

THE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF FIVE EXPERIENCED HIGH SCHOOL  
TEACHERS WHO SUCCESSFULLY TEACH CHILDREN OF COLOR

A Record of Study

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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December 2019

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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## ABSTRACT

Too often, the educational achievements of students of color are examined from a deficit model. Repeatedly, research studies focus on the obstacles to learning. Throughout this Record of Study (ROS), I used the abundance model by emphasizing the instructional practices of five secondary school teachers who successfully taught children of color. Despite the reality of an achievement gap, teachers on struggling campuses are making a difference. The African American and Latino students of these teachers consistently, year after year, have performed at or above the academic levels of their White peers on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) End of Course (EOC) assessment. By focusing on three chief components: teacher perception, culturally responsive teaching (CRT), and effective classroom instruction. The findings of addressing teacher perception and effective instruction were in line with previous studies; showing that positive teacher perception and effective classroom instruction improves student performance. The impact of CRT was inconclusive.

## DEDICATION

Dedicated to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Dedicated to my loving parents, Douglas and Nancy Givens.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I first wish to thank my dissertation committee. Thanks to Dr. Larke who freely gave her advice and support. Dr. Larke maintained communication and encouragement when I was having difficulties. Dr. Valerie Hill-Jackson, Dr. Gwendolyn Webb-Johnson and Dr. Mary Margaret Capraro shared their expertise and have given me constructive feedback during this educational endeavor. Thank you very much.

I would like to acknowledge my aunt, Dr. Thelma Douglass, for her continued encouragement and insight.

Mostly importantly, I thank my parents, Douglas and Nancy Givens. Dad and Mama, without your unconditional love and support, this never would have happened. Thank you for being my parents. I love you. To my sweet nephew, David Ewing, you inspire me, and I love you beyond measure.

## CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

### **Contributors**

This work was supervised by a Record of Study committee consisting of Professor Patricia Larke of the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture.

The data analyzed for Chapter 3 was provided by Professor Patricia Larke. The analyses depicted in Chapter 4 were conducted in part by Dr. Patricia Larke of the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture and were published in 2019.

All other work conducted for the thesis (or) dissertation was completed by the student independently.

### **Funding Sources**

No outside funding was received for the research and writing of this document.

## NOMENCLATURE

CRT	Culturally Responsive Teaching
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
EOC	End of Course
STAAR	State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness
NCLB	No Child Left Behind

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

**The Context**

This is the value of the teacher, who looks at a face and says there's something behind that and I want to reach that person, I want to influence that person, I want to encourage that person, I want to enrich, I want to call out that person who is behind that face, behind that color, behind that language, behind that tradition, behind that culture. I believe you can do it. I know what was done for me.

M. Angelo, Maya Angelou Pays Tribute to the Power of Teaching (October 29, 1998)

This quote resonates what many researchers have found regarding the influence and quality of a teacher and how a teacher's influence can impact the quality of student learning (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). The impact of an outstanding teacher is something almost everyone should personally experience; yet, there are some students who do not share that experience. For those who were fortunate, their schooling years were exciting, enlightened, and academically meaningful. These teachers were their bridge to academic success. Likewise, those who had inadequate teachers had bridges that led to academic deficits resulting in what researchers identify as an achievement gap. Through this study, I sought to address the intersectionality of teacher quality and the academic achievement gap.

National Context

Today the value of good teaching is no secret. However, the Coleman Report, Equality of Educational Opportunity (1966), suggested that differences in teachers had minimal effect on

student achievement. The principal finding was the importance of a student's family and academic success. Contrary to the 1966 Coleman Report, subsequent research consistently showed the positive impact of effective teaching on student achievement (Goldhaber, Krieg, & Theobald, 2017).

More current researchers consistently showed the impact of effective instructional practices on student achievement (Goldhaber et al., 2017). More than twenty years of research findings are clear about the direct relationship between teacher quality and student learning (Goldhaber et al., 2017). Sanders and Rivers (1996) conducted a value-added assessment to answer the question of whether teachers matter (Archer, 1999). Math teachers in grades third through fifth in two urban school districts in Tennessee were examined to ascertain the average amount of academic growth of students in their classrooms. From these data, teachers were identified and grouped as being the most effective teachers, the top 20%, and the least effective teachers, the bottom 20% (Archer, 1999). The progress of students assigned to these effective and least effective teachers was documented over a consecutive three-year period. The results showed that, at the end of fifth grade, students assigned to the high performing teachers scored in the 83rd percentile while students assigned to the low performing teachers scored in the 29th percentile (Whitehurst, 2002). In 1997, a second study related to long-term teacher effectiveness was conducted in Dallas, Texas. Researchers used three different urban school districts and two different methods for determining teacher effectiveness, and yielded comparable results, highlighting the measurable difference that more effective teachers have on student performance (Sisson & Sisson, 2017).

These studies repeatedly have shown that teacher quality is one of the single most important school-related factors in student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Goldhaber et

al. (2015) found that teacher quality was the most important school-based factor associated with improving student achievement.

Just as good teaching is no secret, so is the truth that race matters. One of key findings from the Coleman Reports (1966) was concerning achievement disparities between the races within the United States. Even though racial and ethnic achievement gaps have narrowed substantially since 1966, a gap between Whites and students of color remains (López, 2017). Today, African American and Latino students are much more inclined than White students to fall behind in school and drop out, and much less likely to graduate from high school, procure a college degree, or obtain a middle-class living (D'Amico 2001).

The achievement gap is the difference in the academic performance of students of color compared to the academic performance of their White peers (Abramson, 2006). The achievement gap shows up in standardized test scores, grades, dropout rates, and college completion rates, among other success measures. The achievement gap has been a disturbing reality of our education system since public education's inception in the 1800s. School reform efforts have not always been successful as demonstrated by the continuing achievement gap between groups of students. The aim of both the 2002 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was a federal legislative response to improve the performance of public schools by increasing accountability standards. However, even with these stringent accountability systems aimed at providing better education, the achievement gap continues (Abramson, 2006). All subgroups of students have, in general, improved as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Tables 1.1 and 1.2 display the average score results in NAEP mathematics and reading for the years: 2005, 2009, 2013, and 2015.

Table 1.1 Average Scores Results in NAEP Mathematics for Twelfth-Grade Students, by Race/Ethnicity: Various years, 2005–2015

	Average scale score			
	2005	2009	2013	2015
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
White	157	* 161	162	160
Black	127	* 131	132	130
Latino	133	* 138	141	139

Note: \* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ )

U.S. Department of Education

Table 1.2 Average Scores Results in NAEP Reading for Twelfth-Grade Students, by Race/Ethnicity: Various Years, 2005–2015

Characteristic	Average scale score			
	2005	2009	2013	2015
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
White	293	* 296	297	295
Black	267	269	268	266
Latino	272	* 274	276	276

Note: \* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ )

U.S. Department of Education

### Situational Context

Commonly, by the eighth grade, African American and Latino students nationwide have tested three years behind White students. By the 12th grade, the achievement gap swells to four years behind White students (Educational Trust, 2004). This difference in performance among African American, Latino, and Whites is apparent across the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) End of Course (EOC) results as displayed in Table 1.3.



Table 1-3 Texas 2018 STAAR EOC Algebra I, English I & II, and US History Results of African American, Latino, and White Students Percentage Passing Rate

STAAR Assessment	African American	Latino	White
Algebra I	74%	81%	89%
Eng. I & II	48%	54%	76%
US History	87%	90%	96%

Note: Texas Education Agency, 2018 Accountability Report, 2018

Studies consistently found that teacher quality—whether measured by content knowledge, training, or, experience—is strongly related to student achievement (Goldhaber et al., 2015). These researchers demonstrated that skilled teachers produce students who demonstrate higher results on standardized tests. Many researchers found that Latino and African American students are the least likely to have qualified teachers. This reality is a significant contributor to the achievement gap (Goldhaber et al., 2015). It follows that assigning experienced, qualified teachers to low-performing schools and students is likely to pay off with narrowing the achievement gaps. Therefore, through this Record of Study (ROS) problem, I focused on the instructional practices of schoolteachers who successfully taught children of color in hopes of finding replicable instructional practices. Success was defined as regular education secondary school teachers with classes that were at least 50% Latino and African American and at least 90% of their Latino and African American students passed the State of Texas Assessment Academic of Readiness (STAAR) End of Course (EOC) assessments in English, mathematics, science and social studies. Through this study I focused on three key factors: teacher perception, culturally responsive teaching (CRT), and effective classroom instruction.

## Mustang Independent School District

Since 1994, Mustang Independent School District (MISD) has experienced rapid racial and ethnic student population shifts. In 1994, Mustang Independent School District (MISD) was a rural district with a Texas Education Agency (TEA) rating of “recognized.” MISD had a student enrollment of 1,617 that was 23% African American, 32% Latinos, and 45% White (Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 1994). Today in 2018, MISD was a suburban district with a TEA rating of “Met Standard.” MISD had a student enrollment of 8,039, with 24% African American, 62% Latino, and 10% White (TEA Academic Excellence Indicator System Report, 2018). At 86%, Mustang ISD’s student of color population had become the overwhelming majority. Since 1994, the Latino student population had grown 241%, and the African American student population had risen 501%. Despite the district’s seismic growth and demographic change, MISD has not closed the achievement gap between Whites and children of color. On the 2018 STAAR EOC, Whites performed 10 to 15 percentage points higher than Latinos and African Americans in both reading and math (Texas Education Agency, Accountability Report, 2018). Table 1.4 indicates Mustang ISD’s overall results of the 2018 STAAR Reading and Math exams based on race. Regarding performance, all three groups performed below the state average on both assessments.

Table 1.4 MISD 2018 STAAR EOC Algebra I, English I & II, and US History Results of African American, Latino, and White Students Percentage Passing Rate

STAAR Assessment	African American	Latino	White
Algebra I	67%	70%	71%
Eng. I & II	44%	49%	59%
US History	76%	82%	90%

Note: Texas Education Agency, 2018 Accountability Report, 2018

### Problem

Perhaps the most robust and most consistent finding of recent research is the importance of teacher quality in closing the achievement gap (Goldhaber et al., 2017). In a speech commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the landmark, *Brown v. Board of Education*, at Vanderbilt University, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2014) questioned the country's lack of collective outrage over our nation's achievement gap. The causes of achievement gaps are multiple and complex. However, research suggests that effective teaching plays a vital role in closing the gap (McCoy, 2014).

Too often when addressing the academic gap, researchers and educators approach the issue from a deficit mindset. School administrators too often seek outside for assistance in addressing the achievement gap. Fortunately, in most districts there are teachers who are doing an outstanding job but are not readily identified within the district. According, to MISD there were five teachers on their staff of 138 teachers who maintained high quality teaching for over a period of a least four years. Therefore, this I chose to focus on these five in-district high school teachers who were successful with students of color. By examining these five teachers who were successful, I sought to discover and illuminate instructional practices that could be replicated.

## Relevant History of the Problem

In 2000, Mustang, TX was a rural community with a population of 1,200. At the time of the study, Mustang, TX, was a suburb with over 9,000 residents. This massive growth accompanied drastic demographic shifts. The Latino population increased by 200% and the African American population increased over 500%. In 1997, Whites students at 45% comprised the largest racial group in Mustang ISD. Today, over 80% of Mustang ISD students are either African American or Latino with 10% identified as White. Until recently, senior district administration neglected to address the academic needs of its rapidly changing student demographic population. Using the study's findings, Mustang ISD actively is addressing its changing demographics through its 2017 - 2022 District Strategic Plan.

In addition to sweeping demographic changes, Mustang ISD had a problem with teacher retention. High teacher turnover rates have a negative effect on school quality as measured by student performance (Adnot, Dee, Katz, & Wyckoff, 2016). Mustang ISD had a teacher turnover rate of over 20%. Mustang ISD teacher attrition rate was 5% higher than the state average. Table 1.5 compares MISD's 2016 -17 teacher turnover rate by experience level with the state average. The issue of a high teacher attrition rate results in a workforce that lacks experience, a critical component of successful teaching (Adnot, Dee, Katz, & Wyckoff, 2016). Given the district's annual turnover rate of teachers and the number of novice teachers in Mustang ISD, the district would benefit from including a strong focus on understanding and implementing culturally responsive teaching and the nine effective strategies.

Table 1.5 MISD’S 2016- 17 Average Teacher Turnover Rate by District and State Experience Level

	District	State
Beginning Teachers	15.8	7.0
1-5 Years of Experience	39.1	26.1
Average Years of Experience of Teachers with District	3.9	8.0
Turnover Rate for Teachers	20.4	15.3

Note: Gibson: 2017 Final Performance Review Report for the Mustang ISD

During the time I was reframing the ROS problem in years 2015 – 2017, the district was in a state of flux. In 2016, between the months of March to June, a new Superintendent was appointed, the Chief Academic Officer resigned, the Associate Superintendent resigned, and the district was under audit by the Texas Education Agency for misappropriation of funds. As I spoke with stakeholders, one reoccurring concern was the belief that the prior district leadership ignored the district's demographic changes. Many stakeholders stated the belief that district leadership did not support the district-wide implementation of culturally responsive teaching.

Since the appointment of the new Superintendent, Dr. Adler, a massive mindset shift occurred. Stakeholders believed the district would address many of the underlined racial and ethnic academic issues that had plagued the district. One respondent stated, “Dr. Adler’s presence gives me hope that this district finally is serious about Black kids’ education.” Dr. Adler had been very public in his support of cultural responsiveness.

#### Significance of the Problem.

The issue of the academic gap is critical MISD. Despite decades of dramatic growth in the number of students of color, it was not until 2017, that the district created a plan to address

the instructional needs of population. Texas Education Agency, Accountability Report, 2018 identified an academic a gap existed between Whites and children of color, more specifically Latinos and African Americans in MISD. This gap noted that in both math and reading Whites performed 10 to 15 percentage points higher than Latinos and African Americans (Texas Education Agency, Accountability Report, 2018). In 2018, Mustang ISD Met Standards by receiving from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) a grade of D with a score of 69. Though MISD met state standards, two campuses failed to meet the state standards and, as such given a rate of Improvement Required. These two schools had an 80% student of color population To meet state standard, schools are evaluated in three domains: Domain I Student Achievement, Domain II Student Growth, and Domain III Closing the Gap. Although Mustang High School's overall performance met state standards, it failed to meet Domain III Closing the Gap. According to TEA, the Closing the Gap domain is the percentage of different groups of students that are performing above state goals in four areas. The four areas evaluated in the Closing the Gap domain are as follows:

(a) STAAR performance, (b) academic growth or graduation, (c) English language proficiency, and (d) college, career, and military readiness (CCMR). If students of colors' academic performance continued on that trajectory, additional schools would fail to meet state standards and as a result, the district would be rated, Improvement Required.

### **Research Questions**

Two research questions guided the study. These questions were:

1. How do successful math, English, and social studies high school teachers describe their student's continuous high-test performance?

2. What are the instructional practices of successful math, English, and social studies high school teachers?

### **Personal Context**

As the primary investigator of the ROS, I surveyed and questioned teachers who had documented successes with students of color. Through the study, I strived to identify effective instructional practices that could be replicated. The district found the study beneficial. Therefore, I worked with the Curriculum and Instruction Department to design an instructional strategies training program for teachers. This program provided instructional strategies to assist teachers to be able to work more effectively with the increasing the academic achievement of students of color in the district.

### **Researcher's Roles and Personal Histories**

Currently, I am an Administrative Instructional Coach for Mustang ISD and an Ed.D. graduate student at Texas A&M University. I hold a B.A. in psychology from the University of Texas, in Austin, Texas, and an M.A. in Educational Leadership and Administration, from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. I have been an educator for 24 years. In my career, I have taught both elementary and secondary students. At the elementary level, I taught self-contained pre-kindergarten, second, third, and fifth grades. At the secondary level, I taught sixth-grade mathematics. In addition to teaching, I have written curriculum for two Texas school districts. In addition, I have conducted fifty-eight teacher professional development workshops. For the past eight years, in my role as an administrator, I routinely have observed and evaluated the instructional practices of teachers.

Initially, this study I interned with the Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Harper, who was the second highest-ranking administrator in Mustang ISD. Dr. Harper was a member of the district's Executive Board, which included the following: Superintendent, Associate Superintendents, and Executive Directors. In June 2015, Dr. Harper resigned from her position. My Field Supervisor became Mrs. Heart, the principal of Mustang Elementary. Serving in her tenth year as principal, Mrs. Heart was the longest serving principal in Mustang ISD. Under her leadership, Mustang Elementary consistently was the highest performing campus in the district. Having an enrollment of over 700 students, Mrs. Heart oversees the running of the largest elementary campus in Mustang ISD. Under Mrs. Heart's leadership, Mustang Elementary received many distinctions, such as Blue-Ribbon Schools. Throughout my internship, I had regular informal meetings with the Superintendent and my campus principal, Mrs. McKenney. Also, I had formal meetings with the Human Resource Director, Chief Academic Officer, and the Board of Trustee members.

