Give Us a Clear Vision, Time, Space and Have Our Backs:

Supporting Grades 7-12th Social Studies Teachers in Their Transition Toward More

Culturally Responsive Instruction

Channon N. Washington, M.Ed.

Peabody College of Education, Vanderbilt University

LLO 8910: Capstone Project

Dr. Erin Henrick, Advisor

Spring, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION

First, I have to thank my God, my Creator for His hand on my life and for the clear constant message that I could do all things through Him who strengthens me. I would also like to thank my family, Saddi, Sidney and Caleb for being my "why" in various ways and for various reasons. I would also like to thank my mother, Debra for being my first educator and never letting me forget how smart I was. I would also like to thank my ancestors, those I knew and those I have yet to meet for surviving and thriving so that I could be here. Finally, I would like to thank my classmates and professors in the Vanderbilt Peabody Educational Leadership community for sharing their knowledge, wisdom and support and for being the iron to my iron.

Give Us a Clear Vision, Time, Space and Have Our Backs:

Supporting Grades 7-12th Social Studies Teachers in Their Transition Toward More

Culturally Responsive Instruction

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SAS[1], a Midwestern suburban school system with approximately 15% minorities, seeks to improve its teachers' implementation of culturally responsive instruction. By examining what encourages them toward this transition and what has been prohibitive, leaders look to use this capstone to locate actionable ways to continue to bolster the district's efforts at becoming a more welcoming, equitable and inclusive educational community.

The literature explains that teachers' training, systemic support and beliefs are directly related to whether teachers will embrace being more culturally responsive. This project inquires as to what teachers believe about culturally responsive instruction, their participation in training, how they currently implement it and how they are otherwise supported. This project also seeks to examine what has been challenging for teachers and what supports they still need to continue in their transition away from traditional instruction to being more culturally responsive.

Participants in this project demonstrated a willingness and ability to become more culturally responsive though each of them had their own definition of what that meant and how they have engaged in it. Observations revealed examples of teachers implementing several of the core tenets of culturally responsive instruction but with different levels of intensity. These teachers attest to being instructionally and materially supported by their leadership and colleagues. However, they also clarify that their leadership has not been particularly prescriptive, explicit or articulate in their expectations or in how they will support them through the challenges of this work.

---

[1] Acronym to preserve anonymity

Data used in this study comes from two administrative focus groups, six teacher interviews, six classroom observations, and a Likert scale/open ended survey completed by 14 teachers. This capstone's findings lead to actionable recommendations well within the capacities of the school system for needed outcomes. SAS is in the process of implementing a Three Year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan. A focus on culturally responsive instruction supports this plan and is in line with several of the district's other existing value statements.

In order to continue and sustain a transition toward becoming more culturally responsive, teachers need:

- A concise articulated vision from their leadership which outlines the district's expectations of teachers becoming more culturally responsive.

- Time and space to professionally develop including but not limited to collaboration with colleagues and an opportunity to both observe and build realistic models they can use to enhance their practice.

- To know, without doubt, that they will be supported by leadership particularly in the face of parent/community pushback or errors.

- To be assessed for progress over time to continually monitor and support their growth

INTRODUCTION

A series of racist incidents from 2018 to 2020 involving students and parents in a southeastern Michigan, suburban K-12 school district (SAS) has prompted school leadership (superintendent, principals and teacher leaders) to launch a district wide effort toward implementing more culturally responsive instruction. As a district wide effort, it is expected that all teachers transition from traditional teaching methods to more culturally responsive instruction. The leadership of SAS sees a gap in the extent to which teachers embrace this transition. Leadership observes both the progress and lagging of teachers' development of

culturally responsive classroom curriculum and instruction and is invested in finding out what precipitates and what are barriers to its implementation.

The problem is significant as public schools have a moral imperative to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all students. The psychological safety of being free from social identity harassment is paramount to students of color, English language learners, immigrants, non-Christian, poor and LGBTQ students. Having access to an education that both considers these students' identities, communities and individual value to society, within their identities not only supports a meaningful education for them but a usable education for their classmates with majority identities. In fact, SAS states much of this mission in several of the outcomes of its learner profile:

"Students are ethical and responsible citizens when they see beyond themselves to the needs of others, contribute to their community, promote social justice, take responsibility for the environment, and demonstrate respect, empathy and compassion. –SAS Compass

"Students are globally connected when they demonstrate their understanding of the complexities of cultures and global issues, see viewpoints beyond their own, and positively impact and connect to the world around them" – SAS Compass (SAS Compass Learner Profile, 2017).

SAS states its mission and vision around diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in its Three Year Plan for DEI, student handbook and school board policies:

"We Believe That:

The educational process can be enhanced by recognizing multiple intelligences and by providing alternative instructional models to address students' differences, varied learning styles, and talents"(SAS Board Policy, 2022).

This project will focus on social studies teachers in the middle school and high school in SAS. The social studies department has been highlighted by leadership as a department demonstrating a range of implementations of culturally responsive instruction. The purpose of this project is to identify what precipitates and/or is a barrier to the full implementation of culturally responsive instruction.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

This public school system serves 5,213 students in nine buildings, across two municipalities in a southeastern Michigan suburban community. SAS boasts a 94% graduation rate and a teacher to pupil ratio of 22:1. Thirteen and a half percent of students identify as members of a racial/ethnic minority group (SAS, 2020). Over half of SAS students test proficient in both mathematics and reading (Explore SAS, 2020). SAS routinely ranks among the top ten school districts in the state of Michigan with special recognition for its outstanding athletics and arts programs. The overwhelming majority of teachers and professional staff identify as White, Non-Hispanic except for 5 teachers and 8 professional support staff members with racial/ethnic minority identities.

As mentioned in the introduction, the district is guided by its learner profile known as the "Compass" which can be seen widely throughout every public and virtual space as a symbol of SAS' commitment to holistically preparing students for life beyond textbook content and

standardized testing. The "Compass" focuses on what's called "The Four Cs" which are communication, creativity and innovation, collaboration and critical thinking and problem solving. The "Compass" also details student attributes such as "collaborative leader," "creative innovator" and "financially and digitally literate" (SAS Compass Learner Profile, 2017).

In general, the entire school community is the stakeholder in this project. A significant number of high-profile racist incidents, involving both SAS students and parents over the past three years, galvanized various members of the community. Social justice-oriented groups comprised of teachers, students and other members of the community demanded that the leadership of SAS begin taking intentional steps to make SAS a more welcoming, inclusive, equitable school system. Students formed ally and affinity groups while teachers formed building level equity teams both of which are focused on embracing diversity and promoting equity and inclusion. The elected school board established an official diversity, equity and inclusion advisory committee (DEIAC) while the local city council established its own diversity, equity and inclusion committee. SAS leadership (the superintendent, assistant superintendents of human resources and instruction, building principals and department directors) examined their hiring practices, disciplinary handbook policies and other policies to see where they needed to shift the system towards embracing more diversity and improving equity.

SAS' leadership will use the data from this capstone to locate their instructional staff along a continuum of belief, competence and comfort around culturally responsive instruction. They aim to both support their instructional staffs' existing efforts and encourage increased effort toward implementing culturally responsive practices regardless of where teachers are starting on this journey. SAS leadership highlights this topic as one of the most significant in light of those recent events and in light of the community's demands. The data from this project

will inform the curation of professional development, the recruiting and interview process as well as for assessing the quality of instruction and level of responsiveness in SAS.

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

In 2018, a White student in the 5th grade called an African American student the N-word in their Spanish class prompting local outrage and a district emergency. At the time, SAS defined its mission, vision and educational value system in its learner profile known as the "Compass," in its district strategic plan and in its school board philosophy statements (SAS Compass Learner Profile, 2017). These foundational documents articulate the districts' intention to welcome diversity, value cultural differences and to promote an understanding of social justice at every level of learning. Although these documents articulated these ideas, in 2018, SAS did not have a district wide plan focused on diversity, equity and inclusion or a clear policy on hate speech and social identity harassment. After this initial incident, district leadership, with the support of the school board and informed by several community stakeholder groups, launched a community-based committee to begin exploring ways to embrace diversity and promote equity and inclusion through policy, curriculum, hiring, community education and other initiatives.

A handful of teachers in the district served as leaders in social justice training prior to 2018 but teacher participation in social justice training increased with each consecutive year. District leaders and community members engaged in both large and small public dialogs on race, LGBTQ and other social issues in the community. Progress in the form of new policies, new curriculum and new recruiting and hiring practices demonstrated SAS' commitment to the work toward its goal of becoming a more welcoming, inclusive and equitable district (SAS DEI Action Plan 2020-2023). In 2020, the district garnered national and international media attention when White students used racial slurs in a Snap Chat group text against Black students in the same

chat (Hester & Slagter, 2020). The Black students exposed the texts. Media attention on the texts went from national to international when a White American parent questioned a Mexican American parent during a school community meeting about the racists SnapChat texts. The Mexican American parent shared his son's painful experiences as a Mexican American student in SAS and the White American parent interrupted and asked, "Then why didn't you stay in Mexico?" (Hester & Slagter, 2020).

The district's responses to both the initial racist incident and the follow-up incident have been to reconfigure its approach to DEI. A series of community dialogs and significant administrative collaboration with local and national experts produced a formal Three Year Plan for SAS to continue its journey toward becoming a more welcoming, inclusive and equitable district. As part of this plan, the district set out to recommend and offer professional development for its instructional staff while implementing more culturally responsive teaching practices. For example, SAS invested in a district wide book study of "Cultivating Genius," by Gholdy Muhammad (Muhammad, 2020). School leadership participates in frequent webinars with Muhammad as part of their ongoing education about culturally responsive instruction.

The problem of practice this capstone seeks to address is SAS' leadership's limited understanding of what precipitates and/or is a barrier to full implementation of culturally responsive practices. SAS' leadership wants to know why some teachers are further along than others in their implementation and why some teachers make attempts and then retreat to more traditional methods. SAS leadership selected the secondary social studies department as the target population for this study.

This project will investigate this progress and lagging by answering the following questions:

- How are social studies teachers currently implementing culturally responsive instruction?

- What professional development and/or systemic supports are currently in place for teachers related to culturally responsive instruction?

- What additional professional development and/or systemic supports are needed for teachers in their efforts to fully implement culturally responsive instruction?

