5-2024

Assessing Teachers' Dispositions Towards Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Northwest Arkansas High Schools

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Citation

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Spring 2024

Abstract

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) entails the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and learning styles of ethnically and culturally diverse students to make instruction more relevant and effective for them. Furthermore, practices within this pedagogy are validating, inclusive, emancipatory, and ethical, and help diverse students succeed academically while maintaining their cultural identity. Numerous studies have indicated that using culturally responsive pedagogy increases student academic achievement, sense of self, and emotional well-being (Ladson, 1995; Gay, 2018). Considering the varying degrees of cultural and linguistic diversity in Northwest Arkansas (NWA) schools and the lack of reported professional development relating to CRP, this study aimed to examine NWA secondary teachers' dispositions (values, attitudes, and beliefs) toward culturally responsive pedagogical practices. Employing a mixed methods survey research design, the study integrated self-reported Likert scale ratings and open-ended questions for a more in-depth understanding of teachers' challenges while incorporating CRP into their classrooms. This study presents the online survey results of 131 teachers from 9-12 grades from various regional districts. Findings indicate that NWA secondary teachers report having positive perceptions toward culturally responsive pedagogical practices. Further analysis also suggests factors, such as subject area taught and years of teaching experience, that may impact teacher dispositions. These findings are significant because they indicate potential areas of concern regarding equitable teaching relevant to teacher preparation, training, and support for CRP. They can be used to develop more meaningful, tangible, and supportive professional development. These results could also impact the decisions made by school administrators regarding matters related to CRP, affecting both teachers and the overall school culture.

Acknowledgments

This project would not have been possible first, without the influence and guidance of the professors and instructors in the Curriculum and Instruction Department, whose emphasis on the critical role of culturally responsive pedagogy has been instrumental in shaping this project. Special thanks to the faculty members who assisted me in my survey distribution, Dr. Paul Calleja, Dr. Jack Kern, Dr. Freddie Bowles, Mr. JL Jennings, Mrs. Hannah Mhoon, Mrs. Megan Grizzle, my advisor, Dr. Peggy Ward, along with anyone else who contributed to the distribution process.

I would also like to thank, Courtney Mann, the 2017-2018 Arkansas Teacher of the Year, for her guidance and invaluable insight on culturally responsive pedagogy.

Most importantly, thank you to all of the NWA secondary educators who took the time to respond to my survey; your thoughtful contributions made this project possible.

Again, thank you, Dr. Peggy Ward, whose mentorship guided me through this process. She has been my teacher, advocate, cheerleader, editor, and more. I am so thankful for this positive, profound research experience, I credit that to her.

Introduction

When students of racial/ethnic minorities, particularly Black, Hispanic, and Native American students, enter high school, they experience a significant gap in achievement compared to that of their White and Asian counterparts (Browns-Jeffrey & Cooper, 2011). In the diverse region of Northwest Arkansas, school districts have varying demographics and achievement levels. For instance, one district's high school has a 37% minority enrollment and 30% of the students are economically disadvantaged; the school scored in the 95th percentile on the ACT Aspire test. A second district's high school has an 82% minority enrollment and 80% of the students are economically disadvantaged; the school scored in the 17th percentile on the test. Additionally, the first school's gap between the school and the state's proficiency levels on state assessments among underserved students is 2.2%. The second school's gap is -3.6%. A negative value means the state outperformed the school (USN, "Fayetteville," 2019-2020; USN, "Springdale," 2019-2022; "ADE School Info"). To provide a more equitable educational experience for all students, culturally responsive pedagogy emerges as a dynamic and essential approach that acknowledges and incorporates students' diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to foster inclusive and effective learning environments.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) defines dispositions as "The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice" (2006, p. 53). Teacher dispositions are a crucial factor in students' social and academic development in the classroom. The beliefs, values, and attitudes of teachers inform whether or

not they will engage in equitable education. Teachers must examine their racialized identities to truly begin dismantling policies and practices that oppress diverse students. Choosing to ignore race or take a "colorblind" mindset, may give an illusion of equity, but only ignores the issues (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018).

While scholarship has reported only positive effects of culturally responsive pedagogy, current teacher preparation programs, and professional development may fail to highlight its practices. Based on Northwest Arkansas' school districts' websites, listed professional developments, and personal communication, there is a lack of evidence reporting districts mandating professional development/training explicitly related to culturally responsive pedagogy for all faculty members. This pedagogy should be a part of all schools' professional and cultural philosophy but is particularly pertinent for areas with varying degrees of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity.

Given these observations, this study sought to explore the perspectives of teachers in the region regarding practices and values associated with CRP. Specifically, this research examined NWA secondary teachers' values, attitudes, and beliefs relevant to culturally responsive pedagogy and its practices. Additionally, this study aimed to identify factors influencing teacher dispositions towards CRP, barriers hindering the use of CRP, and potential avenues for supporting teachers in implementing CPR. This investigation involved the survey and analysis of responses from teachers from schools in the region to assess their dispositions towards culturally responsive practices.

Professor of Education, Geneva Gay (2018) defines culturally responsive teaching as "Using 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"

(p. 36). This study employed the use of the Dispositions for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Scale (DCRPS), created by Whitaker and Valtierra (2018). The scale combines national

standards with theory and standards related to inclusive education. Particularly, the survey

statements in the scale align with Gay's definition of CRP by focusing on three main factors:

Praxis, community, and social justice. Results of this survey were expected to reflect the

dispositions teachers from various secondary schools have toward culturally responsive

pedagogy. This information may benefit local schools in their approach to future professional

development and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training.

Background and Significance

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, which is known by a wide variety of names such as

culturally relevant, sensitive, centered, congruent, reflective, mediated, and contextualized

pedagogy or teaching is based on practices that help to close achievement gaps, connect content

to prior knowledge, create a sense of belonging, and foster an equitable classroom environment.

Studies document that English Language Learners, students in poverty, and students of color

receive less instruction that develops higher-order skills resulting in a large number of culturally

and linguistically diverse students being dependent learners (Hammond, 2015).

One of the earliest leading pedagogical theorists in this field is Gloria-Ladson Billings

who introduced "culturally relevant teaching" in 1994 and set the fundamental frameworks for

many of the ideas still enforced today. Ladson began her research by examining the work of

anthropologists who studied teaching practices that would align more with the home and

community cultures of students of color. She references Mohatt and Erikson's work in 1981 that

coined the terms "culturally congruent" and "culturally responsive" (Ladson, "Just Good

Teaching," 1995). Ladson also notes that all of the terms that were employed in early research connotated an accommodation, or assimilation, of the students' culture with mainstream culture. "Culturally responsive," was the exception, she saw it as a more synergistic relationship between home and school culture, rather than a compromise made at the expense of the students' home culture.

In 1988, Ladson began investigating eight teachers, in a predominantly African-American area, who were nominated by community members as outstanding teachers. At the time, there was much research on African American students' academic failure, but not their success. Ladson observed that the students in the eight classrooms were successful, and not just in terms of standardized testing. Furthermore, the teachers brought students' culture into the classroom, mitigating the negotiation of academic success between cultural connections. Landson took note of the beliefs and ideologies of these eight teachers, and her goal was to create a pedagogy that provided a way for students to maintain their cultural identity while succeeding academically. She explained that culturally relevant teachers must encourage academic success and cultural competence, as well as help students recognize and understand social inequalities ("Theory of CRP," 1995).

Building from Ladson's work, Gay (2018) developed a framework that focuses on strategies and practices teachers can employ to be culturally responsive. She argues that culturally responsive teaching is validating, inclusive, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory, and ethical. Her work argues that when culturally responsive teaching is done appropriately, it promotes academic excellence of all students, and in time, could reduce the consequences students face from unfair distribution of power, resources, and opportunities (p. 283).

Additionally, CRP helps students engage in critical thinking and build what Zaretta Hammond refers to as "intellective capacity," or the increased power the brain creates to process complex information effectively (2015, p. 36). Hammond examines the inequalities in access to rigorous and supportive education for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. When these inequalities are not addressed through methods such as CRP, it perpetuates a cycle of barriers that CLD students will continue to face (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

CRP and Teacher Preparation/Professional Development

While research on culturally responsive pedagogy reports highly effective positive outcomes for all students, scholarship suggests that effective teacher preparation for CRP has yet to be achieved (Jensen, 2021, p. 64; Kolano et al., 2014). In a study done on the level of preparedness that white veteran teachers feel in managing increasing diversity in the classroom, Jensen (2021) sought to investigate the experience of veteran teachers because most research on growing diversity in the classroom was focused on new teacher candidates. She intended to identify future professional development needs to support the change in student demographics. When it came to the teachers' perceptions of their preparedness, most reported quite limited levels of preparedness. Further, when asked about their school district's professional development, most said it was not good. Many teachers felt unprepared in their ability to create and foster a culturally competent and diverse classroom. A theme that emerged was the differing definitions of what cultural competency meant to them. The research concluded that teachers were excelling in their relationships with students in the classroom, but districts were not doing a good job of providing professional development on equity in education.

A 2013 study on multicultural teacher education investigated the perceived effectiveness of teacher-training programs and professional development (PD) of 157 teachers. The study

analyzed the teacher's experiences in preparing to work with ELLs and other diverse learners. The researchers argued that the lack of culturally congruent practices in the classroom was due to teacher preparation programs' failure to prepare teachers for ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. The study concluded that when provided with multicultural course work preservice teachers were engaged in it, but many preparation programs are not consistently addressing diversity and multiculturalism in a variety of ways, specifically field experience (Kolano et al., 2014).

