2011

Using Multi-Paradigmatic Interventions: Gauging the Possibilities of Using Culturally Responsive Pedagogy within a Response to Intervention Framework

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Using Multi-Paradigmatic Interventions: Gauging the Possibilities of Using Culturally Responsive Pedagogy within a Response to Intervention Framework

by

Vanessa L. Hein

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts Department of Anthropology College of Arts and Sciences University of South Florida

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Date of Approval: July 15, 2011

Keywords: inclusive education, differentiation, whole-child instruction, teacher quality, professional development

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my son, Taj, who kindly offered to write my thesis for me, and has been my inspiration not only to pursue my degree in anthropology, but also to focus on education. During the first nine-week grading period parent-teacher conference, I was informed of two concerns. The first was his “inability” to color within the lines, and the second was his “possible dyslexia” due to his extremely poor penmanship. As it turned out, he added superpowers to every coloring subject and he is left-handed. His educational experiences led me to believe that improvement within the system of public education through cultural responsiveness was necessary and an anthropological perspective was vital.

I would also like to thank my mother and my Baba for providing the support and encouragement to continue when the going got tough and to remain passionate about my interests and open to those of others. Having such strong women in my corner has made me the person I have always wanted to be. I love you!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would first like to say thank you to all of my professors, both undergraduate and graduate. Each one of you has added a special category of knowledge to my understanding of the world and my place in it. To all my AAREA-rites, a special thank you for broadening my perspectives and tempering my radical initial approaches. I would like to give an immeasurable amount of gratitude to the members of my thesis committee: Dr. Kathryn Borman, Dr. Susan Greenbaum and Dr. Liz Bird. You have all presented me with challenges that made me stronger and provided me with support when I needed it most. It's not easy playing hard ball, but you have taught me about perseverance and equipped me with the tools and resources to be both a creative and responsible researcher.
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ABSTRACT

There exists a highly charged debate about whether or not the Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) model works alone in lowering the rate of special education referrals for students in an inclusive learning environment. This study seeks to explore the incorporation of a culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) into the PS/RtI framework, with the assumption that it would assist teachers with PS/RtI implementation as well as enhance their classroom learning environment. Interviews with PS/RtI coaches and elementary school teachers implementing PS/RtI are coded using inductive and deductive strategies, using salient factors of both CRP and PS/RtI as indicators for a comparative analysis. Results suggest that PS/RtI coaches and teachers in favor of CRP incorporation have a more positive perspective about inclusive education as well as viewing PS/RtI as a successful and sustainable model that benefits all children in the classroom, in addition to lowering the rate of special education referrals. The result of a union between a pedagogical model and a problem-solving model purports to not only promote whole-child instruction, but a more holistic school-wide learning environment.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Proponents of two emergent educational models, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) and Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI), have argued that each approach is effective in both lowering the rates of referrals to special education and improving academic achievement in what are considered to be high-risk students (i.e.: minority status, English language learners (ELLs), immigrant, homeless, behavioral/emotional disorder, etc.). Each model proposes a different set of methods for identifying and managing a similar group of factors that contribute to their over-representation and disproportionality in special education. The major difference between the two models is the approach each takes toward attaining these goals. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy tackles the issue from a qualitative perspective by encouraging educators to examine the various ways in which socio-demographics and other pertinent cultural factors intersect with academic achievement and performance in the immediate learning environment. The approach taken by Problem Solving/Response to Intervention is more quantitative, executed primarily through school psychologists and PS/RtI specialists and is concerned with planning, monitoring and assessing cognitive development and behavioral improvement through the use of a three-tiered system over-time.

