, I can't, I don't have the liberty to do that. I can;

I would just have to kill myself (Int. #1).

Samantha expressed that working in a space where choosing a text different from her

colleagues meant being, as she earlier described it, "on my own little island", and then

having to create all of the lessons, materials, and assessments herself made choosing CRP

informed texts and instruction too big of an ask.

Janet echoed Samantha's recognition of their experience that CRP required more

effort and time in her comments on how much time reading her students' journals took of

her already tight schedule. This turned out to be a practice featured in a story Samantha

referenced in her concluding comment on why she believed culturally responsive

practices remained largely absent in schools. She succinctly summed up the attitude

toward CRP challenges of capacity and limited resources foment in teachers saying, "I

think that being a culturally responsive teacher is framed like this *Freedom Writers* kind of teacher, but that's not realistic and practical for the real classroom, so we are just going to read *The Great Gatsby*" (Int. #1).

Teacher Learners' Experience Interacting with the HiTCRiT Planning Template

The previous findings section revealed that new teachers see being pressured to conform by colleagues and the various existing structures of the schools they enter as significant obstacles to their ability to enact a culturally responsive pedagogy. Additionally, and consistently as part of the challenge they saw in confronting these structures, participants indicated a sense that even when they recognized the need or a space for more culturally responsive approaches to learning, they were not sure what performing these approaches would look like or how to do them. The findings in this section focus on an attempt to address this challenge by analyzing participants' experiences using an instructional planning tool aimed at guiding their decisions made during planning with the intent to increasing their capacity for enacting CRP—the HiTCRiT lesson plan.

Participants' experience with this lesson planning template was unique to the course they took with me. It replaced a planning tool they were previously required to use during their other teaching courses at the University and for observed lessons in their class placements. Coursework in the English teaching methods course required teacher learners to prepare three lessons which would be observed by their principals or university supervisors and to articulate their instructional plans on this template.

As discussed in the Introduction, the HiTCRiT lesson plan evolved out of the on-going work discussed in Foster et al. (2020). The lesson plan I created was intended to

operationalize the realms of the HiTCRiT—text, style, socio-emotional connections, and institutional bridge—by creating a series of prompting questions related to each realm teacher learners would consider as they planned. Though the HiTCRiT lesson plan retained some elements of standard planning templates (e.g., identifying standards and objectives, procedures, etc.) it sought to foreground students in the process and guide teacher learners to consider all aspects of planning with their students in mind.

These findings are based on participants' discussion of the HiTCRiT lesson plan in their interviews and an analysis of their lesson plans submitted as coursework during the semester. In the submitted lesson plans themselves, I analyzed the participants' instructional choices, through the category codes suggested by my analysis of initial codes in Enacting/Understanding CRP: "culture competence", "co-constructed learning", "sociopolitical consciousness", and "academic development" as indicated by their description of them in the HiTCRiT template. This allowed me to capture instances of them considering the tenets of CRP by applying category codes to their decision-making in each of the sections of the template and seeing their teaching more holistically—including students, curriculum, and style along with whether they chose alternative texts.

During the second round of coding where I applied category codes to organize the data, under the "HiTCRiT template" code in the interviews for references there consistently emerged from initial codes the verbs, "Focusing", "Guiding", "Reflecting". When I reviewed the full initial codes, these verbs were often directed toward the teacher learners themselves, leading me to thematically group these findings into the last section presented here "Reflection and 'Mentoring'".

Connected to the emerging themes of reflection and mentoring, I additionally returned to the first and final submitted lesson plans and performed discourse analysis on the teacher learners' responses the HiTCRiT template's guiding questions. This close analysis of the language employed in the teacher learners' responses on the template provided insight to their developing concept of CRP as a theory of practice.

Considering Whom I Teach

Consistent among the participants' data was the indication that working through the prompts on the HiTCRiT lesson plan altered their focus in planning from considering only the targeted learning standard or specific objective of a lesson to considering the students themselves in the decision-making process. They saw this as a significant shift in paradigm from their previous experiences with planning templates and one very much in line with CRP's focus on seeing the classroom as a community of learners and students as participants in the instruction.

Jennifer specifically talked about the way in which the HiTCRiT lesson plan shifted her initial focus when approaching plan away from the required, material considerations and on to her students. Referring to the lesson plan she said, "the whole thing is asking us to think about our audience, the kids in my class… looking at audience and making it relevant to who's in front of me" (Int. #1).

Both Samantha and Janet echoed this sentiment that the HiTCRiT template prompted them to choose content and approaches to delivering it by making it more inclusive of students. Additionally, they suggested that the template's heuristic nature altered their thinking about the students themselves and how their place in the planning process. Janet noted how she was guided to focus on students saying,

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…[the HiTCRiT lesson plan] had me take a critical look at whether or not what I was teaching was actually doing anything…am I actually like being inclusive of what my kids are dealing with what they are talking about? (Int. #1)

This quote suggested that the emphasis on considering the institutional knowledge to be taught through the lens of to whom the participants were to teach it, allowed Janet to better determine the impact of or her success in teaching it.

Along with its effect on the tangibly observable elements of content and procedures, Janet implied that the structure of the HiTCRiT lesson plan prompted a more holistic understanding of the students' cooperative role in instruction relative to hers. As noted in the previous section, of all participants, Janet most clearly noted her sense that she was hindered in enacting CRP because of gaps between what she was told she should do and what she was taught how to do. Her responses on whether this template illuminated elements of practice, keyed in on its inclusion of prompts to consider style of instruction and socio-emotional connections with students as helping address her noted gaps in practice: "Going over these questions the socio and emotional questions... I'm never asked those things or I'm never asked to consider those things" (Int. #1). Janet specifically noted the absence of these discussions in the contexts where she expected to receive guidance or training, "it's never brought to the conversation at my PLC, it's never brought into conversations at like staff meetings… They always talk about "[student] ownership in the classroom" but they're not telling me how" (Int. #1). She concluded that the HiTCRiT template helped her understand how CRP worked in the classroom.

My analysis of Samantha's data showed the HiTCRiT lesson plan similarly affected both her centralization of students in the planning process and her overall

perception of the student/teacher relationship in the classroom. She contrasted it with previous planning tools she used,

> Most other planning tools focus on the institutional bridge. They're breaking down the standard: how are you been going to apply your standard, how are you going to measure that your students understand the standard...this is what I think my school, and I would go as far to say the District, focuses on. Whereas the HiTCRiT focuses on how are you engaging students' culture, how are you engaging students where they're at emotionally (Int. #1)

Samantha additionally noted, like Janet and Jennifer, that the template more fully examined the participants in the learning rather just the content and procedures, "this plan allowed me to think more holistically about the students rather than just the logistics of what we were doing; what we were studying; how we were doing it" (Int. #1).

She again used the term "holistic" to suggest that guidance from the HiTCRiT template had a humanizing effect on students in the planning process asking her, "how are you engaging them as people; it's a more, I think holistic plan than just strictly focusing on what's required institutionally" (Int. #1). Samantha implied in this response that previous lesson planning guides disregarded the existence of students to the point that she would not necessarily recall that she was teaching "people" and not just a text or skill.

Jennifer implied that the HiTCRiT template's format addressed this need to "see" students in instructional planning. Though she noted that while seeing students as co-learners and "human beings" involved in the education process was her "bread and

butter" she did not believe that to be the case for most teachers: "I'm wondering if all teachers even know what socio-emotional considerations look like. So, in looking at that…I don't know if this came up in my curriculum or my teacher training for sure" (Int. #1). These responses seemed to indicate a sense that the HiTCRiT lesson plan did aid participants in the aspects of CRP regarding what culturally responsive practices might look like and the positioning of students as partners in the instructional planning process

Reflection and "Mentoring"

As discussed above, and in the *Obstacles to Implementing CRP* section of this chapter, Janet, Jennifer, and Samantha indicated that the relatively rare presence of CRP among existing practitioners and within established school structures was a significant hindrance to their ability to develop as culturally responsive teachers. Janet and Jennifer benefits from the HiTCRiT lesson plan, and that their experiences with current practitioners and school leaders indicated that there existed little institutional discussion on CRP or colleagues equipped in CRP to serve as mentors.

My analysis showed a sense among these teacher learners that the format of the planning template served to mentor their instructional choices and helped them reflect on those choices in future planning. Participant responses also indicated these were welcome attributes of the template given the final ten weeks of their school year was conducted virtually. A portion of their work this study examines was conducted during spring 2020's lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants' depictions suggested that being removed from many of the structures inherent to in-person teaching in their schools, while potentially daunting for them as new teachers, presented opportunities to actively use the template as a guide.

Jennifer captured both of these aspects—reflective tool and guide—of the HiTCRiT lesson plan in her interview. She communicated the template fit her personality better than previous ones she had used which she saw as leaving students' out of the planning process and not asking her to consider her instructional style (Int. #1). Specifically, she credited the lesson plan with helping her to, "think about choosing texts and just how things are set up…[for] who's in my class" and suggested it helped her "…remember this specifically, I want to be sensitive to my audience" (Int. #1). Her comments indicated she saw the template guiding her reflection on this focus she saw as essential because, "Otherwise, it's pointless; we're not having an educational experience. I'm delivering information into thin air is how I feel" (Int. #1).

Moreover, Jennifer spoke to the mentoring role she saw the HiTCRiT lesson plan template playing during the time she was teaching remotely from home. She noted of the template, "…the whole thing is asking us to think about our audience…rather than checking a box, it's less nuts and bolts" (Int. #1) indicating that it required her to thoughtfully engage with the prompts rather than perfunctorily filling in a required documented. Further, her responses about

the role the template played in her planning outside of in-person teaching characterized it as providing guidance not likely attainable in her work place:

> I always think about the student and this template allowed me to express it. I don't know where I was as far as myself as a teacher and feeling comfortable expressing myself. It [the template and teaching remotely] allowed me to be in a more safe space personally. I spent most of my year last year really angry and feeling like teaching is a gotcha profession. I feel a little more candid,

comfortable and safe being handed the lesson plan template obviously it gives me

a space where that kind of expression can be allowed (Int. #2)

Jennifer suggested that, for her, the template's prompting questions provided a space to

dialogue with herself on her choices, and as she said, focus on the students and more

culturally responsive practices outside of the structures she saw limiting those while

working in-person with colleagues.

This sense of the HiTCRiT lesson plan's value as a reflective tool through which

participants could refine their thinking and planning was also evident in Samantha's

interview. She confessed in her interview that at the beginning of the course she took

with me she typically filled out the lesson plans after having implemented the lesson with

students instead of using for planning beforehand. While she acknowledged that writing

the plans ex post facto, "…is not the way in which it was supposed to be used" she added,

"As a reflective practice, I think it was good for me to focus back on the kids and not so

much on the standards" (Int. #1). She demonstrated the effect of this reflection in her

comments on her work over the course of the semester and what she noticed change din

her planning on the final lesson plan she submitted. She recognized that her work had

expanded her understanding of CRP beyond picking texts by writers of color or that

represented characters that shared ethnicities or life experiences like those of her students

to considering the style of engagement a lesson would foster and varying the assessment

modes (Int. #2).

Samantha indicated she too saw the role the HiTCRiT lesson plan played in

advising her choices during the planning and not only as a reflective guide afterwards.

She referred to her lesson during remoting teaching, saying, "That one [referring to a

question on Style] did have me consider more of, 'Okay, how will this actually be engaging for the kids, especially during [online teaching]" (Int. #1). Samantha credited questions from the HiTCRiT lesson plan with helping her to rethink her assessments in this final lesson to include a multimodal, comic strip, response to the graphic novel *Maus* (Spiegelman, 1986). While she felt that her first lesson plan of the semester had worked to include culturally responsive texts, she said of that assessment, "I don't know that I got across what I was trying to get across… I wasn't really thinking about how would show best that they really understand this" (Int. #2). She noted CRP aspects of thinking about assessment this way in that it equalized students' access to do analysis through modes other than the specialized terminology of literary analysis and that it made, "made the assessment look like the text and that connection is cool and important" (Int. #2).

