Becoming Culturally Responsive Teachers in Today's Diverse Classroom

by

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Abstract

In an invitational learning environment (Purkey, 1991; Schmidt, 2004), 7 teachers began the process of identifying their cultural identity and perspectives, naming ways that they used their cultural identity with their culturally diverse students, and discovering culturally responsive teaching pedagogies that they could use in their classrooms. In a 6-hour workshop, participants explored their beliefs about teaching culturally diverse students. They were able to label their values and beliefs. When the participants began the conversations about their own cultural identity, they found empathy for those who were different from them. The participants completed the *Multicultural Teacher Efficacy Scale (MES)* (Guyton & Wesche, 2005), the *Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)* (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), and the *Multicultural Dispositions Index (MDI)* (Thompson, 2007) before the workshop and 3 months later. The participants completed open-ended interviews 3 months after the workshop. Themes that emerged from the study were in the areas of increasing cultural awareness, teaching strategies in culturally diverse environments, developing multicultural competence, growing personal and general teaching efficacy, and creating multicultural awareness. Recommendations for practice include engaging teachers in cultural conversations with time to reflect about their learning. Teachers can increase their learning when they have opportunities to attend a workshop for 1 day and then return to their classrooms so they can practice what they are learning. By reflecting about their own cultural identity, the participants were able to recognize the possibilities

of what can be in others. They became culturally responsive teachers who wanted to make a difference in the lives of their students.

Introduction

The Latino population has exploded throughout the United States (Fry, 2007), and intense issues of language, culture, and acculturation affect both the Latino community and the educational systems. The Latino communities have impacted culture by influencing their economic and political powers in areas that other immigrant groups have been unable to influence (Novak, 2005), while the Latino communities have had an intense influence on American culture.

Ladson-Billings (1995) emphasized that the students' culture *does* matter in teaching and learning environments. Learning cannot take place in the classroom when students experience a discontinuity, or a mismatch between their home culture and the school culture (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2002). Teachers' basic assumptions determine how they will implement curriculum in their classrooms (Fine & Weis, 2003; Sleeter, 2001). Teachers who believe that students bring to school a wealth of information, prior knowledge, and a heritage language demonstrate an *additive belief* (Cummins, 1996; Freeman, 2004; Nieto, 2002). These teachers believe that their programs will enrich their students' lives as they continue the learning process. Teachers who believe that students come to school without knowing English and have to be taught everything demonstrate a *deficit belief* (Cummins; Freeman; Nieto). These teachers believe that they have a big job ahead of them because their students are behind and may never catch up. The teachers' *additive* or *deficit* perspectives determine how they will approach teaching and learning with culturally diverse students.

In an invitational learning environment (Purkey, 1991; Schmidt, 2004), I invited seven teachers to identify their cultural identity and perspectives, to name ways that they used their cultural identity in their culturally diverse classrooms, and to discover culturally responsive teaching pedagogies that they could use in their classrooms. In this mixed methods study, participants reflected about their cultural perspectives in a 6-hour workshop. They explored their beliefs about teaching culturally diverse students. The participants completed the *Multicultural Teacher Efficacy Scale (MES)* (Guyton & Wesche, 2005), the *Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)* (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), and the *Multicultural Dispositions Index (MDI)* (Thompson, 2007) before the workshop and 3 months later. After the workshop, the participants kept a journal, which I collected from them 3 months later. I also interviewed the participants 3 months after the workshop to discover how they had changed in their teaching practices when they returned to their teaching and learning environments.

I developed the *Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices Workshop* by using the four propositions of Invitational Education Theory. Purkey (1991) stated, "These assumptions are in the form of four propositions based on trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality" (p. 2). The purpose of the workshop was to have teachers who work with culturally diverse students explore their own cultural identity so they could identify how they used their own cultural identity to teach culturally diverse students.

I formed an inviting environment that provided a safe place for the participants to dialogue about culture, identity, and cultural perspectives. I established norms and rules for treating each person with respect so that the participants in the workshop felt valued

and responsible for their part in the workshop. The participants worked together in several different activities to create a cooperative learning environment. Trust was an important collaborative process because the participants began to share their beliefs and perspectives about the cultural differences of others.

. Themes that emerged were in the areas of increasing cultural awareness, teaching strategies in culturally diverse environments, developing multicultural competence, growing personal and general teaching efficacy, and creating multicultural awareness. The participants discovered what it meant to become culturally responsive teachers. They were able to label their values and beliefs. They became culturally responsive teachers who wanted to make a difference in the lives of their students.

<div align="center">Sociocultural Theory as a Theoretical Framework</div>

I focused on the issues of teaching and learning in culturally diverse settings by using the theoretical framework of sociocultural and sociopolitical theory (Giroux, 1992; Nieto, 2002). Many of the sociocultural theorists (e.g., Gay, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Sleeter, 2008; Trueba & Delgado-Gaitan, 1988) place people in their living situations in the world, and they view people from within their cultural, social, and political settings. Rather than living in isolation, people are a part of a bigger social context that involves their social, political, and cultural worlds. According to Nieto (2000), culture is "the values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and/or religion" (p. 383). The crucial dimensions of social class and gender are included in the cultural definition because they may be key factors that explain educational achievement.

Gay (2000) identified an achievement pattern that exists in schools with high populations of students of color and immigrant students. One characteristic of this pattern is that students of color and immigrant students consistently lag in achievement scores when compared with White students. Latinos have lagged behind more than any other group, and they show the largest gaps in academic achievement scores (Gay, 2000; Radigan, 2007). Several studies (e.g., Krashen & McField, 2005; Radigan, 2007; Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Clewell, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002) have shown that as Latinos continue to progress to middle and high school, their achievement scores drop considerably.

Academic Achievement Gaps between Latino(a) and African American and White Students

Students of color typically are not following the path of academic success by completing their high school years and then continuing in higher education programs (Alvarez & Bali, 2004). Latino students, including Mexican immigrant students, face difficult challenges in the public school system (Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000). The shift in student population has created classrooms that include students who have culturally diverse needs, as well as linguistic needs (Trueba, 1999).

Mexican immigrant children and children born of Mexican immigrant parents are the fastest growing population in the United States (Fry, 2007; Klineberg, 2006). The political issues of immigration influence teachers and children in schools with the exploding immigrant populations. Culturally diverse teachers discover many different languages and cultures in schools, and they find various ways of being successful with their students.

A number of researchers have focused on school failure among immigrants (e.g., Allison, Haladyna, & Ong, 2000; Alvarez & Bali, 2004; Black, 1998; Crosnoe, 2005; Giroux, 1992; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). These researchers have emphasized that the lack of academic achievement of immigrants is due to their sociocultural and linguistic characteristics. Crosnoe (2005) noted that Latino immigrants often enter the United States with limited cultural resources such as English language skills and cultural knowledge. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) suggested that the capital that immigrant families bring with them, such as "financial resources, social class and educational background, psychological and physical health, as well as social supports—have a clear influence on the immigrant experience" (p. 5). These resources influence the academic achievement that immigrant children demonstrate in schools.