- How are teachers' beliefs, feelings of competence and comfort level related to the implementation of culturally responsive instruction?

Failing to understand and improve the implementation of culturally responsive teaching risks further marginalizing students and re-affirming a tradition of teaching that excludes minoritized social identities and ignores the rich learning stemming from inclusion and diversity. SAS has already suffered the consequence of being labeled a racist school system after the 5th grade name calling incident, the SnapChat and community meeting incidents in the local, national and international media. Change is required.

Students want this change as well. In 2019, an independent educational research firm conducted focus groups with SAS students about school climate. Grades 7-12 students participated in the study. The firm's final report included the following collective statement from students regarding what they believed to be the most important thing SAS needed to improve upon:

"The number one priority should be an increased focus on diversity, multicultural awareness and sensitivity, and creating more opportunities for students to learn about different backgrounds. [We] feel like we are in a bubble and other school divisions see [us] as "racist"

because [our] school is "mostly white." we know we can't do anything about who makes up [our] community, but [we] would like to learn about more diverse backgrounds and controversial issues as well as actively promote global citizenship and multicultural sensitivity"--Saline Students, Grades 7-12, K12 insight focus group Summary, 2019 (K12 Insight, 2019).

This is perhaps one of the most compelling answers to the question of "Why Does This Matter?" Students are asking to learn in this way.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To investigate the implementation of culturally responsive instruction, it is important to first consider research on culturally responsive instruction, teacher professional development and best practices in both areas. A study of the relationship between these topics and teachers' beliefs or attitudes about them must also be layered into this consideration.

DEFINING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION[2]

The literature on culturally responsive instruction may refer to it as culturally sensitive, relevant, reflective or mediated to name a few terms (Gay, 2018). As it relates to teacher professional development, teacher beliefs, teacher comfort and teacher competence, the literature examines the relationship between teacher beliefs about diversity and student achievement while attempting to evaluate for effectiveness the ways teachers are trained in the area of culturally responsive instruction, if at all.

Any exploration of this literature should be grounded in an agreed upon definition of culturally responsive instruction. Foundational to most studies on culturally responsive

---

[2] *For consistency in this paper, the term "culturally responsive instruction" will refer to the instructional practices named "culturally responsive pedagogy" in the literature unless the literature is directly quoted or referenced.*

instruction (also named in the literature as culturally responsive pedagogy) is Gloria Ladsen-Billings', "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy" (Ladsen-Billings, 1995). More than any other single scholarly article, Ladsen-Billings' work is cited in articles published up to 20 years after her work. Ladsen-Billings frames the concept of culturally responsive teaching as being a teaching practice that affirms students' cultural identity while "developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities"(Ladsen-Billings, 1995) perpetuated by schools (Ladsen-Billings, 1995). Building on Ladsen-Billings' work, Geneva Gay (2018) provides eight characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy. These characteristics distinguish it from traditional pedagogy which she identifies as culture blind and Eurocentric (Gay, 2018). These characteristics and a summary of them are as follows:

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY IS:
- Validating:
  - promotes a positive self-concept and pride in ethnic identity
- Comprehensive and Inclusive:
  - is embraced by the whole curriculum and embraces the whole child
- Multi-Dimensional:
  - Not limited to the curriculum but also includes emotion, beliefs, values and climate management
- Empowering:
  - Promotes high personal confidence, skills, high expectations and a will to act
- Transformative:
  - Decries learned helplessness
- Emancipatory:
  - Allows reconstruction of narratives and abandons tradition when beneficial to students
- Humanistic:
  - Benefits all students, but differently
- Normative and Ethical
  - The right thing to do in an educational system that cares about children (Gay, 2018)

Additionally, several publications related to culturally responsive instruction cite Gholdy Muhammad's "Cultivating Genius" (Muhammad, 2020). These three publications use Critical

Race Theory as a larger framework within which to examine equity in public K-12 education. Supportive to the theory of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is literature elevating the role of teacher to that of an agent of social change based in Socio-Transformative Theory. This research yields cases and outcomes of improved student achievement as teachers deploy "multicultural instructional practices" (Rodriguez, 2005) which are considered characteristically the same as culturally responsive pedagogical practices.

Culturally Responsive Instruction, Professional Development and Teacher Needs

In general, the literature reveals no consensus or conflicting conclusions on evaluating the effectiveness of professional development to teaching practice (Guskey, 2005). As it relates to social justice focused professional development, such as training to become more culturally responsive, studies show that full implementation of culturally responsive instruction is inhibited when systems do not fully support teachers in their efforts to develop these strategies and when a teacher-centered learning community is not created and sustained within the system (Kohli, et al. 2015). Several studies indicate teachers' needs for resources, culturally specific information, time and collaboration as part of consistent professional development. These studies indicate teachers' needs for time and space to address their own biases, worldviews and beliefs that may be in conflict with culturally responsive pedagogies as well as systemwide reforms beyond classroom curriculum which would support these transitions. Teachers in multiple studies articulate a need for opportunities to collaborate and engage in critical conversations where they are allowed to be cooperative and meet each other's needs for building knowledge, unity and community (Tibbitts & Weldon, 2016; van Middelkoop & Ballagkin & Meeran, 2017; Kohli, 2015). Teachers criticized the corporate style, pre-packaged, "diversity" trainings school systems often invest thousands of dollars in without giving local teachers opportunities to articulate their

particular needs. One study highly criticized game playing and sing-alongs as activities serving to shield White teachers from discomfort they might experience in more dialogic, self-reflective settings (Grinage, 2020).

Nora E. Hyland, Christopher C. Martell and John S. Wills contribute small subject studies of one and three teachers' efforts to implement culturally responsive instruction or implement effective teacher led professional development. While these studies may not necessarily offer widely generalizable findings, they provide insight and voice into teachers' experiences with training and implementing culturally responsive instruction with a reflective lens. Subjects in these studies identify emotions, biases and gaps in personal and professional skillsets while highlighting successes evidenced by improved student achievement. Self-identified young, White and Asian teachers in these studies recognized the benefit to their students of implementing culturally responsive instruction as proven in their classroom dialog, engagement, writing and demonstrated critical thinking and analysis (Hyland, 2009; Martell, 2013; Wills, 1996).

TEACHER BELIEFS ABOUT DIVERSITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Teacher beliefs impact whether and how teachers implement culturally responsive practices. While the smaller sample studies provide insight and voice into teachers' experiences with training and implementation, larger sample studies in the United States and the Netherlands examine teachers' attitudes about the relationship between diversity, learning and student achievement. These larger studies conclude that teachers' beliefs about diversity surface in their teaching. They conclude that the more a teacher believes cultural diversity impacts student achievement, the more that teacher will attempt to implement culturally responsive instruction in their classrooms (Mette & Nieuwenhuizen & Hyidston, 2016; van Middelkoop, et. al, 2017).

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

As this capstone focuses on social studies teachers and includes interviews with four United States history teachers, a review of the literature specific to this content area provides some nuance and detail related to the importance of culturally responsive social studies instruction. John Wills (1996) and Christopher C. Martell (2013) spotlight history education specifically as having the potential to improve students' overall experiences in all social studies courses. Both advocate for making history a more personally applicable and usable subject by inviting students to learn through culturally responsive practices. For example, these studies found the need to situate United States history as part of global and ethnic histories. They found that connecting the past with today's social, economic and political landscapes (from their student's perspectives) made history more relevant to the students' current lives (Martell, 2013; Wills, 1996). Students in these studies indicated feeling like successful learners when they were able to make more seamless connections between their current lives and the past because of their teacher's culturally responsive practices (Martell, 2013; Wills, 1996).

THIS STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION

The literature varies in rigor from single subject to multi-subject studies. It is still missing a definitive study on White teachers in a predominantly White school system focused on implementing culturally responsive instruction as a way to become a more welcoming, inclusive system for its less than 15% minority population. This project aspires to contribute a narrow look into a predominantly White teaching staff and student body and provide a possible roadmap to equipping teachers to meet the cultural learning needs of their students with minority identities. This project also aspires to provide actionable feedback for improvement to a school system invested in becoming a more inclusive learning environment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework   Channon N. Washington   March 15, 2022
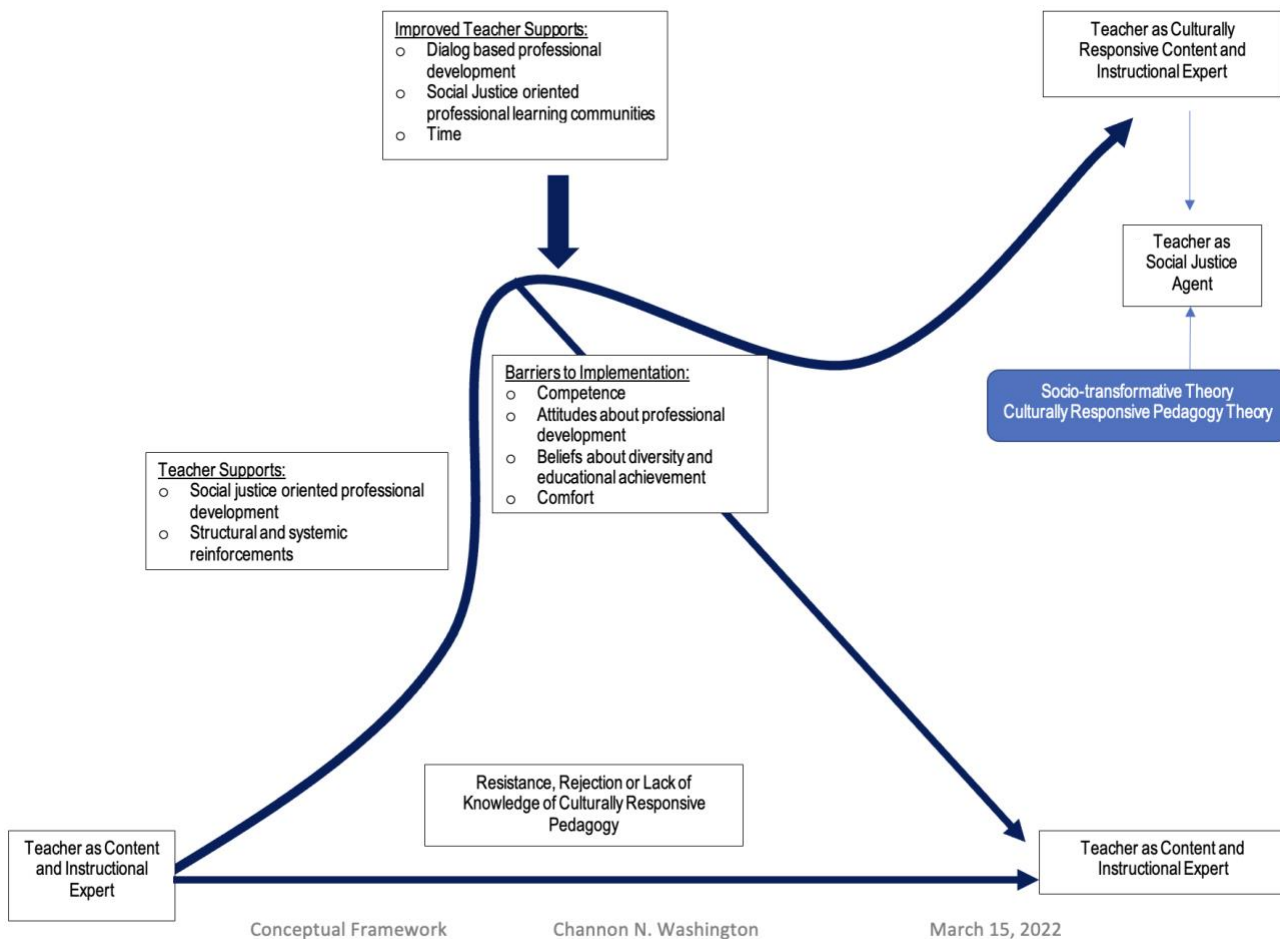
The conceptual framework (Figure 1/Appendix A) for this project provides a structure within which to examine how educational systems orient teachers toward transitioning from existing as content and instructional experts to culturally responsive content and instructional experts.