Janet also articulated that the HiTCRiT template had a significant effect as a reflection and mentoring tool in her planning. Her interview responses offered the clearest look at instances where the template guided her in refining instructional choices and developing her capacity to enact CRP. In a review of her lesson plans during the interview she pointed out how the questions prompted reflection: "[F]or the most part it just really had me take a critical look at whether or not what I was teaching was actually doing anything"; "Did I not realize that I was including my students voice alright or like being culturally inclusive?" (Int. #1). These comments spoke to seeing the HiTCRiT lesson plan as a reflective tool. Her last comment suggested that she was enacting some of the culturally responsive practices she sought to, which she confirmed by noting, "there's like a lot of moments of like affirmation as well as like self-critique that I liked" (Int. #1). Additionally, Janet expressed that the heuristic nature of the template allowed to

her self-assess her instructional planning in a way that she found instructive and encouraging: "[the HiTCRiT's] questions prompted me checking myself about what I was currently doing and had me thinking about what I could do in the future to do it better" (Int. #1).

Along with acknowledging how the template informed her future teaching, Janet, like Jennifer and Samantha, noted the mentoring effect the HiTCRiT lesson plan had her work during this spring semester. She indicated that unlike previous planning tools which she saw as, "too open, I didn't know how to target my lesson" (Int. #1), the HiTCRiT template guided her with questions which she, "got to do by myself so I don't have to have that conversation with anybody; it was nice to be able to see the instances in which I actually did or did not [center students in planning]" (Int. #1). She saw this interaction with prompts on the lesson plan as having the potential to develop her and other teacher's personal capacities for enacting CRP:

> If you were being asked questions like on the HiTCRiT all the time, being forced to ponder those questions, addressing how to exemplify racial equity in a classroom and not make it like a chore, instead make it like a part of like a teacher's identity, maybe it would be a lot more easy for people to incorporate and for kids to feel more involved and seen (Int. #1)

Janet affirmed this assessment of the template in our follow up interview where she related her experience with internalizing the HiTCRiT lesson plans prompts. She noted of her progress in planning with a CRP focus,

Whereas when I did the third one [lesson plan], I was already answering those

questions in the prompts. I was asking those questions without even looking at

them; like they were already in my wheelhouse when I was making the

assignment (Int.#2)

This response indicated that, for Janet, the process of planning with the template

increased her confidence that her planning was culturally responsive in focus. She

acknowledged the transformation of her focus,

In the first lesson plan I felt like I wanted them to respond to my culture of

teaching and in the third one I felt like I was responding to their culture and

having like I had made the assignment as a response to their culture (Int. #2)

Moving Practice During the Semester

In this final section, I share my findings from my review of the participants' first

and last lesson plans. They were submitted as part of the coursework for the English

teaching methods course and represented lessons they taught in their middle or high

school classrooms. Since many of the interview responses analyzed in the above themes

were initiated through participants' review of one or both of these lesson plans, some of

the data discussed will be familiar.

However, it was these responses which motivated me to explore their HiTCRiT

lesson plans for indication of its effect on participants' growth in planning culturally

responsive instruction.

Participant responses in the first interview, which indicated they responded

differently to the HiTCRiT lesson plan than to previous planning instruments, suggested

to me that over the course of the semester these differences might have affected their planning—moving it more in line with CRP. (Jennifer's initial lesson plan was actually turned in on the district's standard instrument) I saw significant differences across time in choices participants made in respect to the types of texts the template indicated they were using. Given my observation, I asked in the second interview what shifts they saw, if any, which allowed me to check my analysis of their work.

In looking at these findings, I think it is important to note that any of the noted shifts need to be viewed in the wider context of participants' experiences between January and April of 2020. These teacher learners were attending the English methods course during this time, a course specifically designed to equip them with literacy approaches and instruct them in classroom procedures. Additionally, as I have established, these final lesson plans were to be implemented during the societal shutdowns in response to the pandemic, and therefore, reflect decisions participants made based on limitations associated with online teaching. These considerations notwithstanding, notable differences in the participants' lesson plans from the beginning of the semester and the end, combined with their observations about them, indicated more culturally responsive practices. Example of these practices were easily observable in differences in the texts they chose for their students—paintings and graphic novels versus speeches—and more subtle, but recognizable CRP shifts, were evident in how they discussed their roles as teachers.

Samantha noted in her interview that she felt that even in her first lesson plan she had made a concerted effort to choose the content of the texts with the students in mind. However, she indicated that she had not similarly considered them in the style of

engagement or assessment, and that those elements had caused the lesson to be less

successful (11-12, #2). Shown below are excerpts from her lesson plans based on the

HiTCRiT prompts pertaining to engagement and assessment. I focus here on the

linguistic details of pronouns (highlighted in yellow) and verbs (highlighted in green)

using discourse analysis as discussed in Chapter 3. The first submission is on the left and

the final on the right.

Figure 3

Excerpts from Samantha's lesson plans: HiTCRiT Style Realm

First Lesson Plan: Style		Final Lesson Plan: Style
How will the instruction in this lesson be structured? Why does this structure make sense for its content and objectives?		*How will the instruction in this lesson be structured? Why does this structure make sense for its content and objectives?*
Instruction will be structured in an "I do, we do, you do" format. **Our** unit has focused on argument, but this will be the first time so far that **we've** explicitly used the techniques that **I'll** *teach* them to evaluate the arguments they're hearing.		The core instruction is structured through the slideshow **I** *created* in which **I** *use* Screencastify to look for and analyze an author's choices in a text. For obvious reasons, this makes a lot of sense for NTI. I think this is a good way to structure the instruction for this lesson particularly because **I'm** *able* to show the students where in the graphic novel **I'm** *seeing* the author make specific choices and then verbally process how those choices add deeper meaning and impact readers.
What classroom practices or activities are tailored with the students *in mind?*		
The texts are both speeches given by high school students, both of which may be familiar to the students. Additionally, the topics ~~they're~~ considering in the speeches are things the students expressed interest in last semester during a social justice unit. The texts are meant to be relatable, informative, and applicable to their lives.		*What classroom practices or activities are tailored with the students in mind?*
		The formative assessment **I'm** *using* for this lesson asks students to design a short comic themselves. **I've** *allowed* a lot of flexibility in this assignment and outlined that what **I'm** *looking* for is that **they**, as the author of their comic,

	can make one specific choice that will add deeper meaning for **their** readers. The students are then asked to describe their *choice*, why **they** *made* it, and what impact it had.
	I had the students in mind *allowing* **them** to get as creative as **they** *wanted*.

In the first lesson plan, an initial observation would be how few pronouns are present (written in **boldface**, except for "they're" which is struck through because if refers to the writers of the speeches, not anyone present in the classroom). With the exception of the "I" in "I'll", there is a sense that the work being described in this lesson exists outside the agency of anyone actually in the classroom, a feeling consistent perhaps with enacting instruction to satisfy a curriculum or learning objective chosen for her. The use of "our" to describe the unit is most likely used in the sense of the "royal we" since students for whom it will be the first time explicitly learning rhetorical techniques likely did not have input to do a unit on argument.

In contrast, the final lesson indicates a shift toward more agency for those actually involved in the learning in the classroom and most importantly inclusion of the students. Though the prevalence of the use of "I" in the final lesson plan might indicate a continued emphasis on Samantha, as the authority in the classroom, the actions associated with "I" here belies this centering of the teacher. The last third of the description here is dominated by "they", "them", and "their" recognizing the role of the students in this lesson—something completely absent in the first lesson plan.

An analysis of the verbs used (written in *italics*; including the word "choice", which even though it is a noun, represents having been chosen) also argues for a shift in the positionality and role of the teachers and students between these two plans. The first lesson plan discussed very little about what the teacher or students would be doing in the classroom with the one exception being the teacher-centered statement "I'll teach", presumably, based on the context, something she assumes her students do not know. In the second lesson plan, Samantha uses "I'm" and "I've" a number of times. It's most often present when describing her work and her actions as a learner herself: "created", "using", "seeing" in regards to tools she acquired for distance learning and as reader of graphic novels. While the verb "allow" did position her as the authority in the class, one who could also "prohibit", her use of it here does indicate opening a space for student agency that was non-existent in the other lesson plan.

The verbs associated with the third person pronouns referring to the students further suggest this move toward shared agency in the class. The students ("they") get to "make choices" and "make" something of their own and "be creative" as much as they wanted. In the previous lesson plan they were the (implied) passive recipients of instruction, in the second lesson plan they are active in the creation of the work. Additionally, "their readers" and "their choice" of visual communicative device, shows they are free to conjure their own imagined audience, separate from the teacher, and purpose for their work, beyond proving knowledge for the teacher.

Figure 4

Excerpts from Samantha's lesson plans: HiTCRiT Institutional Bridge Realm

First Lesson Plan: Institutional Bridge	Final Lesson Plan: Institutional Bridge
How will you assess students' understanding of the content?	*How will you assess students' understanding of the content?*
I will assess their understanding multiple ways. Firstly, I will formatively assess in class as we talk out loud during the "We do" portion of the lesson. I will be able to hear whether the students seem to be properly applying the content they learned. Additionally, later in the week we will use the same graphic organizer we use in class Monday for the "You do" portion so that I can assess whether students can properly apply the skills on their own. Lastly, at the end of the week, students will have a written response test assessing whether they can evaluate an argument.	For this lesson, I will assess students' understanding of the significance of an author's choice by having them create their own comic strip. I will know the students understand this standard if the student demonstrates that they can make one strategic visual choice in their comic to add a deeper layer of meaning to the strip and explain their reasoning and the impact of that choice. That will show me that students understand authors make specific choices in their composition that create meaning for the story and don't just have to do with the surface level plot line.

The relative subtlety of Samantha's shift in instructional style, belied the impact it had on her choice in assessment and her perceived effect it had on the quality of her students' work. The first lesson plan showed Samantha structuring her assessment approach around the "I do, we do, you do" framework and employing similarly common assessment approaches and products: graphic organizers and written response test. These assessment approaches are generated by her and structured to direct the students to give answers and responses she has predetermined as the teacher. In the second lesson plan, she asks students to create their own comic strips where they attempt to employ "a visual technique" to create meaning and be able to discuss how in their minds it communicates that meaning. She discussed that this assessment, "allowed a lot of flexibility" and "I had the students in mind, allowing them to get as creative as they wanted", which showed a

move toward creating assessments that offer a wider range of opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge.

Samantha's and Jennifer's first lesson plans data indicated they felt they were reading high-interest, inclusive texts for their students. Similarly, Jennifer noted in her interview differences in the style and procedures of her instruction, which she discussed in terms of keeping her instructional choices focused on her audience, students. Though making direct comparisons in the data was complicated by the fact that Jennifer's first observation was so early in the semester she prepared for it on the standard planning instrument used by the University, it was possible to analyze areas in each related to her perceived differences.

