A Study On Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Implementing Common Core Standards to Increase Positive Outcomes for African American Students

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

EDGE, ANDREA NIKELE B.S.ED. GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY, 2006
M.ED. GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, 2008

A STUDY ON CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY IMPLEMENTING COMMON CORE STANDARDS TO INCREASE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

Committee Chair: Dr. Barbara Hill
Dissertation Dated May 2014

The purpose of this study was to identify the link between culture and pedagogy through the implementation of the Common Core Standards with the goal of increasing the instructional outcomes of African-American students. This study investigated culturally relevant pedagogy implementing of Common Core Standards through the variables of teacher efficacy, instructional delivery of Common Core Standards, cultural synchronization, and cultural sensitivity. Furthermore, the research examined Ladson-Billings criterion for culturally relevant teaching and its application to the 21st century student as they encounter Common Core Standards. This research was conducted at a primary public school with a large minority population and located in the suburbs of Atlanta. The participants in this study were certified classroom teachers, support teachers, and instructional lead teachers.

i
Data were collected in a triangulated fashion through surveys, interviews, observations, and attitude scales. The study findings manifested how the characteristics of culturally relevant teaching aligned with regulated standards could create a connection between culture and education for African-American students. The findings and conclusions of this study suggest that cultural characteristics of teachers have an impact of culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards. Teachers are cultural beings and utilize their own cultural backgrounds to identify differences between themselves and African-American students. These differences manifested themselves as teachers worked to implement new standards while using culturally relevant teaching practices. Practical implications and recommendations based on findings and conclusions are offered in this study.
A STUDY ON CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY IMPLEMENTING
COMMON CORE STANDARDS TO INCREASE POSITIVE OUTCOMES
FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

ANDREA NIKELE EDGE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2014
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

This dissertation is truly the result of countless hours of prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to God. I am grateful to my Heavenly Father for blessing me with His peace throughout this journey.

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, Elijah Bobby West, my inspiration to work diligently in reaching my goals and pressing towards greatness.

To my amazing family, your love, understanding, and support have truly been my anchor during this journey. To my extended family and friends, thank you for loving me through this process. I love you all!

To the wonderful CAU faculty and staff, you guys have been truly awesome! Thank you Dr. Hill for helping me to see that I should not be afraid of my own potential but should walk in a manner that highlights my strengths as a change agent! Thank you Dr. Gregory, Dr. Turner, Dr. Norman, and Dr. Groves for your guidance on this journey.

To my CAU crew, we did it! It is time for our platinum stars!

I am extremely grateful to all who have said a kind word, sent up a prayer, or thought lovely thoughts for me during this time in my life. Your love and support have meant so much to me! I pray that I have made you proud!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES ......................................................................... vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................ viii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

### I INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

- Statement of the Problem ........................................................ 4
- Purpose of the Study ............................................................... 6
- Research Questions ................................................................... 8
- Significance of the Study ......................................................... 9
- Summary ................................................................................. 10

### II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .......................................... 12

- Organization of the Review ...................................................... 12
- Gloria Ladson-Billings and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy ............ 12
- Common Core State Standards ................................................. 20
- Cultural Sensitivity .................................................................. 23
- Cultural Synchronization ......................................................... 26
- Teacher Efficacy ....................................................................... 29
- Summary ................................................................................. 32

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ........................................... 33

- Research Design ........................................................................ 33
- Theory of Variables ................................................................... 33
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis and Qualitative Research Questions</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and Implications</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Informed Consent Letter</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Letter to Principal Requesting Permission to Conduct Research</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Teacher Survey</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Interview Protocol</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Observation Form</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Profile of Teachers in the United States, 1986-2011</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cultural Synchronization</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bennett’s Stages of Intercultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Stages of Development, 2004</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Relationship among the Variables</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Subthemes Identified from Emergent Themes</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Efficacy for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Implementation of Common Core Standards</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Efficacy for Cultural Synchronization</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Efficacy for Instructional Delivery</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Efficacy for Cultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Teacher Behaviors: Observations</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Empower Students (ES)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Teacher Perception of Self (TPSL)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Student Background</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Teacher/Student Relationship (TSR)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Teacher Instructional Strategies (TIS)</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Pedagogy</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. Teacher Perception of Student (TPST)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perception of Self and Others</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social Relations</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perceptions of Knowledge</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Instrument Matrix</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Age of Participants</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Years of Teaching Experience of Participants</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ethnicity of Participants</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pearson Correlation: Common Core Standards and Age</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Teachers’ Age Group and Common Core Standards</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teachers’ Years of Experience and Common Core Standards</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ethnicity and Common Core Standards</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Correlations: Culturally Relevant Implementing of Common Core Standards (Teach Common Core) and Independent Variables</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the year 2001, educators found themselves headed into instructional captivity bound by national legislation that required schools to meet certain expectations or be labeled as a school that does not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) detailed guidelines and standards for schools to meet that determined if they met Annual Yearly Progress. Student test scores were a large part of these requirements for schools to secure the status of meeting AYP. The test scores portion influenced the decision making of educators and resulted in teachers being directed by scripted instruction. This type of instruction had the potential to place a cap on the innovative nature of teachers to meet the various needs of students. This era of accountability created a culture of prescriptive teaching that lacked flexibility to consider academic or cultural needs of students because of the rigid guidelines of NCLB.

The waiver of NCLB and the introduction of Common Core standards presented a newfound freedom. This liberty opened doors for educators to come out of the box of scripted instruction and accountability. Teachers could begin to embrace more innovative and flexible ways of teaching while considering the academic and cultural needs of students. With the liberty to adjust their pedagogy styles, teachers have the option to utilize flexibility within the parameters of Common Core. This way of teaching will require a paradigm shift that will challenge educators to think differently and put
away teaching boundaries that have held them captive for over 10 years, while considering the various needs of students—academically and culturally.

While adjusting to newfound freedom in their instructional delivery, teachers now have to begin teaching a new set of standards; 47 out of 50 states will have implemented a set of common standards designed to prepare students for college and career readiness. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of high quality academic expectations in English-Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics that define knowledge and skills all students should master by the end of each grade level in order to be on track for success in college and career (The Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2013). The standards are a product of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices to unify the expectations and increased rigor to primary and secondary education. English-Language Arts and Math standards were released in 2010 as the result of a study conducted on college and career readiness. The mission of the Common Core State Standards Initiative is to provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn while raising the achievement bar to a level comparable to those of the best educational systems in the world (Conley, 2011). Standard developers strived to create a sense of national consistency of academic expectations across the nation (Conley, 2011).

In 2010, the Common Core Standards were introduced as a result of research on the importance of postsecondary education (Rothman, 2012). A lack of adequate preparation of high school student was identified as a possible cause for students’ lack of readiness for college or the work field (Rothman, 2012). Both researchers and educators
noted that state standards were allowing for a gap between secondary education and readiness for the postsecondary world, whether college or the workplace. The Common Core Standards were developed with an intentional increase of rigor and intense concentration on rearing up students who are ready for life after graduating from high school, whether attending a postsecondary institution of learning or entering into the career field.

Georgia adopted the Common Core Standards on July 8, 2010, with the goal to help teachers improve and better prepare students for success (Common Core Georgia Performance Standards [CCGPS], 2010). Georgia educators were a part of the development of the standards. Georgia’s governor at the time, Sonny Perdue, served as the co-chair of the initiative (CCGPS, 2010). Georgia educators received on-going training and professional learning on the standards during the 2011-2012 school year. Classroom implementation of the standards took place during the 2012-2013 school year. As a result of implementing the standards, classroom teachers would have a clear set of expectations that would serve as a rigorous extension of the previously taught standards (Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS, 2010). Georgia’s students would receive instruction full of rigorous knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and/or careers, consistent expectations, and relevant content and application of knowledge through higher-order skills (CCGPS, 2010).

Georgia educators serve a diverse set of students. African-American students make up 38% of Georgia’s student population. The instructional implementation of Common Core Standards will have a direct impact on African-American students. At the
close of 2011-2012 academic year, Georgia’s graduation rate for African-American students was 60% (Downey, 2012). Will the implementation of Common Core have an impact on this percentage? Can Common Core be implemented in a manner that would empower African-American students on their academic journey to be prepared for life after secondary education? The criteria for Gloria Ladson-Billings’ (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy can serve as the basis for the implementation of Common Core Standards for teachers of African-American students. Culturally relevant teaching rests on three criteria: students must experience academic success, students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status of the current social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This study was designed to identify how culturally relevant teaching of Common Core Standards can have an impact on the teaching of African-American students.

**Statement of the Problem**

The challenge with classroom delivery of Common Core Standards is to determine whether or not it is having a positive influence on the instructional outcome of African-American students due to lack of realization between the link of culture and education. The failure of realizing the culture of African-American students can stem from teachers having a sense of color-blindness, not acknowledging the color of students but merely seeing all students as children. Many teachers are uncomfortable acknowledging any differences among students, particularly racial differences (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Ladson-Billings (2009) calls the attempts of color-blindness mask a “dysconscious racism,” an “uncritical habit of mind that justifies inequity and exploitation
by accepting existing order of things as given” (p. 35). Examining the demographics of urban school districts, it is evident that African-American students fill the majority of the seats. Educators who do not recognize their responsibility to accept the racial differences in classrooms add to lack of sensitivity for African-American students. Failure to recognize race has the possibility to create classrooms that render instruction that lacks characteristics of culture sensitive pedagogy that has the ability to create academic connections for students as they encounter a new set of common standards.

Are school climates conducive to students experiencing academic success? Is instruction structured in a way that encourages students to choose academic excellence? Davis and Harper (2012) highlight Fordham and Ogbu’s oppositional culture theory. The theory contends that black students perceive fewer returns on educational investments displaying a resistance to school, resulting in a decrease in positive instructional outcomes (Davis & Harper, 2012). Ladson-Billings (1995) states that school is perceived as a place where African American students cannot “be themselves” (p. 161). Is the culture of students being utilized as vehicle for learning as Common Core begins to take root in classroom instruction? Oppositional culture theory contends that African-American students resist academic success in effort to protect cultural identity (Davis & Harper, 2012). Teachers that lack support of cultural competence can have a negative effect on the instructional outcome of African-American students. Instruction that does not develop or maintain cultural competence within students has the ability to hinder academic growth. Does instruction guided by Common Core allow students to think critically and critique cultural norms (Ladson-Billings, 1995)? If students are not given
the opportunity to engage the world and others critically, their classroom instruction
hinders their development of critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The
instructional outcome of African-American students can be affected when instruction
does not have embedded aspects of culturally relevant teaching. The implementation of
the Common Core Standards has the possibility to not make significant gains among
African-American students if instruction does not encourage students to choose academic
success while developing or maintaining cultural competence and critical consciousness
(Ladson-Billings, 1995).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify the link between culture and pedagogy
through the implementation of the Common Core Standards with the goal of increasing
the instructional outcomes of African-American students. The researcher studied the
dependent variable of culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core
Standards while examining the independent variables of the instructional delivery of
Common Core Standards, cultural sensitivity, cultural synchronization, and teacher
efficacy. There was an analysis of culturally responsive strategies implemented during
Common Core guided instruction. The researcher avows that the findings of this study
have the possibility to highlight how culturally relevant practices embedded in the
teaching of Common Core Standards can influence the instructional achievement of
African-American students. The researcher sought to examine how the knowledge of
culturally relevant pedagogy can have an impact on teacher efficacy to implement these
strategies to their instructional delivery. This research focused on the use of culturally
relevant pedagogy to increase cultural sensitivity in teachers as they implement Common Core State Standards. As a result of this research study, the researcher sought to examine how culturally relevant teaching can impact instructional delivery to the 21st century African-American learner through cultural sensitivity.

The study findings manifested how the characteristics of culturally relevant teaching aligned with regulated standards can create a connection between culture and education for African-American students. This connection can cultivate an atmosphere that encourages students to choose academic success while having competence in their culture. The research examined the need for teachers to see and acknowledge the color of students and not take on a “color-blind” mentality. Seeing the color of a student can allow teachers to acknowledge the culture of a student and infuse this in their instruction to allow students to develop academic connections that are grounded in culture consciousness.

The study describes how teachers are exposed to culturally relevant pedagogy and how it is utilized to teach the Common Core Standards. Teachers shared their perceptions of how the use of culturally relevant practices has the possibility to increase the achievement of African-American students. The response of teachers was documented as data to examine the cultural connections made as they introduce instruction guided by the new set of standards.
Research Questions

The following questions guided this research study:

RQ1: To what extent does teacher efficacy have an influence on culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between teacher efficacy and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards?

RQ3: To what extent do teachers of African-American students feel that cultural sensitivity is an important factor in the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards?

RQ4: Is there a relationship between culturally relevant teaching practices and cultural sensitivity of teachers?

RQ5: How do teachers of African-American students identify cultural differences that vary from that of the teacher?

RQ6: To what extent are cultural differences utilized in the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards?

RQ7: How can culturally relevant pedagogy influence teachers’ ability to cultivate cultural synchronization with African-American students?

RQ8: Is there a relationship between cultural synchronization and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards?

RQ9: How do teachers of African-American students synchronize classroom culture to that of African-American students?
Significance of the Study

As a result of this study, the findings will add to the body of research about the Common Core Standards and culturally relevant instruction. There are implications for future research and instructional application. At the time of this study, the implementation phase of the standards has been active for one full school term. Therefore, the findings will contribute to research information about the instruction for African-American students in relation to Common Core. Educators in urban school districts can utilize the research to encourage culturally relevant teaching as they implement the new set of standards. This study can impact teacher preparation programs as they set to equip teachers to step into urban classrooms. This study can ignite research about African-American students and their instructional response to the Common Core Standards. There is research about African-American students and their achievement on standardized tests. However, research as yet to surface about how students are responding academically to the many changes to instruction that the new nationally set standards. Research is needed to explore learning at every academic level, primary and secondary, in regards to African-American students and their journey through a Common Core guided curriculum.

The significance of this study was to develop the body of knowledge about cultural synchronization and its impact on the implementation of Common Core Standards. Research on cultural synchronization has focused on how matches between school and student culture have an influence on academics and disciplinary actions. Updated research is needed to apply Irvine’s (1990) work to the 21st century student.
This body of research seeks to add knowledge of how through use of culturally relevant pedagogy, cultural synchronization can develop in the instructional delivery of the Common Core Standards.

