Culturally Responsive Practices: Addressing the Overidentification of Culturally Diverse Students in Special Education

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of Pittsburgh

2022

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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It was defended on

February 17, 2022

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Culturally Responsive Practices: Addressing the Overidentification of Culturally Diverse students in Special Education

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University of Pittsburgh, 2022

The paper aims to explore the impact of teachers' culturally responsive self-efficacy on the overidentification of students from historically oppressed and historically marginalized communities in special education. The current study collected mixed methods data through primary and secondary means, which included critically reviewing the existing work of scholars on or around the mentioned aspect. Likewise, primary quantitative data has been collected by conducting surveys that also included open-ended questions. The participants who volunteered to be a part of the current study were pre-kindergarten to fifth-grade teachers, therapists, behavioral health professionals, psychologists, counselors, and other education service providers. The primary measurement tool used to inform the research questions that guided the study was the Culturally Responsive Teachers Self-Efficacy (CRTSE) Scale created in 2007, which was designed by Kamau Siwatu. The survey questionnaire consisted of 41 Likert-type questions, with a range of 0–100, where zero reflected the lowest confidence level and 100 represented the highest confidence level. Although the qualitative data has been collected by including open-ended questions in the questionnaire, the 3-hour professional development session was held via Google Meet to accommodate social distancing protocol. A semistructured interview was conducted with five participants after attending the professional development session. *Keywords:* culturally responsive education, self-efficacy, special education, teachers' self-efficacy

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Preface

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Sharon Vereen, who is a hero in my story. Momma- your sacrifices, love and dedication is immeasurable. Thank you for reminding me daily who and whose I am. **Jeremiah 29:11**

The study was guided by the expertise of my wonderful committee: Dr. Yarneccia D. Dyson, Dr. Kari Kokka, and my advisor Dr. Tessa McCarthy

To Dr. Dyson- "Lift as You Climb" is not just a motto to you but your actions. I appreciate your mentorship and guidance.

To the Pitt EdD Cohort of 2018 especially the Special Education ARCO, I appreciate your support and the laughs!

To Javania and Vince- I appreciate you all carving out a place for me once a month, the memories created and the projects were special #Family.

To the Wolfpack, Trapezoid, Freedom Shores family, friends and family- I cannot say thank you enough. I look forward to all that is to come.

To my therapist, Jessica Ncube- I thank you! This journey could not have been completed without your support.

To Lavidah you are my rock, sister and safe place. Thank you for taking this journey with me and not judging me along the way. I'm ready for your journey whenever you are!

Last but definitely not least, Claude Vereen, my granddaddy, you never stopped believing in me. I love you more than words can say. I carry your legacy with me. <3

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1.0 Naming and Framing the Problem of Practice

1.1 Broader Problem Area

The stigma associated with the overrepresentation of students with minoritized social identities has become a point of interest for expert educators in the field. This stigma extends to students as well as their parents and teachers (Voulgarides, 2018). The stigmatization, at its foundation, affects the mindset of those living around these children, creating an environment of mistrust, misrepresentation, and misunderstanding. Ultimately, these factors negatively influence outcomes for students who are disproportionately identified as candidates for special education services (Robertson et al., 2017).

Stakeholders have studied different symptoms. The pace of learning and students' ability to adapt to the existing system informed by implicit biases and stereotypes end up contributing to an informed decision about placement, which can hurt the mindset of the students and their parents (Woodson & Harris, 2018). The propensity of such instances and events has dictated the need for a system that is sensitive to students' cultural differences, where educators can filter out inaccuracies before identifying students as eligible for special education but also helps make a correct eligibility by filtering the system of inaccuracies and complexities that have created a strong and definite divide between the kind of education system that can be used for special education children (Gentry, 2009).

In addition, understanding cultural differences can set the foundation for a platform to eliminate the achievement gaps in learning between children in special education and their peers in general education. Consequently, it has become important to study the need for culturally

responsive practices (CRP) that can reduce the overrepresentation of students with minoritized identities in special education (Harmon, 2012). In the current report, the researcher conducted a comprehensive analysis of culturally responsive teaching practices and special education. The underlying purpose of the research was to understand different culturally responsive teaching practices and the areas where these practices overlap with special education. The aim was to understand different dimensions of teaching that contribute to the divide that exists between children in special education and their peers in general education. At its foundation, the research presents an overlap between culturally responsive practice and special education to ensure that placement of historically marginalized students is based on scientifically proven disabilities of the mind or body rather than on the results of marginalization, stigma, and misunderstanding.

Analysis involving careful examination of relevant factors showed discrepancies and inaccurate decision-making as major players in the overidentification of marginalized students in special education programming (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). The current trends in special education indicate a need to close achievement gaps in learning between special education students and their general education peers. Community efforts have attempted to address achievement gaps between special education and general education students by focusing on disproportionality, evidence-based practices, and legislation impacting students with disabilities. Disproportionality occurs when one group is represented at a higher rate than the overall population (Fiedler et al., 2008). The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, which monitors and addresses disproportionate trends in special education, issued reports highlighting the large disparities existing among racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically marginalized students and their White peers in special education (Griner & Stewart, 2013). The overidentification of historically oppressed students in special education has presented a persistent problem that continues to fuel

stereotypes, breed low expectations, and lower graduation rates, often impacting students who do not need the provided service because they were mislabeled in special education (Scott et al., 2014). For this study, the researcher was specifically concerned with the disproportionate number of historically marginalized students enrolled in special education in my school district.

In addition, an inherent need exists to acknowledge the national crisis evident in data presented by the National Center for Education Statistics (2019; see Figure 1). Based on the data, students from Black, LatinX, and American Indian/Alaskan Native backgrounds have not performed on the same level as their White or Asian American peers in the 20 years between 1995 and 2015. These are students who school staff may eventually identify for special education services. They may also be likely to drop out of school if they become frustrated with learning, leading to similar outcomes as those before them.

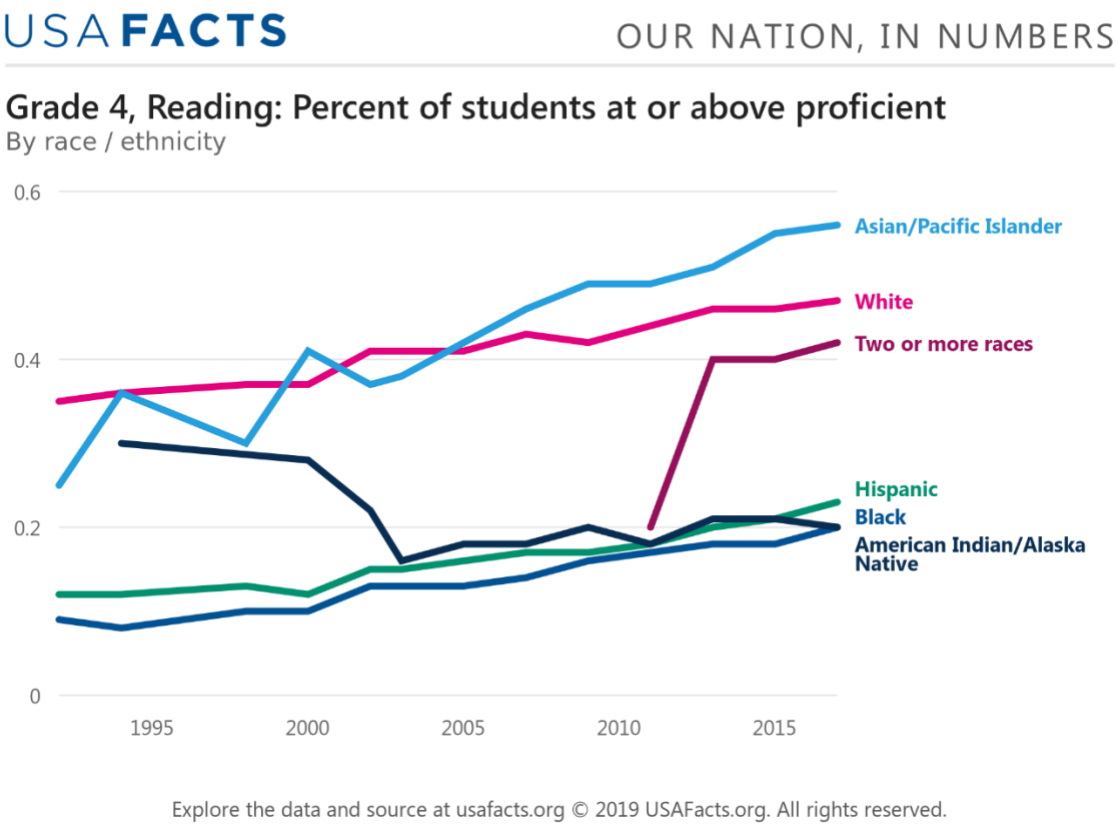


Figure 1: Grade 4, Reading: Percent of Students at or Above Proficient

A decline in reading for Black students occurred in 2005, and evidence of inconsistent reading performance has emerged in the years since then. It also must be noted that although Asian American/Pacific Islander, White, and multiracial groups have all shown improved proficiency, the proficiency gap is widened between them and LatinX, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native students whose performance has remained significantly low.

I suspect part of the reason our district funnels students with behavior or academic challenges from various backgrounds into special education is the cultural stigma of special education and lack of availability to resources in the general education classroom (Cruz et al., 2020). For example, during a school-based team meeting, a teacher can be heard forcibly saying,

"He just needs to be tested; he just needs to be made [exceptional student education]." When a team leader asked her about her concerns regarding the student, she explained there was clearly something impairing his learning and that the student could benefit from the assistance of another teacher providing academic support. The teacher could not articulate how she had intervened to assist him with the learning deficits he had experienced in reading. Teachers who refer students to special education can have their own reasoning for the referral, but they should consider that initiating this process represents a significant event in each child's educational journey (Chu, 2011).

1.2 Organizational System

The problem of practice took place in a Florida School District. As of 2018, the population of Holiday County approached 1,433,417 people. White citizens comprised 74% of the county's population, and 81% of residents were 18. Based on the school district's full-time equivalent (FTE) report from October 25, 2019, the total enrollment (PK–12) was 198,133 students. The enrollment total showed a 0.9% increase from the previous year at the same time. Within the district, students spoke 145 languages and represented 197 various countries or territories of birth.

Out of the 198,133 total students enrolled in the county, the Exceptional Student Education website reported that 37,058 students were eligible for exceptional student education services, and 9,279 students were eligible for gifted services. The data presented from the October 2018 state FTE concerning Black students with the designation of intellectual disability and emotional behavioral disabilities (EBD) were the most concerning. Black students in the Holiday County School District had a 2.21% likelihood of being identified as intellectually disabled and a 2.76%

chance for EBD eligibility. State projections were similar for Black students, at 1.97% and 2.10%, respectively. If the risk ratio reached 3.5%, district personnel would have to create targeted early intervening services for student populations who fell into the risk ratio from IDEA funding. According to a 2020–2021 state FTE report, 183 White students were eligible for EBD, and 363 Black and 112 LatinX students were identified in the same category. Similarly, 4,201 Black and 4,805 LatinX students were found eligible for a specific learning disability, while only 2,483 White peers were identified (Florida Department of Education, 2021).

For the purposes of this study, a pseudonym will be used for the study site, Celebration Elementary. Celebration Elementary was a B-rated school located in Florida. It was also home to one of the choice programs in the district, a gifted site, and a cluster for students with emotional behavior disabilities (EBD). As of December 6, 2019, Celebration's population was 757 students, which included 97 students identified as gifted and 178 students identified as having disabilities (e.g., specific learning disabled, language impaired, EBD, or other health impaired). Of these 178 students, 121 were Black or LatinX, and 57 were white. Based on district and school data, educators identified students from marginalized populations (e.g., students of color and students with low socioeconomic status or English as a second language) at higher rates than their White peers.