In a similar study done in 2016, a group of researchers collected data on a team of teachers and principals who began a three-year effort to embed professional development (PD) focused on cultural competency into the job. Following the PD, 120 teachers were surveyed on their experience. While most agreed that it helped them examine areas of cultural competency such as poverty, they did not agree that the PD would help to close the achievement gap. The research noted that elective and special education teachers were significantly more positive than core subject teachers regarding how the training improved instruction. Furthermore, the research identified two challenges for acknowledging cultural differences: lack of time and implementation apathy from colleagues (Mette et al., 2016). Teachers who may not have as much perceived experience with issues of diversity, such as Math or Science, may not see it as beneficial to their subject area.

Furthermore, Dion (2020) investigated diversity and inclusion in world language (WL) teachers' instruction by interviewing 17 secondary WL instructors. Her findings suggested that most participants incorporate cultural diversity into their practices, several drew upon student interests, and some considered the intersection of their identities in their approach to diverse instruction. Her research highlights some of the key themes of WL teachers' practices: cultural

diversity, student diversity, and teachers' experiences, interests, and identities. She also highlights some practical implications that would make WL instruction more diverse and inclusive, most notably that the consideration of student interests and characteristics is often the missing piece in instruction. Her work is significant because it highlights the culturally responsive capabilities and training within the subject area, and the importance of language courses to proliferate cultural and linguistic diversity. Furthermore, communicating an understanding of diversity is vital in WL because there has been a relative decline in student enrollment in language courses across the country.

Lastly, Martell's case study of three self-identifying CRP social studies teachers describes how the teachers went about teaching race in U.S. History classes. He concludes that all three teachers used conversation as a part of their class, and they continued to emphasize the presence and effects of race in each lesson. They described challenging previous misconceptions and working to "open the eyes" of their students (2018, p. 69-71).

Significance

In an article written in partnership with the National Center for Culturally Responsive Education Systems, Richards (2007) discusses why we need to address diversity in schools. He builds off of previous literature in the field such as Ladson-Billings and explains how to meet the instructional needs of an ever-growing diverse student population. He presents three culturally responsive dimensions: 1) institutional, 2) personal, and 3) instructional. These dimensions are critical to long-lasting reforms within education to make it more culturally responsive. Within the institutional dimension, he identifies the organization of the school, school policies and procedures, and community involvement as key factors to culturally responsive school institutions. He notes a particular concern, the impact of school policies on the allocation of

resources. Furthermore, he lays a framework for the personal dimension, identifying ways that teachers can be culturally responsive. Ultimately, he highlights teacher self-reflection and examination of their attitudes and beliefs. He concludes that teachers must recognize the "power" they have because the daily contact they have with students provides teachers with an opportunity to either "further the status quo" or make a difference that will impact the achievement and lives of each student.

Studying teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy in the specific region of Northwest Arkansas is significant due to its unique demographic factors, varying district resources, proximity to a state university, and lack of specified CRP training. According to Northwest Arkansas Council's Diversity Report in 2022, from 1990 to 2021 the region's racially and ethnically diverse population increased from 5% to 29%, and it is only expected to increase. Additionally, diversity in NWA school districts is growing faster than the diversity of the overall population of the region. However, certain districts are seeing an increase in diversity more than others, for example, at one district's high school, roughly 81% of students are of racial/ethnic minorities, compared to a nearby school with only 25% of students being a minority (NCES, 2022). Moreover, Arkansas is especially unique in that it is home to more than 15,000 Marshallese people, making it the largest concentration of Marshallese in the continental US; a high majority of that population resides in Northwest Arkansas with more than 12,000 Marshallese residents (Brown, MEI NGO, 2021).

Lastly, the examination of local teachers' perceptions of culturally relevant pedagogy is significant because NWA is home to the University of Arkansas, a large state university, that sends roughly 200 interns to schools as part of its teacher preparation program. The more exposure preservice teachers get to culturally responsive practices and ideologies, the more

likely they will be to create that same culture in their future classrooms. The cultural and linguistic diversity in the region makes it even more pertinent that educators and their leadership are promoting and supporting equitable educational practices.

Method

This study investigated Northwest Arkansas secondary teachers' dispositions (values, attitudes, and beliefs) towards culturally responsive teaching. The region of NWA was selected due to its varying degrees of diversity across the school districts. To understand the experiences of classroom teachers and determine if more training or professional development in this area may be needed, this study was guided by one primary research question and three subquestions. My primary research question was, what are teachers' self-reported perceptions of values, attitudes, and beliefs relevant to culturally responsive pedagogy? My sub-questions were:1) What possible factors could affect teachers' dispositions towards CRP? 2) What difficulties teachers' are experiencing while incorporating CRP into their classrooms? 3) What support or resources could assist teachers in the incorporation of CRP?

Participants

Participants in this study were Northwest Arkansas high school (grades 9-12) teachers. The survey was sent out via email to local secondary teachers through a network of University faculty who assisted in survey distribution.

Subsequently, 131 teachers completed the survey. Because many teachers teach multiple subjects or identify with more than one race/ethnicity, there were 189 responses related to the subjects taught and 151 responses related to race/ethnicity. Tables 1-4 below provide an overview of the demographics of those who participated in this research study. The demographic factors collected were participants' subject areas, years of teaching experience, gender, and

racial/ethnic identity. Later analysis elaborates on participants' subject areas and years of

teaching experience alongside survey responses to explore possible factors affecting the teachers'

dispositions toward CRP.

Table 1-4 Participant Demographics:

Table 1. Frequency of Participants' Responses Subject Area(s) Taught (n = 189)

Subject(s) Taught	N #	%
ELA	32	0.17
Social Studies	18	0.1
Math	25	0.13
Science	26	0.13
World Languages	8	0.04
ESL	7	0.03
Fine Arts	6	0.32
Physical Education/Coach	13	0.7
Special Education	25	0.13
Other	29	0.15
Total	189	100

Table 2. Frequency of Participants' Responses to Years of Teaching Experience (n = 131)

Years of Teaching Experience	N #	%
Less than 5	21	0.16
5-10 years	23	0.18
11-20 years	44	0.33
More than 20	38	0.29
0 or Pre-service Teachers (Interns)	5	0.03

Table 3. Frequency of Participants' Responses to Gender (n =131)

Gender	N #	%
Male	35	0.27
Female	92	0.70
Prefer not to say	2	0.15

Other	0	0.00
Non-binary/non-conforming	2	0.15

Table 4. Frequency of Participants' Responses to Race/Ethnicity (n = 151)

Race/Ethnicity	N #	%
Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin	3	1.99%
Black or African American	5	3.31%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4	2.65%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	0.66%
Asian	0	0.00%
White	132	87.42%
Prefer not to say	5	3.31%
Other	1	0.66%

Survey Instrument

This study examined teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and values relevant to culturally responsive pedagogy using a reliable and validated survey tool (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). As mentioned, the tool utilized was the Dispositions for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Scale (DCRPS)(2018). Minor changes were made to the DCRPS by decreasing the question count to only include two of the three main factors, praxis, and community (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). Questions were limited to keep the survey under eleven questions to increase the likelihood of full survey completion, it took less than five minutes to complete.

The eleven survey statements were presented on a six-point Likert scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The survey started with demographic questions: grade level(s) they teach, years of teaching experience, subject(s) they teach, racial/ethnic identity, and gender. Demographic responses were imperative to my secondary question addressing the potential factors affecting teacher dispositions. Additionally, two open-ended questions were added. The first question asked what difficulties teachers have when using CRP in their classrooms, and the

second question asked what support or resources might assist them in using CRP. The intention

for asking these questions was to identify what issues NWA teachers were facing regarding CRP

and identify what could be done to mitigate those barriers as well as to give participants a sense

of agency as they were able to provide their lived experiences. The actual survey instrument

titled "Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: NWA Teachers," is accessible here or in

Appendix A.

Examination of the survey responses with the demographic categories was also

performed to identify which factors may have contributed to positive or negative dispositions.

Additionally, through an iterative process of reading the open responses, common themes were

identified and used to categorize teachers' responses into themes. Through the analysis, the goal

was to identify 1) Whether the majority of the sample population's dispositions align with or

against CRP, 2) Any connections that may exist between the survey statements and the

demographic factors, and 3) What difficulties teachers encounter and what supports would assist

them. The anticipation was that certain demographic groups would be more likely to have

positive dispositions of CRP. For example, it was anticipated that certain subjects, such as World

Language and Social Studies, would have more positive dispositions to CRP than other subjects

(Martell, 2018).

Results

The survey findings were collected using Qualtrics software (Qualtrics, Provo, UT) and

analyzed to better understand secondary teachers in NWA dispositions toward CRP.

Subsequently, frequency tables and bar charts were created to show the distributions of

responses. For the purpose of clarity, the following section of my paper is subdivided into

sections based on the specific research questions.

RQ #1: NWA Secondary Teachers' Dispositions (values, attitudes, and beliefs) Toward CRP?