The findings of this study can also contribute to Ladson-Billings (2009) study on culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings conducted researched in various classrooms in during a three year period. This research examined Ladson-Billings criterion for culturally relevant teaching and its application to the 21st century student. The findings will bring a 21st century approach to Ladson-Billings culturally relevant pedagogy theory. This work was designed to challenge educators to be intentional when teaching African-American students and utilize culturally relevant teaching best practices when implementing Common Core to positively influence their instructional outcomes.

The researcher also sought to identify behaviors of the African-American culture that future research could study interactions between black students and teachers. The study will be significant to key in on teacher behaviors that increase the probability of positive academic outcomes for African-American students. The research examined how teachers of African-American students utilize these behaviors to impact instruction. The identifying of teacher behaviors that are an effect of student cultural differences can influence future research to examine behaviors used with other minorities for the purpose of improvement of academic achievement.

**Summary**

This research study was looking to determine if there is a significant relationship between the implemented use of culturally relevant pedagogy and cultural sensitivity of
teachers towards African-American students. This research study as sought to identify if there is a significant relationship the use of culturally relevant practices and cultural synchronization in the implementation of Common Core Standards. Through the study, teachers’ efficacy was monitored to see if there is a shift in their confidence of their ability to implement culturally relevant practices in instruction guided by Common Core Standards. Common Core is an initiative that is making changes and sculpting the status and future of public education. Cultural differences among students and teachers play a large part in the delivery of instruction. Building a bridge between culture and instruction can have an impact on a teacher’s ability to examine the curriculum while considering racial identity and cultural difference versus cultural deficit (Groulx & Silva, 2010). This understanding has the possibility to impact the disposition of teachers to respect and celebrate students’ cultural differences while holding high expectations and developing caring relationships as instruction goes through a paradigm shift through the implementation of Common Core (Groulx & Silva, 2010).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Organization of the Review

This chapter presents the review of recent educational literature directed to the factors related to how culturally relevant pedagogy can impact the instructional delivery of the Common Core Standards. The review of the literature examined background information about the variables and their relationship as it relates to culturally relevant pedagogy. This chapter highlights and describes the following themes: (a) Gloria Ladson-Billings and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, (b) Common Core Standards, (c) Cultural Sensitivity, (d) Cultural Synchronization, and (e) Teacher Efficacy.

Gloria Ladson-Billings and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant teaching has been the focus of authors whose research has centered on the education of African-American students. Ladson-Billings (2009) work in *The Dreamkeepers* followed eight elementary teachers who were considered successful with African-American students and their culturally relevant practices. Ladson-Billings study took place over a 3-year period in a low-income school district with a population that predominately consisted of African Americans. Of the participants in Ladson-Billings study, five were African-American and three were white. The nature of the study called for Ladson-Billings (2009) to assign each participant a culture of reference according to the culture group the teacher identified most closely with. Five
African-American and one white teacher had an African-American culture of reference, one white teacher had a bicultural orientation, and the other white teacher had a white cultural orientation (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Ladson-Billings begins by sharing her belief that American education has failed to recognize African Americans as a distinct culture group. She shares that there is acknowledgement of African Americans as a racial group but not as a distinct culture group; therefore, African-American students are alleged to be just like white students but in need of extra help. She continues by stating that the possibilities of cultural differences are rarely investigated while poverty and lack of opportunity are often presented as the only plausible reason for the poor performance of African-American students (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Ladson-Billings writes that when culture is in integral part of the school experience, African-American students can understand that academic excellence is not the sole province of white middle-class students. *The Dreamkeepers* (2009) focuses on teaching and teachers who helped students not only achieve academic support but also achieve success while maintain a positive identity as African American. The beliefs about teaching, pedagogical styles and the manner in which each teacher affects the way students perceive the content of the curriculum are outlined as success stories with African-American children.

Before Ladson-Billings (2009) shares what was observed in classrooms, she differentiates between culturally relevant and assimilationist teaching practices. Assimilationist teaching practices are those that operate without regard to students’ particular cultural characteristics. A teacher’s perception of oneself and others gives proof to their manifested set of teaching practices.
Table 1 details the comparison of culturally relevant to assimilationist perceptions of how teachers view themselves and others (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Table 1  

*Perception of Self and Others*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally Relevant</th>
<th>Assimilationist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher sees herself as an artist, teaching as an art.</td>
<td>Teacher sees herself as a technician, teaching as a technical task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher sees herself as part of the community and teaching as giving something back to the community, encourages students to do the same.</td>
<td>Teacher sees herself as an individual who may or may not be a part of the community; she encourages achievement as a means to escape the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher believes all students can succeed.</td>
<td>Teacher believes failure is inevitable for some.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher helps students make connections between their community, national, and global identities.</td>
<td>Teacher homogenizes students into one “American” identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher sees teaching as “pulling knowledge out” – like “mining.”</td>
<td>Teacher sees teaching as “putting knowledge into” – like “banking.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ladson-Billings also compares the social relations of culturally relevant and assimilationist teachers. She examines how the structure of classrooms gives evidence
the social relations of teachers. Table 2 details the comparison of culturally relevant social relations to those of assimilationist practices (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Table 2

*Social Relations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally Relevant</th>
<th>Assimilationist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-student relationship is fluid,</td>
<td>Teacher-student relationship is fixed, tends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humanely equitable, extends to interactions beyond the</td>
<td>to be hierarchal and limited to formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom and into the community.</td>
<td>classroom roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher demonstrates a connectedness with all students.</td>
<td>Teacher demonstrates connections with individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher encourages a “community of learners.”</td>
<td>Teacher encourages competitive achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher encourages students to learn collaboratively.</td>
<td>Teacher encourages students to learn individually, in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are expected to teacher each other and be</td>
<td>isolation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsible for each other.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Ladson-Billings compares the importance of constructing knowledge according to culturally relevant and assimilationist practices. The relevance of a student’s relationship and understanding of knowledge is viewed as truly significant. She highlights the ongoing debate of whether to focus on a “teacher-proof” curriculum or to encourage
teachers to be prepared and willing to engage in curriculum develop and knowledge-building (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Table 3 details the comparison of culturally relevant and assimilationist Conceptions of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Table 3

*Conceptions of Knowledge*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally Relevant</th>
<th>Assimilationist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge is continuously recreated, recycled, and shared by teachers and students. It is not static or unchanging.</td>
<td>Knowledge is static and is passed in one direction, from teacher to student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge is viewed critically.</td>
<td>Knowledge is viewed as infallible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher is passionate about content.</td>
<td>Teacher is detached, neutral about content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher helps students develop necessary skills.</td>
<td>Teacher expects students to demonstrate to prerequisite skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher sees excellence as a complex standard that may involve some postulates but takes student diversity and individual differences into account.</td>
<td>Teacher sees excellence as a postulate that student independently from student diversity or individual differences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many authors speak of Gloria Ladson-Billings’ work as a key development in the concept of culturally relevant pedagogy. Howard (2003) acknowledges Ladson-Billings as a research who has described culturally relevant pedagogy as an effective means of meeting the academic and social needs of culturally diverse students. He discusses how
his belief that culturally relevant teaching is a rejection of deficit-based thinking about culturally diverse students supports Ladson-Billings’ principle that culturally relevant pedagogy is an authentic belief that students from culturally diverse and low-income backgrounds are capable learners (Howard, 2003). Beckett (2011) states that Ladson-Billings has done more than any other scholar to develop the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. Beckett shares Ladson-Billings’ ethnographic study as he expounds on her experiences in mixed schools that found effective practices of teachers in all-black school He uses her examples to describe his notion of racial uplift (Beckett, 2011). Beckett writes that racial uplift may have become community improvement and that the idea that everyone was needed and everyone had a contribution to make was evident in the classroom example from Ladson-Billings (2009) study. He also cites Ladson-Billings to support his belief that culturally relevant teachers feel the need to be prepared to go where students’ critiques lead them when social issues are infused in instruction (Beckett, 2011). He continues by praising teachers from Ladson-Billings study for working to build new realities along with students, working to develop partnerships with their students while relying on their local knowledge to benefit the community, and working to develop a common knowledge of the world they live in (Beckett, 2011). In Hyland’s (2009) account of a white teacher’s struggle to utilize culturally relevant pedagogy, she credits Ladson-Billings work for setting teaching orientations from the examples of teachers from the study. Hyland cited principles from Ladson-Billings work on how culturally relevant teachers share a belief that children are capable of academic excellence, view knowledge as socially constructed, and help students make connections
between their home community and broader issues. She uses these principles to outline the struggle of the white teacher to make real connections with a community that was socially and culturally distant (Hyland, 2009).

Durden (2008) cited Ladson-Billings as she questioned comprehension school methods and their degree of culturally relevant pedagogy. She questioned different reform methods utilized in high-poverty, low performing schools to address “at risk,” “disadvantaged,” and “minority” students (Durden, 2008). Durden supports Ladson-Billings’ belief of immersing students in their culture by espousing culturally affirming teaching practices develops children who see themselves as cultural workers and leaders. To effectively do this, it is suggested that first teacher and schools must believe that all students can succeed, maintain affirming student-teacher relationships, and believe that assessment must incorporate multiple forms of excellence (Durden 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Durden’s (2008) research affirms that the positive impact of making learning culturally responsive for students holds considerable implications for schools deciding in the adoption of a comprehension reform model.

Love and Kruger (2005) developed a survey adapted from The Dreamkeepers, to measure teachers’ beliefs regarding culturally relevant practices in classrooms serving African American students. The survey consisted of 25 of the 48 statements reflecting culturally relevant beliefs and practices of teachers in the Ladson-Billings study and 23 statements reflecting assimilationist beliefs (Love & Kruger, 2005). An example of a culturally relevant statement is, “Every child is a unique composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences” (Love & Kruger, 2005, p. 90). An example of an
assimilationist statement is, “I don’t see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children” (Love & Kruger, 2005, p. 90). Just as in the study conducted by Ladson-Billings, the classroom teacher was the unit of analysis of Love and Kruger’s (2005) study. The research findings of the survey were compared to culturally relevant characteristics outlined by Ladson-Billings. Teachers both agreed with culturally relevant and assimilationist statements. They also found as teachers agreed with both sets of statements, teacher beliefs contrasted each other as they endorsed different statements about students’ race, ethnicity, and culture (Love & Kruger, 2005).

As a result of their study to build on Ladson-Billings qualitative research, Love and Kruger concluded that there may be multiple pathways to teaching African-American children successfully and that successful teachers hold an eclectic array of beliefs.

Milner (2011) revisits cultural competency, one of the tenets from Ladson-Billings’ conception of culturally relevant pedagogy in an attempt to build on and from it. Milner’s focus was the building of cultural competence within teachers to maximize learning opportunities in the classroom. He compares his work to the Ladson-Billings’ principle of fostering and maintaining cultural competence for students. Milner states that for Ladson-Billings, cultural competence is about student acquisition of cultural knowledge regarding their own cultural ways and systems of knowing society. This will allow students to expand their knowledge to understand broader cultural ways and systems of knowledge (Milner, 2011). Cultural competence addresses the ability of teachers to foster student learning about themselves, others, and how the world works in order to be able to function effectively in it and contribute to their community (Milner,
2011). Milner continues by stating that according to Ladson-Billings, student perception as a goal of self and collective knowledge in efforts to challenge and transform power structures. Milner’s foundation about cultural competence according to the research of Ladson-Billings helps him to focus on the building of cultural competence of teachers to effectively reach students in urban areas through building and sustaining relationships, recognizing identify, confronting race, and teaching as a communal affair by establishing a culture of care and collaboration.

**Common Core State Standards**

The Common Core State Standards Initiative began in 2009 as a collaborative effort among nearly all Unites States and territories, the National Governors Association, and the Council of Chief State School Officers (Doorey, 2012). The National Governors Association is the collective voice of the nation’s governors that provides services of representing states on Capitol Hill and before the Administration on key federal issues to developing and implementing solutions to public policy challenges at the state and national levels (National Governors Association, 2011). The Council of Chief State School Officers leads and facilitates collective state action to transform the public education system in four areas: Educator Workforce, Information Systems and Research, Next Generation Learners, and Standards, Assessment, and Accountability (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). This effort reflected research on college and career readiness for students (Rothman, 2012). Rothman shares of a study conducted by Frank Levy and Richard Murname in 2004. In the study, Levy and Murname found that technology is transforming the workplace and reducing the need for routine skills
This transformation causes the need for problem-solving and communication skills (Rothman, 2012). There were other driving forces that led to the development of the state improvement initiative. Evidence gathered presented a significant difference in academic expectations across United States (Doorey, 2012). This had an effect on the transient nature of some students (Doorey, 2012). One of the key initiatives of the new standards is to reduce inequalities and achievement variation from one state to the next (Loveless, 2012). Evidence also presented changes in the skills set required for current and emerging jobs (Doorey, 2012). The initiative questioned if students were adequately prepared for postsecondary education and the work force upon completion of high school. This evidence along with the increasing of global competition in the workplace drove the designing of the initiative to identify the most essential skills and knowledge students need (Doorey, 2012).

The Common Core State Standards were developed under the leadership of state governments to improve the content of instruction (Burroughs & Schmidt, 2012). Past efforts for educational improvements have been directed by the federal government (i.e., No Child Left Behind) (Burroughs & Schmidt, 2012). Common Core is the not the first national educational initiative to be launched with the anticipation of student success nor is it the first time policymakers have called for and educational movement towards better standards (Loveless, 2012). Beginning with the launching of Sputnik in 1957, the reform movement in education has been ongoing. In 1983, A Nation at Risk announced that due to a low quality education system, reforms were needed to right the alarming direction that public education was seen to be headed (Graham, 2013). This educational reform
involved the federal government’s role in education. Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush attempted to bridge the concerns about quality and equality in public education through promoting statewide standards and assessments that all students should achieve (Fritzberg, 2013). No Child Left Behind legislation under the presidency of George W. Bush Jr. re-authorized Lyndon Johnson’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Fritzberg, 2013). Under the presidency of Barack Obama, the Race to the Top grant competition offered $4 million federal dollars geared towards school improvement.