Although the data demonstrated disproportionality within the school, the causes varied as much as the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. One out of every three students in an elementary or secondary setting comes from a marginalized background. Low socioeconomic status impacted one out of five students, and one of every 10 students was an English language learner. Yet, 87% of the teachers were White and female (Griner & Stewart, 2013; National Education Association, 2016; Weinstein et al., 2004). General education teachers teach students

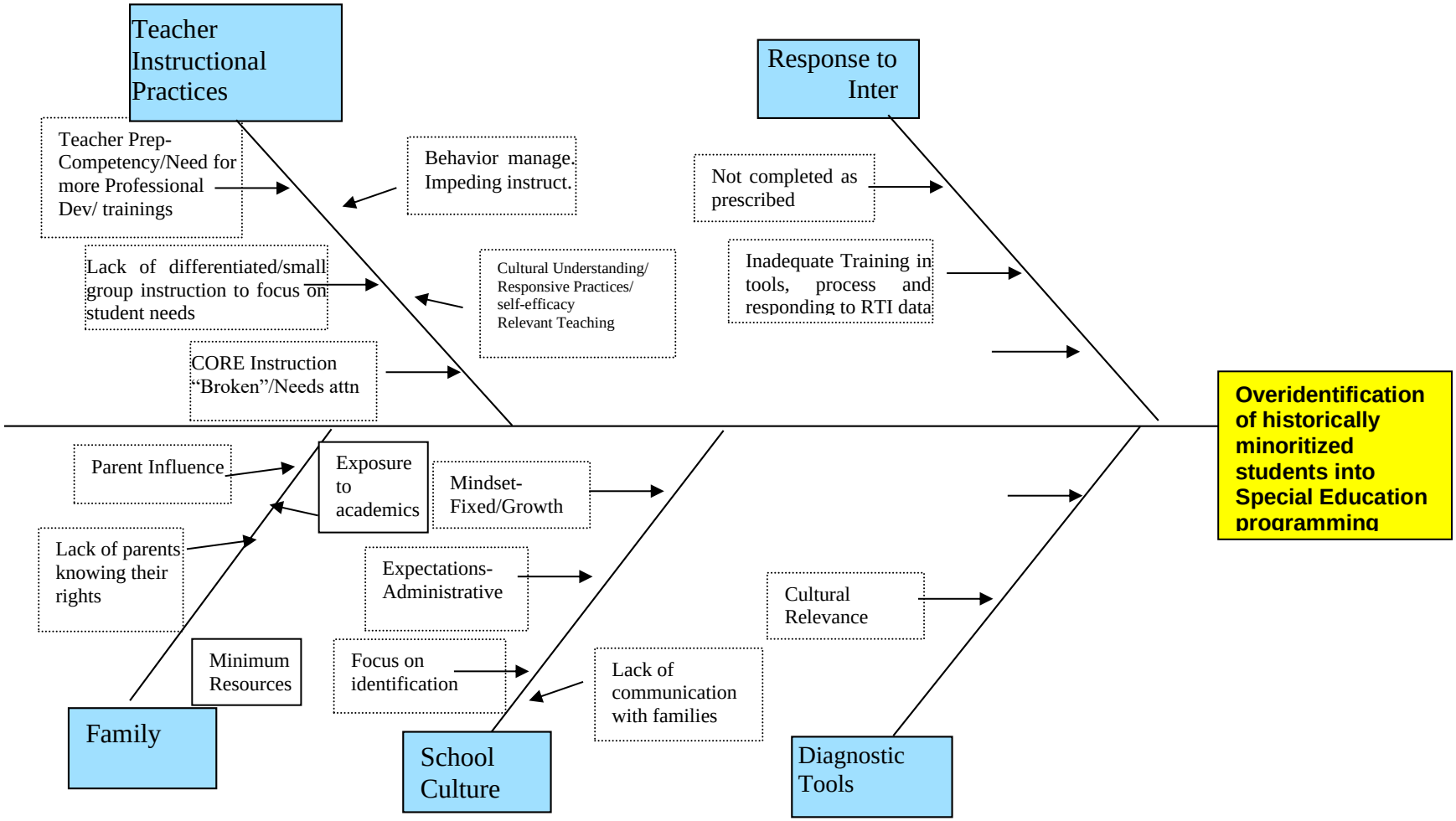
from diverse backgrounds and overidentify students who differ from them culturally for special education services (Cruz et al., 2020). This trend was particularly evident in Holiday County, where approximately 60% of EBD-eligible students belonged to minority communities, and 74% of residents were White (Holiday County, 2019). Indicating the national teacher–student racial gap, White teachers comprised 83% of public teachers, followed by Hispanic (7%) and Black (6%) teachers. White students make up 49% of students within the public school system, followed by Hispanic (27%) and Black (15%) students (National Education Association, 2016).

Given the overrepresentation of students in special education programming and teachers' cultural demographics, a discrepancy existed between students' needs and what their teachers could provide (McKenna, 2013). Public schools task educators with selecting curriculum, teaching and assessing students, analyzing data, and building safe environments, all without adequate cultural knowledge about their students' backgrounds. To teach students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, public schools must train their educators to implement appropriate pedagogy for students' needs and build appropriate classroom culture (Cruz et al., 2020). An educator must understand students' cultures to develop positive relationships within the classroom. For example, Asian American students from Southeast Asia smile when being admonished by a superior to demonstrate that they will not take it personally. Without having context or a cultural understanding, there is likely to be a breakdown in communication between teacher and student (Weinstein et al., 2004).

Some of the potential causes for students' overidentification for special education include infidelity of response to intervention, school culture, diagnostic tools, family, and teacher instructional practices. Figure 2 provides details for each cause and shows how each may influence the overidentification rate. Within the school culture, mismatched expectations from the

administration, lack of parent communication, and staff mindset impact student overidentification. More in-depth analysis revealed that teacher instructional practices and school culture were the two areas with the potential to be influenced by local efforts. School administrators can address teacher instructional practices in several areas, such as through teacher preparation programs, PD, differentiation within the classroom, behavior management, and cultural education. To be impactful, school leaders can also provide PD opportunities and address teachers' self-efficacy regarding their abilities to teach students from diverse backgrounds and influence their learning (Chu, 2011). Instead of placing blame on the education system and teachers, researchers have found that lack of resources, access to information, lack of knowledge on the subject, and even parent-oriented factors can influence the historically marginalized communities in the existing educational system, thus exposing them to a system that is unsuitable for them (Sullivan, 2017). Figure 2 shows a range of factors, including the students' home and school environments, individually contribute to the issue. At the time of the study, the aim was to focus on one branch of the issue (i.e., the branch associated with teachers and education).

Figure 2: Fishbone Diagram



1.3 Stakeholders

The term *stakeholders* refers to individuals who influence or are influenced by a system, an institute, or an organization (Beaulieu & Pasquero, 2017). The term has long been used to generalize and summarize the entities that affect or are affected by a system or decision (McGrath & Whitty, 2017). Within the context of this research, a range of stakeholders existed, each of which contributed to the general idea of the research and influenced its outcomes. In the current assessment, the researcher focused on teachers, students, parents, and administrators as the significant stakeholders affiliated with education.

1.3.1 Teachers

Teachers represented one of the research stakeholders who would draw inferences from the research outcome and contribute to the main body of the research. The analysis showed that the general norm and contextualization are key to identifying students as either general education students or special education students. Teachers play a definite role in contributing to the stigmatization and overidentification of marginalized students as special education students (Palmer, 2010). One individual cannot effectively change an entire system for the better, so it becomes necessary for individuals to cater to the existing discrepancies in the system, which in turn can hinder efforts to reduce marginalization and stigmatization at the individual level (Palmer, 2010).

Teachers can play an important role in eliminating systemic discrepancies because they are light-bearers who guide students toward a better future (Park, 2010). At its foundation, the ability of a teacher can meaningfully impact the students' lives. However, the same light bearers can also break the chain that links the education system to the psychological and physiological needs of students. Therefore, teachers must raise a voice against the overidentification of marginalized students as special education children (Baglieri & Moses, 2010). The same factors dictated the need to focus on this branch of the fishbone diagram, thus eliminating one of the most significant root causes contributing to the issue.

With the focus on standardized testing that emerged with the No Child Left Behind and Every Student Succeed Acts, teachers have focused on the provided curriculum. Teachers may feel more prepared to meet all learners' needs with improved self-efficacy to make learning more meaningful (Cruz et al., 2020). During a semistructured interview conducted by the researcher, a teacher of gifted students pointed out that due to the allocation of resource staff, instead of enriching her gifted students, she provided interventions to students from another class who had been identified as needing more support. The maker of the reading intervention, *Leveled Literacy Intervention*, prescribed the program for use with groups of no more than three or four students at a time. However, many schools place many more than four students in the intervention grouping (Fountas & Pinnell, 2020). The teacher expressed their frustration about the lack of instructional assistance and the disregard for intervention protocol, which impacted student outcomes:

> *I would have to say they would need to get more help. Honestly, let the gifted or high achieving teachers teach and get more resource teachers. One of the problems is that some of these programs support two or three kids, but people I know have six kids in a group. I'm not talking just about our school; I'm talking everywhere! That's not going to*

help the children; they need to have more people come to help. How effective is that? (Teacher of Gifted Students, 2019)

1.3.2 Administrators

Dos and Savas (2015) conducted an extensive analysis of administrators' roles in creating an efficient education system and ground rules. The author found that education administrators worked at every organizational infrastructure level, contributing to the system in ways as basic as decision-making and as complex as direct programming (Lalvani, 2015). The results showed the administrators and their ability to identify the capacity and capabilities of students could have a definite influence on the overall nature of the issue. Dos and Savas found that, at the highest level, the administrators within the educational institution assumed the role of principal decision-making authorities. Combined with their ability to lead, advocate, consider, and correlate, educational administrators can bring about a seismic change in the field of education because they play the role of mediators between authorities who organize and manage an educational system as well as teachers who directly connect with students.

As one of the leaders of educational standards, administrators want students to be safe and have teachers who can share knowledge that resonates and has a lasting impact. Unfortunately, there are times when they must also "speak the unspeakable" when making observations or analyzing classroom data (Heifetz et al., 2009, p.24). Administrators must facilitate difficult conversations to inform teachers that when they refer 30% or more of their students to the multitier system of support, then according to the data, the core instruction in the class needs improvement. It is not necessarily the student who needs intervention or special education services in these cases. Speaking the unspeakable in this case may cause teachers to become defensive and displace

responsibility rather than develop a plan to improve their core instruction using best practices. Administrators play a significant role in students' overidentification in special education, staff accountability, and school culture. They can use academic data and teacher self-efficacy and make observations to determine if teacher placement benefits or harms student progress and learning (Chu, 2011; Cruz et al., 2020). Creating a responsive school culture focused on educating students and ensuring use of culturally sensitive best practices would benefit all stakeholders. The responsibility of dialoguing about students' development belongs to those who share in their future, such as parents, teachers, and school administrators.

1.3.3 Parents

The idea of parents contributing to the marginalization and stigmatization of minority students in special education is not an unheard-of concept. Researchers have found that parents unconsciously contribute to increasing the stigma against other children and their own children. Zusel (2011) conducted an informal analysis of the role and perception of parents toward special education, highlighting that the notion incites fear in the minds of many parents, often leading them to make decisions that are contrary to their children's needs (Zusel, 2011). The extent of the role of parents in promoting marginalization and stigma does not end there. Rather, parents of many children in general education often wreak havoc by finger-pointing and complaining, making it relatively impossible for minoritized children to live a normal life (Lalvani, 2015). Parents play a very strong role in characterizing the issue from different fronts. For instance, Alvelo-Rivera et al. (2011) asserted that the growing stigma against historically marginalized students and special education, partially characterized by parents, has grown to an extreme that has led to an increase

in issues for the special education system. Parents have contributed to fragmenting the existing education system to ensure their child's individual needs are fulfilled (Alvelo-Rivera et al., 2011).