To answer my primary research question, I used a survey that consisted of 11 Likert-scaled questions that asked teachers to evaluate their culturally responsive beliefs, attitudes, and efficacy. To make survey analysis more accessible, the 5-Likert scales were compressed into three: agree, neutral, and disagree. Then descriptive statistics were used to create a frequency table of the participants' responses. See Table 5 for an overview of the responses. Additionally, a graph was created to show the frequency of the teachers' responses to each question. See Figure 1 below.

Table 5. Frequency of Participants' Responses to the CRP Survey (n = 131)

| Question #	Survey Question	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%
1	I value assessing my own teaching practices	124	0.95	6	0.05	1	0.01
2	I am aware of my cultural background	112	0.86	15	0.11	4	0.03
3	*I am willing to take advantage of professional development opportunities focused on issues of diversity*	98	0.75	27	*0.21*	6	0.05
4	I am open to feedback about my teaching practices	126	0.96	4	0.03	1	0.01
5	I am willing to examine my own identities	108	0.82	17	0.13	6	0.05
6	I am willing to be vulnerable in my classroom	110	0.84	17	0.13	4	0.03
7	I value dialogue as a way to learn about students' out-of-school lives	125	0.95	4	0.03	2	0.02
8	*I have an awareness of my cultural background*	90	0.69	31	*0.24*	10	0.08
9	I value student differences and incorporate them into my curriculum	105	0.80	24	0.18	2	0.02
10	I view myself as a member of the learning community along with students	127	0.97	3	0.02	1	0.01
11	*I am comfortable with conflict as an inevitable part of the teaching and learning processes*	84	0.64	42	*0.32*	5	0.04
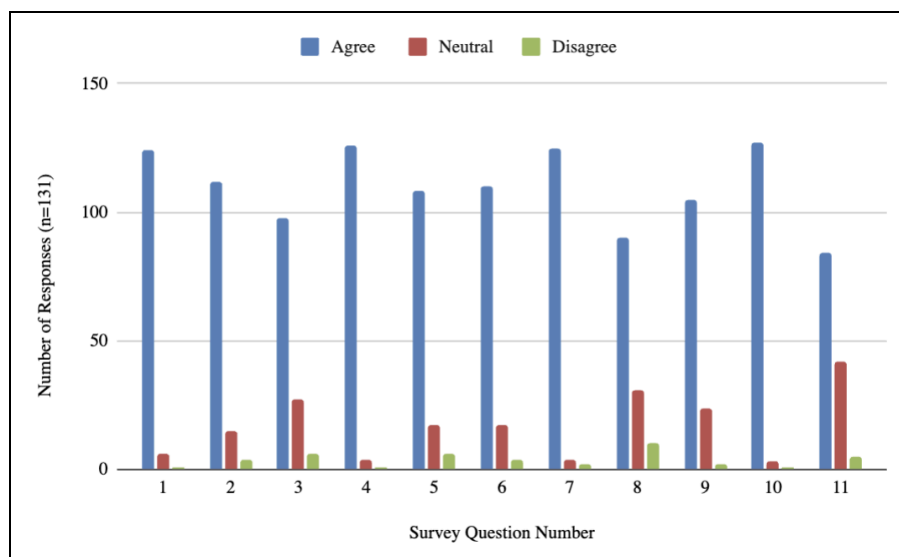
Figure 1. NW AR Teachers' Responses on the Culturally Relevant Teaching Survey

Overall, the teachers who responded to the survey clearly have positive dispositions toward their own CRP practices. Meaning participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs, for the most part, appear to align with those consistent with CRP. They also report having high self-efficacy when it comes to incorporating CRP in their classroom and lessons. Therefore, the data indicates that NWA secondary teachers have positive perceptions toward culturally responsive pedagogical practices.

Although the responses were overall positive, it was both interesting and prudent to explore the responses that revealed lower positive agreement with the survey questions asked. Questions 3, 8, and 11 as noted in italics (in Table 1 above), elicited 75% or less agreement with the survey questions.

RQ #2: Factors Affecting Teacher Dispositions

Participant demographics which included participants' subject area(s), years of teaching experience, race/ethnic identity, and gender are presented in Figures 2-5 below. A greater variance in the participants' subject areas (Figure 2) and their years of teaching experience (Figure 3) provided an opportunity to examine possible factors affecting a teacher's disposition

towards culturally responsive pedagogy and practices. Other demographic information,

racial/ethnic identity and gender, however, was more limited and less useful for analysis
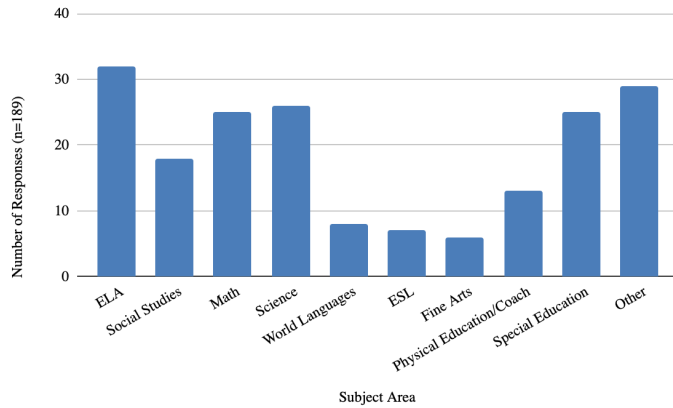
purposes.

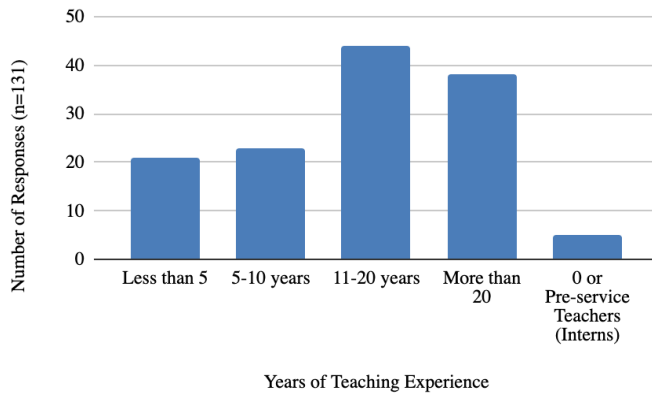Figure 2. Participant Distribution by Subject Area

Figure 3. Participant Distribution by Years of Teaching Experience
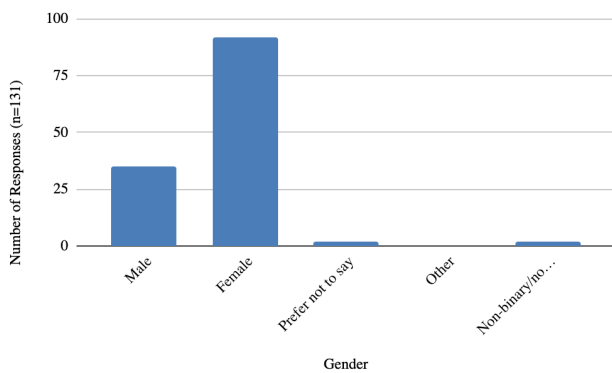
Figure 4. Participant Distribution by Gender
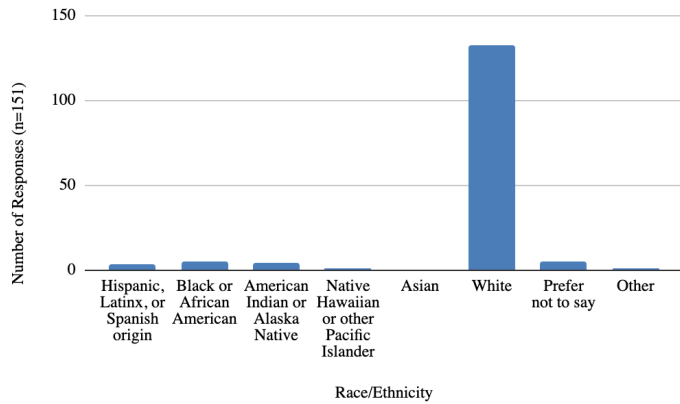
Figure 5. Participant Distribution by Race

Factor 1: Subject Area(s)

In response to survey question 3, "I am willing to take advantage of professional development (PD) opportunities focused on issues of diversity," the majority of participants agreed. In examining the responses by subject area, none of the participants (0%) from Social Studies, ESL, Fine Arts, or Special Education disagreed. World Languages (WL) and ELA also had a low rate of disagreement. The group with the highest number of participants who disagreed with the statement was Math (.22), followed by Other (.13), and Science (.09). See Figure 6 below.
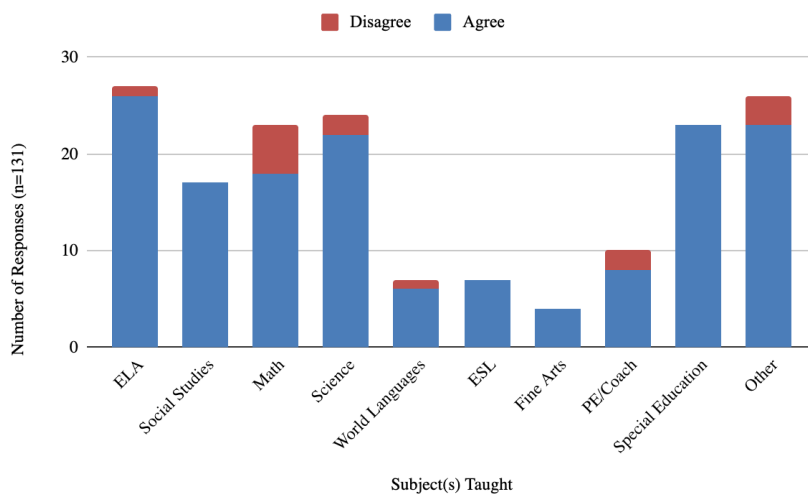
Figure 6. NWA Teachers' Responses to Survey Question 3 based on Subject Area(s)

