Training and Preparedness of Teachers to be Evaluated on Culturally Responsive Practices in One Public School Division in Virginia

Kristen Marbury

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

In

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Carol S. Cash, Chair
Jodie L. Brinkmann
Michael C. Jarvis
Susan E. Johnstad

February 8, 2024
Richmond, Virginia

Keywords: culturally responsive practices, culturally relevant teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, teacher evaluation, cultural competency, teacher training
Training and Preparedness of Teachers to be Evaluated on Culturally Responsive Practices in One Public School Division in Virginia

Kristen Marbury

ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine if teachers in one public school in Virginia were prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices (CRP) after completing Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) Cultural Competency Training Module. This qualitative study sample included eight teachers from a suburban school division. The conceptual framework illustrated the connections between the evaluation of CRP and teacher preparedness after teachers completed VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module.

The research questions that directed this study were: (1) How has Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module prepared teachers to implement culturally responsive practices? (2) To what extent do teachers feel prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices after completing Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module? The research method included a basic qualitative research design that used interview protocol.

Interview prompts were created based on Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains that underpin legislation approved by the 2021 Virginia General Assembly requiring that teacher evaluations include a standard for CRP. Interviews took place during the summer months of 2023 as virtual meetings using the Zoom video conferencing platform. Interview transcriptions were utilized as the data set. As categories and themes emerged, the interconnectedness of data was examined using open coding.
The findings of this study revealed that teachers indicated a support for Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains. However, teachers perceived that VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module did not achieve the desired focus of providing educators with the tools needed to implement CRP. Instead, teachers perceived that their lived experiences framed their individual approach to understand and implement CRP. The implications of the study encouraged VDOE to consider a redesign of the Cultural Competency Training Module. Another implication emphasized the need for school divisions to consider investing in professional trainers to provide deep level culturally competency training in a format that also accounts for the emotional security and comfortability of teachers.
Training and Preparedness of Teachers to be Evaluated on Culturally Responsive Practices in One Public School Division in Virginia

Kristen Marbury

GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine if teachers in one public school in Virginia were prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices (CRP) after completing Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) Cultural Competency Training Module. This study included eight teachers from a suburban school division. The conceptual framework illustrated the connections between the evaluation of CRP and teacher preparedness after teachers completed VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module.

The research questions that directed this study were: (1) How has Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module prepared teachers to implement culturally responsive practices? (2) To what extent do teachers feel prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices after completing Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module? The research method included teacher interviews.

Interview prompts were created based on Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains that reinforced legislation approved by the 2021 Virginia General Assembly requiring that teacher evaluations include a standard for CRP. Interviews took place during the summer months of 2023 as virtual meetings using the Zoom video conferencing platform. Interview transcriptions were utilized as the data for the study. As categories and themes emerged from interview responses, the connection of data was examined.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers indicated a support for Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains. However, teachers perceived that VDOE’s Cultural Competency
Training did not achieve the desired focus of providing educators with the tools needed to implement CRP. Instead, teachers perceived that their lived experiences framed their individual approach to understand and implement CRP. An implication of the study encouraged VDOE to consider a redesign of the Cultural Competency Training Module. Another implication emphasized the need for school divisions to consider investing in professional trainers to provide deep level culturally competency training in a format that also accounts for the emotional security and comfortability of teachers.
Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents and sister, the foundation of my character.

To Patricia Marbury, your love for your family knows no bounds. As my mom, you have sacrificed to ensure that your daughters receive an education that your parents could only dream of. Mommy, you’ve done it. We’ve made it. Thank you for modeling the resilience and charm necessary to be a successful black woman in America.

To Murphy Marbury, my drive, and discipline was learned at a young age from watching and observing you. As my dad, you taught me how to live to serve others. I am not sure what is next, but I have unwavering confidence that it will be in accordance with God’s plan. Thank you for teaching me that anything is possible through prayer and faith. I hope that I have made you proud.

To Kelly Marbury, I have and will always look up to you. Throughout this process I have sought refuge in the safety of your presence. Your love and support have sustained me through the darkest days and commemorated the greatest moments. Thank you for always answering the phone with compassion in your voice and love in your heart. The best is yet to come!

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents, Claude, Ruth, and Mary Lou. This dissertation is also dedicated to my extended family members Theodis, Angela, Tiffany, Mai Li, Jarvis, H.T., Cynthia, Valerie, Ronald and Sherlene who have emphasized the limitless possibilities of education. Thank you to “McCarther Proud” for overcoming poverty and paving a pathway for future generations to break glass ceilings.

This dissertation is dedicated to those in public education considering a doctoral program but, unsure of their academic skills. Let this serve as a reminder that it is never too late to learn new skills. That is the crux of education. If you are waiting for a sign to start a program, this is it.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I thank God for setting me on this path and keeping me in His grace throughout this journey. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my professor and chairperson, Dr. Carol S. Cash. I am grateful for your timely feedback and words of encouragement. I would also like to acknowledge and express appreciation to Dr. Ted Price, who served as my dissertation chair for two years. I extend sincere thanks to Dr. Jodie L. Brinkmann for providing valuable feedback and to Dr. Michael C. Jarvis and Dr. Susan E. Johnstad for agreeing to serve on my dissertation committee.

Also, to Dr. Tinkhani White, you are a wonderful leader and statistics wizard. Thank you Dr. Tinkhani White for being generous with your time and providing study sessions to our cohort. Your Zoom sessions provided a safe space for learning and community. I would like to also thank my incredible cohort at Virginia Tech. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn alongside you.

Last, but not least at all, I would like to express appreciation to the school and division administrators I worked alongside while completing this doctorate, Mrs. Pam Kalso, Mrs. Ann Gwynn, Dr. Matt Sielloff, Ms. Kip Tuttle, and Ms. Nicole Sarich. You each provided positive words of affirmation and support that meant the world to me.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................. ii
General Audience Abstract ................................................................................. iv
Dedication ................................................................................................................ vi
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................. vii

Chapter One Introduction ....................................................................................... 1
  Background ........................................................................................................... 1
  Statement of the Problem .................................................................................... 4
    *Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module* .......... 4
  Purpose of the Study ......................................................................................... 5
  Research Questions ......................................................................................... 5
  Overview of the Study .................................................................................... 5
  Conceptual Framework ..................................................................................... 6
  Definition of Terms ........................................................................................... 7
  Limitations .......................................................................................................... 8
  Delimitations ....................................................................................................... 9
  Organization of the Study ................................................................................. 9

Chapter Two Literature Review ............................................................................ 11
  Search Process .................................................................................................. 12
    *Historical Review of Education Legislation Supporting Students of Color* .......... 13
    *Bilingual Education Act of 1968* ................................................................. 13
    *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* ............................................................. 14
    *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* .......................................................... 15
    *Virginia State Legislation* ........................................................................... 16
    Student-Teacher Demographic Mismatch ....................................................... 17
    *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy* ................................................................. 18
    *Culturally Responsive Training in Teacher Preparation Programs* .............. 21
    *A Framework for Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices* ............... 22
    *Creating a Sense of Belonging* ................................................................. 23
    *Self-Reflective Practices* ............................................................................. 25
    *Ongoing Professional Training* ................................................................. 25
    *Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains* ............................................... 27
  Summary .......................................................................................................... 31

Chapter Three Methodology ............................................................................... 33
  Purpose of the Study ....................................................................................... 33
  Research Design .............................................................................................. 34
  Research Questions .......................................................................................... 34
  Data Collection ................................................................................................. 35
Research Sites .............................................................................................................. 35
Cultural Competency Training Module ........................................................................... 36
Populations ..................................................................................................................... 36
IRB Approval ................................................................................................................. 37
Interview Prompts .......................................................................................................... 38
Instrument Validity and Reliability ................................................................................ 40
Data Treatment and Management ................................................................................ 41
Data Analysis ................................................................................................................ 42
Summary ....................................................................................................................... 43

Chapter Four Data Analysis ......................................................................................... 44
Research Questions ....................................................................................................... 44
Analysis of Data ............................................................................................................. 45
Research Question 1 (RQ1) .......................................................................................... 46
Analysis of Data for RQ1 .............................................................................................. 47
  Interview Prompt 1 ....................................................................................................... 47
  Interview Prompt 2 ....................................................................................................... 49
  Interview Prompt 3 ....................................................................................................... 53
RQ1 Major Themes ......................................................................................................... 56
Research Question 2 (RQ2) .......................................................................................... 57
Analysis of Data for RQ2 .............................................................................................. 57
  Interview Prompt 4 ....................................................................................................... 57
  Interview Prompt 5 ....................................................................................................... 60
  Interview Prompt 6 ....................................................................................................... 63
RQ2 Major Themes ......................................................................................................... 66
Summary ....................................................................................................................... 67

Chapter Five Findings, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Studies .......... 68
Summary of Findings ...................................................................................................... 68
Research Question 1 Findings ...................................................................................... 69
  Finding 1 ...................................................................................................................... 69
  Finding 2 ...................................................................................................................... 70
  Finding 3 ...................................................................................................................... 72
Research Question 2 Findings ...................................................................................... 75
  Finding 4 ...................................................................................................................... 75
  Finding 5 ...................................................................................................................... 77
Implications of Practice ................................................................................................. 78
  Implication 1 ............................................................................................................... 78
  Implication 2 ............................................................................................................... 78
  Implication 3 ............................................................................................................... 79
  Implication 4 ............................................................................................................... 80
  Implication 5 ............................................................................................................... 80
Recommendations for Future Studies ........................................................................... 81
Summary........................................................................................................................................... 82
Personal Reflections................................................................................................................................83
References........................................................................................................................................... 84
Appendix A Interview Protocol and Prompts.................................................................................... 93
Appendix B Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Request Letter ................................. 95
Appendix C Principal Letter Explaining Study................................................................................... 96
Appendix D Invitation Email to Prospective Participants................................................................. 97
Appendix E Information Sheet for Participation in a Research Study ............................................. 98
Appendix F CITI Program Social & Behavioral Course Certification............................................ 100
List of Figures

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework: The Relationship Between CRP in Virginia’s Teacher Performance Evaluation System and Teacher Preparedness ......................................................... 7
List of Tables

Table 1 Virginia's Cultural Competency Domains ................................................................. 27
Table 2 Culturally Competent Self-Reflection ................................................................. 29
Table 3 Culturally Competent Pedagogy and Practice ...................................................... 29
Table 4 Culturally Competent Learning Environments ....................................................... 30
Table 5 Culturally Competent Community Engagement ...................................................... 31
Table 6 Interview Prompts and Research Questions Matrix .............................................. 39
Table 7 Participant Years of Experience ........................................................................... 46
Table 8 Participant Response to VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training .......................... 47
Table 9 Participant Responses to Defining CRP .............................................................. 50
Table 10 Participant Reflection of Lived Experiences Comparative to their Students ........... 54
Table 11 Participant Explanation of Creating Culturally Affirming Learning Environments ... 58
Table 12 Teacher Preparation for CRP Evaluation Process ................................................. 61
Table 13 Participant Questions Regarding CRP .............................................................. 63
Chapter One
Introduction

Background

In January 2021, the Virginia General Assembly passed House Bill 1904 (2021) and Senate Bill 1196 (2021) requiring that teachers, principals, and division superintendent evaluation systems include an additional cultural competency standard by the start of the 2022-2023 school year. These bills required action to evaluate the cultural competencies of Virginia educators and addressed social justice issues prevalent in the United States public education system (House Bill 1904, 2021; Senate Bill 1196, 2021). Research suggested that teachers can learn to understand cultural differences through training sessions addressing racial biases (Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Hanover Research, 2017; Khalifa, 2011). “Since we are all socialized by societal stereotypes, we all to some degree have implicit racial biases that can negatively affect how we perceive and interact with young people of color” (Diem & Welton, 2021, p. 131). Training sessions aimed to get educators to recognize oppressive aspects of our current education system so they could actively participate in creating a more just experience for all students (Chen & Cheng, 2014; Gutstein et al., 1997; Huang et al., 2012; Khalifa, 2011). The challenge was in designing a training model that was well balanced and effective (Khalifa et al., 2016; Shedrow, 2017).

Most public-school teachers in the United States are White, middle-class females who have limited cultural understanding of their growing number of minority students (Choi, 2013; Goldring et al., 2013; Pentón, 2019). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2018) provided statistical data on current cultural data from a national lens, reporting a 12% decrease in White student enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools. Also reported was the
relatively stagnate race/ethnic percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary teachers in public school settings, with the majority being White females since teacher data began to be collected in 2003 (NCES, 2018, p. 10). Research supports that the demographic mismatch between teacher ethnicity percentages and student ethnicity percentages put minority students at an academic disadvantage (Amthor & Roxas, 2016; Choi, 2013; Huang et al., 2012). Delano-Oriaran and Meidl (2013) addressed the demographic mismatch between teachers and students in a study and expressed a sense of urgency to implement culturally responsive practices (CRP). Students tend to produce better in school settings where they have a sense of cultural belonging (Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Larson et al., 2018; Merchant et al., 2012).

The 2021 Virginia General Assembly authorized a new evaluation standard addressing cultural competency. Virginia House Bill 1904 and Senate Bill 1196 were both passed in winter 2021:

The bill requires every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license from the Board of Education (i) to complete instruction or training in cultural competency and (ii) with an endorsement in history and social sciences to complete instruction in African-American history, as prescribed by the Board. The bill also requires each school board to adopt and implement policies that require each teacher and any other school board employee holding a license issued by the Board to complete cultural competency training, in accordance with guidance issued by the Board, at least every two years. (para 1)

In March 2021, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) announced the addition of CRP to teacher evaluation standards. VDOE Superintendent’s Memo #083-21 (2021) explained
that this addition to the teacher evaluation standards “reflects the Board’s commitment in its comprehensive plan to support the recruitment, development, and retention of well-prepared and skilled teachers and supporting equity and culturally responsive classrooms for all students” (p. 1). VDOE further described the plan to offer more information regarding how academic institutions and school divisions are to enact the new legislation (VDOE, 2021). This additional guidance was produced as Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools in November 2021.

VDOE’s culturally responsive performance standard went into effect at the start of the 2022-2023 school year. The added teacher performance category highlighted cultural responsiveness as a research-based strategy that advanced academic progress for minority students in particular (EdEquity VA, 2022). This standard added to the Virginia Teacher Performance Evaluation System (TPES) is supported by research that advocated for CRP (Choi, 2013; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Gay, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Viloria, 2019; Warren, 2018).