Parents face a different adaptive challenge in balancing competing commitments where they have no win–win outcome (Heifetz et al., 2009). Mainly, parents struggle to balance supporting their student learners and being active at their child's school. Gaetano (2007) explained: "Parental involvement policies treat all parents as if they had the same needs or the same experiences as White, middle-class parents. He suggests that the one-size-fits-all framework does not address ethnic diversity" (p. 146). These policies and competing commitments contribute to the disproportional representation of historically marginalized students in special education programs across the United States. Most parents want their children to succeed in school, but their influence only goes as far as their participation or understanding of policy. In a program, *The Cross-Cultural Demonstration Project,* conducted at two different school sites, parents and teachers could access monthly development to improve academic performance for second language learners (Gaetano, 2007). Parents came to understand their importance as allies as instructional partners in their children's schooling. Over 3 years, participation grew from 15% in Year 1 to 45% in Year 3.

1.3.4 Students

After teachers, students represent one of the most important stakeholders and comprise the subject of assessment of the current research. This research was not directed toward all students, but rather toward the historically marginalized students who, due to prejudice, misunderstanding, and a lack of a support system, can become the victims of the experiences (Sylva et al., 2010). Such experiences can lead to many culturally diverse students without disabilities being identified

as special education students (Othman, 2018). In actuality, narrowing the scope of information and research to historically marginalized students limits the scope of stakeholder analysis to students mostly affected by marginalization and stigmatization rather than students who might influence a change on this front.

Extensive analysis on the subject disclosed that marginalized and stigmatized students find themselves in a very difficult position because they are at the mercy of their parents, the teachers, and the education system (Cooc, 2017). As such, the chances of finding their way out of this situation unscathed are relatively impossible. Research has shown that students who undergo such difficulties at a young age are highly likely to become a black sheep of society because they mentally influence the children and physically challenge them (Cooc, 2017). Generally, students from culturally minoritized backgrounds experience consternation and difficulties throughout their educational career if they are exposed to difficulty attributable to their culture. Owing to this assessment, a definite need exists to counter the current educational and special education system and devise strategies for children, teachers, and parents.

Students receive the impact of school culture and play an active role in its influence within the building. By using differentiation, meeting student needs, and modeling responsive practices; students must receive appropriate necessary services because their ability to access the needed services determines their future actions and can impact their community. Academic failure, indicated by disengagement and increased negative behaviors, occurs when school administration does not closely monitor school culture and emphasize culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Although students have little to no power to influence change, they can make an environment thrive with their participation, similar to their parents.

1.4 Statement of the Problem of Practice

An extensive overview of the subject, characterized by its influence on different stakeholders and the implications of improvement for different stakeholders, suggested that historically oppressed students have long been a subject of unique attention from people around them. The shocking fact remains that these students experience ridicule from their peers and others with the power to hold any marginalization or stigma against them. The extent of the problem affiliated with this issue can be identified by the fact that continued exposure to such an environment can have a lasting influence on the minds and bodies of historically marginalized students (da Silva et al., 2020). Furthermore, being unjustly forced to study in a system that does not fully necessitate such students' psychological and physiological needs can lead to incomplete education, which hinders these students' chances of leading a normal life (Ran et al., 2021). A report generated by the United Nations found that marginalized people were hit the hardest by stigma and inequality in cultural settings where people call themselves educated and modern (United Nations, 2021). Furthermore, the scope of the issue could be identified by the fact that a feasible solution to this issue remains in the hands of the very people who stigmatize marginalized people. Moore et al. (2016) conducted an extensive analysis of marginalization's role on an individual's cognitive and impulsive functioning. The researchers claimed that extensive exposure to such behavior and unjust situations create a mental burden, which can lead to criminal behavior. Additionally, Sapiro and Ward (2020) asserted that constant exposure to stigmas and marginalization can lead to mental health issues.

The research showed an extensive need to develop a system that eliminates all prejudice and marginalization to create a fair and strategically executed educational system. The development of such a system is important. It will reduce complexities in the education system,

reduce crime and mental health issues among youth, and significantly stimulate the national economy. Among other factors, each stakeholder must understand their role in fighting this issue (Sapiro & Ward, 2020). With the number of culturally diverse American youth rising, so does the need to inform students about the importance of their role in fighting this issue because the particular does not influence them as much as those around them. Furthermore, teachers, parents, and administrators must also be aware of the implications of continuing on the same path, particularly when they wish to reside in a society where cultural matters do not permanently damage young lives.

1.5 Review of Supporting Knowledge

Analysis highlighted that the general norm of overidentifying marginalized students for special education has long been a subject of interest and concern (Morgan et al., 2018). Research has shown that the issue of over- and underidentification of minority students in the special education system stems from multiple relaxed strategies that have been used to flag districts that overidentified students as disabled (Kramarczuk Voulgarides et al., 2017).

Despite the efforts to reduce disproportionality and overidentification of historically marginalized students in special education, systemic barriers have hindered progress. One such barrier is the dominance of the European-centered value system within school systems. The European-centered value system, also referred to as “education hegemony,” dramatically impacts the same structures that CRP would address (Cholewa et al., 2014; Weinstein et al., 2004). Students of racially minoritized backgrounds may experience disequilibrium or “cultural discontinuity”

when they experience differences between their home and school cultures due to the European-centered value system (Cholewa et al., 2014, p.).

Another barrier is the actual curriculum, which is driven by the European-centered value system. School administrators must intentionally provide students with a responsive curriculum and pedagogy free of "master scripting" from the dominant culture (Blanchett, 2016, p. 3). Master scripting is the dominant culture's control of the academic curriculum and the practices for teaching it to students. According to Blanchett (2006), master scripting allows for the omission of Malcolm X from public school studies of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, or, when he is included, enables educators to portray him as less worthy of recognition because he did not employ the same tactics as Dr. Martin Luther King and accordingly is less palatable to Whites. (p. 26)

Educators who do not resemble students from diverse backgrounds overidentify them for special education services (Griner & Stewart, 2013). Although all education providers take part in the system, novice teachers can function as a barrier due to their greater likelihood of teaching historically minority students and the higher suspension rates in schools where they are the majority (Losen et al., 2014). Schools with high volumes of Black and Brown students are less likely to have veteran, established teachers who can support students from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, novice teachers are more likely to struggle with behavior management and the delivery of thorough instruction (Losen et al., 2014). Teachers with less experience are also more likely to interpret challenging behaviors as impeding instruction. Teachers may need more PD to learn to use small groups and focus on individual student needs.

Due to concerns and spiking data, the federal government addressed these concerns in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The law mandated balancing experienced and

novice teachers among low socioeconomic and culturally diverse students. Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education admitted that the mandate has not been monitored well since its inception (Losen et al., 2014). Marginalized students are also less likely to receive instruction that improves their high-order thinking (Hammond, 2015). This trend may lead to the overrepresentation of Black, LatinX, and other historically marginalized students in special education. The essential component for improvement is training that increases teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy emerges from personal efficacy. Teachers with outcome efficacy prioritize results and are more likely to refer students to special education services. Teachers who have a higher personal efficacy will persevere through academic and behavioral challenges with students (Chu, 2011). Individuals with higher personal efficacy will also seek resources, PD, and other methods to strengthen any weak components that prevent student success. Research completed by individuals such as Soodak and Podell (1993) indicated that an educator's self-efficacy influences decisions such as student placement and instructional approaches (as cited in Chu, 2011; as cited in Malo-Juvera et al., 2018).

Since the early 1980s, anthropologists have studied educators' practices using cultural experiences within a school setting to improve students' academic outcomes. In a study of Native Hawaiians, the researcher used a language style to maximize standardized reading scores. Other studies completed with Native American students occurred after home studies were completed, and teachers began using similar talking patterns as those used in Native American students' homes (Ladson-Billings, 1995). These studies demonstrated educators' ability to weave cultural similarities between students and academics to achieve academic success. This practice has been coined a multitude of terms over the years, such as "culturally responsive approaches" (Fiedler et al., 2008), "culturally responsive instruction" (Malo-Juvera et al., 2018), "culturally responsive

pedagogy" (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Weinstein et al., 2004), and "culturally responsive teaching" (Bennett et al., 2017; Cruz et al., 2020; Siwatu, 2007). However, I will use Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP);(Mckenna, 2013).

CRP practitioners utilize frames of reference, prior experiences, and knowledge to deepen learning and motivate diverse students' academic progress by making lessons relevant and relatable (Griner & Stewart, 2013). As an approach to teaching, CRP dictates weaving academic components with student culture. The goal of CRP is for the teacher to act as a bridge to ensure success and accelerate student learning (Hammond, 2015). After appropriate teacher training, the use of CRP can positively impact the quality of education, as students will have higher interest, can navigate academic content more efficiently, and may find more meaning in required tasks (Cruz et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2014).

Teachers who create a classroom environment where students feel protected and connected foster healthier student–teacher relationships (Cruz et al., 2020). Teachers are encouraged by administrators and academic coaches to actively engage students in conversations to get to know them and model behavior such as active listening and turn-taking. Authentic experiences that students, teachers, and collective classes share can expand inclusiveness beyond recognizing religious or ethnic celebrations (Bennett et al., 2017). Hollie (2017) introduced the iceberg concept of culture to demonstrate how attempts at culturally responsive teaching often only address what is visual to persons outside a student's culture. Hollie described the iceberg as having three levels: surface, shallow, and deep. The surface encompasses the top of the iceberg, which is what people can always see. In terms of culture, this represents what individuals eat, how they dress, and their celebrations, music, and language. Nine-tenths of the iceberg remains unseen and includes unspoken rules about time, feelings about leaders, food, child-rearing, and disease. Deep culture

consists of unconscious concepts, such as how individuals feel about themselves, problem-solving, jobs, and family relationships. If educators only focus on the surface of a student's culture, they will have difficulty responding to their educational or socioemotional needs. Responsive teachers can use the levels of culture to create a broader community within their classroom, which will feed into the greater school environment (Cholewa et al., 2014; Hollie, 2017).

According to CRP, educators should do the work of becoming self-aware by acknowledging their inner implicit biases (Weinstein et al., 2004). A culturally responsive teacher proactively adjusts their own racial attitudes and propensity to commit microaggressions, which may negatively impact historically marginalized student populations (Quinn & Stewart, 2019). Teachers can monitor whether they have the awareness and self-efficacy (i.e., their beliefs about themselves related to student learning) required to implement CRP appropriately (Chu, 2011; Cruz et al., 2020).

Culturally responsive teachers try to make themselves aware of the cultures in which children avoid eye contact when talking to adults or where it is acceptable to talk over another person. In a culturally responsive environment, an educator teaches turn-taking and active listening rather than punishing or scolding students based on Eurocentric standards (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008). When there is a clash between a school or classroom practice and students' cultural norms, teachers often tell students they have deficits instead of differences (McKenna, 2013). Through CRP training, teachers learn to embrace differences and build inclusive classroom systems. Training teachers and school administrators to become more aware of preconceived notions could also decrease the number of students identified for special education by helping educators understand and address cultural and linguistic misconceptions in the classroom (Cruz et al., 2020).

Teachers who engage with CRP address the need for a positive and inclusive classroom by establishing rapport, building relationships, and respecting students and their cultures (Hollie, 2018). Educators model expectations through community building, social skills training, and perseverance while integrating students' cultural backgrounds into the classroom's culture and daily routines. In classrooms where educators use CRP, students can perform within the classroom norms in accordance with their role in the community rather than from fear of consequences (Weinstein et al., 2004). Creating a nurturing environment with high expectations and culturally attuned relationships maximizes student performance. In these environments, students are more likely to feel their inclusive classroom is an extension of who they are and the culture that they embody.

Responsive teachers align activities and lessons with the diversity of cultures in their classrooms. The focus is not on teaching diversity (Sciuchetti, 2017). With that concept in mind, teachers must teach all students how they can best learn. According to Griner and Stewart (2013), culturally responsive practitioners:

- legitimize the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, approaches to learning and through content worthy of being taught in the formal curriculum;
- build meaningful bridges between home and school experiences and between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities;
- use a wide variety of instructional strategies that connect to different learning styles;
- teach students to know and praise their own and each other's cultural heritage; and
- incorporate multicultural information, resources, and materials in all subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (p. 589).

The Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs provides competencies that serve as guidelines for teaching staff, specifically counselors, for use in the school setting (Scott et al., 2014). The infusion of three doctrines (i.e., culturally skilled attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills alongside the academic curriculum) is considered a responsive practice. As schools renew their accreditation every 7 years, they undergo an audit of their multicultural competence, which demonstrates the importance of these practices.

Multicultural education involves five components: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, an empowering school culture, and equity pedagogy (Banks, 2001). In addition to content, each component involves processes, access, and teaching that come together to build on student knowledge. While planning culturally responsive activities, teachers must also develop their personal awareness, which may impact their self-efficacy (Cruz et al., 2020). When educators embed culture in the classroom environment, students become more attentive and families more engaged in schooling (Gaetano, 2007; Griner & Stewart, 2013). To emphasize the importance of CRP, Gunn, a professor of reading and literacy education, shared her experience:

> *She asked this eager group of learners, "Who wants to be an astronaut?" none of the children raised their hands. She called on one student, and his response surprised her, "I am not old!" Then, she realized that the pictures around the room only displayed White, older men in their NASA suits. Reflecting on the experience, she wondered if students were more likely to see themselves as young scientists if she showed them more diverse pictures that included women and people of different races and ages. (Bennett et al., 2017)*

The purpose of this review was to generate information about the impact of teachers' culturally responsive self-efficacy CRP on the overidentification of historically oppressed students

in special education. After analysis, conclusions can be made about the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and students' identification for special education. First, CRPs are appropriate for any learner, not just for those from racially or linguistically diverse backgrounds. Teachers who engage CRP make connections between school, home, and the community. Educators using CRP also tie together relevant and prior knowledge to build a culture within the school setting (Cruz et al., 2020). Second, the literature suggested that no one factor leads to the overidentification of students in special education. Still, analysis of CRP indicated there can be significant impacts on overall identification (Voulgarides et al., 2017). Finally, the process of identifying and developing an educator's CRP self-efficacy influences teacher ability and student achievement, which potentially impacts the achievement gap (Cruz et al., 2020). As such, the existing literature provided the necessary information to appropriately address my problem of practice. The questions guiding this study included:

RQ1. How does PD on culturally responsive practices impact teacher self-efficacy?

RQ2. What are the barriers or challenges to reducing the number of historically marginalized students receiving special education services?

2.0 Theory of Improvement and Implementation Plan

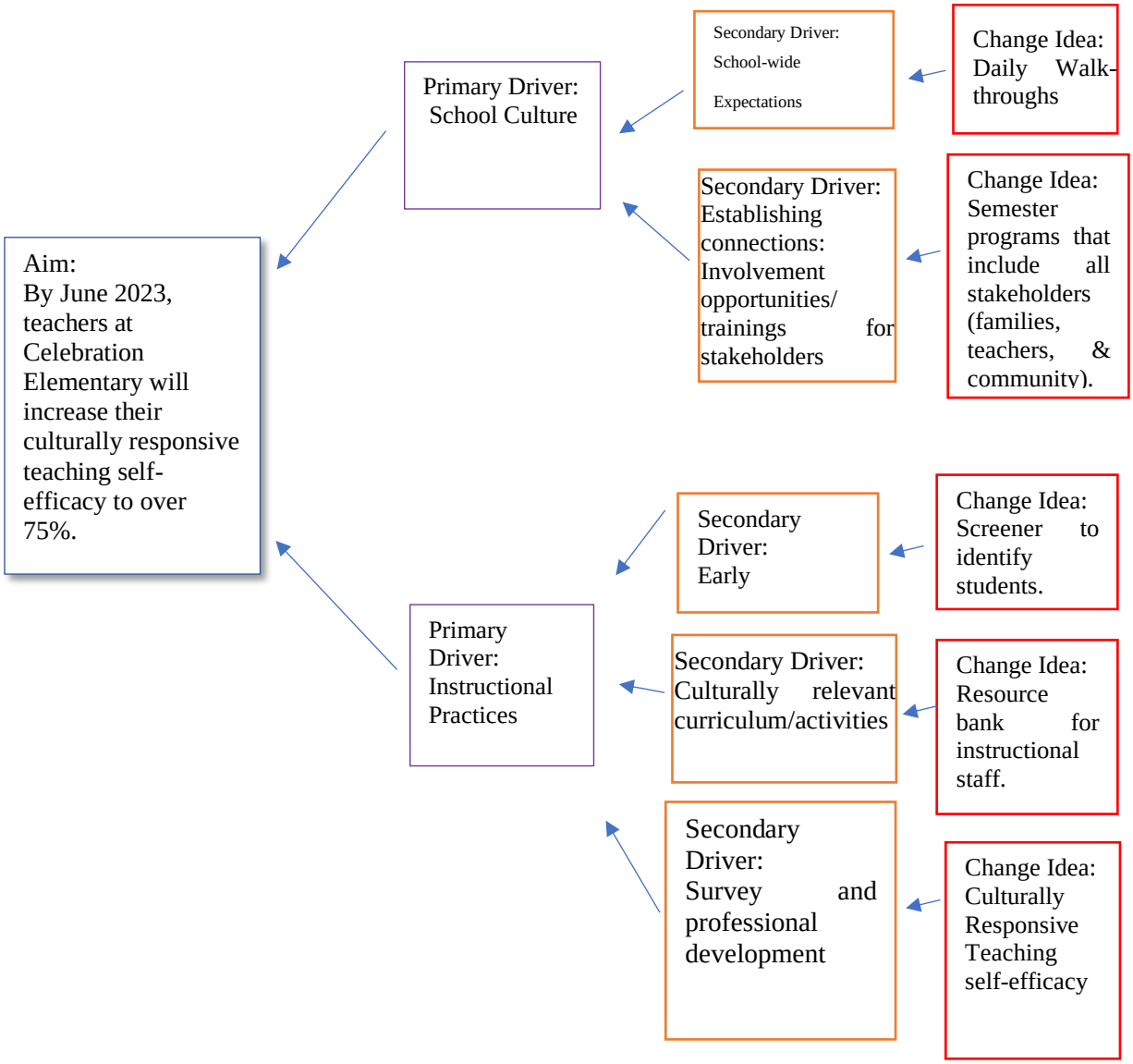
The previous section exemplified the need for a strategically structured method and technique to change the lives of children sent to segregated classrooms due to cultural misunderstanding. With this premise in mind, the current section represents a close examination of the methods and measures that could be used to bring about a definite change in the lives of many students.

The aim of adopting the proposed theory as a framework for this research was to decrease the overidentification of historically oppressed students in special education programming. To do so, educational leaders must improve teacher efficacy through PD focused on CRP. If culturally responsive stakeholders within the school community intentionally implement appropriate teaching practices, students will benefit emotionally, behaviorally, academically, and socially. The classroom should not be a place where students must change themselves to receive instruction; rather, it should aid student growth. Teachers should embrace students for who they are, teach them with their culture in mind, and elevate them to their expected performance level. School culture and instructional practices serve as the primary drivers for decreasing minoritized students' overidentification for special education programming. By June 2023, Celebration Elementary expects teachers to increase their culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy to over 75% by continuing PD.

When considering drivers that influence the overall aim, the researcher chose to examine school culture and instructional practices, as shown in Figure 3. If leaders shift expectations for all school staff, they can reform school culture and begin eliminating previous practices. School leaders can ask whether their staff members understand the expectation that they facilitate teaching

and learning for all students. Leaders can also ask stakeholders whether they understand their own role in performance. Elevated expectations should be applied to everyone in the building, including students. As community members, students must allow their peers to learn safely by being respectful and present for student-centered learning opportunities.

Figure 3: Driver Diagram



2.1 Culturally Relevant Curriculum and Activities

Educators tasked with ensuring that curriculum, environment, and activities are culturally responsive should consider the following questions: (a) When planning the classroom floor plan, would most students do better individually, in pairs, or in groups? (b) Are daily activities allowing students to learn concepts using various modalities, including paper and pencil, turning and talking, or dancing? (c) Do students see themselves reflected in the materials their teachers provide? (d) Are teachers using a multisensory approach, which is more beneficial to historically minoritized populations? (Hollie, 2017). Learning outcomes can be improved or enhanced when students engage in full-body movement (i.e., kinesthetic learning) or when teachers relate students' musical interests to teaching algebraic formulas.

Teachers can demonstrate CRP in many forms in a classroom setting. Equity in practice is a culturally responsive practice that enables teachers to develop teacher–student relationships and increase student academic buy-in (Milner & Tenore, 2010). Equity occurs when each student does not necessarily receive the same type of assessment, number of opportunities to try again, and level of encouragement. Each student receives what they need to succeed. In responsive environments, students feel heard by their teachers and accept any decision concerning consequences or needs (e.g., extensions on assignments) as fair. This kind of equity arises from the culture the classroom teacher built by communicating with students, allowing students to communicate with one another, and leading with trust. In practice, students and teachers establish their community rules and concepts, such as fairness, with everyone's input.

Additional examples of CRP include synonym development and vocabulary acquisition. Teachers use the word knowledge students bring from home and bridge it to academic terms to facilitate understanding (Hollie, 2017). Scholars have compared the strategy to the process of

breaking down information in the Frayer model, using definitions, examples, nonexamples, and descriptions (Frayer et al., 1969). Hollie (2017) encouraged teachers to instruct students to make dictionary cards across content areas, including a term, an illustration, a curriculum definition, and a personal meaning. As students' understanding of terms strengthens, students can return to cards. Educators must adopt best practices to ensure positive learning outcomes, especially for learners from diverse backgrounds.

2.2 Theory of Improvement and the Change

At the time of the study, the school district's department of equity and access launched Culturally Responsive Teaching, a six-part series for teachers. The series was a component of the superintendent's strategic plan focused on meeting all students' needs. The district made the series optional for all district employees in August 2020. As school leaders met to make plans for the new year, they encouraged equity training for teachers.

After deciding to embed cultural competence, equity, and access into instructional practices, leaders at Celebration Elementary chose to use PD opportunities led by school team leaders to address the needs of student learners. Embarking on newer instructional practices required staff training through PD. Staff members learned new practices that would enhance their current practices to change learning outcomes for any student population, especially those from racially and linguistically diverse groups. One challenge involved helping teachers step out of their fixed pedagogies, which often did not align with CRP. The purpose of this study was to measure teachers' culturally responsive self-efficacy before and after they participated in PD. The expectation was that as teachers met more students' needs during core-level instruction, fewer

students would be identified for special education programming, resulting in progress toward the aim.

2.3 Methods and Measures

A mixed-method study was conducted with a focus on CRP and its influence on the overidentification of marginalized populations in special education and culturally responsive teacher self-efficacy. Participants included individuals serving prekindergarten to fifth grade in any of the following roles: teacher, psychologist, therapist, speech-language pathologist, behavioral health professional, counselors, and other education service providers in the school building. All participants must have attended the PD session (i.e., one audio-recorded session that lasted approximately 3 hr). The virtual platform Google Meet was utilized to accommodate the school district's social distancing protocol. The training focused on the following key areas: (a) culture and key terms; (b) bias; (c) culturally responsive teaching pedagogies and practices; and (d) culturally responsive learning environment and strategies (see Appendix A). The PD session included collaborative learning, during which attendees shared student artifacts, lesson plans, and information about Google classrooms and physical classes. Leaders encouraged participating individuals to showcase evidence of CRP in their classrooms and share student work samples with all participants. Interactive activities included participants self-reflecting through activities, selecting culturally responsive strategies for lesson plans, and sharing their knowledge with others. The researcher constructed training components independently. Participants experienced culturally responsive teaching during the PD as activities were built to model methods.