In response to survey question 8, "I have awareness of my cultural background," the majority of participants agreed, but there was a higher rate of disagreement than in the previous question. Math had the highest rate of disagreement (.30), followed closely by ELA (.26). However, all participants (100%) from WL and Fine Arts agreed. See Figure 7 below.
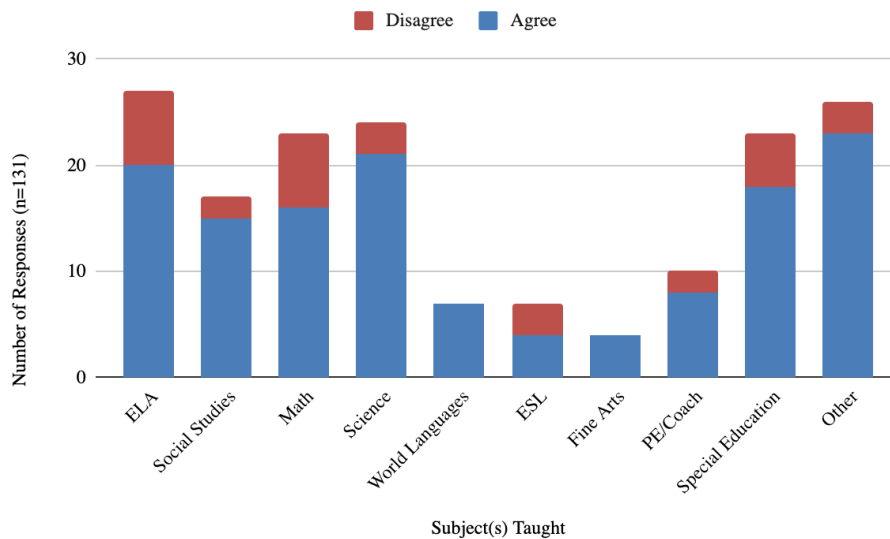
Figure 7. NWA Teachers' Responses to Survey Question 8 based on Subject Area(s)

Lastly, in response to survey question 11, "I am comfortable with conflict as an inevitable part of the teaching and learning processes," all (100%) participants from Fine Arts and PE agreed. Special Education (.04) and Social Studies (.06) also has low rates of disagreement, Math (.09) and Science (.08) had slightly higher rates. Followed by World Language (.14) and ESL (.14) with the same rates. ELA had the highest rate of disagreement (.19). See Figure 8 below.
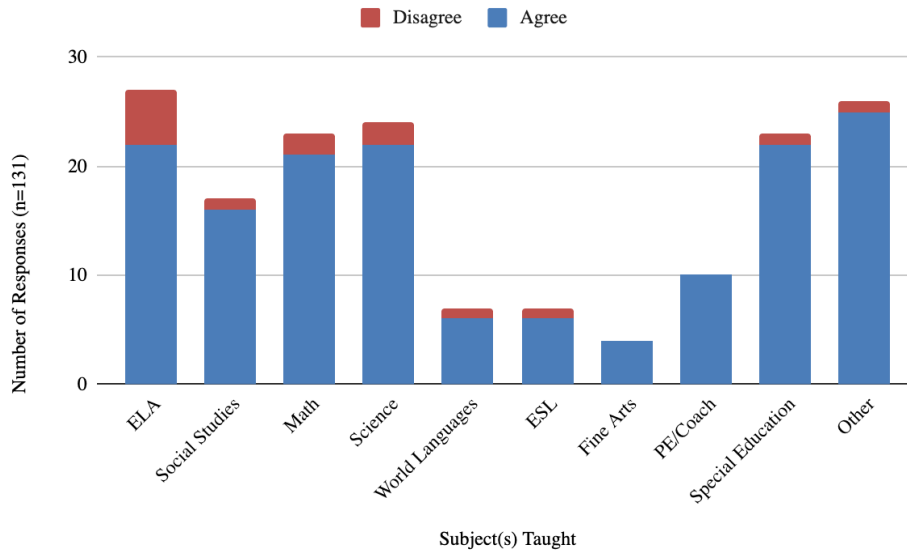
Figure 8. NWA Teachers' Responses to Question 11 based on Subject Area(s)

Factor 2: Years of Teaching

In response to survey question 3 "I am willing to take advantage of professional development opportunities focused on issues of diversity," most participants agreed, however, the participants with more than 20 years of teaching experience had the highest rate (.16) of disagreement. 11-20 years had the second most disagreements (.06), followed by 5-10, then less than 5, who had zero participants disagree. The rate of disagreement with the statement gets higher as the years of teacher experience go up. See Figure 9 below.
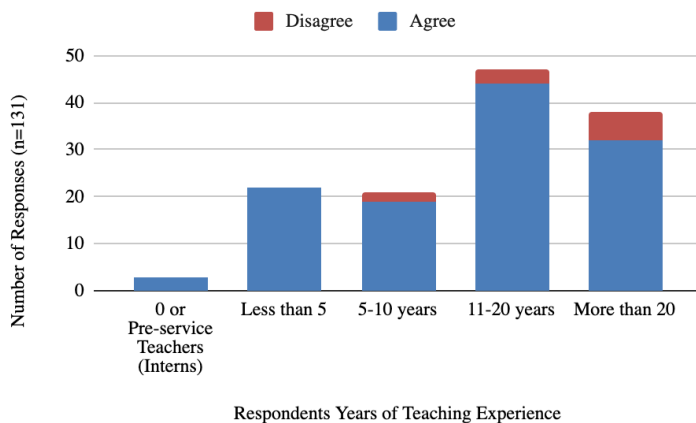
Figure 9. Survey Responses to Survey Question 3 Based on Teachers' Years of Experience

Responses to survey question 8, "I have awareness of my cultural background," are consistent with the above question as the two groups with the highest rate of disagreement are the 11-20 years and more than 20 years of experience. The largest group of participants who disagreed with the statement being the 11-20 years of experience (.23), and the succeeding group is teachers with more than 20 years of experience (.16). Additionally, teachers with less than 5 years (.18) had a slightly higher rate of disagreement than 5-10 years (.14). See Figure 10 below for a visual of this reporting pattern.
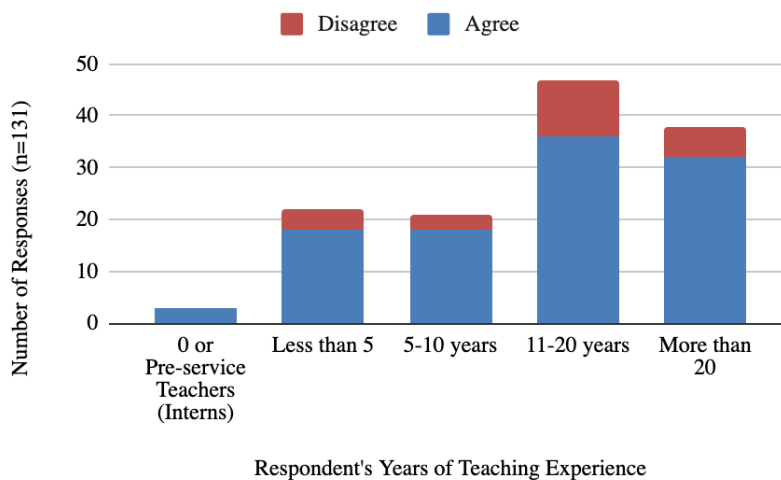
Figure 10. Survey Responses to Question #8 Based on Teachers' Years of Experience

Lastly, most of the responses to survey question 11 "I am comfortable with conflict as an inevitable part of the teaching and learning process," were "agree." However, the pattern noted in the preceding figures, is also present in Figure 11 below, "11-20 years" of experience has the highest rate of disagreement with the statement above (.12). It is noteworthy to mention that the "more than 20" years of experience (.05) category has very similar rates of disagreement with 5-10 (.10) and less than 5 years category (.09).
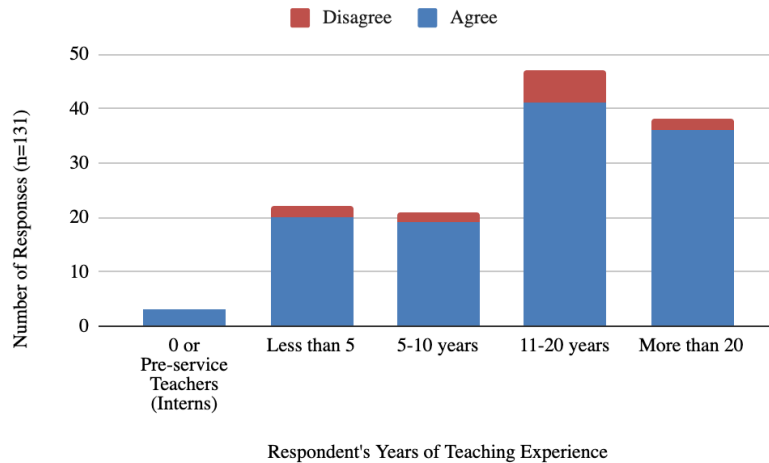
Figure 11. Survey Responses to Question #11 Based on Teachers' Years of Experience

As are many of the survey questions, this particular statement is very subjective to what the respondents view as "conflict." For example, one teacher may imagine conflict as student frustration over their ability to understand the material, while others may see it as student disagreement with each other over a controversial issue. However, the frame of reference I am viewing this statement through is the one set up by the creators of the DCRPS, promoting community integration into student learning (Whitaker and Valtierra, 2018, p. 10). With that in mind, conflict in the teaching and learning process may be discussing difficult topics that impact students' lives such as - racism, poverty, and cultural differences - topics that may pertain to students' lived experiences, or offer them a new perspective.