The Common Core State Standards initiative does not call for the support of a national curriculum but is designed to identify the essential skills and knowledge needed by students to compete globally in the workforce and be successful in postsecondary education (Doorey, 2012). The standards were developed with the goal of raising the achievement bar to a level comparable to those of the best educational systems in the world and to create national consistency in expectations (Conley, 2011). The initiative does not dictate how students will acquire the skills. This decision is at the liberty of each state that has chosen to adopt the standards. In 2010, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were released. Forty-six states, three U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia have voluntarily agreed to share the set of standards for English language arts and mathematics (Alberti, 2012). Under Governor Sonny Perdue, the state of Georgia adopted the English language arts and mathematics standards for grades K-12 in July 2010.

Brooks and Dietz (2012) outlined six practices that the CCSS endorses:

- balancing informational and narrative texts;
• helping students build knowledge within disciplines;
• scaffolding complexity of text material;
• fostering rigorous conversations connected to the content;
• nurturing students’ ability to offer evidence in crafting an argument;
• and building an academic vocabulary.

Ensuring the standards will improve student learning will require new assessments, curriculums, instructional materials and resources, and professional development (Rothman, 2012). Funded by millions of dollars from the U.S. Department of Education, two state consortia, the Partnership for the Assessment for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, have proposed plans to create tests that included performance tasks to assess English language arts and mathematics for grades 3-8 (Rothman, 2012). In July of 2013, Georgia made the decision to withdraw from the group of states that decided to use PARCC assessments during the 2014-2015 school year due to financial and technology constraints. State Superintendent, Dr. John Barge, clarified that Georgia was not withdrawing from Common Core Standards; they are just making the choice to not utilize the assessments.

**Cultural Sensitivity**

Research shows that cultural differences between teachers and students continue to increase as the majority of teachers are comprised of European-American females whose ethnicities and social class are from different worldviews. An awareness of these differences has been expressed as a call to action in the field of teacher education in
efforts to make adjustments to current programs. There is a need for teacher education to sensitize future teachers to cultural and social concerns (Nieto, 2006).

An intentional awareness of these cultural differences that consists of ethnicities, norms, values, beliefs, assumptions, and social class defines one part of cultural sensitivity. Cultural sensitivity also includes relating to cultural differences. This combination of acknowledgement and relating allows for the importance of cultural differences to be recognized and an important factor in the education of diverse learners. The research for this study examined the development of cultural sensitivity at the collegiate level, perceptions of cultural sensitivity of special education parents, the use of cultural plunges to promoting cultural sensitivity, and cultural sensitivity in the application of behavior principals.

At the collegiate level, the development of cultural sensitivity for pre-service teachers and in foreign language classrooms was based on the fact that cultural differences will be made evident when students venture outside of the postsecondary world. Nieto (2006) shared how cultural plunges were used to “sensitize future teachers to cultural and social concerns: “A cultural plunge is a cultural immersion activity in which an individual exposed to persons or groups markedly different in culture (ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and/or physical exceptionality) from that of the ‘plunger’” (p. 77). Preservice teachers were to immerse themselves in an activity such as, attending a church service or a religious activity of a different ethnicity of language or interact with homeless people or people with disabilities. Students experienced what it felt like to be a part of the minority group and experienced a plethora
of emotions during the plunges. Students became aware of their own prejudices, biases, values, and pre-conceived notions. This is an essential step to developing cultural sensitivity. “The degree of resolve which student feel to act on after their experiences highlights their new sense of sensitivity” (Nieto, 2006, p. 81).

Urban African-American families with children who are served in special education classes shared their perception of cultural sensitivity in an article written by Bellinger, Harrison, Zionts, and Zionts (2003). Parents shared that they had a desire for a there to be a greater sense of understanding and acceptance based on culture. Parents believed that through cultural sensitivity, teachers could possible “distinguish between behaviors of learning problems that resulted from the child’s disability and culture-based behaviors that varied from the teacher’s idea of normal” (Bellinger et al., 2003, p. 46). Questions from the interview asked parents what racial or ethnicity group did they identify with and if they believed their cultural beliefs and values were considered (Bellinger et al., 2003). From the conducted study, findings indicated that cultural sensitivity could be developed if teachers were more aware of students’ culture. An example was given from the study about Black History Month. Parents acknowledged that recognizing black American icons was a great school-wide effort but believed that this same cultural consideration was not shown in individual classrooms. Cultural differences between teacher and students were frustrating to parents. This frustration came from parents sensing a lack of sensitivity from white teachers who they perceived were unable to understand African-American students. This had an effect on teacher-student relationships and causes parents to question the cultural sensitivity of the school
in general. From the findings, teachers underwent training to develop and nurture sensitivity for working with students of various with various needs, communication, and student advocacy.

Cautions arise again in the use of culture in Conroy, Gardner, Kauffman, and Oswald’s (2008) article about cultural sensitivity and the application of behavior principles. The study examined interventions for behavior with consideration of culture. They warn educators to be on guard against stereotypes in regards to culture. They encourage really getting to know students beyond the acknowledgement of culture to identify what interventions work best and what adaptations are needed. It is boldly stated that “nothing can substitute for sensitivity to the ideals of individual student and family” (Conroy et al., 2008, p. 247). Knowledge must extent to students’ families in conjunction with an understanding of their cultures.

**Cultural Synchronization**

The sociocultural gap between African-American students and teachers continues to widen from year to year. This gap illustrates the differences in the culture of African-American students and their educators. The gap also leads to the lack of cultural synchronization in classrooms due to the differences of culture from teacher to student. Cultural synchronization is the matching between the school culture and the culture of the students (Ware, 2006). According to a Profile of Teachers in the United States, African-American students are sitting under the instruction of a teaching population that consists of 84% white, 7% black, 6% Hispanic, and 4% other (Feistritzer, 2011). Figure 1 reflects the ethnicity of U.S. teachers from 1986 to 2011.
Irvine (1990) speaks of this gap by stating that teachers and students lack correspondence and synchronization due to differences of culture. In her book *Black Students and School Failure: Policies, Practices, and Prescriptions*, she gives an example of how white teacher and white children understand the unstated rules and subtitles of the majority’s culture’s verbal and nonverbal communication in comparison to that of a white teacher understanding the same of black children (Irvine, 1990). The idea of cultural synchronization is grounded in the realization of blacks having a culture that is distinct and founded on identifiable norms, languages, behaviors, and attitudes (Irvine, 1990). The failure to recognize the cultural distinction of African Americans can manifest itself as misunderstandings between students, parents, teachers, and school administrators. These misunderstandings have the ability to cause interference with the delivery of instruction. Irvine examines this misunderstanding to a combination of cultural inversion and aversion. Cultural inversion is related to black students’
perceptions that certain behaviors are characteristics of white Americans (Irvine, 1990). Cultural aversion is the reluctance of teachers and administrators to discuss race and race-related issues like ethnicity, culture, prejudice, equality, and social justice (Irvine, 1990). This combination causes a lack of cultural sync as the interpersonal context of both teachers and students are not considered and addressed. Both teacher and student culture characteristics are needed to build a cultural sync that can be positive in the reaching of African-American students (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Cultural Synchronization

A lack of harmony establishes itself between the cultural systems of schools, diverse groups of learners, and the communities from which those learners come has an impact on the educating of students whose culture is not identical to that of the major society (Paul, 2000). This is made manifest when African-American students have teachers who are often cultural outsiders in the communities they work (Paul, 2000). Paul continues by stating that the lack of cultural continuity in classrooms can result in cultural misunderstanding, student resistance, low teacher expectation for student success, and self-fulfilling prophesies of student failure. Identifying and working with the identifiable cultural differences of African-American students calls for educators to find innovative, educationally sound approaches that consider and develop the cultural
capital students bring to the classroom while making instruction relevant and purposeful (Paul, 2000).

Researchers who have studied how cultural synchronization and its impact on African-American students have found that reflecting on students’ culture in the classroom allows teachers to create familiar environments that celebrate, rather than penalize students’ heritage (Monroe, 2006). Classroom strategies that enhance cultural synchronization reflect culturally relevant pedagogy. Monroe encourages teachers to understand themselves as cultural beings who bring their own socialization, experiences, values, and perceptions into classrooms that shape who they are. Establishing strong relationships with parents and other student caregivers as allies in promoting student success and assuming multiple roles in students’ lives are other strategies provided to enhance cultural synchronization (Monroe, 2006).

Teacher Efficacy

Bandura (2006) states that “self-efficacy is concerned with perceived capability” (p. 306). Bandura’s theory is based on the understanding that self-efficacy is domain specific. In an issue brief, Jeter (2007) outlines teacher behaviors that highlight a strong sense of teacher self-efficacy:

- Exhibiting a greater sense of planning and organization, more open to new ideas and willing to experiment with new methods to better meet needs of students,
- more persistent and resilient when things do not go smoothly, and less critical with errors. (p. 3)
Inquiries focused on teacher self-efficacy center on its development or effect in particular areas, such as, an area of academic instruction, teacher burnout, or preservice education. Research about teacher self-efficacy includes examples of studies that examine if teachers’ perception of their capability as an effect on the carrying out of various tasks. Research also includes studies that observe the factors that can and an effect on the development of self-efficacy. For example, Ebrahim’s (2012) study examined factors that had a positive influence on the confidence of students training to be science elementary school teachers in Kuwait. In the *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, Petra Hastings (2012) studied the factors affecting the self-efficacy of teachers for their reading instruction. Her focus was in early career teachers (Hastings, 2012). Bernadowski, Perry, and Del Greco (2013) studied the development of college students’ self-efficacy through their participation in required service learning versus making a choice to volunteer.

Various researchers provided definitions for teacher self-efficacy. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) defines self-efficacy as a teacher’s confidence in their capacity to plan, organize, and carry out activities in efforts to attain certain educational goals. Another definition for teacher self-efficacy is the teacher’s “belief in his or her ability to complete the steps required to accomplish a particular teaching task in a given context” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 203). Muijs and Reynolds (2002) state that teacher self-efficacy has the ability to predict teachers’ goals and aspirations, while Fuchs, Fuchs, and Bishop (1992) suggest that teacher’s attitudes towards change and innovation is predicted by self-efficacy.
A large quantity of the research about teacher self-efficacy focuses on pre-service teacher and teachers early in their careers. The association between pre-service teachers’ performance, personality and beliefs was studied through the observation of mastery teaching experiences (Jamil, Downer, & Pianta, 2012). Looking at the student teaching experiences, the personality and beliefs of preservice teachers were examined to determine the association with developed self-efficacy at the end of their teacher preparation program (Jamil, Downer, & Pianta, 2012). The outcome of this research revealed that preservice teachers who were more outgoing and exhibited and extraversion in their personality demonstrated more confidence in their ability to be successful teachers while preservice teachers who were inclined to display negativity and distress lacked confidence (Jamil, Downer, & Pianta, 2012). The study also did not reflect the research of Bandura (2006) in that the observation of master teaching performances was not related to teacher self-efficacy.

The likelihood of teachers believing in their capabilities to teach particular children and implement strategies while maneuvering through obstacles is an aspect of teacher self-efficacy that is stressed throughout the literature. Reflected throughout studies is the relationship between the perceived capability and a teacher’s willingness to tackle and persevere through various educational tasks or initiatives, especially when the task at hand presents a challenge. Teachers with high self-efficacy believe that they have the ability to keep distracting factors under control; they are able to overcome and press through possible setbacks that may present themselves, and have a sense that success will manifest itself. Teachers that give in to self-doubt, who find themselves easily weighed
down by the daily demands of teaching, and are unable to pull themselves up quickly from drawbacks have a lower sense of self-efficacy. “The outcome people anticipate depend largely on their judgment of how well they will be able to perform in given situations” (Bandura, 2006, p. 309).

**Summary**

Ladson-Billings (2009) states that “culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 20). The research discussed in this chapter focused on the variables that make up this study. Common Core Standards have been implemented in classrooms with the intent to equip students to be prepared for life after secondary education. Cultural sensitivity has been targeted for development to make educators aware of the differences that exist from the teacher’s desk to the student’s seat. Research about cultural synchronization has continuously discovered a mismatch between student cultures and school cultures. While teacher self-efficacy research has focused on the perceived capability to be successful in the obtaining of educational goals.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Design

This research was designed to take a mixed-method approach through a case study to examine the influence of culturally relevant pedagogy within the implementation of Common Core standards. This study sought to investigate how the dependent variable of culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of Common Core Standards could possibly impact the following independent variables: (a) the instructional delivery of Common Core standards, (b) cultural sensitivity, (c) cultural synchronization, and (d) teacher efficacy. The following sections of this chapter include the theory of the variables, definitions of variables and other terms, relationship among variables, limitations of the study, and a closing summary.

Theory of Variables

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The theory of cultural relevant pedagogy utilized in this study is founded in Gloria Ladson-Billings work. Ladson-Billings stated that “the compelling issue is the development of a culturally relevant approach to teaching in general that fosters and sustains the students’ desire to choose academic success in the face of so many competing options” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 313).
Ladson-Billings (2011) theory examines how teachers think about four elements: (a) social contexts, (b) students, (c) the curriculum, and (d) instruction. These four elements framed this study as they provided the foundation for the behaviors of the African-American culture that the researcher looked for as teachers engaged with students. There are behaviors that integrate the norms of the African-American cultures that can be identified and utilized by teachers to connect with students to reach them academically. For the purpose and framing of this research study, four behaviors were focused on as the researcher looked to observe characteristics of culturally relevant practices: validating students’ real life experiences, cooperative learning, using African-American literature or examples that include people of diverse backgrounds, and interactive dialogue.

One culturally relevant teacher characteristic is the valuing, caring, and making use of the culture students bring to the classroom. This characteristic allows for teachers to validate or support students’ real life experiences. Teachers can utilize appropriate questioning about student lives outside of school to gather information about their experiences to make connections with the themes that are a part of the Common Core curriculum. The connections made with instruction can empower students’ learning because they are linked to experiences in their lives. Students are treated as if they already possess knowledge and are not taught in a manner that does not give value to their background knowledge. Teachers who practice culturally relevant teaching are sensitive to the knowledge of students while making connections and possible adjustments to the curriculum as they take into account what students bring to the table.
They realize the abundance of information black children bring from home (Ladson-Billings, 2009). One teacher from Ladson-Billings’ (2009) study stated, “I can’t feed them a steady diet of cute little animal stories and happy middle class kids. Their experiences have to be part of our curriculum” (p. 57). In these classrooms, students’ experiences are respected and connections are also made between current happenings and the personal lives of students.

