

# Paving the Way: The Journey towards Culturally Responsive Teaching for Teacher Educators and Teachers

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**Abstract**— American public schools are becoming increasingly diverse. There are ongoing demographic changes across the nation and globalization efforts necessitate the development of a more profound cognizance of culture as a concept and as a means for creating equitable opportunities and environments for learning in our schools. School administrators and in-service teachers become more adept at recognizing and addressing the variances in culture within our classrooms, but pre-service teachers must also have opportunities to explore and observe the concept of Culturally Responsive Teaching. The aim of this article is to explain how a Department of Elementary Education approached the issue of Culturally Responsive Teaching through professional development opportunities for faculty, pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. The article describes a model used for professional development that can be adapted to help teacher educators increase their level of understanding regarding culturally responsive teaching. The *CASKS* assessment taken by participants prior to the presentation showed negligible levels of understanding or skills regarding *Culturally Responsive Teaching* by pre-service teachers, in-service educators (including administrators) and university faculty members alike. The professional development activities provided educators with research, modeling and instructional design practice regarding *Culturally Responsive Teaching*. Participants completed the *CASKS* assessment again after completing all professional development activities. The results showed an increase in understanding and skills, while the comments showed a positive attitudinal response regarding the need for more training on *Culturally Responsive Teaching*.

**Keywords**— Culturally responsive teaching, Professional development, Teacher education

## I. INTRODUCTION

American public schools are becoming increasingly diverse. There are ongoing demographic changes across the nation and globalization efforts necessitate the development of a more profound cognizance of culture as a concept and as a means for creating equitable opportunities and environments for learning in our schools. Not only must school administrators and in-service teachers become more adept at recognizing and addressing the variances in culture within classrooms, but pre-service teachers must have opportunities to explore and observe the concept of Culturally Responsive Teaching. Likewise, teacher educators must self examine their

own understanding of cultural responsive teaching and in turn embed in teacher education programs opportunities for pre-service teachers to explore and develop skills in designing effective culturally responsive instruction and environments. The change in American public schools toward a more culturally responsive approach to teaching and learning must include work at the university level with teacher educators and both pre-service and in-service teachers.

## II. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

### A. Purpose

The purpose of this article is to share with teacher educators a professional development framework used to introduce Culturally Responsive Teaching to university education faculty and education practitioners in local education agencies. The article further provides insight regarding the current level of knowledge and skills with regard to culturally responsive teaching practices by both in-service educators and teacher education faculty. It shows how the department of elementary education at one state university approached the concept of Culturally Responsive Teaching and developed professional development opportunities for local school district personnel and pre-service teachers.

The article describes the model used for the ensuing professional development; one that can be used or adapted to help teacher educators develop a greater level of understanding regarding cultural responsive teaching. Furthermore, the article shows specific strategies to use when instructing in-service teachers and how teacher educators can provide professional development to in-service educators as a means for developing reciprocal partnerships. As faculty of pre-service teachers become more enlightened regarding the issue of culturally responsive teaching in a global society, they are, in essence, ensuring that the incoming teacher workforce use approaches that provide young learners greater levels of access to the curriculum.

### B. Changing Demographics

The ever-increasing diversity in our schools and communities is a topic that arises time and time again when discussing the state of education. Not only has the makeup of the U.S. population changed significantly over the last two decades, but the definition of "diversity" itself has undergone transformation. The concept of diversity has grown to encompass more than just the commonly accepted

determinants of ethnicity and race; cultural and socioeconomic factors play a large part in how a person interacts in society. Even the once clearly delineated check boxes of race have changed. For the first time, the 2000 U.S. Census allowed individuals to indicate more than one race on the form, meaning that people of mixed heritages no longer have to decide which one classification best describes them. All of these changes indicate a shift in the American perspective on diversity [1]

Keeping abreast of the demographics on a local level is crucial for educators to make learning effective. Nationally, the number of individuals who speak languages other than English increased from 23.1 to 55.4 million between 1980 and 2007 [2]. Also, according to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, the number of English Language Learners grew nearly 400% from 1996 to 2006. The state of North Carolina mirrors these national statistics. While linguistic and cultural diversity in our classrooms and communities has the potential to enlighten and expand our understanding of others and ourselves, it also presents challenges for educators. These demographic changes in the United States will necessitate some shifts in how we educate our children and the teachers who educate them.