RQ #3: What difficulties are NWA Secondary Teachers having when incorporating CRP into their lessons?

The first open-response question (ORQ) in the survey addressed the third research question by asking "What difficulties have you encountered when incorporating culturally responsive practices into your lessons?" The themes for question one represent the overarching difficulty that teachers are reporting in their schools and classrooms. The themes identified from

the responses were as follows: student engagement and understanding; resistance and lack of support from community and others, policy pressures; lack of resources and time constraints; lack of personal efficacy with CRP and curricular challenges; do not use CRP; and no issues reported. It is important to mention that many of the responses overlap in their themes and fall into more than one of the categories, as all of these themes are interconnected in origin. Table 6 below shows some participant responses and their corresponding theme. For the full table with all of the responses, refer to Appendix B (see table B1).

11% of teachers reported not knowing how to incorporate CRP into the curriculum. 25% reported feeling worried or confused about how to use CRP under current legislation, afraid to upset students or parents, and are unsure if their administration will support them. To illustrate, below are some examples of teacher' responses that reflect these two themes:

- "With the recent Arkansas LEARNS Act, I feel a strong sense of fear when teaching anything that is REMOTELY controversial. I have to support my family. As it stands, I will no longer teach anything that can get me in trouble".
- "A lack of support from my administration and parents of my students."

While 11% of responses are indicative of either apathetic, uninformed teachers, or against CRP all together.

- "I don't incorporate culturally responsive practices into my lessons. I treat all students the same regardless of their backgrounds and believe all students can learn well regardless of their backgrounds."
- "I do not worry about being culturally responsive in my lessons. 2 + 2 = 4 in every culture."

Table 6. Sample of Participants Responses to Open Response Question #1 Sorted by Theme

Theme	Responses:
1) Student Engagement and Understanding:	Some of the kids don't want to learn these other cultures. Or they can't find their culture.
	Students are quick to make the leap to racism when it's just a discussion about different cultures.
	immaturity of students or lack of exposure in their own lives
	Students (and some parents) questioning its relevance to the course
	Students maybe uncomfortable sharing
	I'm always sadden by the lack of self-esteem and pride in different cultures. I wish more parents would celebrate their unique backgrounds and cultures.
	Sometimes students have charged responses to these teachings, especially in history. Answering charged or loaded questions in a professional and neutral way can be challenging at times.
2) Resistance and Lack of Support from Community and others, Policy Pressures:	Honestly, at this point, I am more worried about issues at the district and state level. Particularly state. As teaching about the world is bound to make someone uncomfortable, conflict is always a possibility, and the state has damaged a lot of confidence in incorporating culturally responsive practices.
	Concern about political attacks from community members
	Under the new law it sounds illegal.
	The pressure from state representatives, legislators, and some parents and stakeholders who openly criticize culturally responsive practices.
	a lack of support from my administration and parents of my students
	Outside pressure from certain groups to not include culturally responsive practices out of fear of being accused of teaching CRT.
	Some parts of the LEARNS Act now limit or forbid some of these practices.
	With the recent Arkansas LEARNS Act, I feel a strong sense of fear when teaching anything that is REMOTELY controversial. I have to support my family. As it stands, I will no longer teach anything that can get me in trouble.
	Racist attitudes and comments from other students.
3) Lack of Resource and Time Constraints:	I want to utilize resources from the cultures of our population, but there seem to be far less resources and also translation ability with the Marshallese community when compared to the Latine community
	limited time to develop and incorporate culturally responsive practices into classroom content
	teach physics and not a lot of resources, but more keep coming, like Step-UP
	Having enough time. We have a lot of frameworks already to cover
	It can be difficult to find appropriate supplemental resources to use with Curriculum.
	I teach a subject where culture is not a major topic or even discussed. Knowing how to incorporate this is something I have never been taught or learned about in PD.
	I will admit that I am struggling to find the time to readjust my curriculum and activities to incorporate

	some culturally responsive practices.
	Knowing how to incorporate it with meaning the goals of standard/state testing. Having the time and pacing and scheduling to do community and culture practices.
4) Lack of Personal Efficacy with CRP and Curricular Challenges:	I have encountered anxiety about appropriation and hesitated to present certain topics that I don't understand fully.
	It is difficult for some people to understand other cultures
	I do not know what culturally responsive practices are.
	How to fit in culture into science practices
	I teach an objective subject that is not open to interpretation or subjective opinion. (My curriculum)
	Making it authentic instead of feeling forced.
	Not knowing about other culture's well enough
	I am sometimes worried that something I say or something I present will be taken out of context and reported to a parent who is against cultural inclusivity.
	It is difficult to know and understand the cultural backgrounds of all students. I try to get to know each students and incorporate cultural knowledge into the lessons.
	I try to be sensitive (as much as I can), but also my school isn't very diverse, so sometimes I worry that students will feel singled out.
	I don't always feel confident that I make all feel included, or that I am politically correct.
5) Do not use CRP:	I do not talk about culturally practices
	I do not worry about being culturally responsive in my lessons. 2 + 2 = 4 in every culture.
	I don't incorporate culturally responsive practices into my lessons. I treat all students the same regardless of their backgrounds and believe all students can learn well regardless of their backgrounds.
	I don't necessary teach this so I don't have much conflict.
	I teach math. I try to stick to math. The most culturally incorporative thing I've done is have table names that were the names of minority mathematicians. The curriculum I use often uses names that would not be considered traditionally white protestant.
6) No Issues:	I work in a very culturally diverse school and I have not encountered many issues. Many years ago, some of our cultures were apprehensive about sharing about their culture. Everyone is much more comfortable about sharing their values now.
	I teach film. Each student brings their own culture into their work. The culture that I'm trying to develop is creativity and a hard work ethic.
	Rarely have difficulty. Hospitality is very inclusive as an industry and diversity is prized.
	The majority of my students are very open minded. I work very hard at the beginning of the school year to create a positive and accepting learning environment.

RQ4: What support or resources might assist NWA teachers in incorporating CRP into their practices?

To address the final research question, the second ORQ asked "What support or resources would assist you in incorporating culturally responsive practices into your classroom?" The themes identified in participants' responses were as follows: professional development and training, resources and time, community engagement and understanding, administrative support and collective efforts, and responses that were not clearly aligned. Table 6 below shows some participant responses and their corresponding theme. For the full table with all of the responses, refer to Appendix B (see table B2).

13% of responses reflected a desire to learn more about cultures, languages, and how to enact CRP and other issues of diversity.

- "I have had students from different countries in my class. It would be good to know how to pronounce words such as mom and dad in their native language. It would also be good to have a knowledge of cultural expectations that the family may have while also making sure the rules and laws of our country are followed."

Additionally, 15% of respondents wanted better, more engaging professional development.

- "A good PD session that is not just someone reading from a powerpoint slide."

40% of responses indicate that teachers really just need a place to start. Many were unsure how to use CRP within their curriculum and standards, and they did not have the time to figure it out on their own. Further, 10% of participants said they have the awareness and resources, but instead of educational policies supporting them, they were hindering them.

- "I have the resources. I'm not sure I can legally without being sued."

- "A reversal of recently passed legislation would be necessary to reach all cultures

in my classrooms."

● "The elimination of laws aimed at educators to keep curriculum white washed and

history comfortable."

Table 7. Sample of Participants Responses to Open Response Question #2 Sorted by Theme

Theme	Responses:
1) Professional Development and Trainings	My initial response is to say that access to high-quality PD would help. We have many veteran teachers in our building who may be resistant to the idea of culturally responsive practices, so getting them on board would be necessary.
	I have had students from different countries in my class. It would be good to know how to pronounce words such as mom and dad in their native language. I would also be good to have a knowledge of cultural expectations that the family may have while also making sure the rules and laws of our country are followed.
	Better understanding of how culture and poverty affect student performance
	Understanding the background of diverse cultures in our area such as Indian & Polynesian peoples and understanding what culture/identity in being retained in the home.
	Professional Development with actual real life application
	A good PD session that is not just someone reading from a powerpoint slide.
	Being more educated on differences in culture
	Possibly a training to discuss cultural norms and expectations for the entire student body.
	I would love more PD sessions on different cultures so I can learn more. I do believe it would help me become a better teacher and improve my practices.
2) Resources and Time	TIME :). Also a database of artists from various cultures
	Having a resource bank that has differentiated material so it is meaningful for students with a variety of different needs and ability levels.
	Good well rounded true resources. With this day and age it is hard to know what is a good resource on this idea and what is pushing a certain agenda.
	Ideas specific to a middle school science classroom - how do other science teachers incorporate these practices?
	If it was incorporated into our curriculum and we were provided with actual people that we could speak to to know if we are in line.
	Tie-ins to the curriculum. If there were any questioning by parents about our conversations, I don't feel like I could back it with my standards.
	Aligning to science standards
	For conflict, I wish I learned a way to steer conversation away from pointing fingers and hearing "You're wrong" or "You'll go to Hell for that". I would like a resource or support that helps me de-escalate situations.