Another behavior that was observed is cooperative learning. Family is a cultural norm of the African-American community. McKinley (2010) states that cooperative learning is effective with black students based on teachers’ recognizing the cultural difference of the value of immediate and extended family within the African-American community. Cooperative learning encourages a community of learners as it develops trust and patterns of collaboration and cohesion. Teachers’ care causes community building in the classroom that works against the spirit of competition and individualism. This community of learners is an extension of family and develops unity and an atmosphere of cohesion. Both teachers and students care. Teachers encourage students to care about the success of their fellow classmates. These classrooms have an atmosphere of that reflects success cannot be accomplished without the efforts of everyone. “Cooperative group instruction allows effective and culturally relevant teachers to build lesson formats on students’ preference for cohesive group participation” (McKinley, 2010, p. 115).

The researcher also looked for the use of African-American literature or examples that include diversity. Music can be utilized to share that teachers are aware of the
culture of students. Student-centered stories and examples can quickly capture the interest of students because they have something to relate or they recognize someone of something that is a part of their lives. Curriculums utilized in today’s classrooms can be scripted or heavily focused on a textbook. Teachers who practice culturally relevant teaching learn about the backgrounds of their students as they form relationships with them. This information is infused in their instruction to engage African-American students in learning. “When teachers generate these learning opportunities, they create a safe environment for students to share even more information about them that can be used to enhance learning” (McKinley, 2010, p. 41).

The fourth practice that the researcher looked for was interactive dialogue. The use of questioning to engage students demonstrates to students that what they bring to the classroom is valued and usable in classroom instruction. Dialogue also manifests a teachers’ belief that teaching is not one way. There are lively discussions that cause students to question social injustices and inequalities that they are faced with. Teachers who utilize culturally relevant pedagogy take these opportunities of questioning to challenge the knowledge of students by taking on oppositional viewpoints to foster students’ confidence, decision making, and problem solving skills (Ladson-Billings, 2009). This type of instruction is manifest in the classrooms of teachers that do not put a time limit on learning and are not bound to classroom schedules or pacing guides. As teachers facilitate these discussions, they welcome the opinions of students and allow students to express themselves. Interactive dialogue through questioning allows for personal connectedness and can present the opportunity for teachers to scaffold.
Teachers who practice culturally relevant practices scaffold their instruction to help students reach a level that allow them to fully participate and construct learning. Confidence is built in students as teachers meet them where they are and design tasks to build their personal and academic confidence until they are at a level that allows them to construct knowledge in a meaningful way. Teachers develop a sense of self-efficacy in students, nurturing their beliefs in their ability to be successful.

The propositions for Ladson-Billings’ culturally relevant teaching is three-fold: (a) academic success, (b) cultural competence, and (c) critical consciousness. Students need to experience academic success while making the choice on their own. The key part to academic success is the choice of African-American students to choose work hard and accept responsibility in their learning. This academic success extends past the classroom and takes into the consideration of students’ life after graduation by cultivating student’s minds and supporting their lives as intellectuals (Ladson-Billings, 2011). Ladson-Billings’ focus, when speaking of academic achievement, goes beyond standardized tests but looks at what students learning, what students know. Cultural competence involves exposing student to a broad view of the world without conceding their own culture (Ladson-Billings, 2011). Teachers who nurture cultural competence help students embrace their own culture, cultural differences, beliefs, and practices while exposing them to the dominant culture. Students’ ability to develop and sustain cultural integrity while choosing academic success is a key aspect of cultural competence. Critical consciousness involves facilitating learning that provokes students to question and critique inequalities they face in their lives. “Students must develop a broader
socioeconomical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162).

**Cultural Sensitivity**

Cultural sensitivity theory is the study of how individuals relate to cultural differences (Morgan, 2011). The revised conceptual framework of Clark Atlanta University’s School of Education (2012) defines cultural sensitivity as a disposition that demonstrates respect for the learners’ communities and cultural norms and sees the learning potential in all students. Stafford, Bowman, Eking, Hanna, and Lopes-DeFede (1997) define cultural sensitivity as being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning, and behavior. This theory was demonstrated in this study as a factor of a teacher’s planning and instructional delivery process when teaching African-American students.

The manifestation of cultural sensitivity within teachers of African-American students can be observed throughout instructional delivery and interactions with students. As teachers build relationships with students, they intentionally and actively seek to gain information and an understanding of the community for which the students call home. They also seek to identify and understand cultural norms and values that vary from that of their own. These cultural norms can include language, attire, customs, attitude, style, communication patterns, and behavioral patterns. Values may include what is deemed of importance in a specific household, customs, celebrations, sense of family, or spirituality. Teachers with cultural sensitivity acknowledge these norms, beliefs, and values of their
black students while igniting a sense of self-awareness as they realize differences or similarities with their personal lives. They also seek to listen to these students with the intentions to gather a better cultural understanding of students.

Cultural sensitivity within teachers allows them to recognize stereotypes and generalizations of African-American students because they have an understanding of differences. Teachers who have the disposition of cultural sensitivity do not criticize students for an action that is a behavioral pattern. They are able to interpret student action, academically and behavior-wise, within the context of their cultural understanding. There is a sense of open-mindedness and flexibility that is evident in their instructional delivery and interactions with African-American students. Teachers also have a sense of empathy for African-American students that is grounded in cultural awareness that has resulted in sensitivity. This empathy allows these teachers to see learning in all students. Teachers with a disposition of cultural sensitivity are able to shift their perspectives based on the respect of learners’ community and cultural norms.

Bennett’s model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993) highlights six stages of dealing with cultural differences. Bennett’s framework was utilized in this study to look at the stages of cultural sensitivity with a focus on the utilization of culturally relevant pedagogy to increase this awareness of and relation to cultural differences. The six stages range from denial of differences to integration of cultural differences. These six stages fall under two categories—ethnocentrism or ethno-relativism. Figure 3 identifies the six stages under their respective category. Figure 4 shows the progression of the six stages.
The term ethnocentrism refers to the experience of one’s culture as “central to reality” (Bennett, 2004, p. 62). The three stages in this dimension are denial, defense, and minimization. Denial of cultural differences is the state in which one’s culture is experienced as the only real one and there is a level of disinterest in cultural differences (Bennett, 2004). People in this stage are indifferent or ignorant of cultural differences.
(Fabregas, Kelsey, & Robinson, 2012). As coined by its names, the denial stage in indicated in the denying of the existence of one being culturally different (Morgan, 2011). This avoidance of cultural differences is founded in the inability to make the perceptual distinctions that allow one to be aware of cultural facts (Bennett, 2004). The next stage is defense against cultural differences. In this stage, one believes that his/her culture (dominant culture) is superior. There is a sense of threat in this stage. One is aware of cultural differences and believes that their culture is threatened by the differences. Though cultural differences are recognized, they are experienced by people in this stage from a stereotypical perspective (Bennett, 2004). The world is organized into us and them, reinforcing that one’s own culture is most righteous (Bennett, 2004; Fabregas, Kelsey, & Robinson, 2012). In the progression of development, the next stage if minimization of cultural differences. This last stage of the ethnocentrism dimension demonstrates recognition and acceptance of superficial cultural differences while holding that all human beings are essentially the same (Bennett, 2004). Although cultural differences are acknowledged, there is an overwhelming sense of similarity that there is minimization of cultural differences to create a melting pot worldview (Bennett, 2004). People in this stage underappreciate other cultures because they cannot see their own culture clearly (Bennett, 2004).

The ethno-relative stages of development are acceptance, adaptation, and integration. In these stages, cultural differences and one’s own culture are recognized and this acknowledgement results in a respect to be developed and manifested. Bennett (2004) describes this acceptance of cultural difference as a state in which recognition and
appreciation of cultural differences in behavior and values is demonstrated. In the acceptance stage, people are comfortable with and may find a greater interest in cultural differences which may allow for the identifying of how cultural differences operate in a wide range of human interactions, even in the classroom (Bennett, 2004; Durocher, 2007). Cultural or value relativity, the act of understanding happenings with cultural context, is also part of the acceptance stage. Moving to the next stage of development of adaptation involves committing to take on the perspective of another culture without losing one’s own perspective (Bennett, 2004). Adaptation to difference involves the development of communication skills that enable communication that crosses cultural barriers due to the extension of one’s beliefs and behavior (Bennett, 2004). These skills go beyond just the development of communication skills and also include the development of skills to relate with people of differing cultures to possible modify behaviors and norms according to cultural differences (Bennett, 2004; Durocher, 2007; Fabregas, Kelsey, & Robinson, 2012). The final ethno-relative stage is integration of cultural differences. In this stage, cultural differences have been internalized and choosing between the most appropriate cultural context for behavior is demonstrated (Bennett, 2004; Durocher, 2007). There is a sense of ease shifting from various perspectives and interacting in a variety of situations (Bennett, 2004; Durocher, 2007).

The theoretical concept behind the conceptual framework of Bennett’s Development of Intercultural Sensitivity is based on the construction of experience to organize the way happenings are perceived. One does not perceive a happening without considering one’s own culture. Ethnocentrism stages results from only having one’s own
culture to analyze behavior, language, and norms of others from differing cultures. The degree of sensitivity towards cultural difference allows one to have a more complex viewpoint to analyze and react to day to day happenings. This same degree of sensitivity has the ability to discriminate between cultural differences and develop improved skills to communicate effectively with differing cultures (Bennett, 2004). This communication involves being able to see a culturally different person as equally complex to one’s self while being able to take on a culturally different perspective (Bennett, 2004). Individuals that only have access to one cultural worldview are limited in their ability to experience the difference between their own perception and that of people who are culturally different (Bennett, 2004).

**Teacher Self-Efficacy**

Bandura’s (1994) theory of self-efficacy is focused on what an individual perceives. Bandura’s definition of perceived self-efficacy is a “person’s belief about their capability to produce or perform that in turn determines how they feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave” (p. 1). This theory provided framing for this study as the research sought to examine the belief of teachers in their ability to utilize culturally relevant teaching implementing Common Core Standards. Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy sets parameters in this study to look at the perceived confidence levels of teachers in their ability to identify cultural differences of African-American students. The theory also allowed for the investigation teachers’ certainty of their ability to cultural sync their differences with student differences in their classrooms to deliver effective instructional of the Common Core Standards.
Having a heightened sense of efficacy allows for greater accomplishment. Bandura (1994) states that, “people with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided” (p. 1). These people are able to recover quickly even if they are not successful. However, people who do not have a heightened sense tend to avoid challenges because they do not have the sense of capability or assurance that they have control over the task at hand. They do not rebound quickly from unsuccessful attempts but are discouraged even the more.

Bandura’s (1994) theory includes sources that have an influence on self-efficacy. There are four sources of influence. The first influence and most effect way of creating a sense of efficacy is going through experiences with mastery. Achieving mastery and experiencing a sense of success develops confidence is one’s ability to handle situations with the ability to keep adversity under control. This allows for one to become more confident. Teachers can experience this as they are successfully able to make connections with students on a cultural level without offending someone. The confidence that develops as a result of this can possibly lead to teachers working to consistently identify cultural differences and utilizing them in the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards. Experiencing setbacks or encountering difficulties, such as offending a student or their family in an attempt to connect culturally, can undermine ability. There is a greater possibility for this is efficacy is not firmly established.

The second influence is through modeling, “seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort” (Bandura, 1994, p. 2). The theory outlines this influence as
way to create or strengthen self-efficacy when one observes in someone else the desired capabilities to acquire that mastery. This source of influence can manifest in schools as teachers with limited confidence in their ability to use culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core observe a teacher who they admire being able to proficiently deliver instruction through practices that are culturally relevant. This can raise the observing teacher’s belief in their own ability. While the modeling of mastery can increase self-efficacy, the modeling of failures can lower confidence levels. Bandura (1994) also states that “if people see models as very different from themselves their perceived self-efficacy is not much influenced by the models’ behavior and the result it produces” (p. 2).

The third way of creating or developing self-efficacy is through social persuasion. Verbal persuasion sharing that one “possesses the capabilities to master given abilities are likely to mobilize greater effort” (Bandura, 1994, p. 2). The goal of this influence is to create the desire within individuals to exert effort that leads to success. This would lead to an increased sense of efficacy and the development of skills. Verbal persuasion can help to encourage teachers to put forth the effort to engage themselves in the community of African-American students with the intention to gather a better understanding of their culture to develop their cultural sensitivity. If these boosts prove to be unrealistic and lead to disappointment, the chance to develop efficacy diminishes and the avoidance of challenges with continue.

Reducing stress and adjusting negative reactions is the fourth way of creating self-efficacy. Emotional responses play a large part in one’s belief in their capabilities. This
source of influence really focuses more on how reactions are perceived. Teachers perceived reactions to utilizing culturally relevant practice to implement Common Core Standards can be used as a source of energy to work towards accomplishing this task. Operating with this viewpoint can build upon one’s perceived ability and grow self-efficacy. While those whose reactions are clouded by doubts can cause diminish the possibility of developing self-efficacy.

**Definition of Variables and Other Terms**

**Common Core Standards** are “English/Language Arts and Math standards that outline skills and knowledge that are to be effectively taught and learned for students to be ready to succeed academically in credit-bearing, college-entry courses and in workforce training programs” (Common Core State Standards Initiative Standards-Setting Criteria, 2010).

**Cooperative Learning** is the organizing of small groups within a class to facilitate learning in such a way that individual success is connected to the success of the group.

**Cultivate** means to develop or foster in response to a driving force.

**Cultural Differences** are distinctive characteristics of African-American students that are unique to factors of home life, background, and community influence.

**Cultural Norms** are behavior patterns are typical of specific groups. These behaviors can be acquired from parents, peers, and many others whose values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors take place in context of their own culture.
**Cultural Sensitivity**: For the purpose of this research, cultural sensitivity is defined as teacher instructional behaviors validating students’ real life experiences, cooperative learning, using African-American literature or examples that include people of diverse backgrounds, and interactive dialogue.

**Cultural Synchronization** is defined as recognition and harmonious joining of cultural characteristics between both the teacher and student utilized to match school culture with the culture of African-American students.

**Culturally Relevant Implementation of Common Core Standards** is defined as the integration of culturally relevant teaching practices in the instruction guided by Common Core Standards.

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy** is defined as a teaching approach that recognizes, acknowledges, and embraces culture to empower student academic success.

**Influence** means to have an effect upon someone or something.

**Interactive Dialogue** is defined as verbal interaction between teacher and students that encompasses student interest and personal experiences through questioning and conversation focused on academics with the integration of aspects of the students’ culture.