2.3.1 Quantitative: Data Collection

After the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board provided consent for the study (20080073) to commence, the researcher informed participants of an optional opportunity to complete the pre-self-efficacy survey through Qualtrics no more than 1 week before the PD session would begin (Appendix B). During the presurvey, participants created their unique alphanumeric code to input on the posttest for comparison after completing the PD session. The PD opportunity was a component of the school's regularly scheduled activities. Following the PD, participants had up to 1 week to complete the postsurvey in the University of Pittsburgh Qualtrics system. The researcher reminded them to use the same alphanumeric code to enable a comparison of scores during analysis using Siwatu's (2007) Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE; see Appendix C). This scale was the primary measurement tool utilized in this study and was obtained with the creator's permission (see Appendix D). The survey consists of 41 Likert-type questions ranging from 1–100. On the scale, zero represents *no confidence* at all, 50 represents *moderately confident*, and 100 is *completely confident*. The higher score indicates to the evaluator that the educator will execute CRP in the learning environment and believes in their ability to do so (Cruz et al., 2020).

2.3.2 Qualitative

2.3.2.1 Data Collection

The researcher used three main modes of qualitative data collection for the study. These included the following: (a) open-ended questions added to the CRTSE (see Appendix E), (b) PD, and (c) the confidential semistructured interviews (n = 5). The University of Pittsburgh

Institutional Review Board approved Phase 2 of the study (21020208), which encompassed the qualitative component. The researcher invited five volunteer participants to share their CRP experiences following the postsurvey by participating in individual semistructured interviews in which a phenomenological approach was used (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). The researcher approached the potential participants during the PD by presenting a PowerPoint slide requesting five volunteers for audio-recorded interviews. Only five individuals volunteered, eliminating the need to draw names at random. Following the PD, the researcher scheduled the interviews to be held via Zoom in accordance with social distancing guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. No more than 15 participants attended the PD, so no more interview volunteers were sought to reach saturation. The researcher used the phenomenological approach because of its emphasis on individuals and their lived experiences and world interactions. In this study, the phenomenon investigated was teacher self-efficacy in implementing culturally responsive teaching and the overrepresentation of Black and LatinX students in special education (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018). Interviews that consisted of no more than 11 questions lasted approximately 50–90 min. During the interviews, the researcher gave participants the opportunity to expound on their experiences with CRP and teacher self-efficacy (see Appendix F). All participants received preselected pseudonyms (i.e., Owl, Lily, Parrot, Sunflower, or Rain) for confidentiality, but the researcher collected demographic information such as years taught, gender, and race or ethnicity.

2.3.2.2 Thematic Coding

The researcher used thematic coding to analyze and summarize the qualitative data (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2013). This coding style was chosen to produce themes that would help me identify similarities across educators regarding culturally responsive teacher self-

efficacy and the overidentification of a certain population of students in special education. With terms relevant to the topic, the researcher developed a code book to analyze qualitative data. Code books are used to maintain a list of codes used to assist the researcher with making sense of the data in a study (Lavraka, 2008). For example, the following terms were used to start the code book: diversity, resources, multicultural, home life, low income, disability, parent involvement, school district. The researcher added further codes as the thematic coding process progressed. The additional codes included communication and lived experience. The researcher also engaged a second coder from the researcher's committee, an expert in qualitative data methods, to ensure reliability. Each coder worked independently to review and code the transcripts and meet to compare the same data, ensuring objectivity and interrater reliability across the data. If irregularities arose, a third coder would have been engaged to analyze the transcripts (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2013). A third coder was not utilized.

2.3.2.3 Content Analysis

Content analysis generated themes to understand CRP in the overrepresentation of students in special education and culturally responsive teacher self-efficacy. This type of analysis can help a researcher make inferences, categorize data, and compare data for similarities or key trends (GAO, 2013). The open-ended questions and PD was coded based on predetermined codes and the participant's answers as a part of the thematic coding process. At the beginning of the interview, participants' consented to have the conversation audio recorded using Zoom. The researcher had also used Zoom to audio record the PD session. Immediately following the interviews, the audio recordings were saved to a password-protected computer file. The researcher utilized Zoom's audio transcription service and edited the resulting transcript for accuracy. After the interviews

were transcribed and coded, the researcher conducted a content analysis to analyze the qualitative data. The analysis involved the following steps:

Step 1. Identify data sources. The data sources for the project were the five educators who volunteered to complete the interviews.

Step 2. Develop categories. The categories were developed based on the study's research questions. Thus, these categories were (a) PD on CRP, (b) culturally responsive teacher self-efficacy, (c) barriers and challenges, and (d) overidentification of historically marginalized students.

Step 3. Code data. The researcher coded the data using thematic coding with terms generated in the code book. The researcher added more codes to the code book after seeing the transcript for each interview.

Step 4. Assess reliability. The researcher engaged in interrater reliability with a committee member to assess the reliability of the interviews

Step 5. Analyze results. After each of these steps was completed, the researcher analyzed the results of the analysis to draw conclusions and answer the research questions that guided the study (GAO, 2013).

2.3.2.4 Researcher Bias

To control for researcher bias, the researcher engaged in journaling after each interview to detail thoughts or reactions to the information that was shared. This important step helped to control any unintentional bias or personal objective held by the researcher that could have influenced the study, especially given the researcher served as the data collection tool in this process (Creswell, 2018).

3.0 PDSA Results

The researcher gathered data from the CRTSE pretest prior to the start of the PD session. At that time, 13 anonymous surveys had been submitted, but only 10 individuals attended the PD. At the conclusion of the PD, those participants received a link to complete the posttest. The 3-hr PD session occurred via a virtual platform. Table 1 presents information about the participants who attended the PD session and completed the pre- and postsurveys. Each question was open-ended, which explains the varied terminology in the race and ethnicity column.

Table 1: Participants' Background Information

Participant	Years in education	Gender	Race and ethnicity
A	22	Female	White
B	20	Female	Black
C	40	Female	Black/American
D	15	Female	Caucasian/non-Hispanic
E	7.5	Female	Hispanic
F	13	Female	White
G	13	Female	African American
H	8	Female	White Caucasian
I	17	Female	Hispanic
J	24	Female	Caucasian

The 10 participants all reported their gender as female. Their average number of years in education was 17.95 years. Half (50%) of the 10 participants considered themselves White or Caucasian, two identified as Hispanic, and three designated themselves as Black or African American. Table 1 also shows the participants' teaching experience in years, with the least experienced teacher reporting 7.5 years of teaching and the most experienced teacher reporting 40 years.

Table 2 indicates the results for the responses to the CRTSE survey. The goal of using question-based responses was to understand the level of confidence the respondents exhibited in

response to each question. Results show responses prior to and after the PD session and the differences between the scores.

Table 2: Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale Results (n = 10)

I can…	Pre-	Post-	Difference
Adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students.	85.8	92.4	6.6
Obtain information about my students' academic strengths.	91.9	92.4	0.5
Determine whether my students like to work alone or in a group.	84.6	92.6	8
Determine whether my students feel comfortable competing with other students.	82.1	90.7	8.6
Identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students' home culture.	76.5	89.9	13.4
Implement strategies to minimize the mismatch between my students' home culture and the school culture.	74	87.6	13.6
Assess student learning using various types of assessments.	83.8	91.5	7.7
Obtain information about my students' home life.	77.2	88.9	11.7
Build a sense of trust in my students.	87.1	93.5	6.4
Establish positive home-school relations	85.1	92.1	7
Use a variety of teaching methods.	89.8	91.7	1.9
Develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds.	84	94.3	10.3
Use my students' cultural background to help make learning meaningful.	79.3	88.7	9.4
Use my students' prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information.	85.7	91.4	5.7
Identify ways how students communicate at home may differ from school norms.	79.2	86.8	7.6
Obtain information about my students' cultural backgrounds.	80.3	88.7	8.4
Teach students about their cultures' contributions to science.	76.2	85.4	9.2
Greet English Language Learners with a phrase in their native language.	69.9	79.9	10
Design a classroom environment using displays that reflect a variety of cultures.	78.3	87	8.7
Develop a personal relationship with my students.	91.4	93	1.6
Obtain information about my students' academic weaknesses.	87.5	92.1	4.6
Praise English Language Learners for their accomplishments using a phrase in their native language.	66	74.9	8.9

Table 2: Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale Results (n = 10) (continued)

I can…	Pre-	Post-	Difference
Identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards linguistically diverse students.	77	84.4	7.4
Communicate with parents regarding their child's educational progress.	88.6	90.6	2
Structure parent-teacher conferences so that the meeting is not intimidating for parents.	88.1	92.3	4.2
Help students to develop positive relationships with their classmates.	87.7	90.8	3.1
Revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups.	81.4	87.2	5.8
Critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes.	80.6	88.9	8.3
Design a lesson that shows how other cultural groups have made use of mathematics	77.8	86.8	9
Model classroom tasks to enhance English Language Learner's understanding.	77.8	86.1	8.3
Communicate with the parents of English Language Learners regarding their child's achievement.	75.7	89.3	13.6
Help students feel like important members of the classroom.	90.7	94.7	4
Identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally diverse students.	84.3	90.2	5.9
Use a learning preference inventory to gather data about how my students like to learn.	80.1	86.8	6.7
Use examples that are familiar to students from diverse backgrounds.	83.2	85.6	2.4
Explain new concepts using examples that are taken from my students' everyday lives.	82.8	86.2	3.4
Obtain information regarding my students' academic interests	84.4	91.1	6.7
Use the interests of my students to make learning meaningful.	87.6	91.4	3.8
Implement cooperative learning activities for those students who like to work in groups.	87.6	91	3.4
Design instruction that matches my students' developmental needs.	89.8	90.9	1.1
Teach students about their cultures' contributions to society.	83.2	90.7	7.5
Totals	82.53902	89.28049	6.741463

The first inquiry was: "I am able to adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students." A pretest assessment found that all 10 teachers were confident (85.8%) about the role they could play

in adapting to the needs of their students. However, educating the teachers about the core functions and activities of and approach to CRP in the PD session aided the teachers significantly, thus raising confidence in adapting to the needs of students to 92.4%, an increase of 6.6%. When asked if they could "obtain information about my students' academic strengths," respondents reported a collective average score of 91.9%. This score was high, exhibiting that the teachers believed they could easily understand the areas where each student excelled. After the PD session, a posttest score of 92.4% showed an increase of 0.5%. Notably, the PD session positively influenced the teachers. In response to the inquiry, "I am able to determine whether my students like to work alone or in a group," the teachers expressed collective confidence, with an average figure that amounted to 84.6%. The respective score increased to 92.6%, with a record increase of 8% after the teachers learned about the techniques that would enable them to become culturally responsive practitioners. The score increased by 13.4%, from 76.9% in the pretest to 89.9% in the posttest when the teachers were asked to "identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students' home culture." In response to a question, "I am able to implement strategies to minimize the mismatch between my students' home culture and the school culture," the score increased by 13.6% units, from 74% in the pretest to 87.6% in the posttest. The teachers responded confidently about "assessing student learning using various types of assessments," with the score increasing by 7.7%, from 83.8% in the pretest to 91.5% in the posttest. The confidence level increased from moderately high (77.2%) to confident (88.9%) when the teachers were asked if they were able to "obtain information about my students' home life."

The survey further posed the question of whether teachers could "build a sense of trust in my students," to which the score increased by 6.4%, from 87.1% (*confident*) in the pretest to 93.5% (*very confident*) in the posttest. The inquiry about "establishing positive home-school relations"

increased the teachers' confidence from 85.1% in the pretest to 92.1% in the posttest. In the context of student diversity, the teachers were asked if they could “develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds.” To this, the confidence of 84% in the pretest increased to 94.3%.

The teachers responded with a confident score (85.7% in the pretest and 91.4% in the posttest) when asked if they could “use my students’ prior knowledge to help me make sense of new information.” The level of confidence in the pretest was comparatively low (76.2%), but it increased considerably to 85.4% when the teachers were asked if they were able to “teach students about their cultures’ contributions to society.”