While CRP was commonly recommended to bridge the cultural mismatch between teachers and students in American schools, the difficulty was that CRP was not regularly understood in practice by teachers (Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013; Khalifa et al., 2016; Warren, 2018). Warren (2018) explained that many teachers agree with the goals of CRP, however, are unsure of how to draw direct connections to make changes to their classroom instructional practices. When the topic of cultural differences was introduced in trainings, teachers frequently reported having an immediate negative response to the content and feeling unprepared to implement strategies discussed (Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013; Khalifa, 2018; Shedrow, 2017).
Statement of the Problem

With TPES criteria now reliant on cultural competency training, there is little research evidence that suggests teachers will gain the necessary understanding and preparation to carry out new responsibilities. Despite completing the Cultural Competency Training Module designed by VDOE, teachers do not commonly understand how to implement CRP and were not prepared for this standard to be added to the TPES. If this problem is not addressed, it is likely that teachers will develop an adverse perspective towards CRP practices.

Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module

VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module was designed to meet the 2021 Virginia General Assembly requirement of House Bill 1904 and Senate Bill 1196 for educators seeking initial licensure or renewal from the Virginia Board of Education. Similar to trainings researched by Gay and Kirkland (2003) and Shedrow (2017), the cultural competency training released by VDOE aimed to foster self-reflection and critical consciousness. Two learning outcomes were specified for the Cultural Competency Training Module. First, educators were to “receive an overview of the domains and micro-competencies found in the Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools” (VDOE, 2022). Second, educators were to “identify strategies that contribute to the achievement of all students” (VDOE, 2022).

The forty-minute Cultural Competency Training Module reviewed strategies and recommendations for implementation to support each of the four domains. The training was designed to be completed in one session. One check for understanding question was asked after each domain was reviewed however, participant responses were not recorded. Moreover, no assessment was given at the completion of the module.
Purpose of the Study

As student demographics continued to shift to increased populations of students of color in American public schools, CRP was the common teaching practice that met the needs of a more diverse student population (Khalifa et al., 2016; NCES, 2018). Research investigating CRP in practice was easily accessible (Bergantz, 2021; Choi, 2013; Gay, 2010; Khalifa et al., 2016; Sandilos et al., 2017; Warren, 2018). However, very little research existed investigating the evaluation of CRP from the teacher perspective. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which teachers were prepared to be evaluated based on CRP after completing VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module.

Research Questions

1. How has Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module prepared teachers to implement culturally responsive practices?
2. To what extent do teachers feel prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices after completing Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module?

Overview of the Study

The study was a basic qualitative research design utilizing a researcher-designed survey for data collection to investigate the extent to which teachers were prepared to be evaluated based on CRP after completing VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module. The study contributed to CRP research from the unique lens of Virginia’s Teacher Performance Evaluation System and Virginia state legislation. Interview prompts were created based on Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains that underpin legislation approved by the 2021 Virginia General Assembly requiring that teacher evaluations include CRP. Interviews took place during the
summer months of 2023 as virtual meetings using the Zoom video conferencing platform. Each interview audio file was uploaded, transcribed, coded and saved to the researcher’s password protected computer in a Google Folder within Virginia Tech’s Google Domain. As categories and themes emerged during data analysis, the interconnectedness of data was examined. A conceptual framework was utilized to illustrate the interconnectedness of CRP within Virginia’s Teacher Performance Evaluation System and what is needed from cultural competency training to achieve teacher preparedness.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework illustrated the connections between the evaluation of CRP and teacher preparedness after they had completed VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module. The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 indicated that demographic mismatches between teachers and students led to CRP research (Bergantz, 2021; Choi, 2013; Gay, 2010; Khalifa et al., 2016; Sandilos et al., 2017; Warren, 2018). This research informed the addition of CRP as a standard in Virginia’s Teacher Performance Evaluation System.
Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: The Relationship Between CRP in Virginia’s Teacher Performance Evaluation System and Teacher Preparedness

VDOE produced Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools in November 2021 to provide support and clarity to local school boards as they took the necessary steps to implement CRP.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were included throughout this study. These definitions will be the common understanding for when these terms were mentioned with regards to this study.

Cultural Competency. “The capacity of educators to understand their own cultural identity, understand the different dimensions of diversity, and use those dimensions of diversity to foster academic achievement, growth, and empowerment for all students” (VDOE, 2021, p. 3).
**Culturally Responsive Practices.** “The behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning. An approach that emphasizes using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2010, p. 31).

**Culturally Relevant Teaching Practices.** “Expect and yield academic success, help students develop positive ethnic and cultural identities while simultaneously helping them achieve academically, and support students’ ability to recognize, understand, and critique current and past social inequalities” (VDOE, 2021, para. 7).

**Surface Level Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices.** Teaching practices that are based on cultural aspects that can be observed. Examples include food, music, holidays, and dress. (Hammond, 2015).

**Deep Level Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices.** Teaching practices that are based on the collective unconscious, the beliefs and norms that provide the foundation for culture. Examples include concepts of fairness, concepts of self, and spirituality. (Hammond, 2015).

**Limitations**

There were several limitations that influence this study. According to Roberts and Hyatt (2018), “limitations are particular features of your study that you know may affect the results of your ability to generalize the findings. Limitations can involve areas over which you have little or no control” (p. 154). One constraint was the limited scope of the study. Participants represented a small sampling of teachers in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

A unique limitation of this study involved media attention surrounding the research topic. When culturally responsive teaching practices were introduced by Ladson-Billings (1994), the
acronym CRT was utilized to shorten the four-word term. In the spring of 2020, Virginia communities noticed the appearance of this acronym referenced in local school board documents due to many stakeholders mistaking the acronym to represent critical race theory which shares the same three letter acronym. Media coverage of CRT led to unfavorable reactions and may have caused participants to be reluctant to participate in a study or provide candid responses because of the similar topic of CRP.

**Delimitations**

Some delimitations were presented in this study. Delimitations were explained by Roberts and Hyatt (2018) as being what, “clarifies the boundaries of your study. It is the way to indicate to the reader how you narrowed your study’s scope” (p.110). The sample of teacher participants in this proposed study was limited to one suburban school division in Virginia. Therefore, research findings and suggestions may not be easily transferable to other school settings.

Another delimitation of this study involved the targeted population. The study design included teachers who had completed at least one full school year as a licensed teacher as the participants, and education leaders, support staff, and other instructional staff members were excluded. This could limit the applicability of the study to other educator groups.

**Organization of the Study**

This paper consists of five chapters. Chapter One explains the background and purpose of the proposed study. Chapter One includes the research questions, conceptual framework, definition of terms, and limitations/delimitations that provide a foundation for the study. Chapter Two provides a detailed review of pertinent literature pertaining to the implementation and evaluation of CRP. Chapter Three presents the proposed methodology including the overall
research design, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. Chapter Four reviews the results of the study using the data and themes identified by the researcher during the analysis phase of the study. Chapter Five explains the findings of the study, discussed the implications for practice, and suggested future studies.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

The percentage of White children in public schools has decreased while the percentage of minority children, especially Hispanic children, has steadily increased (Khalifa et al., 2016; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). While student demographics have changed, the demographic of public-school employees working with students was relatively stagnant (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Most United States public-school educators were on record as identifying as middle-class White females (Choi, 2013; Goldring et al., 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). The cultural backgrounds of teachers was not reflective of the changing backgrounds of students (Pentón, 2019). The cultural mismatch of teachers’ and students’ beliefs, values, experiences, and perspectives contributed to academic disadvantages for minority students (Amthor, 2016; Choi, 2013; Huang et al., 2012).

In January 2021, Virginia House Bill 1904 and Virginia Senate Bill 1196 required that teachers, principals, and division superintendent evaluation systems include a component of cultural competency. Both Virginia House Bill 1904 (2021) and Virginia Senate Bill 1196 (2021) required “every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license from the Board of Education to complete instruction or training in cultural competency” (p.1). In March 2021, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) was one of the first to announce the addition of culturally responsive practices (CRP) to teacher evaluation standards. The VDOE Superintendent’s Memo #083-21 (2021) explained that this addition to the teacher evaluation standards “reflects the Board’s commitment in its comprehensive plan to support the recruitment, development, and retention of well-prepared and skilled teachers and supporting equity and culturally responsive classrooms for all students” (p.1).
In this literature review, the development of culturally responsive pedagogy by researchers in response to the limited cultural understandings of public educators will be examined. Recent legislation and policy changes now requiring assessment of CRP in Virginia’s Teacher Performance Evaluation System (TPES) requirements will be discussed. The review will also examine how institutions and school divisions plan to build the cultural competence of teachers and teacher candidates.

**Search Process**

The process for identifying and selecting literature to review was primarily conducted utilizing Google Scholar and the Virginia Tech EBSCO Host search database. Key terms and phrases searched during the process include *culturally responsive practices, culturally relevant teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and equity*. This provided a foundation for organization of the literature review. The search process was conducted between August 2020 and December 2023. Culturally responsive teaching was the initial search term in fall 2020 and yielded 20,000 results when entered in the EBSCO Host search database. In summer of 2022, a similar search term of culturally responsive practices produced well over 52,000 results when entered in EBSCO Host. As themes appeared within the literature, the search process became more specific, and sources were categorized.

Newly passed state legislation pertaining to CRP in Virginia caused the search process to evolve to review a CRP focus within teacher evaluation systems. Over 150 sources were closely examined from peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, books, and other scholarly writing. As themes developed in the research, a color-coded organizational system was utilized to track the frequency of subtopics appearing in literature. Search parameters were then adjusted to include
subtopics such as teacher evaluation, teacher training, cultural competence, critical consciousness, teacher preparation, and self-reflection.

**Historical Review of Education Legislation Supporting Students of Color**

Numerous studies indicated that student academic performance trends are directly related to the ethnic backgrounds of students (Blanchett, 2006; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Additionally, studies pointed to historically oppressive structures in education being the primary reason students of color have been academically disadvantaged (Choi, 2013; Dallavis, 2011; Dutro et al., 2008; Gay, 2010; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Khalifa et al., 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Warren, 2018). Legislation specific to addressing these structures first appeared in the 1960s and has since reappeared in every major federal education act following (Bilingual Education Act, 1968; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001; Schettino et al., 2019). A review of the major federal acts that pertained to education provides a foundation for the eventual development of CRP.

**Bilingual Education Act of 1968**

The federal government recognized and addressed the unique needs of minority students with the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 also known as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments (Bilingual Education Act, 1968). Congress cited different cultural backgrounds as the basis for justifying more financial support of English language learners in the opening statement of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968:

The Congress hereby finds that one of the most acute educational problems in the United States is that which involves millions of children of limited English-speaking ability because they come from environments where the dominant language is other than English; that additional efforts should be made to supplement present attempts to find
adequate and constructive solutions to this unique and perplexing educational situation; and that the urgent need is for comprehensive and cooperative action now on the local, State, and Federal levels to develop forward-looking approaches to meet the serious learning difficulties faced by this substantial segment of the Nation’s school-age population. (p. 816)

Stewner-Manzanares (1988) examined the federal government’s involvement for students of limited English proficiency in the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and found the following: Title VII was largely seen as a remedy for civil rights violations. However, it also began the process of formally recognizing that ethnic minorities could seek differentiated services for reasons other than segregation or racial discrimination. More significantly, it encouraged instruction in a language other than English as well as cultural awareness. (p. 1)

This legislation responded to the learning needs of students with limited English-speaking ability and expressed the need for further programming to support students with non-English backgrounds. The Bilingual Act of 1968 established a foundation for the federal government responding to the unique needs of a growing population of minority students. The involvement of the federal government in education continued with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

**No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 included the unique learning needs of students based on their cultural backgrounds in the Title III purpose statement that addressed immigrant students and then again in the Title V purpose statement that spoke to Alaskan and Hawaiian cultures. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) highlighted a congressionally mandated study that found immigrant students “receive lower grades, are judged by their teachers to have lower
academic abilities, and score below their classmates on standardized tests of Reading and Math” (p. 91). The proposed solutions included in the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) to address the findings of the study were a focus on curriculum, increased flexibility in instructional methodology, increased accountability for student performance on annual performance assessments, and the empowerment of parents through targeted communication.

In the Title V purpose statement of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), a description of an innovative federal program was explained. The program was designed for students to increase their cultural knowledge of others.

This program develops culturally based educational activities, internships, apprenticeship programs, and exchanges to assist Alaska Natives, native Hawaiians, and children and families of Massachusetts linked by history and tradition to Alaska and Hawaii, to learn about shared culture and traditions. (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001, p. 137)

Once introduced, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) continued with explaining intended program outcomes to “encourage intergenerational cultural exchanges among the target populations to increase their awareness of the diverse cultures, as well as sharing collections among cultural institutions” (p. 137). These same recommendations later appeared in research studies by Shedrow (2017) and Warren (2018) who suggested that teacher preparation programs include similar experiences for teachers to better relate to minority students following the federal release of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015.

*Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015*

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 replaced the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and expanded aspects of cultural responsiveness to include grant funding for curriculum changes and training opportunities in addition to proposing culturally responsive programing.
Included in ESSA (2015) were qualifications for grant funding that included “activities that promote the incorporation of culturally responsive teaching and learning strategies into the educational program of the local educational agency” (p. 251). These grants provided funding for programs that support local efforts to close achievement gaps, as required by ESSA. Culturally responsive trainings and curriculum were mentioned in ESSA as research-based strategies to close the disparities in academic performance between student groups.

ESSA (2015) also addressed how to develop the cultural competency of educators to be able to lead such activities. ESSA (2015) accomplished this by identifying the following areas where it was suggested that school systems direct their focus, “teacher mentoring programs, professional guidance, and instructional support provided by educators, local traditional leaders, or cultural experts, as appropriate for teachers during their first 3 years of employment as teachers” (p. 255). The new emphasis on training opportunities for educators resulted in new state legislations requiring a pedagogical shift in teacher evaluation structures to include cultural responsiveness as a component of teacher evaluation.

**Virginia State Legislation**

During winter 2021 Virginia General Assembly House Bill 1904 and Senate Bill 1196 were both passed. These bills addressed new requirements to the current evaluation standards of teachers, principals, and superintendents. House Bill 1904 and Senate Bill 1196 stated that an evaluation of cultural competency must take place on a regular basis. Additionally, House Bill 1904 (2021) addressed the training of staff members by stating that, “each teacher and any other school board employee holding a license issued by the Board is required to complete cultural competency training, in accordance with guidance issued by the Board, at least every two years” (p. 1). Changes to evaluation criteria were a result of politicians becoming more supportive of
CRP in education under the combined guidance of former Virginia Superintendent of Public
Instruction, James Lane and Former Governor of Virginia, Ralph Northam.