For the purpose of this study, the primary interest lies within the area of possible overlap between the two models, which is the promotion of student
achievement through inclusive and equitable education (Table 1). In addition, a great amount of significance also lies within the idea that these models can inform each other, or perhaps be used in conjunction as a mixed-methods approach, to better achieve what would appear to be identical goals. While CRP is rapidly gaining momentum through on-going professional development efforts and more recently via pre-service training for educators, PS/RtI has already obtained federal support and funding to be implemented within pilot schools across the United States. The Florida State Department of Education (FLDOE) has taken on a bulk of that task in partnering with The Florida Project, which is Florida State’s official implementer of PS/RtI, from the University of South Florida. This study seeks to explore the following: to what extent is PS/RtI, as implemented in Florida State public schools, also culturally responsive or able to incorporate CRP without challenging the methods and implementation of PS/RtI?

PS/ RtI has the potential to feasibly integrate the central tenets of CRP into its existent framework without having to surrender its quantitative design. In order to do so, there must be allowed a certain amount of flexibility. The research goal is to find where that flexibility exists and determine whether the PS/RtI structure can acknowledge and accommodate culture as a tool for both teaching and learning. Results may also determine if CRP will remain only a pedagogy chosen by particular educators rather than utilized as a resource for intervention strategies aimed at improving the overall quality of education in our nation.
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Background on CRP

Boykin (2002), sums up the philosophy behind CRP quite concisely by stating that it “develops the talent potential [of students], placing them at promise, instead of at risk” (Gay 2010: 1). Nevertheless, it is not a stand-alone model for school-wide improvement, as other factors such as consensus, infrastructure, and continuing professional development efforts are required for sustainable positive impact. According to Ayers (2001), there are three steps toward achieving optimal teaching and learning conditions for students, which are: (1) being a student along with your students, (2) providing a comfortable, yet challenging learning environment, and (3) building bridges between all factors present in the classroom. With regard to CRP, special attention must be paid to step three, by increasing cultural competence. Abrahams and Troike (1972) expand upon this exercise by suggesting that educators first identify the cultural differences in each classroom, including those of the teacher, and then capitalize upon them. In successive studies, Chun-Hoon (1973) asserts that this practice also provides both intellectual and psychological benefits for the communities represented both in and outside of the classroom, while Arciniega (1975) builds upon this idea by stating that CRP also increases students’ abilities to succeed in higher education and enhances their overall contributions to society.

Since the 1970’s, studies on the efficacy of CRP have broadened in scope and depth. Geneva Gay (2010), in collaboration with a variety of other scholars has, by far, completed the most comprehensive texts addressing CRP, and together have outlined five major premises and six descriptive characteristics for
CRP. The first major premise is that culture counts, because "it is at the heart of all we do in the name of education" (Gay 2010: 8). Second, conventional reform is inadequate because they are entrenched in cognitive discrepancy theories focused on deficit, rather than ability. Third, intention without action is insufficient, especially in relation to discrimination and awareness. Fourth, there is strength and vitality in cultural diversity, and fifth, poor student achievement data are symptoms, not causes of achievement issues.

The six descriptive characteristics, as delineated by Gay (2010), begin with validation. CRP provides a legitimate platform for culture and heritage to be used as assets that should be supported and shared so they may continue having value to the student as a member of that community. CRP is also comprehensive, as it fosters the learning process to also incorporate political, social, and economic factors into the curriculum for whole-instruction. Next, CRP is multidimensional. Not only does CRP address culture in the immediate learning environment through curricular content, but also encompassing the learning context, student-teacher relations, and academic assessments. This combination of qualities allows CRP to be empowering for teachers and student alike, through creating an environment that builds confidence and perseverance, resulting in academic success for students and increased level of self-efficacy for teachers. In addition to empowerment, CRP is transformative. It challenges conventional instruction and educational reform by changing cultural difference from a challenge to strengths and added levels of knowledge. Lastly, CRP is described as emancipatory. Through the transformational process, new
knowledge is constructed, authenticated, and shared between all participants, liberating them from traditional cannons of knowledge and knowledge production.