3) Community Engagement and Understanding	Community members from my students' communities to educate me on what they wish teachers would know and to also preview my curriculum as needed.
	Political support for education and diversity in education as well as resources/lessons
	A reversal of recently passed legislation would be necessary to reach all cultures in my classrooms
	I have the resources. I'm not sure I can legally without being sued.
	The elimination of laws aimed at educators to keep curriculum white washed and history comfortable.
	Guests and experts visiting the classroom from diverse backgrounds
4) Administrative Support and Collective Efforts	A sense of security.
	Knowing my students' preferences culturally, but that would be deemed heresy by admin.
	I wish everybody in the school promoted cultural diversity. I also wish that more world languages were taught, and were seen as an enrichment, rather than just an elective class
	Admin support and assurances that teaching culturally responsive content will not be met with resistance from them or directives to stop.
5) Not Clearly Aligned	I am really not sure. You don't know what you don't know.
	I'm not sure; I really just try to treat them all like people knowing that they all come from different backgrounds.

Discussion

This research aimed to examine teacher dispositions toward culturally responsive pedagogy in Northwest Arkansas high schools. More specifically, it investigated how NWA secondary teachers self-report their dispositions (values, attitudes, and beliefs) toward CRP. Survey findings indicate that the NWA secondary teachers who participated have positive perceptions of CRP.

The study also had three secondary questions it sought to answer. The first sub-question asks what factors affect these teachers' dispositions about culturally relevant practices (i.e., years of teaching, subject matter, and ethnicities). The conjecture was that teachers who teach from the content-specific culturally related curriculum (i.e., World language teachers) to have stronger dispositions toward CRP practices than non-world language teachers (e.g., science, math, history,

etc.). Additionally, based on the instructional practices that scholars suggest are consistent with culturally responsive teaching, it was anticipated that teachers who explicitly teach English language learners (ELL) have stronger perceptions of CRP practices than single-subject teachers (Richards et al., 2007).

Based on recent educational reform movements, an increase in multicultural education, and the dismantling of previous "colorblind" ideologies in education, the study predicted to find that novice teachers may have more positive dispositions to CRP than veteran teachers. (Richards et al., 2007; Mette, 2016). The responses of teachers in this study suggest that teachers with less than 5 years to 10 years of teaching experience are more likely to have positive perceptions of the values, attitudes, and beliefs related to CRP, than teachers with 20 or more years of experience.

Lastly, the study sought to examine classroom teachers' struggles in using CRP. The expectation was that responses would be mixed, some of which teachers were facing issues, and some who were not concerned with incorporating CRP.

Cultural Awareness

Overall, survey findings suggest that teachers who work with predominantly diverse students or topics are more likely to agree with the values, attitudes, and beliefs related to culturally responsive practices. Specifically, teachers in subjects who work with culturally related content or diverse students, were more likely to agree with the statement, "I have an awareness of my cultural background." This is consistent with the expectation because literature suggests that experiences and exposure to diversity are the most impactful when it comes to multicultural or culturally responsive instruction (Kolano et al., 2014).

Conflict in the Classroom

Further, a key pillar of CRP is addressing students' lived experiences alongside experiences outside of their lives to expand their worldview into a social justice mindset. With that, teachers and students may experience conflict as part of the teaching and learning process. In a world that has become very polarized, many teachers may fear having conflict in their classrooms. Social Studies content, in particular, may be a point of contention. This is evident in recent years as different curricula, topics, and books are being banned in Social Studies classrooms. For example, Florida's 2022 ban on AP African American Studies courses and legislation banning Critical Race Theory, the "Individual Freedom Act" (Hollingsworth, 2023; DeSantis, 2022). Similarly, Arkansas' Executive Order 23-05 "prohibits indoctrination and Critical Race Theory in Schools," (Sanders, 2023). These legislative actions alone present space for potential conflict in the classroom, and by banning discussion of America's instructional racism, it has the potential to amplify those issues.

For those reasons, it is interesting that Social Studies teachers posed one the lowest rates of disagreement to the statement, "I am comfortable with conflict as an inevitable part of the teaching and learning processes," when it comes to single-subject content areas because. These results may suggest that despite the legislative battles happening outside the classroom, Social Studies teachers are committed to teaching students how to critically examine the past and understand historical inequity, allowing potential conflict to spur discussion (Martell, 2018).

Professional Development on Diversity

The survey statement, "I am willing to take advantage of professional development opportunities focused on issues of diversity," the results were consistent with what was expected; teachers who work with predominantly diverse students were more likely to agree with the

statement. ESL teachers consistently work with culturally and linguistically diverse students and Special Education teachers as work with students with diverse sets of needs and backgrounds. Research supports that teachers who have a connection or interest in issues of diversity in education will be more likely to continue learning about it or participating in further training (Kolano et al., 2014). Another consideration for these more positive perceptions is that these courses do not have the added pressures of standardized testing, therefore, they may have different perceptions of student achievement and instructional goals (Mette et al., 2016).

On the same survey question as above, it was anticipated that teachers who have had more teaching experience, but more importantly, teachers who went through their teacher education longer ago, would disagree with this statement more than newer teachers. The results confirmed my expectation. These findings are congruent with what other researchers suggest because teacher training programs have added coursework and prompted reflection on cultural awareness, that was not previously provided or mandated when veteran teachers completed their education (Jensen, 2021). Therefore, teachers who were more recently in teacher preparation programs were likely given a stronger understanding of cultural competency and its implications on the classroom (Jensen, 2021). Further, classrooms are becoming more diverse than ever before, so teachers who have been working longer may be accustomed to predominantly white environments, leading to less cultural awareness. Whereas newer teachers are more likely to begin their teaching experience in more diverse classrooms, requiring them to develop more cultural awareness from the start (Kolano et al., 2014).

Whitaker and Valtierra reported that white preservice teachers whose student teaching was in a diverse urban school realized the importance of connecting content to the students' community, making them more open to conflict and discussion (2018, p. 10). As schools are

growing in diversity, that offers more opportunities for preservice teachers to get exposure to diverse classrooms earlier in their experiences, whereas teachers with more experience may not have had significant exposure (Kolano et al., 2014). An important consideration is that researchers note that there is not enough known about the level of acceptance of diversity training for veteran teachers, largely because they self-report higher CRP strategies than what is observed (Cox et al., 2017, p. 4).

Difficulties Using CRP

Lastly, this study sought to explore what difficulties teachers were having while incorporating culturally responsive practices into their lessons. Further, it aimed to explore potential avenues of support for teachers' implementation of CRP. According to survey findings, teachers reported lacking support, resources, time, and understanding of CRP. Likewise, when asked what support and resources would assist them, teachers reported wanting more tangible professional development, administrative support, and community understanding.

The sentiments that were seen in NWA teachers' responses to the difficulties they were facing in using CRP in the classroom and the support they needed are consistent with what scholarship reports. A case study of teachers' perceptions of CRP and its connection to leadership and preparation noted the importance of leadership which fostered a supportive environment for diversity and promoted effective training (Mette, 2016). Similarly, respondents in this study reported a lack of support from school administration and parents. Additionally, in the case study the two main themes the researchers identified for teachers' challenges when using CRP were, "lack of time and implementation apathy," (p. 14). Those themes were also attributed to little preparation and training on CRP during teacher preparation programs. Research often attributes teachers' apathy or even rejection of diversity initiatives in school to the lack of

examination of race and racism in our society in traditional teacher preparation programs. Limited training about CRP means some educators are left with a limited understanding of racism and the importance of equitable practices. In many cases, it is up to the leaders of the school and community to foster an equitable environment and promote CRP practices within the school (Mette, 2016; Gay, 2018).

A common thread amongst research suggests that when teachers are offered support, resources, training, etc. that is relevant to CRP, it is not very effective (Jensen, 2021; Mette, 2016). This is consistent with studies on teacher diversity training and preparedness that report professional development opportunities on diversity were not actionable or effective (Jensen, 2021, p. 116). Regardless of the lack of competency or self-efficacy teachers have towards CRP, it is the responsibility of school districts and school leadership to enhance teachers' skills (Jensen, 2021, p. 49). Even with these considerations of cultural competency and awareness, there are still concerns about what is considered "too far," by the law. While research has not yet been done to investigate Arkansas teachers' response to the recent legislation, there are reports of educators speaking against the LEARNS Act, expressing similar sentiments to those of the participants (Claybrook, 2023). Richards' work asserts that reform of school policies and procedures is one of the foremost ways to make the institution of education more culturally responsive. Educational policies have the power to determine the relationship the education system has with its diverse constituents and, therefore, have the power to shape what goes on inside the classroom (Richards et al., 2007, p. 64).