The schooling of Mexican American and African American children has a long history in Texas (Crosnoe, 2005; Radigan, 2007; Valencia, 2000). Valencia described the academic achievement levels of Mexican American and African American students in Texas. In 1994, 59.7 % of African American and 49.0% of Hispanic students passed the state-mandated test, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) (*Accountability Manual: The 1995 accountability rating system for Texas public schools and school districts and blueprint for the 1996-2000 accountability system, 1995).* Valencia provided historical and empirical data that demonstrated that African American and Mexican American students in Texas have had poor performance scores on the state tests. He charged that the history of segregated schools and the hiring of substandard or noncertified teachers have contributed to the lower scores for Latino and African American students.

The disparity between academic achievement for Latino, African American, Asian, Native American, and White children is evident 13 years later (McNeil, Coppola, & Radigan, 2008). In 2007, 53% of African American students and 58% of Hispanic students in the 11th grade passed all tests, including Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies tests, the state mandated tests, Texas Assessments of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) *(Academic excellence indicator system: 2006-2007 campus performance, 2007).* Thirteen percent of both African American and Hispanic students in Texas dropped out of school during the 2006-2007 school year, according to the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) for 2006-2007. In the same year in Texas, 84% of White students passed the TAKS tests, and 3.9% of Whites dropped out of high school.

McNeil et al. (2008) identified the achievement gaps that still exist between the Latino and African American groups and Whites in Texas. They identified factors that the Texas Education State Agency (TEA) used to misidentify high school dropouts. Discrepancies exist between the TEA reports and the "actual disappearance" (p. 2) of students. In 2005, the TEA reported a dropout rate of 2.3-3.2%, while McNeil et al. reported that 25% of White students, 45% of African American students, and almost 50% of Latino students failed to graduate. TEA used a code called a *leaver code* as a means to eliminate the reasons that the students gave for leaving school from the records. When students identified their reasons for leaving school, the state did not report them as dropouts or as failures. The leaver codes would identify students leaving school for reasons such as pregnancy, incarceration, declaring their intent to take the General Education Development (GED) exam, or leaving to attend a school in another district. The students were not identified as dropouts or failing in school.

Gay (2000) suggested that the reasons for the academic achievement gap between students of color and White students was that a cultural disconnect exists between students' home and school language. She called for a culturally responsive curriculum that represents the cultural differences of all students. Gay suggested changes in the implementation of curriculum and instruction in schools by the teachers and administrators. As teachers recognize the cultural disconnect between what is taught in schools (curriculum), how it is taught (instruction), and the students' home environment, they can make a real difference in the educational achievement of all students. Changes can happen when teachers choose a culturally responsive teaching pedagogy by demonstrating that they value the cultural differences of their students.

Teachers' Perspectives about Culturally Diverse Students

Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) told the stories of the children of immigrants who came to the United States with their parents. The immigrant parents were searching to find a better life for their children, and they believed that they could find that better life through becoming educated. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco identified the struggles of the immigrant children who did not bring the cultural capital that social scientists believed that they needed in order to be successful in schools. They found that Mexican immigrant students have more difficulties transitioning into the school settings than nonimmigrant students. Mexican immigrant students who often demonstrate a limited literacy background in their native language and lack literacy skills in English face challenges that are difficult to overcome (Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000).

Mexican immigrant students face tremendous odds against succeeding in school (Crosnoe, 2005; Romo, 1999). Cummins (2001) observed that schools traditionally

implemented instructional intervention programs to bridge the achievement gaps for underachieving students. The intervention programs have become a "deep structure of disempowerment" (p. 648). The school structure has remained intact, while the students' achievement gaps have grown wider.

Valencia (2000) attributed much of the school failure of culturally diverse students in Texas to the negative attitudes that teachers and administrators have exhibited toward students of color. Valencia said, "This deficit-thinking framework for explaining school failure among African American and Mexican American students locates the child's inability to succeed academically in his or her socioeconomic background, motivation, cognitive abilities, and family socialization" (p. 455). The teachers and administrators in Valencia's study showed a deficit-thinking framework as they taught African American and Mexican American students. The teachers and administrators believed that the African American and Mexican American students could not succeed academically because of their ethnicity or race.

Educators in schools exist within the sociopolitical structures, and they reflect many aspects of society (Nieto, 2002). Teachers and administrators who work and teach in schools often reflect the social and economic levels of society (Valencia, 2000). The teacher population represents the European American, dominant culture of society, and teachers are generally White, middle-class, and female (Fine & Weis, 2003; Sleeter, 2001). Sleeter (2008) found that many White teacher candidates developed "deficit-oriented stereotypes" toward students of color (p. 217). These teachers bring negative assumptions to the classroom. They often blame the students' family background, socioeconomic level, or lack of home support as problems in the classroom. Nieto and

Bode (2008) suggested that students who suffer the most from the dominant cultural perspectives are culturally diverse students. Because often, they are from lower-income families who speak languages other than English and reflect cultures that are different from the dominant society, they tend to develop identities that label them as students who are at risk of failing in schools.

Zeichner (1993) said that a crisis has arisen in the field of education because student teachers are not prepared to teach in culturally diverse settings with the competence that they need to meet the academic needs of the students. Zeichner stated, "the problem of educating teachers for diversity . . . will continue to be one of educating White, monolingual, and mostly female teacher education students during preservice teacher education in college and university settings to teach diverse learners effectively" (p. 1).

Multicultural Competence of Teachers Who Teach Culturally Diverse Students

Cummins (1996) suggested that students' relationships with their teachers are an important aspect of the children's education. Teachers' interactions with students are critical for the students' success in the classroom. In the diverse and changing populations of schools in the United States (Fry, 2008), many White teachers are teaching culturally diverse students (Sleeter, 2008). According to Cummins (1996), these teachers reflect their cultural perspectives and beliefs in their relationships with their students. They tell their students what they believe about the different cultures by the way they teach, their attitudes, and their assumptions about learning. Teachers tend to implement their own cultural beliefs into the curriculum, and they ignore the cultural differences of their students (Gay, 2000; Reed, 1996; Sleeter, 2008).

Many schools represent the changing populations of the United States. Students who are culturally diverse, are immigrants or children of immigrants from Mexico, are in lower socioeconomic levels, and live in the urban areas of the country attend urban schools in these cities with the changing demographics (Bennett, 2007; Fine & Weis, 2003; Trueba, 1999). The teachers who teach in the urban schools are generally middle class, female, White, and live in the suburban areas of the country (Fine & Weis, 2003; Sleeter, 2001). Sleeter (2008) stated that 84% of the teacher candidates are White. This population shift has created a cultural mismatch between teachers and students (Delgado-Gaitan, 2006; Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2002). Gay (2003) and Ladson-Billings (1995) believed that, in general, White, middle class, female teachers have not been meeting the needs of culturally diverse students.