### C. Barriers to Culturally Responsive Teaching

Public school instructional practices and learning environments unconsciously create barriers for equitable access to learning and curriculum due to a miniscule understanding of the concept of culture and the means by which teachers can be culturally responsive. Wlodkowski & Ginsberg [3] questioned if there is a “pedagogical framework that respects the backgrounds and contemporary circumstances of all learners regardless of individual status and power, and employs learning processes that embrace the range of needs, interests, and orientations to be found” among learning institutions at either primary, secondary or higher education levels. The problem that public school learners may have inequitable access to curriculum and learning opportunities has a fourfold cause: 1) school based educators may not be culturally responsive because they do not have the cultural knowledge and skills to effectively meet the needs of diverse learners; 2) school based educators were not trained in cultural responsiveness their teacher education programs; 3) teacher education programs may address the idea of instructional differentiation, but do not connect the concept of culture as a major factor impacting how students receive instruction or how they respond to the instruction provided by teachers within a monolithic culture; 4) research regarding the concept of culturally responsive teaching is scant and professional development is limited so the possibility of effecting a dynamic culture change is dubious.

### D. Teacher Education Program Changes

#### *Frames of Reference*

Teacher Educators, as well as pre-service and in-service teachers, are challenged with infusing culturally relevant teaching into their instruction with 21<sup>st</sup> century culturally diverse children. Teaching practices continue to mirror a monolithic view and children are being left behind, causing a widening achievement gap [4][5] Teachers are challenged

with knowing how to work with culturally diverse populations of children. The response to achievement gaps, diversity and equity leadership, etc. posits an in-depth approach for meaningful professional development. Enhancement of teacher educator knowledge base for multicultural knowledge is inherent in order to meet these needs. Research-based techniques in the field of education foster traditional teaching practices which inhibits equitable learning opportunities for culturally diverse students. This compels teacher education program faculty to educate themselves and align program academics with social justice skill building and multicultural frames [6] in order to enhance instructional practices.

#### *Definitions*

While the terminology used in this work has been projected in educational literature for many years; for the purpose of this article we will use the following definitions.

#### *Culture*

Culture is the collective values, expectations and norms of a group. A shared perception as to the meaning and importance of those values, expectations and norms is reflective of the priorities and goals of the people in that group. It is indicative of the manner in which they behave in differing situations and their ability to cope with their environment and with one another. Social environment is experienced through culture and culture is transmitted from generation to generation [7].

LeVine [8] states that culture is a "shared organization of ideas that includes the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic standards prevalent in a community and the meanings of communicative actions;" and Goodenough [9] states that it is a set of "standards for deciding what is, standards for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to do about doing it."

Furthermore, Fickel [7] states that culture “imposes order and meaning on all our experiences.” She further states that culture provides a world view, helping us to make sense of the world and our assumptions about how it works. Culture provides a perceptual lens through which experiences are filtered and knowledge and meaning is made. It allows us to predict how others from our group will behave in certain situations and provides us language and imagery for talking about and explaining our world.

#### *Pedagogy*

Pedagogy is the philosophical approach by which we frame our teaching practices. It is through this lens we design, implement and reflect on our teaching practices. In short, it is both the art and science of teaching. It is a culmination of the techniques, strategies and models used to stylize our presentation of the knowledge we determine that students should know and be able to do.

#### *Culturally responsive teaching*

According to Ladson –Billings [10], culturally responsive teaching is an instructional approach empowering students at several levels (intellectually, socially, emotionally, etc.). This is done by utilizing cultural reference points to impact attitudes, increase knowledge and develop skills. Ladson-Billings identified several principles that characterize culturally responsive teaching practices. Teachers should always communicate high expectations for learning and use

active teaching methods to help students acquire knowledge and skills. The teacher is a facilitator for learning – not just a dispenser of knowledge. The culturally responsive teacher reshapes the curriculum to include the traditions, processes and response modes of all students within the class. The classroom becomes a place of student controlled discourse that helps students embrace the uniqueness of their peers and helps them develop skills in looking at academic concepts from a variety of perspectives. Employment of culturally responsive teaching strategies builds on what students already know and helps students understand ways on knowing vary. Furthermore by encouraging students to embrace their own culture, they are able to develop an appreciation of another student's culture. Together, students develop a love of learning and individually they are able build on their personal strengths to confront areas of limitation [11].

Geneva Gay [12] defined *Culturally Responsive Teaching* as instruction that validates the values, prior experiences and cultural awareness of students. She continues to state that culturally responsive teaching is comprehensive, transformative and liberating. Gay [12] states that the practice of culturally responsive teaching requires a continuous analysis of school climate and participating teachers should ask 'Who feels comfortable and safe?' and 'Who feels uncomfortable and unsafe?'