Figure 5

Excerpts from Jennifer's lesson plans: HiTCRiT Style and Institutional Bridge Realms

First Lesson Plan		Final Lesson Plan: Style
Students' Baseline Knowledge and Skills (PGES 1B, 1F) Prior to this lesson, students were provided with a pre-assessment. The pre-assessment asked that students create level two and level three questions, based on informational student presentations, and the required fictional text. *Formative/Summative or Summary* Assessment(s) (PGES 1F) Formative assessment will include the following: • Student Socratic seminar self-assessment/instructor assessment: Students will have a Socratic seminar about the required reading in the fictional text, and student presentations about specific #BlackLivesMatter cases.		*How will the instruction in this lesson be structured? Why does this structure make sense for its content and objectives?* Many of the students have limited digital capabilities. Plus, they are in charge of household responsibilities and work responsibilities during the COVID19 pandemic. Therefore, the content is delivered in a way that the students can consume it in small bites. Also, it offers flexibility and freedom in how to respond and submit assignments. *In what ways are your practices guided by who your students are and honor ways of interacting familiar to their communities?*

Students will self-assess using the embedded form. The instructor will also use the same form to assess each student.		To add to the previous answers - students were permitted to express their understanding of the content by creating Instagram posts and videos, or they could submit with paper/pencil if digital capabilities are limited.
First Lesson Plan		**Final Lesson Plan; Institutional Bridge**
Closing Task: Using metacognition strategies, students will be required to reflect on their performance from the Socratic seminar. The closing task is in their digital Daily Achievement form. The closing task is to answer the following: (1) On a scale 1-10 (one being not prepared, 10 being totally prepared), how prepared were you for the Socratic seminar today?		*What opportunities does the lesson provide for student agency or spaces does it create for student voice?* This lesson(s) gives students choice in which assignments they would like to complete. - This lesson is asynchronous, allowing students to choose when they would like to complete the assignments within a range of dates. - This lesson also gives students a choice in how they would like to express their learning (Google Docs, Photos, Google Slides, Music)

The comparison of the language across Jennifer's two lesson plans perhaps most clearly validated her assertion in the interviews that she saw the standard lesson plan as a "box-checking" exercise. The two lesson plans also confirmed her perception that the HiTCRiT lesson plan encouraged her to "feel safe" to focus her instruction in what she saw as more student-focused culturally responsive ways. The language in her first lesson plan was technical and institutionally focused as were the assessments, with specifically scaled rubrics and pre-planned responses. Her responses on her final, HiTCRiT lesson plan demonstrated an acknowledgement of her students in the context of their current

situations during the pandemic and in terms of response modes they are familiar with. Jennifer's final lesson plan procedures and assessments allowed students flexibility in terms of when they accessed the instruction (as it was available asynchronously) and by giving them an array of response options—both culturally responsive practices.

Janet's lesson plans revealed shifts in her choices of text and assessments, which for her implied more culturally responsive thinking for both her students and her. She mentioned in her discussion of the HiTCRiT template that she saw it as a valuable reflective tool that, "had me thinking about what I could do in the future to do it better" (Int. #1). Her lesson first and final plan submissions, suggested she had improved at incorporating culturally responsive practices. Like Jennifer and Samantha, Janet's first lesson focused on a text by an African American, and the civil rights movement (MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech): one she would see as addressing tenets of CRP. However, she discussed in the interview how its predictable nature and the way she taught it was not responsive to her students as it could have been. I looked at Janet's final lesson plan for evidence that she had addressed this self-critique and how she might have done it.

Figure 6   *Excerpts from Janet's lesson plans: HiTCRiT Texts Realm*

First Lesson Plan: Text	Final Lesson Plan: Text
What features of this text/material/activity make it a good choice for learning the content? We have been discussing Dr. King since the beginning of the grading period, in preparation for recognizing his holiday. We scaffolded this activity by first giving classes opportunities to use the GALE Research Database to conduct research on Dr. King, providing them with historical context before tackling persuasive technique notes. Our current unit has been on Speech and Persuasion. We then combined the two concepts by analyzing his "I Have Dream" speech. This activity was a good choice because students wanted to explore Dr. King's speech deeper after learning about his impact on our world beyond the relatively limited scope they possessed prior to conducting and sharing research. *Are they/it chosen with the intent to connect to the classroom community and honor student socio-emotional needs?* This speech was chosen because it's a tried-and-true text for this time of year, based on the history of it shared with me by my PLC. It contextualizes the content by framing it with a speech that resonates with our students. Across the team, we have a very diverse population and it allowed for very open communication and pondering about what it means to be an activist and how prejudice and racism has and continues to impact our communities, no matter the scale.	*What features of this text/material/activity make it a good choice for learning the content?* What I try to constantly impart to my students is the idea that anything that communicates a message is a text. It's difficult to perfectly emulate the classroom experience while staring at a computer screen from the comfort of our home. Being more flexible with the route we take to hit standards and trying to reach students by offering texts they normally don't get to engage with in class was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. I plan on using standards for reading literature as a guide for how I structured the lesson and the questions I asked students to consider as they make observations about the different paintings I show them. *Are they/it chosen with the intent to connect to the classroom community and honor student socio-emotional needs?* Looking at and reflecting on pieces of art without having to worry about an answer being correct or incorrect is the intent of this lesson. Considering these complicated and uncertain times, the last thing I want to do is put extra, unnecessary pressure on my students. My students' socio-emotional needs are bound to have been shifted and/or amplified, so my intent in choosing a visual medium for students to engage is to shake up the monotony. My students and I check in with one another every video lesson, however I wanted to give students more than one avenue to communicate what they think and feel about what they see.

Figure 7

Excerpts from Janet's lesson plans: HiTCRiT Style Realm

First Lesson Plan: Style	Final Lesson Plan: Style
How will the instruction in this lesson be structured? Why does this structure make sense for its content and objectives? Students have a graphic organizer on their iPads with different persuasive techniques with boxes for them to type examples they glean from the speech as we watch it. Also, the speech will be paused periodically to allow students to write and discuss their observations of which persuasive techniques they believe Dr. King is using in his speech.	*How will the instruction in this lesson be structured?* We only have a short amount of time together in video lessons, since students have other lessons to attend. We check in with each other and how we're doing as we take role, I will briefly revisit the Harlem Renaissance information they've done work on to lend context today's lesson, I will tell them what the lesson is focusing on, then we will get as far into the slideshow as we can together before our time runs out, then they will finish on their own. *Why does this structure make sense for its content and objectives?* The structure is meant to emulate a gradual release of responsibility, the I do, we do, you do-esque model. Though, the I do portion is significantly reduced considering the content. I don't want to lead students into any one direction when interpreting the art pieces, I've selected for them. I want their opinions, free of teacher influence. After all, the objective is to have them communicate their observations and what aspects of the paintings led them to those conclusions, similar to citing textual evidence to support analysis of the text.

In her first lesson Janet asked her students to respond on a graphic organizer, specifically looking a predetermined set of literary devices. Likewise, in the template she specifically noted that the text was chosen because it fit the calendar, near Martin Luther King Jr.

Day, and its familiarity and predictability—none of which indicated a relevance to students. In the final lesson plan she made a choice of text specifically centered on student needs both in terms of offering models for a new understanding of what constitutes a text and in recognition of virtual format now required for instruction. In response to another prompt in the Style realm she added,

> Also, not everyone reads physical books for fun in their spare time at home….it is
> a reality of the digital age that we're in. So, presenting students with something
> other than print felt like an acknowledgment of that reality and a means of
> expanding the horizons of how we interact with what are perceived as texts (LP2)

These comments indicated a culturally inclusive response to who her students are and the media forms with which they interact.

Additionally, the way Janet discussed her intentions with the assessment format of students' responses to their "readings" of the paintings, indicated movement toward more culturally responsive practices. Whereas the first lesson included teacher defined goals (e.g., identify literary devices, within a structured instrument; use a graphic organizer), she articulated her intent for the second lesson of leaving student responses open to their interpretations. Janet's response recognized the tendency of traditional instruction to direct student responses and she specifically indicated her attempt to steer away from this, "I don't want to lead students into any one direction when interpreting the art pieces, I've selected for them. I want their opinions, free of teacher influence" (LP2). Her intention here indicated both an expanding of options for students to respond and removal of the teacher as an arbiter of the correctness of those responses, practices consistent with CRP.

Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the findings from my analysis of Jennifer, Janet, and Samantha's interviews and coursework as represented through their lesson planning for their classes using the HiTCRiT lesson planning template. The first set of findings, *Understanding of CRP* examined the degree to which the teacher learners in this study understood CRP as a theory of practice and found places in their practice to enact its associated principles. The participants recognized several of the associated principles of CRP as characterizing the practices they saw as good teaching and either attempted to or aspired to enact in their own teaching. However, analysis that led to the category *Obstacles to Enacting CRP* indicated that the teacher learners encountered numerous challenges related to the teaching, curriculum, and discipline cultures of their respective schools when trying to practice a culturally responsive pedagogy. Likewise, the teacher learners indicated that in trying to face these structural challenges they saw their lack of confidence from feeling unprepared or having insufficient knowledge as obstacles to being able to teach in culturally responsive ways on their own. Finally, I shared my analysis of the teacher learners' engagement with the HiTCRiT lesson planning template. The three teacher learners indicated that they felt the template had helped them to keep their focus on students in their planning, and to some degree, it had served to guide their work toward culturally responsive practices. I confirmed these perceptions by analyzing the substance and language of the first and last lesson plans of the semester.

In Chapter 5, I discuss these findings in the context of existing literature and draw conclusions from examining these teacher learners' experiences.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, I work to synthesize the findings presented in the previous chapter in relation to the research questions directing each aspect of my inquiry and discuss those findings in relationship to existing literature on culturally responsive pedagogy. Then I discuss my study's potential contribution to this literature, and finally, its implications for future research and for addressing the gap between CRP scholarship and practice which initiated my work presented here.

Connecting the CRP Dots

I lean in this discussion on the combined ideas expressed by Grossman et al. (2009) and Smagorinsky et al. (2003). They each discussed the significant challenges faced by novice professionals in fields dealing with "human improvement", specifically teaching, as those professionals seek to marry their ideological understandings to their practice in those fields. These two lenses seemed particularly apt for exploring the experiences enacting CRP Jennifer, Janet, and Samantha reported in the findings. Understanding the challenges posed by the teacher learners grasping CRP more as a pseudoconcept than as a fully informed concept (Smagorinsky et al., 2003; Vygotsky, 1987), provides a way of understanding the difficulties they faced enacting culturally responsive practices. Likewise, Grossman et al. asserted that novice practitioners require spaces offering guidance through thoughtful "decompositions" of practice and exemplar

"representations" of practice, and opportunities to mediate developing concepts through "approximations" of practice. Unfortunately, this does not describe the workplaces the teacher learners reported experiencing and offers insight into how the obstacles they identified created challenges for them enacting CRP and offers some for the problems which limit culturally responsive practices in K-12 schools in general.

It is through these two ways of understanding the teacher learners' developing theories of practice that explore the potential in their current knowledge of CRP, and problems created by the various obstacles to realizing that potential, and the possibilities the HiTCRiT lesson planning template offers for addressing those challenges.

The Teacher Learners and CRP

In setting out to research explanations for the scarcity of culturally responsive practices in elementary and secondary schools, it seemed logical to begin by determining to what degree the teacher learners in this study were familiar with CRP theory. If findings showed they were generally unfamiliar with the practices and teacher dispositions espoused by CRP scholars (Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2014), it would indicate a significant gap in their training and offer clear indication as to why they are not enacting culturally responsive practices in their classrooms and provide a direction for teacher education programs to take in addressing the issue. The findings from my work with the teacher learners in this study suggest, however, that this was not the case. Each of the study participants indicated that they first heard the term "culturally responsive pedagogy" during the course they took with me and when they also used the HiTCRiT lesson plan for the first time. However, in interviews

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which were conducted in the summer, two months after the school year ended, they communicated an understanding of and dispositions toward enacting many aspects of CRP. Their understanding can be seen in their aspirations, even if unfulfilled in many cases, toward classroom interactional practices, curriculum choices, and student relationships consistent with CRP.