Theoretical Foundation The theory of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy asks teachers to target student achievement improvements while nurturing a critical perspective on educational inequity and affirming individual cultural identities (Ladsen-Billings, 1995). Socio-Transformative theory and a transitional justice lens serve as the pathway to be followed as teachers navigate their transition. Both theories feature the teacher as one of the, if not the most

critical, tools to achieving social justice in education if they embrace culturally responsive

pedagogies as a sustained practice in place of traditional teaching methods (Tibbitts & Weldon,

2016; Rodriguez, 2005).

Instructional and Content Experts The framework assumes teachers serve as experts in

instructional practice and their content area, particularly as the teachers in this study teach grades

7-12th. In the state of Michigan these teachers must hold a major or minor in their area of

certification and complete methods and secondary education courses (State of Michigan, 2022).

Beginning with this assumption and considering the goals of SAS, teachers are expected to move

beyond serving as content and instructional practice experts to become culturally responsive

content and instructional experts.

Barriers and Precipitators This project looks to isolate both the barriers to implementation

and the precipitators of implementation. The literature reveals possible barriers such as teacher

competence, comfort and beliefs about diversity and indicates supports such as training and

structural/systemic support toward overcoming those barriers. This framework calls for

improved supports to aid teachers at the point in their transition where they would encounter

barriers. Improved supports include but are not limited to dialog based professional development,

social justice based professional learning communities and dedicated time. As these improved

supports meet teachers during their transition, teachers are expected to make progress toward the

goal of becoming culturally responsive content and instructional experts. This is where the

teacher fully serves as an agent of social justice as asserted in Socio-Transformative Theory.

Without Support Should teachers lack access to support, teachers will remain

instructional and content experts without accounting for the expectations of the district or the

needs of students for more culturally responsive instruction. Teachers who remain solely experts

in content and instruction run the risk of affirming a system of education that does not necessarily prioritize affirming ethnic identity or critically challenging inequities. This conceptual framework lays out a path by which teachers and school leadership may collaborate toward achieving the district's goal of becoming a more inclusive educational community.

DATA COLLECTION

The superintendent and principals selected the social studies teachers of grades 7-12th as a target department for this project in the Fall of 2020. Nineteen teachers work in this department full time. All identify as White. Nineteen teachers received a Likert Scale and open-ended electronic survey. Fourteen teachers completed the survey over the course of three months. Teachers received a scheduling spreadsheet to sign up for interview time slots of 20 minutes each over a four-week period with availability on 28 days from 7 am to 9 pm. Six teachers scheduled interviews using this spreadsheet. At the end of the interviews, teachers indicated their willingness to host a classroom observation. Teachers dictated observation days and times based on their preference. Prior to the completion of the first teacher interview, five school leaders participated in two focus groups as the first phase of data collection. Two high school principals and two middle school principals along with the superintendent discussed the district's vision around culturally responsive instruction, their observed challenges, successes and identified their plans to further support teachers. Both focus groups and all but two interviews took place via Zoom. All interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai software.

The conceptual framework for this project looks to identify barriers to implementation of culturally responsive instruction and remove them. The literature provides broad descriptives of both the barriers and precipitators teachers face in their transition toward more culturally responsive teaching. The data collection tools (interview, focus groups, survey and observations)

directly inquired as to where exactly SAS social studies teachers find barriers and where they find precipitators. The tools also specifically sought detail about teachers' experiences and beliefs drawing on the research which shows a strong positive connection between personal/professional beliefs and implementation.

The data collection tools provide an opportunity to illuminate all these variables as useful to develop professional supports. This data isolates and identifies teachers' efforts toward implementing culturally responsive instruction and assesses their needs to continue implementation. Data on the teachers' progress toward full implementation, perceptions of their competence and comfort level, their beliefs and articulated needs for support can provide school leadership a clear picture of where teachers need training, resources, collegial support and further reflection. School leadership can use this data to determine which teachers are in the best position to serve as mentors to others, which professional development programs have been the most helpful and if there are other needs teachers have in this area. School leadership can also use this data to determine if teacher needs warrant additional funding. The social studies department could serve as a model for a few other departments should school leadership successfully use this data to pinpoint areas to improve its efforts in becoming more culturally responsive at scale.

DATA ANALYSIS

Interview and Focus Group Otter.ai software transcribed recordings of interviews and focus groups. Repeated review of these transcripts yielded 18 codes sorted by the research questions. The codes captured "big ideas" that connected to the literature or were unique to the SAS system (Table 1). These ideas repeatedly surfaced in more than one or two interviews or focus group conversations. For example, the absence of a clear statement of expectations around becoming a

culturally responsive teacher surfaced in multiple teacher interviews, both focus groups and in

the open ended survey answers. Accountability and evaluation processes were also mentioned.

This resulted in the code, "Tell Us The Vision and Mandate It." Several "listens" to interview

recordings and multiple reviews of transcripts revealed other clear patterns. For example, several

teachers indicated that they wanted to "see" what culturally responsive teaching looked like or

wanted to conduct their own observations of competent teachers or wanted to travel to see what

teaching looks like in other parts of the country. An administrator mentioned working to provide

teachers the chance to do their own observations of their colleagues. This resulted in the code

"Modeling" as a big idea to describe one of the teachers' stated needs.

Table 1: Research Question Response Coding

Research Question	Codes
How are social studies teachers currently implementing culturally responsive pedagogy?	• Connecting to Students Through Conversation • Diversity of Content • Having Difficult Multi-Perspective Conversations on Historical Topics
What professional development and/or systemic supports are currently in place for teachers related to culturally responsive pedagogy?	• WISD Social Justice Leader Training • Time and Money to Professionally Develop with Colleagues • Leadership Support (Providing Access, Advice, Parent Back-up • Individually Intrinsically Motivated-Don't Interfere • DEI Policies and Practices In The Beginning Stages
What additional professional development and/or systemic supports are needed for teachers in their efforts to fully implement culturally responsive pedagogy?	• Lessons and Resources • Administrative Support with Parents • Modeling • Tell Us The Vision and Mandate It • Chance to Open Dialog • Time and Space
How are teachers' beliefs, feelings of competence and comfort level related to the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy?	• Fear of Saying or Doing the Wrong Thing • Kids Being Comfortable Optimizes Learning • New vs. Experienced Teachers • Willing

Observations Teachers who sat for interviews afforded access to their classrooms for one class period of their choosing. A classroom observation note taker helped to organize examples of how teachers currently implement culturally responsive instruction based on the eight characteristics of culturally responsive instruction (Appendix D). For example, three teacher interviews indicated the importance of examining history from multiple perspectives and reconstructing traditional narratives to more accurately reflect the experience of minorities which is part of instruction being transformative. Classroom observations provided examples of how teachers routinely prompt students to practice this reconstruction as a skill.

Likert Scale and Open Ended In order to locate teachers' current evaluation of their progress toward becoming more culturally responsive, teachers completed a survey containing both Likert scale questions and open ended questions. Open ended responses fit into pre-existing codes and reinforced and illuminated ideas from the interview data. The Likert Scale questions sorted teachers by the strength of their beliefs about culture and learning, self-designated level of comfort and competence with becoming more culturally responsive. This data sorted teachers and used the designations of "comfortable" and "extremely comfortable" as markers to help spotlight what characteristics defined a competent, comfortable culturally responsive teacher in SAS. This profile supports the identification of teacher needs. Looking to those participants who rated themselves as extremely comfortable and extremely competent, a profile of an SAS culturally responsive teacher surfaced. An extremely comfortable and competent culturally responsive teacher indicated feeling very supported by colleagues and leadership as well as having access to highly applicable training.

Analysis of this data will include comparisons between the perspectives of school leadership and teachers because of their different positioning within the organization.

Triangulating the data from the varied tools, as indicated by Table 2, strengthens the

understanding of teachers' needs in their work toward becoming more culturally responsive.

Table 2: Use of Data Tools to Answer Research Questions

Answered By	Interview Responses	Focus Group Conversations	Observation	Likert Scale and Open Ended Survey
How are social studies teachers currently implementing culturally responsive pedagogy?	X		X	X
What professional development and/or systemic supports are currently in place for teachers related to culturally responsive pedagogy?	X	X		X
What additional professional development and/or systemic supports are needed for teachers in their efforts to fully implement culturally responsive pedagogy?	X	X		X
How are teachers' beliefs, feelings of competence and comfort level related to the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy?	X			X

FINDINGS

HOW ARE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY?