### Journey to the Problem

For the vast majority of my career, I have had the pleasure of serving students of color at Title I schools. Throughout my career, I have amassed a record of implementing instructional practices that increase student success. In my five years as a fifth-grade teacher, my students averaged a 100% passage rate in reading and 99% passage rate in math on state assessments TAAS and TAKS. In my five years as a sixth-grade mathematics teacher, my students averaged a 90% passage rate on TAKS. I know my success as a teacher was anchored in my belief that my students deserved my best. My firm belief in academic excellence for all students led me to establish the Pearce Middle School chapter of Texas Alliance for Minorities in Engineering (TAME), an organization that promotes science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for African Americans and Latino students.



Throughout my journey in education, I have crossed the paths of some fantastic teachers who have dedicated their lives to teaching. These teachers have earned accolades for their instructional practices for working with students of color. As I moved into administration, I noticed that administrators often looked outward for instructional solutions. In doing so, these great teachers are often overlooked. Yet, they could make valuable contributions to school districts. . Therefore, , my study focused on sharing the experiences of these successful teachers with administrators who may be unaware of the valuable resources that could improve the academic achievement of students of color and thus, decrease the achievement gap in the district. .

### **Significant Stakeholders**

In my conversations with campus and district level personnel, stakeholders' issues of basic human values emerged. The most common values revolved around trust or, more accurately, mistrust. Repeatedly participants were not willing to speak with me on tape for fear their identities would be revealed. During interviews, phrases such as, "on the list" or "who knows who" repeatedly were mentioned by all respondents. With a significant amount of media coverage that Mustang ISD had received in the previous two years, I was not surprised that basic human values, such as, trust and survival would rank high in order of importance. Table 1.6 is a ranked-order table of values obtained from various interviews with district stakeholders during a time of district transition. The rank-order was determined based on the frequency a value or belief was expressed during interviews.

Table 1.6 Ranked-Order Table of Values, Conversant, and Illustrative Statement(s): Interviews with Stakeholders During the Time of Transition

Rank	Category and Value	*Conversant	Illustrative Statement(s)
1.	Basic Human Value: Trust	Ms. Steak	There is no trust in this district. Everything is based on your relationship to the Superintendent. If he likes you or his people, then you move up.
2.	Basic Human Value: Survival	Ms. Kind	Good job performance doesn't mean anything. You can still lose your job. They keep who they like and destroy whom they don't. We have had principals with excellent records get demoted while sorry ones keep their jobs.
3.	Organizational Values: Effectiveness	Ms. Kind	Mustang ISD continues to rank low among local districts. This is hurting teacher recruitment and retention.
4.	Organizational Values: Effectiveness	Ms. Steak	I'm so tired of Mustang being viewed as the bottom of the barrel by everyone. We don't need YouTube ads; we need better instruction and leaders.
5.	Social and Political Values: Fairness	Ms. Behave	Everything is so political. There is just too much nepotism in Mustang. Everyone is related, so if you are not kin to or friends of it's hard to move up. That's why so many leave to move-up.
6.	Professional Values: Obligation to Clients/ Power/ Control	Mr. Know	The students of Mustang desire better than what they are currently getting.
7.	Basic Human Value: Respect for Others	Ms. Behave	I think we need to train the teachers to be more culturally responsive.
8.	Professional Values: Obligations	Mr. Know	I show up every day to do my best.

Note: Conversates are anonymous.

After many discussions with various stakeholders, I have realized that focusing on classroom pedagogy is primary. Gathering preliminary information during the internship stage of my ROS caused me to shift my problem space toward narrowing my study's focus. In my discussions with various stakeholders, I have encountered vast views. Solving the achievement

gap requires fundamental changes. Cuban (2001) stated that fundamental changes' intention is to alter an organization's culture permanently. Although a noble goal, implementing fundamental changes reach far beyond the scope of my ROS. However, implementing teaching strategies that are shown to be effective with children of color is an incremental change within my scope. According to Cuban (2001), incremental changes aim to improve the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of existing structures and cultures of schooling, including classroom teaching (Cuban, 2001). Therefore, my ROS will explicitly focus on classroom instruction.

The key stakeholders in the school district are campus principals, Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Board of Trustees members, and teachers. The board of trustee members, district administrators, and teachers, all hold a stake in how well MISD students performed academically. As stated earlier, the majority of the students in Mustang ISD were African Americans and Latinos. This demographic reality tied the district's State accountability rating directly to the performance of its students of color. Figure 1.1 illustrates all of the principal stakeholders.



Figure 1 Stakeholders

## Important Terms

**Achievement Gap.** In education refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. (Abramson, 2006).

**Culturally Responsive Teaching.** A pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Gay, 2000).

**Dysconscious Racism.** A form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges (King, 1991).

**Every Student Succeeds Act.** The 2015 Federal Act that requires states to use other indicators of student achievement and school quality. These include student and educator engagement, school climate, access to and completion of advanced coursework, and postsecondary readiness

**Experienced Teacher.** Teachers with a minimum of fifteen years of teaching experience.

**Golem Effect.** The psychological phenomenon in which lower expectations placed upon individuals either by supervisors or the individual themselves lead to poorer performance by the individual (Babad, Inbar, & Rosenthal, 1982).

**No Child Left Behind.** The 2001 Federal Act was designed to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice. Was replaced by the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act.

Add a reference to each

**Pygmalion Effect.** The phenomenon whereby higher expectations led to an increase in performance (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1966).

**State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR).** Since 2012 the STAAR test has been the standardized test used in Texas The STAAR intensified its rigor and created the end of course assessments. At grades 3–8, STAAR assessments were administered to the same subjects and grades that were assessed with TAKS. At the high school level, however, grade

specific assessments were replaced with five End-of-Course (EOC) tests: Algebra I, English I, English II, and U.S. History. High school students must pass all five STAAR EOC tests to earn a diploma.

**State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) End -of Course.** The high school level STAAR test that are course specific: Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History. High school students must pass all five STAAR EOC tests to earn a diploma.

**Successful Teacher.** Defined as regular education secondary school teachers with classes that are at least 50% Latino and African American and at least 90% of their Latino and African American students passed the State of Texas Assessment Academic of Readiness (STAAR) End of Course (EOC) assessments in English, mathematics, science and social studies.

**Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).** The TAAS was the third standardized test used in Texas between 1991 and 2002. The TAAS tested three competencies: reading, math, and writing for grades 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th and 11th.

**Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS).** The TABS test was the first standardized test for public schools in the State of Texas from 1980 - 1984, Introduced by statute by the 66th Legislature in 1979. The TABS tested three competencies: reading, math, and writing for grades 3rd ,5th, and 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).** The TAKS was the fourth standardized test used in Texas between 2003 and 2011. The TAKS was used to test three competencies: reading, math, science, social studies, and writing for grades 3rd - 11th. The TAKS test introduced a grade promotion requirement called the Student Success Initiative (SSI). SSI required students in grades 3rd, 5th, and 8th to pass the reading and math sections of the TAKS to be promoted to the next grade.

**Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS).** The second standardized test used in Texas from 1984 until 1990. The TEAMS was employed to test three competencies: reading, math, and writing for grades 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th and 11th. The TEAMS test was the first Texas standardized test that was a requirement for a high school diploma.

### **Closing Thoughts on Chapter 1**

The 1966 Cohen Report reported the existence of the achievement gap while minimizing the effects of good teaching. I acknowledge the causes of the achievement gap are complex. However, its complexities are not insurmountable. Likewise, I recognize effective teaching is not a panacea. Nonetheless, subsequent studies since 1966, such as Sanders and Rivers (1996), have shown the success that effective teaching has on student achievement (Archer, 1999). These national issues of teacher quality and academic gaps exist in Mustang ISD. By identifying the practices of successful district high school teachers, it is believed that disparities between students of color and Whites can be abridged.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF SUPPORTING SCHOLARSHIP

While many studies assert that some teachers contribute more to their students' academic growth than other teachers, research has not been as decisive at identifying the precise teacher requirements, components, and classroom practices that are most likely to increase student achievement (Sisson & Sisson, 2017). Darling-Hammond and Young's (2002) study showed the impact of effective teaching on student achievement. "Having an effective teacher can dramatically alter students' educational and economic outcomes" (Adnot et al., 2016 p. 54). This research revealed teacher effectiveness narrows the academic gap between students of color and Whites (Adnot et al., 2016). Another study (Marzano, 2001). highlighted the importance of actual instructional practices.

The purpose of this ROS was to focus on the specific teacher qualifications, characteristics, and classroom practices of high school teachers who successfully taught students of color. The study focused on three key components: teacher perception, culturally responsive teaching (CRT), and effective classroom instruction. As such, this chapter will include a historical background, a brief history of Texas standardized testing and accountability, and the most significant research and practice studies.

#### **Historical Background**

The key researched concepts can be divided into two theoretical pedagogical categories. These categories are teacher perception and student-centered instruction, which includes CRT and effective classroom instruction.

Teacher Perception. According to Rosenthal and Jacobson (1966), the expectancy effect occurs if an expectation develops, and, even if it is wrong, the person behaves as if the beliefs were true (Hartley, 2017). In Rosenthal and Jacobson's 1968 book, *Pygmalion in the Classroom*, the expectancy effect is explored. Rosenthal and Jacobson conducted an intriguing study that found the extent to which teacher expectations influence student academic performance (Chen, 2011). Positive expectations positively impact performance, and negative expectations negatively influence performance. In educational communities, this has been termed the Pygmalion Effect, or more colloquially, a self-fulfilling prophecy (Hartley, 2017). Rosenthal and Jacobson (1966) proposed the idea that if teachers' expectations about students' abilities are manipulated early, those expectations will carry over to affect teacher behavior, which, in turn, will affect how the students perform (Chen, 2011). In 1968, Schrank conducted a similar experiment showing the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon, or Golem effect, exists at the group level as well (Babad et al., 1982). Schrank (1968) falsely told teachers that their classes were composed of students with either high or low learning potential. At the conclusion of the study, the high potential group performed better and learned more than the low potential group (Schrank, 1968).

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and Schrank (1968) studied only positive expectations. In 1986, Brophy investigated the effects of negative expectations of the Pygmalion effect (Brophy, 1986). Brophy found that negative expectations, expectation-mediated discrimination, and inaccurate evaluation can be harmful to student motivation (Chen, 2011). Brophy listed eight forms of negative expectations which produced disadvantageous learning conditions. The eight forms are as follows: (a) giving up easily on low-expectation students, (b) criticizing them more often for failure, (c) seating them in the back of the room, (d) praising them less often following



success, (e) neglecting to give feedback following their responses, (f) praising inappropriately, (g) generally interacting with them less frequently or paying less attention to them, (h) expressing less warmth towards them or less interest in them as individuals (Good & Brophy, 2003). The findings of both studies show the importance teacher expectations on student performance.

Both CRT and Marzano's (2001) effective classroom practices are derivatives of student-centered learning which is part of the educational philosophy called constructivism. Student-centered learning is the practice of instruction focusing on the student rather than the teacher. John Dewey was a pioneer of student-centered learning by advocating the principles of experiential learning or learning by doing. This viewpoint shifts the focus of education from the desires of the teacher to the needs of the student. Dewey emphasized that students need to have meaningful learning experiences that were pragmatic and hands-on.

Dewey's viewpoints are aligned fully with the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). CRT is an instructional philosophy that acknowledges the significance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). In *Experience and Education* (1937), Dewey stressed that not all experiences are educational and that for lessons to be meaningful, basic foundations need to be position; these features include "selecting the kind of present experiences that will live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" (p. 17). Also, Dewey maintained that the class must be a continuation of the home, he also held that teachers need to know their students, including their "capacities, interests and habits" (1897, p. 17). Dewey (1937) also held that a teacher needs to survey their students' abilities and needs and then create the conditions for impactful learning opportunities.

In the past, culturally significant pedagogy has been referred to as “culturally appropriate” (Au & Jordan, 1981), “culturally congruent” (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), “culturally responsive” (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), and “culturally compatible” (Jordan, 1985). However, it was Ladson-Billings’ 1992 book, *The Dreamkeepers*, that brought CRT to prominence. Geneva Gay is a prominent educational researcher who has contributed to the popularity of CRT. In her 2000 book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*, Gay increased the conventional view of culture. Traditionally in culturally significant pedagogy discussions, culture was limited to issues of race and ethnicity. Gay (2000) expanded the meaning of culture to include a student's beliefs, motivations, and even social groups and norms.

#### Brief History of Texas Standardized Testing and Accountability

The Texas legislature began state-wide standardized testing and accountability in 1980. The test was named the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS), and it assessed students' skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Schools were required to test students on basic skills in third, fifth, and ninth grades. Students were not required to pass the TABS. In 1984, the Texas legislature introduced the more rigorous Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS). The TEAMS test required students to be tested every other year, beginning with first grade and ending with 11th grade. This was the first occurrence that the passage of a State assessment was a requirement for a high school diploma (Texas Education Agency, 2017).

In 1991, the Texas State Legislature changed from evaluating basic skills to assessing academic skills with the introduction of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The TAAS was the equivalent level of rigor and subjects as TEAMS, but it had higher passing standards. In 2003, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) replaced TAAS as the primary statewide assessment program. TAKS was intended to be more comprehensive than

its forerunners and to measure more reflectively the state-mandated curriculum standard, known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) (Texas Education Agency, 2017).

Currently, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is the official standardized test of the State of Texas. The STAAR test debuted in 2012 replacing TAKS. The STAAR is a set of state-mandated standardized examinations used in Texas public schools to evaluate a student's achievements and knowledge acquired in that grade level. The STAAR intensified its rigor and created the end of course assessments. At grades 3–8, STAAR assessments were administered to the same subjects and grades that were assessed with TAKS. At the high school level, grade-specific assessments were replaced with five STAAR End-of-Course (EOC): Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology and U.S. History. In grades 3rd and 8th, students may advance to the next grade level only by passing the STAAR. High school students must pass all five STAAR EOC tests to receive a diploma (Texas Education Agency, 2017). The STAAR End-of-Courses used in this study were: Algebra I, English I, English II, and U.S. History. The Biology STAAR EOC was not used because no perspective candidate met the study's participant requirements.

#### Action Research Framework

Action research is attuned to Dewey's pragmatic view of learning. With action research, the researcher is seeking to find a solution to a real local problem as opposed to a theoretical problem. The use identified successful teachers to assist in the professional growth of district teachers who would most align with practical action research (Stringer, 2014). In this study, teachers were asked questions related to discrete pedagogical strategies of practical interest, such as lesson planning, instruction, and parental communication. Embedded within these questions, is information about student perceptions and CRT.

## Theoretical Framework

The overarching theoretical framework that aligns with this study is the student-centered learning theory. Student-centered learning is a theory of education that focuses on the needs and interest of students, rather than those of teachers and administrator (Dewey,1937). The purpose of identifying local successful high school teachers is to provide other district teachers with local experts. Local expert teachers who would be available to do a myriad of things: model, instruct, coach, and consult. Thereby, district teachers will gain professional knowledge based on personal experiences and interaction with the district expert teachers.

### **Most Significant Research and Practice Studies**

#### Teacher Perception Affects Student Performance

For the past four decades, the debate in this area has been concentrated either on the extent to which teachers' expectations are founded on negative beliefs or the extent to which students are impacted by the same. According to Brophy (1986), a teacher's perception of their students matters. Brophy's (1986) study showed a correlation exists between a teacher's perception of their students and the students' performance. According to Crawford (2007), teachers viewed Latino and African American students as less academically capable than White or Asian students. Some of the most disconcerting indicators of teacher beliefs, views, and bias towards students come from an established area of research on teacher expectations (Good & Brophy, 2003).

According to Crawford (2007), lowered expectations for Latino and African American students contributed to their poorer academic performance. Without a doubt, the issue of teacher-student perception has a direct impact on the quality of education in the district (Brophy, 1986).

These findings were supported by McKown and Weinstein's (2008) research that examined teacher expectations within the context of the classroom and the achievement gap. McKown and Weinstein (2008) examined the relationship between a child's ethnicity and teacher expectations, and its impacts on student achievement. The researchers found teacher expectations were higher for European American and Asian American students than for African American and Latino students with similar achievement levels. Using an ethnographic approach, Crawford (2007) described the curricula that veteran urban high school special educators use in self-contained special education classrooms with a majority of African American and Latino students. Crawford's findings suggested that the teachers routinely exposed students to elementary level curricula and to material that was ramparted with racist images of African American and Latino. These instructional practices were grounded in the teachers' perception of their students' capabilities.

In 1981, Beady and Hansell conducted a study on teacher academic expectation of African American students. The purpose of this study was to examine teacher expectations for future student success. Beady and Hansell (1981) also examined the perceptions of student achievement and student effort held by both African American and White teachers. The study was conducted in both predominantly African American and White schools. Two principal findings included: (a) African American teachers expected their African American students to be more successful in attending and completing college than did White teachers; (b) African American teachers and White teachers in African American schools did not differ in their evaluations of elementary achievement, elementary effort, or in their expectations for the future success of their students in high school (Beady & Hansell, 1981).