Banks (1988) believed that teachers who developed cross-cultural competency improved their teaching abilities, attitudes, and understandings in diverse cultural settings. He stated that the "Global Competency" (p. 69) that individuals develop enables them to act within the global society. They internalize the values and principles of humankind, and they know how to act on those values.

Gudykunst and Kim (1984) described the intercultural person "as a facilitator and catalyst for contacts between cultures" (p. 230). They believed that intercultural people are equipped to function effectively in more than one culture. Intercultural people possess cultural empathy, which is linked to the flexibility of being able to imagine other worldviews. Intercultural people demonstrate cultural competence in more than one culture, and they are able to navigate between different cultures because they have developed competence in social communication. Most importantly, Gudykunst and Kim

believed that intercultural people develop a "third-culture perspective" (p. 231). This perspective gives intercultural persons the capabilities to act as communication links between two or more cultures.

Bennett (2007) described a person with multicultural competence as one who "develops competencies in multiple ways of perceiving, evaluating, believing, and doing" (p. 9). People who live in two or more cultures discover an intercultural relationship with others. They demonstrate the ability to encounter different cultures, in addition to their own, serve as facilitators between cultures, act as communication links for others, and show cultural empathy for others. As a major goal of multicultural teacher education, teachers help culturally diverse students to "retain their own cultural identity while functioning in a different cultural milieu; for example, the school" (Bennett, 2007, p. 9). Bennett suggested that teachers who develop multicultural competencies also learn about their cultural awareness. Multiculturally competent teachers bridge the gaps between the school and home cultures.

When teachers become conscious of their own cultural identity, they become multiculturally efficacious individuals who can move between two or more cultures. They become advocates for those who are from cultures other than the dominant culture (Bennett, 2007; Guyton & Wesche, 2005). These teachers demonstrate high levels of personal efficacy because they believe that they can make a difference in the lives of their students, and they are conscious of their own cultural identities and the cultural identities of others (Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Tucker et al., 2005). Multiculturally competent teachers navigate through the diverse cultures of their students, and they can become the bridge that connects the students' home culture with their school culture (Bennett, 2007;

Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2002). They become the advocates for others to learn to negotiate and define their own cultural identities.

Multiculturally efficacious teachers find ways of building the bridges for their students (Guyton & Wesche, 2005). They demonstrate their multicultural competence by leading their students across the bridge, no matter what obstacles the students encounter (Gay, 2000). Teachers and students can use the bridge both ways. Multiculturally efficacious teachers help their students navigate between their home and school cultures while learning to use their bicultural identity as the tool to lead them through the educational system successfully (Nieto, 2002). When bicultural individuals identify with two or more cultures (Berta-Avila, 2004), they claim their sense of power and their voice. The culturally diverse students discover their sense of power by utilizing their bicultural identities.

<center>Invitational Education</center>

Invitational theory is based on the self-concept theory (Purkey & Novak, 1996). By using this theory, a group of people establishes their common language and practice while working together. The human potential creates an inviting possibility of what can be an exciting and satisfying experience. Purkey described this basic message when he said, "that human potential, not always evident, is always there, waiting to be discovered and invited forth" (p. 1).

Invitational theory is focused on the intentionality of creating an open and inviting space for people in the work environment. Purkey and Novak (1984) found that the essential nature of the relationships between teachers and students, the power that teachers have by sending inviting messages, and the students' right to accept the

messages created the concept of invitational education. Later, Purkey (1991) included the reciprocal process of students and teachers inviting each other in a personal and professional manner. He also explored the process of sending inviting and disinviting messages through "people, places, policies, programs, and processes" (p.7).

Novak (1985) said that invitational education began with several educators, including Combs and Snygg (1959). Novak said that these educators began to ask the question, "What's an educator supposed to be about" (p. 1)? In the late 1960s, these educators began answering that question in the humanistic tradition, as opposed to the mechanistic or authoritarian traditions. They answered the question by saying, "Teachers are supposed to be about humanizing the classroom" (p. 2).

Purkey (1970) identified a relationship between self-concept and student achievement. He identified self-concept as "the complex and dynamic system of learned beliefs that each individual holds to be true about oneself" (Purkey, 1991, p. 4). Students behave in certain ways because of their beliefs and perceptions about themselves and others. Purkey (1991) suggested that essential parts of a teacher's job were to teach content and to develop positive self-concept in students. Purkey and Novak (1984) described the essence of inviting school success as the way to invite others to develop their own self-concepts.

Novak (1985) described the teachers' and students' obligations in the invitational model. Inviting teachers are responsible for developing a common language and setting the agenda for the students' learning. They know the set of knowledge, skills, and strategies of their content so they can engage the learners. The students' obligations are to choose to reconstruct their personal learning experiences in order to incorporate new and

meaningful learning experiences. The reciprocal process is important to create a caring

relationship in the classroom.

In a school, the potential for school improvement is based on the "four

propositions of trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality" (Purkey, 1991, p. 2). These

propositions form the basis for inviting people to perform their duties. They give purpose

to the educational process, and they need to be present when groups of people work

together.

Invitational theory can be used on both a personal and professional level (Purkey,

1991). The four dimensions, which are, "being personally inviting with oneself, being

personally inviting with others, being professionally inviting with oneself, and being

professionally inviting with others" (p. 3), encourage individuals and groups to enrich

their lives by being personally and professionally inviting with themselves and others.

This involves people functioning at a high level of caring for themselves and for others.

Intentionality as a tool can be a tremendous asset for educators. They have choices in the

ways that they will invite or disinvite students to unleash their human potential.

Invitational Theory and Diversity

Schmidt (2004) suggested that the assumptions upon which Invitational Education

is based and multicultural education are compatible. The basic concepts and constructs of

invitational theory establish an atmosphere of respect in which people from different

cultures can interact together. The messages that teachers send that are inviting or

disinviting establish a culturally responsive teaching environment. Schmidt utilized

invitational theory in counseling situations with culturally diverse populations. The

relationships that professionals develop with their clients increase the scope of invitation

so that they can increase their work with clients who are from different cultural

backgrounds.

Reed (1996) used invitational theory to call for an end to educational prejudice by

having teachers reflect about their own beliefs about teaching students who were different

from them. She proposed that the educational system of places, people, programs,

policies, practices, and processes perpetuates a status quo system that supports prejudice

in the classrooms. Reed offered a practical model to help educators to overcome

educational prejudice by integrating Haberman's (1994) five-step approach to facing

prejudice and Purkey's (1992) five-level conflict management process. Reed found that

dealing with prejudice and racism is "very delicate work and requires an approach that

can reach people on both a personal and a professional level in a positive but penetrating

manner" (p. 82).