Techers in the SAS social studies department are operating under different

understandings of what culturally responsive instruction is and how it is implemented. While

there are clear variations, there are also clear commonly held beliefs about what it means to be

culturally responsive. Five teachers explained it as simply being responsive to students as

individuals while one saw it as part of the work of "diversity, equity and inclusion" initiatives.

All of them saw it as including lessons and conversations that have multiple perspectives and telling the stories of those who have been historically marginalized. All teachers indicated a strong desire to equitably include these stories and perspectives and all characterized it as endemic to their work as teachers of United States and World History and Geography.

Observations helped to paint a picture of which characteristics of culturally responsive instruction teachers actively practiced. Geneva Gay broadly describes culturally responsive instruction as validating, comprehensive and inclusive, multi-dimensional, empowering, transformative, emancipatory and humanistic (Gay, 2018). [3]Within these broad domains, teachers practiced each domain with different levels of depth and focus. "Comprehensive and Inclusive" surfaced in four out of the six observed classrooms. Both teachers and administrators indicated that connecting to students through conversation as a way to know students is a critical practice for a culturally responsive teacher. This approach to seeing the "whole child" is foundational to being a responsive teacher. In the classroom, teachers used one-on-one conversations, group conversations and followed "off topic" conversation as a way to engage with students beyond the content which is an example of a "comprehensive and inclusive" practice.

Observations of the domains, "Validating" and "Multi-Dimensional" surfaced with the most variation. Three out of six classroom teachers decorated their classroom with symbols such as a large "Black Lives Matter" flag, a large "Pride" flag, portraits of various civil rights leaders, social justice oriented quotes and pictures of their students. All six teachers' classrooms displayed books written by diverse authors. Some classes displayed photos of the students in the class. One teacher repeatedly invited students to share their personal perspectives on the content

---

[3] See Literature Review: Defining Culturally Responsive Instruction

while stating, "This is a judgment free zone." These displays and practices validate student identities. Every teacher deployed the practice of allowing many ways of being a student in class as a function of classroom management which is foundational to multi-dimensional culturally responsive teaching characteristic. All six teachers, in general, embraced diverse seating arrangements, student choice in pacing, room location, due dates, partner selection, topic selection and other student-centered classroom management tools.

In classrooms with limited or no culturally validating displays or diverse seating, evidence of the "Humanistic" and "Emancipatory" domains surfaced in the content of classroom instruction and discussion. Teachers led students through evaluative discussions on the dominant narratives around Christopher Columbus, John and Abigail Adams, The French and Indian War, The American Revolution, various Supreme Court rulings and the perception of the differently abled. Teachers challenged students to rethink the story as written through the lenses of those without a voice. This practice benefits all students, but differently. Some students will benefit from having to exercise empathy toward those who could not tell their story and engage in bravely correcting that injustice while other students will feel empowered by hearing the stories of those whose stories have not been widely told.
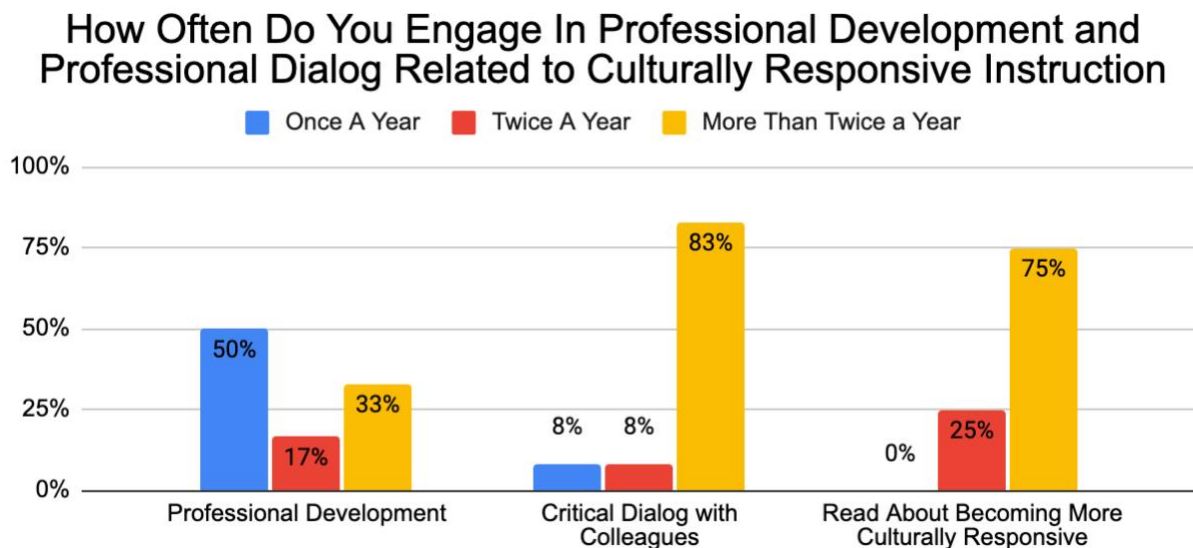
Teachers routinely communicated their high academic and skill expectations which is one of the characteristics of "Empowering" culturally responsive teaching. In the two Advanced Placement courses observed, teachers expected students to have completed the reading beyond just reading, but analysis. Teachers expected students to have a firm grip on complex vocabulary. Teachers communicated these same high expectations in the 7th grade classes with a focus on "I can" statements and mastery of learning targets while encouraging kids to be deeply self-reflective in their self-assessments. In general, teachers expected students to be prepared or be

able to communicate what they needed to get prepared. The consistent mix of high expectations and flexibility promotes both the elements of the "Emancipatory" domain and the "Transformative" domain where teachers work to eliminate learned helplessness while promoting academic achievement.

What professional development and/or systemic supports are currently in place for teachers related to culturally responsive instruction?
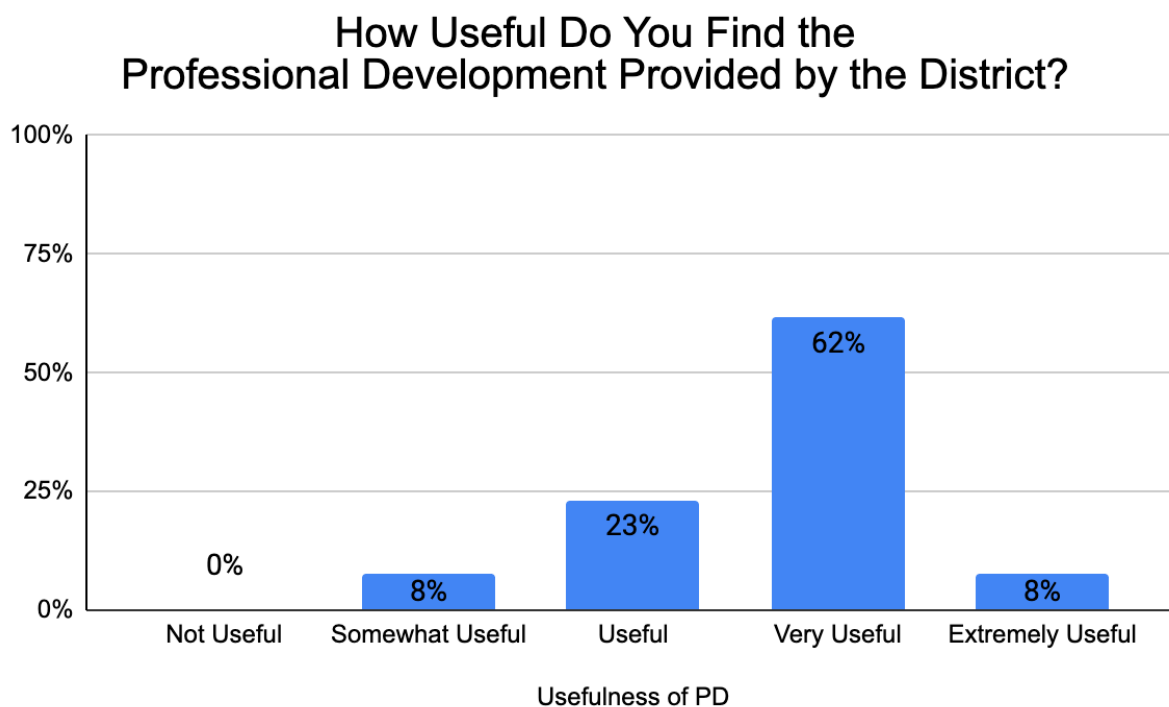
All but two of the teachers interviewed indicated completing a series of courses on social justice in education offered by the county intermediate school district (ISD). This series focuses on educating and supporting teachers in making education more equitable and accessible (Justice Leaders, 2022). Within the ISD's professional development catalog are a myriad of offerings to deepen teacher development on social justice in education including responsive teaching. SAS teachers have free access to this training and are frequently granted release time to attend these sessions. In 2019, SAS encouraged all teachers to complete these trainings and documented an marked increase in the number of teachers opting for this training. 50% of teachers engage in these trainings more than twice a year. 83% of teachers indicated engaging in critical dialog with their colleagues on culturally responsive teaching more than twice a year in addition to the 75% who participate in readings on the topic more than twice a year (Figure 2). The literature on social justice oriented professional development shows that teachers gain more from collaborating with colleagues and engaging in critical dialog consistently than just taking in lectures and presentations (Grinage, 2020).

Figure 2: Teacher Engagement with Professional Development

How Often Do You Engage In Professional Development and Professional Dialog Related to Culturally Responsive Instruction

Legend: Once A Year | Twice A Year | More Than Twice a Year

Category	Once A Year	Twice A Year	More Than Twice a Year
Professional Development	50%	17%	33%
Critical Dialog with Colleagues	8%	8%	83%
Read About Becoming More Culturally Responsive	0%	25%	75%

On average, teachers evaluate these trainings as useful with 70% of teachers finding them very or extremely useful (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Usefulness of Professional Development

How Useful Do You Find the Professional Development Provided by the District?

Usefulness of PD	Percentage
Not Useful	0%
Somewhat Useful	8%
Useful	23%
Very Useful	62%
Extremely Useful	8%

Beyond training opportunities, teachers credit their school leadership with being supportive when sought out and with providing useful materials, advice and "back up" with parents when parents push back against certain topics or perspectives. For example, a teacher indicated that their principal would "always be on their side" when they sought to teach the facts and truth on some topics that might "rile up" parents. This teacher indicated that they could go to their principal and walk-through content that made them nervous and the principal would talk them through it and was good at listening. Other teachers viewed school leadership support as allowing teachers to independently seek their own development opportunities and experiences and "not interfering" with their work. This teacher indicated being supported financially to explore development programs out of state and through extensive learning institutes.