**Teacher Efficacy** is a teacher’s belief in his or her ability to complete the steps required to accomplish a particular teaching task in a given context (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).
Relationship among the Variables

From the review of the literature, a possible connection between gaining the ability to construct a view that alternates one’s own culture through awareness of cultural differences and culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of Common Core Standards was derived. This possible connection was investigated in this study in regards to the impact on the instruction of African-American students (see Figure 5).

![Diagram showing the relationship among the variables]

*Figure 5. Relationship among the Variables*
Limitations of the Study

There were limitations of this study that deserve notice. The selection of participants for the study was drawn from a single elementary school. This created a sample whose results may not generalize to other teacher populations. The researcher of the study works at the elementary school at the focus of the research. This could have created a degree of researcher bias and an atmosphere among the participants to respond in a certain way because of their working relationship with the researcher. Another type of bias that was a limitation of this study was self-reported bias. Surveys were used as a measurement tool. Persons completing the surveys may have provided responses that would highlight them in a favorable manner or a manner in which they desire to be but does not currently match the reality of their classroom instruction.

Also, the results of this study only reflect the associations between culturally relevant pedagogy with African-American students. This form of sampling bias omits other students and minorities that are under the instruction of Common Core Standards and have cultural differences that vary from their teachers. Further research examining culturally relevant practices are needed to examine these practices with various minorities in the implementation of Common Core Standards.

Furthermore, there is little steady research about the implementation and success of the Common Core Standards due to the fact that we are in the beginning stages of the instructional rollout. The standards have been in the implementation phase for one full academic school year. That is not enough time to gather sufficient data to monitor the
longitudinal, academic results that manifest solely from the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards.

Summary

The theoretical framework helped to mold the focus of the study. The theories of culturally relevant pedagogy, cultural sensitivity, and teacher efficacy framed this research study. This chapter outlined the theoretical definitions and the practical application of each theory and how they can possibly manifest themselves in this study. This section also shared the limitations of this study while explaining the relationship among the variables and providing definitions for each variable and other relevant terms.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study examined the relationship between the dependent variable of culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards through the independent variables of cultural sensitivity, cultural synchronization, teacher efficacy, and the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards. The inspection of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables took place through a mixed method approach. The research was designed to take a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between culturally relevant teaching practices and cultural sensitivity of teachers. The research also examined the relationship between teacher efficacy and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards with efficacy scales. The relationship between culturally synchronization and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards was investigated in this study.

Through a quantitative approach, the researcher surveyed teachers to determine to what extent teacher efficacy has an influence on culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards. The researcher also looked to determine the extent to which teachers of African-American students feel that cultural sensitivity is an important factor in the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards. In the study, the extent to which cultural differences are used in the delivery of Common Core
Standards was investigated. Qualitatively, the researcher interviewed and observed teachers to generalize how culturally relevant pedagogy influences teachers’ ability to cultivate cultural synchronization with African-American students. Through qualitative interviews, the study also observed how teachers of African-American students identified cultural differences.

**Description of the Setting**

The surveys, efficacy scales, interviews, and observations were administered at a public elementary school located in a suburban city located about 20 miles outside of Atlanta, Georgia. The primary elementary school consists only of grades kindergarten, first, second, and third grade. The students feed into a neighboring elementary school for fourth and fifth grade. The student population of the school is 626; 77% of the school’s population receives free or reduced lunch. The student population consists of 9% English language learners; 7% of the student population is served by special education. The ethnic makeup of the school is 58% African American, 18% Hispanic, 15% white, 7% multiracial, and 2% Asian.

**Sampling Procedures**

Convenience sampling was utilized when giving the survey. The survey was given to 30 certified teachers at the elementary school that work with African-American students on a daily basis. Convenience sampling was used in the acquiring of these participants due to the accessibility of the teachers to the researcher. Following the example of Ladson-Billings (2009) in *The Dreamkeepers*, the researcher met with the principal and assistant principal of the school to determine the participants. An outline of
the study was shared at this meeting. The components of culturally relevant pedagogy were discussed for the school’s administration to purposefully suggest and sample teachers whom they believed had demonstrated effectiveness with African-American students. The researcher asked for two to three names from each grade level as suggestions. From the suggestions, purposeful sampling was used to determine the teachers for interviews, observations, and teacher attitude scales. Teachers were asked for their consent to participate in the study. The sampling technique provided the researcher with participants that best helped in the understanding of the problem and research questions (Creswell, 2009).

Working with Human Subjects

Participants were asked to volunteer in participation of the study. A consent form was given to all participants. The consent form included the purpose of the study, what participants were asked to do, risks were stated, and benefits were shared. The form guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were asked to sign the consent form. Participants were asked to complete the survey online for the results to remain anonymous. The researcher also submitted a proposal to and received approval from Clark Atlanta University’s Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to go through the Institutional Review Board process.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed the survey and the attitude scale for teachers from the review of the literature. Survey items were developed to show a relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The survey questions were derived from the
researcher and two previously given surveys (Love & Kruger, 2005; Hairston, 2011).

The items were written as statements about cultural sensitivity, cultural synchronization, and the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards. The survey questions consist of a Likert 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The 18 question survey can be broken down to address the independent variables (see Instrumentation Matrix, Table 4).

Table 4

*Instrumentation Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Teacher Survey Questions</th>
<th>Teacher Attitude Scale Statements</th>
<th>Interview Protocol</th>
<th>Observation Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ1</strong></td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ2</strong></td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ3</strong></td>
<td>5, 7, 8</td>
<td>16, 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ4</strong></td>
<td>6, 10, 17</td>
<td>14, 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ6</strong></td>
<td>9, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22</td>
<td>11, 12, 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ7</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>8, 9, 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ8</strong></td>
<td>11, 12, 13, 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ9</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>8, 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bandura’s (1993) research on the development of self-efficacy scales led to the creation of the teacher attitude scale. The researcher sought the guidance of the dissertation committee during the development of the instruments. The self-efficacy scale developed to examine the efficacy for the following: culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of Common Core standards (dependent variable), cultural synchronization (independent variable), instructional delivery of Common Core standards (independent variable), and cultural sensitivity (independent variable). Teachers’ degree of confidence was measured on a scale from 0-10; 0 = Cannot do at all, 5 = Moderately can do, and 10 = Highly certain can do.

An interview protocol was developed by the researcher consisting of nine questions that were designed to examine the independent variables of cultural sensitivity and cultural synchronization. Responses of participants were recorded and transcribed to determine common themes that can shed light on the dependent variable of culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards.

An observation tool was created by the researcher to be utilized during classroom visits. Research was conducted on observation tools for culturally relevant teaching. An instrument created by Hairston (2011) was used to develop observation tool. Characteristics of teacher behavior that would demonstrate culturally relevant teaching were correlated with the performance standards of the Teacher Keys Evaluation System used to assess the performance of teachers.
Participants/Location of Research

The researcher selected the participants from a list of teachers supplied from the principal and assistant principal of the school. Following the example of Ladson-Billings (2009), the researcher consulted the administration of the school to identify teachers that are successful with African-American students. From this suggested list, the researcher conducted a meeting with the teachers to share the purpose of the study and gain their consent in participating. From the group, the researcher gathered a group of four teachers, one from each grade level of the school. The researcher is a teacher at the research setting, allowing access to the research setting.

Data Collection Procedures

First, the researcher created an electronic survey of the 22 questions for teachers to respond to through Survey Monkey. The survey was distributed to the participants through an email. The researcher collected the responses of completed surveys as teachers completed them. Second, the researcher distributed the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale to teachers in an envelope to be completed in confidentiality. Participants were asked to return the scale in an envelope. Third, the researcher set up a schedule to conduct observations. The researcher conducted three observations for each participant, one 30-minute visit, and two 15-minute walkthroughs. The researcher completed the observation form during each classroom visit. From the observations, there was a total of 4 hours of observation data. After the first classroom visit, a one-on-one interview was conducted using the Interview Protocol. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.
Statistical Applications (Quantitative)

For this study, the researcher used the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The software was used to administer Pearson Correlation tests to analyze the relationship between independent variables of cultural sensitivity, cultural synchronization, teacher efficacy, and instructional delivery of Common Core Standards and the dependent variable, culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the implementation of Common Core Standards.

Description of Data Analysis Methods (Qualitative)

The teacher attitude scale results, observation forms and notes, and the interview transcripts were analyzed for “issue-relevant meaning to emerge” (Creswell, 2007, p. 163). The researcher looked for patterns amongst the data to emerge. As patterns emerged, the researcher aggregated the data into categories that eventually collapsed into themes (Creswell, 2007). The themes were used to develop generalizations that can be implications for educational leaders.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the research design of the study. Through a quantitative and qualitative approach, the researcher attempted to seek out the possible relationships between the independent variables of cultural sensitivity, cultural synchronization, teacher efficacy, and instructional delivery of Common Core Standards and the dependent variable, culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the implementation of Common Core Standards. Participation in this study resulted from purposeful and convenient sampling with the intent to gather a wide collection of data. This chapter
outlines the specific instrumentation, how the data were collected, and the process for analyzing the data.
CHAPTER V
DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify a link between the culture of African-American students, culturally relevant pedagogy, and the implementation of Common Core Standards. The data were collected at a public primary elementary school located in suburban city about 20 minutes outside of Atlanta. Data analysis was conducted based on the research questions derived with a concentration on determining the relationship among the independent variables: (a) teacher efficacy, (b) instructional delivery of Common Core Standards, (c) cultural sensitivity, (d) cultural synchronization, and the dependent variable—culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards. This chapter is designed to present the results of the data analysis process of both sets of data, quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The researcher sent a link to an online survey instrument consisting of 22 questions to certified teachers who work at the elementary school. The researcher utilized the email database of the school to distribute the surveys. A total of 35 surveys were emailed out to teachers and approximately 30 surveys were completed for a return rate of 86%. In addition to the selected variables as they relate to culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of Common Core Standards, the survey also included
questions concerning demographics, including gender, age, years of teaching experience, and ethnicity. The survey consisted of 18 questions representing independent variables: instructional delivery of Common Core Standards (questions 15, 17, & 22), cultural sensitivity (questions 5, 7-10), teacher efficacy (question 6), cultural synchronization (questions 11-14), and the dependent variable culturally relevant pedagogy implementing of Common Core Standards (questions 16, 18-21). Survey items pertaining to the independent and dependent variables were developed and measured utilizing a Likert-scale with the following response options: (a) strongly disagree, (b) disagree, (c) undecided, (d) agree, and (e) strongly agree. The summary analysis of the collected survey data was conducted utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Using the SPSS software, the following procedures were utilized: Frequency, Pearson Correlation, ANOVA, and T-Test.

Of the 30 participants, the following demographic factors were noted: Age—8 of the participants were 25-34 years old, 7 were 35-44 years old, 13 were 45-54 years old, and 2 were 55-64 old. The majority of teachers surveyed were between the ages of 45 and 54. Approximately half of the surveyed participants were between ages of 25 and 44. Table 5 outlines the breakdown according to the age demographic.

As noted in Table 6, the teaching experience of the participants varied from one year of experience to over 25 years of experience. Of the 30 participants, 11 teachers had experience of over 15 years and the majority of the sample has had teaching experiences for either 14 years of less.
### Table 5

**Age of Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-35 years old</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-44 years old</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54 years old</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 64 years old</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6

**Years of Teaching Experience of Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 9 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 14 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 24 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>86.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>25+ years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ethnicity breakdown of participants manifested two dominant races and one other race. Table 7 displays how most of the participants identified their ethnicity as black or African American. The other half of the sampling population identified their ethnicity as either white (13) or Asian/Pacific Island (2).

Table 7

*Ethnicity of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Island</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis and Demographics**

Data analysis was conducted to determine if there was a correlation between the demographics of the participants’ age, years of experience, ethnicity and the dependent variable. A Pearson Correlation was run to determine the relationships among these variables. The level of significance was set at .05 level of probability.

As displayed in Table 8, there is no significant relationship between the culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards and age. The table shows a coefficient of .024 and a significant level of .899; this is above the acceptance level indicating no significant relationship.
Table 8

**Pearson Correlation: Common Core Standards and Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TeachCommonCore</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>TeachExp</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TeachCommonCore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>.288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.899</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>675**</th>
<th>-.512**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.899</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>TeachExp</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>.202</th>
<th>.675**</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.247</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>.288</th>
<th>-.512**</th>
<th>-.218</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.247</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 also shows there is no relationship between the dependent variable and years of teaching experience. The table shows a coefficient of .202 and a significant level of .285; this is above the acceptance level indicating no significant relationship. In addition, Table 8 shows there is no relationship between the dependent variable and ethnicity. The table shows a coefficient of .288 and a significant level of .123; this is above the acceptance level indicating no significant relationship.

The data were further analyzed using Analysis of variance testing to see if there was any difference among the demographic subgroup. In respect to age, the analyzing...
process sought to determine if there was any difference or variance among the different age groups in regards to culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards.

From Table 9, it can be seen that there is no significant difference among the four age groups represented in the sample. The table shows a level of significance as .802 between the different age groups of teachers. This is above the acceptable level of significant of .05, indicating no difference among the teachers’ age group and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards. There is also no significant difference among the four age groups represented in this sample in relation to culturally relevant teaching implementing Common Core Standards.

Table 9

*Teachers’ Age Group and Common Core Standards*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TeachCommonCore</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares</td>
<td>Mean Squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>39.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41.467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 shows that there is no significant difference among the various years of teaching experience represented in the sample. The table shows a level of significance as .196 between the different years of teaching experience. This is above the acceptable level of significant of .05, indicating no difference among a teachers’ years of experience and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards.

Table 10

*Teachers’ Years of Experience and Common Core Standards*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TeachCommonCore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8.602</td>
<td>2.151</td>
<td>1.636</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>32.864</td>
<td>1.315</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41.467</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 shows that there is no significant difference among the different ethnicities represented in the sample. The table shows a level of significance as .162 between the different ethnicities. This is above the acceptable level of significant of .05, indicating no difference among a teacher ethnicity and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards.
Data Analysis and Quantitative Research Questions

Data analysis was conducted to answer the research questions that examined the relationship between the independent variables—teacher efficacy, cultural sensitivity, and cultural synchronization—and the dependent variable, culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of the Common Core Standards. A Pearson Correlation was run to determine the relationships among these variables. A correlation result of .05 was used as the level of significance.