Dee's 2003 study, *Teacher, Race, and Student Achievement in a Randomized Experiment* brought new empirical data to address the finding that African American students perform better with African American teachers. Dee (2003) found sizable evidence that significant educational benefits exist for own-race teacher and student achievement of both African American and White students in grades first - third. Dee also (2003) discovered that White students perform best with White teachers and African American students perform best with African American teachers. Additionally, he found that, as students age, the correlation between own race teacher and student achievement decreases. The topic of what Dee (2001) called "passive" teacher effects was particularly intriguing. A teacher's racial presence elicits "passive" effects and not by specific teacher behaviors. He cited Claude M. Steele's theory (year) of "stereotype threat," which is having anxiety when a person can confirm a negative stereotype about one's social group. Dee (2003) stated that stereotype threat might come into play when an African American student is taught by a White teacher. Haberman and Hill-Jackson (2017), also discuss the effects of racial ideology and prejudices and how these views affect issues surrounding student achievement. They discuss the idea of a hierarchy of native intelligence related to race. (p. 23).

Moon and Brighton (2008) focused on the first phase of a recent National Research Center on Giftedness and Talented project, which used survey research to target a random sample of primary grade teachers about their views and practices related to talent growth in young children. Findings indicated that elementary teachers continue to hold traditional conceptions of talent that shapes how they view cultural minority students and non-native English speakers (López, 2017). These perceptions contribute to the underrepresentation of children of color (Moon & Brighton, 2008).

## Culturally Responsive Teaching

In many schools throughout the country, African American students are not receiving an equal education. Often, students in African American urban areas continue to show lower test scores and performance than White students in suburban schools. In *The Dreamkeepers*, Ladson-Billings (1994) examined how African American students become academically successful by looking at eight different teachers and examining both "political and the practical" to determine the best types of teaching for African American students. Ladson-Billings referred to CRT as "Specifically culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These cultural references are not merely vehicles for bridging or explaining the dominant culture; they are aspects of the curriculum in their own right" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p.20). Often, teachers indicate that many are uncomfortable acknowledging any student differences and particularly racial differences. These teachers often make statements as, "I don't see color, I just see children," or "I don't care if they're yellow, green, or purple, I just treat them all like children." However, these efforts at color-blindness mask a "dysconscious racism," an "uncritical habit of mind that justifies inequity and exploration by accepting the existing order of things given." (p. 34-35).

As the number of African American and Latino populations increase, drastic implications will exist for teaching and learning in these classrooms and, more importantly, challenges for teachers who are teaching student populations whose culture differs from their own (Howard, 2003). According to a few multiculturalists such as Ladson-Billings (2009), Gay (2000), Howard (2003), and Nieto (2016), CRT is one approach that may have the potential to "narrow" the unequal educational outcomes between White students and often less successful students of

diverse ethnic and cultural heritage. Given the increasing diversity in schools within the U.S., teachers must be able to recognize how race, ethnicity, and culture shape the learning experience for many students (Howard, 2003). More pointedly, teachers must be able to create pedagogical practices that have significance and meaning to a students' social and cultural realities.

Education does not live in a vacuum; it is an integral part of society's culture. Therefore, culture is central to education. Culture plays a role not only in transmitting and receiving information but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. Researchers repeatedly have confirmed that teachers need to know more about the world of the children with whom they work to provide better opportunities for academic success (Pransky & Bailey, 2002). CRT is a set of beliefs and strategies that are central to this ROS. The theory of CRT recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Gay, 2010). Gay defined culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge, earlier experiences, and performance behaviors of diverse students to make learning more effective and suitable. According to Gay (2000; 2010), CRT teaches to the strengths of diverse students. Gay made a case for why educators must adopt culturally responsive teaching practices, both to perform their role effectively and address the needs of the growing number of children of color. Ladson-Billings' 1994 study featured in the book, *The Dreamkeepers*, showcased teachers who successfully taught African American students. Ladson-Billings (1994) found that CRT is not a matter of race, gender, or teaching style. In many ways, this study mirrored that of Ladson-Billings (1994). Both studies were qualitative examinations of the teaching practices of teachers who were successful in teaching children of color.

Boykin and Noguera (2011) found that a key feature of CRT is teacher-student relationship quality (TSRQ). The TSRQ is a crucial component when improving the academic



performance of children of color (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). For TSRQ to impact student performance positively, a sense of cultural caring and respect must exist (Gay, 2010). Rodriguez and Bellanca's (2007) book, *What About Me You Can't Teach?*, blended classroom expectations and standards with research-based practices to show teachers how to deliver high-quality instruction in any environment. Meece and Wingate (2010) examined the importance for students in teacher preparation programs to understand changes in curricular approaches to diversity- from the color-blind approach to multiculturalism to anti-bias curriculum. Meece and Wingate (2010) suggested instructional practices that acknowledge differences between children from different cultural groups without developing a "pedagogy of poverty," that may result in lowered expectations of children from minority and low-income families (Meece & Wingate, 2010).

CRT emphasizes the importance of family and culture. Stevenson's 1990 study examined school achievement among 3,000 Black, White, and Latino Chicago elementary school children by probing the beliefs about the academic performance of the children and their mothers. Interviews with approximately 1,000 mothers and children revealed a greater emphasis on and concern about education among families of color than among White households. Ladson-Billings (1994) stated that culturally responsive teachers used "cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 32). Culturally responsive teachers not only realize the importance of academic achievement, but also the maintaining of one's cultural identity and heritage (Gay, 2010).

Howard notes poverty as one of the most definitive reasons for the achievement gap. Howard states that children living in poverty have difficulty learning due to increased health issues because of poor living conditions and a shortage of adequate health insurance (Howard,

2018). He states that poverty often leads to a difficult home life due to overworked parents, frequent moving, and even possible homelessness. Howard understands that while poverty may play a significant role in student achievement, teachers must nevertheless be equipped to address other changeable factors. One of these factors is the recognition of race and culture within schools (Howard, 2010). In the Star framework, driven teachers and school leaders hold affirming beliefs and enact empowering behaviors that engender excellence among learners in poverty (Haberman, & Hill-Jackson, 2018).

When discussing education, Howard expands his discussion beyond student achievement by subjects, such as mathematics and reading. He also looks at the wide gaps between races in regard to drop-out and graduation rates, and access to accelerated courses. Also, Howard discusses gaps in student achievement in disciplinary actions, such as retention, suspensions, and expulsions. Howard identifies five characteristics needed to successfully close the achievement gap: visionary leadership, effective teaching practices, academic support, acknowledgment of race, and community support (Howard, 2010).

### Effective Classroom Instruction

Teacher quality has an enduring impact on student learning. Data show that a student who has an exceptional teacher for merely one year will remain ahead of her peers for the next few years (Adnot et al., 2016). Regrettably, the opposite is true as well: if a student has an ineffective teacher, the adverse effect on her achievement may not be fully remediated for up to three years (Adnot et al., 2016). Recent research has strengthened both the importance of teachers in producing student achievement growth and in the variability among teachers to achieve student growth (López, 2017). These findings raise the stakes on the ability to identify effective teachers and teaching practices. Over the past thirty years, researchers have reported

substantial differences in student achievement gains in different teachers' classrooms (Hanushek, 1971; Murnane & Phillips, 1981). The literature on teacher quality has recently undergone a resurgence. Recently, state governments and school districts, have begun to track achievement gains of similar students assigned to different teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

Research on the effectiveness of teaching has reported a direct relationship between its quality and student learning (Darling-Hammond & Young, 2002). Odden, Borman, and Fermanich (2004) indicated that teachers have a significant influence on student learning. Based on Ding and Sherman (2006), the following seven teacher factors were found to be associated with student achievement and include: (a) years of teaching; (b) major of undergraduate study, particularly for science and mathematics teachers; (c) ACT or SAT test scores; (d) course work or degree obtained; (e) quality of high school; (f) earning a license; and (g) verbal ability. However, Odden et al. (2004) suggested that these variables should be defined further, especially for the variables that show mixed effects.

The studies of teacher effectiveness largely have not attempted to identify specific characteristics of teachers (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Nonetheless, research on teacher behaviors in the classroom showed that effective teachers tended to be those who could use a variety of teaching strategies and demonstrate a flexible style rather than a single, rigid approach. Studies cited in Darling-Hammond (2010) suggested that the expertise of the teachers makes learning occur for students. In general, effective teachers can adjust their teaching style to fit the needs and style of different learners because they have an extensive repertoire of approaches and strategies, such as direct teaching, modeling interactive teaching strategies, cooperative learning techniques, and experienced-based and skill-based approaches. Darling-Hammond (2000) mentioned other variables that have been found to be important: clarity, enthusiasm, task-

oriented behavior, and higher order thinking. In effect, high-quality instruction depends on the competence and attitudes of each teacher. Darling-Hammond (2000) referred to the report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, the standards and assessments that have emerged from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future that identified that an effective teacher should have an understanding of how students learn and develop, skills in using a range of strategies, the ability to work well with parents and other teachers, effectiveness and responsiveness in working with students from diverse backgrounds, and assessment expertise capable of ascertaining how well students are doing. In addition, effective teachers can appropriately monitor instructional pacing (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Therefore, the fact remains that teaching behaviors and practices facilitate student learning.

Hill-Jackson (2019), also identify seven key dispositions of an effective teacher that they refer to as Star Teacher: (1) persistence; (2) positive values about student learning; (3) the ability to adapt general theories into pedagogical practices; (4) an encouraging approach to students classified as at risk; (5) a professional versus a personal orientation to learners; (6) the ability to navigate school bureaucracy; and (7) a willingness to admit one's shortcomings.

Central to any instructional study is the ability to recognize and to identify instructional strategies that have the highest probability of increasing student achievement. The work of Marzano (2001) and Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) was central to understanding research-based effective instructional strategies. In *What Works in Classroom Instruction*, Marzano (2001) synthesized the findings of McREL, entitled, *A Theory-Based Meta-Analysis of Research on Instruction*. McREL conducted over 100 studies involving 4,000+ comparisons of experimental and control groups (Marzano, 2001). The meta-analysis determined the instructional strategies that have the highest probability of improving student achievement for

all students across all subjects and grades. Results were reported in effect sizes noting the increase or decrease in performance of the students who were exposed to the specific instructional method in standard deviation units. The effect sizes can be translated into percentile gains and interpreted concerning impact.

- The effect size concerns to the impact on student learning (Marzano, 2001).

Effect Size = Impact

.20 Small

.50 Medium

.80 Large

Listed in Table 2.1 are the nine categories of strategies that research, and experience suggest have a strong influence on student achievement according to the meta-analysis by McREL:

Table 2.1 The Nine Categories of Strategies that have a Strong Influence on Student Achievement.

Marzano strategies	Effect Size
1. Identifying similarities and differences	1.61
2. Summarizing	1.00
3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition	0.80
4. Homework and practice	0.77
5. Non-linguistic representations	0.75
6. Cooperative learning	0.73
7. Setting objectives and providing feedback	0.61

*Table 2.1 Continued*

Marzano strategies	Effect Size
8. Generating and testing a hypothesis	0.61
9. Questions, cues, and advance organizers	0.59

Identifying Similarities and Differences: Summarizing and .... <https://www.middleweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Marzanos-Nine.pdf>

Hill-Jackson (2019) stated that putting theory into practice explains how effective teachers transform theory and research into commonsense instructional practices. This profile predicts an educator's receptiveness to professional development activities and the likelihood to grow in the profession. Haberman reports that the extent to which a teacher can cross-step from theory to practice—or vice versa—foreshadows that teacher's ability to benefit from professional development activities and grow as a professional practitioner (Hill-Jackson, 2019).

### **Closing Thoughts on Chapter 2**

The literature reviewed assisted by framing and reframing the problem by providing background knowledge and focus. The studies of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), pioneers of teacher-student perception, revealed the Pygmalion Effect or Self-fulfilling Prophecy theory, which states that a teachers' expectations about students transform the teachers' behaviors in ways that confirm the initial expectations, thus becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Brophy (1986) also found that a teacher's perception of their students' matters. Steele's stereotype threat is having anxiety when a person has the possibility to confirm a negative stereotype about his or her social group (Steele, 2010). A positive teacher-student perception is a cornerstone of CRT. Boykin and Noguera (2011) found a key feature of successful CRT is a positive teacher-student relationship quality. In addition to student-teacher relations, CRT is based on a student-centered instructional theory, much like the effective instructional practices studied by Marzano (2001).

The constructive theory of student-centered learning is the anchor of both CRT and the instructional practices studied by Marzano (2001). Student-learning theories such as advocating the principles of experiential learning or learning by doing were championed the pioneering Dewey.

The information from the various studies has improved the understanding of perception theories, best practices, and culturally responsive education. In many ways, the study mirrored that of Ladson-Billings' study (1994) featured in her book, *The Dreamkeepers*. Like Ladson-Billings, my ROS study is a qualitative examination of the teaching practices of high school teachers who were successful in teaching children of color. In my study, the questions used in the survey were derived from the Ladson-Billings study (1994). My ROS study used practical action research; the study looked for pragmatic solutions to address the local problem of teacher quality.

CHAPTER III  
SOLUTION AND METHOD

**Proposed Solution**

For the past decade, the student of color population has grown in actual numbers and percentages in Mustang ISD while the White student population decreased. All the while, students of color routinely had performed below their White peers in math and reading on the STAAR test. Because culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers bring to the instructional process, it is a major determinant of how the problems of underachievement among students of color will be solved. One possible approach and solution would be to use qualitative data analysis of the instructional practices of secondary teachers who successfully teach children of color that yields transferable effective instructional practices. With the implementation of these effective instructional practices, the performance of African American and Latino students could possibly increase on the STAAR EOC assessments.

Student STAAR scores were used to identify teachers. The study focused on five secondary school teachers who had at least 90% of their assigned Latino and African American students passing the STAAR EOC in Algebra I, English I, English II, and US History. Latino and African American students had to constitute a minimum of 50% of the class. The instructional subjects under study were algebra I, English I, English II, and US history.

Qualitative data collection methods employed were conducting interviews and surveys. Qualitative data were analyzed using the problem-solving method of positive deviance (Creswell, 2013) to identify trends and patterns of teacher instructional practices. The qualitative methodology was the most appropriate approach to providing in depth insight on how the



teachers viewed their own instructional practices. Allowing the voices of the teachers to be heard through interviews and surveys.

Despite its demographic shifts, Mustang ISD had not implemented a plan to explicitly address the academic needs of its African American and Latino students. Culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers bring into the classroom. Therefore, the solution proposed through this ROS study was training teachers to become more culturally responsive using the principles outlined in Gay's book (2000), *Culturally Responsive Teaching*. With the implementation of these effective instructional practices, the performance of African American and Latino students would increase on the STAAR EOC assessments.

The type of input that I received was influenced significantly by the respondent's position or role. In general, campus-based respondents (campus administrators, teachers, and instructional coaches) framed the issue using dilemma language, such as “mess”, “crazy”, “hopeless”. Whereas, central office employees (HR Director, Superintendent, and Board Trustee) framed the issues as more problematic, using language such as the “fix”, “reboot”, “new page”. Although I appreciated the candor of many of the campus-based employees, I found the more solution-based discussions of the central office employees more useful to implementing my ROS. Some key solutions were:

- Increase teaching time by eliminating early release days and late start Mondays
- Review campus principal selection
- Restructure teacher professional development and implement CRT
- Revamp principal campus selection
- Hire racially diverse staff

The most valuable information that my stakeholders offered was that the design of a solution to my problem for my ROS was too broad. Therefore, after gathering information on my ROS from stakeholders, I shifted my problem space by narrowing my study's focus. Solving the achievement gap requires fundamental changes. Cuban (2001) stated that fundamental changes aim to alter an organization's culture permanently. Although an honorable goal, implementing fundamental changes reach far beyond the scope of my ROS. For the most part, stakeholders supported providing CRT training for teachers in August.

My discussion group was most informative. The group discussions became critical to the reframing of my ROS. The members made me think about what I was proposing to study, and, due to their honesty, I narrowed my focus and improved the focus of my ROS. As outsiders, my discussion group functioned as an objective voice. My insider status was a definite advantage; however, it was also a disadvantage because we often develop "blind spots" that may be visible to an objective outsider. When collecting data from within a group, the risk of "stepping on toes" or finding something that other insiders might take offensively inadvertently exists.