#### E. Assumptions

There are some philosophical assumptions about learning upon which this article is founded. First, that knowledge is socially- constructed and reflects the culture in which it was developed. Language is the primary means of expression of that culture; whether it is through verbal or nonverbal means of communication [13]. Secondly, knowledge is based on the beliefs, worldviews and values of the culture through which the knowledge is obtained. These frames of reference are the means by which we make sense of the world around us and are the basis for relating to others persons. Thirdly that schooling or educational practices in an enculturation appropriate to the culturally group that provides the schooling [7]. The process of schooling operates on cultural nuances (e.g., agriculture calendar, giving teacher an apple, speaking up in class, calling teacher by last name). Historically, the culture of "others" has not been acknowledged in the schooling process which has resulted in an environment of 'differences'. (Banks [14], Delpit [15], Sleeter [16], Grant [17], and Bernstein [18] postulated that induction into a subject discipline should be understood as induction into a culture with its accepted assumptions and supporting beliefs about what constitutes content knowledge, rules for determining evidence and forms of inquiry, formalized language and rhetorical forms, and a social organization that includes issues of power, influence, and status. Finally, motivation is inseparable from culture. Motivation is a psychological process through which unsatisfied wants or needs lead to drives that are aimed at goals or incentives. What a person sees as important and strives to do is what the culture from which that person derives their social significance deems important. The motivation process is universal, that all people are motivated to pursue goals they

value—what the work-motivation theorists call goals with "high valence" or "preference". Culture influences the specific goals and that motivation differs across cultures [19].

#### F. Rationale

There is concern that teacher candidates receive, in teacher education programs, an instructional model approach that is derived from a monolithic view of schooling. The elementary education faculty used this as a query in response to a challenge presented by the university Office of Policy and Research (OPAR) to engage in self-inquiries for program quality and continuous improvement. The elementary education faculty agreed to do a self- evaluation and do self- reflection regarding the concept of culturally responsive teaching.

In an effort to ensure continuous improvement in the teacher education program and to prepare student teachers to work in increasingly diverse and global learning environments, the elementary education department sought for evidence that pre-service teachers are provided opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the learning needs of culturally diverse learners in American schools through culturally responsive teaching practices. They also sought seek to determine ways to infuse the university learning environment and academics with culturally relevant teaching practices. The primary purpose was to ensure that teacher candidates graduate prepared to impact their school environments toward a less monolithic approach to teaching and learning.

### III. SYMPOSIUM DESIGN

The symposium was supported and sponsored by the Department of Elementary Education. The faculty team examining this initiative felt that the professional development must address three ideas: 1) what culturally responsive teaching is and how it differs from most current classroom practices; 2) why it is important to develop personal cultural responsiveness and the impact of a culturally responsive classroom on student learning; 3) and what are some practical ways that teachers can utilize culturally responsive teaching strategies.

The faculty team selected and adapted the *Crosswalks Assessment of Participants Knowledge and Skills and Instructional Strategies (CASKS* [20], a Likert scale (0-5) survey formulated to determine the level of knowledge and skills teachers, faculty members or administrators have regarding the values, culture and pedagogy when addressing culturally and linguistically diverse learning groups (Appendix 1). The survey had 22 questions that were divided into 6 sections. The first 10 questions addressed the general knowledge of cultural traditions and their impact on the participant's personal lives and then how that culture impacts the learning of children. It also gauged the level knowledge regarding how to support the learning needs of children in cultural transition. The second section of 12 questions addressed the skill level of participants related to working with or teaching children and families who are culturally diverse.

A six hour symposium regarding the concept of culturally

responsive teaching strategies was developed. Invitations were sent for a Saturday workshop as a culminating event to the School of Education *American Education Week* activities. Symposium invitations were sent to the university faculty members across the School of Education and to Local School Agency (LEA) human resource directors from five school districts; with which the university had partnership agreements. The human resource directors made the invitation available to the teachers in their districts. There were thirty six symposium participants. Six of those in attendance were pre-service teacher candidates from the Birth through Elementary licensure programs at the university. There were also four university faculty members present and the twenty-six remaining participants were classroom teachers from partnering local education agencies.

Upon arrival at the symposium, participants were asked to complete the CASKS survey. The symposium began by examining current demographic data from the North Carolina Census Bureau [21] regarding changes in populations within a ten year period. Participants engaged in personal reflections regarding those changes and its impact in schools.

