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“Opening the Window to a World Wider Than Our Little Classroom”: The Importance of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

By Hannah Carter¹ & Melissa Bedford²

► ABSTRACT

Diversity in today’s classrooms must be considered and valued to create effective learning environments. Through surveys (N=83) and interviews (N=10), this mixed methods study examined in-service elementary teachers’ beliefs about culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) – more specifically, self-efficacy and outcome expectancy, as related to CRP. Results showed that teachers not only have highly positive outcome expectations for CRP quantitatively, they also explain specific benefits of CRP – relationship building, student achievement, and learning beyond the curriculum. Teachers were efficacious implementing CRP related to general *good teaching* practices, such as developing relationships and building trust with students. However, they were less efficacious in more culture-specific CRP practices, such as utilizing students’ native languages and evaluating curriculum to ensure the inclusion of various cultural groups. The importance of CRP was described by all teachers, yet their self-efficacy acted as a barrier to implementation.

Keywords: culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP); self-efficacy; outcome expectancy; elementary teachers

You’re to guide them and nurture them and keep them safe, and you have to build relationships with them...Everyone is so worried about test scores; they don’t have time to dig deeper into these kids’ lives and really see what’s going on. You could look into a sea of faces and just see names and numbers, so it’s up to the teachers to dig deeper...More education is really all it takes [long pause]. Well, that’s not all it takes. I think culturally relevant pedagogy comes with experience. You can’t know about [it] until you experience the kids first-hand because you can’t understand it until you’re with these kids, until you’re their mentor; you’re their everything.

Reflecting on over 20 years of experience, Margaret shared her thoughts about what it means to teach today. She described some of the most significant roles of teachers, as related to culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), and highlighted some of the responsibilities of teachers in today’s

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standards- and testing-focused era face. She noted the reality that while teachers may feel CRP is important, their intentions may not coalesce with their self-efficacy or with the various systemic demands teachers face. Margaret also mentioned teachers' backgrounds as playing a role in their fidelity to CRP. Growing up, Margaret attended schools "where the students weren't very different from one another." When she reached the classroom, she engaged with students and families from various cultures and recognized she had a responsibility to help these cultures coexist within her classroom.

Diversity in the U.S. continues to grow — racially, ethnically, linguistically, religiously, academically, and beyond. Opportunity gaps between students also continue to grow (Au, 2009). While various explanations for these gaps exist, finding viable resolutions for this "complex and multifaceted" issue "remain[s] elusive" (Dickenson, Chun, & Fernandez, 2015, p. 1; McIntyre & Hulan, 2013, p. 18). Shrinking and closing these opportunity gaps, as well as the variation in achievement that may result from students not being afforded equitable learning opportunities, requires teachers' commitment to equitable practice and CRP. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), teachers should strive toward the three goals related to CRP: "an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical consciousness" (p. 483).

Students in classrooms where CRP is prioritized experience various benefits both affectively and academically. Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy (2006) suggest that incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum positively influences academic performance. When integrated with other content-specific practices, such as literacy instruction, CRP further supports the academic achievement of all students (Houchen, 2013). For example, the benefits of CRP are highlighted by studies showing high student engagement during reading in classrooms where instruction builds from students' cultural and linguistic strengths (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2009; Rueda & McIntyre, 2002). Bell and Clark (1998) found that African American students' reading achievement was improved through culturally-familiar reading tasks, in comparison to non-familiar tasks. These findings were replicated with Hispanic students (Kelley, Siwatu, Tost, & Martinez, 2015), resulting in similar gains in reading achievement, as well as increases in student self-efficacy for reading. Other affordances of culturally-responsive practice include more robust academic goal-setting, higher engagement, increased motivation, and an overall atmosphere of respect in the classroom (Au, 2009; Kelley, et al., 2015).

While educators and researchers have agreed since the 1980s that students benefit from CRP (Heath, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1992), almost 40 years later, we still see a disconnect between research and practice related to CRP. Conversations with the pre- and in-service teachers for whom we work reveal that many educators strive to build their classrooms around CRP, but they face barriers bringing that endeavor to fruition. As former K-12 educators ourselves, who have worked with diverse student populations, we cannot deny the challenges presented in meeting the needs of all students; however, we have certainly seen the benefits of CRP in our classrooms, and we recognize preparing teachers to implement CRP as a necessity for the 21st century classroom. Our study presents teachers' perspectives on CRP, as related to their self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. Evaluating these constructs can identify how teachers might be supported in making CRP a more significant aspect of their practice. Subsequently, K-12 students can benefit from the myriad of benefits CRP offers.