The former Virginia Board of Education President Dan Gecker addressed these practices
by commenting, “cultural competency and equitable practices are essential for teachers to
achieve success in the commonwealth’s increasingly diverse schools” (Lane, 2021, p. 1). The
former Virginia Secretary of Education, Atif Qarni, also demonstrated his support of the new
bills by stating, “I applaud the Board of Education’s expedient action to implement SB 1196 and
HB 1904” (Lane, 2021, p.1). With the new evaluation measures identified in 2021 by the
Virginia General Assembly in place with both federal and local support, many school systems
began trying to understand how CRP could be implemented. Studies suggested that this could be
achieved by first identifying where cultural divides exist (Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013). The
National Center for Education Statistics provided more specific data on the current demographic
mismatches between students and teachers.

Student-Teacher Demographic Mismatch

The National Center for Education Statistics (2018) provided statistical data on current
cultural divides from a national lens. The National Center for Education Statistics (2018)
reported that, “between Fall 2000 and Fall 2015, the percentage of students enrolled in public
elementary and secondary schools who were White decreased from 61% to 49%” (p. 52). The
National Center for Education Statistics (2018) also reported the relatively stagnant race/ethnic
percentage distribution of teachers in public school settings. “The majority of public elementary
and secondary school teachers were White in both 2003-04 (the first year for which teacher data
for all racial/ethnic groups were available) and 2015-16” (National Center for Education
Statistics, 2018, p. 10). Research supported, that demographic mismatches between teachers and
students are disproportionately having a negative impact on the education of minority students (Amthor, 2016; Choi, 2013; Huang et al., 2012).

Delano-Oriaran and Meidl (2013) addressed the demographic mismatch between teachers and students in their study and expressed a sense of urgency. “As a greater number of White teachers enter culturally and linguistically diverse student classrooms, the need for increased training, professional development, and enhanced teacher ability to plan, develop, and implement culturally relevant, appropriate, and responsive practice will grow proportionately” (Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013, p. 22). Delano-Oriaran and Meidl’s (2013) called for a pedagogical shift that included all the key components of what is presently known as CRP.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The concept of culturally responsive pedagogy was most popularly attributed to the work of Geneva Gay (1994, 2002, 2010) and Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014). Both researchers offered a solution for how teachers could ensure academic success for minority students by first growing and developing their own understanding of minority students. The early work of Geneva Gay (1994) aimed to, “illustrate the potential of culturally sensitive knowledge and pedagogy for making education more effective for students from different ethnic and racial backgrounds” (p. 149). Gay (1994) also argued how nearly impossible it is to achieve a caring and supportive classroom climate without deliberately attending to student ethnicity and finding common ground between teachers and students, “teacher must know, value, and embrace ethnic diversity, understand how it may exacerbate general developmental changes during adolescence, and adapt instructional practices to incorporate cultural pluralism” (p. 151).

Ladson-Billings (1995) joined Gay in this same philosophy and described teaching practices centered on student learning, cultural competence, and critical consciousness that
produced the best academic results for minority students. Ladson-Billings (1995) spent 6 years observing successful teachers of African American students and emphasized the importance of how personal teacher beliefs transfer into the classroom by stating:

The philosophical and ideological underpinnings of their practice i.e. how they thought about themselves as teachers and how they thought about others (their students, the students’ parents, and other community members), how they structured social relations within the outside of the classroom, and how they conceived of knowledge, revealed their similarities and points of congruence. (p. 162)

Ladson-Billings (1995) outlined three success criteria of culturally relevant teaching. The first criteria were that students must experience academic success. Secondly, students must have developed and/or maintained cultural competence. Lastly, students must have developed a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. These three criteria measures provided the initial definition of CRP. Since Geneva Gay (1994) and Ladson-Billings’ (1995) initial research, several other researchers have taken the foundational principles of CRP and provided additional understanding.

Sandilos et al. (2017) referred to the work of Geneva Gay (1994) and Ladson-Billings (1995) when they explored the relationship between students’ perceptions of the classroom environment and achievement growth. Sandilos et al. (2017) connected the first two CRP criteria of academic success and maintaining cultural competence by proposing a warm demander pedagogy as a culturally responsive framework. Sandilos et al. (2017) referred to the warm demander theory as, “a teaching style in which teachers are nurturing or caring toward their students but do not lower academic standards or expectations and are effective disciplinarians” (p. 1322). The mixed methods study designed and implemented by Sandilos et al. (2017)
supported the hypothesis that students’ perceptions of their teachers as warm demanders related positively to student achievement growth for 634 fourth and fifth graders from five large districts in New York, North Carolina, Florida, Tennessee, and Colorado.

The study designed by Sandilos et al. (2017) used data from the first year of a two-year Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project which was a large-scale observational study of classroom teaching conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation between 2009 and 2011. The data from the MET Project provided measures to evaluate teaching quality and instructional effectiveness (Kane & Staiger, 2012). Through student perception surveys and student achievement data regarding low and high stakes reading and math assessments, Sandilos et al. (2017) were able to successfully demonstrate that students’ perceptions of teachers’ challenge and control have a positive correlation to student achievement growth.

Several researchers approached CRP through a micro lens by researching implementation at the classroom level. Dutro et al. (2008) framed their research design to assess implementation of CRP at the classroom level. In Dutro et al.’s case, it was the teacher’s first attempt to implement CRP within a highly diverse, urban elementary classroom setting. The teacher approached CRP as a class project in preparation for a Family Cultural Night and poster fair. Students in the fourth and fifth grade were asked to read folktales, create their own folktale, create a poster, write about their culture, and have discussions both in class and at home with their families. When discussing future implications of the assignment, the teacher expressed that the class discussions yielded the most desired result above all other aspects of the project. Dutro et al. (2008) commended the teacher’s efforts and emphasized the crucial support that teachers will need to implement CRP with fidelity.
Choi (2013) designed a similar study to Dutro et al., relying on conducted observations, interviews, and gathered artifacts for data. Choi’s (2013) research focused on one social studies teacher who was recognized by their supervisors as using culturally responsive practices on a regular basis. Further examination into the teacher’s classroom revealed how they found success implementing CRP with students. According to Choi (2013), the teacher “streamlined the official curriculum and shifted its approach to a global, multicultural citizenship in order to better address the needs of his newcomer students and build strong connections between their home culture and school curriculum” (p.14). This specific approach to make curriculum change was supported by the findings of earlier researchers Blanchett (2006), Salinas (2006), and Johnson (2006).

Both Dutro et al (2008) and Choi (2013) focused on the impact of the teacher role and illuminated CRP. However, neither study researched how the teacher of focus came to learn the skills necessary to successfully implement CRP. Research stressed the need for highly effective training of current teachers and teacher candidates before they begin implementing CRP (ESSA, 2015; Warren, 2018; Bergantz, 2021). Future teacher training programs could provide an ideal platform for such trainings to take place.

**Culturally Responsive Training in Teacher Preparation Programs**

To compensate for the demographic mismatch between student ethnicity percentages and staff ethnicity percentages, research suggested that changes be made to future teacher training programs. This allows teachers entering the field to already have a commitment and understanding of CRP (Blanchett, 2006; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Suarez, 2002). Warren (2018) argued, “Teacher candidates need empathy
to better understand students, families, and communities, especially if they are preparing to teach in racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse school settings” (p. 1).

Shedrow (2017) made a case for collegiate teacher preparation programs to expand the cultural competency of students through study abroad opportunities. However, instead of advocating for cultural otherness, Shedrow (2017) suggested cross-cultural experiential learning. Shedrow (2017) explained, “the purpose of cross-cultural experiential learning is to submerge students in a culture different from their own so that they can experience the dissonance that accompanies the navigation of foreign systems and traditions” (p. 284). For one academic year Shedrow (2017) utilized a narrative inquiry approach to better understand cross-cultural experiential learning for one White, female teacher whose student teaching placement was abroad in Uganda. The narrative inquiry approach included observations of teaching, document collection, information conversations, formal interviews, and field notes. After descriptive coding and data analysis, three themes emerged. These themes are flexibility, critical questioning, and self-reflection. Shedrow (2017) described the teacher as being, “markedly more aware of the cultural disconnect students faced at school and in her own classroom” (p. 282). While Shedrow (2017) made a strong case for foreign experiences during teacher preparation programs, other researchers prefer building the cultural competency of the candidates with tactics that do not require international travel and point out that this solution does not address teachers already in the workforce.

A Framework for Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices

Culturally responsive practices were the agreed upon recommendation for the cultural disparity between students and staff members of the United States public education system (Choi, 2013; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Gay, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Leonard
Creating a culture where students feel a sense of belonging was a consistent theme for classrooms employing CRP (Choi, 2013; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Merchant et al., 2012). Three themes emerged in literature for developing culturally responsive teachers. Creating a sense of belonging within the classroom, encouraging teachers to self-reflect on practices, and providing ongoing professional trainings were the strategies frequently recommended by researchers to implement CRP with fidelity.

**Creating a Sense of Belonging**

Culturally responsiveness involved a commitment to understanding how cultural hegemony and racism were embedded into school practices and being intentional about uprooting them (Choi, 2013; Diem & Welton, 2021; Gooden & Dantley 2012; Warren, 2018). One way to uproot programs and practices that limit the success of minority students was to create learning environments where everyone feels that they belong (Edwards & Edick, 2013; Merchant et al., 2012). This sense of belonging, was a common thread across literature that explained why some teachers can inspire students to learn despite other teachers having little success with the same students (Amthor, 2016; Cain 2018; Sylvester et al., 2014).

Choi (2013) explored a social studies teacher’s ability to get positive academic outcomes when working with students who often had trouble in other classes. After observing the teacher, Choi (2013) concluded that he, “created a learning community where his students feel comfortable in constructing a collaborative knowledge with others” (p. 15). In the findings section of the study Choi (2013) emphasized the importance of creating a collaborative learning community based on high expectations and care for students. Choi’s (2013) final analysis
affirmed Sandilos et al.’s (2017) warm demander theory that marries high expectations with genuine support and care.

Khalifa conducted several studies that collected data demonstrating the correlation between high expectations student performance. Khalifa (2011) investigated why teachers lower expectations by making deals and permitting student disengagement. The two-year ethnographic study took place in an alternative school setting for at-risk Black students. Research questions provided the framework for the study that focused primarily on the responses and tendencies of teachers that were observed by Khalifa.

The results of Khalifa’s (2011) study indicated that White teachers are more likely than Black teachers to engage in deal making with students that results in them disengaging from the curriculum. Khalifa (2011) determined “the cultural gap between teachers and students contributes to the views that teachers hold of their students” (p. 705). Khalifa (2011) further described that, “what often happens is that because teachers do not understand different cultures, they hold negative perceptions of culturally different students” (p. 705). At the conclusion of the study Khalifa (2011) argued that it is the responsibility of principals to be culturally responsive leaders that also have the desire to enact social justice leadership.

Other researchers found that creating a sense of belonging requires extending beyond school personnel to include the students’ families (Dallavis, 2011; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Khalifa, 2018; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Edwards and Edick (2013) found that the classroom transforms to becoming culturally responsive when the teacher works to “allow students and their families to become involved in collaboratively designing the educational experience” (p. 5). This can take a variety of formats. Khalifa (2018) suggested that school leaders’ welcome families into the school many times during the first few weeks and find creative ways to allow
parents to voice their recommendations for school procedures and policies. Another method that frequently appeared in literature involved the self-reflection of students, teachers, administrators, and school staff members.

**Self-Reflective Practices**

Self-reflective practices were a consistent recommendation across research for implementing CRP (Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Leonard et al., 2009; Merchant et al., 2012; Shedrow, 2017). Gay and Kirkland (2003) were the first to claim self-reflection as a requirement for implementing CRP. Gay and Kirkland (2003) explain that:

Self-reflection and cultural critical consciousness are imperative to improving the educational opportunities and outcomes for students of color. They involve thoroughly analyzing and carefully monitoring both personal beliefs and instructional behaviors about the value of cultural diversity, and the best ways to teach ethnically different students for maximum positive effects. (p. 182)

In their research, Gay and Kirkland (2003) acknowledged that many educators do not clearly understand what constitutes self-reflection, or how to go about utilizing it on a regular basis. Thus, school leaders have found success turning to teacher trainings to promote culturally responsive, self-reflective instructional strategies (Chen & Cheng, 2014; Huang et al., 2012; Khalifa, 2011; Warren, 2018).

**Ongoing Professional Training**

Teachers could learn to seek out and understand cultural differences through professional trainings. These sessions aim to get educators to recognize oppressive aspects of our education system, so they do not recreate these barriers for students (Chen & Cheng, 2014; Gutstein et al.,
1997; Huang et al., 2012; Khalifa, 2011). The challenge was in designing a professional training model that was well balanced, effective, and emotionally comfortable for participants (Davis, 2023; Kay & Orr, 2023; Picower, 2021). Gay and Kirkland (2005) described three maneuvers observed by training participants educators displayed to avoid engaging with racial issues in education.

One maneuver is for educators to divert or diffuse attention away from the topic. Gay and Kirkland (2003) found that this can happen if a participant does not want to look through the cultural lens and instead wants to discuss each student individually. Accepting or acknowledging trends based on race can be difficult for teachers who do not want to further examine how their biases may unintentionally seep into their classroom (Shedrow, 2017). Another maneuver commonly discussed was avoidance. Gay and Kirkland (2003) noticed that when participants were asked to participate in discussion and activities, some choose not to. Lastly, educators sometimes questioned the validity of the content. As important self-reflective questions are asked and data trends are presented, these participants choose to find the one outlier to disprove the information (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

Khalifa et al. (2016) cautioned against these educators who refuse to consider culture and race as relevant to student learning. Khalifa et al. (2016) described them as teachers and leaders who fail, “to tap into the uniqueness of individual student cultures, values, and beliefs as tools for developing culturally relevant pedagogy and leadership that could benefit all students” (p. 1292). Research demonstrated that when school leaders have a firm mastery of culturally responsive pedagogy, they can navigate their staff through these types of conversations and activities that at times can be uncomfortable (Khalifa et al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018). However, a gap exists in the research that gives examples and further detail regarding what this process
looked like and how school leaders can go about designing these systematic teacher trainings plans aimed to create more culturally competent staff members. To supplement this gap in research, the VDOE designed cultural competency domains and micro-competencies based on academic literature to set minimum criteria for local evaluation practices following the addition of CRP as an evaluation standard.

**Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains**

The Virginia framework for cultural competency was described in *Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools* (VDOE, 2021). “Virginia’s four domains are identified to provide a framework for types of capacity that licensed professionals should foster. While thought of sequentially, the four domains are interrelated and require continued reflection, attention, and practice over time.” (VDOE, 2021). Table 1 includes Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains as presented in *Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools* (VDOE, 2021).

**Table 1**

*Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy and Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Adapted from Table 1 in Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools; VDOE, 2021, https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/cultural-competency/guidance-on-cultural-competency.pdf.*
In addition to the four domains, the more detailed micro-competencies were also reviewed. The micro-competencies, “operationalize the Board’s definition of cultural competence and provide the foundation on which divisions may build as they develop content for local cultural competency training” (VDOE, 2021, p. 5). Figures 3 through 6 illustrate the micro-competencies explained in the Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools that are intended to be covered in professional learnings and trainings.

The first domain addresses culturally competent self-reflection. VDOE (2022) made clear that teacher beliefs, “profoundly impact what happens in the learning environment for students.” This domain emphasized the practice of educational professionals acknowledging and reflecting on their personal lived experiences. Hattie’s (2009) research was cited by VDOE as support for this domain. Hattie (2009) ascertained, “educators’ beliefs and commitments are the greatest influence on student achievement over which they have some control” (p. 25). A Teacher Self-Evaluation Form was provided by VDOE (2021) in the Virginia Teacher Performance Evaluation System Handbook that listed each of the evaluation standards with a space for teachers to indicate areas of strength, areas needing work, and strategies to improve the practice. Table 2 illustrates the micro-competency supporting culturally competent self-reflection.

The second domain was centered on the pedagogy and practice of CRP. This domain combined the importance of culture with the practicality of teaching. Strategies recommended by VDOE (2022) to implement this domain include discussion protocols, sentence stems, graphic organizers, manipulatives, songs and spoken word, quality feedback, student reflections, and
Table 2

*Culturally Competent Self-Reflection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally Competent Self-Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuously reflect on one’s own beliefs, behaviors, lived experiences, and practices and their impact on one’s educational decision making, and on one’s interactions with others generally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Table 2 in *Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools; VDOE, 2021*, https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/cultural-competency/guidance-on-cultural-competency.pdf.

student goal setting. Table 3 expanded on the second domain by proving five micro-competencies that further define culturally competent pedagogy and practice.

Table 3

*Culturally Competent Pedagogy and Practice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally Competent Pedagogy and Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish a classroom and school culture in which all dimensions of diversity are respected and valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide ongoing opportunities for student reflection and interpersonal interactions with diverse peers; support the development of self-regulation strategies, empathy, and civil discourse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build positive relationships with students and families and provide instruction to students on building and maintaining positive peer relationships in the education learning setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with students, families, and the community in linguistically and culturally responsive ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build student capacity to think critically and consider alternative perspectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Table 3 in *Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools; VDOE, 2021*, https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/cultural-competency/guidance-on-cultural-competency.pdf.

The third domain focused on creating culturally competent learning environment VDOE (2021) explained that to meet the expectations of this domain, “culturally competent educators
analyze policies, procedures, and programs that prevent or limit access and opportunity for students and staff and align resources to increase achievement for all, without lowering standards for any student” (VDOE, 2021, p. 6). Table 4 involves one additional micro-competency that explained the culturally competent learning environment.

Table 4

*Culturally Competent Learning Environments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally Competent Learning Environments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create safe, and culturally affirming learning environments where all dimensions of diversity are respected, and all students are held to high expectations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The fourth and final domain emphasized the need for community partnerships. This domain was informed by The Carnegie Corporation of New York’s (2018) report *Joining Together to Create a Bold Vision for Next Generation Family Engagement: Engaging Families to Transform Education* and Mapp and Bergman’s (2019) *The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships*. The culturally competent community engagement domain involved both internal and external stakeholder participation to unify advocacy for equitable access. Table 5 clarifies what culturally competent community engagement looks like by including three micro-competencies.
Table 5

Culturally Competent Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally Competent Community Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support students in learning about dimensions of diversity in the community. Provide opportunities for students to be active contributors in solving relevant, local, state, national and global community challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create opportunities for authentic student, family, and community engagement by cultivating relationships beyond the classroom anchored in affirmation, mutual respect, and validation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with students and families to process and respond to incidents of discrimination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Summary

National data reported that most public-school teachers in the United States have been White, middle-class females with limited cultural understanding of the growing number of minority students (Choi, 2013; Goldring et al., 2013; Warren 2018). Research indicated that culturally responsive pedagogy is an effective way to draw meaningfully on the cultures, language, and experiences that students bring to classrooms to increase academic achievement for students of color (Dutro et al., 2008; Leonard et al., 2009). Although culturally responsive pedagogy was commonly recommended, it was not commonly understood in practice by teachers (Amthor, 2016). Thus, making it a necessity to be taught both to future educators and current educators Legislation from Virginia House Bill 1904 and Virginia Senate Bill 1196 were requiring that school leaders take responsibility for designing cultural competency trainings, creating culturally relevant climates within their schools, and evaluating staff progress towards implementing culturally responsive strategies.
There was a disconnect between what CRP literature recommends and how teachers are being prepared to meet the recent CRP requirements embedded within TPES (Dallavis, 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016). The Culturally Responsive Teaching and Equitable Practice standard and foundational competencies were rooted in research; however, it has yet to be determined if the VDOE provided Cultural Competency Training Module would inform and equip teachers with the understanding and skills needed to demonstrate proficiency. Thus, the direction for this study design was to determine the extent to which teachers were prepared to be evaluated based on CRP after completing VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module.
Chapter Three

Methodology

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research was best utilized when there is, “a need to study a group or population, identify variables that cannot be easily measured, or hear silenced voices” (p. 45). The researcher chose a qualitative research design for this study to further examine teacher preparedness to meet culturally responsive practices (CRP) evaluation criteria after completing Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) Cultural Competency Training Module. Culturally responsive practices are the behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning (Gay, 2000). This proposed study includes a qualitative research design of a suburban school division in Virginia. Interview protocol has been selected for data collection to allow for the capture of participant perspective.

Purpose of the Study

The results from this study contributed to the existing knowledge of CRP from the less documented viewpoint of teacher training and teacher preparedness. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which teachers were prepared to be evaluated based on CRP after completing VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module. There have been a number of studies researching CRP and implementation practices at the classroom level (Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Bergantz, 2021; Choi, 2013; Civitillo et al., 2019; Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Larson et al., 2018; Sandilos et al., 2017; Warren, 2018). There has been little research as to whether or not teachers are prepared to demonstrate their proficiency of CRP. This study hoped to inform school divisions and school leaders of teacher preparedness to be evaluated based on CRP criteria at the school
The results from this study might serve as a valuable tool that informs educators responsible for teacher trainings and legislators and central office decision makers.

**Research Design**

The methodology for this study was a basic qualitative research design using interview protocol. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained, “a basic qualitative study would be interest in (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and experiences” (p. 24). An individual’s level of preparation was best captured using a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell (2014) described this form of inquiry as being, “a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation” (p. 4). Research questions focused the study on determining if teachers were prepared to be evaluated based on CRP after completing a Cultural Competency Training Module.

**Research Questions**

This study explored the following research questions:

1. How has Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module prepared teachers to implement culturally responsive practices?

2. To what extent do teachers feel prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices after completing Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module?

The first research question addressed the preparedness of teachers as it related to implementing CRP after completing VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module. Teacher
responses were compared to Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains and micro-competencies. The second research question investigated the extent to which teachers felt prepared to be evaluated based on CRP as determined by Standard Six of the updated Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers (VDOE, 2021).

Data Collection

Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended data collection to include interviewing individuals with common experiences within the study criteria when designing a qualitative study utilizing interview protocol. Data were collected during teacher interviews during the summer months of 2023. The data set was transcriptions from the interviews conducted by the researcher. Interviews took place as virtual meetings using the Zoom video conferencing platform. The interview script and questions are included in Appendix A. A piloted interview with one teacher took place to test the validity of the interview process and questions. The duration of an individual subject’s participation in the study lasted for a minimum of 25 minutes and a maximum of 45 minutes. It took two weeks to enroll all participants and two months to complete the study.

Research Sites

The proposed research sites include three school locations that are all a part of a small, suburban school division in Virginia. Sites one and two were elementary schools serving students in preschool through fifth grade. Site three was a high school that serves ninth grade through twelfth grade.

It was the practice of the school division for a formal request letter to be sent to the executive director of teaching and learning when research involving division staff members is requested. A copy of the letter sent to the executive director of teaching and learning seeking
permission to complete the study is attached as Appendix B. A copy of the letter sent out to school principals informing them of the study once permission had been granted from the executive director of teaching and learning is attached as Appendix C.

All three research sites included similar racial and ethnic student populations. Students were 67% Hispanic, 15% White, 8% Black, 4% Multiple Races, and 6% Asian. Research sites one and two had a high English learner population including over 50% percent of students. All three research sites also had over 50% percent of students that are within the category of being economically disadvantaged. VDOE (2009) explained that a student is considered economically disadvantaged if, “the student is eligible for free/reduced meals, receives Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or is eligible for Medicaid” (para. 10).

**Cultural Competency Training Module**

The division required all instructional staff to complete VDOE’s virtual Cultural Competency Training Module prior to the start of the 2022 – 2023 school year. The module was designed to be completed in one session totaling approximately forty minutes in length. No assessment was included in the module; however, one question was presented once each domain was explained to check for participant understanding. A certificate awarding five professional development points was presented at the completion of the model.

**Populations**

The population selected to be included in this study included eight teachers spanning across kindergarten to twelfth grade. The participants had an even sampling of instructional levels and years of experience. The study population included two to three participants who are teachers at each site location.
Eligibility criteria for this study included teachers within the school division who had completed at least one full teacher evaluation process in their current position and have completed VDOE’s virtual Cultural Competency Training Module. Teachers who had not completed one school year in their current position were excluded from the study. Eligibility requirements were communicated in an email using purposeful sampling to invite specific teachers to participate in the study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined purposeful sampling as being, “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 96). Purposeful sampling is supported by researchers in cases of qualitative studies involving interview protocol aimed to identify and provide a deep understanding from the best possible participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

**IRB Approval**

Approval to utilize a basic qualitative interview design was dependent upon approval from the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB). Potential participants were invited to participate in the study by receiving an email from the researcher’s Virginia Tech Google Email account. The email will explain the research eligibility criteria and request voluntary participation. The email subject line read, “Research Study: Evaluating Culturally Responsive Practices: Preparedness of Teachers”. A copy of the teacher invitation email is attached in Appendix D along with the Information Sheet for Participation in a Research Study attached in Appendix E.

A part of the IRB approval process was identifying potential risks to participants of the study. A potential for psychological risk was noted by the researcher. Since spring of 2020, Virginia communities have discussed CRP and its relation to critical race theory. Negative public
opinions of culturally responsive teaching and critical race theory have been referenced in local school board documents (VSBA, 2021). News coverage of the unfavorable reaction from the public led to Virginia schools having conversations surrounding race and racism. Many parents spoke to media outlets about their concerns (Anderson, 2021). VDOE (2021) responded to these concerns with statements that justified new teacher evaluation practices along with the overarching goal of equity and inclusive learning. The Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA, 2021) also provided explanation in a document entitled, “Understanding the Difference Between Critical Race Theory and Education Equity: What You Need to Know”.

It is possible that discussing CRP could have activated feelings of discomfort for participants as recent news of critical race theory had been heavily covered by the media and a central focus of Virginia’s current governor, Glenn Youngkin. Special care and consideration were placed in ensuring that participants understood that they would not be identified during the study and that their responses were solely for the purpose of the study. This was emphasized in the email inviting teachers to participate and revisited during a statement read at the beginning of the interview. A copy of the statement is included in the interview script that is attached in Appendix A.

**Interview Prompts**

Interview prompts were created based on Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains that underpin legislation approved by the 2021 General Assembly requiring that teacher evaluations include CRP. Interview prompts one through three were designed to investigate the level of preparedness that teachers feel as it relates to implementing CRP after completing VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module. The first three interview prompts were in alignment with research question one. Interview prompts four through six were designed to explore the extent to
which teachers feel prepared to be evaluated based on CRP. These last three interview prompts were in alignment with research question two. Table 6 includes the interview prompts and their alignment to Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domain and Research Questions one and two.

**Table 6**

*Interview Prompts and Research Questions Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Prompt</th>
<th>Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domain</th>
<th>Prompting</th>
<th>Research Question (RQ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prompt One</strong></td>
<td>Domain II: Pedagogy and Practices</td>
<td>Explain what completing the cultural competency training module was like.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the cultural competency training module you completed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prompt Two</strong></td>
<td>Domain II: Pedagogy and Practices</td>
<td>Explain what culturally responsive teaching practices means.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you define culturally responsive teaching practices?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prompt Three</strong></td>
<td>Domain I: Self-Reflection</td>
<td>Explain how you self-reflect on your own lived experiences when teaching.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does self-reflection of your beliefs and your lived experiences influence your teaching?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prompt Four</strong></td>
<td>Domain III: Learning Environments</td>
<td>Explain how you create a culturally welcoming learning environment.</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me how you create culturally affirming learning environments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### Table 6 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Prompt</th>
<th>Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domain</th>
<th>Prompting</th>
<th>Research Question (RQ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prompt Five</strong></td>
<td>Domain II: Pedagogy and Practices</td>
<td>Explain why you are or are not prepared to be evaluated on culturally responsive practices.</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about how prepared you feel or do not feel to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prompt Six</strong></td>
<td>Domain III: Learning Environments</td>
<td>Explain what aspects of culturally responsive practices you are unsure about.</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What questions (if any) do you have about implementing culturally responsive practices?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Instrument Validity and Reliability

Several qualitative research strategies were recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) to ensure instrument validity and reliability. These strategies were presented to address both instrument validity and reliability and as such are presented together in this section. Three strategies recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) addressing instrument validity implemented during this study were peer examination for content validity, member checks, and reflexive journaling. In accordance with this protocol, the interview protocol was reviewed by a panel of experts for content validation and a piloted interview with one teacher took place to test the validity of the interview process. Those deemed to be experts in teacher training and professional learning included a central office staff member, administrator, and a teacher not participating in the interview protocol. Results from the content validity check were reviewed with the research advisor to make changes to the interview protocol as appropriate. Changes were made to the phrasing of interview prompts, allowing for clear and precise phrasing throughout the interview.
Member checks were implemented to improve transparency between the researcher and participants as well as strengthen the validity of the study. An email from the researcher’s Virginia Tech Google Email account included the participants transcribed interview data with the opportunity for the participant to review the document to add or edit the participant’s responses included in the transcription. Participants were given two weeks to respond to the email with changes that they would like to be captured in the interview transcription. One participant responded with a change to their interview transcription. This participant replaced two separate word phrases that were included in their transcription to provide clarity to their response. Finally, reflexive journaling was implemented by the researcher to uncover any biases, dispositions, and assumptions as it related to the study.