Table 3 shows the individual overall results on the CRTSE for the 10 participants who attended the PD. Scores indicate teacher progression from pretest to posttest. One participant had the least difference in scores at 2%, and another participant indicated the greatest difference at 13.1%. On average, the participants observed a mean increase of 6.74% after they underwent the PD training (82% to 89%).

Table 3: Pre- and Posttest Results

Participant	Pretest	Posttest	Difference of scores
A	87.36585	93.34146	5.97561
B	88	90	2
C	78.90244	88.14634	9.2439
D	68.95122	73.29268	4.34146
E	83.87805	89.43902	5.56097
F	95.80488	98.82927	3.02439
G	80.02439	90.46341	10.43902
H	87.85366	97.95122	10.09756
I	89.60976	93.19512	3.58536
J	65	78.14634	13.14634

The research conducted a paired sample *t* test to determine if there were statistically significant differences in teachers' CRTSE responses from pretest to posttest. Results showed a statistically significant difference in mean pre- and posttest values. Scores indicated that teachers' confidence levels increased after attending the PD session ($t[9] = 5.69$, $p > .000$). There was a statistically significant *t* test result; this finding, combined with CRTSE survey analysis, motivated the researcher to continue PDSA cycles of the study.

This section provides a discussion of the focal and core themes apparent during the qualitative assessment (Alhojailan, 2012). Responses to the open-ended questions served as a foundation for closely examining the emerging themes of culturally responsive teaching practices. Information gathered from the five participants' responses included the following demographic data.

- Rain. Rain identified as a Puerto Rican, Hispanic American female with 8 years of teaching experience. Rain became an educator as a second career.

- Sunflower. Sunflower identified as an African American female with 13 years of teaching experience.
- Owl. Owl identified as a White American female with 25 years of experience (2 years in college, 23 in elementary). Owl became an educator as a second career.
- Lily. Lily identified as a Puerto Rican American female with 18 years of teaching experience.
- Parrot. Parrot identified as a White American female with 14 years of teaching experience.

Table 4 displays the different themes that emerged in the thematic analysis and their corresponding codes, as well as the key themes and codes created from the open-ended interview question-and-answer session.

Table 4: Themes and Codes

Themes	Codes
Engagement	Increased and meaningful learning Enhanced interest Open and better communication
Teaching practices	
Diversity & multiculturalism	
Lived experiences	Student lived experiences Educator lived experiences (unconscious bias and personal denial bias)
Structural implications	Policies and procedures
Resources	

3.1 Theme 1: Engagement

The codes assigned to this theme included the following:

- increased and meaningful learning,
- enhanced interest, and
- open and better communication.

There was a microlevel (i.e., personal) and macrolevel (i.e., structural) of engagement that emerged in the analysis of how respondents felt PD training on culturally responsive teaching practices impacted their self-efficacy (Clarke et al., 2015). The quest to understand the factors and dimensions that forged a sense of engagement between students and teachers was, according to the respondents, integral to the strategic and successful implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices. For instance, Sunflower mentioned: “If a student lives in a home with others who speak loudly/animated and comes to school with a teacher who is monotone and boring, then it is very disconnected.”

Sunflower raised the key point that teachers need to be the bigger person in interactions with students. A teacher who did not fully encompass the role of educator and uplift the mood of the class was highly likely to see discontent and disengagement from students. Sunflower expressed that teachers should avoid behavior that could create gaps between children's home and school environments because the effort of transitioning from one environment to another would emotionally exhaust the student.

Similarly, Lily claimed: “If students are interested in video games, dancing or other topics then find materials also based on those topics of high interests. Students have a different way of learning and different paces.” To ensure students are comfortable with her, she calls them “friends.” Lily’s statement showed that the importance of student engagement in the classroom can be exemplified by the fact that student interests and preferences form an integral and definite part of the learning process. According to Lily, student engagement played an important role in

learning that could help to decrease the overidentification of historically oppressed students for special education. To encourage such engagement, teachers must make students comfortable enough to overcome their reservations, allowing them to express themselves openly.

When asked if CRP had the potential to engage the students in a more meaningful way, Rain claimed:

> *Now after taking the training, I am more aware of the way I deliver the information to the students, ways that they can engage, and the meaningful ways of learning. Students are more willing to respond to the learning, learn it with more enthusiasm and, even thrive even faster.*

In this statement, Rain hinted that she found the training session to be enlightening and thought the technique learned would help her communicate better with each child and help them engage in her classroom (Alhojailan, 2012). For the same question regarding the influence of CRP, Parrot agreed that the sessions influenced her pedagogical practices and added: "So I haven't always done that, but I feel like now, I feel I'm aware of, I really felt I should do more with it; you know since taking your course." She added: "As much as I thought I was doing already, I definitely been more aware since your class to really like step it up and to take more time to like collect resources that will really." These statements inadvertently speak to the importance of engagement and teachers being able to connect to the material in order to implement CRP in the classroom.

Participant responses showed that engaging students served as an essential component that teachers could use for all children to draw out the feelings, strengths, and academic needs of all students. Engagement emerged as a useful process for eliminating assumptions that could lead to overidentification of historically marginalized students because engaged students are better able to express themselves in a world where culture, customs, and even the language differ from their

own. On a microlevel, respondents acknowledged the importance of considering student backgrounds and their lived experiences and the effects of these dynamics on classroom environments as a whole.

3.2 Theme 2: Teaching Practices

Participant responses also showed that teaching practices had a definite influence on historically marginalized children. This aligned with the extant literature on the subject in which researchers found the lack of efficacy to be a significant factor leading to overidentification. Respondents discussed different measures and methods they utilized in their classroom management and delivery styles to avoid erroneous assumptions. Sunflower shared: “including student background and experiences they bring to school in lessons is a culturally responsive practice.”

This is important to acknowledge, given how student socialization and academic learning grow from their lived experiences and foundational learning. Likewise, Sunflower's statement also endorses the engagement theme because she acknowledged the importance of considering background, social class, and the prior experiences that students bring to the classroom.

The open-ended questions generated some important results and viewpoints about teaching practices. For instance, in response to a question about the role of PD on CRP, Rain mentioned how it made her conscious of student learning. Furthermore, Rain highlighted the importance of using culturally neutral information as the foundation for curricula to help students evolve teaching practices from nondirectional to multifaceted and culturally responsive.

On the other hand, Lily expressed her sentiments on the subject by claiming that her approach is “student-centered and teach my students is based on their background and their interests.” She added: “My background is Hispanic, and I always like to teach my students the way that I learn and how I’d been taught in the past.”

Lily’s description of herself as Hispanic suggested she had been subject to the cultural stigmatization of the U.S. educational system. Furthermore, the PD session allowed Lily to recognize the ways she could address difficulties similar to those she faced for her students. The extent of the issue’s magnification can be identified because Rain expressed a desire for texts that reflected students' cultures because she often had to rely on what she knew about them. Rain explained: “I use examples like background knowledge or examples that can reflect their culture or something they know about it. For example, the other day, I was trying to explain to some of the girls the Author’s point of view.”

Rain’s responses suggested the existing education system did not have the resources to help teachers represent the culture of historically marginalized students. Education providers, even those from diverse backgrounds, are not necessarily prepared with needed resources to teach a culturally diverse classroom (Nowell et al., 2017). Likewise, this espoused the need for CRP to be a standard operating procedure within school systems to ensure that students with marginalized identities are not overrepresented in special education.

3.3 Theme 3: Diversity and Multiculturalism

The theme “Diversity and Multiculturalism” became a prominent subject during the open-ended interviews. The subject of diversity and multiculturalism was directed toward the

historically marginalized students and the experience of all the respondents of themselves and others. The underlying purpose of this theme was to understand how diversity and multiculturalism contributed to the gap between general education practices and CRP (Nowell et al., 2017). Through analysis, the researcher uncovered hints as to where the U.S. educators fail to address the issue of overidentification of historically oppressed students as special education students. Sunflower explained:

> So even if you look at special education or ESOL teachers, oh, there's the Black and Brown teachers. But regular classroom teachers from the get-go, people [students] might feel connected to, and it's the same thing with males. Even the background, because most teachers come from middle-class backgrounds and they're White females. You're getting the same type of people instructing you. It creates a disconnect, even from the beginning.

The experience described by Sunflower showed where the educational system failed to cater to diverse classrooms, leading to division and stigmatization. Consequently, educators must use their knowledge to eliminate the barriers that divide students from one another to lead them toward a better future for students. Sunflower hinted that even teachers found themselves divided from one another by ethnicity and culture. The assessment suggested that student engagement and teaching practices can be overridden by cultural differences among educators. As a result of such division, teachers felt discouraged from understanding the physiological needs of the children because they were in conflict with other educators and contending with their own biases (Kvande et al., 2018).

3.4 Theme 4: Lived Experiences

The codes assigned to this theme included student lived experiences and educator lived experiences (unconscious bias and personal denial bias).

3.4.1 Student Lived Experiences

The first code, lived experiences, was created to understand different student experiences from the teacher's perspective. The analysis showed that understanding student lived experiences illuminated the difficulties and complexities that students, specifically cultural minority students, faced in the classroom. The underlying premise of the code is very important because it provides a direct overview of the difficulties that students experienced as a result of teachers' inability to understand their psychological and physiological needs. Furthermore, it aligns with researchers' claims regarding the consequences faced by students who feel misunderstood by their teachers. In this context, Sunflower claimed:

> *So even if you look at special education or [English as a second language] teachers, oh, there's the black and brown teachers. But regular classroom teachers from the get-go, people [students] might feel connected to, and it's the same thing with males. Even the background, because most teachers come from middle-class backgrounds and they're White females. You're getting the same type of people instructing you. It creates a disconnect, even from the beginning.*

An analysis of Sunflower's statement suggested that the cultural divide between teachers negatively affected their ability to meet students' needs, discouraging students from voicing their opinions for fear of airing their concerns to the wrong teacher. The fear of asking the wrong teacher

for help could result in issues between teachers, reflecting in the teachers' behavior toward the student. As such, students often found themselves disengaged with the content and the teacher as well. Furthermore, the school district's inability to attract quality teachers magnified the divide between teachers, making teaching a White-dominated field, which presents an issue for students. Consequently, students disconnect from the classroom, resulting in their identification as special education students. Rain explained that one "student asked about a teacher who spoke Portuguese" and "concerned with bringing food and clothes to provide."

The teacher validated the point that students often approach the teachers due to the difference between their school and home culture. The difference between home and school environments, combined with the disengagement students feel due to the cultural disparities that lead to misunderstanding, creates hardship for students. Furthermore, Lily provided another example of the fact that teachers do consider the needs of the students when making efforts to understand student life experiences. She said: If students are interested in video games, dancing, or other topics, then find materials also based on those topics of high interest. Students have a different way of learning and different paces." To ensure students felt comfortable with her, she calls them "friends." With these remarks, Lily suggested that understanding student life experiences and integrating that understanding into the curriculum would prove to be an effective method of engaging the students.

3.4.2 Personal Lived Experience

This section provides information intended to add to understanding of teachers' perspectives on their interactions with students during their professional careers with children. It was imperative to understand how teachers viewed the PD session, minority children, and CRP

because teachers play a significant role in overidentifying culturally minoritized students as special education students. Two codes emerged when mapping the teachers' personal experiences (Setiawan, 2019). These included unconscious bias and personal bias. The following sections provide discussions of these two codes.

3.4.3 Unconscious Bias

Researchers in the extant literature had emphasized that the teacher's lack of understanding and inability to assess the situation became a primary reason behind the overidentification of culturally minoritized students with low socioeconomic backgrounds as special education students. However, it is possible many teachers did not realize the extent to which they changed the lives of students by either inaccurately identifying them as special education students or failing to identify them as such (Setiawan, 2019). Consequently, the first code for personal life experience was unconscious bias. The code refers to the phenomenon where teachers unconsciously contribute to the overidentification of certain students in special education, despite their belief that they have done the right thing for the students. Rain indicated that teachers have long overidentified students from historically minoritized groups or students from households with low socioeconomic status as needing special education services. Rain claimed*:* "To me, it's social-economical background, not a race." This statement indicated that the general behavior of some teachers had become a common cause behind the overidentification process. However, Rain explained that the difficulties students face arise from assumptions about economic background rather than race. Rain's assertion suggests and two-pronged problem. In addition to culture, a student's economic background could also lead to their misplacement in special education. Furthermore, this assertion showed a clear

need to change the mindset of teachers—a process that cannot occur without buy-in from the teacher and their explicit participation in the learning process.