Oser, Dick and Patry (1992), describe “good teaching” as including the following traits: “reflection, imagination, self-criticism, knowledge of subject matter and the tools of best practice” (Oser et. al. 1992: 834). It is this set of traits that CRP builds, with particular consideration toward the critical aspects. Ladson-Billings (1995), believes it is this manner that CRP departs from conventional instruction and emphasizes three specific elements as examples of such: (1) CRP promotes academic excellence for all students, (2) CRP cultivates and advances cultural competence, and (3) CRP fosters social critical consciousness. Together, these elements systematically dismantle the status quo in education, and subsequently, bring about balance to power and resource distribution in society.

Ideally, this is what is believed to be the outcome of a successful educational system, but we are not there yet, and we have miles to go. Encouraging CRP is one of the most appropriate places to begin, however, those in favor of maintaining the status quo meet the practice with great opposition. This may be the primary reason for CRP, after all the years of research and dissemination on its effectiveness, to remain as a personal choice in pedagogical practice rather than expounded upon as a course unto itself during pre-service teacher training and a requisite workshop in ongoing professional development for in-service teachers.
Background on PS/RtI

Over the past three school years, ranging from 2007/2008 to 2009/2010, a collaborative effort between the University of South Florida and the Florida Department of Education, called the Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project (The Florida Project), has made great strides in exploring the efficacy of the PS/RtI model in reducing referral rates to special education. The Florida Project was developed with the initiative to (a) examine the PS/RtI model in practice in order to offer support to Florida PS/RtI educators in the form of technical assistance and professional development and (b) provide a systematic evaluation of the model’s impact on student achievement. The goals of the pilot project were intended to present a model for replication across the entire state.

Findings from the Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Program Year 3 Evaluation Report¹ are organized into three categories: consensus, infrastructure, and implementation. In terms of consensus, it was reported that educator and administrative consensus increased at the pilot sites across the three years; however, no substantial increase in efficacy was evident at the level of individual student. Improved structural support and educator training, resource allocation and access were reported over the three year span, naming professional development as the most critical aspect of capacity building at the school and district levels. Findings concerning implementation were similar to those of improved infrastructure in that, the ability to effectively implement all model components relies heavily upon systematic support, which resultantly

¹ All findings are taken from the full report, which can be found at www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/yr3_eval_report.pdf
builds and expands infrastructure and consensus. Because of this, the major implication for project success is consistent professional development efforts over a period that extends beyond the pilot project.

The section in The Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project Year 3 Evaluation Report that is of interest to this study is teacher self-perception, which is addressed through the Beliefs Survey administered by The Florida Project. These results correspond to the need for a convergence model that incorporates the central praxis of CRP into the professional development activities supported through PS/RtI implementation. The Beliefs Survey was designed to capture and assess “educators’ beliefs regarding data-based decision making, functions of instruction and intervention, and the capabilities and performance of students with high-incidence disabilities” (The Florida PS/RtI Project Year 3 Evaluation Report 2011: 21). Across the first three years of implementation, a moderate increase of reported self-perception of skills was demonstrated. Two concerns were acknowledged when deciphering future progress and sustainability of the PS/RtI program: (1) self-perceptions of skills are directly related to professional development and support that extend beyond the current evaluation period, and (2) allocation of professional development and support is inconsistent across sites. Sites with higher amounts of professional development, supplementary infrastructure, technical assistance, and coaching were reported as “implement[ing] PS/RtI more quickly and with greater levels of fidelity” (The Florida PS/RtI Project Year 3 Evaluation Report 2011: 71).
However, it remains unclear as to what type of professional development is needed to address issues of self-perception of skills as they relate to educator beliefs about function of instruction and intervention. This leads to an opportunity to (1) introduce pedagogical tactics for educators that directly and positively affect student achievement without interfering with PS/RtI requirements, (2) integrate qualitative components into the existing research-based practices that drive the PS/RtI model implementation.