One additional strategy recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) that was used in this study to ensure research reliability was an audit trial. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined, “an audit trail in a qualitative study describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (p. 223). The researcher logged each phase of the study and kept a record of participant interactions, researcher reflections, and researcher decision making. The audit trial was included in a Google Document that was saved on a password protected computer in a Google Folder within Virginia Tech’s Google Domain.

**Data Treatment and Management**

Transcriptions of participant responses during the virtual interview were collected. The researcher transcribed and coded the audio recordings of each interview. Upon completion of each interview, the audio file was uploaded to the researcher’s computer and saved on a password protected computer in a Google Folder within Virginia Tech’s Google Domain.
Participants’ privacy interests were protected. Only the minimal amount of private information required to complete the study was collected. This information was then be stored on a password protected computer in a Google Folder within Virginia Tech’s Google Domain. All files were saved using a numeric coding system so that the interviewee was not identifiable. Audio files were deleted after the one-week time period provided to the participant to verify the transcribed interview data during the member check.

The results from the study will be shared with division leaders from the participating school division. All data obtained during the study were stored in a Google folder within a virtual file on a password protected computer. Interview data and collected data from the interviews will be stored for three years following a successful defense of the study. Only members of the research team had access to the data.

**Data Analysis**

Data were collected using interview protocol over the course of the summer months of 2023. Interview data gathered were transcribed and coded to identify key words, categories, and themes. The constant comparative approach was implemented to allow the coding and analysis of data to begin as soon as they were collected. The constant comparative approach was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to allow for the sorting and organization of raw interview data into themes and categories to support concrete findings and research conclusions. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that “using the constant comparative approach, the researcher attempts to ‘saturate’ the categories – to look for instances that represent the category and to continue looking until the new information obtained does not provide further insight into the category” (p. 203). As categories and themes emerged, the interconnectedness of data was
examined using open coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher sought to achieve thematic saturation at the conclusion of the interview protocol.

After each interview was audio recorded and transcribed, the researcher reviewed interview prompt responses to identify repeated words, phrasing, and concepts over the course of the interview and compared to other interview data. The researcher kept a tally of repeated concepts to develop themes. Once all interviews were completed, the interview transcriptions were printed without identifying information and sorted by interview prompt. Again, the researcher reviewed data to identify frequented responses from participants. The researcher then sorted the data by subcategories to determine trends in participant responses based on teacher experience, grade level, and gender. Finally, a chart was created for each interview prompt, connecting each participant with identified themes to confirm trends present in the data and to organize into corresponding categories.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the methodology of the proposed qualitative study using an interview protocol design. The participating populations and school sites were defined with demographic information to establish contextual understanding. Additionally, the purpose, research design, research questions, data collection process, data management plan, and data analysis strategies were described in detail.
Chapter Four

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which teachers were prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices (CRP) after completing Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)’s Cultural Competency Training Module. Culturally responsive practices are the behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning (Gay, 2000). This study sought to inform school leaders of teacher preparedness as they transition to having CRP evaluative criteria. The results from this study will serve as a valuable tool that advises educators responsible for teacher trainings as well as legislators designing education reform. This study adds to the existing knowledge of CRP from the less documented viewpoint of teacher training and teacher preparedness. The research utilized a qualitative research design using interview protocol to best capture individual, unique experiences from participants. This method is supported by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) who recommends basic qualitative studies that allows participants to interpret and make meaning of their experiences.

Research Questions

This chapter was organized based on research questions presented in Chapter One. Interview data were examined for common themes as the researcher sought to address two research questions. The research questions directing this study were:

1. How has Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module prepared teachers to implement culturally responsive practices?
2. To what extent do teachers feel prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices after completing Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module?

**Analysis of Data**

The researcher utilized a constant comparative approach to analyze interview data. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that “using the constant comparative approach, the researcher attempts to ‘saturate’ the categories – to look for instances that represent the category and to continue looking until the new information obtained does not provide further insight into the category” (p. 203). Utilizing the constant comparative approach allowed for sorting and organizing raw interview data. Data were examined and themes were identified over the course of the study. Reflexive journaling and transcribing followed each interview. New interview responses were compared to previous interview responses as the interconnectedness of data became evident. Once the study was complete, each interview prompt response was printed and sorted so that responses could be reviewed from various perspectives. The researcher sorted responses in categories such as years of experience in teaching, school site locations, and gender of participants to uncover patterns of responses.

Interviews were conducted virtually utilizing the researcher’s Virginia Tech Zoom video conferencing account. Each interview was audio-recorded using a feature in the Zoom video conferencing platform and then transcribed by the researcher. All data collected during the research study were kept confidential. The researcher coded the interviews using a pseudonym and uploaded the audio files to the researcher’s Virginia Tech Google Domain which requires a two-step authentication process and is password protected. Participants were provided with copies of the interview transcripts for member checking and given two weeks to notify the
researcher of any necessary changes. Only one participant chose to modify their transcript to provide clearer communication of their interview responses. Table 7 represents the years of experience of each participant in the study.

**Table 7**

*Participant Years of Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>Years of Teaching Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>6-10 Years of Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>1-5 Years of Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>6-10 Years of Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>11+ Years of Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>6-10 Years of Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>11+ Years of Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>11+ Years of Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>1-5 Years of Experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 1 (RQ1)**

The first research question for this study was: How has Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module prepared teachers to implement culturally responsive practices? The following three interview prompts, and questions inform research question one:

1. Describe the cultural competency training module you completed.
2. How would you define culturally responsive teaching practices?
3. How does self-reflection of your beliefs and your lived experiences influence your teaching?
Analysis of Data for RQ1

**Interview Prompt 1**

Describe the cultural competency training module you completed. The following categories were identified by the researcher during the data analysis process of interview prompt one: long term memory of trainings, timing of CRP training, and emotional response of CRP training topics. Eight out of eight participants (P1-P8) recalled completing the cultural competency training authored by VDOE. Four out of eight participants (P2-P4, P6) could not remember any details of the training. Two out of eight participants (P3, P8) stated that they remembered VDOE’s cultural competency training, but then described trainings using a different platform on other topics such as sexual harassment and basic first aid. Two out of eight participants (P1, P5) stated that they completed VDOE’s cultural competency training and then described aspects of the training with accuracy. Table 8 highlights participant responses to interview prompt one.

**Table 8**

*Participant Response to VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>Memory of VDOE Cultural Competency Training Outcomes</th>
<th>Negative Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Did Not Remember Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Negative Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Did Not Remember Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Positive Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Confused Cultural Competency Training with other Virtual Trainings</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Did Not Remember Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Negative Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Remembered Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Negative Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Did Not Remember Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Negative Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Remembered Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Positive Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Confused Cultural Competency Training with other Virtual Trainings</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the four participants (P2-P4, P6) who did not remember details of the training, three of the four participants (P3-P4, P6) were experienced teachers. Participant’s history of completing similar trainings was cited as a reason for not remembering the specifics of the Cultural Competency Training Module. P4 described the veteran perspective:

To be honest, I remember we did it. I remember we had to do it. As far as what was involved in that, I don’t remember much to be honest. I’ve been teaching for almost thirty years. I get to a point now where a lot of it sounds like common sense, so I know when I took it, I tried to listen to it. I answered the questions, but to be honest, we had done so many by that point I couldn’t even tell you what we were asked to do.

Four out of eight participants (P2, P4, P6, P8) mentioned the unideal timing of the Cultural Competency Training Module. Participants commented that many other trainings were required to be completed by their school division within the same timeframe. P2 and P6 explained that the primary focus of teachers was to complete the Cultural Competency Training Module and other required trainings as soon as possible. P2 recalled typical methods of “skipping” segments of trainings were not available for the Cultural Competency Training Module. P2 stated, “We have a lot of trainings at the beginning of the year. So, I do remember it was pretty lengthy, like we couldn’t skip. We couldn’t leave the page. We had to actually stay there and listen.”

P6 expressed that timing of other required trainings inhibited their memory of the Cultural Competency Training Module and felt that the information presented was “common sense”. P6 explained:

I’ll be honest, we did so many online trainings. I don’t know that I remember the specifics of this one. I mean I know the concepts. I was just on teacher evaluation this
year. I have the basic familiarity of what the expectation was, but I can’t honestly say that I remember what the content of the module was. I do remember thinking with most VDOE stuff, it’s common sense if you’re being a decent and responsible human being and teacher so I remember thinking that it was pretty obvious and straightforward stuff, but the content of it I couldn’t describe to you.

Six out of eight participants (P1, P3-P6, P8) provided negative descriptors of VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module. P1 and P5 both described the training as “basic” and “shallow”. P4 expressed their opinion of the effectiveness of the training, “It was not really effective. It really wasn’t. In terms of did I come away from it feeling knowledgeable? No. I did what I had to do and jumped the hoops to keep my certification to be able to teach last year.”

Similar to P4’s perspective, participants P1 and P8 described the Cultural Competency Training Module with a transactional viewpoint, noting what they received in exchange for completing the training. P1 explained, “It’s kind of like a basic overview. I remember it being fifteen professional development points.” P8 recalled the evaluative metrics of the training and stated, “At the end of watching the videos you answer quiz questions… If you don’t get them correct you can go back and rewatch the videos and retake the quiz. If you do get it correct, then you get the certification.”

**Interview Prompt 2**

**How would you define culturally responsive teaching practices?** The following categories were identified by the researcher during the data analysis process of interview prompt two: personal self-reflection and personal identifiers utilized to define CRP, surface level CRP, and deep level CRP. While the question was how would you define culturally responsive teaching practices, the responses did not include a direct definition but rather were characterized
by descriptions of personal experiences that participants had with CRP. Four out of eight participants (P2, P5-P7) self-reflected and utilized a personal memory when asked to describe CRP. Three out of eight (P2-P3, P5) participants described surface level culturally responsive teaching practices in their responses. Five out of eight participants (P1, P4, P6-P8) described deep level culturally responsive teaching practices in their responses.

The terms surface level and deep level culturally responsive teaching practices were included and specifically defined in the terms section of Chapter One. Both terms will again be defined for further explanation of participant responses to interview prompt two and interview prompt six. Surface Level Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices are teaching practices that are based on cultural aspects that can be observed. Examples include food, music, holidays and dress. (Hammond, 2015). Deep Level Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices. Teaching practices that are based on the collective unconscious, the beliefs and norms that provide the foundation for culture. Examples include concepts of fairness, concepts of self, and spirituality. (Hammond, 2015). Table 9 outlines the depth in which participants described CRP.

### Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>Described Personal Experience with CRP</th>
<th>CRP Response Level</th>
<th>Quote from Participant Response to Defining Culturally Responsive Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Personal Memory</td>
<td>Deep Level CRP Description</td>
<td>“Being responsive or taking into consideration a student’s customs, characteristics, experiences, perspectives while informing the classroom climate and student instruction.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Surface Level CRP Description</td>
<td>“Understanding that I have to step back and think like what, why they could be acting this way.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 9 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>Described Personal Experience with CRP</th>
<th>CRP Response Level</th>
<th>Quote from Participant Response to Defining Culturally Responsive Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Surface Level CRP Description</td>
<td>“Acknowledging where students come from.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Deep Level CRP Description</td>
<td>“I tend to look at my students from a variety of different ranges. From where they come from, their backgrounds and I try very hard to incorporate the different backgrounds that my students have.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Personal Memory</td>
<td>Surface Level CRP Description</td>
<td>“Seeing how I need to be thinking about how my kids are doing and where they’re coming from and what works best for them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Personal Memory</td>
<td>Deep Level CRP Description</td>
<td>“I think connecting the students’ real lives like that is the essence of being culturally responsive.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Personal Memory</td>
<td>Deep Level CRP Description</td>
<td>“A focus on social efficiency and civil obligation and responsibility.” “And then of course character development and discipline.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Deep Level CRP Description</td>
<td>“Making sure that every culture from your group, your classroom is being represented authentically throughout all of your materials the whole school year.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half of the participants (P1, P5-P7) defined CRP by self-reflecting on their childhood experience or telling a personal memory that expressed cultural responsiveness in a classroom setting. P2 detailed personal, cultural family dynamics and the role that plays in their classroom, “I was a single mother household, and we didn’t always have like everything we wanted. I think that kind of like shapes you… I think it kind of helps me relate to a lot of my students in the classroom.” P7 reflected on their experience in the classroom setting as a student new to the English language. P7 stated, “when I was in elementary school… we were not encouraged to
speak our own language but mainly to have that, that idea of assimilation. Like simulate into our new culture as immigrants.”

From the three participants (P2-P3, P5) who provided shallow responses to define CRP, all three teachers taught lower elementary school grades. P3 described CRP as, “acknowledging where students come from. So that means you know their culture and their experiences and history.” P5 also defined CRP as a practice that is centered on the teacher having background information on students. P5 mentioned that CRP is, “how I need to be thinking about how my kids are doing and where they’re coming from and what works best for them.”

Five out of eight participants (P1, P4, P6-P8) described deep CRP in their question responses by detailing examples of how rich classroom discussions, reflective journaling, and productive debating yielded bonded experiences for cultural beliefs and norms. Secondary teachers P4 and P6 described pathways to cultural responsiveness that is rooted in literature. P6 went into detail when saying the following:

If you don’t have an understanding of the culture that you’re situated in as a teacher, then you can’t be culturally responsive so that involves a little bit of learning and intentionally seeking information about how other people live. That is kind of how it starts. In terms of the classroom, the way that I’ve tried to incorporate any type of culturally responsive stuff is trying to make teaching science, biology and environmental science and making it realistic to the students’ lives. The examples that I choose to use are things that the kids are going to understand and know about. I’m not going to make references to the way that I grew up because it was very different from the way that they are growing up. It also includes trying to find those parts of your content standards that lend themselves easily.
P6 later gave an example of a book that is embedded within the curriculum each year to spark deep cultural debates. P6 described the activity:

> It creates this whole ethical debate with the students, but it’s something that they can relate to because it is about a person of color. It is directly related to my standards but also directly related to their lives. It brings up some interesting conversations and questions. I think connecting the students’ real lives like that is the essence of being culturally responsive.