The second part of the symposium provided a brief overview of the research regarding cultural responsiveness and personal examples and artifacts provided by the faculty presenter. The faculty presenter used the Peter Speirs' [22] book "People" to engage the participants in and interactive discussion regarding diversity found in groups. A PowerPoint presentation was used to give participants research and information about Louise Derman-Sparks' [23] concept of anti-bias teaching and examples of a culturally relevant classroom. The presenter also provided pedagogical examples through by showing artifacts gathered from classrooms and through observation and personal teaching practices. An array of multi-cultural literature and objects of art provided a supporting ambience to the symposium presentation space. Music from a variety of countries and cultural venues served to further enhance the symposium's culturally responsive focus.

The third and final section of the workshop included the participants teaming together to map a design for unit of article using a selection of multi-cultural children's literature. The teams selected the age level for the unit and were asked to share why they chose the book, how they would use it to facilitate instruction from a culturally relevant approach while meeting a set of state standards that were integrated across curricular boundaries. Following a collaborative work session, participant groups presented their unit maps to the entire group. After reflective discussions about the planning activity, the participants were asked to take the CASKS survey again. The resulting data from the pre and post CASKS was used to help faculty members determine the effectiveness of the symposium in impacting participant levels of culturally responsive teaching knowledge and skills.

After examining the data, the faculty felt that the workshop was successful enough to share at the state reading conference. Some alterations were made regarding time, but the same format and information was present and focused on strategies toward increasing literacy in all readers. The faculty presenters decided to use traditional "Cinderella" type stories from many different countries. The stories were pre-

determined for cooperative groups in the conference session. Those in attendance selected this session from a menu of choices. Forty-three in-service teachers or university faculty members participated in this session. The workshop was one hour in length and began and ended with the CASKS survey which was collected at the end of the workshop. The surveys were compiled and the data was analyzed. There were seventy-nine total pre-service teachers, in-service teachers and university faculty that participated in the two presentations.

#### IV. RESULTS

Analysis of the pre and post CASKS revealed some surprising patterns. There was a greater change in both sessions in the *General Knowledge* and *Teacher Knowledge of Supporting Child Learning* sections of the CASKS. The data suggests that the participants became more knowledgeable about: 1) the role language and culture hold for children and families; 2) the impact of the dominant/mainstream culture on shaping research and practice for teaching and learning; 3) how culture impacts the development and learning of children; 4) how to design environments, activities, and develop relationships between children and families from different cultures or for groups with varying languages and how to adapt teaching and intervention to meet the needs of culturally or linguistically diverse children. The apparent shift in response levels may be the result of participant engagement in reasoning and discussion regarding the research about culturally responsive teaching and student learning prospects. The data further demonstrated that participants were cognizant of the role their own culture played in their attitudes and value systems; particularly to the questions concerning personal cultural traditions with regard to attitudes, interaction styles and use of language. There was a more pronounced change in understanding the impact of the dominant culture on shaping research and practices for elementary learners and early interventions. All participants rated themselves as having no (0) knowledge of the legal implication related to cultural or linguistic diversity in the pre survey. The post survey revealed a more median understanding with 45 participants rating themselves at a level 2 and 38 participants rating themselves at a level 3 regarding 'knowledge for understanding legal issues'.

Regarding how to design environments and develop relationships so that children are exposed to cultures, participant responses move from all response being at the 0-2 level for the initial survey to 65 responses being level 3 and above. The following questions regarding the support for transitions showed an equally significant change from a level 2 and below to an increase for above level three. Most participants indicated a higher skill for addressing learning styles for students across all cultural groups so there was a less substantial increase in data for those concepts. While most areas had some positive change there were two specific areas that showed little or no growth in the data. The response for 'skills for including parents and community in developing shared priorities and plans' was very low with the initial survey; however it stayed in the low to median range in the final survey. The data also revealed that there was little

change in understanding in relation to using school and community resources to help find or use translator or cultural mediators or for gathering teaching resources. This phenomenon could be a result of systemic roles; those who supervise or determine the availability of these resources. Most classroom-based teachers have little authority in the selecting and funding of such personnel and depend on system administrators to procure those resources.