RQ2: Is there a relationship between teacher efficacy and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards?

According to the data analysis, it was determined that there is a significant relationship between teacher efficacy and culturally relevant implementation Common Core Standards. The data reveal that for self-efficacy and Common Core Standards, the coefficient was .558 and the level of significance .001; this is below the .05 level of acceptability, indicating a very strong relationship between teacher efficacy and
culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of the Common Core Standards (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Correlations: Culturally Relevant Implementing of Common Core Standards (Teach Common Core) and Independent Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TeachCommonCore</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>TeachCommonCore</th>
<th>Efficacy</th>
<th>CulSensitivity</th>
<th>CulSynchro</th>
<th>CulRelPed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TeachCommonCore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.558**</td>
<td>.690**</td>
<td>.558**</td>
<td>.526**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.003</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy</td>
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<td>.600**</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.489**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CulSensitivity</td>
<td>.690**</td>
<td>.600**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.327</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CulSynchro</td>
<td>.558**</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.327</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CulRelPed</td>
<td>.526**</td>
<td>.489**</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ4: Is there a relationship between culturally relevant teaching practices and cultural sensitivity of teachers?

The term *culturally relevant teaching practices* in this research question refers to the dependent variable of culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards. From Table 11, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between cultural sensitivity and culturally relevant pedagogy implementation Common Core Standards. The Pearson Correlation manifests a coefficient of .690 and a level of significance of .000. This is also below the .05 level of confidence and indicates a very strong relationship between the dependent variable and cultural sensitivity.

RQ8: Is there a relationship between cultural synchronization and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards?

Table 11 shows that there is a significant relationship between cultural synchronization and culturally relevant pedagogy implementation Common Core Standards. The Pearson Correlation manifests a coefficient of .558 and a level of significance of .001. This is also below the .05 level of confidence and indicates a very strong relationship between the dependent variable and cultural synchronization.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data analysis process took place as a result of data collections from interviews and observations. Personal interviews consisted of nine questions asked by the researcher to address the research questions examining the identification of cultural differences and cultural synchronization. The interview questions are as follows:
• In your teaching career, how many years have you primarily worked with African-American students?

• When you hear the term ‘culturally relevant teaching’ what comes to mind?

• What are ways in which you identify cultural differences between you and your African-American students?

• What is an example of a cultural difference specific to African-American students have you observed/noticed? Can you explain any other cultural differences that are specific to African-American students?

• Are cultural differences utilized in the planning of your instruction that is guided by the Common Core standards? Does your instruction respond to the cultural differences of students? Can you give an example?

• What do the cultural differences of your students reveal to you about yourself?

• Do cultural differences vary from what you deem as “normal?” How does this impact your ability to teach African-American students?

• How does responding to the cultural differences of your students allow your classroom community to match the culture of African-American students?

• How do you take your cultural characteristics and match them with the culture of your African-American students?

Observations were conducted during classroom instructional time and took place over a 3-week period (a total of 12 observations). The researcher used an observation form to identify if the teacher utilized aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy while implementing instruction guided by the Common Core Standards. Four sets of evidence
were key checkpoints of each observation: Use of African-American literature or examples; Legitimizes students’ real life experience; Interactive dialogue; and Cooperative grouping. In the data analysis process, interviews were transcribed and observation forms and notes were typed out. All transcribed interviews and observation notes were analyzed for emergent themes and trends among the data.

Four individuals from the survey sample of teachers were purposefully selected to provide more in-depth information that would address the qualitative research questions that guide this study. The researcher collected demographic data on each observation form and interview question sheet. Participants consisted of four females, two white teachers, one African-American teacher, and one Asian teacher. In reference to the age of the participants, one teacher was between the ages of 25-34, two teachers were between the ages of 35-44, and between the ages of 55-64 there was one teacher. Regarding years of experience, one teacher had 6-9 years of experience, two teachers had 10-14 years of experience, and one teacher had more than 25 years of experience. Interview responses and observation notes were transcribed and coded for emerging themes. The researcher discovered several themes after coding the responses of each participant. A total of 39 themes materialized from coding. Upon identifying the subthemes, the researcher re-examined the data looking for interrelated subthemes to create emergent themes of trends from the data. The formulated themes were student background (SB), teacher perception of self (TPSL), teacher perception of student (TPST), teacher instructional strategies (TIS), teacher/student relationship (TSR), empower students (ES), and pedagogy (PD). Four themes emerged from interviews only: student background, teacher perception of self, teacher perception of student, and
teacher/student relationships. Two themes emerged from codes combined of data from interviews and observations: teacher instructional strategies and empower students. One theme emerged from data collected from observations only: pedagogy.

Figure 6 displays the frequency of each code from the coding of each interview and observation. The results indicated Student Background as the highest frequency. The next most frequent emergent theme was noted as Empower Students. Teacher Instructional Strategies and Teacher Perception of Self were indicated as highly emergent themes.

Figure 6. Subthemes Identified from Emergent Themes
Data Analysis and Qualitative Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent does teacher efficacy have an influence on culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards?

The teacher efficacy variable was broken down into activity elements according to the different independent variables. A survey was given to four teachers to get a more in-depth picture of efficacy as it applies to the teachers in this sample. The findings in Figure 7 show that in the category of Efficacy for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Implementation of Common Core Standards, teachers indicated that they were more confident in viewing student identities as rich with color and culture and recognizing cultural backgrounds but were not as confident in bringing students background into lesson planning.

![Figure 7. Efficacy for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Implementation of Common Core Standards](image-url)
The findings in Figure 8 show that in the category of *Efficacy for Cultural Synchronization*, teachers indicated that they were more confident in utilizing culture of students to establish the classroom community but were not as confident in recognizing cultural behavior of students and harmonizing personal cultural system to student cultural system.

*Figure 8. Efficacy for Cultural Synchronization*

Figure 9 shows that in the category of *Efficacy for Instruction Delivery*, teachers indicated that they were more confident in making connections between personal lives and standards but were not as confident in utilizing culturally strategies to prepare students for collective thinking, growth, and understanding.
Figure 9. Efficacy for Instructional Delivery

Figure 10 shows that in the category of Efficacy for Cultural Sensitivity, teachers indicated that they were more confident in delivering instruction with a positive attitude towards cultural differences of students but were not as confident in structuring instruction with the knowledge cultural differences and planning with the consideration of various worldviews that vary from oneself.

Figure 10. Efficacy for Cultural Sensitivity
RQ3: To what extent do teachers of African-American students feel that cultural sensitivity is an important factor in the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards?

For the purpose of this research, cultural sensitivity is defined as teacher instructional behaviors of validating students’ real life experiences, cooperative learning, using African-American literature or examples that include people of diverse backgrounds, and interactive dialogue. Classroom observations were conducted to detect this in instructional delivery of the Common Core Standards in classrooms. Figure 11 displays the frequency by which validating students’ real life experiences, cooperative learning, using African-American literature or examples that include people of diverse backgrounds, and interactive dialogue was observed in the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards.

Figure 11. Teacher Behaviors: Observations
In every classroom observation, teachers were proficient in the use of cooperative
groups. Cooperative groups were observed to provide academic intervention for students
with guidance from teachers and math learning centers. As Figure 11 shows, interactive
dialogue was either proficient or exemplary in every classroom observation. Interactive
dialogue took place during observed whole group instruction, one on one session with
teacher and student, and cooperative groups. Validating students’ real life experiences
was observed at an exemplary level during three classroom visits, at a proficient level
during eight classroom visits, and at a level of needing improvement during one
classroom visit. During classroom visits teachers validated students’ past academic
successful experiences through praise and authenticating students shared real life
experiences during various dialogue sessions. During half of the classroom observations,
the researcher was clearly able to detect use of African-American literature of examples
and was unable to clearly detect in the other half of classroom visits, denoting 6
proficient levels and 6 needs improvement levels (see Figure 11). African-American
examples were observed as teachers carried out mini-lessons of instruction and spoke
with students. In classrooms where this was observed, some teachers used language or
gestures specific to the African-American culture (i.e., “Hallelujah!” and lifted hands to
express praise for student academic success).

The Empower Students connects with this research question. Codes from
interviews and observations demonstrate the extent to which teachers of African-
American students feel that cultural sensitivity is an important factor in the instructional
delivery of Common Core. Codes such as cooperative groups and empower students to
learn (validating students’ real life experiences) make up the emergent them as shown in Figure 12.

![Figure 12](image)

**Figure 12.** Empower Students (ES)

**RQ5:** How do teachers of African-American students identify cultural differences that vary from that of the teacher?

Participants were open about the variances between themselves and their African-American students. From collected responses, teachers shared how they compared themselves (home life, childhood, personal culture) to students and were able to identify clear cultural differences. Participant 2 stated:

I look at how I was raised and how I raise my own children, and how my husband was raised. I identify with them to a certain extent. When I think about the way I was raised and even the way ____ (referred to her husband) was raised, we were raised differently. So I think, you know, when you look at different cultures, it is different. We look the same. We’re all black. However, the experiences that you
offer your children come from the culture that you’re raised in. (Personal Communication, February 26, 2014)

Through interviews, teacher shared that comparing African-American students to other ethnicities allowed them to see cultural differences. Teachers also compared the culture of African-American students to their own personal culture to identify differences.

Participant 1 stated:

I guess since I have had the most Hispanic students, like I have seven or eight. I guess in comparison, Hispanic students are like Asian students. They are very quiet and reserved. They wait for instruction, whereas my African-American students are a little more vocal, a little more active. It’s not necessarily a bad thing. I have to make sure my lessons are active and engaging so that don’t turn their brains off. That’s really for all the kids because of their age. I guess that would be one thing that I notice. Yeah, it just goes back to an Asian’s culture; it’s very strict. That’s what they want. They want accuracy. They want high achieving. Umm, let me go ahead and tell you, I was not that child. I was average. (Personal Communication, February 11, 2014)

Participants also shared that how dialogue with students allowed for differences to manifest themselves. Participant 3 stated:

I mean the easiest way to identify is by having conversations and building relationships with the students. I think that just through talking with them. Oh, I hear a lot of people say that I don’t see differences but I think that’s a good thing. I think to see the differences and to share experiences is the easiest way.
There’s a difference and that’s ok, that’s a good thing. To say that you experienced it this way and I experienced it this way and having those conversations and it’s not always easy but it’s important. (Personal Communication, February 25, 2014)

There were three emergent themes that spoke primarily to RQ5: Teacher Perception of Self (see Figure 13), Student Background (see Figure 14), and Teacher/Student Relationship (see Figure 15).

**Figure 13.** Teacher Perception of Self (TPSL)
RQ6: To what extent are cultural differences utilized in the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards?

Participants clearly identified various ways that cultural differences were used in instruction. There were many instructional strategies mentioned in interviews and observed in observations. Instructional tactics and the use of culture in instruction were evident during interviews and interactive dialogue and probing questions were observed during classroom visits. Participant 1 stated:

The Common Core standards go through the units, like E/LA. There are a ton of technology links. So you know, openers that have to do with technology, research. So I use that as much as possible because that engages everyone. If it’s something that they can get up and go manipulative, even just to sit and watch and like do like little signals, I heard this or I learned this. I’ve been trying to do that, especially since I got this (referring to the ENO board), try to use that a lot more.
Ummm, and give them more opportunities to research. (Personal Communication, February 11, 2014)

Participants also shared that they worked to meet the needs of students. Many responses included teachers sharing that they used their knowledge about students cultural differences to meet them at an instructional level that would allow the students to feel success, whether the student was on, above, or below grade level. Participant 4 stated:

For those that I know are going to be at a disadvantage, you try to level the playing field. For those that you know whose families are not going to get them to the library, who are not gonna help them with research, who are not going to help them learn their sight words. We/I have to work very hard on how do I meet their needs at school because I know it’s not going to happen at home. I’ve got to figure out what can I do at school to meet the child’s need right now with what I can do and for those children who have the benefits of support, then I can take advantage of that and I can many times help those children move forward if I didn’t have that. So I have to look at what…I guess it culture they’re coming from, what culture they’re in and then use that to help me figure out who needs what. You know and uhhh, like this group. There’s a lot of having to really provide challenges and more advanced kind of things for them because their families taking and running with it and for those, my little ones that, you know, aren’t going to get that, like my little homeless child, I have to really try to supplement what I do with that child here. (Personal Communication, February 26, 2014)
Participant 3 stated:

A long time ago when I was doing my Master’s at Georgia State, I had a professor come observe me and she mentioned something that I have never noticed before. I like how you accept a level of noise in here. It’s a little louder in here than it is in other classrooms and that it’s being really respectful of African-American students because sometimes they come from situations, it seems like, there’s a higher level of noise and talking over. I had to get used to that but as I have had conversations with African-American parents and other teachers that I’ve worked with, that seems kind of a norm. And I noticed it, even when I had conversations with my friends. Umm, that that’s just a difference. (Personal Communication, February 25, 2014)

The emergent theme of Teacher Instructional Strategies relates to RQ6. Figure 16 displays how interrelated sub-themes such as instructional tactics, culture used in instruction, students’ needs, interactive dialogue, and probing questions make up this emergent theme.

![Figure 16. Teacher Instructional Strategies (TIS)]
RQ7: How can culturally relevant pedagogy influence teachers’ ability to cultivate cultural synchronization with African-American students?

Cultural relevant pedagogy for this research study is defined as a teaching approach that recognizes, acknowledges, and embraces culture to empower student academic success. Participants’ responses in interviews and observations manifested how teacher utilize different culturally relevant practices to recognize and harmonize the joining of cultural characteristics between themselves and the culture of African-American students. As teachers recognized differences, they found themselves making person adjustments to teacher teaching styles to match the learning of their African-American students. Participants also shared how they would adjust their classrooms or instruction to ensure that they were matching the differences they recognized in African-America students. Participants shared how they utilize African-American literature as a way to integrate cultural differences in their instruction. Participant 3 stated:

My way is not always the best way and so I have to willing to let their needs and their interests help to guide my instruction. I don’t think that it changes it completely but I just think I have to be open and also be empathetic as well. You know there may be a need that I would not have noticed on my own, so have to continue to just listen to them and just be mindful.