P1 joined P6 in defining CRP as linking student background knowledge with future learning. P1 described CRP as, “trying to build the background knowledge based on what they are already bringing to the table and using that to facilitate and help their learning. So, you’re building upon what they’re bringing, what their culture [is], what their family is bringing to help them further their growth.”

**Interview Prompt 3**

**How does self-reflection of your beliefs and your lived experiences influence your teaching?** The following categories were identified by the researcher during the data analysis process of interview prompt three: past personal experiences inform self-reflection and self-reflection as part of the instructional planning process. In response to this interview prompt, participants did not directly explain how self-reflection of their beliefs and lived experiences influence their teaching. Instead, participants described their childhood upbringings and personal experiences in school as it related to their teaching.

Eight out of eight teachers (P1-P8) expressed that they viewed reflection as a positive component of the teaching process. Seven out of the eight teachers (P2-P8) provided examples of their childhood and/or described their cultural background when explaining how their beliefs
and lived experiences impact their teaching. Five out of eight teachers (P3-P6, P8) stated that their upbringing and/or cultural background did not match the students that they teach. Table 10 provides how participants described their reflective process and whether their cultural experiences match the students they teach.

**Table 10**

*Participant Reflection of Lived Experiences Comparative to their Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>Self-Reflective Process Described</th>
<th>Participant Response Cultural Background Match Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Personal School Experience</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Childhood Upbringing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Childhood Upbringing</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Personal School Experience</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Childhood Upbringing</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Childhood Upbringing</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Cultural Background</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Cultural Background</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P3 described the difference between their upbringing and the observed upbringing of their students through the lens of race:

Where I grew up, it was the total opposite. It was not diverse at all. Just from where I grew up, I lived the same place my entire life. Even college I would say was just a step up but not even in the sense of as much with race, but maybe with different experiences, life experiences. So, for me coming here is quite different.

P6 joined P3 in describing the initial surprise that they experienced teaching students with a different cultural background from their own. P6 explained, “I grew up in white suburbia… there’s universal things about childhood and adolescence but in other ways you know when I started teaching particularly in our school system it was a little bit of a culture shock.”
P2 was in the 25% of participants who described similarities between their lived experience and the experiences of their students. P2 commented, “I came from a single mother, low-income household. I like grew up in this area so I personally know this area and the demographics… I think it helps me relate to a lot of my students in the classroom.” P7 also expressed being able to personally relate to the lived experience of their students. P7 detailed how they self-reflect and also how they challenge their colleagues to do the same. P7 stated:

I do a lot of reflection and I have helped a lot of my colleagues have reflection…when I started teaching, I was literally the only Latino person teaching. And now it’s different which is amazing! But back then and even now I have some colleagues that have said statements. This goes back to their reflection and micro biases. They have said “you can’t teach stupid” when they are referring to kids who are newcomers or from another country. Or “oh you know how they are I can’t tell them apart”. So, in that aspect I had to again step back and feel the need to school them a little bit…as I’ve grown as an educator, part of my reflection has been the reflection of others or the lack of reflection of others.

P5 and P6 detailed growth in their reflective thinking process. P5 compared where they are as a teacher now to when they first started teaching. P5 responded by saying, “I think that when I first started teaching, I didn’t really do a lot of self-reflection when it came to my own background and culture. I think it’s very much like being White I felt like there wasn’t much of a culture to think about and consider what I grew up in. But then as I’ve gone on, I’ve realized that there are way more things that I need to consider.”

P6 described personal growth that was sparked by a study abroad experience. P6’s reflection was in alignment with research conducted by Suarez (2002) and Shedrow (2017) who
advocated for teachers to have experiences abroad to better understand diverse learning communities. P6 explained, “I had experiences in college where I studied abroad in Central America and in a separate summer, I also went to Honduras on a service project. I think that really kind of pushed me in the direction of wanting to serve a community that is different from my own. Everything that I had known up to that point was just white suburbia.”

RQ1 Major Themes

**How has Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module prepared teachers to implement culturally responsive practices?** Participant responses to interview prompts 1, 2, and 3 were used to identify how the cultural competency training prepared teachers to implement culturally responsive practices. Participant responses indicated that the cultural competency training was not effective. Only one participant (P7) was able to articulate the learning outcome of the cultural competency training and provide positive feedback about the training design. All other participants (P1-P6, P8) either could not recall learning objectives from the training or described a negative experience completing the training.

Teachers instead explained that their understanding and preparation to implement CRP came from their own lived experiences. Teachers emphasized the importance of the reflective process, and the role reflection plays when supplementing cultural differences between teachers and students. While only three participants (P1-P2, P7) reported having a similar cultural background as their students, all participants (P1-P8) mentioned their commitment to understanding the unique cultures of their students. All participants (P1-P8) also emphasized the value and importance of implementing CRP in classroom settings.
Research Question 2 (RQ2)

The second research question for this study is: To what extent do teachers feel prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices after completing Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module? The following three interview prompts, and questions inform research question two:

1. How do you create culturally affirming learning environments?
2. How prepared do you feel being evaluated based on culturally responsive practices?
3. What questions do you have about implementing culturally responsive practices?

Analysis of Data for RQ2

Interview Prompt 4

How do you create culturally affirming learning environments? The following categories were identified by the researcher during the data analysis process of interview prompt four: student informed culturally affirming learning environments, research and training to create culturally affirming learning environments, high expectations for all students.

Four out of eight participants (P4-P7) described creating culturally affirming learning environments that focus on relationship building with students. Four out of eight participants (P1-P3, P8) described creating culturally affirming learning environments that are informed by trainings and research of the different cultures represented in the classroom. Participant responses were split based on the age range of students taught by the teacher. The four teacher responses (P4-P7) that described relationship building with students as essential in the development of culturally affirming learning environments were also the teachers who taught upper elementary and high school students. The four responses (P1-P3, P8) that centered on outside trainings and independent research of diverse cultures were from teachers who taught
lower elementary students. Five out of eight participants (P1, P4-P7) spoke about the importance of having high academic and behavioral expectations for all students when creating culturally affirming learning environments. Table 11 details the school setting of each participant and their response to how teachers create culturally affirming learning environments.

**Table 11**

*Participant Explanation of Creating Culturally Affirming Learning Environments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>School Setting</th>
<th>Participant Response of What Informs Culturally Affirming Learning Environments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Lower Elementary</td>
<td>Outside Research of Cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Expectations of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Lower Elementary</td>
<td>Outside Research of Cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Upper Elementary</td>
<td>Trainings and Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Positive Student Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Expectations of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Upper Elementary</td>
<td>Positive Student Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Expectations of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Positive Student Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Expectations of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Upper Elementary</td>
<td>Positive Student Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Expectations of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Lower Elementary</td>
<td>Outside Research of Cultures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half of the participants explained that each student’s culture is unique to them, therefore, building a relationship with the student is the best way to make sure that they feel represented in the learning environment. P4 expressed this thinking by saying, “When I’m working with kids and incorporating those things it’s all about individuals. It’s all about learning who they are as an individual and then how can I bring it into the classroom to impact my students?” P6 provided a
similar response to P4 and then extended their response to identify three pillars to a culturally affirming learning environment:

I think it starts with relationships. As stereotypical as it is, kids need to feel like they’re safe and valued. But I really feel like kids need three things. They need to belong. They need consistency. And they need success. Whether it’s culturally responsive or whatever I just think that is good teaching and good relationship building. You have to start with setting up a classroom where kids feel safe being who they are. If you don’t have that level of relationship or security, then you’re not going to have a culturally responsive room if kids don’t feel safe being in their own skin and being who they are.

P1 described the other perspective by stating that you create culturally affirming learning environments by, “taking it upon yourself to learn more about the different cultures that you might have in your classroom because that is what is going to help you the most is for you to learn about them.”

P5 was one of the five participants (P1, P4-P7) to describe high expectations as an essential component of a culturally affirming learning environment. Participants whose responses highlighted the importance of high expectations for all students is included in Table 11 and is in alignment with researchers Choi (2013), Khalifa (2011), and Sandilos et al. (2017). High expectations for students is also emphasized in the third domain focus of Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domain. VDOE (2021) explained that to meet the expectations of this domain, “culturally competent educators analyze policies, procedures, and programs that prevent or limit access and opportunity for students and staff and align resources to increase achievement for all, without lowering standards for any student” (VDOE, 2021, p. 6). P5 stated, “It starts with making sure that all students know you are being held to the same standard of working hard and
trying your best … then from there just basic community building and relationship work.” P1 provided a response with similar thinking, “I believe it is important to have high expectations for all students so that all students can learn regardless of their background.”

**Interview Prompt 5**

**How prepared do you feel being evaluated based on culturally responsive practices?**

The following categories were identified by the researcher during the data analysis process of interview prompt five: surface level preparation for CRP and general preparedness for evaluation of CRP. Four out of eight participants (P2-P3, P5, P7) described the training that they received in preparation for CRP implementation as “surface level” or “scratching the surface”. One out of eight participants (P8) expressed that they were very prepared to be evaluated based on CRP. Two out of eight participants (P6-P7) expressed that they were prepared to be evaluated based on CRP. Four out of eight participants (P1-P4) expressed that they were somewhat prepared to be evaluated based on CRP. One participant (P5) expressed that they were not prepared to be evaluated based on CRP. Table 12 notates how participants responded to explaining their level of preparation to be evaluated based on CRP.
## Table 12

*Teacher Preparation for CRP Evaluation Process*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>Level of Preparation to be Evaluated Based on CRP</th>
<th>Quote from Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Somewhat prepared</td>
<td>“I kind of feel like I’m in the middle of the road because I know that there are more areas that I can grow. I’m not at the beginning where I am not doing any of these things, but I’m not there [prepared].”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Somewhat prepared</td>
<td>“I would hope I feel confident, but I don’t. I don’t want to be naive and say I’m perfect in something because I think you can always grow.” “It’d be hard to have someone evaluate you on it, but I think hopefully I’d do good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Somewhat prepared</td>
<td>“So, I think that I feel just a little prepared just through my own experiences of being a teacher and seeing what works and what doesn’t. Or learning just a little more each year about what I can do for my students and then again acknowledging them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Somewhat prepared</td>
<td>“I’m not afraid to ask questions and to say you know life is a learning experience and I had a certain experience growing up that other people didn’t and so it’s my job to learn about other people’s experiences. By doing that I feel somewhat comfortable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Not prepared</td>
<td>“Not very prepared. I think that – culturally responsive teaching seems like it just sounds like it’s a buzz word and there is a lot of you know it’s good teaching when you read the standard… I’m realizing that you’re doing all the basic stuff but when it comes down to the deeper reflection and deeper understanding I still don’t feel comfortable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Prepared</td>
<td>“Yeah, prepared. I mean I think a big portion of that is the experience of teaching children from different cultures for so long.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Prepared</td>
<td>“I personally think that I am. You know? I would say no one is ever 100% ready but I think I am. I would. It wouldn’t be a problem to me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Very Prepared</td>
<td>“I feel very prepared because I make that my mission every year.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four out of eight participants (P2-P3, P5, P7) communicated that the trainings and implementation steps to prepare them to meet the CRP evaluation standards lacked depth. P7 stated, “What we are doing right now is just scratching the surface and not really impacting our students.” P3 expressed feeling a need to conduct their own research to better understand CRP after completing the VDOE cultural competency training. When asked to complete a self-reflective teaching exercise that included all the teacher evaluation performance standards, P3 did not feel confident responding to the CRP section of questions. P3 explained, “I actually had to kind of do my own research… in general because there wasn’t enough, it was just like complete this form. So, I wanted to be mindful of how I was reflecting.”

Three participants (P6-P8) reported feeling prepared or very prepared to be evaluated based on CRP standards. P7 and P8 expressed that their confidence was rooted in having a similar childhood experience as the population of students in their classrooms. When asked if they were prepared to be evaluated based on CRP standards, P7 expressed, “I personally think that I am… It wouldn’t be a problem to me… I feel that I’m in a very unique situation because of who I am, what my culture is, what my ethnicity is.” Similarly, P8 responded, “I feel very prepared… I am from this area so I know the demographic of students that we teach.”

Contrastingly, P5 was the only participant that described feeling unprepared for the shift in the evaluation process. P5 mentioned unconscious bias and the difficulties that come with designing effective CRP trainings as barriers to feeling confident in CRP. P5 stated, “I still don’t feel comfortable. A lot of that has to do with the uncomfortable conversations about race and about where I stand in this and my different outlooks on things that maybe I don’t realize.”

Four of the eight participants (P1-P4) expressed that they felt somewhat prepared to be evaluated based on CRP standards. P1 and P2 described a growth mindset when it comes to
CRP. P1 responded, “I kind of feel like I’m in the middle of the road because I know that there are more areas that I can grow, but I’m not at the beginning where I am not doing any of these things.” P2 reflected on having a growth mindset. P2 stated, “You can always grow and being a White person, we can always grow to learn about systemic injustices that happen in our country and in our world. So, I am always willing to grow.”

**Interview Prompt 6**

What questions do you have about implementing culturally responsive practices?

One major category was identified by the researcher during the data analysis process of interview prompt six. The major category identified included modifications of the CRP training practices. Two subcategories were identified by the researcher during the data analysis process of interview prompt six. The two subcategories identified included: meeting the needs of diverse students and discomfort when discussing race matters.

Four out of eight participants (P2-P3, P5, P7) had questions regarding the effectiveness of VDOE’s cultural competency training and expressed their preference for a different training approach. Three out of eight participants (P1, P3, P8) detailed questions that they have regarding how best to meet the needs of a diverse student population. One participant (P6) did not have any questions regarding the implementation of CRP. Table 13 outlines questions participants had involving CRP.

**Table 13**

*Participant Questions Regarding CRP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>Question(s) Regarding the Implementation of CRP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>“How do you meet all student needs?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>Question(s) Regarding the Implementation of CRP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>“Is there a way to change the CRP training?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>“How do I implement CRP?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“How do we dive deeper into CRP during trainings?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>“How can we have a more comfortable experience during CRP trainings?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>“How do you quantify CRP and document it?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Are leaders prepared to evaluate CRP?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“How do we take politics out of CRP?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“How can we redesign CRP training?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>“How can CRP be defined plainly and simply?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“How are administrators introducing CRP?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>“How do we meet all student needs and provide equitable experiences?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked what questions remain about the implementation of CRP, P2 asked the following, “Is there any other way to teach it [CRP] or like to share across the school system versus the VDOE modules that are very lengthy?” P2 further detailed why this was their question, “I think it would be nice to have a public speaker about it. Or like someone in person because … when you have the modules, you’re kind of just trying to get your classroom ready and move on.” P7 also presented a question related to the CRP training process. P7 asked, “Can our training be defined more plainly and simply for us very tired teachers?... What does cultural responsiveness look like?” P7 noted similarities between VDOE’s cultural competency training and previous trainings they had received on Social Emotional Learning curriculum (SEL). P7 stated the following:

I know that the Virginia Department of Education has done samples of it of what it looks like. But again, I think they’re more attaching it to SEL instruction rather than the action
instruction of anything… What is it really going to look like to help our students grow
cognitively so that they can be ready for cultural diversity?