After examining the academic data for Latino and African American students, Ms. Heart, my Field Supervisor, strongly supported my study's proposed solution of increasing CRT through teacher training. My Field Supervisor agreed with Crawford (2007) that lowered expectations for Latino and African American students contributed to their poorer academic performance. In Mustang Independent School District (MISD), over 80% of students were children of color; yet over 60% of teachers were White. Without a doubt, the issue of teacher-student perception had a direct impact on the quality of education in the district (Brophy, 1986). Recently, a new Superintendent was appointed who is more open to CRT. Mrs. Heart believes teachers can receive CRT training with the new initiative to reform teacher professional

development. Dr. Larke, my committee chair, supported my solution to implement CRT based on local instructional practices. However, Dr. Larke was most concerned with how I was gathering data. Dr. Larke assisted me with preparing for my interviews by advising me how to structure my conversations with my stakeholders. By structuring my conversations, conceptual patterns became much more apparent.

After extensive collection efforts, I am confident that the recommended solution for training teachers on CRT based on local instructional practices was correct. Nearly all respondents voiced concerns about instruction quality and its impact on children of color. With the support of Board Trustee, Mr. Samson, and Superintendent, Dr. Adler, there are currently district level leaders who see the need for CRT and support the solution to train teachers. Once my ROS was completed, I met with the Assistant Superintendent of Academics and Accountability to discuss implementation and sustainability.

#### Justification of proposed solution

When teachers are aware of the specific instructional strategies, they will be able to adopt practices that begin a path to greater achievement for all. The guiding question asked, “What are the characteristics of successful teachers?” The guiding question centered on how effective teachers teach. Therefore, through the study surveys and interviews, I asked the teachers the following additional questions:

1. How do successful high school teachers account for their student’s continuous high-test performance?
2. What are the instructional practices of successful high school teachers?

## Study Context and Participants

Using data gathered from the Mustang Independent School District (MISD) Eduphoria data management program, the study focused on five high school teachers who had at least 90% of their assigned Latino and African American students passing the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness End of Course exam (STAAR) for Algebra I, English I, English II, and US History. Although Biology was a required EOC, no biology teachers fit the criteria for teacher selection. Table 3.1 shows the demographic information of the five participating teachers.

Table 3.1 Demographic Information of Study Participants

Participant	Gender	Race	Course	Years of Experience
A. Alice	Female	White	Algebra I	31
B. Brian	Male	African American	Algebra I	23
C. Charles	Male	White	US History	22
D. Denise	Female	African American	English I & II	15
E. Eva	Female	Latina	English I & II	17

Alice is a White female mathematics teacher. Alice is in her mid-60's and holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Mathematics both from the University of Texas. Alice has taught for 31 years in a variety of schools within two school districts. For the past seven years, she worked at a high school in Mustang ISD. Alice teaches the following courses: Algebra I, Algebra II, and AP Calculus.

Brian is an African American male mathematics teacher. Brian is in his mid-50's and holds a bachelor's degree from Prairie View A&M University. Brian taught for 23 years at an

Austin, Texas, public school. For the past four years, he worked at a high school in Mustang ISD teaching the following courses: Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry.

Charles is a White male Social Studies teacher. Charles is in his mid-40's and holds a bachelor's degree from New York University. Charles has taught for 22 years in a variety of schools in Texas and New Jersey. For the last seven years, Charles taught at a high school in Mustang ISD, teaching the following courses: US History, World History, and Economics.

Denise is an African American female language arts teacher. Denise is in her mid-40's and holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan. Denise taught for 15 years in a variety of schools in Texas, Ohio, and Michigan. For the last three years, Denise taught at a high school in Mustang ISD, teaching the following courses: English I, English II, and Journalism.

Eva is a Latino female language arts teacher. Eva is in her mid-30's and holds a bachelor's degree from Texas A & M University. For the past seventeen years, Eva taught at a high school in Mustang ISD. For the past ten years, she worked at a high school in Mustang ISD teaching English I and English II.

### Research Paradigm

Educational issues have been analyzed using a multitude of methods. However, the primary analytical methods are quantitative studies which examine numerical data and qualitative studies which examine subjective data, such as interviews, and surveys. Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that analyzes information conveyed through language and behavior in natural settings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). A qualitative approach was required through the use of interviews and questionnaires to explore fully the nature of the problem in this study.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggested that qualitative research is a “field of inquiry” (p. 2) and that qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of phenomena that are studied in its natural setting. Stake (2005) referred to this inquiry as “discovery learning” (p. 454), and Creswell (2007) agreed and discussed exploring issues or problems through qualitative research. Qualitative research is preferable when researchers make interpretations from what they see and hear based on their findings, and this approach is connected directly to the researcher’s background and history (Creswell, 2007).

The case study as a form of qualitative descriptive research was the most appropriate method to examine the small group of participants in my research. Yin (2009) based his approach to a case study on a constructivist paradigm. This paradigm is built upon the premise of making cognitive connections and the social interactions that result (Vygotsky, 1978), and one of those social interactions is the close collaboration that occurs between the researcher and the participant.

### Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods used were interviews and surveys. Trends and patterns of both teacher expectations and instructional practices were analyzed using content analysis (Creswell, 2013). Data collection was via surveys and one-on-one structured interviews. The survey was developed using the work of Marzano’s 2001 book, *Classroom Instruction The Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* and Charlotte Danielson’s (2007), *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. Online surveys tend to be the most cost-effective modes of survey research. A survey is relatively easy to administer and can be developed in less time (compared to other data-collection methods). However, respondent

truthfulness may be an issue with online surveys. Participants may not answer questions precisely those addressing controversies (Creswell, 2013). Respondents may not feel obliged to provide accurate, honest answers. The truth behind these contentions may not be reviewed as precisely as when using alternative data collecting methods such as face-to-face interviews and focus groups (Creswell, 2013). This provides a little better description of the methodology

Also, each participant took part in a structured interview. The interview questions in this study were based on the eleven questions asked of teachers in the Ladson-Billings' 1994 study. The one-on-one interviews conveyed a sense of seriousness and provided the researcher with both verbal and nonverbal information. A well-structured interview allowed for greater nuance. If crafted well, participant responses reveal both priorities and importance (Creswell, 2013). The content analyses of transcribed interviews identified specific interests, practices, and concerns of teachers being studied.

Finally, each study participant took part in a structured interview (Creswell, 2013). This formatting style provided precision and reliability. A structured interview protocol was designed to assure continuity across interviewers. After participants had been given written informed consent, interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed (Creswell, 2013). The website seobook.com was used to analyze the content of both the open-ended survey questions and structured interview responses. Table 3.2 displays the goals, objectives, activities, guiding questions, and assessments associated with the problem solution.

Table 3.2 Goals, Objectives, Activities, Guiding Questions, and Assessments Associated with the Problem Solution

Guiding Questions	Data Collection Methods	Rationale for Methods
How effective teachers plan and prepare?	Online survey	An online survey was available to everyone and yielded many participants. The anonymity created a safe space for parents to voice true opinions.
How effective teachers view the classroom environment?	Structured Interview	The one-on-one interviews conveyed a sense of seriousness and provided the researcher both verbal and nonverbal information.
What instructional practices do effective teachers find impactful?	Online survey	The survey enabled researchers to describe trends.
How culturally responsive are these effective teachers?	Online survey and Structured Interview	Both online survey and structured interview allowed for attitudinal measures when they measured feelings toward educational topics (e.g., assessing positive or negative attitudes toward giving students a choice of school to attend)
Are the practices of these effective teachers transferable?	Online survey and Structured Interview	Transcripts and survey reports could be analyzed using content analysis.



### Justification of Use of Instruments in Context

A structured interview has a fixed format in which all questions are prepared beforehand and are put in the same order to each interviewee (Creswell, 2013). This formatting style provided precision and reliability. A structured interview protocol was designed to assure continuity across interviewers. After participants had given written informed consent, interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed (Creswell, 2013).

Participants completed an online survey designed using the work of Marzano's, 2001 book, *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*, and Charlotte Danielson's, ((2007) *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. Questions were formatted both to a Likert scale and open-ended. Surveys do not involve a treatment given to subjects by the researcher. Alternatively, survey studies describe trends in the data rather than offer rigorous explanations. Survey research has much in common with correlational designs. Survey researchers often correlate variables, but their focus is directed more toward learning about a population and less on relating variables or predicting outcomes, as is the focus in correlational research (Creswell, 2013). By using the online survey site Survey Monkey, I was able to import the data into Microsoft Excel, where I analyzed percentages and graphed the numbers.

Finally, each study participant took part in a structured interview (Creswell, 2007). This formatting style provided precision and reliability. A structured interview protocol was designed to assure continuity across interviewers. After participants had given written informed consent, interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed (Creswell, 2013). The website

seobook.com was used to analyze the content of both the open-ended survey questions and structured interview responses.

Content analysis was used to transcribe conversations and field notes to identify specific patterns and practices. Content analysis is a research method used to make replicable and valid inferences by deciphering and coding word-based material. By systematically assessing texts, qualitative data can be changed into quantitative data. With content analysis, a researcher strives to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Creswell stated, content analysis “looks for categories, themes, or dimensions of information...several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186). I looked for common themes in discussions and placed them into categories. Additionally, I used frequency counts on survey choices and commonalities of importance rankings. The open-ended questions in the survey were analyzed using content analysis.

### Data Analysis Strategy

In preparing for analyzing my data, I explored the use of technology to conduct a computer analysis of the qualitative data. I considered the qualitative analysis program Nvivo, however; due to the study’s small sample size, a computer qualitative data analysis program was not used. Creswell (2007) stated that hand analysis might be preferable when analyzing a small database (less than 500 pages). Therefore, in a study with only five participants and a database of fewer than 500 pages, I opted to conduct hand content analysis. With qualitative data analysis, the task of the researcher is to find patterns within the words and to present those patterns for others to scrutinize while staying as close to the construction of the world as the participants initially experienced it (Creswell, 2013).

Reliability is as important for qualitative research as it is for quantitative research (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013). The issue of reliability is often discussed in research studies based on quantitative rather than qualitative data. According to Krippendorff (2004) there exist three types of reliability. One is stability where the concern is if a coder's use of codes changes over time or stays consistent. Second is accuracy where a benchmark coding scheme is already established with high reliability, and other coding schemes are developed and compared to it. The third is reproducibility across coders where the concern is whether different coders would code the same data the same way. My interest here was with developing coding schemes that are reproducible for in-depth semi-structured interviews.

#### Effective Teaching Surveys

The interview questions in this study were based on the eleven questions asked of teachers in the Ladson-Billings' study (1994). The process of analysis began with listening to playbacks for all the interviews and taking notes. All interviews were then transcribed. Once transcribed, all interview transcripts were read twice. A spreadsheet was used to prepare the interview transcripts for coding.

Coding is the process of organizing and sorting data. With coding, the researcher can label, compile and organize data. It also allows the researcher to summarize and synthesize what is happening in the data. In linking data collection and interpreting the data, coding becomes the basis for developing the analysis (Gibbs, 2007).

A spreadsheet was created to prepare the interview transcripts for coding. On the spreadsheet, each question and response were placed in an individual cell. This process is known as the constant comparative method which involves breaking down the data into discrete

‘incidents’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) or ‘units’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and coding them to categories. The goal of this process is to assist the researcher in developing theoretical insights.

Once on a spreadsheet, each question was coded as a category, and the responses were highlighted in relation to the category. Once each interview was coded and highlighted, all five interviews were inputted on a single spreadsheet. Having all the interviews inputted into a single spreadsheet better allowed for the comparison of the participants' responses. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated: “the process of constant comparison stimulates thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories” (p. 334). An excerpt of my code book is located in appendixes 2.

### Participant Survey Analysis

Using Marzano’s, 2001 book, *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*, and Charlotte Danielson’s, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, participants took an online instructional practices survey on the website Survey Monkey. Questions were formatted to a Likert scale, open-ended, and ranking. Likert items addressed student engagement, teacher competence, and school resources. Likert item addressing student engagement had responses that were assigned numbers from one to five with one being “Not Engaged” and five representing “Extremely Engaged.” For Likert items addressing teacher competence or campus resources, each Likert item had responses that were assigned numbers from one to five with one being “Poor” and five representing “Very Good.” Creswell (2007) stated that Likert scales often are “treated like both ordinal and interval data in educational research” (p.176) and different researchers have their own preferences. The Likert scale is designed to display estimations of attitudinal magnitude,

rather than opinion. The scales of the Likert express a “greater than” relationship. The Likert scale allows the researcher to ascribe quantitative values to qualitative data, which makes qualitative data more amenable to statistical analysis. Although the Likert scales was used to collect ordinal data, it was analyzed as if it was interval data. Treating Likert data as interval data allowed the creation of averages and the application of other statistical tests. Therefore, for this study higher Likert values were interpreted as a more positive response.

Over half of the survey allowed for open-ended questions. An open-ended question was designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the subject's own knowledge and/or feelings. The analysis of the open-ended survey questions was very similar to the analysis of the interviews. In my creating a spreadsheet, each question was coded as a category and the responses were highlighted in relation to the category. Once each question was coded and highlighted, all responses were inputted on a single spreadsheet. Inputting all responses into a single spreadsheet better allowed for the comparison of the participants’ responses. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated “the process of constant comparison stimulates thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories” (p. 334).

The third element of the survey was the ranking of instructional practices. A ranking question survey asked respondents to compare a list of different objects to one another. The surveys utilized Likert scales. Each Likert item had responses that were assigned numbers from one to five, with one being “Poor” and five representing “Superior.” The Likert scale was designed to display estimations of attitudinal magnitude, rather than opinion. The scales of the Likert expressed a “greater than” relationship. The number assigned to each category was arbitrary, yet Likert scales imply theoretically equal intervals among responses. Creswell (2007) stated that Likert scales are often “treated like both ordinal and interval data in educational

research” (p.176) and different researchers have their preferences. Since ordinal scales provide response options that ask participants to rank their preferences, I examined the data as ordinal data. Similar to the Likert scales, ranking questions allowed for responses to be transformed into an ordinal scale. Ordinal scales provided good information about the order of choices. A key statistical value of a ranking question item is the ability to extract measures of position, such as, percentiles ranks. The categories that developed from the analysis were as follows: (a) educational philosophy, (b) culturally responsive teaching, (c) parental involvement, (d) student discipline and (e) teacher autonomy.

### Timeline

In the summer of 2014, I submitted a proposal for IRB review to complete interviews, surveys, and classroom observations during the fall semester of 2014. It was not approved, and revisions were required. After two revisions, in May 2015, the proposal was reviewed by a full board and rejected. In the fall of 2015, I submitted a new proposal for IRB to complete thirty-five interviews and surveys. In March 2016, I received IRB approval.

In February 2017, I approached IRB for an amendment to the proposal to ask permission to extend the study. Table 3.3 displays the goals, objectives, and activities associated with the ROS.

Table 3.3 Goals, Objectives, and Activities Associated with the Problem Solution

Goal	Objectives	Activity
Improve the academic performance of students of color in Mustang ISD.	Identify replicable instructional practices of teachers who successfully teach children of color	Identified teachers will take an online survey of their instructional practices.
Improve Mustang ISD’s culture responsiveness to all students.	Increase culturally responsive instruction in Mustang ISD	Identified teachers will be interviewed on their instructional practices as it relates to cultural responsiveness

## Reliability and Validity Concerns or Equivalents

**Reliability:** The fact that anyone who had the short link to the survey was able to access the survey could have posed a minor reliability issue. To obfuscate personal identities, all participants were given the same survey short link. The study's link was distributed directly to the subject's district email accounts to deny non-participants from taking the survey.

**Validity:** I created the survey that mirrored the eleven questions asked of teachers in the Ladson-Billings 1994 study. My Texas A&M committee chair reviewed and approved the final version of the survey before it was administered. Did the questions measure what we intended to measure? Did the questions match topics addressed in the Ladson-Billings 1994 study? The content was focused on collecting demographic data as well as their views of various instructional practices.

**Distinguish between whether the information is confidential or anonymous or both**

**Confidentiality:** To ensure confidentiality, any information that was obtained in connection with this study and that can identify subjects will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with participants' permission or as required by law. All surveys will continue to be confidential. Responses to surveys will be completely confidential; names will not appear anywhere on the survey. All interviews will remain confidential. Subject identities will be kept confidential by assigning a code that indicates grade level, subject, years of experience, and gender. No information collected for this study will be disclosed to any district personnel. No information collected for this study will be used for any evaluative purpose. All data were password protected, and I was the only one able to access the data.

### **Closing Thoughts on Chapter 3**

The data analysis process began by listening and reading the transcribed interviews while coding the transcription. This was done to make note of the tone and inflection of the participants' voices to try to capture the true intent of their words. The next step was to review the data gathered from the Effective Teaching surveys. I calculated measures of central tendency, standard deviations, and ranking to explore patterns between participants' responses. I strived to triangulate my problem under study by collecting data from different methods, interviews, and survey question types, in order to achieve a more accurate and valid estimate of my qualitative results.

Once the coding was completed and statistical measures calculated, the information was used to generalize from the themes about the problem in question and interpret the data in light of the literature. Data subsequently were re-analyzed until saturation was reached. A researcher achieves saturation when the collection of new data does not shed any further light on the issue under investigation (Creswell, 2007).



## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### **Findings Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine high school teachers who had taught students of color successfully as measured by STAAR End -of Course. The first part of the study examined teacher practices through the lens of an Effective Teacher survey. The second part was to uncover teacher perceptions of student engagement and achievement via a structured interview. Therefore, the research questions were answered from responses to a survey and interview questions.

#### **Presentation of Data**

To provide a complete picture of the study's results, outcomes are presented in two ways. First, findings are grouped by the research questions. The theme is represented under the context of the research questions and described through selected quotes from the transcriptions. Second, to provide support, the survey results are discussed. More focus on the themes is needed.

My research questions consisted of the following:

1. How do successful high school teachers account for their student's continuous high-test performance?
2. What are the instructional practices of successful high school teachers?

Several commonalities were noted as I began analyzing the data. When examining the interview transcripts, common themes emerged through the coding process. These commonalities were supported by the two Effective Teaching surveys. Since I could compare the commonalities between both data sources, I considered these topics to be overarching themes. The themes were: (a) Educational Philosophy, (b) Culturally Responsive

Teaching, (c) Parental Involvement, (d) Student Discipline, and (e) Teacher Autonomy.

Following is an explanation of these themes in the context of the research questions using the responses from the teacher interview questions.

Research question #1: How do successful high school teachers account for their students' continuous high-test performance?

Through the interview, I explored research question #1 in depth: How successful teachers account for their students' high-test performance by having respondents discuss their views on educational philosophy, culturally responsive teaching, teacher-parent relations, and attitudes towards authority.

### Educational Philosophy

The first part of the interview addressed educational philosophy. In response to these questions, all subjects expressed a belief in student-centered learning. Student-centered learning moves students from passive recipients of information to active participants in their learning process. What students learn, how they learn it and how their learning was assessed all are driven by each student's needs and abilities (Cannon, 2000). Teacher participant, Brian stated: My philosophy of teaching is creating an environment where students feel safe to take learning risks and facilitating learning in the classroom. The children actively participate in their learning. One hundred percent of respondents also stressed the importance of knowing their students academically and the significance of conducting student academic goal setting conferences. When asked, "What do you believe works," although responses varied, such as having a variety of strategies to meet the need or forming goals based on data, all respondents espoused some element of student-centered learning. Table 4.1 shows key responses to the interview question: How would you describe your philosophy of teaching?

Table 4.1 How Would You Describe Your Philosophy of Teaching?

Open Responses	
Alice	My philosophy of teaching is one day at a time, and <u>plan</u> and perfect your plan. And stay focused on your students' learning.
Brian	I believe that teaching is the interplay and relationship and pedagogy, and what works is dependent upon the learner. skills, and to meet the needs of that one.
Charles	My philosophy of teaching is creating an environment where students feel safe to take learning risks and facilitating learning in the classroom, not just directly doing everything a teacher's very important the facilitation of the lesson more than just giving the lesson. Then, the children actively participate in their own learning.
Denise	There are multiple things that go in with teaching. Structure, that's probably the top of my list. And planning and knowing your students academically.
Eve	My philosophy, well, I believe everyone, all students, have it in them to learn the material. But you have to practice, you have to have what I call "true grit" sometimes to get through some things that are tough, but if you practice and you participate, I reassure my students that you will learn and I'm there to help you. So, I believe my philosophy is do the work, you will gain the success.

In addition to student-centered learning, all respondents emphasized the importance of preparedness. Each repeatedly stated that spending time preparing lessons was a pivotal factor in their success. Eve said, "You have to put in the work as a teacher, you have to put in the work. I find I'm most successful when I have truly planned everything; I have all my materials, I have my notes, I'm ready to present a lesson. I've looked at the TEKS, and the standards. I know where I'm going as far as the state requirements" Denise stated, "I'm big on detailed lesson plans. I have to be prepared myself. I have to have it almost scripted for myself just because I've got to have it laid out. I have to be prepared. I have to know what I'm doing when I go into the classroom and teach. Table 4.2 shows key responses to the interview question: What do you believe works?"

Table 4.2 What Do You Believe Works?

Open Responses	
Alice	I believe with the kids can really truly learn is that, you have a universal collaborative piece where it's between you and the student, you and your peers, you and your administrator and everyone forming goals based on the data that you get. But having the student be well aware of other goals and everything that's needed in order for them to be successful so they can mark and indicate and prove themselves.
Brian	What I believe works is the balance between the student need and the teacher's ability to dig into their repertoire of skills and meet the need, to have a variety of strategies to meet the need. There is no one size fits all.
Charles	What works is knowledge. Knowledge of your subject, knowledge of various teaching strategies, and perhaps most of all, knowledge of your students. You must know your students' academic strengths and weaknesses.
Denise	I would start with classroom management. I'm big on detailed lesson plans. I have to be prepared myself. I have to have it almost scripted for myself just because I've got to have it laid out. I have to be prepared. I have to know what I'm doing when I go into the classroom and teach.
Eve	You have to put in the work as a teacher, you have to put in the work. I find I'm most successful when I have truly planned everything, I have all my materials, I have my notes, I'm ready to present a lesson. I've looked at the TEKS, and the standards. I know where I'm going as far as the state requirements.

#### Color-Blind Perspective

None of the respondents explicitly acknowledged using culturally responsive teaching method, but 60% of the respondents repeatedly stated that they treated all students the same which is not the essence of culturally responsive teaching, but the color-blind perspective. However, all spoke positively about teaching African American and Latino students. Forty percent emphasized how they purposely chose to educate African American and Latino students. A common sentiment was expressed in Eve's statement: "In the early 2000s, I transferred to Johnson High School because it was a school that was struggling, and it was a majority, almost 100%, racial minority, Black and Hispanic. What I do is I give them my best." Table 4.3 shows

key responses to the interview question: What kinds of things have you done in the classroom that have facilitated the academic success of your students of color.

Table 4.3 What Kinds of Things Have You Done in the Classroom that have Facilitated the Academic Success of Your Students of Color?

Open Responses	
Alice	One thing I've done is just make sure that they (children of color) have a good strong base.
Brian	I think I care about all kids no matter their race. So, I try to build relationships with my students. Relationship goes a long way with teaching the learning. That same kid won't care till they know you care. Sounds very clichés, but it's very true. I've spent, and I still do, spend time building relationships. Then once you have that relationship, of course you have to have skills, you know, to help the learner.  Relationship is the key that meets the need. That unlocks students' achievements.
Charles	What I do is for all students. I've done small group teaching. I've done project-based learning, where they get a real life connection to their work. I've done rotations, where students get different aspects of a particular lesson from different standpoints and they go around and do that. Some of those things I've done.
Denise	I don't do things based on a student's color. Small groups, spiraling, after school tutoring.
Eve	In the early 2000s, I transferred to Johnson High School, because it was a school that was struggling, and it was majority almost 100% racial minority, Black and Hispanic. What I do is I give them my best. I prepare for my lessons. I give them different ways, I present information in different ways to help them learn how to master those problems.

One hundred percent of respondents stated that their formal teacher training failed to address the academic needs of students of color. All respondents also indicated that what they learned about teaching African American and Latino students they acquired on the job. If there were any training directly addressing students of color, it was in language acquisition strategies for Latino students who were also English as a second language students (ESL). Table 4.4 space shows key responses to the interview question: How much of what you know about teaching students of color did you learn as a result of teacher training, either pre-service or in-service?

Table 4.4 How Much of What You Know About Teaching Students of Color Did You Learn as a Result of Teacher Training; Either Pre-Service or In-Service?

Open Responses	
Alice	Not much. Really the only thing that was addressed, for students of color, was when you're looking at data. They started looking at data across the board and then vertically. Then you start drilling down and picking out where your outliers are and, usually, it's male.
Brian	I think that you learn a little about culturally responsive teaching, but not much.
Charles	I would say sixty to seventy percent of what I know is the result of some kind of in service or maybe some research on part. I would say that the other thirty percent or so would come from just my experiences in the classroom.
Denise	I feel it's getting better. I don't feel that student teaching or interning really prepared me for what I'm doing today. I feel that when I get in there and practice, that's when I really know what I'm doing.
Eve	When I graduated from the University of Texas, I'll be honest, I didn't learn hardly anything about teaching students of color in college. Everything I've learned has been on the job. It's been on the job. I have not learned much at all formally.

Eighty percent of the respondents believed some level of culturally responsive teaching training should be provided. They recognized that schools and teacher training programs are not directly addressing the needs of African American and Latino students. Table 4.5 shows key responses to the interview question: If you could revamp teacher education so that teachers will be more effective with students of color, what changes would you make?

Table 4.5 If You Could Revamp Teacher Education so that Teachers will be More Effective with Students of Color, What Changes Would You Make?

Open Responses	
Alice	First of all, I'd just talk about culture and diversity. Got a lot of young people coming into education; they need some cultural awareness for themselves to help them realize what they're going to do. If you have a teacher who has never been around any children of color and you stick them into an urban setting, they're not going to be there very long.
Brian	I would honestly do away with so many of the teacher online programs. It's not that I'm against it, it's just that those teachers are the ones who tend to get positions in the neediest schools because the least needy schools don't have the teacher turnover. That creates a greater inequity and a larger disparity between the have and the have-nots.
Charles	For teachers to be effective with all students, I think that I would incorporate some type of sensitivity training so teachers will be more in tune with the different level of different races. The different ethnic groups, as well as different learning styles of students and give them real situations where they could be involved with students
Denise	Honestly, I want to do more teaching not focusing so much on race or the tests
Eve	Well, I think the first thing would be leave your pre-notions and prejudices and biases and stereotypes at the door. I really, how do I put this ... you have to start learning your children and your students as individuals. With individual problems, with individual issues. It can become a real slippery slope if you view them always as a group, and not as who they all are. I do try to get to know my students, who they are.

### Parental Involvement

The next series of questions had the respondents reflecting on how they viewed parental involvement. Positive impacts of parental involvement on student academic outcomes have not been recognized only by school administrators and teachers, but also by policy-makers who have interwoven different aspects of parental involvement in new educational initiatives and reforms (Graves & Wright, 2011). All respondents reported that they believed parents play a pivotal role in their student's academic success. Charles' response is representative of the sentiment expressed by subjects, "I think parents play a big role because their attitude towards education, kind of, drives what the students think of education a lot of times." Table 4.6 shows key

responses to the interview question: What kind of role do you believe parents play in the success of children of color?

Table 4.6 What Kind of Role Do You Believe Parents Play in the Success of Children of Color?

Open Responses	
Alice	In order for us to be able to service the whole child, that also includes the families being very active in the educational process.
Brian	There's nothing like a teacher who is able to see a parent on a regular basis, and to be proactive in their interaction with that kid, whether it be as a parent volunteer, or a conference, or just like I forgot my homework and the parent has to bring it up to the school.
Charles	I think parents play a big role because their attitude towards education, kind of, drives what the students think of education a lot of times.
Denise	Communication is the key. If you don't have communication, you don't really know what's going on.
Eve	Well, children of color, or any kind of color, it doesn't matter, the <u>parents play a major role in their child's success.</u>

All subjects stated they had positive relations with their students' parents. Many disclosed that they interacted with parents outside of school. Table 4.7 shows key responses to interview question: How would you describe the kind of relationships you've made with parents of students you've taught?



Table 4.7 How Would You Describe the Kind of Relationships You've Made with Parents of Students You Have Taught

Open Responses	
Alice	...you hope that you do well with your parents, it's to help encourage them and give them a bigger vision for themselves and their students and make it easier for them.
Brian	Well, I think that, socially, it's easy to connect with some parents, and others, you have to find ways to connect. I've always been able to find a way to build bridges with parents.
Charles	Over the years, I've made some good relationships. I tend to try to reach the parents within the first week or two of school, whether or not there is an issue or not.
Denise	I have a very good rapport. I work really well with parents. If I have a child that's struggling, whether it's academic, behavior, whatever, I want to work with the parent to help the child succeed. Instead of just telling the parent, this is what's wrong with your kid, take care of it, fix it, I want the parent to work with me to help the child.
Eve	I tend to have very good relationships with my parents. Like I said, I can't tell you the value of the introductory phone calls at the beginning of the year. It sets a really nice tone where when I do have concerns with their child, they're very responsive, because they know I'm not calling when there's only something bad. ...I tend to get a very high percentage of parents wanting me to teach the younger siblings in their family, because it gets around that I'm a very good teacher, and that I'm a very responsive teacher, and I will go the extra mile for their child because I know how important it is to have a solid education. I take my job very seriously. I feel that teaching is a calling; it's not just a profession, I feel that very strongly.

### Student Discipline

The respondents enacted student discipline plans that possessed three key features: (a) mutual respect, (b) well-defined boundaries, and (c) consistency. Discipline is the required action by a teacher toward a student after the student's behavior disrupts the ongoing educational activity or breaks a pre-established rule created by the teacher. All teachers stated that building a relationship with their students based on mutual respect was fundamental. Alice said, "Well you should always expect respect, and you model it, you teach it, you preach it." Along with mutual

respect, each subject stressed the need for transparency and clarity concerning behavioral boundaries and expectations. Teachers noted the importance of consistency when applying consequences. Table 4.8 shows key responses to the interview question: How do you handle classroom discipline and are there particular things that teachers of students of color should know about discipline?

Table 5 How Do You Handle Classroom Discipline and are there Special Things that Teachers of Students of Color Should Know About Discipline?

Open Responses	
Alice	Well you should always expect respect and you model it, you teach it, you preach it. I mean just stay persistent with it and don't stop, don't back down. Just because you say it once, say it again and keep going, but also apply some love with it.
Brian	I just found that by building relationships and being fair and clear about my expectations, I didn't have to do a whole lot of "management."
Charles	Classroom discipline to me is handled from day one with ... In my class, I create what's called my social contract, which is the norm for the classroom, and I get students to voice their concerns about what should be in the social contract, keeping in mind that I do need to give them a chance to voice, but remembering that I do have an ethical responsibility to make sure that all students are safe in my classroom.
Denise	I set the boundaries at the beginning. We review the classroom procedures all the time, daily, especially at the beginning of the year. Consistency, that's the key right there. You've got to be consistent. If you're not consistent ... Parent communication. The parent needs to know what's going on. Setting the boundaries and letting the child know what the consequences are if they don't.
Eve	Well, now I'll be honest, I don't treat children of color any different than I would treat a white child. I think that's where you can get into a whole lot of trouble with that. For the most part, you show respect. ...respect isn't earned, it's given because you're a human and you matter to me. So, you will have my respect, and, in turn, I expect you to respect me. If there are any problems, we will speak about it privately, I will not castigate you in public.

## Teacher Autonomy

The concluding section of the interview addressed teacher autonomy. Teacher autonomy refers to the professional freedom of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can be self-governing or make autonomous decisions about what they teach students and how they teach the material. According to Smith (2000), teacher autonomy refers to “the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in cooperation with others.” None of the respondents espoused ardent beliefs for teacher autonomy. One hundred percent of the respondents believed in adhering to state standards. Eighty percent of all respondents were deferential towards campus administration. Twenty percent of subjects stated that they would challenge instructional mismatches. Tables 4.9 and 4.10 show key responses to two interview questions: How do you handle the possible mismatch between you and what you want to teach and what you have to teach? How do you handle the potential mismatch between what you want to teach and what the administration wants you to teach?

Table 4.9 How Do You Handle the Possible Mismatch Between You and What You Want to Teach and What You Have to Teach

Open Responses	
Alice	You can always infuse a little of your teacher magic in any curriculum.
Brian	I really don't find a mismatch because ... I want to teach whatever students need to know in order to be successful on tests because to me that's how they're measured .
Charles	If there's a mismatch between what I want to teach and what I have to teach, because of my ethical obligations, I teach what I have to teach. I do make sure that the curriculum that's prescribed by the state or district is taught.
Denise	I am a big rule follower. I'm not really sure exactly between what I want to teach and what I have to teach. I don't know exactly what that's asking. I pretty much go with what I have to teach.
Eve	I'm going to do what's best for my students. Now, I'm always going to do what is the curriculum for the state, and I'm not going to go off on the deep end and teach something I'm not supposed to teach. But, I'm going to always fight for what's best

Table 4.10 How Do You Handle the Possible Mismatch Between What You Want to Teach and What the Administration Wants You to Teach

Open Response	
Alice	
Brian	I've never been in that situation because I feel that when you are a part of a school, if you want to be a part of that school, then you catch hold to that vision.
Charles	If there is ever a mismatch between what I want to teach and what the administration wants to teach, I rely mostly on what the state written curriculum is to make sure that I'm not just pleasing an administrator without making sure that students learn what they are supposed to learn.
Denise	What the administration says I do. I have to. I have to do what I am told to do as far as teaching.
Eve	Usually, if I can show them evidence of the contrary, they will acquiesce and let me go on and do what I want to do. What I want to do, what I plan to do, because they know what I'm going to do is going to be what's best for the children. Like I said, I'm going to do what's best for my students no matter what.