Part of ensuring that teachers are ready and equipped to implement CRP is considering their beliefs, knowledge, and skills related to teaching students of diverse populations (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Siwatu, 2011). This includes teachers' self-efficacy and outcome expectancy for CRP. While self-efficacy and

outcome expectancy related to CRP have been examined with pre-service teachers (Fitchett, Starker, & Salyers, 2012; Siwatu, 2011), little is known about these constructs for in-service teachers. Investigating teachers' perceptions around CRP is necessary to determine effective ways to equip and support both pre- and in-service teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to promote the success of all students. Thus, we explored the following inquiry through our research:

- What are elementary teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs?

► THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this study was to identify and understand the CRP beliefs of elementary teachers. Our theoretical framework considered multiple theoretical perspectives, which allows for a deeper understanding of the complex nature of the phenomenon of teaching and learning (McIntyre & Hulan, 2013; Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degener, 2004). Tracey and Morrow (2007) posit that good practice itself is grounded in multiple theoretical perspectives, as multiple lenses interact as part of teachers' instructional decision-making. In the following sections, we describe sociocultural theory and social cognitive theory, as related to teachers' self-efficacy and outcome expectancy for CRP.

The Sociocultural Perspective: Culturally-Relevant Pedagogy

Dating back to the 1980s, studies illustrate that when teachers purposefully use students' linguistic strengths and cultural backgrounds as tools in the classroom, learning is positively impacted (Heath, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1992). Research based in this theoretical frame falls within the realm of CRP (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995), with roots in sociocultural theory. CRP uses students' cultural and linguistic resources in order to empower them, scaffold their learning, and provide opportunities for them to create meaning and understand the world (Ladson-Billings, 1995). With origins in critical theory and multicultural education, CRP "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 20).

CRP is founded on the notion that students will learn best when academic skills and content are positioned within students' lived experiences and frames of reference (Gay, 2010). Emerging as a response to inequity, this type of pedagogy creates classrooms that are inclusive for all students, where each culture represented coexists. Culturally-responsive instruction recognizes that all students bring different and valuable assets to the classroom that teachers should incorporate into the curriculum (Au, 2009). According to Gay (2010), ensuring that learning is both relevant and meaningful for diverse students, culturally-responsive classrooms should utilize students' prior knowledge and experiences, provide varied opportunities for students to share their knowledge, and celebrate difference.

The Social Cognitive Perspective: Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectancy

Social cognitive theory views individuals as "proactively engaged in their own development," and suggests that a person is the product of an active relationship between the external, internal, and current and past behaviors (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007, p. 105). Essential to this theory and part of its internal stimuli aspect, *efficacy* is defined as "generative capability in which cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral subskills must be organized and effectively orchestrated to serve innumerable purposes" (Bandura, 1997, p.36). *Self-efficacy*, then, refers to beliefs or judgments about one's own capabilities to successfully organize and execute a particular course of action to attain a specific type of performance (Bandura, 1986).

Knowledge and skills alone cannot ensure that a given task, such as delivering effective culturally-relevant instruction, will be performed successfully. Instead, perceived self-efficacy must also be considered (Bandura, 1986). Gibson and Dembo (1984) state that teachers' self-efficacy "indicate[s] [their] evaluation of their abilities to bring about positive student change" (p. 570). Teachers' self-efficacy impacts their decision-making processes and related courses of action, as people engage in tasks in which they feel competent and confident, sometimes avoiding those in which they do not (Pajares, 1996).

Outcome expectancy is a related aspect of social cognitive theory, defined as the belief that a "given behavior will lead to certain outcomes" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). When applied to teaching, outcome expectancy measures a teacher's belief that our practice can positively impact students' learning outcomes, despite all other influences, such as family background, socioeconomic status (SES), and school conditions (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In hopes of ensuring that the needs of all students are met by way of CRP, Siwatu (2007) suggests that a need exists for teachers to be efficacious in executing the practices of CRP, as well as believe in the outcome expectancy associated with this practice. Culturally-responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs (CRTSE) are defined by Siwatu (2007) as: "teachers' beliefs in their ability to execute specific teaching practices and tasks that are associated with teachers who are believed to be culturally responsive" (p. 1090).