Unfulfilled or not, Janet, Jennifer, and Samantha all communicated their aspirations to be culturally responsive practitioners throughout the data, and showed their potential to realize this goal. That some of their expressed ideas about CRP were not fully realized is to be expected Smagorinsky et al. (2003) noted saying, "learning as a practice-mediated phenomenon that takes place over time in various activity settings and communities of practice" (p. 1417). Still these teacher learners foregrounded student "agency" in terms of both allowing students space to guide the work in class and how they were able to demonstrate their grasp of the knowledge being taught: a pedagogical stance consistent with CRP principles (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995) and informed by sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and critical consciousness theory (Freire, 1970). Likewise, they indicated they understood the foundational concept of CRP as conceived by Ladson-Billings (1995), that in order for teaching to be culturally responsive, teachers must see knowledge as mutable and emerging and, therefore, not as something *presented to* but something *co-constructed with* their students. This element of CRP links across the different propositions in Ladson-Billings's (1995) work from relationships to concepts of knowledge and the data suggests that through the teacher learners' interaction with these ideas, they developed a clear understanding of this concept.

Additionally, the study participants understood CRP's emphasis on the need to develop positive, "fluid" relationships and connect with students in developing a community of learners (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This aspect of CRP was largely unexplored in the other studies on teachers enacting CRP reviewed for this study. Brown et al. (2018) and Young (2010) do not explicitly discuss teachers' understanding on student relationships; Daniel (2016) acknowledges that participants saw CRP as primarily directed at community building, but implied they saw this focus as a detriment to academic work; and Hinton (2020) indicated that all of his participants recognized building a community of learners as an example of culturally responsive pedagogy, but his discussion showed participants foregrounded collaborative work between students in groups and did not specifically discuss student/teacher relationships.

In contrast, the findings here show how Jennifer, Janet, and Samantha valued developing relationships with students and how that affected their ability to work with them. They point to how knowing about their students' lives and their interests through casual conversations or diligent reading of their journals earned them "relationship collateral", as Samantha phrased it, they could draw on to encourage students to engage in classwork. This is consistent with Emdin's (2016) assertions on the power of "co-generative dialogues"—meetings between the teacher and a few students in which the class or teacher's work in it are critiqued and suggestions are made for improvement—and teachers make an effort to engage in students' culture by valuing some aspect of students' aesthetic to create culturally responsive educational spaces. While the teacher learners' responses on their lesson plans suggest this was still an emerging understanding

of CRP, the length of their responses on close student relationships in culturally responsive practice implies they assigned significant importance to them.

The clear potential represented in these findings notwithstanding, though each participant demonstrated an understanding of some aspects of CRP, none of them demonstrated, either through their responses in interviews or as evidenced in their lesson planning, a firm acknowledgement of the theory as a whole. Instead, they are at a stage of understanding CRP as a pseudoconcept—able to articulate, and realize, only some aspects of the theory and likely to employ some practices inconsistent with it. Common with previous studies on teachers working to enact CRP (Brown et al., 2018; Daniel, 2016; Hinton, 2020; Young, 2010), the participants demonstrated an understanding of the need for inclusion of texts relevant to and reflective of their students' interests and identities, but indicated varied understanding of the need to guide students in questioning existing systemic barriers in education or raising students' sociopolitical consciousness. None acknowledged CRP's focus on academic rigor and success. Often the participants showed recognition of the social relations, collaborations, and the concept of knowledge as a co-construction with students as desirable elements of CRP (Emdin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2014). However, because they had not developed an understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy as a concept, they were consistently unable to articulate how to include these elements in their teaching nor yet able to operationalize them fully with students.

Obstacles

The participants' understanding of the theory surrounding CRP showed that the teacher learners in this study had an emerging, but clearly informed, grasp of several tenets associated with culturally responsive practice. Even in areas where there was less consistent understanding evident, the teacher learners were still theorizing and grappling with ideas surrounding their practice, and they were committed to making that practice culturally responsive. Given their demonstrated understanding of CRP and their desire to teach in culturally responsive ways, raises the obvious question of why Janet, Jennifer, and Samantha often felt unsuccessful in, or prevented from, doing so. Understanding the problems they reported facing as new teachers desiring to enact CRP and what factors hindered their attempts, sheds light on the teacher learner experience moving from their university, teacher training programs to the classroom and on the persistent absence of culturally responsive practices in many middle and high schools.

As the length of the section on them in Chapter 4 implies, whether erected by structural entities other than the participants, but directly affecting their work, or by their own self-conceptions or perceived abilities, the teacher learners in this study identified several obstacles to them enacting CRP. I argue that the different challenges to CRP implementation posed by the identified external and internal obstacles, and the interplay between them, worked to thwart the teacher learners' attempts to enact principles consistent with the theory directly and hindered their ability to conceptualize CRP fully.

This argument is consistent with Smagorinsky et al.'s (2003) findings that when novice teachers arrive at their first job placements with only a pseudoconcept of the

theory of practice they plan to enact (as I argued above the teacher learners in this study had) and they find their training unreinforced, they "gravitated toward the prevailing norms held by the schools in which they taught in their first jobs" (p. 1419). These "prevailing norms" would have given rise to, to use Vygotsky's (1987) term, "spontaneous concepts" about learning formed through the daily practice of the experienced teachers in the school, but not based on scientific concepts or formal instruction (Smagorinsky, et al., 2003, p. 1399). This makes these concepts more dependent on the specific contexts of each teacher, potentially even relying on who the individual teacher is, and therefore less generalizable or able to be tweaked around a theory or grounding principles.

I kept this way of thinking about the communities of practice in Jennifer's, Janet's, and Samantha's schools in mind as I considered their discussion of the obstacles they identified to their attempts to enact more culturally responsive practices. Considering their position as novices with only a pseudoconcept of CRP as a theory of practice, and their colleagues' commitment to teaching practices based around untheorized, spontaneous concepts that don't draw on the "formal vocabulary of the university" (Smagorinsky, et al., 2003, p. 1419), offers a perspective on why the teacher learners found it difficult to develop their concept of CRP and why culturally responsive practices find so little traction in K-12 schools.

In listening to the teacher learners discuss the various obstacles to enacting CRP(e.g., discipline codes, PLC structures, shortcomings in teacher training, collegial fear, etc.) in relation to their specific attempts, a cyclical pattern emerged which offered insight into the pedagogy's relative scarcity in schools. This interplay suggests that these

obstacles, though differently situated—some externally and others within the different teacher learners themselves—inform and feed-back to one another in a cycle that made it difficult for the teacher learners to enact practices informed by CRP. Discipline norms within the school discourage the types of classroom interactions consistent with CRP, so the teacher learners avoid those interaction styles and opt for more traditional interactional styles.

Additionally, Samantha's comment on how her high school English experiences continue to affect her capacity to enact CRP as a teacher argues the far-reaching effect of this cycle. She acknowledged being unfamiliar with many texts that would be "culturally responsive to her students" and that since she was only 24, "I've been in school for most of my life, so I just haven't read a ton of things to pull from on my own". Even though she is of mixed race and identifies as African American, she acknowledged that her school experience with literature consisted of texts by white men and traditional instructional practices. Not being exposed to culturally diverse texts in high school kept from her a resource she could use as a new teacher to expose her high school students as alternatives to canonical texts. Without that alternative text, she acquiesced to use the canonical text and, logically, the equally canonical lessons and assessments developed by her PLC. This cycle highlights problems new teachers face attempting to enact culturally responsive practices in K-12 schools which are best structured to replicate existing practices (Emdin, 2016; Paris & Alim, 2014; Zeichner et al., 2015) rather than progress beyond them.

This replicative structure is perhaps most obviously manifested in how it limits the number of experienced teachers equipped to help new teachers develop their practice

in progressive and culturally inclusive ways. Each of the study's participants indicated that the colleagues they encountered either lacked knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogies or were committed to more traditional teaching practices and student/teacher relationship paradigms. Samantha mentioned learning that trusting "teachers who have taught a whole lot is not always good because even those teachers don't really know how to teach sometimes" (Int. #1) and Janet discussed her frustration with only being able to work with teachers in her PLC who did not enact culturally responsive practices and not being able to even observe the one teacher whose classroom indicated she might.

This challenge of finding role models for more progressivist and culturally responsive pedagogies in their schools echoes the literature (Daniel, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Jacobs & Low, 2017; Smagorinsky, et al., 2003) on new teachers entering schools to find little help in developing their craft in these pedagogies. I can attest that in my experience teaching high school, they would likely have the same challenge finding qualified mentors regardless of their school placements.

I base this assumption on numerous personal experiences with teachers in our district, specifically one I had leading a professional development day on culturally responsive teaching practices as part of the training teachers were asked to do at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. I began my presentation by asking the 20-person department, all of whom were white and most had ten or more years teaching experience, what culturally responsive pedagogy meant to them and to name the books and authors they felt were essential to include in the high school English curriculum.

The teachers responded to these questions in short posts on a digital bulletin board. On the question of what CRP meant to them, the most common responses

pertained to the inclusion of "diverse texts" and the phrases "meeting diverse needs" or "accommodating diverse needs". Only three respondents posted remarks that indicated a sense that CRP applied to interactional styles or classroom procedures, and only one respondent mentioned having students at the center of the instruction. Perhaps more telling, since including diverse texts was the most identified CRP tenet, of 105 books or authors named as essential to teach, there were only three different works (some titles were named more than once) by African Americans and only six African American were writers named. No other writers from cultures or ethnicities other than African American were represented either by name or by works.

Beyond the dearth of experienced teachers to serve as mentors, and as I alluded to as an example of a cycle which works to exclude CRP, another clear thread running through the comments by participants is the sense that the discipline policies and shared student behavior expectations in their schools, cast students and teachers in oppositional terms. All of the participants described some aspect of their schools' cultures positioning students at best as subjects in need of control, and at the worst, in ways that denied their humanity. Jennifer saw teachers and her school's wider approach to discipline as treating the students "like they're animals"; Samantha discussed her school's practice of a security guard escorting students to the bathroom and acknowledged it made the students feel like prisoners. Janet saw through the mechanism of her PLC, teachers make sweeping generalizations of "these kids" and their enacting a predetermined curriculum as if students were in "a well-oiled machine" and treated like "robots you put numbers into".

By using terms that conjure images of factories and incarceration to describe their schools' discipline policies and practices, these teacher learners pinpointed a key obstacle to implementing CRP—clear inequity in the power dynamics of students and teachers. They were forced, as teachers employed in these schools, to adhere to discipline policies that positioned them as behavior police and by extension as barriers to creating spaces where knowledge can be shared and co-constructed and communities of learners are developed (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This conception of the students is a far cry from Gay's (2000) characterization of CRP teachers that should demonstrate, "an ethical, emotional, and academic partnership with ethnically diverse students…anchored in respect, honor, integrity, resource sharing, and a deep belief in the possibility of transcendence" (p. 52). This depiction suggests that school-wide discipline policies robbed students of the chance to see themselves as equal, contributing members in a community of learners and the teacher learners of the transcendence made possible by seeing students in that way.

The suppression of students' identities as co-contributors in the learning process was also seen in the participants' stories of how their schools, under the guise of creating positive educational environments, valorized silence as an indicator of focus and learning. This echoes Emdin (2016) who noted that these conceptions of appropriate classroom learning environments and sticking close to provided scripts and narrowly-defined curricula is a common defensive stance used by teachers in response to the "narratives of fear" they tell about students. He points out that, too often school, particularly for poor students and students of color, is just a "series of routines" and that irrespective of whether or not students are learning or "inspired to value education,"

teachers see themselves as successful if "students are seated and quiet during the lesson" (p. 41). Thus, schools that have policies requiring students to be quiet, and congratulating teachers for keeping them that way, are inhospitable places for culturally responsive pedagogy.