### Effective Teaching Survey Part 1

Research question #2: What are the instructional practices of successful high school teachers? The two-part of the survey was to investigate research question #2: What are the instructional practices of successful high school teachers? The Survey varied consisting of both Likert scale and open-ended questions. Part 1 of the survey asked the teachers about their competence levels, lesson planning, resource availability, and various elements of classroom management.

Questions 1-4 were multiple choice and Likert scale style questions in which the teachers responded to inquiries addressing their standard competency level, lesson planning. Questions 5 - 7 concerning student assessment were open-ended. All teachers in the study expressed confidence in their subject. According to the survey, 100% of the teachers rated their knowledge

of their subjects TEKS as Good, Very Good, or Superior. Although all respondents viewed themselves as competent in their subject, each week, they all spent a minimum of one hour or more lesson planning. When planning, respondents were almost as likely to plan alone as collaboratively with a team. Noticeably, none of the respondents stated that they worked with an instructional specialist, such as an instructional coach. The most significant variance was in the availability of resources with 20% availability was poor and 40% availability was superior. One hundred percent of teachers surveyed stated that they relied on student responses to ascertain the effectiveness of lessons responses are on Tables 4.11 – 4.15 and figure 4.1.

Table 4.11 Rate Your Level of Competence for Your Subject’s Standards (TEKS)

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Superior
Percentage	0%	0%	20%	60%	20%
Number of responses			1	3	1
Weighted Average			3	12	5

Table 4.12 In a Week, How Long Do You Spend Engaged in Lesson Planning?

Answer Choices	Responses	
0 to 30 minutes	0.00%	0
31 to 59 minutes	0.00%	0
60 to 120 minutes	40.00%	2
121 to 180 minutes	40.00%	2
More than 181 minutes	20.00%	1

Table 4.13 How Do You Plan?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Alone	40.00%	2
With a team of teachers	60.00%	3
With an instructional specialist	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0

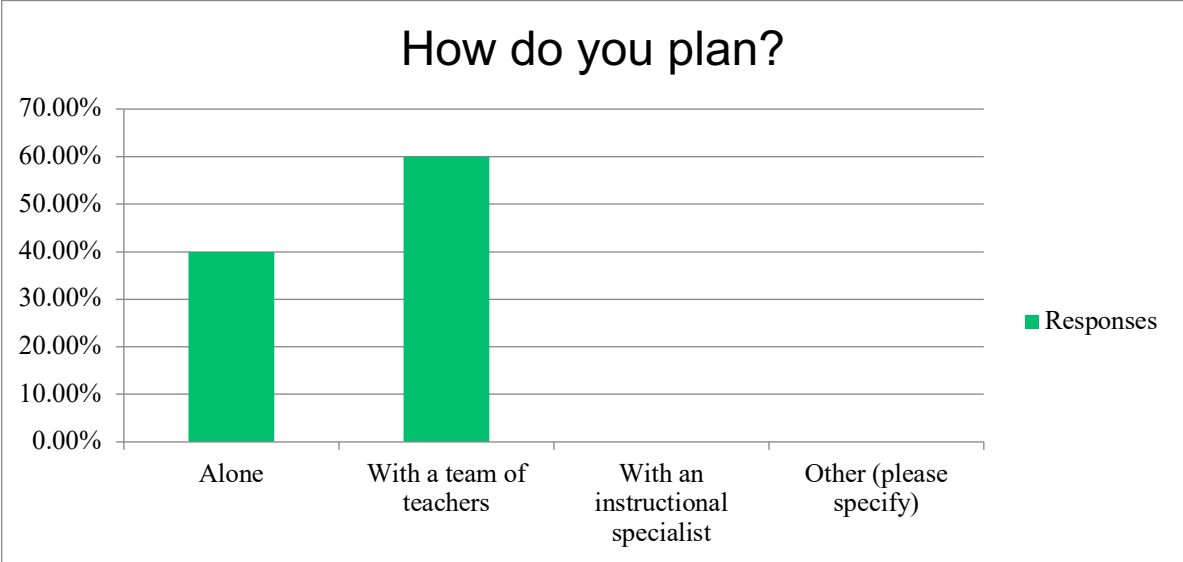


Figure 2 Teacher Planning Practices

Table 4.14 Are Resources Readily Available on Your Campus?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Superior
Percentage	0%	20%	20%	40%	40%
Number of responses		1	1	2	2
Weighted Average					2.8

Table 4.15 How Do You Know If Your Lesson Is Effective?

Open Responses	
Alice	When my students are successful based on external measures.
Brian	I know my lesson is effective because I give students a formative assessment and exit tickets at the end of each lesson to check for understanding.
Charles	Students are engaged and are demonstrating knowledge and understanding through assessments.
Denise	If my students are engaged and have learned it well.
Eve	Student assessments.

The questions addressing classroom management required open-ended answers. In this section, teachers stated their class rules, how they conveyed student expectations, classroom arrangement, and student behavior management. There were many commonalities among the teachers' rules. A primary similarity was the few numbers of rules. The range was between one to four, with sixty percent having three. Besides, the rules tend to be broad allowing the scarcity of their number to cover a multitude of situations. When discussing their class rules, sixty percent directly reference some expectation of respect. None were written negatively. Table 4.16 shows the responses.

Table 4.16 What Are Your Class Rules?

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Alice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect self</li> <li>2. Respect others</li> <li>3. Respect property</li> </ol>
Brian	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect yourself and others.</li> <li>2. Follow directions.</li> <li>3. Raise your hand before speaking.</li> </ol>
Charles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be on time.</li> <li>2. Be engaged.</li> <li>3. Be respectful.</li> </ol>
Denise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be on time.</li> <li>2. Assume positive intent.</li> <li>3. Treat everyone the way you want to be treated.</li> <li>4. Use technology appropriately.</li> </ol>
Eve	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Come to learn and support.</li> </ol>

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A key feature all respondents shared about the conveyance of student expectations was the importance of publishing or publicly displaying student expectations. One hundred percent of

respondents stated that they created a PowerPoint, handbook, or posted student expectations.

Table 4.17 shows the teacher responses.

Table 4.17 How Do You Convey Student Expectations?

Open Response	
Alice	First three weeks of the year, I have a probation period. Full day of going over rules and procedures with a PowerPoint. Send home a student handbook that requires both student and parent signatures.
Brian	My students and I together brainstorm rules/expectations for the school year. I like students to provide their input because I want them to know that I value their ideas and this is a great way to hold students accountable for their actions. We also play games/icebreakers that lead into conversations on student expectations.
Charles	I tell them every day and post on the walls.
Denise	On the board, PowerPoint, and written instructions
Eve	We create them together. Inform parents of my expectations and ask for theirs. Weekly newsletters and open invitations. Also, I keep them posted on the walls.

Eighty percent of teachers stated that they arranged their student desks in some form of small grouping or cluster. Tables 4.18 shows their responses.

Table 4.18 How is Your Classroom Arranged

Open Responses	
Alice	First three weeks in rows. The remainder is on groups and horseshoe.
Brian	I prefer my classroom arrangement in desk clusters of four to five.
Charles	I change it around to suit the class lesson. I always have access to the students.
Denise	In small groups
Eve	Small group clusters.



Sixty percent of teachers stated that having high student expectations was a highlight of their classroom management. Forty percent of teachers mentioned informing parents of class expectations. Table 4.19 shows the teacher responses

Table 4.19 What are Some Highlights of Your Classroom Management Procedures?

Open Response	
Alice	Number of posted student expectation or procedures. Consistency Having high student expectations Group and individual rewards
Brian	Students are given a classroom job. This holds each student accountable, gives them responsibility, and a leadership opportunity. Instead of using a behavior system, I use many of the techniques and positive praise from Teach Like a Champion. This positivity enforces high academic and behavior expectations. This environment creates a safe, fun, and culturally diverse learning environment.
Charles	Treat students with respect, set high expectations, celebrate success
Denise	Raise your hands when you want to answer Walking around the room, constantly monitoring Not embarrassing students in front of their friends Calling parents
Eve	Monthly quality time assignments for parents and students.

The greatest classroom management challenge generated the most varied responses. There was no singular answer. Twenty percent stated phones were their greatest challenge, whereas another 20% said it was time. Table 4.20 shows the teacher responses.

Table 4.20 What Is Your Greatest Classroom Management Challenge?

Open Response	
Alice	Managing and documenting student behavior.
Brian	My greatest classroom management challenge is keeping students engaged and focused during STAAR camps.
Charles	Off-task, on phone
Denise	When the kids come in unusually wild and excited. It makes it hard to settle them down.
Eve	Time.

### Effective Teaching Survey Part 2

The Effective Teaching Part 2 survey consisted of Likert scale, ranking, and open-ended questions. The survey asked the teachers about student activity and engagement levels, student conferencing, test administration, instructional practices, and why they are effective. Survey questions one and two addressed student behavior. All teachers stated that their students either were very active (80%) or extremely active (20%). The survey responses to the question of student engagement were distributed the same as student activity level with very engaged (80%) or extremely engaged (20%). Tables 4.21 and 4.22 shows the teacher responses.

Table 4.21 How Active are Your Students?

	Not Active	Fairly Active	Active	Very Active	Extremely Active
Percentage	0%	0%	0%	80%	20%
Number of responses				4	1
Weighted Average	0	0	0	16	5

Table 4.22 How Engaged Are Your Students?

	Not Engaged	Fairly Engaged	Engaged	Very Engaged	Extremely Engaged
Percentage	0%	0%	0%	80%	20%
Number of responses				4	1
Weighted Average	0	0	0	16	5

The vast majority of teachers, 80% met with students daily. The remaining 20% met with students once to twice a week. Table 4.23 shows the teacher responses.

Table 4.23 On Average, In a Week, How Often Do You Meet with Individual Students?

Number of Weekly Meetings	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Number of Responses		1			4

Questions 4 and 5 addressed assessments. One hundred percent of the teachers administered teacher made assessments weekly. In addition, all the teachers used the assessments to guide future instruction. Tables 4.24 and table 4.25 show the teacher responses.

Table 4.24 How Often Do You Administer Teacher Made Assessments?

	Daily	Weekly	Twice Monthly	Monthly
Number of Responses	1	4		

Table 4.25 How Do You Use Assessments (Student Data)?

Open-Ended Response	
Alice	I track student progress.
Brian	I look at the SEs and see who didn't show mastery, and then I spiral it back in as DOLs or warmups. I also put the students together in small groups, so I can work with them. When I test them again, if they are still struggling, then I work with them individually and have them come to tutorials after school.
Denise	I use assessments to determine where students need additional support. Discern "next steps" for class/individual Find strengths and/or weaknesses.
Eve	I use student data to drive instruction. Data allow me to understand my students' current academic level, strengths, and weaknesses. To monitor student achievement. Guide skill acceleration or remediation?

Question 6 had the teachers to rank the nine categories of strategies that have a strong influence on student achievement. Respondents ranked activating prior knowledge as the most used instructional practice. Conversely, summarizing and note taking were ranked as the least used instructional practice. Figure 4.2 shows the teacher rankings.

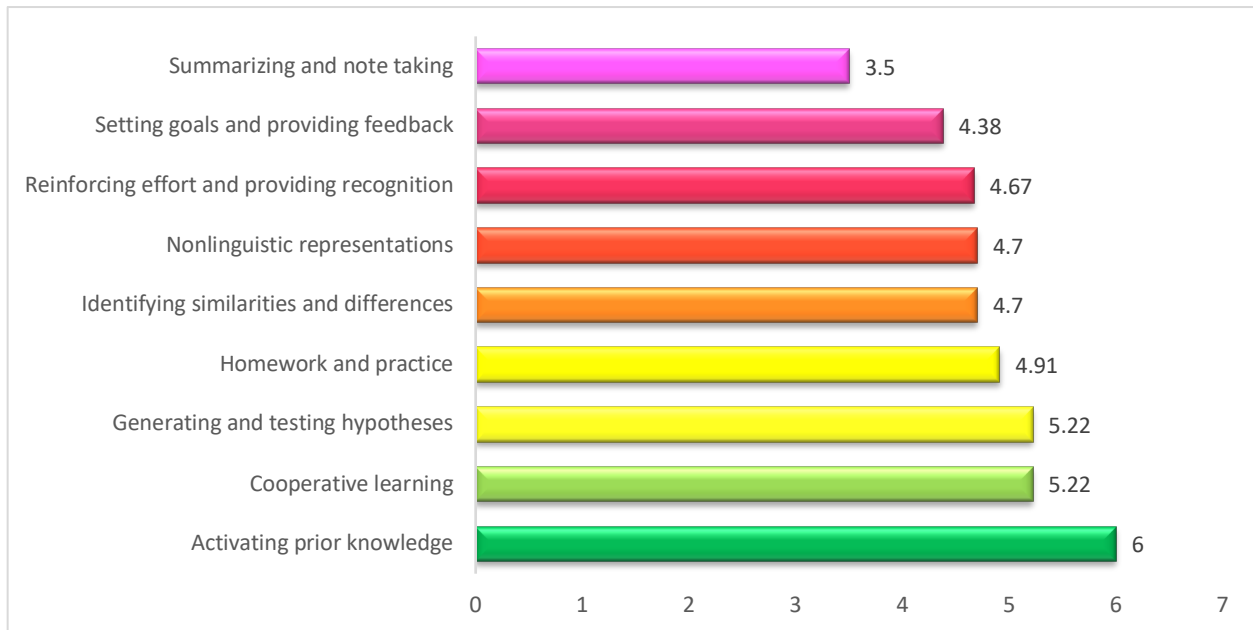


Figure 3 Ranking of Nine Instructional Practices

When asked why you think you are an effective teacher, 100% of responses were student centered. Eighty percent of respondents expressed loving or enjoying teaching and their students. Table 4.26 shows teacher responses.

Table 4.26 Why Do You Think You are an Effective Teacher?

Open-Ended Response	
Alice	I try to make my lessons fun.
Brian	I enjoy teaching and strive to make my classes interesting.
Charles	I establish rapport with the students, establish rigor and boundaries, high expectations, and love each student unconditionally.
Denise	I am an effective teacher because I believe in the whole child philosophy. Before providing instruction, I begin with building a relationship with each student. This one-on-one meeting allows me to identify the strengths and weaknesses of students' academics, behavior, social/emotional, etc. needs. I am also to find out students' interests which helps me to know what motivates learning for individual students. My calm, patient, and positive personality welcomes students so they are safe and feel accepted despite any disability or uniqueness. My knowledge with TEKS helps students master the state standards so they are successful in their future. I work collaboratively with administrators, parents, and teachers to find the most effective strategies in teaching.
Eve	I am a student-centered teacher. I make a point to get to know my students both academically and socially.

### Results of Research

The findings of this study revealed broad themes related to teacher practices. The findings of addressing teacher perception and effective instruction were in line with the expected outcome, however, the prominence of culturally responsive teaching was not as influential as expected. Rather than practicing culturally responsive teaching, most teachers took a color-blind approach to when addressing issues of race and culture.

## Interaction with Context of the Study

### Discussion of Research Questions

The research questions are discussed in this section. The discussion offers an interpretation of the findings of this record of study and relates those findings to the review of literature. The research questions all were answered using data from the participant interviews and surveys.

Question #1: How do successful high school teachers account for their student's continuous high-test performance?

The participants believed that their use of culturally responsive practices and student-centered instruction accounted for their students' continuous high-test performance. Each are described below.

### Culturally Responsive Teaching

Regarding classroom instruction, the majority of the participants espoused a color-blind view. This viewpoint is prevalent among educators. According to Plaut's (2014) findings, a majority of teachers preferred to take a color-blind approach when discussing student performance. And, with a few exceptions, teachers usually were hesitant even to discuss race and gender explicitly.

Despite their purported color-blindness, in practice, all respondents used many of the key principals espoused in culturally responsive teaching (CRT). CRT was most evident when discussing classroom management. CRT stresses that teachers share control of the classroom with their students. Almost all of participants stated that they had some level of student contribution with establishing classroom rules and procedures. All said that rules and

consequences must be enforced with equity and consistency. Moreover, all participants emphasized the importance of having a respectful relationship with students.

A key tenet of CRT is making connections with a student's family and community. Again, all participants actively encouraged positive parental relationships with some fostering true friendships with individual parents. All stressed the need for regular communication with parents via newsletters, website, or phone. In addition, participants emphasized proactively communicating with parents. They stressed the importance of calling each family at the beginning of the years. The teachers noted that beginning the year being positive and proactive helped garner greater parental support when issues did arise.

Perhaps the most impactful finding was the fact that most participants expressed some level of affinity for students of color and held high student expectations. Repeatedly, participants stated that they had high expectations of their students. Marzano (2000) found that when teachers had high expectations of their students, the teachers behaved differently. The teachers called on students more often, waited longer for their answers, and gave students more opportunities to succeed.

#### Student-Centered Instruction

The fundamental principles of student-centered learning theory were adopted by all participants. Student-centered learning theory and practice are based on the constructivist learning theory that emphasizes the learner's critical role in constructing meaning from new information and prior experience. In all interviews, the teachers espoused fundamental student-centered learning theory principles, such as putting students' interests first by having their students actively participate in their learning and acknowledging student voice as central to the learning experience with student conferences.