P3 and P5 presented questions and comments pertaining to the current training module not going
as in depth as is necessary for CRP. P3 expressed, “I feel like it’s more surface level. So how can
we I guess dive deeper into some of these things that then together make a difference?”

Three participants (P1, P3, P8) questioned how to meet the needs of diverse learners. P1
questioned, “How do you accommodate all?” P1 explained, “When you have a classroom that is
extremely diverse, [how do you go about] trying to make sure you’re meeting the needs of all of
those students?” P8 presented a question regarding meeting students need in an equitable
manner. P8 asked, “How can we keep things equitable with things that are changing and make
sure that all of our students are seen and represented?”

Two participants (P4-P5) described what they have experienced when topics such as race
and bias are addressed. As previously explained during the analysis of interview prompt five, P5
cited unconscious bias and the difficulties that come with designing effective CRP trainings that
allow all participants to feel emotionally safe. P5 again brings up these concepts during their
response to interview prompt 6. P5 questioned:

How do we get the politics part out of it?... [CRP] is definitely a polarizing topic right
now and I’ve had so many conversations with my parents who are very
conservative…I’ve tried to explain that I’m working on culturally responsive teaching
and they think that’s insane, but when you actually get down to talking about what it is,
they’re on the same team. They agree, but there’s all of these blockades in verbiage and
in the buzzwords, that’s preventing people from being on the same team. So as someone
who designs a training, how do you get to the point when you’re designing and kind of
framing in a way that is doing justice to what CRP actually is but also creating an entry point for the people who have preconceived notions about it?

P4 detailed a similar inquiry, “How can we have these conversations in an environment where people are not comfortable having those conversations? How do we change the dialogue?... How can we learn from each other’s differences in a way that’s comfortable?” These concerns are commonly found in research (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Khalifa et al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Shedrow, 2017) and present a barrier to training teachers for deep level culturally responsive teaching practices.

**RQ2 Major Themes**

**To what extent do teachers feel prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices after completing Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module?** Participant responses to interview prompts 4, 5, and 6 were used to discover the extent to which teachers feel prepared to be evaluated based on CRP. Overall, most teachers did not feel completely prepared to be evaluated based on culturally responsive practices. Only three out of eight participants (P6-P8) reported feel prepared or very prepared. A trend in participant responses was a call to revise VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module design. Teachers described the training as shallow and lacking and explained a desire for a training that dives deeper into conversations surrounding race and bias. Concurrently, teachers expressed concern and skepticism that a training including discussion of topics such as race and bias could effectively be designed with all participants feeling emotionally safe.

Seven out of eight participants (P1-P5, P7-P8) had lingering questions regarding implementation of CRP. Most questions involved participants expressing uncertainty regarding
the clear, plain definition of CRP and their ability to carry out CRP despite growing student needs. These questions serve as indicators for where learning gaps exist with CRP and provide a pathway forward for the design of future training opportunities.

**Summary**

This chapter reviewed the results of the qualitative study. The research questions were restated to ground the interview protocol design. Next, each interview prompt was discussed and analyzed. The researcher’s discussion included identifying and categorizing trends in participant responses. Lastly, this chapter synthesized trends in interview responses to determine major themes.
Chapter Five

Findings, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Studies

Over the course of this qualitative study, the researcher utilized interview protocol to examine the teacher perspective of implementing culturally responsive practices (CRP). Culturally responsive practices are the behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning (Gay, 2000). The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which teachers were prepared to be evaluated based on CRP after completing Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)’s Cultural Competency Training Module. Furthermore, this study sought to serve as an informative resource as CRP trainings are designed by leaders at both the state and school division level. Data were collected utilizing a qualitative research design using interview protocol to best capture individual, unique experiences from participants. Interviews were conducted virtually utilizing the researcher’s Virginia Tech Zoom video conferencing account. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Interview data gathered were then coded to identify key words, categories, and themes. Transcriptions were saved to a Virginia Tech Google Domain which requires a two-step authentication process and is password protected.

Summary of Findings

Data collected from nine interviews informed the five findings presented in this chapter. Three findings identified were in response to Research Question 1 (RQ1). Two findings identified were in response to Research Question 2 (RQ2).
Research Question 1 Findings

Finding 1

VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training was perceived of as not achieving the desired goal of providing educators with the tools needed to capitalize on the cultural and linguistic resources students bring to school. Most participants did not retain the information conveyed after completing VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module. Participant responses included in Table 8 displayed that six out of the eight participants either could not remember any details of the cultural competency training or confused the training with other mandatory training topics. P4 described the redundancy of mandatory virtual trainings in their response describing the cultural competency training:

To be honest, I remember we did it. I remember we had to do it. As far as what was involved in that, I don’t remember much to be honest. I’ve been teaching for almost thirty years. I get to a point now where a lot of it sounds like common sense, so I know when I took it, I tried to listen to it. I answered the questions, but to be honest, we had done so many by that point I couldn’t even tell you what we were asked to do.

P2 and P6 made clear that the primary focus of teachers was to complete the Cultural Competency Training Module as quickly as possible. P2 recalled typical methods of fast-forwarding segments of trainings were not available. P2 stated, “We have a lot of trainings at the beginning of the year. So, I do remember it was pretty lengthy, like we couldn’t skip. We couldn’t leave the page. We had to actually stay there and listen.” P6 expressed that the information presented was “common sense” yet could not identify specifics from the training. P6 explained, “I can’t honestly say that I remember what the content of the module was. I do
Finding One was supported by the literature reviewed for this study that called for CRP training sessions (Chen & Cheng, 2014; Huang et al., 2012; Khalifa, 2011; Warren, 2018). However, there was limited research that addressed the challenge of designing CRP training sessions that were effective and yielded long lasting learning for participants. Khalifa (2018) suggested that when school leaders have a firm mastery of CRP, they can navigate their staff through training sessions. Other researchers have studied the several responses from educators to avoid uncomfortable training topics like CRP that deal with the topics of race, bias, and culture. Gay and Kirkland (2003) documented participants diverging attention away from the training topic, choosing not to participate in the training, or trying to disprove the training information. Whether school leaders deliver trainings on CRP or outside trainings are provided by VDOE, a different approach to CRP training outside of VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module should be considered.

Finding 2

The teachers perceived that their lived experiences framed their individual approach to understand and implement culturally responsive practices. Half of the participants in the study defined CRP by self-reflecting on their lived experiences and relating those experiences to cultural responsiveness in a classroom setting. Five out of eight participants provided deep level culturally responsive descriptions of CRP. This was presented in Table 9. P2 detailed how their lived experience allows them to relate to students with similar upbringings, “I was a single mother household, and we didn’t always have like everything we wanted. I think that kind of like shapes you… I think it kind of helps me relate to a lot of my students in the
classroom.” P7 explained their experience in the classroom setting as a student new to the English language. P7 described, “when I was in elementary school… we were not encouraged to speak our own language but mainly to have that, that idea of assimilation. Like simulate into our new culture as immigrants.” In both cases the teachers detailed how their unique, lived experience provided them with ways to understand and approach CRP.

All participants agreed that personal beliefs and lived experiences influence how they teach. Table 10 displayed the number of participants who described their childhood upbringing, personal school experience, or described their cultural background when explaining how their beliefs and lived experiences impact their teaching. Five out of eight teachers stated that their upbringing and/or cultural background did not match the students that they teach. This is also included in Table 10 and mirrors information provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (2018).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2018) reported that the percentage of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools who are White is decreasing. The National Center for Education Statistics (2018) also reported the relatively stagnant race/ethnic percentage distribution of teachers in public school settings. “The majority of public elementary and secondary school teachers were White in both 2003-04 (the first year for which teacher data for all racial/ethnic groups were available) and 2015-16” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018, p. 10). Research supports that demographic mismatches between teachers and students can disproportionately having a negative impact on the education of minority students (Amthor, 2016; Choi, 2013; Huang et al., 2012). Ladson-Billings (1995) spent 6 years observing successful teachers of African American students and emphasized the importance of how personal teacher beliefs and lived experiences transfer into the classroom by stating:
The philosophical and ideological underpinnings of their practice i.e. how they thought about themselves as teachers and how they thought about others (their students, the students’ parents, and other community members), how they structured social relations within the outside of the classroom, and how they conceived of knowledge, revealed their similarities and points of congruence. (p. 162)

Shedrow (2017) made a case for growing the lived experiences of teachers by targeting higher education teacher preparation programs. Shedrow (2017) recommended increasing the cultural competency of future teachers through study abroad opportunities at colleges and universities. Shedrow (2017) suggested cross-cultural experiential learning and explained that, “the purpose of cross-cultural experiential learning is to submerse students in a culture different from their own so that they can experience the dissonance that accompanies the navigation of foreign systems and traditions” (p. 284). Shedrow (2017) described one teacher’s experience after spending weeks in Uganda as being, “markedly more aware of the cultural disconnect students faced at school and in her own classroom” (p. 282). Expanding the lived experiences of teachers could supplement demographic and cultural mismatches.

**Finding 3**

**Teachers indicated requesting trainings that include deep level culturally responsive teaching practices while also balancing an approachable format that allows participants to feel emotionally safe.** A theme throughout the study was participants requesting a different CRP training format than the current VDOE Cultural Competency Training Module. Half of the participants questioned the format of VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module when asked what questions they still had about implementing CRP. These questions are featured in Table 13. P2 suggested an in-person training, “I think it would be nice to have a public speaker
about it [CRP]. Or like someone in person because … when you have the modules, you’re kind of just trying to get your classroom ready and move on.” P3 and P5 commented on the VDOE Cultural Competency Training Module not going as in depth as is necessary for CRP. P3 expressed, “I feel like it’s more surface level. So how can we I guess dive deeper into some of these things that then together make a difference?”

Another theme in participant responses was a description of discomfort that is commonly experienced when topics such as race and bias are addressed during professional training sessions. P5 cited unconscious bias and the difficulties that come with designing effective CRP trainings that allow all participants to feel emotionally safe. P5 further explained:

How do we get the politics part out of it?... [CRP] is definitely a polarizing topic right now and I’ve had so many conversations with my parents who are very conservative… I’ve tried to explain that I’m working on culturally responsive teaching and they think that’s insane, but when you actually get down to talking about what it is, they’re on the same team. They agree, but there’s all of these blockades in verbiage and in the buzzwords, that’s preventing people from being on the same team. So as someone who designs a training, how do you get to the point when you’re designing and kind of framing in a way that is doing justice to what CRP actually is but also creating an entry point for the people who have preconceived notions about it?

P4 detailed a similar inquiry, “How can we have these conversations in an environment where people are not comfortable having those conversations? How do we change the dialogue?... How can we learn from each other’s differences in a way that’s comfortable?”

The call for deep level CRP trainings and emotional discomfort that often comes with discussions of race and bias is commonly found in research (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Khalifa et
al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Shedrow, 2017). Emotional discomfort presents a barrier to training teachers for deep level culturally responsive teaching practices.

In the current body of literature, surface level culturally responsive teaching practices are described by Hammond (2015) as teaching practices that are based on cultural aspects that can be observed. Examples of surface level culturally responsive teaching practices include food, music, holidays and dress which are commonly celebrated and included in many public schools across the United States (Hammond, 2015). Deep level culturally responsive teaching practices are described by Hammond (2015) as teaching practices that are based on the collective unconscious, the beliefs and norms that provide the foundation for culture. Examples of deep level culturally responsive teaching practices are described by Hammonds (2015) as teaching practices that are based on concepts of fairness, concepts of self, and spirituality. Based on the findings of this study, teachers are requesting trainings on deep level culturally responsive teaching practices.

Teachers also requested that the deep level CRP training provide an environment where all participants feel safe. There was a common thread across literature that detailed a sense of safety and belonging as necessary before student achievement (Edwards & Edick, 2013; Merchant et al., 2012). While this concept is intended for minority students achieving academic success, the same applied for teachers who were participating in trainings that involve sensitive topics. Accepting or acknowledging trends based on race can be difficult for teachers who may be hesitant to examine how their biases may unintentionally seep into their classroom (Shedrow, 2017). Similar to what was requested of teachers, one way to approach deep level CRP trainings was to first create a learning environment for the teacher participants that ensures everyone feels a sense of safety and a sense of belonging.
Research Question 2 Findings

Finding 4

Teachers indicated a support for Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains but were unsure of how to implement CRP pedagogy and practices along with community engagement in the classroom. Participant responses indicated mastery of two of Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains. Self-Reflection was the first domain that participants described exercising on a consistent basis. Eight out of eight teachers (P1-P8) expressed that they viewed reflection as a positive component of the teaching process that they practice regularly. P5 and P6 detailed growth in their reflective thinking process. P5 compared where they are as a teacher now to when they first started teaching. P5 stated, “I think that when I first started teaching, I didn’t really do a lot of self-reflection when it came to my own background and culture. I think it’s very much like being white I felt like there wasn’t much of a culture to think about and consider what I grew up in. But then as I’ve gone on, I’ve realized that there are way more things that I need to consider.”

Learning Environments was the other domain that participants referenced as a regular topic of focus. Featured in Table 11, half of eight participants (P4-P7) described CRP with a focus on relationship building with students. The other half of participants explained that CRP should be informed by trainings and research of the different cultures represented in the classroom. Five out of eight participants (P1, P4-P7) spoke about the importance of having a learning environment that reflects high academic and behavioral expectations for all students.

Participants regularly expressed an uncertainly of the implementation of CRP. This is included as the Pedagogy and Practices section of Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domains. P7 presented a question related to pedagogy and practices of CRP. P7 asked, “What does cultural
responsiveness look like?” P7 expressed frustration that CRP practices are being confused with SEL practices. P7 further stated the following:

I know that the Virginia Department of Education has done samples of it of what it looks like. But again, I think they’re more attaching it to SEL instruction rather than the action instruction of anything… What is it really going to look like to help our students grow cognitively so that they can be ready for cultural diversity?

This teacher perspective was frequent in research. As noted in previous research reviewed in this study, Warren (2018) explained that many teachers agree with the goals of CRP, however, are unsure of how to draw direct connections to make changes to their classroom instructional practices.