A comment section provided with the final assessment allowed participants to share insights, new understandings and give comment regarding their personal attitudes regarding the concept of *Culturally Responsive Teaching*. Those comments revealed a generally positive attitude toward the need for more extensive training on the concept. University faculty members revealed more reluctance to include the information within the content methods courses but suggested that it should be an integral part of the introductory courses such as *Educational Psychology* or *Foundations of Education*. Pre-service teachers participating in the professional development activities expressed the need to understand the concept more fully, but also admitted to being overwhelmed with the information in current courses and offering suggestions. One repeated suggestion was an additional course in classroom management course in the teacher preparation program with *Culturally Responsive Teaching* embedded throughout the course.

## V. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the data indicated that the introductory professional development activities had impacted teachers. However, the data indicates there is a need for more extensive work regarding *Culturally Responsive Teaching* for both school based teachers and university based teacher educators. This professional development could take the form of more extensive research projects evoking the perspectives of students and parents. Further work could also include the development of an extensive model of professional development that would include training, implementation, monitoring and assessments, and further training as determined by goals set by learning institutions. As indicated by the data, professional development should also include the legal requirements and legislations regarding instructional parameters for language, religion, or cultural differences.

An analysis of teacher education programs for all levels could provide insight to the degree that the concept of culturally responsive teaching is addressed and help guide the development of the most efficient and effective processes to embed the concept and philosophy for culturally responsive teaching. There is an assumption that with professional development and increased knowledge and skills, teacher educators will endeavor to embed culturally responsive teaching strategies and concept building throughout the curriculum of teacher education programs.

It is also assumed that with similar professional development, in-service teachers will implement culturally responsive teaching strategies within their own instructional practices. Further, they will also seek to impact the environment of their schools and mentor new teachers toward a greater level of culturally responsive teaching practices. By

selecting *Culturally Responsive Teaching* as a framework for school improvement, schools may be able to address some hidden barriers to increasing student achievement rates and find that students are more ready to respond to system authorized academic assessments when the learning environment has been supportive and receptive to their culturally developed learning means.

The research on the idea of culturally relevant teaching practices is scant. There is a need for more research from both a conceptual approach and for the development of effective models for teaching and practice. It is imperative that teacher education programs help teachers move past the idea of “touristing” [12] as a model for cultural instruction but rather to infuse the concept of cultural responsivity in the learning environment, in instructional design and in the development of socio-emotional partnerships with parents and the diverse community at large.

As a result of the symposium and the findings from the CASKS pre-post inventory, there are a set of recommendations that can be articulated. First and foremost, professional development should be designed as ongoing from its inception. A suggestion would be to use the CASKS to guide the training and present one section or complementing ideas at a time, ask participants to implement the new skills, have a plan for monitoring and assessing then move to the next set of skills and knowledge identified for priority.

Specific to teacher education programs; in order to ensure a dynamic infusion of the philosophy and framework for culturally responsive teaching throughout the teacher education program, the following ideas may be considered. Complete a readiness survey with university colleagues; then offer to train colleagues using the same professional development provided to practitioners. Developing a study group to analyze the curriculum of the teacher education program and find ‘best fit’ courses to introduce the concept of culturally responsive teaching and identifying courses that would support the concept through activities, observations, class discussions and then bring it to the practitioner level, i.e. field based experiences. Teacher educators may need to discuss and come to consensus concerning what culturally responsive teaching looks like, sounds like, and feels like in a regular classroom.

A third component to consider at the university level would be to develop partnerships with school districts to present a series of ongoing training. The plan could incorporate job embedded projects for in service teachers that includes action research, article groups and opportunities for ‘in the community’ discovery events.

Recommendations for school based teachers and administrators regarding the process of transforming learning organizations into culturally responsive learning communities would include the following ideas: 1) Know what the research says, read extensively about the concept and practical applications of culturally responsive teaching strategies and what the research says about the impact on student learning. Make sure the ‘research informs your decision making processes’[7] when designing instruction or creating school improvement plans. 2) Be honest about where you are as a learning organization. Make a list of things you already do that aligns with the culturally responsive teaching concept. 3)

## APPENDIX

## Appendix I

Crosswalks Assessment of Participant Knowledge and Skills for Culturally Responsive Teaching

Thank you for completing this measure. Your responses will be kept confidential. Please ask if you have any questions. Please read the following statements. Rate your current level of knowledge in that area by placing a number in the blank at the left of the statement. Use the following 5-point scale when making your ratings:  
(0= no knowledge, 1= low knowledge, 2= low/medium knowledge, 3= medium knowledge, 4= medium/high knowledge, 5= high knowledge)

I. Your Current Level of Knowledge about Children and Families who are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

## 1. General Knowledge of:

- \_\_\_ 1. My own cultural traditions, attitudes, interaction styles and use of language.
- \_\_\_ 2. How my own cultural traditions, attitudes, etc., differ from or are similar to the cultures of others.
- \_\_\_ 3. The important role language and culture hold for children and families.
- \_\_\_ 4. The impact of the dominant/mainstream culture on shaping research and practice for elementary education and early intervention.
- \_\_\_ 5. Knowledge of specific legal issues and precedents related to cultural and linguistic diversity.