This student-centered learning approach is conjoined with high student expectations. Repeatedly participants stated that they had high expectations of their students. Marzano (2009) found that when teachers have high expectations of their students, they act differently. The teachers call on them more often, wait longer for their answers, and give them more opportunities to succeed.

Question #2: What are the instructional practices of successful high school teachers?

Based on the study, I found that these successful teachers extensively lesson planned and consistently used well researched effective instructional practices.

### Lesson Planning

Repeatedly, the participants advocated the need to lesson plan. They embraced the mantra, “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” Their practice of extensive planning reinforces the findings of the landmark 1971 study of Hildebrand, who found that effective teachers created lessons that were well prepared and transparently presented material with the effect of making complicated topics easy to understand (Hildebrand, 1971). All study participants reported the importance of spending time preparing well-planned lessons. In planning, the teachers stressed the importance of not only knowing their subject’s standards, but also how those standards are assessed on the STAAR EOC exam.

Teachers noted that extensive lesson planning was a necessity. The teachers reported that they spent many hours a week creating high-level lesson plans. Most respondents, on average, spent over two hours a week actively lesson planning either alone or with a team. Their lesson planning revolved around creating academically rigorous lessons that had both high student engagement and activity.



Many of their instructional practices were aligned with their student-centered philosophical beliefs, such as daily meetings with students. Participants indicated that these regular and routine meetings were indispensable components of their progress monitoring efforts. In addition to daily meetings, teachers worked with their students to establish clear expectations for both instructional and behavioral.

#### Effective Instructional Practices

The respondents ranked the nine high yielding instructional strategies, identified by Marzano (2002), based on how often they used each strategy. The four top-ranked strategies chosen by the participants were activated prior knowledge, cooperative learning, generating and testing the hypothesis, and homework. Table 4.27 shows that the four strategies had a medium effect size with a score range of .59 to .77.

**Table 4.27 The Four Top-Ranked Marzano’s Strategies Chosen by The Participants**

Strategies	Effect Size
Activate prior knowledge	.59
Cooperative learning	.73
Generating and testing hypothesis	.61
Homework and practice	.77

The activation of prior knowledge is a constructivist principle. Constructivism proposes that new knowledge is constructed from past experiences. These teachers activated prior knowledge through a variety of activities, such as, Know-Want to Know-Learn (K-W-L) charts, brainstorming sessions, and using if/then statements.

The high ranking of cooperative learning was consistent with the participants’ student-centered educational beliefs. In a student-centered learning environment, student learning is the

focus. Student-centered environments often are active, engaging, and cooperative. According to Darling-Hammond (2000) student-centered learning allows students to hypothesize, experiment with new concepts, and receive feedback.

According to Marzano the process of generating and testing hypotheses involves the application of knowledge (Marzano, p. 104). Most respondents stated that they required their students to use deductive reasoning when generating and testing hypotheses. Marzano (2001) stated that deductive thinking is the process of using a general rule to make a prediction about a future action or event.

The respondents viewed homework essential to mastering a particular academic skill. The teachers saw homework as a way to extend the day's instruction and foster academic practice. Marzano's (2001) research found that only after a great deal of practice that students could perform a skill with speed and accuracy. The teacher's practices were aligned to the four tenets of homework expressed by Marzano:

1. The amount of homework assigned to students should be grade appropriate;
2. Parent involvement in homework should be kept to a minimum;
3. The purpose of homework should be identified and articulated; and
4. If homework is assigned, it should be commented on.

#### **Closing Thoughts on Chapter 4**

Many aspects of the study's findings, such as effective classroom practices and teacher perspective were consistent with what was expected to be found. However, the role of culturally responsive teaching was not as central to the subject's instructional practices as expected.

The cross-referencing of both data sources resulted in the quantitative data supporting the qualitative data. Overall the data show that effective teachers value their students, are committed to high academic expectations, and enjoy teaching.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### **Summary of Findings**

This section provides a summary of the research findings, a discussion with interpretations relating the findings to extant literature or theories, personal lessons learned with possible implications, and closing thoughts.

The study examined five high school teachers who have successfully taught students of color as measured by STAAR End -of Course. The purpose of the ROS was to focus on the specific teacher qualifications, characteristics, and classroom practices of high school teachers who have successfully taught students of color. A qualitative case study approach was used for this study.

Data were gathered through participant interviews and surveys. By interviewing the teachers, I was able to gain an understanding of the teachers' perceptions. After the data had been collected, the analysis began. As part of the analysis process transcripts of the digitally recorded interviews were subsequently analyzed and coded. Excerpts from the transcripts were sorted by codes and frequencies tabulated.

The findings of this study revealed broad themes related to teacher practices. The findings of addressing teacher perception and effective instruction were in line with the expected outcome; however, the prominence of culturally responsive teaching was not as influential as expected.

#### **Discussion of Results in Relation to the Extant Literature or Theories**

The research questions are discussed in this section. The discussion offers an interpretation of the findings for this ROS and relates those findings to the review of the

literature. The research questions were all answered using data from the participant interviews and surveys.

Question #1: How do successful high school teachers account for their student's continuous high-test performance?

The participants believe that their use of culturally responsive practices and student-centered instruction accounted for their continuous high-test performance. Each is described below.

### Culturally Responsive Teaching

Regarding classroom instruction, the majority of participants espoused a color-blind perspective. This viewpoint is prevalent among educators. According to Plaut's (2014) findings, a majority of teachers preferred to take a color-blind approach when discussing student performance. And, with a few exceptions, teachers were usually hesitant even to discuss race and gender explicitly. Brian's response capsulate this juxtaposition of CRT and colorblind dynamic. Brian stated, "I think I care about all kids no matter their race. So, I try to build relationships with my students. Relationship goes a long way with teaching the learning. That same kid won't care till they know you care. Sounds very clichés, but it's very true. I've spent, and I still do, spend time building relationships. Then once you have that relationship, of course you have to have skills, you know, to help the learner." He does not embrace noting a student's racial background, but he goes on to stress the importance of building relationship, which is an aspect of CRT.

Despite their purported color-blindness, in practice, all respondents used many of the critical principals espoused in CRT which was most evident when discussing classroom management. CRT stresses that teachers share control of the classroom with their students.

Almost all of participants stated that they have some level of student contribution with establishing classroom rules and procedures. All said that rules and consequences must be enforced with equity and consistency. Moreover, all participants emphasized the importance of having a respectful relationship with students.

A key tenet of CRT is making connections with a student's family and community (Gay, 2000). Again, all participants actively encouraged positive parental relationships with some fostering true friendships with individual parents. All stressed the need for regular communication with parents via newsletters, website, or phone. They emphasized proactive communicating with parents that included calling each family at the beginning of the years. The teachers noted that being positive and proactive help garner greater parental support when issues did arise (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Perhaps the most impactful finding was the fact that most participants expressed some level of affinity for students of color and held high student expectations (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Repeatedly participants stated that they had high expectations of their students. Marzano (2009) found that when teachers have high expectations of their students, they act differently. The teachers call on them more often, waited longer for their answers, and gave them more opportunities to succeed. Once again, Brian summarizes the general sentiment, "I use many of the techniques and positive praise from Teach Like a Champion. This positivity enforces high academic and behavior expectations. This environment creates a safe, fun, and culturally diverse learning environment."

#### Student-Centered Instruction

The fundamental principles of student-centered learning theory were adopted by all participants. Student-centered learning theory is based on the constructivist learning theory that

stresses the learner's crucial role in creating meaning from new information and previous experience (Cannon, 2000). In all interviews, the teachers espoused fundamental student-centered learning theory principles, such as putting students' interests first by having their students actively participate in their learning and acknowledging student voice as central to the learning experience with student conferences. Denise' statement mirrors the overall voice of the partakers," I believe in the whole child philosophy. Before providing instruction, I begin with building a relationship with each student."

This student-centered learning approach is conjoined with high student expectations. Repeatedly participants stated that they had high expectations of their students. Marzano (2009) found that when teachers have high expectations of their students, they act differently. The teachers call on them more often, wait longer for their answers, and give them more opportunities to succeed.

Question #2: What are the instructional practices of successful high school teachers?

Based on the study results, it was found that these successful teachers extensively lesson planned and consistently used well researched effective instructional practices.

### Lesson Planning

Repeatedly the participants advocated the need to lesson plan. Embracing the mantra "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Their practice of extensive planning reinforces the findings of the landmark 1971 study of Hildebrand who found that effective teachers created lessons that were well prepared and transparently presented material having the effect of making complicated topics easy to understand (. Hildebrand, 1971). All study participants reported the importance of spending time preparing well-planned lessons. In planning the teachers stressed

the importance of not only knowing their subject's standards but also how those standards are assessed on the STAAR EOC exam.

Teachers noted that extensive lesson planning was a necessity. The teachers reported that they spent many hours a week creating high-level lesson plans. Most respondents, on average, spent over two hours a week actively lesson planning either alone or with a team. Their lesson planning revolves around creating academically rigorous lessons that have both high student engagement and activity. The teachers under study exhibit what Hill-Jackson (2019) refer to as teacher persistence, the endless search for what works best with each student. Eve's statement reinforces the importance of lesson planning, "you have to put in the work as a teacher, you have to put in the work. I find I'm most successful when I have truly planned everything, I have all my materials, I have my notes, I'm ready to present a lesson."

Many of their instructional practices were aligned with their student-centered philological beliefs, such as daily meetings with students. Participants indicated that these regular and routine meetings were indispensable components of their progress monitoring efforts. In addition to daily meetings, teachers worked with their students to establish clear expectations for both instruction and behavior, Charles voices this viewpoint, "I establish rapport with the students, establish rigor and boundaries, high expectations, and love each student unconditionally."

#### Effective Instructional Practices

When the respondents ranked the nine high yielding instructional strategies, identified by Marzano (2002), based on how often they used each strategy. The four top-ranked strategies chosen by the participants were activated prior knowledge, cooperative learning, generating and testing the hypothesis, and homework. Table 5.1 shows that the four strategies had a medium effect size based on work of Marzano (2002) with a score range of .59 to .77.



Table 5.1 The Four Top-Ranked Marzano’s Strategies Chosen by The Participants

Strategies	Effect Size
Activate prior knowledge	.59
Cooperative learning	.73
Generating and testing hypothesis	.61
Homework and practice	.77

The activation of prior knowledge is a constructivist principle. Constructivism proposes that new knowledge is constructed from past experiences. These teachers activated prior knowledge through a variety of activities, such as Know-Want to know-Learn (K-W-L) charts, brainstorming sessions, and using if/then statements.

The high ranking of cooperative learning is in-line with the participant's student-centered educational beliefs. In a student-centered learning environment, student learning is the focus. Student-centered environments are often active, engaging, and cooperative. According to Darling-Hammond (1997), student-centered learning allows students to hypothesize, experiment with new concepts, and receive feedback.

According to Marzano (2001), the process of generating and testing hypotheses involves the application of knowledge. Most respondents stated that they required their students to use deductive reasoning when generating and testing hypotheses. Marzano (2001) said that deductive thinking is the process of using a general rule to predict a future action or event.

The respondents viewed homework essential to mastering a particular academic skill. The teachers saw homework as a way to both extend the day's instruction and foster academic practice. Marzano's (2001) research found that only after a great deal of practice that students

could perform a skill with speed and accuracy. The teacher's practices were aligned to the four tenets of homework expressed by Marzano:

1. The amount of homework assigned to students should be grade appropriate;
2. Parent involvement in homework should be kept to a minimum;
3. The purpose of homework should be identified and articulated; and
3. If homework is assigned, it should be commented on.

The teachers in the study exhibited the ability to turn theory into practice. According to Hill-Jackson (2019) the ability to turn theory into practice is a hallmark of a Star Teacher. Each teacher under study had the ability to transform abstract theories into a specific set of classroom activities (Hill-Jackson, 2019). They honed their skill by keeping abreast of effective instructional practices, knowledge of the state educational standards, and understanding the structure of the STAAR EOC. When asked what works, Eve reiterates that having strong knowledge of content and standards is essential. Eve states, “I’ve looked at the TEKS, and the standards. I know where I’m going as far as the state requirements.”

### **Lessons Learned**

There were many lessons learned from implementing the Record of Study. The first lesson was how crucial to design a research project that will get IRB approval. It is critical to carefully plan how to collect and analyze data within IRB guidelines effectively. This Record of Study's IRB approval process required multiple adjustments and took over a year to achieve.

This study addressed the broad issue of the Education GAP, so narrowing the focus of the research was a challenge. Overall, the variables that had to be considered throughout the process made the development of the Record of Study a more complex than anticipated during the beginning stages of planning the research.

The second lesson learned was the realization of the amount of time required to conduct the study. Throughout the progress, delays in collecting data occurred due to issues with IRB considerations and participant scheduling conflicts. Also, the initial ROS format changed. Therefore, the amount of time it took to finish the research study was longer than predicted.

### Limitations

There are limitations to this study that need to be specified. Perhaps the most noted limitation is that the study was relative to this suburban/urban site only. Another limitation is the omission of classroom observations. The addition of classroom observations would further develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) suggested that participant observation is used as a means to strengthen the validity of the study, as observations may assist the researcher's understanding of the context and phenomenon under study.

### Implications for Practice

This section provides implications and recommendations based on the knowledge I gained from this record of study. After analyzing the findings of the study, I have arrived at two implications. First, many of the instructional practices under study are replicable. The replicability of the instructional practices of the teachers was a concern. There was a concern that their effectiveness may be a result of innate traits, such as a force of personality. However, the data noted that several of the participant's instructional practices, activated prior knowledge, cooperative learning, generating and testing the hypothesis, and homework. These were documented as effective according to the Marzano study (2001).

Second, a district should look inward to teachers who have documented objective success with their students. As the saying goes, "the answer was right in front of your face." Too often,

districts look to outside expertise to answer local concerns. Instead, districts should develop a program where these identified model teachers provide material support to the novice and struggling teachers.

### **Recommendations**

The study generated the following four recommendations:

1. Adopt effective instructional practices.
2. Enact elements of culturally responsive teaching
3. Identify effective teachers within the district.
4. Encourage teacher-parent communication

It was highly recommended that the district actively adopts, develops, and implements the nine effective instructional practices presented in Marzano's study (2001). The nine instructional practices are as follows: activating prior knowledge, 2) cooperative learning, 3) generating and testing hypotheses, 4) homework and practice, 5) identifying similarities and differences, 6) nonlinguistic representation, 7) reinforcing effort and providing recognition, 8) setting goals and providing feedback, and 9) summarizing and note-taking. Also, it would benefit the district if teachers scheduled regular student: teacher conference sessions. Student: teacher conferences enact an element of CRT that is student-centered and acknowledges the student as an individual.

In addition to effective instructional practices and CRT, it was recommended the district develop a system that encourages teacher-parent communication, such as, an online platform like Parent Access or Canvas. Finally, identifying highly successful teachers within the district would not only create a cadre of local instructional experts but improve job satisfaction.

Further research in this area could be approached from a variety of approaches. The first would be to incorporate a larger sample size. The current study's small study size is a limitation for generalizing. According to Marshall (2013), grounded theory qualitative studies should generally include between 20 and 30 interviews. A larger sample size allows for greater extrapolation of study results.

In the future researchers may also choose to incorporate classroom observations. The addition of classroom observations would further develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study. In addition, further research might look at participant's racial or cultural background in relation to how they interact or view their students. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) suggested that participant observation is used as a way to increase the validity of the study. Validity is stronger with the application of additional strategies used with observation, such as document analysis, interviewing, or surveys, and questionnaires (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002).

### **Closing Thoughts on Chapter 5**

There have been many academic initiatives developed by education experts that have attempted to address performance gaps that have not been successful. Most of those attempts approached the issue of the academic performance gap from a deficit model by focusing on what students do not know. These attempts repeatedly, examining the obstacles to learning. Through this ROS study, I looked at the performance gap from an asset perspective or abundance model, by looking at the instructional practices of five high school teachers who have African American and Latino students who demonstrate consistently high academic achievement.

Despite the reality of an achievement gap, there are teachers on struggling campuses making a difference. These teachers address the academic gaps of their students by using a variety of effective instructional practices successfully. They set high expectations for their students. Each teacher was emotionally invested in the academic success of their students. These teachers routinely forged meaningful relationships with both their students, parents, and the community. Perhaps the most germane finding of this study was the fact that the practices of these teachers can be replicated.