All five school leaders corroborated all that their teachers recognized as support. They add that there are newly developed policies and draft evaluative tools being implemented to further support their development. Recognizing that teachers land in different places in their journey, school leaders see policy and evaluation as one way of guiding teachers toward more consistent implementation.

WHAT ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND/OR SYSTEMIC SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED FOR TEACHERS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO FULLY IMPLEMENT CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION?

Both teachers and school leaders agreed that there is a need for a concise, defining statement of vision and a mandate that all teachers practice cultural responsiveness. Three teachers indicated that the district does not always follow through or explicitly state their expectations and school leaders corroborate this by recognizing the lack of an easy to find, articulated statement supported by a mandate. While there are glimpses of the elements of culturally responsive instruction in the district's foundational documents (strategic framework,

learner profile, school board policy, building improvement plans and learning framework) there is not a singular, formal statement of expectation to practice. There is also not a definition of culturally responsive instruction to abide.

Two teachers indicated wanting to be able to observe good culturally responsive instruction to learn from realistic models. Another teacher emphasized their interest in not only conducting local observations but moving beyond Michigan to see how teachers are teaching in other states. One school leader expressed their strong desire to provide teachers a scheduling framework where they could take time to observe each other and provide feedback as part of their professional development.

Teachers expressed needing continued easy access to training as well as time and space to collaborate with colleagues. These teachers stated needing time more than any other need. While lessons and materials may seem to be easily accessible for secondary teachers, one teacher suggested that the district's appointed Teaching and Learning Team (TLT) work to screen and convert curriculum to be more culturally responsive as a support. Both having the material and knowing that it has been screened would provide confidence that teachers are on the right page and the same page as it relates to culturally responsive instruction.

Finally, teachers pointed to the lack of diversity within their department. Two teachers candidly expressed concerns that their department is all White and all male and they wondered if they would be better teachers if they had a more diverse team to work with in their collaboration.

HOW ARE TEACHERS' BELIEFS, FEELINGS OF COMPETENCE AND COMFORT LEVEL RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION?

Figure 4: What Encourages Teachers to Become More Culturally Responsive?

What Encourages Teachers to Become More Culturally Responsive?
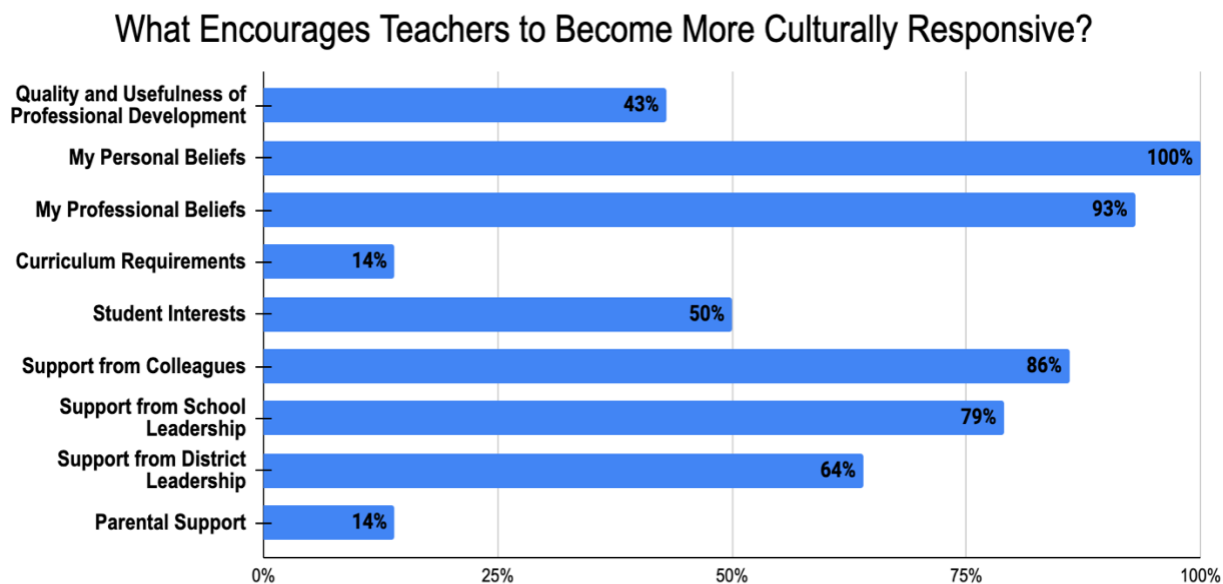
Personal and Professional Beliefs The literature explains that teachers who have personal beliefs in equity and the value of diversity are more likely to be culturally responsive in their practice. One hundred percent of SAS teachers interviewed attribute their willingness to persist toward becoming more culturally responsive to their personal beliefs and personal experience (Figure 4). Two teachers indicated having grown up in homogenous White communities and their exposure to diversity in undergraduate school motivated them to, not only diversify their personal learning, but to be a teacher who offers multiple perspectives and exposure to diverse learning experiences.

One teacher shared an experience with taking students to visit a presidential mansion and recognizing that for some students the property represented a slave plantation and not necessarily a positive symbol of democracy. This impacted this teacher's way of seeing history through their students' eyes.

Two other teachers self-identified as religious minorities with interests in promoting equity and justice because of their ability to relate to marginalized populations. One teacher indicated a lack of willingness to conform to the way things have always been. Their personal "boredom" with the traditional way motivated them to seek new ways to teach and meet their students' needs.

Every teacher interviewed shared both a personal and professional belief in the connection between student comfort, inclusivity and learning. These teachers believe that being culturally responsive creates a level of comfort for students that frees them to learn from them and their fellow students.

The literature indicates that a belief in the presence of systemic racism and its impact on public education results in teachers being more culturally responsive in their practice, particularly if teachers see themselves as agents of change (Rodriguez, 2005). This aligns with Socio-Transformative Theory which sees teachers as one of society's most valuable tools toward achieving social justice (Rodriguez, 2005). While there are two teachers who indicate a neutral perspective on institutionalized racism in the United States and in public education, 12 of the 14 teachers surveyed agree or strongly agree on the presence of systemic racism in public schools and in the United States (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Teacher Beliefs about Institutional Racism

Teacher Beliefs About Institutional Racism
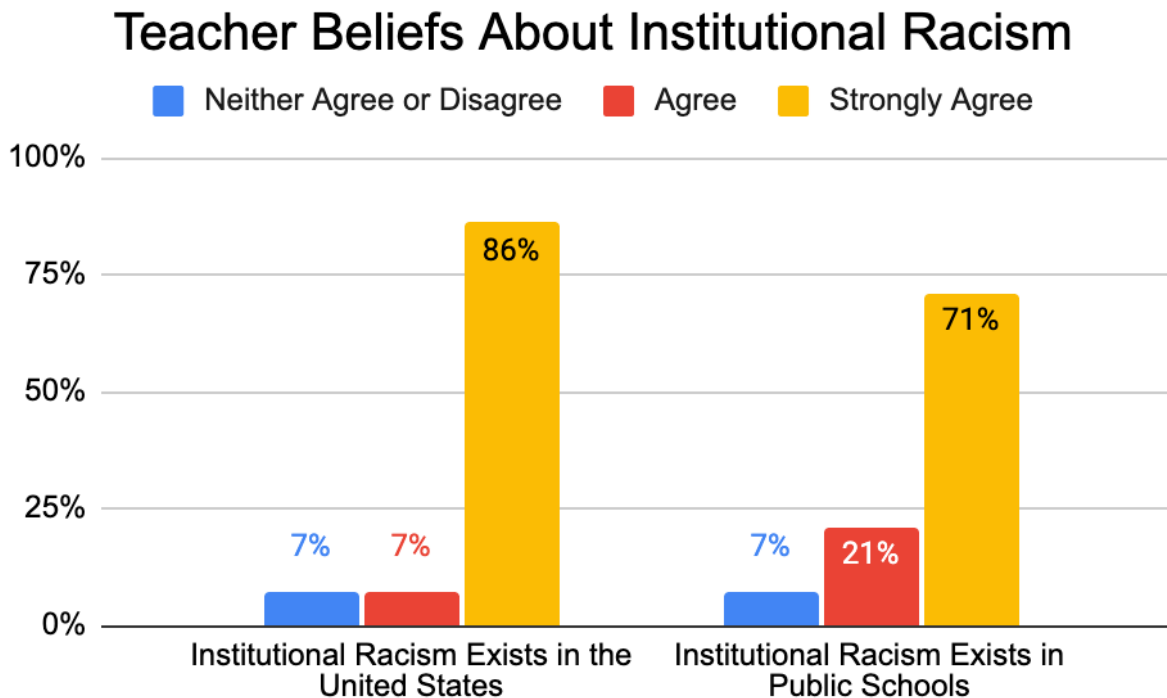
Teachers of United States history (four teachers) believe that culturally responsive instruction is endemic to teaching their subject truthfully and accurately. One teacher stated that failing to do this would be promoting propaganda. These teachers share examples of how they routinely teach students to look at the perspectives of those whose voices have been left out or silenced over time. These teachers shared their effort to have students look critically at historical figures such as Abraham Lincoln and Christopher Columbus through the eyes of the oppressed and examine their words and actions through various lenses.