Fortunately, some participants expressed a willingness to engage with CRP and learn new approaches to teaching after being informed about its advantages. Rain claimed:

> *Why, why do I need to learn this information? How does that pertain to me? So, if they see something culturally that they can connect, that it reflects something about their lives, their experiences, their family, their culture, they are more willing to respond to the learning, learn it with more enthusiasm, and thrive even faster.*

On the other hand, Rain's previous assessment about the cultural divide between the teachers was fairly lost. For instance, during the learning process, Rain demonstrated she understood the role of CRP. Still, she inaccurately claimed that the cultural divide between teachers did not dictate the actions of a teacher in a classroom: "But I think within schools, within communities, it's still not like within classrooms. I still don't think teachers are like, "Well, let me stop and think about this student's background." Rain's statement suggested that despite cultural disparities in the community, some teachers think they are trying their absolute best to maintain decorum. The statement also suggested that teachers felt that by establishing a good environment in the class, they eliminated the risk of allowing cultural assumptions or bias to influence their decisions about students' learning needs (Morgan et al., 2017). However, the inability of teachers like Rain to fully assess the situation and look at the big picture indicated an unconscious bias that she should address to move toward an unbiased and fair assessment of her students that is independent of their customs, culture, traditions, ethnicity, and religion.

Parrot contributed her view by describing ways students in her classroom acknowledge their differing cultures:

Different holidays they may celebrate if they feel comfortable sharing, different situations that we understand their backgrounds. So the family dynamic at home from where they come, how they might live, if they're comfortable sharing and kind of creating that environment in the morning meeting, to solve the day where all the kids kind of feel included, and the other kids are kind of cheering them on and learning about the diversity of our students.

Parrot's method provided a specific solution that can be used as a part of the morning routine to raise awareness of different cultures. She described how sharing can enable students to enjoy different cultures while using their innocent minds to tackle a difficult issue. Rather, the teacher also believed that her approach to sharing information helped her to efficiently integrate CRP into her classroom. Parrot highlighted the solution as a means to ensure student engagement, not only with the teacher but also with their peers (Setiawan, 2019). Another key point involved that fact information sharing also educated the teachers about students' cultures, which was information they could use to communicate with and understand them. Thus, Parrot's practice could reduce the frequency of incidents involving teachers misidentifying a student as needing special education services.

However, it is important to note that Parrot's strategy contains flaws. Asking students to share personal information to promote cultural knowledge-sharing represents neither a productive solution to the issue nor an effective implementation of CRP. Parrot's statement suggested an unconscious bias that diverts responsibility for remedying cultural misunderstanding to students rather than teachers and the education system as a whole. Parrot also demonstrated the unconscious bias teachers can bring to the classroom setting:

The Black population is very underrepresented, and it's not taught and that my [textual] examples were just maybe like a White man astronaut, and not looking to see was there a Black woman or a Black man, so that's been a really big effect in the past few weeks on me since taking your class, that I really haven't been looking around and been very surprised that I never really noticed it.

Parrot's personal admission regarding her own biases provided a glimpse into how easily a teacher's biases can influence a lesson when CRP is not used. When compounded, these types of instances can lead to the overrepresentation of certain groups in special education.

During the interview, Parrot further demonstrated her unconscious bias with the following statement: "We have so many White teachers and obviously in elementary it's like a White females everywhere." Her statement suggested teachers do not see their students or the cultural nuances that may influence the ways in which students navigate the educational system. This could mean that anything not relative to the dominant White culture can be perceived as unacceptable or problematic.

3.4.4 Personal Bias

Teachers' personal bias emerged as the second theme related to teachers' life experiences and how they can impact how teachers approach their classroom and students. The teachers willingly showed a bias toward the teaching practice and the students. For example, Parrot displayed a lack of willingness to learn CRP:

I just feel like what I'm learning through this program that might be very difficult, depending on the educator that's trying to implement the curriculum or making those changes that are needed for those particular students and accommodating their needs.

In this statement, Parrot indicated that using CRP can be difficult and that the level of difficulty depends on many different factors, thus creating a personal bias against learning the proper practices for educating children.

Parrot again demonstrated personal bias by saying, “So I’m looking at my own biases, and I didn't think I was biased, but I felt like I was teaching that way from some of the district curricula, and I didn't really think oh I should.” With this statement, Parrot expressed an unwillingness to accept any mistake in her teaching method and resorted to blaming others. Such bias represents another key reason teachers have been found to overidentify students for special education (i.e., because their personal bias prevents them from taking relevant action on the subject).

Lily also demonstrated personal bias: “Teachers are teaching students to pass a [Florida Standards Assessment], not why the standards or the mastery of standards will matter 30 years from now. Academic standards are also too high for student development.” Lily suggested that teachers focused on equipping students with the knowledge needed to excel in the world of education, but she failed to realize that educating children to help them pass an assessment (e.g., the Florida Standards Assessment) must not be the only vision and mission of education. She did not appear to understand the importance of considering ethics, lack of bias, lack of judgment, and ways of life that are also important, especially when studied in the context of cultural diversity (Setiawan, 2019). As such, Lily also showed personal bias in her response.

3.5 Theme 5: Structural Implications

Structural implications emerged as another prominent theme. Analysis of the thematic codes suggested that structural implications had been playing the role of endorsers, prompting overidentification in special education of culturally diverse students from low socioeconomic backgrounds without any implications (Kincaid & Sullivan, 2017). The statement from Rain that some teachers are not even allowed to use the books they wish to use to teach the students. On the other hand, the following assessment by Sunflower*:* "District Programming is based on the middle-class student and not a diverse population."

Hints that certain structural implications such as policies and procedures cannot hold anyone accountable for their actions, leading to the magnification of the issue. Parrot contributed to this discussion by highlighting that the media portrayal of Black and LatinX citizens represents another reason overidentification occurs. Research has suggested that the chance exists for structural implications (e.g., teachers' mentality, different personal factors affiliated with the students, and policies and procedures) to disable corrective measures being implemented (Anastasiou et al., 2017).

Parrot also pointed to certain structural implications when she discussed the lack of diversity in the gifted or high-achieving class, pointing out that students from historically marginalized groups do not get identified for those classes.

3.6 Theme 6: Resources

Resources emerged as another factor with implications for students in culturally minoritized groups. Analysis disclosed an interesting set of results. For instance, Rain described instances where teachers lacked the opportunity to choose a book to teach her students simply because she felt that the respective resource would be better at educating the children (Graf, 2018). Rain also mentioned seeing "students trying to connect to reading but lack the background to understand [the zoo]." Her statement suggested that the lack of freedom to choose appropriate reading material left students struggling with content. This difficulty was exacerbated for children being educated in a second language.

Sunflower contributed to this discussion by adding that a "required class in college to discuss cultures helped prepare her for this career, and she also subbed for a teacher that completed research on overidentification of minority students in special education." Sunflower's statement indicated to the researcher that lack of freedom to choose the right resources did not influence the participants. Still, it influenced the teaching capabilities of teachers, specifically teachers who had knowledge of CRP and the overidentification of students with low socioeconomic backgrounds in the special education system.

4.0 Learning and Actions

4.1 Discussion of Statistical Results and Analysis

This research was an evaluation of CRP's impact on teacher self-efficacy and historically marginalized students. The guiding research questions were:

RQ1. How does PD on culturally responsive practices impact teacher self-efficacy?

RQ2. What are the barriers or challenges to reducing the number of historically marginalized students receiving special education services?

4.1.1 CRP and Teacher Self-Efficacy

This section provides a close examination of PD's role and teacher self-efficacy. The researcher asked 10 participants to complete the CRTSE so they could measure their own self-efficacy. With pretest scores recorded at 82.5% and posttest scores at 89.2%, participants demonstrated a mean increase of 6.74% after the PD. Responses revealed that after the PD, they were 13.4% more confident in "identifying ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students' home culture." The highest increase (13.6%) occurred in the participants' ability to "implement strategies to minimize the mismatch between my students' home culture and the school culture." The analysis showed an exceptional growth rate between the pre- and posttest assessment for Participant J, who experienced the greatest increase in confidence from 65% to 78.146%, thus highlighting the role of PD sessions for the teachers' confidence. Monitoring teacher confidence and self-efficacy with each question was particularly important

because the educator workforce is 83% White and does not match the national student population (National Education Association, 2016).

The CRTSE and the PD sessions positively impacted the participants. As they learned more about CRP, their teaching self-efficacy increased on the CRTSE. This was highlighted by Participant J's response to an open-ended question. She said:

> *Prior to the professional development I believed culturally responsive practices was forming relationships and a rapport with students and their families, now I understand the need to grow my cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them.*

This statement supports the belief that teachers with higher self-efficacy are willing to seek out opportunities to grow and access resources for their students' success (Chu, 2011; Malo-Juvera et al., 2018). As Participant J indicated, she began the training with a basic understanding of relationships with students, but following the PD, she understood the importance of culturally responsive implementation. Although phenomenology was only implemented on a small scale, the results indicated improved teacher perceptions of self-efficacy after a PD on CRP. With improved teacher efficacy, historically marginalized students can experience improved opportunities within education. Another participant highlighted her future plans and increased belief in carrying out newly acquired knowledge. Participant C wrote: "With much new clarity, I'm able to intentionally instruct students and peers of the intense necessity of teaching using culturally responsive teaching practices. This new knowledge needs to be taught worldwide."

4.1.2 Barriers and Challenges to Overidentification

Thematic analysis produced two themes related to barriers to reducing the number of historically marginalized students identified for special education services. These themes were structural implications and lived experiences. It was through accounts of their lived experiences in the semistructured interviews that the participants revealed unconscious biases or their willingness to blame existing structures (e.g., resources, district curriculum, testing) as the primary reason they could not implement CRP. A critical need exists for culturally responsive educators who understand their tendencies to inadvertently commit microaggressions or act on biases that could negatively impact students from historically marginalized groups (Quinn & Stewart, 2019; Mckenna, 2013).

Given the overrepresentation of historically marginalized students in special education programming, this researcher sought to examine CRP as a possible teaching approach to address the discrepancy. When asked after the PD session how CRP could reduce the overidentification of historically minoritized students in special education, Participant C responded:

> *By staff knowing and accepting diverse changes of students as individuals not writing a student up because he/she/they/them speak up and sometimes out of turn, or a student is silent/shy, or prefers to squat in the class and write on the floor versus sitting at the desk all the times. CRP can elevate cultural differences.*

Respecting students and their cultures and not teaching those differences as deficits both represent essential steps toward creating a culturally responsive environment (Hollie, 2018; McKenna, 2013). In response to the same question, Participant E responded:

> *By becoming familiar with their students' culture, teachers won't label attitudes, behavior, and learning patterns in students as a learning disability. Instead, they can work*

with them in a different way by introducing an intervention/classroom activity that can reduce the cultural disparity.

4.2 Limitations

One of the key drawbacks of the CRTSE is that it involves an analysis of the self in different contexts and situations. Although the findings of this research provide important insight and clarity regarding the need for CRP to decrease the overidentification of students with minoritized identities in special education, limitations existed regarding this important body of work. First, in reflecting upon the methods and steps utilized to answer the research questions, the overall process exposed how adequate time and resource availability contributes to a better, more comprehensive study. Simply stated, the COVID-19 pandemic and requirements for social distancing and quarantining significantly impacted the study timeline and opportunities to engage in this research. Additional time would have allowed the researcher to offer multiple intervention cycles. School calendar days also shifted due to Covid-19 out of consideration for education service providers, so the initial timeline had to be adjusted. This change led to a smaller than anticipated number of participants in the PD session. Notably, the availability of time and the opportunity to make a face-to-face presentation would have enabled the researcher to clarify some areas within the research. Although participants enjoyed some engagement, the virtual platform limited the ability for participants to create personal bonds during break times and activities.