According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), these beliefs impact teacher practice. The purpose of this study, then, was to explore the self-efficacy and outcome expectancy of elementary teachers, as related to CRP. Further, it is important to understand both the self-efficacy of teachers for implementing CRP (CRTSE beliefs), as well as if teachers believe that engaging in CRP has meaningful impacts on their students (CRTOE) (Siwatu, 2011).

► METHOD

Participants

Two school districts in two different western states participated in this study — one large, urban district with over 60,000 students and one smaller, rural district with almost 4,000 students. Around 40% of the student enrollment in each of the school districts was Hispanic, with around 14% of the student population having IEPs. The larger district had 49% of students qualifying for free or reduced-priced meals and 16% of students designated as English learners (EL), while the smaller district had 59% and 26% respectively. These districts were targeted because they represent various aspects of diversity — geographic, enrollment, cultural, academic, socioeconomic, and linguistic.

Table 1 describes the participating teachers. The range of teaching experience represented included 22% of teachers having taught five years or fewer and 29% having taught for more than 20 years. Three of the teachers completed alternative teacher certification programs, and 61% held master's degrees. Twenty-six percent of the teachers spoke two or more languages including Spanish, French, Italian, German, Russian, and Ukrainian.

Table 1
Description of Teachers

Variable	Phase One Teachers (N=87)
Gender	
Female	67
Male	10
Prefer not to specify	10
Age	
21-25	3
26-30	10
31-35	9
36-40	8
41-45	7
46-50	14
46-50	14
51-55	13
>56	9
Race/ethnicity	
White	72
Black/African American	1
Hispanic/Latino	3
Multiracial	3
Other	3
Prefer not to specify	5
Number of languages spoken	
1	59
2	17
3	5
Prefer not to specify	6
Teacher certification	
Teacher education (<i>four-year university</i>)	55
Alternate route certification	3
Did Not Specify	29
Level of education	
Bachelor's	33
Master's	53
PhD	1
Years of teaching experience	
0-3	11
4-5	8
6-10	12
11-15	15
16-20	16
<20	25

► DATA COLLECTION

An explanatory mixed methods research design (Iyankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006) was employed. First, we collected surveys exploring self-efficacy and outcome expectancy, as related to CRP. Next, face-to-face interviews further investigated the survey inquiries.

Phase One.

Data collection procedures were informed by the tailored design method (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). The survey was sent electronically to 273 elementary teachers by way of their site principals.

Email and tangible written reminders were provided to the teachers after the survey link was emailed, warranting 87 responses (32% response rate), which is consistent with other U.S. surveys (Baumann, Hoffman, Duffy-Hester, & Ro, 2000; Commeyras & DeGroff, 1998; Fresch, 2003).

The survey was organized into five sections: 1.) Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy; 2.) Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectancy; 3.) CRP Instruction; 4.) CRP Preparation; and 5.) Background Information. Table 2 outlines the survey, with the current study focusing on the first two sections.

Table 2
Survey Question Descriptions by Section

Section	Description	Question Number	
1. CRP Self-Efficacy	Efficacy ratings regarding culturally responsive teaching practices	2 (a-i) 3 (a-g) 4 (a-f)	
	2. CRP Outcome Expectancy	Ratings on beliefs about importance of culturally responsive teaching	5 (a-g) 6 (a-f) 7 (a-f)
		3. CRP Instruction	Definition
Examples of practices present in current classroom			8
4. CRP Preparation	Extent learned about culturally responsive teaching in teacher education program	9 (a-d)	
	Extent learned about culturally responsive teaching in career	10 (a-c)	
	Amount of professional learning related to culturally responsive teaching in career	11	
	Needed preparation to improve current teaching	12	
5. Background Information	Highest level of education	13	
	Completion of alternate route to licensure program	14	
	Number of years teaching	15	
	Level of school currently teaching	16	
	Grade level(s) currently teaching	17	
	Subject area(s) currently teaching	18	
	Languages spoken fluently	19	
	Race/ethnicity (optional)	20	
	Age (optional)	21	
	Gender (optional)	22	
	Contact information for interview participation (optional)	23	

The first two sections were adapted from Siwatu's (2007) Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy (CRTSE) scale and Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectancy (CRTOE) scale. The two scales, which were created for pre-service teachers, were adapted to better suit our participants, in-service teachers. The number of questions on each scale was reduced, focusing on the questions most applicable to practicing teachers. Question crafting, question ordering, and the visual presentation of the survey were based on recommendations from current literature (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). Six Likert-type questions with numerous sub-questions for each were included. Teachers rated the items using a 1-10 scale (not at all to very) based on their level of efficacy and the level they believed in each item's ability to impact students.