SAS social studies teachers, on average hold beliefs about instruction that support culturally responsive practices. They believe that instruction should affirm student's identities, promote cultural competence and provide students with opportunities to improve the world around them by challenging injustices (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Teacher Beliefs About Classroom Instruction

Classroom Instruction Should...
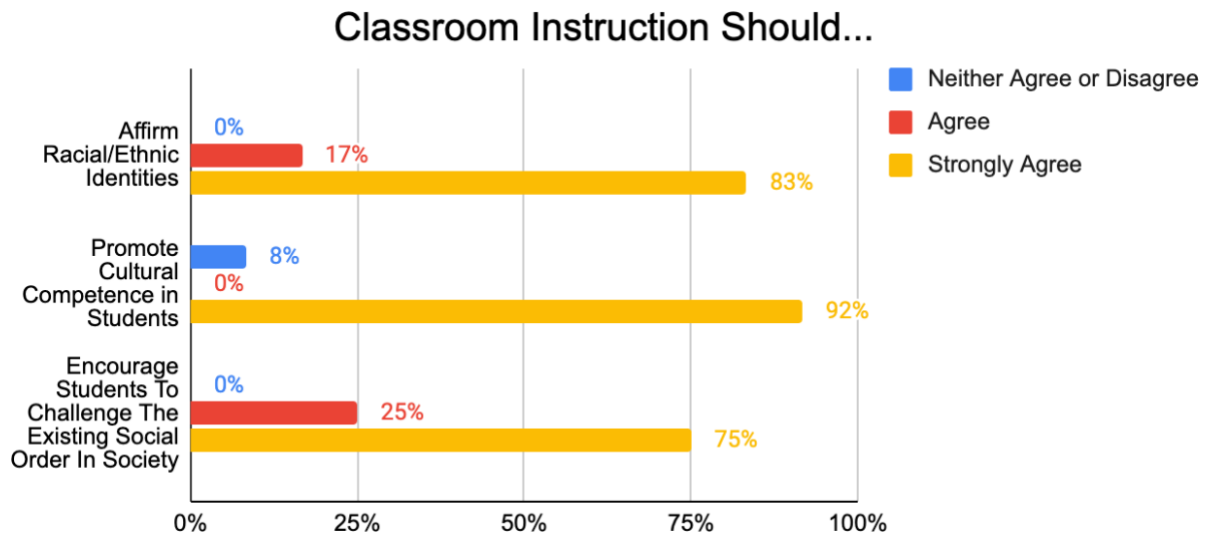
Teachers indicated, in both interviews and in the open ended survey, that they are works in progress and do not feel like they are doing enough or getting it right. One hundred percent of teachers indicated a willingness to keep on this journey because they believe it is the right thing to do for students. This belief directly connects to the culturally responsive domain of being "Normative and Ethical." (Gay, 2018) This domain expects culturally responsive instruction to occur because it is the right thing to do in an educational environment that truly cares about learners (Gay, 2018).

Figure 7: Teacher Comfort

Level of Comfort with Culturally Responsive Instruction

● Comforable
● Extremely Comfortable

15.4%

84.6%
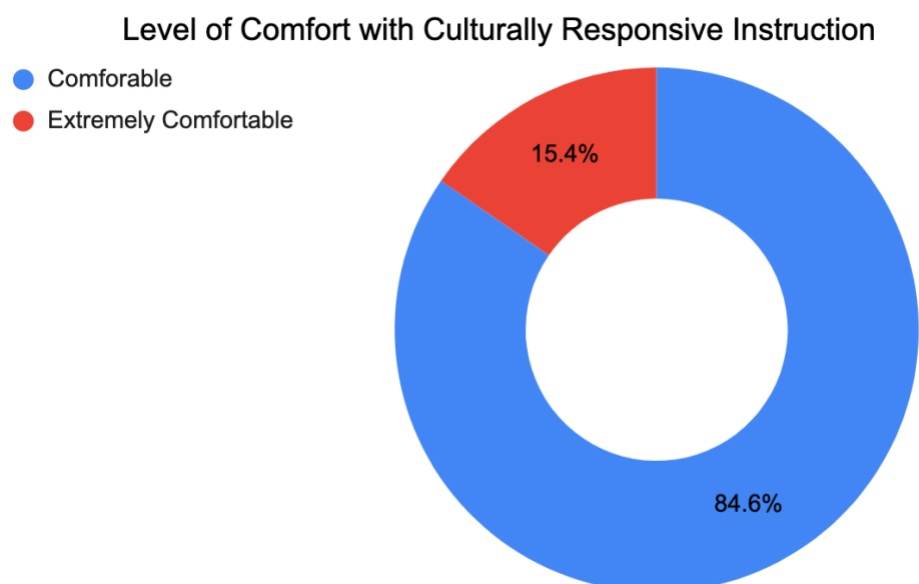
Competence and Comfort Only 2 out of 14 teachers indicate feeling "extremely comfortable" with culturally responsive instruction (Figure 7). In the focus groups, school leaders shared their observations of younger/newer teachers demonstrating higher comfort and competence levels than their more experienced peers. They credit intentional shifts in university teacher training programs toward training teachers to be culturally responsive early on and consistently throughout their programs. According to school leaders, more experienced teachers express more hesitance due to routinization, a lack of consistent training and fear.

Three teachers indicated fear as having an impact on their practice in the open-ended survey. They clarified this fear as being afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing or of inviting parent or community pushback. Table 3 documents teachers' concerns about parent or community pushback and Figure 6 shows that 36% of teachers cite lack of parental support as a barrier to implementing more culturally responsive teaching.

Table 3: Fears of Parent or Community Pushback

Teacher Fears of Parent and or Community Pushback
"I think most parents support this work, but there are some very vocal ones that complain. It's stressful when that happens."
"Being a culturally responsive teacher can open you up as an educator to being attacked by those who disagree with the importance of this work."
"The challenge is how to engage in this work without ending up on the bad end of aggressive public comments."

When asked what challenged or prevented them from becoming more culturally responsive, half of teachers surveyed indicated a lack of quality and useful professional development. Three fourths of teachers surveyed identified a lack of preparation time (Figure 8). These deficits speak to teacher competence. Without training and time to prepare, teachers will lack the competence to fully implement culturally responsive practices and are hindered in their efforts. As reflected in the literature, comfort and competence remain keys to successful implementation.

Figure 8: What Prevents Teachers From Becoming More Culturally Responsive

What Challenges or Prevents Teachers From Becoming More Culturally Responsive?
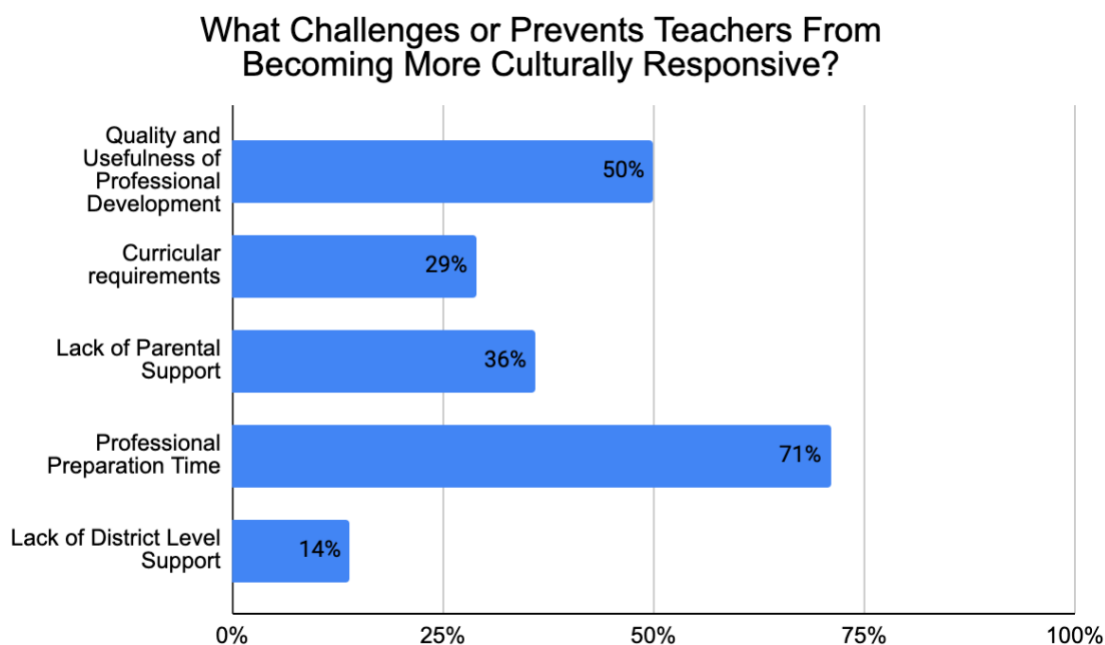
There is consistency between these findings and the literature. When evaluating their motivation to be culturally responsive in the survey, teachers overwhelmingly credit their personal beliefs, their professional beliefs and the systemic support of leadership and colleagues (Figure 4). According to the literature, teachers who are afforded adequate time, usable training and have a belief system favorable to the tenets of culturally responsive instruction are more likely to continue transitioning away from traditional teaching toward more culturally responsive instruction. Teachers who lag or are stagnant likely lack a personal and/or professional belief system consistent with culturally responsive teaching and/or have not participated in usable training with fidelity (Mette & Nieuwenhuizen & Hyidston, 2016; van Middelkoop, et. al, 2017).

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

Findings from this study indicate that SAS social studies teachers possess both an ability and willingness to implement culturally responsive instruction. They recognize the support of their leadership and are asking for consistent expectations and trust. At the same time SAS social studies teachers have expressed their personal and professional beliefs in the importance of this lens for students showing they are primed for persisting through the challenges often encountered when making this transition.

Their strongly held personal and professional beliefs should sustain their practice of culturally responsive instruction if their professional needs are consistently met within the system as they evolve. Their interest in connecting with students individually while also showing an eagerness to engage students in reconstructing narratives and identity affirmation motivates their desire to keep transitioning. There is clarity in the teacher's needs for this transition and their school leaders corroborate their needs. The central area of agreement between the two is that there has not been articulated expectations or a mandate of sorts. Both groups also see the

value in teachers having the chance to conduct observations of culturally responsive instruction to help them build realistic models.

Moving from theory to practice should be easier if teachers who are early in their transition can look to teachers who are further along. Of course, this will require time and space in scheduling and support personnel, however, both groups agreeing on these needs provides a foundation for those structural adjustments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Clear Vision SAS has one of the most detailed and navigable learner profiles in the county. It is widely branded and visible in every communication, every webpage, every classroom, and the majority of public spaces as a symbol of SAS' beliefs and goals for student learning. Keeping with this intentional

Figure 9: The SAS Compass, Learner Profile

systemwide messaging, the first recommendation is that the Teaching and Learning Team (TLT) draft and communicate the district's expectations of teachers to be culturally responsive in their practice and embed it into the teacher evaluation process. SAS distributes its beliefs and expectations about teaching and learning in several places from its school board philosophies, policies, strategic framework, improvement plans, curriculum snapshots and the learner profile. The TLT consists of educational leadership and directors of departments such as Literacy, English Language Learning, Curriculum Design, Instructional Design, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Learning Technology. This team is equipped to craft instructional guidance clarifying the district's expectations that all teachers practice culturally responsive instruction. This team, along with the administrative team, is also positioned to incorporate these expectations in the district's evaluation process. Both teachers and school leaders recognized this

articulation as a need. Since each teacher engages in training and culturally responsive practices at varying levels of intensity and with varying understandings of what it is, teachers must be given time to embrace the expectations. They will need to acclimate to a clear definition, train for competence and comfort and collaborate for support prior to being evaluated for effectiveness. This may require a 2-3-year cycle before becoming a weighted segment of a teacher's annual rating.