I try to make sure that the literature that I’m including is respectful and also representative of different cultures. And obviously African-American literature is something that comes most frequently because that’s the majority of students that I teach but I also think it’s my responsibility to introduce and be respectful of other cultures. (Personal Communication, February 25, 2014)
Participant 1 stated, “My African-American students are a little more vocal, a little more active. It’s not necessarily a bad thing. I have to make sure my lessons are active and engaging so that don’t turn their brains off” (February 11, Personal Communication, 2014).

During observations, the researcher noticed how teachers utilized humor to match the classroom instruction to the culture of African-American students. Teachers said things such as, “You know old people can’t see that far” or joked with students to empower their learning. Teachers used music as a means to foster cultural synchronization. One teacher used rap songs to engage students in recalling previously taught math and social studies concepts. Teachers also used student language and slang as a method to facilitate cultural synchronization by saying such things as, “I got this” or “Hallelujah” during classroom visits. The researcher also observed culturally relevant strategies such as cooperative grouping and interactive dialogue during classroom visits as methods to match the culture of African-American students.

The emergent themes that relate to RQ7 are Pedagogy (see Figure 17), Empower Students, Teacher Perception of Self, and Student Background.

![Figure 17. Pedagogy](image)
RQ9: How do teachers of African-American students synchronize classroom culture to that of African-American students?

Participants shared how they make adjustments to their classroom communities to include the culture of African-American students. Teachers shared how their classroom cultures are filled with care, acceptance, and appreciation of differences form the foundation of their classrooms to ensure there is a harmonious relationship between the culture of African-American students and their classroom culture. Participant 2 stated:

I try to promote acceptance of everybody’s culture. You know what I mean; because I want everybody to feel comfortable in whom they are and you should be able to share whatever your thoughts are without somebody telling you, “You’re wrong.” So that you just make it safe and let children feel secure in their thinking and I think that’s the most important thing. And we’re the examples, what we present to them a lot of times, in our instruction is that things can sometimes…it goes back to Common Core in math, that you arrive at the same solution but you may arrive at it differently. So just because you believe one thing and the other person believes something else or they feel something else, their culture is different, in essence it will come together. (Personal Communication, February 26, 2014)

Participants also discussed how as relationships are built, experiences are shared, and different perspectives have been given, from one culture (student) to the next (teacher’s culture), opportunities to synchronization of cultures present themselves. Participant 3 stated:
I think if you ever give yourself an opportunity just to talk to somebody and just to learn about where they came from and what their interest are, you’re always going to find some common ground. You’re always going to find an interest that is the same or something that you have in common. And just share perspectives. I think that that’s so important. To take one particular situation or one particular interest, whether it be music or a movies or what you like to do in your spare time or the church that you go to. If you just hear somebody’s perspective on that same topic and when you’re just having those shared experiences, that’s when you can kind of match it up and let them know that I come from here and you from here but that’s cool that we can share these experiences and share these interests. (Personal Communication, February 25, 2014).

The themes Teacher/Student Relationship (see Figure 15) and Teacher Perception of Students (Figure 18) are related to RQ9. These figures display the interrelated themes that make up the emergent themes that relate to this research question.

![Figure 18. Teacher Perception of Student (TPST)](image-url)
Summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the data collected in this research study. The analysis of the data revealed that the independent variables: instructional delivery of Common Core Standards, cultural sensitivity, teacher efficacy, and cultural synchronization were significantly related to the dependent variable: culturally relevant pedagogy implementing of Common Core Standards. This chapter also outlined how the quantitative data related to the research questions. Also included in this chapter is the summarization of the conducted interviews and observations. The data were transcribed, analyzed, and connected to related research questions. The mixed method approach to the collection of data allowed the researcher to see the connection between descriptive and statistical data to answer the research questions that provided guidance to this study.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the link between culture and pedagogy through the implementation of the Common Core standards with the goal of increasing the instructional outcomes of African-American students. The researcher studied the dependent variable of culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards while examining the independent variables of the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards, cultural sensitivity, cultural synchronization, and teacher efficacy. This chapter highlights the findings of the study and the researcher will state the conclusions, implications, and recommendations of the study.

Findings

The researcher sought for the findings of this study to highlight how culturally relevant practices embedded in the teaching of Common Core standards can influence the instructional achievement of African-American students. Through a quantitative survey, the researcher examined the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The survey was given to a sample of 30 participants—certified teachers at the research location; 27% of the sample was between 25-34 years of age. 23% of the sample was between 35-44 years of age, 43% of the sample was between 45-54 years of age, and 7% of the sample was between 55-64 years of age. Within the sample, the teaching
experience varied from one year of classroom experience to over 25 years—24% of the teachers had between 1-9 years of teaching experience, 30% of teachers had 10-14 years of experience, and 36% of the sample had 15 or more years of experience. There were three ethnicities represented in the sample—43% of teachers who completed the survey were white, 50% of the sample was African-American, and 6% of the sample was Asian. From the data analysis, the Pearson Correlation manifested no significant relationship between the demographics of the participants and the dependent variable, culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards.

The researcher examined how the knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy can have an impact on teacher efficacy to implement these strategies to their instructional delivery. From the data analysis, there was a significant relationship between teacher efficacy and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards. Teacher efficacy was impacted by belief in his/her ability to implement Common Core Standards instruction through culturally relevant practices. These practices included tasks such as facilitating learning that allows students to maintain their cultural integrity with conforming to the status quo, harmonizing personal and student cultural systems, and adjusting instruction delivery by altering personal worldviews to which reflects cultural differences of students. The gathered research shows that teachers exhibited confidence in some areas based on the independent variables and did not experience confidence in other areas to implement culturally relevant pedagogy.

This research focused on the use of culturally relevant pedagogy to increase cultural sensitivity in teachers as they implement Common Core State Standards. From the data analysis, there was a significant relationship between cultural sensitivity and
culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards. From a mixed method approach, the qualitative data mirrored the quantitative data as teacher identified that they worked to be aware of students and their backgrounds to meet the needs of students through their instructional delivery. Teachers related the culture of students to their home lives, backgrounds, and their parents. As teachers were more aware of the background of students, they became more aware of how their culture differed from that of their students. The cultural sensitivity of teachers led to the adjustment of the instructional delivery to ensure that Common Core instruction considers the cultural differences of African-American students.

From a mixed methods approach, the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards was examined to determine a possible correlation to culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards. Through Pearson Correlation, it was determined that there was significant relationship between the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards and the dependent variable. From the collection of qualitative data, participants shared that they made adjustments to their instruction based on the needs of their students. In interviews, teachers stressed that they worked to ensure that their instructional delivery took the ability, whether high or below grade level, of students into consideration. Through classroom observations, culturally relevant strategies were displayed in the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards. Teachers engaged students in interactive dialogue during whole and small group settings. Students were engaged in interactive dialogue without teacher participation at times but much of the interactive dialogue carried out was facilitated by classroom teachers through probing questions. Cooperative groups were utilized in classroom instruction to provide
intervention support to students. Teachers also facilitated hands-on learning opportunities in small cooperative groups.

For the purpose of this research, cultural synchronization was defined as recognition and harmonious joining of cultural characteristics between both the teacher and student utilized to match school culture with the culture of African-American students. From a quantitative approach and through Pearson correlation, the data analysis displayed that there was a significant relationship between cultural synchronization and the culturally relevant implementation of Common Core Standards. Through interview and observations, teachers shared how they adjusted their personal preferences to adjust to African-American students in their classrooms. Personal adjustments came from the differences from the culture of the student to the teacher. They shared how they made adjustments to classroom communities by accepting elevated noise levels and catering to the active nature of African-American students.

**Conclusions and Implications**

The purpose of this study was to manifest how the characteristics of culturally relevant teaching aligned with regulated standards can create a connection between culture and education for African-American students. The researcher attempted to investigate how teacher efficacy, cultural sensitivity, the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards, and cultural synchronization has an impact on culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of Common Core Standards.

The researcher found that within this sample, demographics (teacher ethnicity, age, and years of experience) did not have a significant relationship with the dependent
variable. The researcher concluded that teaching Common Core Standards in this sample depends largely on teachers’ cultural characteristics, their sensitivity, the way they synchronize their classrooms, their sense of confidence. These variables impacted the teachers’ ability to teach Common Core Standards from a culturally relevant standpoint. Based on this, the researcher can infer that depending on the sample, teachers’ ethnicity, age, and years of experience do not prevent them from implementing culturally relevant pedagogy.

The study took a close look at teacher efficacy and its relationship to culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards and the extent to which it could possibly have an influence on the implementation. The findings of the study indicate that there was a significant relationship between teacher efficacy and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards. The researcher concluded that lack of knowledge about culturally relevant pedagogy impedes growth of a teacher’s confidence in their ability to teach Common Core Standards while addressing cultural differences. Teachers have a level of uneasiness when asked to embed the culture of African-American students into their instructional planning. This lack of confidence greatly influences teachers’ self-efficacy to use culturally relevant pedagogy in classrooms. The researcher can infer that when given tools to understand appropriate culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers feel confident and are better teachers to address cultural differences.

The research examined cultural sensitivity in relationship to culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards as a factor that possibly influenced this instructional delivery. The data collected manifested that there was a significant
relationship between cultural sensitivity and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing Common Core Standards. Teacher instructional practices included culturally relevant practices as they sensitive and acknowledge student differences. Researched-based culturally relevant practices that meet the needs of African-American students are embedded in daily instruction, become automatic, and welcomed as teachers are sensitive to cultural differences. An implication based on this finding is when cognizant of student cultures and differences, teachers are sensitive to address cultural differences of students using culturally relevant pedagogy.

As the research examined the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards, a significant relationship was revealed between this independent variable and the dependent variable. The researcher concluded that teachers want to set students up for success by not allowing cultural differences from teachers to students to foster misunderstandings and frustrations; therefore, teachers make adjustments to instructional delivery. Teachers make connections with what happens in the world of students to engage them instructionally. Even though all teachers were not fully aware of the true nature of African-American students, there was an attempt to make connections between home and school. The researcher can imply that when aware of culturally relevant practices that meet the needs of African-American students, teachers make adjustments to their instructional delivery when teaching Common Core Standards from a culturally relevant standpoint.

Another variable examined in the research was cultural synchronization and its relationship with culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards. The study also examined how cultural synchronization could possibly impact
classroom cultures. Data analysis displayed a significant relationship between cultural synchronization and culturally relevant pedagogy implementing the Common Core Standards. The researcher concluded that teachers were unsure what bridging cultures together meant or looked like. Teachers also matched classroom cultures based on how the culture of their African-American students differed from their culture. Teachers utilized relationship building and previous knowledge about the African-American culture to work on creating a shared understanding. The researcher can infer that when teachers do not ignore cultural differences of students, they are able to make attempts to sync the classroom culture of their African-American students.

This research studied how teachers identified cultural differences in African-American students and to what extent they are utilized in the instructional delivery of the Common Core Standards. The findings of this study indicated that teachers identified cultural differences of African-American students as they made connections with their personal lives. These connections compared the lives and nature of African-American students’ background, home life, and parents to that of the teacher. Teachers made adjustments to their instruction based on the differences identified in their African-American students. The researcher concluded that the only true culture known of the teacher was that of their own. The only sure cultural backdrop that was used as a comparison to students was the personal culture of the teacher; therefore, the differences manifested themselves as things that differed from the culture of the teacher. Differences varied within the same race. For example, the cultural norms of an African-American student differed from their African-American teacher because of different backgrounds, home lives, and upbringings. The researcher also concluded that the
identifying of cultural differences has to be noticeable in the actions of teachers’ more than verbal responses. This allowed for teachers to make adjustments to their personal preferences and utilize identified cultural differences in the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards. When teachers are aware of themselves as cultural beings, they are more conscious of the cultural differences and are able to implement culturally relevant pedagogy more efficiently can be implied from these findings and conclusions. As teachers are more aware, they will be able to synchronize their classrooms to match the culture of African-American students though adjustments. Variances in perspectives, based on culture, from teacher to student create differences that could possibly result in frustration, confusion, and misunderstanding if not recognized and acknowledged.

**Recommendations**

**Recommendations for Curriculum**

- Curriculums that are designed to teach the Common Core Standards through a culturally relevant lens should be written and developed.
- Curriculum writers should include possible connections with various cultures and diverse groups of students while developing instructional framework based on Common Core Standards.
- Curriculum developers should include educators from various backgrounds in the developmental stages to ensure there is a sense of cultural sensitivity embedded in instructional stages.
• Curriculum developers should identify culturally relevant strategies that complement the teaching of specific standards and give teachers options to choose from when utilizing these strategies in instruction.

Recommendation for Staff Development

• Curriculum writers should specific trainings for educators that model how to include culturally relevant materials from Common Core Standards in order to motivate different cultural backgrounds.

• Professional development should be offered on how teachers can take connections with their personal cultures, connect it with the curriculum, and use it as a way to engage students and encourage them to share their personal cultures. This would begin to develop a shared understanding between teachers and students.

• Professional development centered on culturally relevant practices should be offered to educational leaders and teachers on an on-going basis.

• Professional training on the Common Core Standards should be offered on an on-going basis.

• Professional development on how the use of culturally relevant practices complement the Common Core Standards should be offered on an annual basis to teachers and educational leaders.

• Professional development on using culture as a vehicle for learning and bringing cultural backgrounds of student into instructional planning should be offered to teachers and instructional coaches on an annual basis.
• Professional development on how to identify cultural differences without stereotyping students should be offered to teachers and educational leaders.

• Professional development on what cultural synchronization is and how it can be carried in classrooms to increase student achievement should be offered to teachers and educational leaders.

• Professional development on how to adjust the delivery of instruction by altering one’s (teacher) worldview that reflects cultural differences of students without losing your own perspective should be offered to teachers.

• On the job culture training as a means to bring awareness to the personal culture of teachers should be offered to teachers. These trainings can assist in the promotion of acceptance to cultural differences.

• School districts should offer trainings on how to utilize technology to enhance Common Core instruction.

**Recommendations for School Practice**

• Teachers could benefit from reading articles about African-American students to further understand their culture. Article findings can be compared to what is observed in classrooms. Teachers could also utilize this information in collaborative planning meetings to brainstorm strategies that would work to integrate the cultural differences in their instruction.

• Instructional support staff should be provided as support for teachers to help take their understanding of cultural differences to make instructional adjustments.
• Teachers should extend diverse learning experiences to the community at large in order to promote better understanding of the various cultures of enrolled students.