Reed (1996) believed that prejudice occurs when people perceive or believe

themselves to be superior based on their race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other

social markers. Prejudice exists in the school settings because of the belief systems that

teachers and administrators perpetuate through educational places, programs, policies,

practices, and processes. The intentional and unintentional messages that teachers give to

their students support prejudice in the classrooms. Reed determined that the difficult

work of confronting racism and prejudice needed an invitational theory of practice that

Purkey and Novak (1984) proposed. People function in inviting and disinviting ways, and

they give these messages in an intentional or unintentional manner. When teachers

become aware of the messages that they give to their students, they can become

intentional about overcoming their own prejudices in the classroom.

Haberman (2004) offered many opportunities for teachers to identify their

educational beliefs and prejudices. He called teachers who teach successfully in urban

settings, *Star Teachers*. He analyzed the attributes and behaviors of *Star Teachers* to

develop a model to eliminate or reduce prejudice. In his five-step model, Haberman

(1994) invited participants to examine and analyze their prejudices, seek the sources of

their beliefs, examine the benefits of prejudices, consider the effects of prejudices, and

plan to eliminate prejudices. Many teachers could not even begin to face their prejudices.

They would say that they were not prejudiced. Haberman (1994) believed that "they [the

teachers who made this announcement] should not be allowed near children/youth" (p. 9).

When teachers follow the five steps of Haberman's model, they will move to a

desired state of change. Purkey (1992) discussed the changes that teachers can make in

the areas of their prejudices. Purkey's conflict management model included perceiving

concern, conferring with oneself, consulting with colleagues, confronting crisis, and

combating prejudices. In the invitational model, teachers are invited to analyze their

prejudices and to develop a plan to resolve conflict, specifically issues of prejudice.

Reed (1996) sought to create a support for colleagues or supervisors who

demonstrated prejudices against others who were different. They could choose to become

intentionally inviting with students who were culturally different from them. They also

had to make a conscious decision to change after they had become aware of their

prejudices. Teachers had to consider the best interests of the children at all times. Reed

could support her colleagues in becoming more culturally responsive to their students.

She invited them to begin the process of facing and overcoming their prejudices in a

personal and professional journey. By using models such as Haberman's (1994) five-step

approach to facing prejudice and Purkey's (1992) five-level conflict management

process, educators could explore and identify their personal prejudices.

Research Design

In this action research study, 7 participants reflected about their cultural identity,

cultural perspectives, and culturally responsive teaching strategies in the *Cultural Identity*

and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices workshop. I examined their growth in

teacher efficacy and multicultural efficacy when they completed the *Multicultural*

Teacher Efficacy Scale (Guyton & Wesche, 2005), the *Teacher Efficacy Scale* (Gibson &

Dembo, 1984), and the *Multicultural Dispositions Index* (Thompson, 2007) before the

workshop and three months later. I asked the participants to record their insights and

ideas by keeping a journal when they returned to their classrooms. In addition, I

completed follow-up interviews with the participants three months after the workshop to

discover how they changed their teaching practices. The following sections include

descriptions of the setting and participants.

Setting

I conducted this study with teachers in two urban settings—Houston, Texas and

San Antonio, Texas. The United States Census Bureau (*2006 American community*

survey data profile highlights, 2006) reported that the ethnic populations in Houston were

52.7% White, 24.7% Black or African American, 41.9% Hispanic or Latino, 5.0% Asian,

0.4% American Indian and Alaskan Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific

Islander. The America Community Survey designated the category Hispanic or Latino as

a group from any race. The statistics do not equal 100% because the Hispanic or Latino

populations were counted from other races.

In order to understand the cultural diversity of this city, I looked at the Nativity

and Language category in the *American Community Survey* (2006). Twenty-eight percent

of the people living in Houston were born in other countries. Among people who were at

least 5 years old or older, 45% spoke a language other than English at home. Of those

who spoke a language other than English at home, 84% reported that they spoke Spanish,

and 16% reported that they spoke some other language.

The second urban area, San Antonio, was represented by 66.0% White, 6.7%

Black or African American, 61.3% Hispanic or Latino, 2.1% Asian, 0.5% American

Indian and Alaskan Native, and 0.1 % Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. The

America Community Survey (2006) designated the category Hispanic or Latino as a group

from any race. The statistics do not equal 100% because the Hispanic or Latino

populations were counted from other races. According to the Nativity and Language

category in the *American Community Survey* (2006), 13% of the people living in San

Antonio were born in other countries. Among people who were 5 years old or older, 47%

of the people spoke a language other than English at home. Ninety four percent of those

people reported that they spoke Spanish at home.

Participants.

I invited teachers who worked in various educational settings to attend the

Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices Workshop. I advertised

the workshop in school districts, churches, and through friends in both Houston and San

Antonio. The participants responded to the advertisements by contacting me if they were

interested in participating in the workshop and the research study. If they chose to attend

the cultural identity workshop and they wanted to participate in the research study, they

gave signed letters of consent before the workshop. Participants provided pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality. All of the workshop participants chose to participate in the learning workshop and to be a part of the research study.

The participants in the study were teachers who taught in culturally diverse settings in both Houston and San Antonio. They reflected the national averages of teacher ethnicities by mirroring the dominant European-American culture (i.e., middle-class and from the suburbs) (Berta-Avila, 2004; Gay, 2003; Sleeter, 2001). Initially, 8 people participated in the study. Seven of the participants were White, and 1 was Asian/Pacific Islander. Six participants were female, and 2 were male. Five of the participants taught in higher education or K-12 educational settings. One participant worked in church camp programs, and another participant taught medical students.

One participant elected to drop out of the interview process. She reported that she had received the hours that she needed for her professional development, and that she did not want to continue with the study. She also did not complete the three instruments used in the study three months after the workshop, nor did she complete the journal entries.

Data Collection

In mixed methods studies, Creswell et al. (2005) suggested that researchers must determine the research design in order to know how to administer and prioritize the data. Researchers follow several steps as they collect data. First, they must decide whether they will collect the data concurrently or sequentially (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). In this study, I used the concurrent nested design in which I collected most of the data concurrently. I gave the qualitative data priority over the quantitative data. The quantitative data results would confirm or not confirm the qualitative data.

The following sections include descriptions of the qualitative and quantitative

data collection. The qualitative data collection includes the Seven-Minute autobiography,

workshop evaluations, journal responses, interviews, and demographic information. The

quantitative data collection included the *Multicultural Efficacy Scale (MES)* developed by

Guyton and Wesche (2005), the *Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)* developed by Gibson and

Dembo (1984), and the *Multicultural Dispositions Index* developed by Thompson (2007).