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APPENDIX A

STATEMENTS OF IRB DISPOSITION OF THE PROPOSED STUDY



**DIVISION OF RESEARCH**

**DATE:** March 21, 2016 **MEMORANDUM**

**TO: FROM:** Fix this formatting

Patricia Larke TAMU - College Of Education & Human Dev - Teaching, Learning And Culture

Dr. James Fluckey Chair, TAMU IRB

**SUBJECT:** Expedited Approval

**Study Number:** IRB2015-0730D

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Copy of The Instructional Practices of Teachers Who Successfully Teach Children of Color

**Date of Determination: Approval Date:** 03/21/2016 **Continuing Review Due: Expiration Date:** 03/15/2017

**Title:**

**Documents Reviewed and Approved:**

Only IRB-stamped approved versions of study materials (e.g., consent forms, recruitment materials, and questionnaires) can be distributed to human participants. Please log into iRIS to download the stamped, approved version of all study materials. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in iRIS, please contact the iRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area.

02/15/2017

Submission Components			
Study Document			
Title	Version Number	Version Date	Outcome
Interview Questions	Version 1.0	03/21/2016	Approved
Survey Questions	Version 1.0	03/21/2016	Approved
Study Consent Form			
Title	Version Number	Version Date	Outcome
Informed Consent	Version 3.0	03/11/2016	Approved

**Document of Consent:** Written consent in accordance with 45 CF 46.116/ 21 CFR 50.27

**Waiver of Consent:**

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**Comments:**

- I.  This study was approved for 35 participants.
- II.  This IRB study application has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. Research may begin on the approval date stated above.

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701 1186 TAMU College Station, TX 77843-1186Tel. 979.458.1467 Fax. 979.862.3176 <http://rcb.tamu.edu>

- I.  Research is to be conducted according to the study application approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
- II.  Any future correspondence should include the IRB study number and the study title. Investigators assume the following responsibilities:
  1. **Continuing Review:** The study must be renewed by the expiration date in order to continue with the research. A Continuing Review application along with required documents must be submitted by the continuing review deadline. Failure to do so may result in processing delays, study expiration, and/or loss of funding.
  2. **Completion Report:** Upon completion of the research study (including data collection and analysis), a Completion Report must be submitted to the IRB.
  3. **Unanticipated Problems and Adverse Events:** Unanticipated problems and adverse events

must be reported to the IRB immediately.

4. **Reports of Potential Non-compliance:** Potential non-compliance, including deviations from protocol and violations, must be reported to the IRB office immediately.
5. **Amendments:** Changes to the protocol and/or study documents must be requested by submitting an Amendment to the IRB for review. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.
6. **Consent Forms:** When using a consent form or information sheet, the IRB stamped approved version must be used. Please log into iRIS to download the stamped approved version of the consenting instruments. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in iRIS, please contact the iRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area. Human participants are to receive a copy of the consent document, if appropriate.
7. **Post Approval Monitoring:** Expedited and full board studies may be subject to post approval monitoring. During the life of the study, please review and document study progress using the PI self-assessment found on the RCB website as a method of preparation for the potential review. Investigators are responsible for maintaining complete and accurate study records and making them available for post approval monitoring. Investigators are encouraged to request a pre-initiation site visit with the Post Approval Monitor. These visits are designed to help ensure that all necessary documents are approved and in order prior to initiating the study and to help investigators maintain compliance. [L]  
[SEP]
8. **Recruitment:** All approved recruitment materials will be stamped electronically by the HRPP staff and available for download from iRIS. These IRB-stamped approved documents from iRIS must be used for recruitment. For materials that are distributed to potential participants electronically and for which you can only feasibly use the approved text rather than the stamped document, the study's IRB Study Number, approval date, and expiration dates must be included in the following format: TAMU IRB#20XX- XXXX Approved: XX/XX/XXXX Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX. [L]  
[SEP]
9. **FERPA and PPRA:** Investigators conducting research with students must have appropriate approvals from the FERPA administrator at the institution where the research will be conducted in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) protects the rights of parents in students ensuring that written parental consent is required for participation in surveys, analysis, or evaluation that ask questions falling into categories of protected information. [L]  
[SEP]
10. **Food:** Any use of food in the conduct of human research must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M4.02.
11. **Payments:** Any use of payments to human research participants must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 21.01.99.M0.03.
12. **Records Retention:** Federal Regulations require records be retained for at least 3 years.

Records of a study that collects protected health information are required to be retained for at least 6 years. Some sponsors require extended records retention. Texas A&M University rule 15.99.03.M1.03 Responsible Stewardship of Research Data requires that research records be retained on Texas A&M property.

This electronic document provides notification of the review results by the Institutional Review Board.

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**Submission Approval DATE:** February 17, 2017

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Patricia Larke  
TAMU - College Of Education & Human Dev - Teaching, Learning And Culture

**FROM:** Dr. David Martin  
Chair, TAMU IRB

**SUBJECT:** Approval for IRB Continuing Review Form REF: 050130

**Study Number:** IRB2015-0730D

**Title:** Copy of The Instructional Practices of Teachers Who Successfully Teach Children of Color

**Initial Application Approval Date:** 03/21/2016

**Continuing Review Due:** 01/15/2018

**Expiration Date:** 02/15/2018

**Documents Reviewed and Approved:** Only IRB-stamped approved versions of study materials (e.g., consent forms, recruitment materials, and questionnaires) can be distributed to human participants. Please log into IRIS to download the stamped, approved version of all study materials. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in IRIS, please contact the IRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area.

Submission Components			
Study Document			
Title	Version Number	Version Date	Outcome
Interview Questions	Version 1.1	03/21/2016	Approved
Survey Questions	Version 1.1	03/21/2016	Approved
Study Consent Form			
Title	Version Number	Version Date	Outcome
Revised Informed Consent Letter 3.0	Version 3.0	02/12/2017	Approved

**Document of Consent:** Written consent in accordance with 45 CF 46.116/ 21 CFR 50.27  
**Waiver of Consent:**

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701  
1186 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843-1186  
Tel. 979.458.1467 Fax. 979.862.3176  
<http://rcb.tamu.edu>

- Comments:**
- This IRB study application has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. Research may begin on the approval date stated above.
  - Research is to be conducted according to the study application approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
  - Any future correspondence should include the IRB study number and the study title.
- 

Investigators assume the following responsibilities:

1. **Continuing Review:** The study must be renewed by the expiration date in order to continue with the research. A Continuing Review application along with required documents must be submitted by the continuing review deadline. Failure to do so may result in processing delays, study expiration, and/or loss of funding.
2. **Completion Report:** Upon completion of the research study (including data collection and analysis), a Completion Report must be submitted to the IRB.
3. **Unanticipated Problems and Adverse Events:** Unanticipated problems and adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately.
4. **Reports of Potential Non-compliance:** Potential non-compliance, including deviations from protocol and violations, must be reported to the IRB office immediately.
5. **Amendments:** Changes to the protocol and/or study documents must be requested by submitting an Amendment to the IRB for review. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.
6. **Consent Forms:** When using a consent form or information sheet, the IRB stamped approved version must be used. Please log into IRIS to download the stamped approved version of the consenting instruments. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in IRIS, please contact the IRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area. Human participants are to receive a copy of the consent document, if appropriate.
7. **Post Approval Monitoring:** Expedited and full board studies may be subject to post approval monitoring. During the life of the study, please review and document study progress using the PI self-assessment found on the RCB website as a method of preparation for the potential review. Investigators are responsible for maintaining complete and accurate study records and making them available for post approval monitoring. Investigators are encouraged to request a pre-initiation site visit with the Post Approval Monitor. These visits are designed to help ensure that all necessary documents are approved and in order prior to initiating the study and to help investigators maintain compliance.
8. **Recruitment:** All approved recruitment materials will be stamped electronically by the HRPP staff and available for download from IRIS. These IRB-stamped approved documents from IRIS must be used for recruitment. For materials that are distributed to potential participants electronically and for which you can only feasibly use the approved text rather than the stamped document, the study's IRB Study Number, approval date, and expiration dates must be included in the following format: TAMU IRB#20XX-XXXX. Approved: XX/XX/XXXX. Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX.
9. **FERPA and PPRA:** Investigators conducting research with students must have appropriate approvals from the FERPA administrator at the institution where the research will be conducted in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) protects the rights of parents in students ensuring that written parental consent is required for participation in surveys, analysis, or evaluation that ask questions falling into categories of protected information.
10. **Food:** Any use of food in the conduct of human research must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M4.02.
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APPENDIX B

COPIES OF SOURCES AND/OR INSTRUMENTS

**Interview Protocol Form**

Faculty Interview Protocol

Institutions: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee (Title and Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Survey Section Used:

\_\_\_\_A: Interview Background

\_\_\_\_B: Institutional Perspective

\_\_\_\_C: Assessment

\_\_\_\_D: Department and Discipline

\_\_\_\_E: Teaching and Learning

\_\_\_\_F: Demographics (no specific questions)

Other Topics Discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Documents Obtained:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Post Interview Comments or Leads:

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### Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Interviews

#### Introductory Protocol

To facilitate our note-taking, we would like to audio tape our conversations today. Please sign the release form. For your information, only researchers on the project will be privy to the tapes which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. In addition, you must sign a form devised to meet our human subject requirements. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) we do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for your agreeing to participate.



We have planned this interview to last no longer than thirty minutes. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.

Introduction

You have been selected to speak with us today because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about teaching, learning, and assessment on this campus. Our research project, as a whole, focuses on the improvement of teaching and learning activity, with particular interest in understanding how faculty in academic programs are engaged in this activity, how they assess student learning, and whether we can begin to share what we know about making a difference in undergraduate education. Our study does not aim to evaluate your techniques or experiences. Rather, we are trying to learn more about teaching and learning, and hopefully learn about faculty practices that help improve student learning on campus.

A. Interviewee

Background How

long have you been

...

\_\_\_\_\_ in your present position?

\_\_\_\_\_ at this institution?

Interesting background information on interviewee:

What is your highest degree? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your field of study? \_\_\_\_\_

My Questions	Dr. Ladson-Billings' Questions
1. What is the highest level of education you have completed?	1. Tell me something about your background. When and where were you educated? And where did you begin teaching?
2. How would you describe your philosophy of teaching? What do you believe "works"?	2. How would you describe your philosophy of teaching? What do you believe "works"?
3. How many years have you taught?	
	3. Can you think of any characteristics that African-American youngsters as a group bring to the classroom?
4. What kinds of things have you done in the classroom that have facilitated the academic success of your students?	4. What kinds of things have you done in the classroom that has facilitated the academic success of African-American students?
5. How much of what you know about teaching students did you learn as a result of teacher training, either pre-service or in-service?	5. How much of what you know about teaching African-American students did you learn as a result of teacher training, either tree service or in-service?
6. If you could revamp teacher education so that teachers would be more effective with all students, what changes would you make?	6. If you could revamp teacher education so that teachers would be more effective with African-American students, what changes would you make?
7. What kind of role do you believe parents play in the success of students?	7. What kind of role do you believe parents playing success of African-American students? How would you describe the kinds of relationships you have had with parents of students you've taught?
8. How would you describe the kinds of relationships you've had made with parents of	

students you've taught?	
9. How do you handle classroom discipline?	8. How do you handle discipline? Other special things that teachers of African-American students should know about discipline? Should not be a separate number
10. How do you handle the possible mismatch between you and what you want to teach and what you have to teach (for example, materials or supplies)?	9. How do you handle the possible mismatch between you and what you want to teach and what you have to teach (for example, materials or supplies)?
11. How do you handle the possible mismatch between what you want to teach and what the administration wants you to teach?	10. No info here 11. How do you handle the possible mismatch between what you want to teach and the and what the administration (building principal at district superintendent) wants to teach (for example, curricular mandates, philosophies)?
	12. How do you think the schooling experience of the students you teach differs from that of white students in a middle-class community?

**Survey**

**Effective Teaching Part 1**

**1. Rate your level of competence for your subject's standards (TEKS). Why are the ratings shown twice?**

- Poor**     
 **Fair**     
 **Good**     
 **Very Good**     
 **Superior**
- Poor     
 Fair     
 Good     
 Very Good     
 Superior

**2. In a week, how long do you spend engaged in lesson planning?**

**3. How do you plan?**

**4. Are resources readily available on your campus?**

- Poor**                      **Fair**                      **Good**                      **Very Good**                      **Superior**
- Poor                       Fair                       Good                       Very Good                       Superior

**5. How do you know if your lesson is effective?**

**6. What are your class rules?**

**7. How do you convey student expectations?**

**8. How is your classroom arranged?**

**9. What are some highlights of your classroom management procedures?**

**10. What is your greatest classroom management challenge?**

**Effective Teaching Part 2**

**1. How active are your students? Rankings are shown twice**

- Not Active**                      **Fairly Active**                      **Active**                      **Very Active**                      **Extremely Active**
- Not Active                       Fairly Active                       Active                       Very Active                       Extremely Active

**2. How engaged are your students?**

<b>Not Engaged</b>	<b>Fairly Engaged</b>	<b>Engaged</b>	<b>Very Engaged</b>	<b>Extremely Engaged</b>
<input type="radio"/> Not Engaged	<input type="radio"/> Fairly Engaged	<input type="radio"/> Engaged	<input type="radio"/> Very Engaged	<input type="radio"/> Extremely Engaged

**3. On average, in a week, how often do you meet with individual students?**

**4. How often do you administer teacher made assessments?**

**5. How do you use assessments (student data)?**

**6. Rank these instructional practices based on how often you use each one.**

<input type="text"/>	Activating prior knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="text"/>	Cooperative learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="text"/>	Generating and testing hypotheses	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="text"/>	Homework and practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="text"/>	Identifying similarities and differences	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="text"/>	Nonlinguistic representations	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="text"/>	Reinforcing effort and providing recognition	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="text"/>	Setting goals and providing feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="text"/>	Summarizing and note taking	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**7. Why do you think you are an effective teacher?**

APPENDIX C

CODEBOOK SAMPLE PAGE

Alice	Brian	Charles	Denise	Eve	Codes
<p><b>What kinds of things have you done in the classroom that have facilitated the academic success of your students of color?</b></p>					
<p>One thing I've done is just make sure that they (children of color) have a good strong base and you can do that with some summative testing or even some formative tests, depending on what your district is into. But I always try to have it at the beginning of the year just to see where my students are and list all the things that they were not successful on. And going back to that planning again just to show it to them in black and white, paper and pencil; this is what you missed and this is what you need to do. So they can start planning and that way you can know what you can start early on with doing tutorial and intervention.</p>	<p>I think I care about all kids no matter their race. So, I try to build relationships with my students. Relationship goes a long way with teaching the learning. That same kids don't care if they know you care. Sounds very cliché-ish, but it's very true. I've spent, and I still do, spend time building relationships. Then once you have that relationship, of course you have to have skills, you know, to help the learner. Relationship is the key that meets the need. That unlocks students' achievements.</p>	<p>What I do is for all students. Somethings that I've done are scaffolding for students that are not at the level they should be, whether academically or language related. I've done small group teaching. I've done project based learning, where they get a real life connection to their work. I've done rotations, where students get different aspects of a particular lesson from different standpoints and they go around and do that. Some of those things I've done.</p>	<p>I don't do things based on a student's color. I'm a big believer in small groups. I do whole group teach but I minimize that to about 15-20 minutes. but then I break the groups up. I have to meet with no more than 5 or 6 at a time. Sometimes some of my struggling students I'll meet 3 or 4 at a time. I spiral everything. Everything is ongoing. When I'm doing a small group I've got station setup. It's just spiraling, reviewing things that we have already learned. I tutor after school. I'll even do it without pay. The biggest goal is that the students succeed, not that I get paid for tutoring or something. I've had students, this past year as an example, I had a very challenging group. I</p>	<p>My students of color, well. Basically, that's the same thing I said what works is what I've done. I've given them my best. In the early 2000s I transferred to Johnson High School, because it was a school that was struggling, and it was majority almost 100% racial minority, black and Hispanic. What I do is I give them my best. I prepare for my lessons. I give them different ways, I present information in different ways to help them learn how to master those problems. I'm very transparent. We have a common goal. We're working on that EOC. I'm very proud to say the last year I had 100% pass in algebra one at the high school, and that's almost unheard of. But, I was very transparent with what I expected, where their goals were. I monitor them. I meet with them one-on-one. I schedule the</p>	<p>Approaches small groups building relationships, real life connection spiraling, reviewing beginning of the year Assessments stations/ rotations doing tutorial and intervention.  Interpersonal Relationship  Advocacy / Dedication (Grit)</p>

Unneeds Given  
Interpersonal Relationship  
  
Unneeds Given  
Capacity Building

			<p>had a big ratio of boys. A couple of them were in ISS quite a bit. I would go there and make sure that they caught onto the concept too. When they're there they're not learning. A lot of it goes into it. Small groups, spiraling, after school tutoring. I show up at 7:00 because that's when the buses drop them off, bring the kids in, do intervention, just consistent teaching and spiraling.</p>	<p>meetings, so they know that I'm coming up. Then, like I said, I insist on homework. I insist on note taking. They work in groups and they also have the option to work alone if they want to opt-out, but I again try different ways to reach my students, especially my students of color. I give them an encouragement that they can do it, and there are no barriers to prevent them from getting there, what they want.</p>	
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Unneeds Given  
Advocacy/ Dedication