The survey was validated to ensure dependability and reliability. The face validity of the survey was established by having evaluative dialogue with experts in several fields – K-12 teachers and administrators, as well as teacher educators and researchers in literacy, quantitative research methods, self-efficacy, and multicultural education. Another round of revisions occurred after the survey was piloted with a small group of teachers in a variety of settings. We next considered the reliability of our survey. The original scales (Siwatu, 2007) were found to have internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's and meeting the minimum criterion of .70 alpha value, with the 40-item efficacy scale at .96, and the 26-item outcome expectancy scale at .95; however, because we adapted items for in-service teachers, we confirmed the reliability again, and the alpha coefficients for the present study were .93 (CRTSE, 22 items) and 0.86 (CRTOE, 19 items).

Phase Two.

A sequential mixed methods sampling technique (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009), including purposeful sampling (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015), was used. Upon completion of the survey, participants were offered the opportunity to volunteer for in-person interviews. We chose 10 teachers with diverse views, as related to their self-efficacy for CRP. Participants' responses to each of the 22 items relating to their self-efficacy were totaled, generating a total score ranging from 0 to 220. Participants with higher scores were more confident in their abilities with CRP, as compared to those with lower scores. As shown in Table 3, our interviewees represent a range of self-efficacy levels. The sample of teachers in Phase Two (N=10) consisted of nine women and one man. Interviewees' teaching experience ranged from one year to over 28 years. The teachers worked, both currently and previously, in a range of affluent neighborhoods and Title I schools.

Table 3

Phase Two: Teachers' Total Scores - Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectancy

	Total Self-Efficacy Score (Max=220)	Total Outcome Expectancy Score (Max=190)
Peggy	216	188
Donna	178	190
Margaret	219	190
Mischa	163	171
David	209	188
Stephanie	178	185
Taylor	187	171
Diana	191	190
Brenda	178	174
Christine	178	185

The interviews were designed to gather more detailed information from the survey data. Each face-to-face interview, ranging from 18 to 35 minutes, was led by one of the two researchers. Interviews were semi-structured and guided by open-ended prompts and questions. Examples include: "Describe what you think about when you think about Culturally Relevant Pedagogy" and "What impacts your/other teachers' comfort level implementing CRP?"

► DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analyzed in multiple phases. First, descriptive statistics (e.g., item-specific means) were calculated for the survey data. The researchers generated these calculations collaboratively and discussed initial noticings based on an evaluation of the individual survey items. Next, we individually read and coded each interview transcript. We used a priori coding to first document instances of self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. After the first round of coding, we created a spreadsheet on which to categorize each teacher's transcript. Talking through our individual coding, and reevaluating the descriptive survey data, we worked together to determine the following categories: 1.) why CRP mattered to teachers; 2) what teachers felt their roles and responsibilities were, as related to CRP; and 3) what teachers viewed as barriers to CRP.

The coded data were then arranged and rearranged into the categories they most represented. For example, the following quote from Taylor: "Being accepting and aware of the students' cultures helps them learn. It helps them not feel left out or misunderstood and helps them feel safe" was first coded as being an instance of *outcome expectation*. During categorization, the quote was placed under *why CRP mattered to teachers*. Finally, we looked across the teachers' data spreadsheets to determine sub-themes that related to our research question. The sub-themes were compared to related survey data, and a findings outline was created. Considering our theoretical framework of sociocultural and social cognitive theories, we combined evidence of sub-themes from all data sources to determine intersections between CRP and teacher's self-efficacy and outcome expectancy.

► FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers' self-efficacy and outcome expectancy, as related to CRP. When discussing each set of findings, both an overview from the survey data and perspectives from our 10 interview participants are provided.

Teachers' Outcome Expectancy for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Teachers' belief that CRP positively impacts their students was evident when all teachers (N=87) placed significant value on the practices represented on the survey. When asked to rate how strongly they believed specific CRP practices positively affected student achievement or behaviors in particular ways, over 70% of the teachers scored each of the 19 practices nine or higher (out of 10).