Relevant Literature

Due to the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, an extensive amount of importance has been placed on what The Gates Foundation has labeled as The 3 R’s of Education, rigor, relevance, and relationships. The enactment of NCLB has had a drastic impact on how districts choose and implement educational intervention and reform programs within their schools and classrooms (Whitehurst 2003). The PS/RtI model is commended in both NCLB and the most recent re-authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 for its treatment of rigor, relevance, and relationships as it applies to all students in an inclusive learning environment (BEESS 2006). Gresham (2005) has defined PS/RtI as a change in performance and/or behavior as a function of a multi-level intervention that increases intensity based upon demonstrated progress and data analyses within a specified time-frame. This early intervention educational model was developed in order to replace the previous Discrepancy or “wait-to-fail” models that were used in educational
reform efforts of the past and is praised for its use of an evidence-based approach and decision-making process to improve the quality of education in the United States (Batsche et al. 2007). The PS/RtI model proactively engages students, parents, teachers, administration and a multi-disciplinary team of PS/RtI professionals in the learning process of individual students by providing services, training and feedback from monitoring and assessment data (Lenz et al. 2003). As a result, the over-representation and disproportionality of minority and English Language Learner (ELLs) students are greatly reduced while concurrently maximizing the rate of measurable academic and/or behavioral progress (Fuchs et al. 2001).

One of PS/RtI’s greatest strengths is found within its ability to address and improve upon all students’ education and learning potential, including those with disabilities, in a responsive and cooperative learning environment (Opitz 2006). The proof of success with PS/RtI has been documented by the improvement of high-stakes testing scores on both district and state assessments at the student level as well as being supported by an increase in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) at the school level (Elliott and Thurlow 2005). The main concern or apprehension displayed towards the use of PS/RtI models is sustainability because it is an early intervention program that does not currently reach beyond the level of elementary school, although efforts to implement the model in middle and secondary school are underway. This resultantly limits the types and lengths of research projects that can be conducted (Kavale 2002).
In order to address the issue of sustainability, one must evaluate the roles of student investment, empowerment, and agency within education and regard these factors as a set of tools to be promoted in the attainment of an equitable and relevant education. The concept of CPR addresses these very issues. It has been argued that issues of learning and low academic performance are not really problems found within the high-risk students as much as they are issues found within the historically constructed inequalities in the schools and educational systems in which they attend and participate (Gay 2004). Bruner (1996) discusses the ways in which culture, as both a process and a product, is the primary mechanism used by people to construct meaning and experience and then to communicate those meanings and experiences to others. Because of this, culture and learning are indivisible. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy centers its approach on this notion and can be explained as “using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective” in such a way that “teaches to and through the strengths of these students” via validation and affirmation (Hanley and Noblit 2009: 28).

This model shares two key components of the educational reform movement currently shaping our educational system, relevance, and relationships, which are also core features of the PS/RtI model (Wyngaard 2007). There is a fourth “R” that CRP examines and that is the concept of resiliency. Increased resiliency in students through the use of CRP illustrates how risk and protective processes can be used jointly to create a developmental trajectory and
overcome barriers in the learning process (Luthar and Zigler 1991). Daniels et al. (2008) have reported that resilient students display social and cognitive competence and a positive sense of self, and that beyond the student and their family, responsibility lies also within educators and the surrounding community to promote strong ties between student and school resulting in lasting commitment and increased levels of academic performance. Many CRP scholars have noted particular pit-falls in placing such significance on high-stakes testing and the resultant disparities in scores seen between socio-demographic categories (Steele 2006). CRP has been celebrated for its ability to reduce or even eliminate these stereotype threats seen within the educational system and on various standardized tests used to measure academic competence and performance (Lew 2006). CRP has also been highly criticized for its suggestions that conventional curriculum is ineffective, culturally biased and discriminatory; however proponents of CRP do not all agree that traditional curriculum need to be changed, just the manner in which it is taught (Perry and Delpit 1998).