Pseudonyms were used for the participants during the study.

Qualitative Data

I offered a 6-hour *Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices*

Workshop to participants. The purpose of this workshop was to provide teachers who

work with culturally diverse students with the opportunity to explore their own cultural

identity so they could identify how they used their own cultural identity to teach

culturally diverse students.

Seven-minute autobiography.

During the workshop, the participants wrote a Seven-Minute Autobiography

(Schneider, 1994) in which they described their cultural identity. The Seven-Minute

Autobiography provided the participants with the opportunity to write reflectively about

their own cultural background within a short period of time. They were able to write an

important piece without the pressures of writing in-depth about their personal lives. The

participants were asked to use the cultural components described by Cummins (1996)

which were family background, ethnicity, religion, and socio-economics, and Nieto's

(2002) cultural markers, which were language, faith, and heritage.

Workshop evaluations.

The participants completed an evaluation of the *Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices Workshop* at the end. York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, and Montie (2006) developed a cognitive thinking map based on reflective processes, which I used in the workshop. The participants completed the evaluation in which they reflected on the major ideas that they learned, shared insights that they gained in the workshop, and posed questions about the workshop. The questions were:

1. What were the major ideas that formed the basis of the workshop?
2. What insights have you gained from this workshop?
3. What might be some questions that you have after participating in the *Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies Workshop?*
4. In what ways will you be using the learning from this workshop in the classroom?

This evaluation helped me to assess the participants' understanding of the workshop content and their thoughts about how they intended to use their new learning.

Journal responses.

The participants recorded their new learning from the workshop in journals. In these journals, they captured their reflections about their thoughts and understandings about their teaching practices. They were asked to write a minimum of 10 entries during the 3-month interval between the *Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices Workshop* and the participant interviews. The participants used a journal rubric. They continued to explore their cultural beliefs in order to understand their perspectives, assumptions, and biases about different cultural groups (Bennett, 2007). I wanted the participants to continue writing and gathering their own data about what they were thinking and doing in the classroom.

Interviews.

I conducted open-ended interviews approximately 3 months after the *Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices Workshop* with the participants. I used the Cognitive Coaching[SM] Reflecting Conversation Map (Costa & Garmston, 2001) to ask the participants about how they had used the information from the workshop in their classrooms. The questions were open-ended so that the participants could reflect about what they were doing in the classrooms after having attended the workshop.

By using the Reflecting Conversation Map (Costa & Garmston, 2001), the participants could analyze their thinking in order to gain a deeper level of understanding. In the map, the participants reflected about what happened in the past. First, the participants summarized their impressions of the event. Next, they analyzed the factors that may have affected the events. The participants constructed new learnings after they had analyzed the different factors. Then, they committed to incorporate the new learnings into their practice. During this conversation, the participants could begin to analyze the events in different ways, in order to create a shift in their thinking, leading to seeing the events from a different perspective.

Quantitative Data

The participants completed a pre- and post- assessment of the *Multicultural Efficacy Scale (MES)* developed by Guyton and Wesche (2005), the *Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)* developed by Gibson and Dembo (1984), and the *Multicultural Dispositions Index* developed by Thompson (2007). I used the assessments to determine if the participants increased in their multicultural efficacy, teacher efficacy, and multicultural

awareness by participating in the cultural identity workshop and applying what they

learned. The surveys were administered before the workshop and 3 months later.

Demographic information.

Demographic information was gathered from the participants during the

workshop. The participants completed information about their gender, age, geographical

location, racial/ethnic background, professional position, and educational experience at

the beginning of the workshop.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data in this study were analyzed using the ATLAS.ti software

program. I coded the data inductively and then deductively (Lewins & Silver, 2007). I

used the constant comparative data analysis method (Glaser, 1965) to analyze the text.

The emerging themes were identified. The participants' attitudes and their shifts in

perspectives were also identified. In addition, I coded the data to identify how the

teachers used language to discuss culture, identity, and teaching strategies (Baker, 2003).

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 16.0 was used to

analyze the pretest and posttest responses on the *Multicultural Efficacy Scale (MES)*

(Guyton & Wesche, 2005), the *Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)* (Gibson & Dembo, 1984),

and the *Multicultural Dimensions Index (MDI)* (Thompson, 2007). While 12 participants

are generally required to run a *t*-test, the results of paired-samples *t*-tests are included to

provide some indication about the findings. Paired-samples *t*-tests were used to determine

if participants significantly increased on the subscales of these instruments as a result of

attending the *Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices Workshop*

and applying their new learning in the classroom.

Results of the Study

The participants in this study discovered what it meant to become culturally responsive teachers. They began the conversations about culture and cultural identity. Once they named their cultural perspectives, they were able to identify what was important to them. They began to label their values and beliefs. They could choose what they should hold on to and what they needed to let go of within their own cultural perspectives (Greene, 1995). They became culturally responsive teachers who wanted to make a difference in the lives of their students. Themes that emerged from the data analysis were in the areas of increasing cultural awareness, teaching strategies in culturally diverse environments, developing multicultural competence, growing personal and general teaching efficacy, and creating multicultural awareness. To maintain the participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms were used throughout the data analysis process.

Increasing Cultural Awareness

All of the participants said that they became more conscious of their culture after they left the workshop. They also became more conscious of the culture of other people. One participant summed it up for all by saying, "Culture is suddenly everywhere. I have kind of a heightened awareness. I'm able to label things more clearly, and I now have a name for it and a framework."

The participants became aware of their critical voices and identified their personal assumptions, biases, and stereotypes. They experienced differences between themselves and their students. They began to see that often, their students did not have the same perspectives or beliefs as they did.

As all 7 of the participants became more conscious of their own cultural identity, they became more aware of culture around them. They became conscious of the culture of others. Emma said, "It's raised my awareness to another level." Victoria believed that "[It] makes me aware of social conditions." Kaye replied, "I believe that this work is more important than ever because of culture." M.J. explained, "I am more aware now of the differences of schools where I grew up and the schools here." Angeline stated, "I am more aware of how I can meet the needs of my students because they are different from me." According to Timothy, "What was fun for me was that first week after the workshop! I listened to the news differently."

Teaching Strategies in Culturally Diverse Environments

The participants identified teaching strategies that they used when they returned to their culturally diverse environments. They were teaching deliberately and intentionally, developing the role as a teacher, and connecting the story to the students. All seven of the participants described ways that they became intentional with the people whom they encountered.

Two of the participants used English as Second Language (ESL) strategies with all of their students. They discovered that many of the ESL strategies were effective with culturally diverse students, whether English was their first or second language. Angeline observed how her teaching partner used ESL teaching strategies with her ESL students. She tried some of the ESL strategies with her students and found that some of them were good for her students because many of her students did not have strong language skills. Angeline said, "I use *Elbow Partners* during my story time. They find a partner to work with who sits close to them."