Opportunities

My discussion in the previous two sections begins to offer some insights into how the teacher learners' understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy and the obstacles they face trying to operationalize this understanding in their teaching, informs my research on the gap between the presence of CRP scholarship and training in teacher education programs and its practice in K-12 schools. Though the study participants, often more so than the teachers and teacher learners in the literature (Brown et al., 2018; Daniel, 2016; Hinton, 2020; Young, 2010), showed a developing understanding of several principles key to CRP, their understanding was still incomplete and even for the principles about which they felt most knowledgeable, their reported practice of them was more potential than actualized. The teacher learners' development of these culturally responsive practices was hindered by the obstacles discussed above which caused problems for the teacher learners either by directly opposing those practices or by stymieing their efforts at CRP enactment through the replicative cycles of the cultures of practice in their schools.

This section discusses what possibilities the HiTCRiT lesson plan template offered the teacher learners as they explored their potential conceptualizing and actualizing CRP in the face of the obstacles they identified as creating problems for that

work. This discussion directly addresses the study's research question on whether guiding teachers' planning through a modified planning tool has an effect on their practice.

Analyzing the findings for the HiTCRiT template, I was mindful of the larger context in which these lesson plans were produced. Study participants submitted these lesson plans as part of their requirements for a course on teaching middle and secondary English and were studying teaching methodology in addition to teaching full-time. Additionally, the final lesson plans were submitted during a period of time that schools were closed to in-person learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant that participants were removed from their typical milieu of colleagues and their schools' structures and culture. These realities presented a number of potentially confounding elements to interpreting the findings. To counter misreading's while I examined the templates and interview transcripts, I remained mindful of the admonition that any text, "does not fully or unambiguously display its history—even the most insightful of interpretations and analyses are only likely to recover some elements (Prior, 2004, p. 171). I stayed close to participants' language in describing their experiences, and guided by Gee's (2014) conception of discourse analysis, and in our second interviews, I checked my interpretations with the participants. Also, the last portion of my discussion here, on participants seeing the tool as "mentoring" them, arose from memo writing on that topic during analysis.

Through their responses in the interviews about the HiTCRiT template and specifically through my analysis of the templates themselves, participants showed increased culturally responsive instructional choices between their first and final submitted lesson plans. Demonstrated through these choices, and the language they used

to articulate them, were shifts in focus to more intentionally consider their students in the planning process, to see those students as co-learners in the education process, and to broaden the options for assessment allowing students flexibility in expressing their understanding and learning. All of these practices are indicative of culturally responsive pedagogy.

The most dramatic of these shifts toward more culturally responsive pedagogy was the teacher learners' move toward more "flexible" assessments and expanding the types of response modes they offered to students. By rethinking assessment approaches, teachers can be more culturally responsive to the students' different ways of knowing and provide inclusive ways for students to demonstrate their understanding. Consistent in each of the final lesson plans created by the participants was a recognition of this CRP's tenet, communicated through the teacher learners' use of the word "flexible" to describe elements in their assessment approaches:

> Samantha: "I've allowed a lot of flexibility in this assignment… what I'm looking for is that they, as the author of their comic, can make one specific choice" (LP #2)

> Janet: "Being more flexible with the route we take to hit standards" (LP #2)

> Jennifer: "Also, it offers flexibility and freedom in how to respond and submit assignments" (LP #2)

Each of these comments suggests that in their second lesson plans the teacher learners were moving to adopt a key "conception of knowledge" from Ladson Billings's (1995)

propositions for culturally relevant teachers: that assessments should be "multifaceted" and take on multiple forms. This proposition is echoed by scholars (Emdin, 2016; Lee, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2014) who call on teachers to create classroom spaces that sustain pluralism and access culturally familiar ways of interaction as assets in constructing assessments. The teacher learners' choices in these lesson plans answered that call through offering different kinds of texts (Harlem Renaissance paintings) for exploration (Janet); multiple forms response and methods for communicating those responses (Jennifer); and an open-choice, multimodal composition responding to a graphic novel (Samantha).

These examples showed the teacher learners expanding their culturally responsive practices through the inclusion of texts and increasing student agency as co-learners in ways the findings from other studies (Brown et al., 2018; Daniel, 2016; Young, 2010) did not indicate was the case for their participants. Participants in those studies indicated difficulty incorporating CRP practices other than those aimed at cultural competence (Young, 2018) and embracing the work of inclusion as connected to, and not separate from, academic work (Daniel, 2016).

Evaluating the degree to which the choices the teacher learners made showed an embracing of CRP is best seen by contrasting the same aspects from their first and later lessons. Early lessons all focused on responses to written, verbal texts (three speeches and a novel) and all had verbal, linguistic products as their assessment components. Two out three of those products were highly-structured, teacher-generated forms: graphic organizers, a Socratic seminar, and a "written test". Considering these choices across the

lesson plans suggests a significant change in the flexibility in these teacher learner's practice.

The idea of "flexibility" is not only important in regard to "what" they were doing with students, but in how flexibility suggests shifts in the teacher learners' thinking about cultural responsiveness. There is an implied reflexivity in the "flexibility" each participant indicated in their second lesson plans. Flexibility in the types of texts and response modes students have access to suggests that their responses (no longer limited by mode or teacher-generated tools) are likely to produce a wide array of ideas and have diverse focuses. It follows then that the teacher learners will have to be flexible in their evaluation of these responses and flexible in how they assess student learning when it is no longer corralled and directed toward a presupposed set of answers.

As noted in Chapter 2, Rychly and Graves (2012) see this need to be, "flexible and not dualistic" (p.48) and recognize multiple ways of representing "correct" answers even when outside of a teacher's cultural frames of reference as essential to culturally responsive practice.

These shifts, particularly in regard to the new assessments, are well-suited for examination in Smagorinsky et al.'s (2003) frame of new teachers developing unified understandings of a pedagogy. Specifically, these shifts begin to address some of the internal inconsistencies within the teacher learners' understanding of CRP—a hallmark of them developing it as a pseudoconcept, rather than concept. Considering their earlier lesson plans next to their final ones revealed how their increased fidelity between theory

and implementation of some culturally responsive practices also led them toward other aspects of CRP the findings suggested they were missing.

Contrasting the flexible, multimodal approaches to both texts and assessments in all of the teacher learners' final lesson plans were those from the first plans they submitted. In some ways, the initial lesson plans that the study participants submitted offered more potential (in terms of the texts) for exploring social issues relevant to students of color. All of the texts—MLK's "I Have A Dream Speech; speeches given by teens on climate change and gun control related to school shootings—presented entry points on relevant social topics. However, the interaction styles and assessments in the early lesson plans, with the possible exception of Jennifer's Socratic seminar on *The Hate U Give,* steered students away from the actual content of those texts. Their understanding of CRP being at the pseudoconcept stage, the teacher learners lacked confidence in creating assessments consistent with the theory, so they reverted to the assessments used by their colleagues. Though the speeches in Samantha's and Janet's initial lessons presented texts with counter-perspectives on pernicious social and environmental ills, the work to which students were directed was graphic organizers identifying rhetorical and literary devices and on the formation of argument. This mirrors a common experience in middle and secondary classrooms and offers an explanation for why the CRP tenet of fostering socio-political consciousness is less prevalent in these teacher learners' definitions of CRP and in their planning for its practice.

As discussed in Chapter 2, development of a unified pedagogy as a concept requires that the teacher learners' understanding be, "mediated by activity in cultural practice" (Smagorinsky et al.,2003, p. 1404). While the texts in the first lesson plans

seem to offer this opportunity for practice, as they are consistent with the cultural competence aspect of CRP, the assessments were inconsistent with CRP's ideas of varied, multifaceted assessments and co-constructed knowledge. The goals of the assignments and the assessments used to show students' progress toward them were examples of practice—teacher constructed and centering the teacher as the source of knowledge and the sole arbiter of student performance—that are ideologically antithetical to CRP. Further, this pedagogical inconsistency focused the lessons away from the content of the texts and stole an opportunity from the teacher learners where they could have mediated their understanding of CRP's call for raising socio-political consciousness by engaging with students on that content.

The teacher learners' responses to the guiding questions of the final lesson plan, however, suggested that this potential was not missed, and that they were developing CRP, through their practice and mediated through the HiTCRiT template, as a concept. Janet's lesson plan showed her employing varied approaches to evaluation through this response to one of the Style realm prompts, "I don't want to lead students into any one direction when interpreting the art pieces I've selected for them. I want their opinions, free of teacher influence" (LP #2). Similarly, Samantha's final lesson plan had the students read a graphic novel to which they responded by creating original comic strips— making both the text and assessment multimodal in nature. These texts were, to some degree, as new to Samantha as to her students, thus precluding her expert status and positioning her as a co-learner along with them. This "flexibility" to move beyond their cultural frames of reference (Rychly & Graves, 2012) for what constitutes "texts" and "assessments" in middle and high school English classrooms represents the teacher

learners' growth in understanding CRP as a concept. These assessments are now multifaceted and multimodal, center on culturally inclusive texts, and create a space where the teachers and students can learn together and negotiate their understandings— all practices consistent with CRP. Moreover, by virtue of not having answers predetermined by the teacher, these assessments leave the door open for students and teachers to offer responses about or relevant to their own experience.

Along the same lines as creating an ideological space, having been removed from the physical space of their classrooms, where the teacher learners could develop their concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, there emerged from the findings the sense that to some degree the teacher learners in this study also saw the HiTCRiT template as a surrogate mentor teacher, guiding and informing their decisions on how to enact their teaching. It was surprising to hear the participants suggest the lesson plans—a form typically seen as a compliance document—played this role for them, but it suggests a possibility for addressing a central challenge to increasing CRP practice in schools—the scarcity of existing experienced practitioners.

In their own words the participants indicated that finding support among their colleagues to grow their practice in CRP was a challenge. It was clear from the findings that working within their PLCs, where the participants would ostensibly have access to colleagues to act as mentors to hone and focus their instructional practice, what they reported happening was the opposite. Samantha noted that she had learned the trusting other teachers' guidance, " is not always good because even those teachers don't really know how to teach sometimes". Janet's experience was that her colleagues were married to doing things the way they always had, and Jennifer noted succinctly, "I would rather

learn from someone who's done it", which, she found, didn't describe her colleagues or even many people she came in contact with from her district.

This understanding recalls Daniel's (2016) "two-worlds" problem in education: the clash between traditional instructional paradigms entrenched in most public schools and the push for more culturally responsive and constructivist pedagogies taught in teacher education programs. The teacher learners found it impossible to locate more experienced teachers who had developed pedagogical concepts in the sense called for by Smagorinsky et al. (2003) that could aid them with putting their burgeoning understanding of CRP theory into practice to serve as their mentors. Likewise, the experience I related from a CRP professional training in the same district suggests this is likely a consistent challenge new teachers face irrespective of their placements. Those experienced, many mid-career or later, teachers I trained struggled to articulate principles of culturally responsive teaching and indicated they did not possess the knowledge of texts or practices that would allow them to enact those principles.

Scholars (Grossman et al., 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1991) have looked at the importance of apprenticeship and mentoring as a central means to developing proficiency of practice, particularly in professional fields that require complex, multifaceted practices in uncertain and unpredictable conditions—like teaching (Grossman et al., 2009). The dearth of mentor teachers experienced with enacting CRP means that for participants this essential apprenticeship ingredient was missing both in their in-person workplaces and as they worked remotely in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The opportunity then for teacher learners to move beyond the complex or pseudoconcept stages in their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy was hampered by the absence of

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experienced practitioners to "decompose" or offer opportunities to "approximate" and see "representations" (Grossman et al, 2009) of CRP within a culture of practice.

Differences in the character of these two mentor-free conditions offer a clear suggestion of how the template served as a surrogate mentor for the teacher learners in my study.