It is the focus on achievement that becomes entirely problematic because there are so many ways to define and measure it. The PS/RtI model displays a heavy concentration on monitoring, testing and analyzing student achievement through the use of such standardized testing procedures and outcomes, while CRP focuses more on inter-personal and social perceptions of achievement and tailors the process to individual students and yet, both models have proven highly effective in raising levels of both social and academic performance.
There is very little literature that addresses the merging of these two models to create a more comprehensive strategy aimed towards improving education for all students. Harris-Murri et al. (2006) has noted that with the re-authorization of IDEA came a necessary re-evaluation of the term disability and the need for a broader, more comprehensive understanding of how to identify and manage the range of disabilities seen in the classroom. Kashima et al. (2009) have asserted that recent developments in the PS/RtI model have ushered in a culture component, along with parental involvement and leadership. Culture as a core component has also been supported by Brown and Doolittle (2008), as well as Santamaria (2009), in efforts to improve instructional pedagogy as it relates to the implementation of PS/RtI in elementary schools. It is for this reason that it should be further evaluated.
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objective and Hypothesis

An invaluable lesson may be taken from the simple maxim: it’s not what you say or do; it is how you say or do it. It has been argued that improving the education of all students requires a closer examination of course content, but even greater yet, a closer examination of the method of content delivery. If the delivery is culturally responsive, the student has the opportunity to think critically about the information and relate it to personal experience, therefore strengthening the understanding or relationship to the information being presented. This process, in turn, leads to the facilitation of retaining knowledge and more importantly, increased levels of applicability and transferability of the knowledge. The PS/RtI model has attained acceptance at the school, district and federal levels, while CRP is still viewed as potentially threatening to dominant culture, so it would seem more appropriate to evaluate cultural responsiveness through the demonstrated relevance and relationship aspects of PS/RtI, rather than search for rigor in CRP because it is so subjective. The development of a new model that borrows on the strengths and addresses the weaknesses found within both PS/RtI and CRP could allow us to bridge the qualitative and quantitative camps seen in education and move beyond prescriptive and reactionary models and more towards interpretive and supportive models that begin in early education.
One goal of this study is to identify specific factors that overlap between the two models that can be found within the ways PS/RtI coaches are trained in regards to cultural responsiveness, how these PS/RtI coaches relay this knowledge to teachers, and how students respond to this type of instruction. Relating to the goals of educational anthropologists, the result would be an addition to the limited literature that supports the use of elements from both models to produce a single comprehensive research-based paradigm for educational improvement that is student-centered and produces measurable results in the areas of both academic and social performance.

Through the systematic re-evaluation of conventional educational paradigms in promotion of homogeneity, exclusive instruction and traditional aptitude testing, educational anthropologists have already begun on the path toward establishing and executing equitable and relative educational practices (Allington 2007). By combining methodologies, we have also bridged many gaps between research and practice through evidence-based decision-making processes in order to create and uphold a set of best practices for educational instruction in promotion of diversity and inclusion. The continuation of cross-cultural, multi-disciplinary efforts to maintain positive relations and informative discourse on educational reform must continue in order to arrive at effective and sustainable strategies for intervention and improvement. Jointly, the central tenets of PS/RtI and CRP can be applied to current educational reform trends to accomplish such tasks. The comprehensiveness, multi-dimensionality, empowering, transformative and emancipatory aspects of CRP can be utilized to
inform PS/RtI instructional practices, which are already leading to positive results in student performance and achievement rates in school that will last far beyond elementary school and extend outside the physical boundaries of the classroom (Gay 2000, Ladson-Billings 1992, Lipman 1995, Shor 1992).