Developing Multicultural Competence

The participants described becoming more multiculturally competent. They had various levels of multicultural competence when they began the workshop. Five participants demonstrated a positive attitude toward diversity. They encouraged diverse thinking among their students. The participants described how they wanted to accept the students as individuals and attempted to listen to them. They believed that the students could learn because of having diverse, cultural backgrounds. The results of the paired-samples *t*-tests for the *Multicultural Efficacy Scale (Guyton & Wesche, 2005)* indicated that participants decreased significantly in Attitude, and they increased significantly in Efficacy.

The participants demonstrated that they wanted to have a deeper understanding of the differences of others. Two of the participants believed that it was important for them to develop broader perspectives. Emma stated, "So I'm trying to find a more global perspective." Susie said, "I want to be open and tolerant of others. I'm being sensitive to their ways of looking at the world." Four of the participants told stories about their students and their cultures. By telling these stories, they demonstrated how they were continually learning about different cultures.

Growing Personal and General Teaching Efficacy

The participants began exploring their personal and general teaching efficacy by asking themselves questions about becoming better teachers because of attending the workshop. Four of the participants identified the different ways that they taught their students. They reported the perseverance and persistence that they used to teach their students. They explored strategies for becoming better teachers so that their students

could be successful. The results of the paired-samples *t*-tests for the *Teacher Efficacy Scale* (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) indicated that participants grew in general teaching efficacy, although the changes were not significant. Participants decreased in their personal efficacy scores, although not significantly.

Three participants found that by focusing on their students, they were able to get to know their students well. They could build on their students' successes and create situations for the students to be successful. They described what they did to create success with their students. The participants were able to identify their struggling students so they could give them more time in the learning situation. The participants indicated that they knew the strengths and weaknesses of their students. They knew what their students could and could not do.

M.J. said, "A student can learn all that is needed as a bridge or a pathway. A student can learn, but because they are coming from another country, language, and culture, they will need help blending into the American culture." Angeline stated, "I identify my struggling students so I will know how to help them be successful," and Susie reported, "I'm able to accept students as individuals."

Two of the participants described the confidence that they had in their teaching. They believed that because they were more confident in their teaching, their students had more self-assurance in their learning. They gained new confidence in teaching, which created a passion for teaching their students. They were able to build on that confidence to create confidence in their students.

Kaye said that if her students gained confidence in her as a teacher, she could build on their confidence like building blocks. She said, "I know when I am on the right track." If her students do not have confidence in her as a teacher, then they cannot learn.

Susie found that she had gained more confidence in teaching as a result of attending the workshop. She used that confidence to focus on her lessons. Susie stated, "Now I have more confidence in how I teach. I can be more focused on the lesson for a longer period of time."

Creating Multicultural Awareness

Four of the participants appeared to become more aware of their multicultural awareness as they became more conscious of the culture of people around them. While the participants' scores increased overall from pretest to posttest on the *Multicultural Dispositions Index* (Thompson, 2007), the growth was not statistically significant. The participants showed limited growth in the qualitative data, also.

The participants began to develop and maintain their cultural competence working with their students. Four of the participants talked about how they used their growing awareness of their cultural identity to become more culturally competent. They became focused on cultural competence for themselves and their students. Susie said, "I am more aware of my culture." Emma believed that "Teachers who are competent in cross-cultural issues can have a profound positive impact on learners." According to Kaye, "I can embrace the fact that I am a truly bilingual individual and I'm ready for the future." M.J. wanted to learn more about his students' culture as he became culturally competent. He said, "I want to learn more about the student's culture so their culture can be used to

blend the student and parent into the learning process to increase the student's ability and

desire to succeed in the American culture."

<div style="text-align: center">Discussion</div>

The sections below include increasing cultural awareness, teaching strategies in

culturally diverse environments, developing multicultural competence, growing personal

and general teaching efficacy, and creating multicultural awareness.

Increasing Cultural Awareness

All of the participants reflected about their own cultural background as they

connected their cultural elements or markers to others (Cummins, 1996; Nieto, 2002).

The participants used the cultural components of *la lengua,* language; *la fe,* the faith life;

and *sangre y tierra,* the cultural heritage or roots, to connect to their cultural backgrounds

(Pesado Palmieri, 1995). They became more aware of their cultural inheritance (Berry,

1990). They were able to make connections to their students who were culturally

different.

Six of the participants became conscious of their own Whiteness within their

culturally diverse teaching environments. Four of the participants said that they became

aware of their critical voices. They identified the assumptions, biases, and stereotypes

that they had of others while recognizing the assumptions, biases, and stereotypes that

others had about them.

Hall (1976) described the transparent culture that people experience when they

live within the dominant society of the culture. He said that when people are living in a

culture and they are not aware of the differences of others, their culture is transparent to

them. People who are White and middle class often do not see the differences between

other cultures and their culture. They assume that people from other cultures think and believe the same as they do.

Tatum (1997) and Cross (1991) described the events that the participants in my study experienced as stages of White identity. Tatum (1997) identified many of the identity stages for culturally diverse students as being different phases for White students. White students emerge into a consciousness of their own Whiteness, and they become aware of the inequalities that exist. Fine and Weiss (2003) said that people begin to identify the White privilege that has been a part of their lives. Whites start to unlearn the stereotypes of their groups and the stereotypes of others. They will often perceive themselves as being colorblind. They believe that they are free of biases and assumptions about other racial groups.

Fine and Weiss (2003) stated that cultural conflict occurs when members of the dominant society believe that their culture is the only culture. They perceive others as living and thinking as they do. Hall (1976) said that the members of the dominant society will experience cultural differences when they live in other cultures. Cultural diversity exists when people from different cultures live together (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Gay (2003) believed that when people of different cultures exist together, they experience dissonance or conflict.

Nieto (2000) said that once the participants in her study became conscious of their cultural identity, they made a shift in their cultural perspectives. They became more conscious of their own cultural identity and the cultural identity of others, and they were able to name and label those differences. In her study, Nieto found that the participants became more confident in how they interacted with their students. They were able to

label their assumptions and biases, which helped them to "challenge and even shatter

commonly held stereotypes" (p. 13).

Teaching Strategies in Culturally Diverse Environments

Five participants became more deliberate and intentional with their teaching.

Ladson-Billings (1995) defined this deliberate teaching approach as culturally relevant

teaching. She found that by going beyond the surface level of the teachers and their

teaching strategies, they revealed their beliefs about teaching culturally diverse students.