The participants indicated that, their potential mentors were committed to traditional teaching and/or were ill-equipped to enact CRP, and so could not support, and often worked against, their efforts to enact CRP. This is a condition consistent with research (Daniel, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Jacobs & Low, 2017) which acknowledges the propensity for existing communities of practice in schools to keep new teachers locked into or dragged them back toward traditional, teacher-centered instruction.

However, when the participants taught remotely, they engaged actively with the template for guidance informing their practice, rather than perfunctorily as a document for reporting that practice. In the absence of some of the structures causing those frustrations, and with the help of the template, Jennifer felt empowered to enact more culturally responsive instruction. The language she used in the description of her experience during her remote teaching captures this engagement. She spoke of the template in relational terms: "It allowed me to be in a more safe space personally. I feel a little more candid, comfortable and safe being handed the lesson plan template, obviously it gives me a space where that kind of expression can be allowed" (Int. #2). She referred to the template almost as an embodied entity, framing her interaction with it not as "what

she did on it" or "with it", but saying that the template "allowed" her to feel safer and that it "gives me space" to be "candid" and to express herself. The idea of being "candid" with a planning template or that it created an otherwise missing comfortable space to consider her instructional choices cast the HiTCRiT template in a mentoring role. Jennifer further affirmed the lesson plan's role suggesting the template assisted her with enacting through practice her student-centered disposition: "I always think about the student and this template allowed me to express it" (Int. #1). Here she acknowledged the culturally responsive principle that students be at the center of instruction (Emdin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995) and the role the guiding questions of the template played in helping her actualize the concept in her practice.

Janet's depiction of planning with the HiTCRiT lesson plan's questions characterized the template in similar ways, casting the act in terms similar to a collegial conversation with a more experienced mentor. She noted that the template's questions engaged her in a discussion about her work she otherwise saw as absent both with her co-workers and when working remotely. She said, "I don't have to have that conversation with anybody; it was nice to be able to see the instances in which I actually did or did not [center students in planning] (Int. #1). Much like Jennifer, Janet took a tool that is normally seen as a compliance chore and cast it as her partner in "a conversation" about her practice, a conversation she saw as "nice" and as helping her reflect on her practice. She noted that, like a mentor, the HiTCRiT template's structure challenged her to critically assess her work and created a space for recognizing her progress,"For the most part it just really had me take a critical look at whether or not what I was teaching was actually doing anything; there's like a lot of moments of like affirmation" (Int. #1). She

positioned the template as the actor in her description, having her, "take a critical look at whether or not what I was teaching was actually doing anything" and offering her sense of accomplishment or congratulations for work well done.

Jennifer and Janet suggested the HiTCRiT lesson plan template occupied a vacancy in their current professional lives, that of a qualified mentor. I offer this perspective based on Grossman et al's (2009) suggestion that novices need "three key concepts for understanding the pedagogies of practice in professional education: representations, decomposition, and approximations of practice" (p. 2055) to improve at enacting complex professional practice.

For the teacher learners in this study the template seems to perform the duties of "decomposing and approximating" practice, duties common to the instructor or mentor role, in conditions where there is a lack of "representation" of those roles due to colleagues being inexperienced at enacting culturally responsive practices or physically absent due to the pandemic. Through its structure of breaking down culturally responsive practice into the four realms—text, style, socio-emotional connections, and institutional bridge—then asking the planner to consider multiple questions on different aspects of the realm, the template attempts to decompose, "breaking down practice into its constituent parts" (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 2056) the complex act of teaching. Though the HiTCRiT lesson plan on its own does not constitute a site for practicing (approximating) the actual lesson articulated in it, as Jennifer asserted several times in the data, its questions do remind the teacher learners to remember for whom they are planning and position themselves with the students in imagining the instruction. In a sense then, it does allow the teacher learners to walk through, or "approximate", the enactment of the lesson.

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In allowing for the decomposing and approximating of practice, the template fulfills the two roles typically associated with a professional mentor Grossman et al. (2009) suggests are most essential. They argue that decomposition is most important because even watching the most effective "representations" of practice do not fully reveal how that practice is achieved, and, "The focus on components of complex practice allows students to hone their skills…before they have to manage all the competing demands and conditions of uncertainty in actual practice" (Grossman, 2009, pg. 2092).

In addition to how depictions the participants offered of the HiTCRiT template suggest it embodied the roles of a mentor, their depictions also framed their interactions with the template as dialogues surrounding their work, further suggesting that they saw the template in a mentoring role. Each of the participants offered comments which again seemed to embody the template as a partner posing questions to them that positively affected their practice. The teacher learners described the template as asking them questions: "[had] have me consider more of, 'Okay, how will this actually be engaging for the kids"; "the whole thing is asking us to think about our audience…rather than checking a box"; "questions prompted me checking myself about what I was currently doing."

As with Jennifer's and Janet's earlier comments, the teacher learners do not phrase their interactions in terms of what they are doing (e.g., filling out the lesson plan, responding to questions, etc.), but rather in terms of what the template is doing: "have me consider", "asking us", "prompted me", implying the lesson plan is in dialogue with them about their practice. In this sense it fulfilled the mentor role suggested by Grossman et al. (2009), and constituted interactions suggestive of Smagorinksy et al.'s (2003) "activity in

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cultures of practice" (p. 1404) which were needed in the teacher learner's development of CRP as a concept.

Conclusion: CRP and Schools: Minding the Gap
Holism of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

It would be hard to overstate the unprecedented nature of the conditions during which this dissertation was written and the study it chronicles. The world was gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic causing businesses and schools to close for indeterminate lengths of time and causing 500,000 deaths in the United States alone. Also, around the time I conducted the interviews discussed here, the deaths of two African Americans, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, at the hands of white police officers proved flashpoints for the long smoldering fire of opposition to the injustice and systemic racism in America which blazed for months in the form of protests and vigils. The racial reckoning represented in these demonstrations took place against the back drop of arguably the most ideologically contentious presidential campaign in American history; one which saw the sitting president sign executive orders prohibiting cultural sensitivity training in governmental workplaces, as well as any projects informed by Critical Race Theory. Even at the time of this writing, five state legislatures are considering bills which would cut funding to K-12 schools and state universities that offer lessons informed by The New York Times 1619 Project, which reframes American history by foregrounding the roles played by African Americans and the institution of slavery (Schwartz, 2021).

It is hard to say how any of the things in the above paragraph directly affected this study and the participants in it, but it would be equally hard to argue that a single one of them hasn't. This, I have learned is the nature of culturally responsive pedagogy. As I have analyzed and discussed the work and interview data of these teacher learners in hopes of understanding the persistent absence of culturally responsive practices in schools, what has emerged is a teaching landscape as beset with varied obstacles for my participants as the year we had spent working together on this study.

The teacher learners indicated that these obstacles left them feeling unsuccessful in their attempts to enact culturally responsive practices, for by directly hindering one aspect of CRP, the obstacles indirectly undercut their ability to actualize other aspects of the pedagogy. They strove to create communities of learners and be facilitators in their classes, but their PLC insisted they teach only canonical texts with students struggled to engage. They would plan a project-based assignment over which students could have significant freedom, but because in all other classes their students sat and completed work in silence, students were unprepared to use this agency. They had students read texts with the potential to raise socio-political consciousness only to have that potential curtailed by an assessment focused solely on the institutionally endorsed knowledge of identifying rhetorical devices.

In these cases, the teacher learners were adopting aspects of and working around the communities of practice in their schools, as is common to new teachers (Smagorinsky et al., 2003; Zeichner et al., 2015) suggest is common to new teachers. These communities of practice, by nature of being spontaneous concepts (Smagorinsky et al., 2003) about teaching, formed at particular school and irrespective of any theoretical base,

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were incompatible with the more culturally responsive moves the teacher learners were trying to make. Additionally, the cultures of practice that worked to form these new teachers' identities as practitioners did not provide mentors who could assist them in enacting CRP within their contexts.

The teacher learners were left then, trying to enact culturally responsive practices, as they understood them, where they could be accommodated within existing structures, and on their own. This led, as previously discussed, to their development of CRP as a "pseudoconcept", a pedagogy whose "elements appear to be unified but have internal inconsistencies," (Smagorinsky et al., 2003, p. 1402) and presented these novice teachers with significant challenges translating it to effective practice. Since CRP is a transformative pedagogy (Gay, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2014) touching on every aspect of the educational dynamic—content, discourse, power relations, concepts of knowledge, approaches to assessment, etc.—internal inconsistencies between any two of these aspects threatens them all. If a school's assessment protocols valorize the acquisition of a privileged subset of knowledge, evaluated through standardized tests, how students can see themselves as co-constructors of knowledge in a community of learners? Can they then learn that knowledge is not static or question the systems underpinning these ideas?

Further, Smagorinsky et al. (2003) argue that teacher learners can only mediate these inconsistencies through social practice in context; they cannot simply learn how to address them in abstraction, which becomes challenging when it is the "contexts", and the communities of practice within them, causing the inconsistencies. Even in the district where study participants teach, recent (fall of 2020) attempts by the district to promote

culturally responsive pedagogy do not fully communicate the holistic nature of CRP or how context influences its related practices. It has teachers, ostensibly within their PLCs, work with a six-page document to check their unit plans against descriptors of "equitable pedagogy" on several aspects of practice. However, at the top of the document, marked with an asterisk, it says, "Note: Every unit may not have every descriptor". This is reasonable since there are six pages of descriptors covering multiple aspects of instruction, but the document does not equally admonish teachers that every unit *should have* at least one of the descriptors for each aspect of practice. Additionally, this tool is aimed at teachers and the work in their classes, and does not lead teachers, administrators, or other stakeholders to consider the influence of the school's wider culture that the teacher learners in this study have shown represent significant barriers to implementing CRP.

Effectively enacting CRP in school spaces requires teachers to view their practice holistically and to attend to each of the overlapping realms, as imagined in (Foster et al., 2020), text, style, socio-emotional connection, and institutional knowledge to reach the "sweet spot" in their practice. More research to investigate the ways in which the larger shared beliefs about students and discipline, and the systemic structures sustaining those beliefs, may provide insight into how making these structures more culturally inclusive could undergird, instead of undermine, teachers' efforts to reach that "sweet spot" and wholly enact CRP. Additionally, research in school spaces formed more intentionally around a constructivist unifying theme (e.g., Montessori or Waldorf schools) might provide more insight into the efficacy of CRP, and teachers' ability to enact it with

fidelity in spaces where many of the perceived barriers revealed in this study have been attended to.

Transformation Outside Systems of Control

Understanding the holistic nature of CRP and its underlying presupposition that it is meant to transform teaching practices is also to understand the holistic nature of K-12 schools themselves. Likewise, it is essential to consider how these institutions reside, more evidently in 2020-21 than perhaps since the civil rights movement of the 1960s, at the center of social and political contentions. Schools, like people, are shaped by their ideological environments (Ball & Freedman, 2004), so when the president publicly threatens to defund schools that try to present a more accurate version of American history as it pertains to slavery and the contributions of African Americans and then that same president garners 74 million votes in the election, it is fair to assume that schools still struggle to avoid being sites of racist ideology. Seeing the 1619 Project and Critical Race Theory—both topics related to or having potential for inclusion in CRP—assailed as agents of divisiveness by public officials will only serve to reify the existing cultures of practice in schools that valorize standardization around White, middle-class ways of thinking, and to complicate teachers' efforts to enact CRP.

A question for further research emerged from another reality of the summer of 2020 as I examined how the participants talked about their experiences teaching full-time online after being sent home in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further research could examine the types of lessons, approaches to student/teacher interaction, and

assessments that characterized teachers' online practice to understand how that practice

may have shifted in response to working outside of the normal contexts of their schools.