Teachers also identified specific benefits of CRP – relationship building, student achievement, and learning beyond the curriculum. The highest rated item on the survey was relationship building as a means of establishing trust with their students, meaning teachers believe that CRP positively impacts their relationships with students. Relationship building was also a benefit of CRP that was discussed by teachers in all 10 interviews. Teachers mentioned building rapport, making students feel safe and comfortable, and gaining students' trust as associated with CRP. According to David, students begin to advocate for themselves when they feel the support and assurance of teachers. Diana noted that "incorporating students' cultures helps them feel validated and shows them their culture is honored in the classroom." Donna agreed, mentioning the importance of "finding a common ground" with students and understanding they come to school with different cultural experiences, including those related to education.

These meaningful, affective aspects of CRP were also related specifically to students' academic achievement, as teachers considered CRP a way to "get more from students," "promote engagement," and

“move forward.” Mischa noted, “Once you build those relationships, you see the benefits academically.” Margaret’s sentiments were representative of the other teachers, as they agreed that CRP acts as a “starting point” for learning: “If we don’t start with [CRP], we lose trust and respect, so we must start there. A child’s first step into a classroom, they should feel safe, important, valued, and respected.” Taylor also noted that CRP ensures that teachers are cognizant of the specific academic needs of each student, lessening the likelihood of any student falling behind or getting “left out or forgotten.”

In addition to describing relationship building and students’ academic achievement as outcome expectations of CRP, teachers attached CRP to ideas extending beyond the classroom, suggesting that another outcome expectancy of CRP was its capacity to teach students about concepts outside the required curriculum. Peggy discussed the role that CRP plays in the development of students’ identities, and various teachers mentioned how this pedagogy promotes less judgment among individuals by encouraging the acknowledgement and acceptance of differing viewpoints. Teaching acceptance of various cultures was described by teachers as a means of helping students learn by ensuring that their basic needs were first met and that their cultural and personal identities were understood by their peers and their teachers. CRP also promotes thinking in ways that consider an expanded worldview, or as Donna put it: “[CRP] is opening the window to a world wider than our little classroom.” It was clear that teachers have positive outcome expectations for CRP, both based on their high scores from the surveys and the various themes that emerged from the interviews. The desirable outcomes that resulted from incorporating CRP into their classrooms included relationship building, students’ academic achievement, and learning beyond the curriculum. Seemingly because of these positive outcome expectations, each of the teachers took the notion of CRP seriously, projecting a sense of responsibility for this pedagogy. Diana stated, “Culturally responsive teaching is essential. If you don’t have those practices in place, and if you don’t constantly learn more as you go...you can’t make a difference at all in anyone’s life.” According to Mischa, “America is a melting pot...Culturally speaking, everyone has their own unique setup, and [teachers] must be able to keep up with that. Teachers should be able to accept students’ differences.” Peggy also mentioned the notion of acceptance, noting the importance of “changing with the time and demographics.” While all of our interview participants identified positive outcome expectations for CRP, their self-efficacy for CRP differed.

Teachers’ Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Self-Efficacy

When considering self-efficacy, the teachers’ total scores for all CRP items ranged from 143-217 (on a scale of 1-220), with a mean of 188 ($SD = 17.03$). To determine the specific CRP practices that participants felt more or less confident implementing, item-specific means were calculated, and the top and bottom four roles/responsibilities were identified (Table 4). The four items teachers felt less efficacious implementing had means ranging from 5.56-7.30, on a scale of 1-10, ($SD=0.69$), while the four items teachers felt most efficacious in had means ranging from 8.45-8.67 ($SD=0.69$).

Table 4
Self-Efficacy Means

High Self-Efficacy	Mean (<i>SD=0.69</i>)	Low Self-Efficacy	Mean (<i>SD=0.69</i>)
Build a sense of trust in my students	9.36	Implement strategies to connect my students' home culture and the school culture	7.99
Develop relationships with my students	9.31	Obtain information about my students' home lives and cultures	7.81
Help students feel like important members of the classroom	9.19	Examine curriculum to determine how different cultural groups are represented	7.53
Use a variety of teaching methods	9.14	Utilize English Language Learners' native languages when possible	6.25

The survey items teachers felt more efficacious implementing aligned with more general *good teaching* practices (e.g., “Build a sense of trust in my students”), whereas those they felt less efficacious in were more culture-specific (e.g., “Utilize English Language Learners’ native languages when possible”). The survey results were mimicked in the interviews, as teachers further described this dichotomy in their self-efficacy as related to CRP.