Three of the participants described ways in which they were determined to

develop their teaching roles in the classrooms. They found that they focused on the

students rather than on the content that they were teaching. They wanted to pay attention

to their students and to their students' culture. Kaye said that she had such a strong

passion for teaching her students, while Susie found ways to model integrity,

vulnerability, and authenticity for her students. As the participants became more focused

on their students and their students' cultural identity, they began to develop their own

roles as teachers.

Cummins (1996) suggested that the relationship that the teacher develops with

their students is the most important aspect of teaching. He said that when the teachers

develop their relationships with their students, the teachers become more focused on the

teaching process. Paris and Lung (2008) said that an important role as a teacher is to

develop as responsive, respectful, and effective teachers. Teachers who teach in culturally

diverse settings find themselves as "creators of curricula" (p. 254) because they are

continually developing curriculum and instruction that meet the strengths, needs, and

values of a particular group of students. The role of the teacher becomes an essential

element of teaching. The participants found that they were becoming more focused on the teaching process so they could be more effective with their students.

Developing Multicultural Competence

All seven of the participants described their multicultural experiences with others, their knowledge of different cultures, and their attitudes about diversity. They had various levels of multicultural competence, and they made commitments to increasing their knowledge about others by having more intercultural experiences. Banks (1988), Bennett (2007), and Gudykunst and Kim (1984) described teachers with multicultural competence as people who have developed cross-cultural or intercultural competencies. They have developed unique understandings of diverse cultures, and they are flexible enough to live within and between two or more cultures. This perspective gives them the capabilities to act as communication links between two cultures.

Friedman and Antal (2007) described interculturally competent people as those who can explore their thinking about different cultures consciously. They negotiate the different cultures by negotiating their own culture with others. They consciously choose to interact with others in culturally appropriate situations. Teachers in my study identified their own cultural background in order to be able to negotiate their own reality with their students. They reflected about their own intercultural competence, and they negotiated how they could use that competence with their students.

Four of the participants described ways that they wanted to get to know their students' culture in order to have a deeper understanding of their students' culture. One participant discussed how she wanted to have a global perspective. The participants

found that they could learn about their students when their students told their stories to

the teacher.

Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2000) described ways that culturally responsive

teachers become involved with their students. They become familiar with the students'

personal lives. They understand where their students come from and what is important to

them. Teachers can tell their students' stories because they know their students. When

teachers become a part of a community, they learn more about their students and families.

They can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural backgrounds of their students.

Five participants described their attitudes about diversity. Bennett (2007) found

that the multicultural competence of teachers could deeply influence how they prepare to

teach in culturally diverse settings. When teachers reflect about their own cultural

identity, they become aware that members of other cultures invite the cultural diversity of

difference and depth into their classrooms. She believed that the task of multiculturally

competent teachers was to facilitate and lead students to their cultural identity of who

they are and who they will be.

Sleeter (2001) and Fine and Weis (2003) said that teachers' basic assumptions and

beliefs determined how they would implement their educational programs. They found

that teachers who believe that students bring a wealth of information, prior knowledge,

and a language to build on with that prior knowledge demonstrate a positive attitude

toward their culturally diverse students. Teachers who believe that students come to

school without knowing English and have to be taught everything all over again

demonstrate negative beliefs about their students. Cummins (1996) described the

teachers' basic assumptions or beliefs as an additive or a deficit perspective to the

classrooms. Nieto (2002) found that when teachers focused on their own perspectives and

beliefs, they uncovered their true beliefs, biases, and assumptions. They discovered their

own perspectives about how to teach culturally diverse students in their classrooms.

Growing Personal and General Teaching Efficacy

Three of the participants described ways in which they were determined to

develop their teaching roles in the classrooms. They found that they focused on the

students rather than on the content that they were teaching. They wanted to pay attention

to their students and to their students' culture. Kaye said that she had such a strong

passion for teaching her students, while Susie found ways to model integrity,

vulnerability, and authenticity for her students. As the participants became more focused

on their students and their students' cultural identity, they began to develop their own

roles as teachers.

Four participants said that they built on their students' success. They searched for

ways to engage their students in the learning. Ashton and Webb (1986) found that when

teachers believed that they could influence student learning, their students had high

achievement. Czubal (1996) believed that teachers who perceived that they had control

over the learning situation were able to focus on their students. Teachers who believed or

perceived that they could impact their students' learning had higher expectations of their

students. Teachers who believe that they can impact their students' learning have strong

personal efficacy (e.g., Allinder, 1995; Tucker et al., 2005; Yost, 2002).

Two participants said that their students could learn, and they believed in their

students' academic success. Ladson-Billings (1995) identified one criteria for culturally

responsive teaching as academic success. Culturally responsive teachers demonstrate

high efficacy because they believe that their students can learn. They expect academic competence from their students. Ladson-Billings said that the key for culturally responsive teachers was to get their students to *choose* to be academically competent.

Ashton and Web (1986) and Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) identified teacher efficacy as the one consistent characteristic that is essential in increasing student achievement. Tucker (2005) found that teachers who believe that their students could learn would teach longer and be more persistent in their teaching. They believed that their students could be successful, and they persevered to make sure that their students achieved. Good and Brophy (2003) reported that effective teachers maintained high levels of student engagement. By engaging the students in the lesson, teachers were able to focus the students on the academic skills for longer periods of time.

Two participants said that their increasing confidence led to their students' increasing confidence. Ross (1992) reported that teachers' personal efficacy gives the learners the confidence to be successful. When the teachers' personal efficacy is high, the students become more confident in their abilities, they work harder, and they tackle tasks that are more difficult. Ross found that this led to higher academic student achievement.

Chase et al. (2001) found that teachers worked more confidently when they worked in reflective practice groups. The teachers became more confident, which enabled them to take risks and try different strategies with their struggling students. The teachers worked with struggling students to increase their problem solving and math strategies. Teachers' confidence increased, and the students' confidence increased.

Often, teachers feel inadequate in teaching culturally diverse students. Tucker et al. (2005) believed that when teachers felt unprepared and inadequate in teaching

culturally diverse students, they had low expectations for their students. Teachers frequently had a fear of working with culturally diverse students. When teachers increased their multicultural efficacy, they also increased their students' academic performance. As the participants in the study had an opportunity to reflect about culture, they began to increase in their efficacy in teaching culturally diverse students.

Two participants began to question the impact that they had on their students by thinking about their teaching strategies. Susie asked the question, "How can I be a better teacher?" Five of the participants felt that they could improve on their teaching so that they could empower their students. They believed that by asking more questions of themselves and of their students, they could empower their students to learn. The participants found that by empowering their students, their students took control of their learning.