• Teachers should invite parents into schools to share family and cultural practices through job shadowing, volunteering opportunities, PTA, and other opportunities.

**Recommendation for Policy**

• School boards of districts with a high minority population should mandate training on culturally relevant practices on an on-going basis.

• The Georgia Department of Education should mandate school districts to offer rigorous training for the implementation of the Common Core Standards on an on-going basis.

• School boards should mandate a yearly training on Common Core Standards to ensure new teachers have the needed tools and seasoned teachers have access to new information as a way to sharpen their current skills.

• School boards should mandate trainings for building administrators and instructional coaches on how to foster a school atmosphere of culture sensitivity and acceptance of cultural differences.

• School boards should mandate trainings for building administrators and instructional coaches on how to promote and observe culturally relevant practices in classrooms.
• The Georgia Department of Education should mandate training on what culturally relevant practices complement the Common Core Standards that can promote academic success for different sets of minorities.

• School districts should implement policy that would mandate teachers to receive culture training on an on-going basis.

• School districts should implement professional development on strategies for teachers to match their culture with the culture of students to develop a shared understanding.

**Recommendation for Research**

• Future research to extend this study will need to be implemented in more than one school to reveal additional significance among variables and possibly unveil new significant relationships.

• Further research on culturally relevant pedagogy as it relates to the 21st century African-American student should be conducted to further expand on Gloria Ladson-Billings’ research agenda.

• Further study on the Common Core Standards and its implementation should be conducted as Common Core has only been active for one full school term (at the time of this study).

• Further research on Common Core and how African-American students are progressing on a yearly basis should be conducted to increase the research on Common Core.
Further research examining culturally relevant practices is needed to examine culturally relevant practices with other minorities in the implementation of Common Core standards.

Studies on schools that have consistent success with Common Core standards in their African-American population can provide insight on effective instructional strategies proven to promote academic success.

Research on how Teacher and Leader KEYS evaluations promote and encourage culturally relevant pedagogy should be conducted to update the body of knowledge of Gloria Ladson-Billings’ research agenda.

Studies on how teacher efficacy has been impacted throughout the implementation of Common Core should be carried out to add to the research body.

Research on how teachers of one race can effectively teach students of different backgrounds and take on their culture perspective while maintaining their own can add to the body of research of culturally relevant pedagogy and cultural sensitivity.

Further research related to Jacqueline Irvine’s cultural synchronization can provide insight into how this looks with the 21st century student and family.

**Limitations of the Study**

Limitations to this study presented themselves as data was collected and analyzed. The study was carried out at one elementary school, limiting the sample to a certain size. The study will need to be carried out in more than one school to reveal additional
significance among variables and possibly unveil new significant relationships.

Convenience and purposeful sampling was utilized due to the availability of the location. The researcher was conveniently able to collect all data within one location because of its accessibility.

After conducting and reviewing interviews, the researcher discovered that more questions are asked and examples were given to provide clarity to interviewees. Offering explanations and adding more questions would have added significance to the qualitative component of this research. The researcher met with case study participants and scheduled classroom observations. Prior to scheduled classroom visits, teachers were provided with an overview of the research questions and the variables, including a copy of the observation instrument that would be used in the classroom review.

Teachers self-reported the information on surveys and teacher attitude scales. The Likert scale was used; however, respondents could have responded to highlight themselves in desirable manner or in a manner in which they desire to be but does not match the reality of their classroom. The researcher worked at the sample school where the research was conducted. Teachers may have also responded in a manner that reflects their relationship with the researcher. Though these limitations presented themselves, they should not cause a contrary impact on the outcome but they are to be noted as possible limits to the overall study.

**Summary**

This study provides significant findings as it relates to culturally relevant pedagogy impacting the implementation of Common Core Standards. From a mixed
methods approach, the researcher found that teacher efficacy, cultural sensitivity, the instructional delivery of Common Core Standards and cultural synchronization have a significant relationship with culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of Common Core Standards. From the findings, the research concluded cultural factors impact the implementation of Common Core Standards through culturally relevant pedagogy and that teachers’ personal connections provide a comparison backdrop to which they are able to identify cultural differences in their African-American students. From the findings and conclusions, the researcher has developed implications and recommendations addressed to teachers and educational leaders at the local and state level in efforts to improve future implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy and Common Core Standards. The research hopes to continue studying the progression of Common Core as it relates to African-American students and hopes to add other minorities to future research opportunities.
APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

Dear Teacher:

I am Andrea N. Edge, a graduate student in the Department of Educational Leadership at Clark Atlanta University. The purpose of this study is to identify the link between culture and pedagogy through the implementation of the Common Core standards with the goal of increasing the instructional outcomes of African American students. Participants have been asked to be a part of this study to allow the researcher to assess the impact of teachers who utilize culturally relevant pedagogy to teach the Common Core standards with African American students.

Participants will be asked to complete a 22 question survey. The responses of the survey will be anonymous to ensure confidentiality. Selected participants will be asked to answer questions from the researcher in the form of an interview. The interview will be facilitated by the researcher at the setting of the research. The interview will take between 20-30 minutes to complete. Responses to interview questions will be recorded and transcribed to assist the researcher in assessing the impact of teachers who utilize culturally relevant pedagogy to teach the Common Core standards with African American students.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If a participant makes the decision to participate in the study, his/her identity will be obscured. Any information provided will be used for the purpose of this study only. Participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason without consequence. If any participant desires to withdraw from the study, any data collected will be destroyed.

Clark Atlanta University’s IRB has approved this study. If there are any questions or concerns about the study, please contact Andrea N. Edge at (770) 241-3055. Please sign below to give your consent to participate in this study.

Sincerely,
Andrea N. Edge
Department of Educational Leadership
Clark Atlanta University
Consent to Participate

I have read the attached informed consent letter and agree to participate in the study entitled “A Study on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Implementation Common Core Standards to Increase Positive Outcome for African American Students.”

Staff/Volunteer Name (please print)

Staff/Volunteer’s Signature

Date
APPENDIX B

Letter to Principal Requesting Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Principal:

My name is Andrea Edge, and I am an Education Leadership Doctoral student at the Clark Atlanta University. I am conducting research on under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Hill of the Clark Atlanta’s Education Leadership Department. Clark Atlanta’s Institutional Review Board has given approval to approach schools for my research. A copy of their approval is contained with this letter. I invite you to consider taking part in this research.

Aims of the Research

The research aims to:

- The purpose of this study is to identify the link between culture and pedagogy through the implementation of the Common Core standards with the goal of increasing the instructional outcomes of African-American students.

- This research will focus on the use of culturally relevant pedagogy to increase cultural sensitivity in teachers as they implement Common Core State Standards.

Significance of the Research Project

The research is significant in three ways:

1. It will highlight teacher behaviors that utilize to increase positive outcomes for African-American students while implementing Common Core standards.

2. It will provide information on how African-American students are responding to Common Core standards.

3. It will provide educators with a greater understanding of what culturally relevant teaching looks like with the 21st century student.

Benefits of the Research to Schools

1. This study can inform teacher preparation programs as they prepare to equip teachers entering urban classrooms.
2. The findings of this study can contribute to Ladson-Billings study on culturally relevant pedagogy.

**Research Plan and Method**

First, the researcher will create an electronic survey of the 18 questions for teachers to respond to through Survey Monkey. The survey will be distributed to the participants through an email. The researcher will collect the responses of completed surveys as teachers complete them. Second, the researcher will distribute the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale to teachers in an envelope to be completed in confidentiality. Participants will be asked to return the scale in an envelope. Third, the researcher will set up a schedule to conduct observations. The researcher will conduct 3 observations for each participant, one 30-minute visit, and two 15-minute walkthroughs. The researcher will complete the observation form during each classroom visit. From the observations, there will be a total of 4 hours of observation data. After the first classroom visit, a one-on-one interview will be conducted using the Interview Protocol. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Participants will be asked to volunteer to participate in the study. A consent form will be given to all participants. The consent form will include the purpose of the study, what participants will be asked to do, risks will be stated, and benefits will be shared. The form will guarantee anonymity and confidentiality. Participants will be asked to sign the consent form. Participants will be asked to complete the survey online for the results to remain anonymous.

**School Involvement**

Once I have received your consent to approach learners to participate in the study, I will

- distribute inform consent forms to participants,
- arrange a time with your school for data collection to take place,
- obtain informed consent from participants.

Attached for your information are copies of the Parent Information and Consent Form and also the Participant Information Statement and Consent Form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Andrea N. Edge  
Department of Educational Leadership  
Clark Atlanta University
APPENDIX C

Teacher Survey

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Implementing Common Core Standards Survey

I am interested in investigating culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of Common Core standards and its impact on the positive impacts on African American students. Your contribution to this research is instrumental and will provide constructive information for educators. Because of the sensitivity of the matter, your identity will remain protected, making you a completely anonymous participant.

If you are willing to participate in this research, please click on the link below and complete the survey. The survey consists of 22 questions that should take no more than 10-15 minutes to answer.

Directions: Please read each statement. Record your response to the statement by marking 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

1. What is your gender?
   1 Female
   2 Male

2. What is your age?
   1 Below 25 years of age
   2 25-34
   3 35-44
   4 45-54
   5 55-64
   6 Above 65 years of age

3. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
   1 1-5 years
   2 6-9 years
   3 10-14 years
   4 15-24 years
   5 25+ years
4. Please specify your ethnicity.
   1 White
   2 Hispanic or Latin
   3 Black or African American
   4 Native American or American Indian
   5 Asian/Pacific Islander
   6 Other

5. I take the time to learn about the cultures of African American students in my classroom.
   Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
   5 4 3 2 1

6. I am cognizant of my students’ cultures. I cater my instruction to encourage them to choose academic success.
   Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
   5 4 3 2 1

7. I view my students’ identities as rich with color and culture.
   Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
   5 4 3 2 1

8. I don’t see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children.
   Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
   5 4 3 2 1

9. The cultural backgrounds of my students play an important part in my teaching.
   Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
   5 4 3 2 1

10. I recognize that I am a cultural being and that it has an impact on my instruction.
    Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
    5 4 3 2 1
11. My culture and the culture of my African American students are bridged together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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12. I strive to match part of my classroom culture with the culture of my African-American students.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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13. The shared cultural understanding between my students and I influences my instruction.

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14. The personal relationship between my African-American students and I allows for a connection between home and school experiences.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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15. My classroom instruction is guided by the Common Core standards and challenges African-American students to choose academic success while being proud of their culture.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
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16. I strive for my classroom instruction to meet the needs of African-American students academically without gimmicks and entertainment tactics.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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17. It is part of my responsibilities to make connections between what happens in the world of my students and instruction guided by Common Core standards.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</table>
18. My instructional delivery promotes students to critique and question real world happenings.  
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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
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19. My instructional delivery is planned to capitalize on my students’ cultures and experiences.  
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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20. I plan and assess to determine if culturally relevant pedagogy has helped my students learn.  
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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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21. I strive for my classroom instruction to include strategies that integrate cultural differences  
   (i.e. collaborative groups, community of learners, and cooperative learning.)  
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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22. I strive for my classroom instruction to connect the Common Core standards to the culture of  
    African American students.  
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol

Time of Interview: TBD
Date: TBD
Place: TBD
Interviewer: Andrea Edge
Interviewee: TBD
Position of Interviewee: Teacher

I am interested in investigating culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of Common Core standards and its impact on the positive impacts on African-American students. Your contribution to this research is instrumental and will provide constructive information for educators.

Questions:
1. In your teaching career, how many years have your primarily worked with African-American students?

2. When you hear the term ‘culturally relevant teaching’ what comes to mind?

3. What are ways in which you identify cultural differences between you and your African-American students?

4. What is an example of a cultural difference specific to African-American students have you observed/noticed? Can you explain any other cultural differences that you have observed that are specific to African-American students?

5. Are cultural differences utilized in the planning of your instruction that is guided by the Common Core Standards? Does your instruction respond to the cultural differences of students? Can you give me an example?

6. What do the cultural differences of your students reveal to you about yourself?
7. Do cultural differences vary from what you deem as “normal?” How does this impact your ability to teach African-American students?

8. How does responding to the cultural differences of your students allow your classroom community to match the culture of African-American students?

9. How do you take your cultural characteristics and match them with the culture of your African-American students?
APPENDIX E

Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

Please rate how certain you are that you can perform the following tasks related to culturally relevant pedagogy implementation of Common Core standards.

Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 10 using the scale given below:

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<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannot do it all</td>
<td>Moderately can do</td>
<td>Highly certain can do</td>
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**Efficacy for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Implementation of CCGPS**
1. View student identities as rich with color and culture
2. Recognize cultural background of students as important of teaching
3. Bring students backgrounds (race, culture, heritage, etc.) into lesson planning
4. Use student culture as vehicle for learning
5. Facilitate learning to foster student choice of academic success
6. Facilitate learning that allows students to maintain their cultural integrity without conforming to status quo
7. Facilitate learning that promotes student questioning of society and/or ways of life

**Efficacy for Cultural Synchronization**
8. Harmonize personal cultural system to student cultural system
9. Recognize cultural behaviors of students
10. Utilize culture of students to establish classroom community

**Efficacy for Instructional Delivery of CCGPS**
11. Make connections between what personal live students are and standards
12. Allow student responses to determine direction of lesson
13. Utilize culturally relevant strategies to prepare students for collective thinking, growth, and understanding

**Efficacy of Cultural Sensitivity**
14. Plan with the consideration of various worldviews that vary from oneself
15. Structure instruction with knowledge of cultural differences
16. Deliver instruction with positive attitude towards cultural differences of students
17. Adjust instruction delivery by altering personal worldview to that which reflects culture differences of students

Confidence (0-10)
APPENDIX F

Observation Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Keys Standards - Culturally Relevant Teacher Evidence</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge</strong></td>
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<td>- Use of African American literature or examples</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning</strong></td>
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<td>- Legitimizes students’ real life experiences</td>
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<td>3. <strong>Performance Standard 3: Instructional Strategies</strong></td>
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<td>- Interactive dialogue</td>
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<td>4. <strong>Performance Standard 4: Differentiated Instruction</strong></td>
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<td>- Cooperative grouping</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Observer Notes**
REFERENCES


Downey, M. (2012). *Feds release new high school grad data using common yardstick; Georgia’s rate is 67 percent, putting us among the bottom three*. Retrieved from