The entrenched cultures of practice discussed in the first paragraph of this section

did not need bolstering. As Zeichner et al. (2015), paraphrasing Engström (2001), posits,

"human activity is simultaneously constrained by macro-structures and sociopolitical

contexts as well as transformed by individuals' actions, proclivities, and tendencies

within their everyday activities" (p. 124). This proved true for the teacher learners in this

study as they sought to enact CRP in their schools. Jennifer, Janet, and Samantha all

indicated a desire to teach in more culturally responsive ways. Their responses in the

interviews about how they sought to position themselves in their classrooms and about

their understanding of CRP suggested they would be able to do so. However, as they took

their developing concept of CRP into their work-place, the macro-structures of discipline

policies and ossified communities of practice of their schools constrained their efforts to

implement it. When they sought individuals to help them in transforming those contexts,

they found colleagues unversed in CRP and/or committed to those constraining cultures.

However, their HiTCRiT lesson plans and interviews revealed that, outside of the

"macro-structures and sociopolitical contexts" in their physical workplaces, the teacher

learners' planning showed them employing more culturally responsive practices and

considering those practices more deeply. Each of the participants indicated they took

their freedom from these structures to try something they previously had not considered

doing. Samantha said in reflection of her time teaching online, "I would absolutely say

that I hold engagement during NTI as more important than I did when I was in the

classroom. Sometimes in the classroom, things just had to be what they were," revealing

the sense that within her school building something as essential as engagement with the students was secondary to the structures which "had to be what they were." These structures are a source of guidance for new teachers. Zeichner et al. (2015) noted that new teachers' practice is guided by numerous sources—their teacher training, their colleagues, their community, etc.—but while each offer, "varying constraints and affordances to support novice teacher learning; too often these systems are not in dialogue and leave the novice teacher as the sole mediator of multiple knowledge sources" (p. 124).

One of those sources was the structural voice of their PLC. The participants found working within their PLCs to be counterproductive to enacting CRP which is supported by Sevrage's (2008) assessment of how PLCs in practice fall well short of Dufour's and Eaker's (1998) aspiration for them as "transformative" for schools' communities of practice. "Schools can be sites where we uncover and challenge beliefs and practices that undermine democracy and perpetuate social injustices" (p.66) argued Servage (2008), but PLCs fall short of this potential by focusing on improving pedagogy and not transforming many of the foundational assumptions about and structures upholding what we understand to be "schooling". However, on their own and away from the physical and ideological structures of their schools, the participants did find the space to challenge some of these assumptions and transform the structures they had identified as holding them back.

Can Alternative Assessments Find Missing CRP Tenets?

Recognition of CRP's tenets of promoting socio-political consciousness among students and prioritizing their academic development (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995), was not observable in much of the teacher learners' work as represented on their HiTCRiT lesson plans. Outside of Samantha's expressed reservation about the compatibility of cultural inclusiveness and academic achievement, in the study participant's characterizations of CRP, explicit discussion of cognitive challenge or high academic expectation is missing from the responses on the template.

Though the data from this study seems simply to replicate other's (Brown et al. 2018; Daniel, 2016; Hinton, 2020; Young, 2010) findings to on the issue of academic development, its narrowed focus on the specific planning choices of participants through analysis of the HiTCRiT template and in their discussion of those choices, may offer insight on the difficulty teachers have recognizing CRP's potential for academic achievement and an avenue for addressing that difficulty.

There is an adage in teaching circles that goes, "We can't assess what we care about, so we choose to care about what we can assess." While obviously open to interrogation on the various ideas it implies, this saying offers a useful frame to understand the lack of representation of academic development as an essential part of culturally responsive teaching on participants' lesson plans.

The assessments discussed in their first lesson plans (tests, graphic organizers, forms, scale, etc.) were narrowly focused on discrete skills or pieces of knowledge, making them well-suited for straightforward, quantitative or right/wrong evaluation. In

their second lesson plans, the assessments were more "flexible", as previously discussed, and therefore really required the teacher learners to create more complex approaches to evaluation. The study participants showed shifts in the types of assessments they were using, and toward assessments consistent with CRP in that they allowed for more modes of response and individualized evaluation of learning. However, that the teacher learners did not explicitly consider how they would evaluate students' responses in those assessments highlights one of the obstacles preventing teachers in general from associating academic development with culturally responsive practices. That obstacle being how to evaluate student learning through their performance on less structured, more multifaceted assessments.

Often teachers conflate the terms "assessment" and "evaluation". Instead of seeing them separately as the student's approach to demonstrating learning and a teacher's approach to judging student success relative to a learning goal, they associate the degree of learning with the grade achieved. Narrowly focused assignments in which students recall discrete facts or show proficiency, as defined by the teacher's presupposed criteria, of a specific skill often serves to validate this conflation. However, the multifaceted, often multimodal, assessments called for in CRP and meant to arise in co-constructed learning spaces problematize evaluation for teachers. Several scholars have studied how the move to more culturally inclusive and multiliteracy focused assessments requires that teachers reconsider how they evaluate student learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Hung, Chiu, & Yeh, 2013) and how applying existing evaluative structures devalue and negate the inclusiveness of more complex assessment approaches (Curwood, 2012; Reed, 2008; Towndrow et al., 2013; VanKooten & Berkeley, 2016). Because traditional

approaches to assessment tend to be product-based and are directed toward quantifiable responses, teachers struggle to create or adopt valid approaches to evaluating student progress or learning in more open-ended assessments. Multiliteracy and multimodal assessments are significantly more challenging, cognitively, than more traditional approaches and better suited to developing 21st century learners (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), but a lack of understanding in teachers of how to evaluate them limits their presence in schools and teachers' capacity to recognize the depth of learning they communicate (Towndrow et al., 2013; VanKooten & Berkeley, 2016).

This held true for the teacher learners in this study. The work described in their second lesson plans was observably more complex and required a larger variety of skills in terms of engagement with the texts (which spanned two or more communicative modes) and in their assessments. However, in a follow-up question I posed to each of them after discussing their changes in assessment approaches during the second interviews, I asked if they felt like these assessments were effective in accomplishing their lesson's objective. They pointed to the positive level of engagement the assessment created and how the work led to interesting and "fun" conversations, but they did not speak specifically to how effective it had been for students nor how effectively it had allowed them to evaluate students' learning. These comments seem to echo, however unconsciously, the sentiment that culturally responsive practices are focused more toward community building than academic achievement. Likewise, to recall that adage on what schools tend to care about, an absence of understanding how to evaluate student learning through culturally responsive assessment practices contributes to the CRP's struggle for wider acceptance in schools.

The absence of intentional recognition of how their assessments may have promoted high academic achievement points toward areas of the HiTCRiT template that may need revision. While current prompts in the HiTCRiT lesson plan ask its users to consider the nature of their assessments, it does not prompt them to articulate the systems or tools they will use to evaluate students' learning or "grade" those assessments. Considering the demonstrated effect of the HiTCRiT template on other aspects of teacher learners' growth toward enacting more culturally responsive practices, adding prompts to consider valid approaches to evaluating students' learning through those assessments might lead to greater teacher confidence using them.

This is key for increasing the presence of alternative assessments which allow for students to respond and demonstrate their learning through different ways of knowing. Perhaps even more importantly, alternative assessments create opportunities for a wide range of responses and open up spaces for wrangling with socio-political issues often avoided through narrowly focused, institutionally constructed assessments. In this way, creating valid approaches to evaluating alternative assessment teachers can feel confident in using holds possibilities for accommodating CRP's least prevalent practices in K-12 schools.

Assessments of learning; Assessments for learning

HiTCRiT lesson plans and my follow-up questions about evaluation of students' learning on the alternative—multimodal, multifaceted—assessments, revealed challenges in these teacher learners' culturally responsive practice. Actualizing CRP as practice in schools requires embracing it holistically and enacting each aspect of it with fidelity. To

attend holistically to a pedagogy requires attention to the assessment of learning within it. This suggests a need for further study on whether the challenges in assessment posed by offering a variety of response options and modes as part of culturally responsive practice affects it wider presence in schools.

Many CRP scholars (Gay, 2001; Emdin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995) who assert the need for varied forms of assessment and additionally support high academic achievement as essential in culturally responsive practice. However, for those things to go hand-in-hand, teachers need to be better equipped to evaluate the resourceful weaving together of communicative modes (Reed, 2008) and work to create sustainable systems of evaluation in classrooms (Boud, 2000). The summative nature of many present assessment tools in schools focus disproportionately, if not entirely, on "products" over process, a focus Boud (2000) says, "drives out learning at the same time it seeks to measure it" (p. 156). Finding ways for teachers to evaluate alternative assessments with confidence will be key in switching to assessments which are more formative in nature and which foreground process and are more compatible with culturally responsive practice.

Formative assessment tools approach evaluating what students have learned, by engaging with them during the process of that learning, refining and redirecting the work as it manifests. It is possible then to consider ways in which these tools, as opposed to summative assessments of static knowledge, work reflexively with students to both assess what they have learned and direct their learning at the same time. I noticed while discussing the findings on how the teacher learners described their experience planning

with the HiTCRiT template, that in some ways lesson plans serve as assessments of teachers' learning of their craft.

However, like all other assessments, they vary widely in their capacity to assess the skills they set out to assess, and they communicate their ideology about the work through what skills or knowledge they target. So, lesson plans, like the ones Jennifer, Janet, and Samantha described in purely compliance language as "box-checking" exercises valorize the learning of the standards and tightly articulated learning objectives meant to drive their instruction. These lesson plans are like summative assessments that teachers do not engage with in any meaningful way and are meant to check for discrete knowledge. This is insufficient even as an assessment of practice because teaching is a complex, multifaceted practice for which, like all multiliterate work, "acquisition is no longer a relevant or plausible metric" (Kress & Selander, 2012, p. 267).

Several times as they talked about the HiTCRiT lesson plan, the study participants used language reminiscent of a writing conference, a common formative assessment in a composition class. Jennifer saw the prompts on the template as directing her to remember her audience, and Janet saw responding to it as "having moments of affirmation" and as directing her "to take a critical look" at whether what she was doing was achieving what she intended. The teacher learners saw the template as model for formative assessment meant both to assess and increase learning. Kress and Selander (2012) offered a model for considering this type of formative assessment; "feeding -up" (providing context and clear goals for learning), "feeding back" (responding to and guiding work in process), and "feeding forward" (evaluating what needs to be learned next). This sort of formative approach both reveals student learning even as it is guiding that learning forward.

Based on the findings of this study the HiTCRiT template serves this similarly dualistic role. It illuminated for me the teacher learners' emerging understanding of teaching as culturally responsive practitioners even as it guided them in deepening that understanding. This argues a need for more research into the role that lesson planning tools play in guiding teachers' practice and whether structuring these tools like formative assessments that steer teachers toward "problem-exploring" dispositions—dispositions where teachers interrogate and explore their practice instead of attaching it to pre-selected standards or objectives (VanKooten & Berkley, 2016), and which encourage self-assessment and reflective practice and work to positively improve that practice.

Implications

In this study I observed how teacher learners attempted to enact culturally responsive pedagogy as they navigated their first-year teaching and as first-year graduate education students. In the sections that follow I suggest the implications from this study for each of these spaces in the lives of teacher learners..

Focus for Teacher Education Programs

The findings from this study suggest the separation new teachers feel in the "two-worlds problem" (Daniel, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2010); the perceived disconnect between university training and the communities of practice in schools only widens with the interrogation of systemic race issues inherent to culturally responsive pedagogy. The experiences of the participants suggested that the communities of practice teacher education students wanting to enact CRP will join are entrenched in traditional practices and wholly unequipped to engage on issues of racial equity. As mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, the teacher population in America is disproportionately

white, female, and middle class (Foster, 2018). Samantha, who graduated from high school only six years ago, attested to the fact that her experience in high school English, and as a college English major, gave her so little contact with the writers of color she could not come up with a single substitute title she felt prepared to teach for her students.