Although the participants aimed to provide their best and most honest responses, it is only human nature participants may provide answers they perceive as ethical and right during an interview, especially if they perceive an implication of fault or blame. With continuous

interventions also as a scarce resource, the measures that could have been employed to complete introspective work with service providers were lost. The researcher hoped that the respondents answered honestly in order for the outcomes to lead to corrective measures that would benefit the students.

4.3 Next Steps and Implications

The current research and its methodological approach can be used in the future with the implementation of multiple robust interventions to challenge current teaching practices. Providing educators with continuous training and feedback represents the next step in improving cultural teaching self-efficacy of educational service providers. If found effective, the method can be generalized to tackle the complex problem of overrepresentation of some groups in special education. The future research can form the foundation for both small-scale and large-scale analysis of CRP's efficacy.

Future researchers could examine the correlation between teacher cultural self-efficacy and student performance results. Further research should be completed on teacher self-efficacy post training and could address this study's limitations by expanding its generalizability and incorporating coaching support. A focus group could also be conducted with the intent of exploring new themes.

The research provides evidence that knowledge about CRP can positively impact the cultural teaching self-efficacy of education service providers. Fortunately, imparting knowledge on a subject can positively impact educators' teaching methodologies. If implemented on a large

scale with a designed strategy and technique, the knowledge-sharing process can move the educational system forward.

The current study has strong implications for the U.S. education system, particularly because it shows, through valid and primarily sourced information, that PD influences educators. The phenomenological approach enabled respondents to see historically marginalized students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds as being overidentified for special education services. Educators' use of CRP can eliminate barriers in education by enabling teachers and students to forge deeper connections, especially for those populations of students whose educational paths might be limited by teacher bias.

This research also has implications for education service providers, showing them how they can become more culturally responsive and improve their cultural teaching self-efficacy. This will benefit all students, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds. An educator's work lies in being responsive to student needs to give the opportunity to meet their potential.

5.0 Reflections

The focus of the current assessment was the overidentification of historically marginalized students in the special education system. The topic was analyzed by examining the role of teacher cultural self-efficacy in magnifying the issue in the education system. Several themes and ideas emerged during the data analysis, leading to the following key reflections.

5.1 Reflection 1: Socioeconomic Status

The first topic of reflection emerging from the thematic analysis involved the participants' assertion that all students from households with a lower socioeconomic status, regardless of race or ethnicity, were overrepresented in special education. The researcher noted that a bias, whether conscious or unconscious, resulted in educators placing students in services where they might not belong. Racial and ethnic identity, as well as socioeconomic status, may be used as criteria for support in a school rather than academic data, which can inform more on a student.

5.2 Reflection 2: Evolving Culturally Responsive Practices

The second topic for reflection involved the change in tide for CRP, a phenomenon that must be understood by educational leaders before they can implement a solution. CRPs have evolved over time as researchers have … what is being learned about ourselves and the world. An education service provider must be willing to engage with regular training to remain abreast of

new research related to CRP and to understand their students' cultures while staying involved in the community in which they work. The respective changes have the potential to inspire structural change in the education system, promoting the knowledge that teachers must have about CRP and the corresponding implementation strategies that school district leaders can use to encourage more inclusive practices and reduce the potential for bias. As found in the thematic analysis, the continuously changing cycle of CRP is now more potent and increases self-efficacy.

5.3 Reflection 3: Impacting Students Through Overidentification

The last reflection highlights the high likelihood that being misidentified as a special education student results in a negative experience. The process of being identified, especially when services are not needed, can disrupt normal brain and body development in children, which affects their physical health and well-being and can lead them to have negative thoughts about society (Artiles et al., 2001). Therefore, the lack of access to proper educational opportunities removes many opportunities for employment in professional fields, which can lead to long-term financial and mental consequences. These can include poverty and other factors considered social determinants of health. Unfortunately, this outcome creates another cycle where low socioeconomic status could lead to overidentification in special education for their children.

Appendix A PD Agenda

1.Introduction/Purpose 1.1Sign In 1.2Activity: Rings of Culture 1.3Terms to Know 1.4Data Review	*20 mins*
2.Exploring Our Bias 2.1Activity: Belief System Check 2.2Discussion 2.3Implicit Bias	*20 mins*
3.Culturally Responsive Teaching Pedagogy 3.1Activity: Iceberg Concept of Culture *3.2**Break*** 3.3Neuroscience 3.4Methodology Continuum	*40 mins*
4.Culturally Responsive Learning Environment 4.1Activity: Continuum Creation 4.2**Break** 4.3Vocabulary Instruction/Acquisition 4.3.1 Turn & Talk 4.4Classroom Management 4.4.1 Whip Around 4.5Classroom Environment 4.5.1Gallery Walk	*50 mins*
5.Conclusion 5.1Resources 5.2 Post Survey Reminder	*10 mins*

Appendix B **Informational Script**

Research is being conducted by the University of Pittsburgh School of Education. The purpose of this research study is to determine whether a teachers' culturally responsive self-efficacy will improve with PD. The PD is not a component of the study. For that reason, I will be surveying Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade education service providers and ask them to complete a questionnaire. If you are willing to participate, the survey used in this study will ask your beliefs about your own teaching practices. There is an infrequent breach of confidentiality with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. There will not be any payment for participation. The pre and post surveys will take approximately 20 minutes each. To complete the pre-survey, you will be asked to enter a unique ID of your choosing and re-enter the same number on the post-survey. The pre- and post- surveys will be compared.

If you choose to participate, please complete the survey at: https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5sW52feAPAiC6fs Code: CRP2020

Your participation is voluntary participants may withdraw from this project at any time by closing the browser window or stopping. If at any time you should choose to withdraw only the data completed will be submitted and used for data analysis. Surveys are unidentifiable to the study team and therefore, cannot be withdrawn later.

This study is being conducted by Sharrié Vereen, who can be reached at 561.804.3110 (office), if you have any questions.

Appendix C Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale

Rate how confident you are in your ability to successfully accomplish each of the tasks listed below. Each task is related to teaching. Please rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident). Remember that you may use any number between 0 and 100.

0	**10**	**20**	**30**	**40**	**50**	**60**	**70**	**80**	**90**	**100**
No					**Moderately**					**Completely**
Confidence					**Confident**					**Confident**
At All										

I am able to:

1. adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students.
2. obtain information about my students' academic strengths.
3. determine whether my students like to work alone or in a group.
4. determine whether my students feel comfortable competing with other students.
5. identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students' home culture.
6. implement strategies to minimize the effects of the mismatch between my students' home culture and the school culture.
7. assess student learning using various types of assessments.
8. obtain information about my students' home life.
9. build a sense of trust in my students.
10. establish positive home-school relations.
11. use a variety of teaching methods.
12. develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds.
13. use my students' cultural background to help make learning meaningful.
14. use my students' prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information.
15. identify ways how students communicate at home may differ from the school norms.
16. obtain information about my students' cultural background.
17. teach students about their cultures' contributions to science.
18. greet English Language Learners with a phrase in their native language.

19. design a classroom environment using displays that reflects a variety of cultures

I am able to:

20. develop a personal relationship with my students.
21. obtain information about my students' academic weaknesses.
22. praise English Language Learners for their accomplishments using a phrase in their native language.
23. identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards linguistically diverse students.
24. communicate with parents regarding their child's educational progress.
25. structure parent-teacher conferences so that the meeting is not intimidating for parents.
26. help students to develop positive relationships with their classmates.
27. revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups.
28. critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes.
29. design a lesson that shows how other cultural groups have made use of mathematics.
30. model classroom tasks to enhance English Language Learner's understanding.
31. communicate with the parents of English Language Learners regarding their child's achievement.
32. help students feel like important members of the classroom.
33. identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally diverse students.
34. use a learning preference inventory to gather data about how my students like to learn.
35. use examples that are familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds.
36. explain new concepts using examples that are taken from my students' everyday lives.
37. obtain information regarding my students' academic interests.
38. use the interests of my students to make learning meaningful for them.
39. implement cooperative learning activities for those students who like to work in groups.
40. design instruction that matches my students' developmental needs.
41. teach students about their cultures' contributions to society.

Appendix D Permission to Use Instruments

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
College *of* Education

Permission To Use Instrument(s)

Dear Researcher:

You have my permission to use the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale, the Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectations Scale, and/or the Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale in your research. A copy of the instruments are attached. Request for any changes or alterations to the instrument should be sent via email to kamau.siwatu@ttu.edu. When using the instrument(s) please cite accordingly.

- **Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale**

  Siwatu, K. O. (2007). Preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs. Teaching and Teacher Education, 23, 1086-1101.

- **Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectations Scale**

  Siwatu, K. O. (2007). Preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs. Teaching and Teacher Education, 23, 1086-1101.

- **Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale**

  Siwatu, K. O., Putnam, M., Starker, T. V., & Lewis, C. (2015). The development of the culturally responsive classroom management self-efficacy scale: Development and initial validation. *Urban Education*. Prepublished September 9, 2015.

Best wishes with your research.

Sincerely,

Kamau Oginga Siwatu, PhD
Professor of Educational Psychology

Box 41071 | Lubbock, Texas | 79409-1071 | T 806-834-5850 | F 806-742-2179

An EEO/Affirmative Action Institute

Appendix E Additional Open-Ended Questions for Qualtrics

Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
*Based on your experiences, how would you define culturally responsive practices?	*Based on your experiences and new acquired knowledge, how would you define culturally responsive practices?
*What are potential benefits of implementing culturally responsive practices?	*Prior to the PD I believed culturally responsive practices was_____, now I understand _____.
*What are potential challenges of implementing culturally responsive practices?	* How often per week do you implement culturally responsive practices as you have defined it?
*In what ways can culturally responsive practices reduce the overidentification of students to special education?	*What are the benefits of implementing culturally responsive practices?
*How many years have you worked in education?	*What are the challenges of implementing culturally responsive practices?
*What is your gender?	
*What is your race and ethnicity?	*In what ways can culturally responsive practices reduce the overidentification of historically minoritized students to special education?

Appendix F Interview Questions

Interviews will be conducted on a one-on-one basis with approximately three education service providers following the post survey and PD on a voluntary basis.

Interview Script: Thank you for your participation in this research study today. This interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will include questions regarding whether a teachers' culturally responsive self-efficacy will improve with PD. I would like your permission to record this interview, so information can be accurately accounted. Do you give permission for me to record the interview? If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please let me know. Pseudonyms will be used in transcripts, written presentation, and research notes to respect your privacy. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

I. Based on what you have learned, how would you define Culturally Responsive Practices?
    a. How often do you implement culturally responsive practices with the students you work with?

II. What PDs/trainings have prepared you to work with culturally diverse students?

III. Tell me your thoughts and perceptions regarding culturally responsive practices being implemented within Special Education settings?
    a. Which demographic of students are overidentified and why?

IV. Describe how the use of culturally responsive practices reduce the overidentification of Special Education students.
    a. What are some barriers or challenges to reducing the number of minority students receiving Special education services?

V. After analyzing the school culture, have you identified ways that school culture is different from students' home culture?
    a. If so, what are some of those ways (values, norms, and practices)?
    b. If not, could you explain why?

VI. What culturally responsive practices strategies do you implement to minimize the effects of mismatch between students' home culture and the school culture?
    a. How do you communicate with parents regarding students' progress?

VII. What has been your greatest challenge implementing culturally responsive practices?
    a. What has been your greatest success?

VIII. Is there anything else you want to share?

IX. How many years have you worked in education?

X. What is your gender?

XI. What is your race and ethnicity?

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