Culturally responsive teaching was most popularly attributed to the work of Geneva Gay (1994, 2002, 2010) and Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014). Both researchers studied to better understand how teachers could ensure academic success for minority students by first growing and developing their own understanding of minority students. Sandilos et al. (2017) referred to the work of Geneva Gay (1994) and Ladson-Billings (1995) when they connected the CRP criteria of academic success to maintaining cultural competence by proposing a warm demander pedagogy as a CRP framework. Sandilos et al. (2017) referred to the warm demander theory as, “a teaching style in which teachers are nurturing or caring toward their students but do not lower academic standards or expectations and are effective disciplinarians” (p. 1322). Five teacher participants (P1, P4-P7) described elements of the warm demander pedagogy by describing high expectations as an essential component of a culturally affirming learning environment.

Virginia’s Cultural Competency Domain number three focused on creating culturally competent community engagement (VDOE, 2021). VDOE (2021) explained that to meet the
expectations of this domain, “culturally competent educators analyze policies, procedures, and programs that prevent or limit access and opportunity for students and staff and align resources to increase achievement for all, without lowering standards for any student” (VDOE, 2021, p. 6). At no point during this study did teachers express aspects of this domain in their interview responses. As teachers expressed their uncertainty when implementing CRP, culturally competent community engagement is a clear area of growth that was evident in this study and is identified in research (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2018; Choi, 2013; Khalifa, 2018; Mapp & Bergman, 2019).

Finding 5

Teachers indicated they are not yet fully prepared to be evaluated based on CRP.

Only three out of eight participants (P6-P8) reported feeling prepared or very prepared to be evaluated based on CRP. Participant responses were provided in Table 12. Five out of eight participants (P1-P5, P7) reported being that they are not yet fully prepared to be evaluated based on CRP. Seven out of eight participants (P1-P5, P7-P8) had lingering questions regarding implementation of CRP. P5 cited unconscious bias and the difficulties that come with designing effective CRP trainings as barriers to feeling confident in CRP. P5 stated, “I still don’t feel comfortable. A lot of that has to do with the uncomfortable conversations about race and about where I stand in this and my different outlooks on things that maybe I don’t realize.”

As noted in previous research there was a communicated need for highly effective training of current teachers and teacher candidates before they begin implementing CRP (Bergantz, 2021; ESSA, 2015; Khalifa, 2011; Warren, 2018). As previously noted in Finding One of this study, VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module does not seem to be the highly effective training that researchers are recommending. Warren (2018) outlined an
academic training approach through field experiences, critical classroom discourse, engaging literature that centers on race and equity, and critical self-reflection as a pathway to preparing teacher candidates for CRP. The same approach could prove effective for teachers already in the field. Bergantz (2021) emphasized a community training approach through neighborhood walks guided by students, community asset conversations with adult stakeholders, and discussions with community spokespersons. Recommendations from researchers vary regarding how best to prepare teachers for CRP. While concepts of self-reflection, cultural understanding, high expectations, and a sense of belonging are clear themes in research, there is not yet an agreed upon method for training and preparing teachers for CRP. The next section includes implications for practice based on the literature reviewed for this study and the results analyzed from this study.

Implications of Practice

Implication 1

VDOE should consider a redesign of the Cultural Competency Training Module. Data from this study demonstrated that teachers completing the current training module are not retaining concepts. VDOE should invest time and attention into redesigning a training approach that yields long term memory and understanding for participants. The stakes are higher now that teachers are required to demonstrate implementation of CRP concepts as a part of their evaluation process. This implication is associated with Finding One.

Implication 2

VDOE should consider researching methods to incentivize school division efforts to hire and retain teachers that are more reflective of student populations. As noted in this study and in previous research, there was national data to support a cultural mismatch of
teachers’ and students’ beliefs, values, experiences, and perspectives (Choi, 2013; Goldring et al., 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). This cultural mismatch contributed to academic disadvantages for minority students (Amthor, 2016; Choi, 2013, Warren, 2018). Eight out of eight teachers (P1-P8) agreed that their culture, lived experiences, and beliefs influence how they teach. While recruitment and retention of minority teachers is no easy feat, school divisions should continue to be motivated to put forth effort in achieving a staff population that is culturally reflective of the student population. This implication is associated with Finding Two.

**Implication 3**

*School divisions should consider investing in professional trainers to provide a deep level culturally responsive teaching training that provides emotional security and comfortability for participants in a live setting.* This study highlighted the importance of professional training that allows teachers to understand and engage in deep level culturally responsive teaching practices. This study also joined research by further revealing the common barriers that deter teachers from fully engaging in trainings. One barrier revealed in this study is the virtual online format of VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module. Teachers explained that this format was unsuccessful as most participants admittedly did not remember the training or confused it with other mandatory virtual training. The second barrier was teachers’ hesitancy to participate in an intimate training that could threaten their emotional security and comfortability. When school divisions invest in live professional trainers who are experts at explaining the depth of cultural responsiveness while balancing the comfort of participants, teachers are better equipped to carry out CRP in the classroom setting. This implication is associated with Finding One and Finding Three.
Implication 4

School divisions and VDOE should consider providing training opportunities for teachers to better understand Standard Six of the Updated *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*. Standard Six was titled, “Culturally Responsive Teaching and Equitable Practices” by VDOE. Standard Six was added to the updated *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* in March 2021 along with the Cultural Competency Training Module as an option to comply with the mandatory training component. The Cultural Competency Training Module provided a broad, limited explanation of cultural competency and did not go into detail about the specific performance indicators of Standard Six that teachers are now a part of the teacher evaluation algorithm. School divisions and VDOE should consider providing training opportunities specific to the performance indicators of Standard Six so that teachers have an opportunity to clearly understand how to demonstrate Culturally Responsive Teaching and Equitable Practices in their daily routines with students. This implication is associated with Finding Four and Finding Five.

Implication 5

VDOE should consider providing school divisions with funding to provide opportunities for teachers to experience different cultures, expanding upon the lived experiences of teachers. Teachers from this study explained that their approach to CRP was rooted in their life experiences. Research recommended creating and expanding programs that enhance the cultural competency of teacher candidates through study abroad trips and other opportunities that allow teachers to experience cultural otherness and cross-cultural experiential learning (Shedrow, 2017). While more common in teacher preparation programs with higher
education institutions, these same programs could prove beneficial for experienced teachers. This implication is associated with Finding Two.

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

This study revealed that teachers are not yet fully prepared to be evaluated based on CRP. The data gathered from teachers provided a new outlook that could direct future studies. The following recommendations for future studies are listed below.

1. Conduct a study that influences how cultural competency training can be redesigned based on the feedback and questions teachers provided.
2. Conduct a study to determine best practices of training deep level culturally responsive teaching practices that allow participants to feel emotionally safe.
3. Increase the sample size and eligibility criteria of the study to include more teachers who have taken a variety of cultural competency trainings beyond VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module.
4. Expand the setting of the study to include teachers from a variety of public-school settings in Virginia with differing predominant political views. Conducting a qualitative study with interview protocol may provide a picture of the differing perspectives around CRP implementation.
5. Expand the participants of the study to include teachers in private school and charter school settings.
6. Consider a study that includes the parent perspective of CRP in the classroom.
7. Consider a study the includes the student perspective of CRP in the classroom.
8. Consider a study that reviews teacher candidate preparedness to implement CRP from the perspective of higher education professors of teacher preparation programs.
Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which teachers were prepared to be evaluated based on CRP after completing VDOE’s Cultural Competency Training Module. This chapter explained the findings of the study, discussed the implications for practice, and suggested future studies. First, the chapter provided an overview of the findings with supporting data from research and the study. Next, the chapter addressed implications to practitioners associated with the previously discussed findings. Finally, the chapter offered suggestions for future studies that could extend or expand the current study.
**Personal Reflections**

I began this doctoral program in the fall of 2020, right in the thick of a global pandemic. I was unsure how my research of cultural responsiveness would bring meaning to America’s classrooms. As the weeks turned to months and months turned to years of asynchronous learning and virtual classrooms, I saw how desperate our students were to be fully seen, heard, and understood in all their beauty. As vaccines were developed and students returned to the classrooms, I continued to see value in this work. The value of a student’s identity being present in their studies provides an opportunity for the learner to come together with their learning both metaphorically and literally.

In fall of 2021 I witnessed culturally responsiveness misrepresented in media and misunderstood by communities in Virginia. Experiencing this misrepresentation of CRP established a new sense of purpose in this research. It became essential that I shine a light on how cultural responsiveness could be understood with a common language between educators and communities for the betterment of the education we provide to students. It is with a full heart that I end this dissertation knowing that my deepest conviction is to continue carrying out culturally responsive leadership, serving as a thought warrior for public education.
References


Carnegie Corporation of New York (2018). Joining together to create a bold vision for next generation family engagement: Engaging families to transform education. *Global Family*


https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2014.982977


Appendix A

Interview Protocol and Prompts

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. Before we begin the interview, I would like to introduce myself, review the purpose of this study, and confirm that you agree to participate.

My name is Kristen Marbury. I am an assistant principal with 9 years of experience in education. I am very interested in investigating teacher preparedness to be evaluated based on Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) after completion of the Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module. My hope is for this study to serve as a valuable tool that informs the design of CRP teacher training. I look forward to speaking with you about your experiences pertaining to CRP. Now that I have explained an outline of the purpose of the study and your role in the study, can you confirm or deny your participation in the study by stating, “Yes, I choose to participate. Or by stating, I no longer wish to participate."

The interview will involve a total of six prompts. Rest assured that at no point will your identity be shared or connected with any of the detailed responses that you provide during this interview.

Prompt Number 1: Describe the Cultural Competency Training Module developed by the Virginia Department of Education that you completed.

Question 1 Additional Prompt (if necessary): Explain your experience completing the cultural competency training module.

Prompt Number 2: How would you define culturally responsive teaching practices?

Question 2 Additional Prompt (if necessary): Explain what culturally responsive teaching looks like.

Prompt Number 3: How does self-reflection of your beliefs and your lived experiences influence your teaching?

Question 3 Additional Prompt (if necessary): Explain how you self-reflect on your own lived experiences when teaching.
**Prompt Number 4:** How do you create culturally affirming learning environments?

Question 4 Additional Prompt (if necessary): Explain how you create a culturally welcoming learning environment.

**Prompt Number 5:** How prepared do you feel being evaluated based on culturally responsive practices?

Question 5 Additional Prompt (if necessary): Explain why you are or are not prepared to be evaluated on culturally responsive practices.

**Prompt Number 6:** What questions do you have about implementing culturally responsive practices?

Question 6 Additional Prompt (if necessary): Explain what aspects of culturally responsive teaching you are unsure about.

That concludes the interview prompts. I would like to remind you again that at no point will your identity be shared or connected with any of the detailed responses that you have provided during this interview. A transcribed copy of this interview will be provided to you so that you may have the opportunity to check for the accuracy of your responses and confirm the interview results.

Thank you for your participation in this study.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING REQUEST LETTER

Dear Executive Director,

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech under the advisement of Dr. Carol S. Cash. My doctoral study investigates teacher preparedness to be evaluated based on Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) after completion of the Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module. I am writing to ask permission to conduct this study at [Redacted] School, [Redacted] School, and [Redacted] School.

I am interested in interviewing teachers who have successfully completed one full evaluation cycle in their current role. A written report of my work will be provided to you at the conclusion of the study.

Should you have any questions regarding this study, I would appreciate the opportunity to speak to you and answer those questions for you. Please let me know your decision as soon as possible at kristenmarbury@vt.edu. I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Kristen Marbury
Appendix C

Principal Letter Explaining Study

Dear Principal,

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech under the advisement of Dr. Carol S. Cash. My doctoral study investigates teacher preparedness to be evaluated based on Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) after completion of the Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module. I am writing to inform you that I have been granted permission to conduct this study at your school. I am interested in interviewing two to four teachers who have successfully completed one full evaluation cycle in their current role.

Should you have any questions regarding this study, I would appreciate the opportunity to speak to you and answer those questions for you. You may contact me by emailing kristenmarbury@vt.edu. I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Kristen Marbury
Appendix D

Invitation Email to Prospective Participants

Dear Teacher,

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech under the advisement of Dr. Carol S. Cash. My doctoral study investigates teacher preparedness to be evaluated based on Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) after completion of the Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module. I am writing to ask you to be a participant in the study.

I am interested in your experiences regarding CRP and the Virginia Department of Education’s Cultural Competency Training Module. All interview responses will be held in confidence. You will not be identified in the transcripts or the report of the study. Interviews will be conducted individually and should last about thirty minutes.

I hope that you will consider giving approximately thirty minutes of your time to assist with the study. Please let me know at kristenmarbury@vt.edu if you are willing to participate. I appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kristen Marbury
Appendix E

Information Sheet for Participation in a Research Study

Principal Investigator:
- Kristen Marbury

Title of Study:
- Training and Preparedness of Teachers to be Evaluated on Culturally Responsive Practices in One Public School Division in Virginia

Committee Chair:
- Dr. Carol S. Cash

You are invited to participate in a research study. I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech, and I am conducting this research as part of my course work. This form includes information about the study and contact information if you have any questions.

➢ WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?

If you decide to participate in this study, you will complete an interview. As part of the study, you will be asked to answer six questions pertaining to the new standard in the Virginia Teacher Performance Evaluation System that includes culturally responsive practices. Interviews will take place as virtual meetings using the Zoom video conferencing platform.

The study should take approximately thirty minutes of your time.

We do not anticipate any risks from completing this study.

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.
➢ CONFIDENTIALITY

We will do our best to protect the confidentiality of the information we gather from you, but we cannot guarantee 100% confidentiality.

Any data collected during this research study will be kept confidential by the researchers. Your interview will be audio-recorded using a feature in the Zoom video conferencing platform and then transcribed. The researcher will code the transcripts using a pseudonym (false name). The recordings will be uploaded to a secure password-protected computer. The researchers will maintain a list that includes a key to the code. The master key and the recordings will be stored separately until the successful defense of the study for three years and then destroyed.

➢ WHO CAN I TALK TO?

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Kristenmarbury@vt.edu. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact the Virginia Tech HRPP Office at 540-231-3732 (irb@vt.edu).
Appendix F

CITI Program Social & Behavioral Course Certification

This is to certify that:

**Kristen Marbury**

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

**Social & Behavioral Research**
(Curriculum Group)
**Social & Behavioral Research**
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech)**

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?weac16a45-c5d7-4b14-8a04-206f21b9ae17-38396121