The two practices teachers felt most confident in were developing relationships and building trust with students, which are relevant in all educational contexts with all students. David discussed how he felt comfortable building relationships with his students: “I gain a lot of students’ trust just because they relate to me. They think, ‘He’s Hispanic,’ and they don’t have many role models like me in their lives — someone that looks like them, so I build that relationship fairly easily.” Stephanie shared the same sentiment stating, “if [the students] feel like you’re interested in what interests them, they will be more engaged with their learning.” Both David and Stephanie, as well as other teachers, noted how developing relationships just came “naturally” to them. This feeling of innate ability could correlate with the teachers’ self-efficacy in these two practices, and teachers’ confidence in these culturally-relevant pedagogies shows that teachers are conscious of the power in building rapport with students.

Of the rated CRP roles and responsibilities, “Utilize English Language Learners’ native languages when possible” was the practice teachers felt least efficacious implementing. Most teachers (73%) were monolingual; however, two of the teachers interviewed spoke more than one language. David, Hispanic and fluent in Spanish, shared how although he can communicate with Spanish-speaking students at his school, he is hesitant to do so in certain situations. “I know my ways [in communicating], but I don’t have the resources to use the language in school. I don’t know if I’m building misconceptions, and I haven’t had enough training.” While David feels comfortable holding conversations with his students and their families, he’s worrisome of possibly misleading students in the required academic language of school.

Another culture-specific practice teachers felt little efficacy implementing was “Examine curriculum to determine how different cultural groups are represented.” Many teachers noted the curriculum’s role

in their classrooms, specifically with language arts. As Taylor observed, the curriculum is not always representative of the cultures within a given classroom. Diana added that curriculum materials given to or found by teachers “seem so forced.” While teachers were comfortable using the provided curriculum, whether culturally relevant or not, and took notice of curricular features, they were not efficacious in examining curriculum to ensure various cultural groups were represented in a non-stereotypical manner.

Teachers’ surveys and interviews showed that they felt more efficacious implementing CRP aligned with general *good teaching* and less efficacious in more culture-specific practices. Teachers described their comfort level developing relationships and building trust with students, yet they were uncomfortable utilizing students’ native languages and evaluating curriculum to ensure the inclusion of various cultural groups.

► DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify elementary teachers’ self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs, as related specifically to CRP. Teachers’ positive outcome expectancy for CRP was evident. Based on their high scores from the surveys and the various themes emerging from the interviews, teachers value CRP and believe this practice will lead to positive student outcomes. Bandura’s (1977) social cognitive theory suggests that these beliefs impact teacher practice, which was supported by the sense of responsibility our teachers exhibited for CRP. Relationship building, students’ academic achievement, and learning beyond the curriculum were documented as benefits of CRP. Teachers collectively agreed on the significance of trust and relationship building with their students, which aligns with the CRP best practices of helping students connect with teachers and one another and fostering a sense of belonging (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Research also supports the relationship between CRP and student achievement (Hoy et al., 2006; Wilson & Corbet, 2001), which was widely recognized by our teachers. Teachers mentioned not only the relationship between CRP and academic success, but the power of CRP as a starting point for students’ learning. Despite the collective value that our teachers placed on CRP, their self-efficacy for CRP varied.

Siwatu (2007) describes the need for teachers to be efficacious in executing the practices of CRP to ensure the needs of all students are met. Both Yoon (2007) and Au (2009) recognize that the concept of CRP is applicable to *all* students, not simply those that are culturally diverse. Prior research highlights the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and a teacher’s ability to prioritize students’ prior experiences, community settings, cultural backgrounds, and ethnic identities (Gay, 2010). Many of the practices teachers in this study exhibited efficacy in associate with general *good teaching*, as opposed to those that are more culture-specific. Siwatu (2011) also found this trend of higher self-efficacy for general effective pedagogies with his pre-service teachers, suggesting their lack of mastery and vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1997) with CRP as a potential source for this finding. Our teachers, however, had a mean of 14 years teaching experience in schools reflective of cultural and linguistic diversity. While Au (2009) suggests finding a balance between *good teaching* practices and those that are considered more *culture-specific*, Gay (2010) posits that teachers must recognize “that their standards of ‘goodness’...are culturally determined” (p. 23). These researchers challenge educators to integrate CRP that aligns with general good teaching and that aligns with students’ specific cultures, while at the same time realizing how culture impacts their standards. Teacher standards should not only appreciate the funds of knowledge that all students bring to the classroom, but celebrate the difference present.