Methods

It is important to first note that a vital aspect of this study, the prospect of flexibility within the PS/RtI framework, underwent a significant change just before data collection activities. During the period spanning from January to March of 2009, when the research proposal was developed and approved, PS/RtI was only one of the available early intervention programs from which districts could choose to promote inclusive education and decrease student referrals to special education. Discussions about potential legislative changes regarding revisions of the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) special education eligibility requirements expanded rapidly as 2008-2009 student achievement data became available for analysis and prompted the need to realign the objectives of IDEA with those of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). In reaction, the Florida Department of Education instituted the PS/RtI model as a statewide-unfunded mandate, to be effective as of July 2010. Districts moved quickly to become compliant with the new mandate by hosting PS/RtI workshops in various districts, alerting administration, and educators to the new processes and responsibilities for which each school would be held accountable.
It would be fair to assert that when a school or district makes a choice to implement a program, beliefs and attitudes about the program, in addition to fidelity of implementation, will essentially be different than if a school or district is mandated to do so. Therefore, capturing that change would require a different approach to data collection. Based on the a priori assumptions of PS/RtI as an efficacious model for early intervention, there were intentions of collecting three separate data types, for the purposes of data triangulation. The first data set would have consisted of approximately six in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the core PS/RtI coaches employed by the participating district. Following the PS/RtI coach interviews, a focus group comprised of at least six teachers from three separate elementary schools implementing the PS/RtI model would have been conducted. Lastly, a maximum of ten classroom observations would have followed, preferably within the classrooms of teachers that participated in the focus group in order to evaluate the similarities and differences between what teachers say and what teachers actually do to create a more relevant and comfortable learning environment.

In connection with these initiatives, there was interest in observing how and to what students respond, noting any particular trends and identifying differences in instruction that produce various lucrative outcomes in student behavior and achievement. The choices in methodology were aimed at supporting that notion that there is no one particular way or method of executing an educational intervention strategy that addresses such a wide array of factors involved in any given student’s educational process. From the results of these
separate data analyses, a mixed-methods approach to identifying particular cultural factors and linkages to specific behavior and instructional responses of teachers and to those of students would have been highly beneficial.

Due to the changes in legislation, these exact data were not collected, primarily due to time constraints placed on PS/RtI team members. Instead of conducting individual interviews with PS/RtI coaches, a focus group was held with the five core members of the team and the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instructional Services for the district. The original PS/RtI coach interview questions were adapted to fit a focus group setting and still aimed to explore first and foremost the type and amount, if any, of cultural competency training or knowledge that PS/RtI coaches may have received either through instruction or via personal efforts. Questions also sought to examine the ways in which they understand the concept of cultural responsiveness and how they may take steps to use and teach the concept to PS/RtI educators at the elementary school level. Five individual PS/RtI teacher interviews were conducted within two schools, which differed in demography and length of PS/RtI implementation, rather than conducting a teacher focus group. This method still allowed for the investigation and categorization of methods used by teachers are prescribed by PS/RtI and which are not, as well as constructing relationships between shared components of both models. Classroom observations could not be completed during this study; however, the classroom observation checklist, along with the other protocols is included as Appendix 1. To adhere to the original intention of gathering three data-sets for triangulation and to investigate the process of
learning about, implementing and assessing the PS/RtI model, the third type of data collected for analysis was participant observation in a district-hosted PS/RtI training workshop for in-service teachers.

Two approaches to qualitative inquiry inform the manner in which the research questions and codebook were developed and the data analyzed. Due to the ontological nature of the research question and properties of the overall analysis, it was determined that a phenomenological approach to inquiry and analysis would be employed (Moustakas 1994). However, the most notable challenge of phenomenological approaches is avoiding researcher bias through bracketing, or suspending one’s personal understanding or interpretation of the participant’s experience (Creswell 2007). To deter potential researcher bias from clouding or re-interpreting the told experiences of each participant, aspects of the constructivist grounded theory approach were also employed; specifically in the code development and application process. The codes used during data analysis were developed through inductive and deductive processes in order to ensure a more comprehensive exploration of the data through both theoretical and practical avenues. Miles and Huberman (1994) and Boyatzis (1998), offer outlined processes of code construction to increase rigor in the analysis, which I have adapted and incorporated other techniques proposed by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to improve reliability such as employing open- and axial- coding methods. The integrated logic model for code development is provided below (Fig. 1) and the finalized codebook is included as Appendix 2.
Figure 1: Inductive/Deductive Code Process
The training, focus group, and each interview, were recorded on a
digital audio recording device and the mp3 files of were transcribed using
a combination of manual transcription and Dragon Dictate 2.0 software to
prepare them for qualitative coding. Given the reduction of data, the need
to utilize coding software, such as Atlas.ti 5.0, was forgone and all
transcripts were coded by hand and recorded in a Microsoft Excel
spreadsheet. Once each data set was coded, a thematic comparison
within and across data sets was completed in order to extract salient
factors of similarity/difference for further analysis. Results of these
analyses are presented in the section entitled Findings.