Limitations

Given the findings presented, it is imperative to note the limitations of this study. As scholars recognize, it is difficult to discern the accurate acceptance of CRP practices in a

self-reported study (Cox et al., 2017). However, these results do suggest potential disparities that could be investigated further through the district's observations, evaluations, and feedback from school staff and faculty. Additionally, as this study was completed through volunteer participation with a limited number of individuals (n=131) across the school districts, it is not intended to be used as a representative report of the secondary teachers in the region. Rather, this takes a glimpse into the pedagogical values, attitudes, and beliefs of a portion of the population, intending to encourage further research in this area. Further, to gain a better understanding of the current training and initiatives related to CRP in the school districts, it would have been beneficial to have asked participants what CRP-related training they have completed with their district.

Conclusion

This study contributes to a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy. This is done by focusing on a specific region with varying degrees of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity and has recently undergone state-wide educational policy change. The majority a particpants reported positive dispositions toward the values, attitudes, and beliefs of culturally responsive pedagogy. This study further examines factors affecting teachers' dispositions: their subject areas and years of teaching experience. This study suggests that teachers who work with predominantly diverse students are more likely to have positive perceptions toward practices relevant to CRP. Additionally, results suggest that teachers who participated in teacher preparation more recently, specifically teachers with 5 to 10 years of experience, are more likely to have positive perceptions of CRP practices.

Lastly, and perhaps most relevant in understanding teachers' first-hand experience with CRP, this study examined teachers' difficulties when incorporating CRP into their classrooms.

Findings indicate that teachers need more tangible, actionable CRP professional development and CRP curriculum scaffolding to minimize the time they spend building practices into their lessons. Further, teachers need more support from their administration and/or policymakers to ensure that they can incorporate culturally relevant, equitable, and fair educational practices into their rooms.

These findings intend to inform school administrators of factors that may affect positive dispositions towards CRP and the barriers teachers are facing. Based on that information, districts should work to create and implement quality professional development that could support an increase in positive teacher dispositions towards CRP. Districts could initiate future studies investigating NWA teachers' dispositions to CRP to help analyze specific struggles in their area and, if done continuously, could be used to chart the effectiveness of their PD.

As this region continues to diversify and the policies that shape our education system continue to change, school leadership needs to implement mandated professional development focused on culturally relevant pedagogy and practices. School districts should provide all teachers with professional development that gives them the tools and resources to implement a culturally relevant environment in their classrooms and by extension, in the school.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: NWA Teachers

Dear NWA Secondary Teachers,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study to examine some of the perceptions held by local educators towards values associated with culturally responsive pedagogy. Your responses are anonymous.

This examination has the potential to both validate the effectiveness of teacher preparation and training programs in promoting equitable educational practices and uncover areas where additional support and resources are required to cultivate a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment.

In the 3-5 minute survey below, you will be asked to provide some demographic information and then rank a series of 11 Likert- style statements about your own teaching practices.

Participation in this survey is voluntary, and declining to participate will not adversely affect your relationship with the University or the researchers. Willingness to return the completed questionnaire indicates your consent to participate in this anonymous study. We greatly appreciate your participation and support, and we encourage you to share this with fellow Northwest Arkansas 7-12 teachers!

If you have questions about the research, please contact principal researcher, Rylie Ford at rnford@uark.edu or faculty supervisor, Dr. Peggy Ward at pdward@uark.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ro Windwalker, the University's IRB Coordinator, at 479-575-2208 or irb@uark.edu.

Click on the red arrow below to start the survey.

1) <u>How many years of teaching experience do you have?</u>
   ☐ 0 or Pre-service Teachers (Interns)
   ☐ Less than 5
   ☐ 5-10 years
   ☐ 11-20 years
   ☐ More than 20

2) <u>What grade level(s) do you teach? Select all that apply.</u>
   ☐ 7th
   ☐ 8th
   ☐ 9th
   ☐ 10th
   ☐ 11th
   ☐ 12th

3) <u>What subject(s) do you teach? Select all that apply.</u>
   ☐ ELA
   ☐ Social Studies
   ☐ Math
   ☐ Science
   ☐ World Languages
   ☐ ESL
   ☐ Fine Arts
   ☐ Physical Education/Coach
   ☐ Special Education
   ☐ Other __

4) <u>How would you describe yourself? Select all that apply</u>
   ☐ Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin
   ☐ Black or African American
   ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
   ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   ☐ Asian
   ☐ White
   ☐ Prefer not to say
   ☐ Other ___

5) <u>What is your gender?</u>
     ☐ Male
     ☐ Female
     ☐ Non-binary/non-conforming
     ☐ Prefer not to say
     ☐ Other __

<u>How much do you agree with the statements below?</u>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I value assessing my own teaching practices	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am aware of my cultural background	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to take advantage of professional development opportunities focused on issues of diversity	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am open to feedback about my teaching practices	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to examine my own identities	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to be vulnerable in my classroom	○	○	○	○	○	○
I value dialogue as a way to learn about students' out of school lives	○	○	○	○	○	○

I lack awareness of my cultural background	○	○	○	○	○	○
I value student differences and incorporate it into my curriculum	○	○	○	○	○	○
I view myself as a member of the learning community along with students	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am comfortable with conflict as an inevitable part of the teaching and learning processes	○	○	○	○	○	○

Optional Open Response: Do you wish to elaborate, expand, or comment on any of your responses above?

_____

What difficulties have you encountered when incorporating culturally responsive practices into your lessons?

_____

What support or resources would assist you in incorporating culturally responsive practices into your classroom?

_____

<u>Will you consider participating in a subsequent virtual follow-up interview so I can validate my interpretations of the responses you provided? If yes, your identity will remain anonymous to everyone except me and my faculty advisor and used only for data analysis purposes.</u>

- ○ Yes -- include email below

  _____

- ○ No

<u>Do you have any additional comments you wish to provide?</u>

_____

END OF SURVEY

Appendix B

Participant Responses to Open Response Questions 1 & 2

Table B1. Participants Responses to Open Response Question #1 Sorted by Theme (n=88)

Theme:	Responses:
1) Student Engagement and Understanding:	Resistance by a few students. Finding meaninful ways to make all students feel represented and heard. Some students do not have the life experience to believe what other students are saying about their lived experience.
	I think the biggest challenge in my classroom is finding things that will actively engage my students. When going over black history month, sometimes my non-POC students tend to not engage as much.
	Some of the kids don't want to learn these other cultures. Or they can't find their culture.
	Students willingness to engage in these conversations. Not dictating what "culture" means or having too narrow of a lens.
	Students are quick to make the leap to racism when it's just a discussion about different cultures.
	immaturity of students or lack of exposure in their own lives
	Students claim they do not have a culture. I see this more among my white students.
	Students (and some parents) questioning its relevance to the course
	Some students can be skeptical at first, but then they understand the value of what we are doing
	Many student who do not have a strong sense of culture at home have a hard time understanding different culture views and ways of living.
	some students don't want their culture focused on. We have a set curriculum and adding things can be a challenge
	Students maybe uncomfortable sharing
	I'm always sadden by the lack of self-esteem and pride in different cultures. I wish more parents would celebrate their unique backgrounds and cultures.
	Sometimes students have charged responses to these teachings, especially in history. Answering charged or loaded questions in a professional and neutral way can be challenging at times.
	Students may not know about their culture or they might not recognize their culture as a part of their identity
	I teach exceptional students and that brings a heightened sense of awareness to the words that we use to convey information about cultures that are not there own, because most take things very literally and don't have a lot of room for openness from their own unique experiences.
2) Resistance and Lack of Support from Community and others, Policy Pressures:	Attitudes of other educators
	Honestly, at this point, I am more worried about issues at the district and state level. Particularly state. As teaching about the world is bound to make someone uncomfortable, conflict is always a possibility, and the state has damaged a lot of confidence in incorporating culturally responsive

	practices.
	There is a general hesitancy surrounding anything that might be too "woke". I teach in a smaller, rural but rapidly growing district that has historically been resistant engaging in diversity initiatives or culturally responsive practices. We have also been under attack by Moms for Liberty, and I think that has caused fear and frustration among the faculty here.
	Concern about political attacks from community members
	Under the new law it sounds illegal.
	Fears of accusations to indoctrination.
	Some do not agree that we should do that an feel that we are pushing other cultures on them.
	The pressure from state representatives, legislators, and some parents and stakeholders who openly criticize culturally responsive practices.
	a lack of support from my administration and parents of my students
	Outside pressure from certain groups to not include culturally responsive practices out of fear of being accused of teaching CRT.
	Some parts of the LEARNS Act now limit or forbid some of these practices.
	Certain student prejudices or expressed parental responses concerned about a "lack of patriotism" in the classroom.
	With the recent Arkansas LEARNS Act, I feel a strong sense of fear when teaching anything that is REMOTELY controversial. I have to support my family. As it stands, I will no longer teach anything that can get me in trouble.
	Afraid I'm going to offend someone
	Racist attitudes and comments from other students.
	The tough questions students ask. I worry that they will ask something inappropriate and/or offend someone. Also the time, we have so much curriculum to cover as it is.
	Occasional comments or quips about different cultures.
3) Lack of Resource and Time Constraints:	I want to utilize resources from the cultures of our population, but there seem to be far less resources and also translation ability with the Marshallese community when compared to the Latine community
	I don't really have difficulty incorporating Hispanic culture into my teaching. I have classes where the major of students are not white and we talk about their traditions and we read stories that incorporate their culture. The only trouble I have is we don't incorporate all cultures that are represented in my classroom.
	limited time to develop and incorporate culturally responsive practices into classroom content
	teach physics and not a lot of resources, but more keep coming, like Step-UP
	Having enough time. We have a lot of frameworks already to cover
	Timing in class to differentiate and explore beyond the curriculum. The curriculum has broadened its horizons, however, moving away from Western Civilization to incorporating a Southernization element to begin World History that includes the ancient cultures/civilizations that eventually allow Europeans to sail the world.