In doing so, we suggest that teachers approach their practice with cultural humility. Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, and Utsey (2013) conceptualize cultural humility as the “ability to maintain an

interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]" (p. 2). This frame of mind allows teachers to more clearly recognize, understand, appreciate, and pragmatize the role that culture and language play in teaching and learning. The teachers in this study had varying backgrounds and experiences, which in some ways may have impacted their self-efficacy and outcome expectancy for CRP. However, we assert that all teachers have a responsibility to engage in reflective inquiry about their backgrounds, their worldviews, and their biases. By having an introspective outlook on their pedagogy that considers the sociocultural nature of education, teachers are more likely to establish deeper connections with their students (Dickson et al., 2015), in turn creating and facilitating classroom environments that promote and support the learning of culturally diverse students. In the opening reflection, Margaret described the transition from her somewhat sheltered upbringing, which was void of diversity, to her teaching experience, where she took on understanding and using culture in her classroom. Ball (2009) suggests culturally responsive teachers are metacognitively aware of their strengths and weaknesses and have the tools to assist them in achieving their goals, which includes understanding how to utilize students' cultural and linguistic resources throughout the teaching process.

► CONCLUSION

Statistics remind us that educators in all facets of education must be prepared to serve in increasingly multicultural, multilingual schools (Chu & Garcia, 2014). The findings from the current study, however, revealed that while teachers believe CRP is beneficial to students, their self-efficacy may hold them back from this practice. Even Margaret, a veteran teacher of over 20 years and a life-long learner committed to meeting students' individual needs, questioned the combination of education and experience that prepares teachers to employ CRP with confidence.

These findings merit the attention of educational stakeholders. Because our findings with in-service teachers confirm previous findings with pre-services teachers, we suggest a more systematic focus on CRP in teacher education curriculums and professional development agendas. To prepare for a culturally responsive classroom, teachers in all disciplines must: (1) increase their knowledge of the cultures present in their current teaching assignments, and gain cultural competence (Diller & Moule, 2004); (2) seek out the most current pedagogical knowledge and skills in working with diverse students, including knowledge of multilingualism (Chu & Garcia, 2014); (3) extend their practice from accepting students' differences and cultures to promoting and celebrating them (Paris, 2012); and (4) transform their multicultural attitudes (Siwatu, 2011). Because both teachers and students enter classrooms with different backgrounds and experiences, teachers need support as they work toward fostering culturally responsive classrooms.

With the continuing growth of diversity in student populations (National Center of Education Statistics, 2017), the findings from this study, while both confirming and extending previous research on CRP, illuminate the continued need for further research. It was beyond the scope of this study to observe teachers; however, the field would benefit from research that describes what is happening in classrooms, as related to CRP. Identifying CRP in a variety of different contexts, and comparing this practice to teachers' backgrounds, the backgrounds of their students, and other important variables, might offer teacher educators recommendations on supporting pre-service teachers with employing CRP. Likewise, many of our teachers felt that they were underprepared for CRP. Future research might document the expectations of pre- and in-service teachers within teacher education to determine how they are being

prepared and what areas of improvement exist. Along these lines, we wonder how systematic constraints impact both teachers' use of CRP and the preparation of pre-service teachers for CRP.

In an educational climate plagued with the demands of standards, testing, and policies, we must strive to support our students by ensuring their individual needs are met and by promoting their investment in their own education. CRP is a powerful influence on this endeavor - as shared by David: "They don't know who George Washington is. They couldn't care less about him. He's just another white person we have to learn about." David reminds us that teachers must recognize the disconnect students often experience between their "contextual realities and academic expectations" (Dickson et al., 2015, p. 1), and intervene with culturally-relevant pedagogy. We, as educators, must attempt to make school relevant to all students. This begins with ensuring that our K-12 teachers are equipped and confident to do so.

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