This suggests that teacher education programs work, specifically in regards to CRP, to create more opportunities for their teacher education students to develop a culturally diverse repertoire of knowledge and interactional skills. As study participants noted, and researchers (Grossman et al., 2009; Smagorinsky et al., 2003) agree, teaching is a complex enterprise that cannot be learned, it must be mediated through practice. This suggests then that teacher education programs should work to create hybrid spaces, as suggested in Zeichner et al. (2015), between university teacher learners and K-12 practitioners, especially those who teach in schools with large populations of students of color. Within these hybrid spaces the teacher learners could "approximate" culturally responsive practices Grossman et al.'s (2009).

Additionally, the findings of this study indicated that of all of the tenets of CRP, developing students academically was least recognized and there were some indications both from participants in this study, and those studied by Daniel (2016), that a focus on CRP detracted from the learning. Teacher education programs need to be intentional about having teacher learners read texts and examples in the literature that depict culturally responsive teaching practices or provide guides to understanding the funds of knowledge students from different cultural backgrounds bring with them to class. For programs in which teacher learners will enter schools with significant African American populations, increasing familiarity with texts (Emdin, 2016; Foster; 2001; Rickford &

Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 1977), interaction styles (Lee, 1993) and scholarship on

AAE would be advisable.

Focus for Schools and Districts

The findings imply that professional development for existing staff members is

essential to shifting the cultures of practice in schools which make them inhospitable to

culturally responsive pedagogy. Brown et al. (2018) found that training focused on

culturally responsive practices helped the school in their study increase implementation

of those practices, and without it, most of the staff saw CRP as a purely ideological

stance. By equipping more existing teachers to engage with culturally responsive

practices, schools can begin to create communities of practice that are better suited to

developing new teachers' concept of pedagogy.

Additionally, it would behoove schools looking to incorporate CRP to examine, in

a holistic way, their school culture and the ideologies communicated through the various

agents of their "hidden curriculum". Smagorinsky et al. (2003) notes that when new

teachers looking to enact culturally responsive and student-centered practices encounter

schools more committed to "coverage and control" of students they respond with,

"acquiescence (acceptance of, compliance with, or submission to the curriculum), and

accommodation (a grudging effort to reconcile personal beliefs about teaching with the

values of the curriculum)" (p. 1419). In this study, teacher learners enforced rules they

didn't agree with and taught books they thought were no good. Schools should examine

how their discipline policies position their students, in the students' eyes and in those of

the faculty. Likewise, administrators should examine how the teachers are positioned in

their PLCs, and whether they feel they agency to operate beyond reviewing data and create common assessments and engage in transformative pedagogy (Sevrage, 2008).

For districts, and the universities they partner with for teacher education, the findings in regard to the HiTCRiT lesson plan imply that there is a need to review the current documents being used for this purpose to see if they are acting as a formative tool in teachers' practice. The study participants' reactions to the HiTCRiT template suggests there is potential for lesson planning templates to serve as reflective guides for teachers' practice. Given they are constructed as a heuristic to lead new teachers in this reflective practice, the findings here suggest these templates could help mediate teachers' understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy.

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English Methods Lesson Template

Teacher:

Content Area:

Unit Compelling Question:

Lesson Topic: E

Describe the students in the classroom:
(for example -- cultural and ethnic diversity, religious diversity, number of students who receive free/reduced lunch, are gifted, are ELL, have an IEP, and/or a 504 plan, have varied learning styles, etc...)

Student Demographics

Lesson Guiding Question:

Standards:

Materials for Lesson:

Intentional Instructional Plan:

Text	
The texts, materials, or activity is used in teaching this content	What features of this text/material/activity make it a good choice for learning the content? Are they/it chosen with the intent to connect to the classroom community and honor student socio-emotional needs? How do they/does it fit with the style of instruction or teaching in your class?

Style	
The ways of interacting that would be familiar to particular communities	How will the instruction in this lesson be structured? Why does this structure make sense for its content and objectives? What classroom practices or activities are tailored with the students in mind? In what ways are your practices guided by who your students are and honor ways of interacting familiar to their communities?

Socio-emotional Considerations	
My instruction of this lesson is attuned to students' emotions and identities in this way:	How does this lesson value or access the funds of knowledge your students bring to the classroom? What opportunities does the lesson provide for student agency or spaces does it create for student voice? How does the lesson offer connection between school and your students' home life?

Institutional Bridge	
Focus Standard(s): 1. 2.. Other standards addressed: 1. 2.	On what specific, required content is this lesson focused? What other content is related to this topic? Will be reviewed in teaching it? Is there related knowledge students need to grasp the new content? How will you assess students' understanding of the content?

Appendix B

Participant Interview Protocol

1. Visualize for a moment being in your classroom and interacting with your students. How would you describe your role in the classroom and your approach to relationship with students? That is to say, what kinds of interactions would typify your relationship with another?

2. Thinking about the many influences on student learning, what do you see as the key factors affecting students' performance in schools? To what extent would say schools create spaces where all students are capable of academic success?

3. When you hear the terms "culturally responsive pedagogies", "culturally relevant pedagogy" or "culturally sustaining pedagogy", what do you understand those terms to mean? What are some classroom practices you would expect to see in a class where those pedagogies are enacted?

4. Are there aspects of your school or your position that you feel have hindered your ability to enact culturally responsive practices or that you feel make you question even attempting them? If so, share what those are and how you feel they affect your planning and instruction.

5. Think for a moment about the lesson planning template we used in this course. What are some ways you recognize it as being different from other lesson planning guides you've been asked to use in your position or in previous education courses?

6. Considering these differences, would you say the HiTCRiT planning template affected your thinking and your approach to planning instruction? In what ways?

Appendix C

Participant Follow-up Interview Protocol

1. I would like for you to talk a little bit about your experiences with learning as you were growing up, in your family and in school. Can you describe a moment you remember?

2. Thinking about the events related to the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and what some call a moment of reckoning on race in our country, what are your thoughts about what this moment might mean for culturally responsive pedagogies? How do you see yourself moving forward with CRP in this climate?

3. I feel like I noticed in the final lesson plans from last spring how your learning objectives and assessments were approached differently from when you were teaching face-to-face in schools. Can you talk little about your motivations for these different approaches or what opportunities working online, outside of the school environment, afforded you in terms of making these choices?

4. So, I sent you copies of the first and last lesson plans you turned in during the spring semester and asked you to look over them. I would like you to share what you notice in the choices you made for the lessons and the way you discuss them in the separate sections of the HiTCRiT. Do you see any differences? What Are they?

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education

2021	**Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction** Dissertation Title: *"So, How Real Can I Get?": Opportunities and Obstacles for Teacher Learners Enacting Culturally Responsive Pedagogy* University of Louisville Secondary Literacy
1995	**Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)** Secondary English, University of Louisville
1994	**Bachelor of Arts in English** University of Louisville

Certifications:
English 9-12,
Spanish 9-12
National Board of Professional Teaching Standards: Adolescence and Young Adulthood English Language Arts 2002-present (recertified, November 2012)

Teaching Experience

2020	**Instructor- English Teaching Methods** University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky • Taught an iteration of English teaching methods course for alternative-certification teacher education students

- Mentored 15 teacher education students in teaching writing and reading methods, creating units of study, and developing classroom instructional practices for middle and high school students
- Developed and piloted the use of a lesson planning tool aimed at guiding teacher education students' planning toward more student-centered, culturally responsive practices.
- Selected the texts and designed the instruction and assessments for this course.

2013-present **Dual-credit College Writing Instructor**
University of Louisville/Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, KY
- Taught senior high school students (close to 200 at this point) in college composition, rhetoric, and non-fiction reading and research in both the College Writing 101 and 102 courses
- Collaborated with the university composition department on recruitment, curriculum, and access issues

2019-present **Secondary English Teacher**
Louisville Male High School, Louisville, Kentucky

2019 **Co-instructor- English Teaching Methods**
University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky
- Collaborated with the professor of record to mentored 20 teacher education students in teaching writing and reading methods, creating units of study, and developing classroom instructional practices for middle and high school students

2000-2019 **Secondary English Teacher**
Central High Career Magnet Academy, Louisville, Kentucky
- Served as English Department Chair (2003-2017)
- Conceived, designed, and founded Kentucky's first public, secondary Montessori program (2017)
- Served as writing instructional leader (2002-2013)
- Elected to school Site-based Decision-Making Council (2010-2012)
- Taught all levels of class 9-12, including Advanced Placement Literature and Composition.
- Taught dual-credit College Writing/Senior English (2013-2019)

1995-2000 **Secondary English and Spanish Teacher**
Bullitt East High School, Mount Washington, Kentucky
- Served as writing instructional leader (1997-2000)

- Elected to school Site-based Decision-Making Council (1998-2000)

Publications

Journal Articles

- **Baize, J.** (2019). Classics in their own "words": analytical remixes in a land of essays. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *62*(6), 625–633. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.942

- Foster Michèle, Halliday, L., **Baize, J**., & Chisholm, J. (2020). The heuristic for thinking about culturally responsive teaching (HiTCRiT). *Multicultural Perspectives*, *22*(2), 68–78.

- Whitmore, K., Chisholm, J., **Baize, J**. (2018) Standing next to Anne Frank to promote social and emotional learning", *English Leadership Quarterly*, *40*(4)

Book Contributions

- **Baize, J.,** Chisholm, J. (2020). "It's important for people to these types of issues on their own": Soundings during multimodal composing. In K. Whitmore & R. Meyer (Eds.), *Reclaiming Literacies as Meaning Making: Manifestations of Values, Identities, Relationships, and Knowledge*, (pp.208-211). Routledge.

Presentations

- Co-Presenter, National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) conference, "The Heuristic for Thinking About Culturally Responsive Teaching (HiTCRiT)" (July, 2019)

- Presenter, University of Louisville Spring Research Conference: "Classics in Their Own Words; Using Multimodal Compositions to Analyze Literature" (2018)

- Co-presenter International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry: "Documenting, Researching, and Understanding Arts-Based inquiry with the Visual Learning Assessment" (2017)

- Co-presenter Literacy Research Association Conference: "Visual, Embodied, and Emotional Literacies: Research Methods to Understand How Adolescents See, Become, and Feel Challenging Texts" (2016)

- Presenter NCTE Whole Language Strand Summer Conference: "Creating Readers: A Creative Approach to Bridging the Achievement Gap"(2010)

- Presenter Louisville Writing Project Mini-Conference, "A New Approach to Teaching Short Story Through Models." (2002)

- Presenter Louisville Writing Project Mini-Conference, "Developing a Reading Portfolio that serves teaching literacy in the way the Writing Portfolio does" (2003)

- Presenter KCTE/LA Annual Conference 2001, "Paradigm Shifting; Why We Keep Doing Something That Doesn't Work"

Leadership

- English Department Chair, Central Magnet Career Academy (2003-2017)

- Student Teacher Mentor (Spring 2012, 2014, & 2015)

- Kentucky Teacher Internship Mentor 2002, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2013

- Writing Cluster Leader for Central Magnet Career Academy (2002-2013)

- Writing Cluster Leader for Bullitt East High School (1998-2000)

- Participant Louisville Writing Project Summer Institute (1997)

- Kentucky Department of Education project to calibrate PRAXIS scores for new Secondary Spanish teachers. (1996)

Recognitions & Awards

- Finalist for Kentucky Teacher of the Year (2010)

- Ashland Oil Teacher Achievement Award winner (2010)

- National Finalist, Actors Theatre of Louisville Ten-Minute Play Contest (2005)

- President, Greater Louisville Council of Teachers of English (2001-2002)

- Semi-Finalist Louisville Magazine Short Fiction Contest (1994)