Time, Space and Models The literature suggests that providing time and space to train and collaborate with colleagues boosts teachers' competence and comfort. SAS social studies teachers identify these needs as the most pressing in order for them to transition toward becoming more culturally responsive in their practice. The research on effective professional development broadly supports dialogic collaboration between colleagues as one of the more effective models of professional development for teachers (Grinage, 2020). The second recommendation is for the district to embed consistent, repeated training and time for collaboration as part of its ongoing professional development cycle. This also means maintaining its strong recommendation that staff attend the social justice training at the county level and continue to engage in readings and other trainings on the topic. SAS should dedicate a portion of this time to provide teachers with modeling. This modeling can be in the form of teachers observing teachers within the SAS system or granting teachers release time to observe teachers elsewhere. School leaders shared their desire to give teachers time to conduct in-house observations as part of their regular professional development. SAS has teachers that demonstrate competence and confidence in culturally responsive instruction. Those teachers can serve as models for those who are in the process of building competence. Time and space to dig deeply into their practice and begin screening their lessons and processes based on the tenets of

culturally responsive instruction as well as developing ways to get to know their students and their students' communities is critical to this transition and persistence in it. This time and space affords teachers a chance to collect and revise resources. School leaders assured that there are thousands of dollars for teachers to engage in summer curriculum work. Summer curricular development time, in the short term, should be redirected to curating curricula that is more culturally responsive.

Have Our Backs Teachers need to know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they will be supported in this transition. In addition to needing material and instructional support, teachers will need to know that when parents/community members push back, complain or have issues with this approach, school leaders will be a steady support. Most SAS parents are supportive of its Three Year DEI Plan however, recently a small group of parents have questioned this approach, diverse materials, or the use of certain media publicly on social media or directly with teachers. Teachers want to know that they will have the support of the system in making this transition. Teachers also want the trust of school leaders that if given the right guidance they will follow through with this transition and will need little or no interference.

The fourth recommendation is for leadership to be explicit with teachers in how they will both be supported and trusted as they move through this transition to implement culturally responsive instruction. A declarative, profound and public statement of support followed by consistent action, when needed, to demonstrate the system's unwavering support for teachers will boost confidence and help to alleviate fear. This statement should include contingencies for support even when teachers err as they grow in this process.

Revisit Progress As the conceptual framework illustrates, this is an uphill journey. The majority of teachers hold majority identities, this work requires constant reflection on self and

empathy for others. The responsibility for monitoring progress and adjusting support falls on leadership. As the district intentionally sets out to fully implement culturally responsive instruction, the final recommendation is that leaders must purpose to collect data on teacher progress regularly. This initial progress monitoring can be embedded into existing climate surveys teachers complete bi-annually. Prior to formal evaluation processes, leaders can use simple reflective Likert scale questions to gauge teacher competence, confidence and needs. Leaders can also take inventory of the volume of training in which they engage and the intentional shifts teachers make in their practice toward reaching the goal of becoming a culturally responsive instructional and content expert.

As mentioned earlier, a review of SAS' foundational documents reveals the district's intention toward being culturally responsive without being explicit. This explicit transition partners nicely with its existing Learner Profile and its student-centered competences. These recommendations also help to operationalize its newer Three Year DEI Plan as one of many initiatives to make Saline a more inclusive and equitable district. The responsibility for these recommendations rests with the leadership at the intersection of their expectations and support.

CONCLUSION

In an exploration of what moves secondary social studies teachers toward becoming more culturally responsive and what are barriers to it, an assessment of their current practices, belief systems, comfort, competence, and needs has produced actionable recommendations for SAS leadership. Through both open ended and Likert survey questions, interviews, focus groups and classroom observations this project finds that extremely comfortable and competent culturally responsive teachers need to believe in the core tenets of culturally responsive instruction. They need access to usable professional development including time to collaborate with colleagues.

They also need certain support of their leaders both in instruction and with parents and members of the community. Social studies teachers who are on this journey need realistic, observable models to build their own practice. And primary to all of these, teachers need an articulated vision.

SAS landed on aspiring to become more culturally responsive after a series of highly publicized painful and embarrassing racial incidents revealed a deficit in what is otherwise a highly regarded learning community. Culturally responsive instruction serves as one of many initiatives and having a better understanding of what teachers need proves critical to achieving SAS' overall DEI goals.
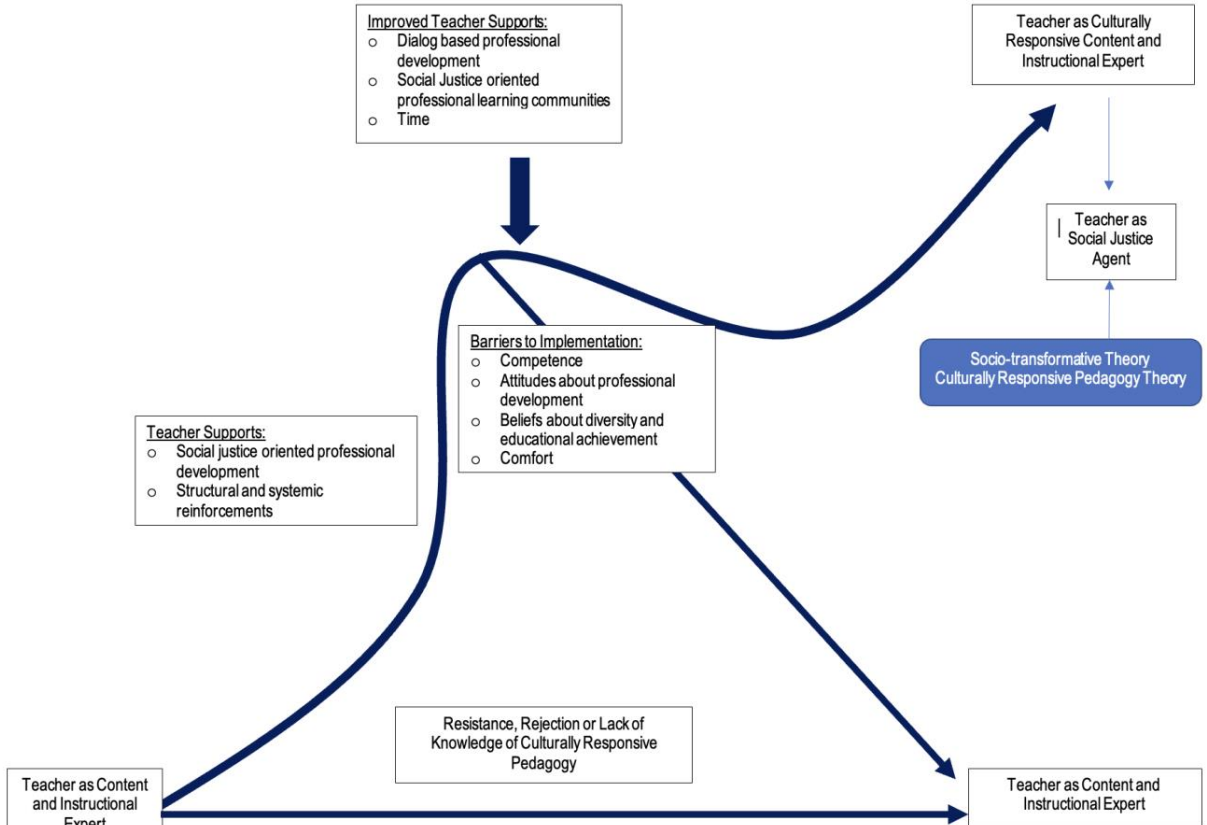
LIMITATIONS

This project focused only on social studies teachers at the secondary level and may not address the needs of teachers in elementary schools or beyond the humanities. This project does not address the impact of Covid-19 on teachers' professional capacities to implement professional development and meet the needs of all students nor does it address the nuances of hybrid or virtual learning SAS engaged in for one year at the beginning of this project. This project has not deeply examined the impact of an all-White and predominantly male secondary social studies department on the implementation of culturally responsive instruction for students who are predominantly female and 13% of them are not White. There is research on the impact of homogeneity or disproportionality between teacher and student population which has not been considered for this project.

POSITIONALITY

As the author of this project, I am an African American, female social studies teacher of 20 years in other school districts. I am the parent of a current middle school student and recent graduate of SAS. Both of my children have been harmed by racism in this system while also having found both peer and adult allies. I have participated in volunteer efforts to improve the climate in SAS around equity and inclusion as a parent volunteer. As a parent volunteer I have worked with the superintendent, principals and offered presentations to the school board on racism in education. After the conclusion of data collection for this project, I continued to work toward this project's recommendations as a part time consultant in SAS as the leadership of SAS wanted to begin implementing these recommendations immediately. I expect SAS will continue to act rigorously on this project's findings and recommendations by adding a full time position to its TLT who specializes in DEI in education and culturally responsive instruction.

APPENDIX A: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK MAP

Improved Teacher Supports:
- Dialog based professional development
- Social Justice oriented professional learning communities
- Time

Teacher as Culturally Responsive Content and Instructional Expert

Teacher as Social Justice Agent

Socio-transformative Theory Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Theory

Barriers to Implementation:
- Competence
- Attitudes about professional development
- Beliefs about diversity and educational achievement
- Comfort

Teacher Supports:
- Social justice oriented professional development
- Structural and systemic reinforcements

Resistance, Rejection or Lack of Knowledge of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Teacher as Content and Instructional Expert

Teacher as Content and Instructional Expert

Conceptual Framework   Channon N. Washington   March 15, 2022

APPENDIX B: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS
Supporting Teachers In Implementing
Culturally Responsive Instruction

This survey is for the collection of data by Channon N. Washington in an effort to collect data for her Capstone Project: Supporting Teachers In Implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. This survey is strictly for the purposes of this project and will not be used for any evaluative purpose in any capacity. You will not be identified as your input will be anonymous. This data will be used in order to support school leadership in their efforts to better support you in becoming more culturally responsive in your practice. Please contact Channon if you have questions call, text or email me at 313-790-5539 or channon.n.washington@vanderbilt.edu.