Guskey and Passaro (1994) described the personal teaching efficacy constructs that reflect efficacy expectations. Teachers who demonstrate personal teaching efficacy believe that they can have a positive affect on student achievement. They are more persistent with students in learning situations. When the teachers exhibit personal efficacy, they believe that their students can achieve. The students believe that they can be successful, so they are more persistent in their work. Czubal (1996) found that teachers with internal self-control believed that they had more control over their teaching situations. When they believed that they had more control over the teaching situation, they could have more impact on their students. Teachers who continually ask how they can be a better teacher are looking for ways to improve their teaching strategies. Czubal found that a correlation existed between strong teacher efficacy and student achievement.

Creating Multicultural Awareness

Four of the participants created a multicultural awareness as they became more conscious of the culture of people around them. Ladson-Billings (1995) found that when teachers become more aware of multicultural settings, they create opportunities to help students develop and/or maintain their cultural competence. They must help students to develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order.

When students discover that their teachers develop both the school language and the students' heritage language, the students begin to reclaim their own personal power. The language of instruction in a school determines the cultural codes that teachers and students will use in the schools. Collier and Thomas (2004), Hadi-Tabassum (2006), and Freeman (2004) suggested that when teachers develop the students' home language, they also develop the students' cultural competence.

Two participants developed a critical consciousness of their world, and they discussed how they could increase their students' global perspectives. As culturally responsive teachers increase their global perspectives, they become critically conscious of the world around them. Ladson-Billings (1995) said, "Students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (p. 162). Culturally responsive teachers plant the seeds of social justice by creating awareness within their students. Ladson-Billings stated that schools are the place to prepare students to critically analyze their world. By engaging the students in these conversations, culturally responsive teachers involved their students in the critical dialogue about their world.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study included the length of time of the workshop and the length of time used to measure the teachers' changes. The participants needed to have more time during the workshop and after the workshop to create changes in their teaching. In addition, only 7 teachers participated in the study. Since I was the presenter in the *Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices Workshop* and the researcher who collected the data, participants might have answered questions in the interview the way they believed I wanted them to be answered. The participants' responses were their perceptions of their own experiences.

The participants completed the quantitative assessments to measure their multicultural efficacy, general and personal efficacy, and multicultural awareness. The post- assessments showed limited or no growth when compared to the pre- assessments. They needed to have more time during the intervention and after the intervention to grow. The participants realized after they began the study that it was valuable to have the time to talk about culture, identity, and cultural perspectives.

Bandura (1977) suggested that change is difficult. When teachers are making attitude changes, they need to have more time, and they need to receive intermittent reinforcements. Teachers often hold on to their judgments and beliefs when they are trying out new skills and experiences. He warned that teachers who participate in workshops or inservices have difficulty making or sustaining change in their attitudes about their own personal efficacy and other teachers' efficacy. Tschannen-Moran, Wolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) found that when teachers participated in an efficacy seminar, they left with higher efficacy scores than when they returned 6 weeks later.

They established that changing teacher beliefs during a teacher workshop is difficult, and it is even more difficult to sustain the change.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Practice</div>

Recommendations for practice include engaging teachers in cultural conversations. In addition, facilitators should provide more time for the participants to apply what they learn and use reflective and open formats in the workshop.

Engaging Teachers in Cultural Conversations

Teachers and administrators need to be willing to engage in cultural conversations. As stated earlier, the demographics in the United States are changing rapidly. Culturally diverse students are becoming the students in many classrooms across the United States (Paral, 2006). Teachers and administrators in school districts need to present opportunities for teachers to have dialogues about cultural and racial issues. According to Gruwell (1999), students want to talk about race and identity and name ways that it affects them. Teachers and administrators also want to talk about culture and race. The time is *now* to begin to have an open dialogue about the important issues of race, cultural identity, and cultural biases.

Providing More Time for Learning

Facilitators who conduct cultural identity workshops should provide plenty of time for the participants to apply what they learn. Teachers can increase their learning when they have opportunities to attend a workshop for 1 day and then return to their classrooms. They can practice what they learned. Teachers should have intermittent communication with the facilitator of the workshop to support them in their new learning.

Using Reflective and Open Formats in the Workshop

In an Invitational Education learning environment, the participants can be reflective about their own learning processes. The intentional setting creates an environment for the participants to reflect about their own personal beliefs and assumptions. The workshop format gives the participants the time and space to learn about their own beliefs and the beliefs about others who are participating in the workshop.

Singleton and Linton (2006) provided opportunities for teachers to reflect about race in an inviting learning environment described in their book, *Courageous conversations about race: A field guide for attaining equity in schools*. Davis (2006) also provided opportunities to facilitate workshops about cultural identity in her book, *How to teach students who don't look like you: Culturally relevant teaching strategies*. In culturally responsive workshops such as these, facilitators can provide opportunities for presenting the workshops in reflective and open formats. Participants in this study indicated that they appreciated the opportunities to understand cross-cultural issues by reflecting on their cultural identity, perspectives, and beliefs.

Conclusion

In the *Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices* workshop, teachers discussed culture and their cultural identity, explored their perspectives about culture, and identified culturally responsive teaching strategies that would be helpful to them. Teachers had the opportunity to do what both Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2000) suggested. They suggested that teachers needed to become aware of their own assumptions, biases, and perspectives about culture in order to make connections with the

cultural identities of their students. Teachers could match the cultures of their students by

using culturally responsive teaching pedagogy.

Because of studying how teachers used their cultural identity to teach culturally

diverse students, I designed a workshop, *The Cultural Identity and Culturally Responsive*

Teaching Practices Workshop, for this research study. I gathered both qualitative and

quantitative data. For the qualitative data, the participants explored their cultural identity

through the Seven-Minute Autobiography (Schneider, 1994). They also investigated their

own cultural perspectives as they explored their assumptions, biases, and prejudices.

They identified the teaching strategies that they used in their classrooms. The participants

recorded their experiences in journals for 3 months. After 3 months, I interviewed them

to identify the changes that they had made. For the quantitative data, the participants

completed the *Multicultural Teacher Efficacy Scale (MES)* (Guyton & Wesche, 2005),

the *Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)* (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), and the *Multicultural*

Dispositions Index (MDI) (Thompson, 2007) before the workshop and 3 months later. I

examined their growth in multicultural efficacy, teacher efficacy, and multicultural

dispositions.

The participants in this study discovered what it meant to become culturally

responsive teachers. Lambert et al. (2002) believed that teachers and leaders were

"leading the conversations" (p. 63). Lambert said, "By constructing meaning, we evoke

the imagination" (p. 63). Greene (1995) declared, "Imagination is what, above all, makes

empathy possible. It is what enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and

those we teachers have called 'other' over the years" (p. 3). Lambert and Greene

described the possibilities that occur when teachers and leaders can lead conversations

about culture and cultural identity. In the course of the dialogue, they discover the possibilities of what they can do to make a difference. When the participants began the conversations about their own cultural identity, they found empathy for those who were different from them. By reflecting about their own cultural identity, the participants were able to recognize the possibilities of what can be in others.

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