	It can be difficult to find appropriate supplemental resources to use with Curriculum.
	I teach a subject where culture is not a major topic or even discussed. Knowing how to incorporate this is something I have never been taught or learned about in PD.
	Finding resources and effective implementation. To be honest, I have significant difficulty implementing any pedagogical practice that is created by someone who does not actually do the work that secondary school teachers do. My experience has led me to believe that there is too large a gap between theory and reality.
	I will admit that I am struggling to find the time to readjust my curriculum and activities to incorporate some culturally responsive practices.
	Knowing how to incorporate it with meeting the goals of standard/state testing. Having the time and pacing and scheduling to do community and culture practices.
4) Lack of Personal Efficacy with CRP and Curricular Challenges:	I have encountered anxiety about appropriation and hesitated to present certain topics that I don't understand fully.
	If the culture is different than your own, it can be very challenging to make sure that you are incorporating the practices fully and responsibly.
	It is difficult for some people to understand other cultures
	If you change education for one group then another can be left behind, so we must present the nuts and bolts of the subject matter.
	I do not know what culturally responsive practices are.
	How to fit in culture into science practices
	I teach an objective subject that is not open to interpretation or subjective opinion. (My curriculum)
	Making it authentic instead of feeling forced.
	Not knowing about other culture's well enough
	I am sometimes worried that something I say or something I present will be taken out of context and reported to a parent who is against cultural inclusivity.
	Its difficult to know how to approach the topic without inviting more conflict. I teach mostly STEM. I make sure to showcase Inventors, scientists, and engineers that are female or people from other cultures. Beyond that I don't feel I am competent enough to handle an open discussion.
	It is difficult to know and understand the cultural backgrounds of all students. I try to get to know each students and incorporate cultural knowledge into the lessons.
	I try to be sensitive (as much as I can), but also my school isn't very diverse, so sometimes I worry that students will feel singled out.
	I don't always feel confident that I make all feel included, or that I am politically correct.
	knowing how or what that even means, I feel like I build a valuable rapport with each of my students and adapt to their level
5) Do not use CRP:	I do not talk about culturally responsive practices
	I do not worry about being culturally responsive in my lessons. 2 + 2 = 4 in every culture.
	I don't incorporate culturally responsive practices into my lessons. I treat all students the same

	regardless of their backgrounds and believe all students can learn well regardless of their backgrounds.
	I don't necessary teach this so I don't have much conflict.
	I haven't.
	I teach math. I try to stick to math. The most culturally incorporative thing I've done is have table names that were the names of minority mathematicians. The curriculum I use often uses names that would not be considered traditionally white protestant.
	The feeling that only certain cultures are receiving favoritism and there is clear bias when these subjects are addressed.
6) No Issues:	I work in a very culturally diverse school and I have not encountered many issues. Many years ago, some of our cultures were apprehensive about sharing about their culture. Everyone is much more comfortable about sharing their values now.
	I teach film. Each student brings their own culture into their work. The culture that I'm trying to develop is creativity and a hard work ethic.
	Rarely have difficulty. Hospitality is very inclusive as an industry and diversity is prized.
	I have not in my time really ran into many problems. I have had a handful of parents ask for their student to maybe do an alternate assignment but nothing crazy.
	none (x2)
	The majority of my students are very open minded. I work very hard at the beginning of the school year to create a positive and accepting learning environment.

Table B2. Participants Responses to Open Response Question #2 Sorted by Theme (n=83)

Theme	Responses
1) Professional Development and Trainings	better education about our super small minority groups, (Karen speakers, Kiribati, Laos, etc)
	My initial response is to say that access to high-quality PD would help. We have many veteran teachers in our building who may be resistant to the idea of culturally responsive practices, so getting them on board would be necessary.
	More professional development and access to diverse texts that are approved to teach in the classroom
	We have Instructional coaches that can help us. I would be open to some professional development.
	I would best be supported initially by training in what constitutes culturally responsive training.
	I always love to learn about new cultures to help in my understanding.
	Learning more, new things that may be better for how we personally do things
	I have had students from different countries in my class. It would be good to know how to pronounce words such as mom and dad in their native language. I would also be good to have a knowledge of cultural expectations that the family may have while also making sure the rules and laws of our country are followed.

	Better understanding of how culture and poverty affect student performance
	Understanding the background of diverse cultures in our area such as Indian & Polynesian peoples and understanding what culture/identity in being retained in the home.
	Additional professional development to help teachers navigate the very muddy water we are in.
	professional development
	training, practice, and teacher observations
	Knowledge of cultural do's and don't's.
	Professional Development with actual real life application
	examples for specific content area. some sort of boundary guide. etc
	A good PD session that is not just someone reading from a power point slide.
	Being more educated on differences in culture
	PD would be very helpful.
	Possibly a training to discuss cultural norms and expectations for the entire student body.
	I would love more PD sessions on different cultures so I can learn more. I do believe it would help me become a better teacher and improve my practices.
2) Resources and Time	Literacy embedded instructional materials with an emphasis on expressive language communication
	TIME :). Also a database of artists from various cultures
	guest speakers, videos, books etc
	Honestly, I think that the resources are out there for those who are willing to seek it. For everyone else, however, I think that teaching resources that present simple bellwork prompts highlighting important figures and dates/events for students and teachers alike to explore.
	more planning time or fewer subjects to prepare for
	more resources
	Texts by diverse authors
	Access to different resources that teachers could choose to take part in their classroom
	I personally would like a great book on the topic.
	Having a resource bank that has differentiated material so it is meaningful for students with a variety of different needs and ability levels.
	If there are certain words pertaining to math that I would need to explain in a different way due to a student's backgrounds, then that would be helpful, but otherwise I don't feel that any support or resources are needed.
	I plan with my PLC for our lessons and we review each one to make sure they are appropriate.
	Good well rounded true resources. With this day and age it is hard to know what is a good resource on this idea and what is pushing a certain agenda.
	If the school could provide information on students' backgrounds at beginning of school.
	Ideas specific to a middle school science classroom - how do other science teachers incorporate these practices?

	If it was incorporated into our curriculum and we were provided with actual people that we could speak to to know if we are in line.
	AR Course Frameworks/Components
	Ideas specific to a middle school science classroom - how do other science teachers incorporate these practices?
	Tie-ins to the curriculum. If there were any questioning by parents about our conversations, I don't feel like I could back it with my standards.
	It is important to understand where each of my students is from. In world history, I don't want to skip over something that a student would relate to or make to general of a summary of the topic at hand.
	Aligning to science standards
	For conflict, I wish I learned a way to steer conversation away from pointing fingers and hearing "You're wrong" or "You'll go to Hell for that". I would like a resource or support that helps me de-escalate situations.
3) Community Engagement and Understanding	Community members from my students' communities to educate me on what they wish teachers would know and to also preview my curriculum as needed.
	Political support for education and diversity in education as well as resources/lessons
	I am a Native Speaker from Colombia and being aware of cultural backgrounds is one of my strenghts.
	A reversal of recently passed legislation would be necessary to reach all cultures in my classrooms
	I have the resources. I'm not sure I can legally without being sued.
	The elimination of laws aimed at educators to keep curriculum white washed and history comfortable.
	Guests and experts visiting the classroom from diverse backgrounds
	How is culture determined? What are diverse backgrounds? What parts are race or religion based? What parts are income based? How do we understand and connect to cultures different than our own? How to we interact with biases on both sides? I'm more ignorant about the lives of wealthy families than I am other groups because I have not lived that life myself. Last, how do we expect people to be aware of others when so many of us are unaware of ourselves? Perhaps that is where the resources should begin? Examining our own experience and then finding ways to connect that to others? To answer your question, I believe that we are lacking knowledge that is not politicized in any way. I'm not necessarily answering this for myself, but I have seen colleagues and community members turn against responsive practices because of the political smearing that has occurred with DEI practices.
	These types of subjects are the very reason we are experiencing tension. Teaching the subject matter in an unbiased way and avoiding pushing an agenda is the most professional way to teach.
	Guest speakers that fit into the curriculum
Administrative Support and Collective Efforts	*A sense of security.*
	I would love to know what my legal boundry would be.
	Knowing my students' preferences culturally, but that would be deemed heresy by admin.
	I wish everybody in the school promoted cultural diversity. I also wish that more world languages were taught, and were seen as an enrichment, rather than just an elective class

	Admin support and assurances that teaching culturally responsive content will not be met with resistance from them or directives to stop.
4) Not clearly aligned:	I am really not sure. You don't know what you don't know.
	None you just need to be aware of all students and their needs.
	All good here.
	There aren't any. I use life experience and student experience.
	NA
	none.
	I'm not sure; I really just try to treat them all like people knowing that they all come from different backgrounds.
	not sure.
	I allow my students of different background share about their cultures, if they are willing.
	Anything that teaches students the value of a strong work ethic and a pursuit of creativity.
	I'm not sure, and I wish there were specific examples of what you mean by culturally responsive practices.
	We have most of the resources we need
	n/a
	I just try not to bring it up
	Anything.
	Not sure
	I don't know what I don't know.