## 2. Supporting Child Learning - Your knowledge of:

- \_\_\_ 6. How culture impacts the development and learning of each child.
- \_\_\_ 7. Effective approaches (curricula, strategies, and resources) for supporting the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse young children.
- \_\_\_ 8. How to design relationships and experiences with the environment, activities, and other children/families so children learn or are exposed to multiple cultures and languages.
- \_\_\_ 9. How to adapt teaching and intervention methods to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families.
- \_\_\_ 10. Effective approaches for supporting the transitions of culturally and linguistically diverse young children between early childhood programs (e.g., transition to kindergarten).

II. Your Current Level of Skill Related to Working with and/or Teaching Children and Families who are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

## 3. Child Learning

- \_\_\_ 11. Skill in designing strategies for addressing different learning styles of individuals including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- \_\_\_ 12. Skill in using a variety of effective approaches (curricula, strategies, resources) for supporting the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse young children.
- \_\_\_ 13. Skill in finding ways to develop and sustain learning environments that facilitate learning about cultural and linguistic diversity and support positive intercultural experiences.

## 4. Families

- \_\_\_ 14. Skill in using a variety of strategies for eliciting family stories.
- \_\_\_ 15. Skill in working with diverse families and team members to develop shared priorities and plans.
- \_\_\_ 16. Skill in sharing information with culturally and linguistically diverse families.
- \_\_\_ 17. Feel competent and confident in my abilities to work with all diverse families.

## 5. Assessment

- \_\_\_ 18. Skill in collaborating respectfully with families in the assessment process and determine with them how they want to be involved (e.g., full participant to observer).
- \_\_\_ 19. Skill in utilizing effective strategies for asking questions and gathering information about culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families.
- \_\_\_ 20. Skill in using assessment results to support an effective process for identifying and planning supports and services for families.

## 6. Collaboration

- \_\_\_ 21. Skill in implementing strategies for effectively using available school and community resources related to cultural and linguistic diversity.
- \_\_\_ 22. Skill in finding and appropriately using interpreters, translators and cultural mediators.

Adapted from: <http://projects.fpg.unc.edu/~crosswalks/pdfs/CASKSS-student.pdf>

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Revisit the school improvement plan and prioritize steps toward transformation. Implement the steps in measurable increments; following up, monitoring and doing periodic assessments about progress toward developing a culturally responsive school. 4) Make sure professional development is ongoing and implementation is monitored in ways that celebrate and encourage teachers and school personnel to approach teaching and learning from a culturally responsive perspective. Be patient, transformation of mindset and re-establishing habits of mind takes time and a spirit of community. Questions school leaders (administrators or teachers) should ask before moving toward the challenge of transforming schools into culturally responsive learning communities might be: 1) What are the implications for the school or organization to create a culturally responsive school environment, barriers, challenges, and benefits? 2) What are some effective strategies that could be implemented right now? Next semester? Next year? 3) How can the school develop relationships with communities and parents that would provide a greater breadth and depth of understanding to both school and community/parent groups? Most importantly, proceed gradually and carefully, choose to learn with others. Be prepared for doubt and apprehension for these are the growing pains of change.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

As teacher educators look at the continuum of teacher impact on student learning, they must determine if the continued issue with schools inability to move away from the monolithic view of American schooling starts at the university level. This article suggests that there is a connection between the models and approaches that teacher education programs imbue to their pre-service teachers and the constancy of the cultural impasse regarding a lack of understanding of culturally responsive teaching practices. It also suggests that there is a need for more research and for specific ongoing professional development of in-service teachers, administrators, and particularly teacher educators regarding the concept of culturally responsive teaching. If the American society is to become more culturally responsive that philosophy must be embedded in the instructional approaches used in American schools. For that to occur, the schools of education must have these ideals entrenched throughout their curriculum from theoretical studies through field based practicum activities. There should be a continuous reflection and analytic look at policies, protocols and procedures for preparing America's future teaching force to engage in culturally responsive teaching practices from the very beginning of their careers.

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