Research Question: What professional development and/or systemic supports are currently in place for teachers related to culturally responsive pedagogy?

Professional Development

Read each prompt. Place an X to best indicate the frequency.

Question Prompt	Not at All	Once a Year	Twice a Year	More than Twice a Year	Other: Explain
How often do you opt to participate in professional development that revolves around issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and/or social justice in a school year?					
How often do you engage in critical dialog with your colleague about issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and/or social justice?					
How often do you read about issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and/or social justice in a school year?					

Use the rating scale to respond to each prompt. Caution – each statement has a different scale.

Question/Prompt	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the usefulness of the professional development related to becoming a more culturally competent teacher? 1=Not Useful At All, 5= Extremely Useful					
How would you rate the overall support you have received from the school district in becoming a more culturally competent teacher? 1=Poor, 5 = Excellent					

Use this space to tell me anything you would like for me to know about the district offered professional development on culturally responsive teaching. (Optional)

Research Question: How are teachers' beliefs, feelings of competence and comfort level related to the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy?

Teacher Comfort and Perceived Competence

Instructions: Please select the response that best fits your position, belief, perspective or experience.

Question/Prompt	Extremely Uncomfortable	Not Comfortable	Comfortable	Very Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
How would you rate your overall comfort with understanding the individual cultures of all of your students?					
How would you rate your overall comfort with transitioning from traditional teaching methods to more culturally responsive teaching methods?					

Use the rating scale to respond to the prompt.

Question/Prompt	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate your level of competence as a culturally responsive teacher? 1=Not Competent, 5 = Highly Competent					

Use this space to tell me anything you would like for me to know about your level of competence in culturally responsive teaching. (Optional)

Teacher Beliefs and Actions

Instructions: Please select the response that best fits your position, belief, perspective, experience or intentional action.

Question/Prompt	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Institutional racism exists in the United States of America.					
Institutional racism exists in public schools.					
A students' culture and heritage are significant factors in their academic achievement.					
Culturally responsive teaching methods benefit all students.					
Classroom instruction should affirm a positive self-identity in learners.					
Classroom instruction should affirm racial/ethnic identities in learners.					
Classroom instruction should encourage students to challenge the existing social order in society.					
Classroom instruction should promote cultural competence in students.					

Use this space to tell me anything you would like for me to know about your beliefs about culturally responsive teaching. (Optional)

Research Question: What additional professional development and/or systemic supports are needed for teachers in their efforts to fully implement culturally responsive pedagogy?

Barriers and Precipitators

Which of the following have been challenges or prevented you from becoming a more culturally responsive teacher? Check all that apply.	
	Quality/usefulness of professional development to my daily practice
	My personal beliefs about it
	My professional beliefs about it
	Curriculum requirements
	Lack of student interest
	Lack of support from my colleagues
	Lack of support from my school leadership
	Lack of district level support
	Lack of parental support
	Professional preparation time
	Other (Please indicate:)

Which of the following have supported or encouraged you toward becoming a more culturally responsive teacher? Check all that apply.	
	Quality/usefulness of professional development to my daily practice
	My personal beliefs about it
	My professional beliefs about it
	Curriculum requirements
	Student interest
	Support from my colleagues
	Support from my school leadership
	District level support
	Parental support
	Professional preparation time

Please use this section to share with my anything you would like for me to know about you and culturally responsive teaching. (Optional)

Interview	Yes	No
Would you be interested in sitting for a 20-30 minute interview with me for this research project? Interviews will begin in June and run through September. I would love to learn more from you. If so, please select YES below. Because this survey is anonymous, I will not collect your identity here. I will send a follow up email to the group to schedule interviews. This item will allow me to estimate participation.		

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Administrator Focus Group Questions
1. Give me a progress or status report on the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy in teacher classrooms.
2. Overall, how would you characterize teacher's embrace of this transition from traditional instruction to culturally responsive pedagogy?
3. Tell me about the criteria for choosing professional development for teachers on culturally relevant pedagogy.
4. Where have you seen growth or efforts in teachers' work toward becoming more culturally responsive?
5. How would you summarize the challenges you've faced in supporting teachers as they transition from traditional teaching to becoming more culturally responsive?
6. What do you think inhibits teachers in this work?
7. What do you think encourages teachers in this work?
8. Tell me about the district's messaging to teachers about becoming culturally responsive teachers.
9. What are the immediate actions district leadership can take to support teachers in becoming more culturally responsive in their teaching

Teacher Interview Questions
1. Tell me how you have approached implementing culturally responsive teaching in your practice. Examples.
2. Summarize your beliefs about the relationship between learning and culturally diversity.
3. How would you define the term culturally responsive teaching?
4. What intentional shifts have you made toward disrupting traditional teaching methods in favor of implementing culturally responsive teaching methods?
5. How would you evaluate the support available to you in this district around becoming more culturally responsive in your teaching?
6. What do you perceive as the primary reasons why you DO practice culturally responsive teaching methods?
7. What do you perceive as the primary reasons why you DO NOT practice culturally responsive teaching methods?
8. If you could ask for support in implementing CRP, what specifically would you as for from the district?

APPENDIX D: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDE

Capstone Project Classroom Observation Guide:

How can school district leadership support teachers in their transition from traditional to more culturally responsive pedagogy?

General Observation Information:	
Today's Date:	*Course:*
Grade Level(s:)	*# of Students:*
General Description of Classroom Environment:	
Specific Description of the Physical Environment:	
Specific Description of the Social Environment:	

General Evaluation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: as adapted from: Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.	
VALIDATING: the class promotes a positive self-concept and pride in ethnic identity	**COMPREHENSIVE AND INCLUSIVE**: the class embraces the whole child
MULTI-DIMENSIONAL: the class is not limited to the curriculum but also includes emotion, beliefs, values and climate management	**EMPOWERING**: the class promotes high personal confidence, skills, high expectations and a will to act
TRANSFORMATIVE: the class decries learned helplessness	**EMANCIPATORY**: allows reconstruction of narratives and uses ethnic identity to generate pride
HUMANISTIC: benefits all students but differently	**OTHER OBSERVATIONS:**

Guide Purpose: The purpose of this guide is to collect field notes from observing 7th-12th grade social studies classrooms in an effort to observe the basic principles and practice of culturally responsive pedagogy and support teachers in furthering their transition from traditional teaching toward more culturally responsive teaching.

OBSERVER: Channon N. Washington

REFERENCES

Diarrassouba, N., & Johnson, S. (2014). Responding to demographic change: what do suburban district leaders need to know? *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 9* (1). https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1024107.

Explore saline area schools. Niche. (2020). https://www.niche.com/k12/d/saline-area-schools-mi/.

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.

Grinage, Justin (2020). Singing and dancing for diversity: Neoliberal multiculturalism and white epistemological ignorance in teacher professional development, *Curriculum Inquiry*, *50(1)*, 7-27. DOI: 10.1080/03626784.2020.1754114

Guskey, T. R. (2003). What Makes Professional Development Effective? *Phi Delta Kappan*, *84*(10), 748–750. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170308401007

Hester, N., Slagter, M. (2020). 'Why didn't you stay in Mexico?' School diversity and inclusion meeting turns volatile. MLive. https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2020/02/why-didnt-you-stay-in-mexico-school-diversity-and-inclusion-meeting-turns-volatile.html.

Hyland, N. E. (2009). One white teacher's struggle for culturally relevant pedagogy: The problem of the community. *The New Educator*, *5*(2), 95-112.

K12 Insight. (2019, April). K12 Insight School Climate and Culture Survey Focus Group.

Kohli, R., Picower, B., Martinez, A. N., & Ortiz, N. (2015). Critical professional development: Centering the social justice needs of teachers. *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, *6*(2).

Martell, C. C. (2013). Race and histories: Examining culturally relevant teaching in the US history classroom. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *41*(1), 65-88.

Mette, I. M., Nieuwenhuizen, L., & Hvidston, D. J. (2016). Teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy and the impact on leadership preparation: Lessons for future reform efforts. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1103652.

Muhammad, G., & Love, B. L. (2020). Cultivating genius: an equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy. Scholastic.

Rodriguez, A. J. (2005). Using sociotransformative constructivism to respond to teachers' resistance to ideological and pedagogical change. *Preparing mathematics and science teachers for diverse classrooms: Promising strategies for transformative pedagogy*, 17-32.

SAS. MiSchoolData. (2020). https://www.mischooldata.org/district-entity-view-page/?LocationCode=81120.

SAS. SAS DEI Action Plan 2020-2023 (2020). Saline, MI.

SAS Board Philosophy. BoardDocs® policy: PO2110 statement of philosophy. Retrieved February 12, 2022, from

http://go.boarddocs.com/mi/sali/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=B7JLKQ54C1D9

SAS Compass Learner Profile. Saline Area Schools. (2017). https://www.salineschools.org/sas-vision/sas-compass/.

Shim, J. M. (2018). Working through resistance to resistance in anti-racist teacher education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *52*(2), 262–283. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12284

Social Justice for Schools & Universities. Justice Leaders Collaborative. (n.d.). Retrieved

February 12, 2022, from https://www.justiceleaderscollaborative.com/for-educators-and-

schools

State of Michigan. (2022). *Educator services educator certification guidance*. MDE -

Certification Guidance. Retrieved February 12, 2022, from

https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-5683_14795_83462---,00.html

Tibbitts, F. L., & Weldon, G. (2016). History curriculum and teacher training: shaping a

democratic future in post-apartheid South Africa?. *Comparative Education v53* (3) 442-

461. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1153055.

van Middelkoop, D., Ballafkin, H., & Meerman, M. (2017). *Understanding diversity: a Dutch

case study on teachers.* https://ervet-journal.springeropen.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s40461-

016-0045-9.pdf.

Wills, J. S. (1996). *Who needs multicultural education? White students, U.S. history, and the

construction of a usable past.* https://www.jstor.org/stable/3195812.