Limitations
There are several limitations of this study. For the purposes of data
triangulation, three data types were intended to be collected, however due to
time constraints, only two of the original data types were collected and analyzed
in their entirety. The classroom observation data could not be collected and
analyzed properly within the limited timeframe and was consequently, excluded
from the study. The second limitation of the study is related to the study
population demographics, more specifically gender. Participation in the research
was voluntary, resulting in less control over particular factors, which may or may
not influence perspectives on education and instruction such as gender, time in
service or age. The greater majority of the study population was female,
disallowing a more thorough examination of gendered responses or behaviors to
the research questions. Lastly, due to the small scale of this research project, the results of this study are not intended to be generalized. Conclusions drawn from the data are truly specific to the district and perhaps even more particular to the participating schools, despite any commonalities that these findings may have with other, more broadly scaled research on the topic. Rather, the findings should be factors to consider when creating or revising PS/RtI training modules and ongoing professional development workshops.
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

Data Source 1: PS/RtI Training Workshop

In an effort to implement the PS/RtI model with efficiency, many districts across the state offered training workshops for educators during the summer of 2010. Attendance of this workshop was critical for this analysis in order to gauge the perceptions of the model as relayed by The Florida Project and the FLDOE. The duration of the workshop was approximately one business day and covered PS/RtI legislation, theoretical background, and model design along with a basic description of implementation, requirements, and examples of monitoring and referral protocols.

Theoretical Connections

“This is not about pedagogy,” was the opening statement made by the workshop facilitator. He then went on to describe how Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) is a school improvement model for “all students [and for] all staff,” and that Exceptional Student Education (ESE) is “not the primary application, [nor is it] the goal.” The inter-connectedness of the following statements’ subject, (i.e. school improvement, students/educational staff and application/goal) from an anthropological perspective, tells us, that in fact, PS/RtI is about pedagogy; furthermore, the accent placed on all students and staff presents the inclusion of the enigmatic concept of culture, more
specifically, the notion of an ideal, collective school ethos. Taken together, along with the manner in which the model is evaluated and reflected by increased student achievement, or responsiveness to the intervention, the foundational principles of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy emerge.

A brief overview of PS/RtI was presented to the attending teacher population, placing emphasis on the two most important changes effecting ESE referral and eligibility: theoretical framework for problem identification (Fig. 2) and the shift in attention from outcomes to process (Fig. 3). Over the past decade, ambition has grown to de-throne the Discrepancy, or “wait-to-fail”, model traditionally used to identify ESE students within public education (Fletcher et al. 2004). As of July 2010, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) made a strategic move to re-evaluate this methodology and devise a new approach derived from systems change theory. Several concessions were made during the presentation that spoke to why past initiatives to reduce ESE referral have failed:

1. Failure to achieve consensus on both process and outcomes measures;
2. Lack of attention paid to school culture;
3. Purpose, objectives and implementation tasks of past initiatives were not clear to all stakeholders;
4. Expectations of outcomes were unrealistic;
5. Failure to capture and adequately measure progress with consistency; and
6. Lack of multi-tiered and cross-directional communication between stakeholders.
Figure 2: PS/RtI Problem Solving Model
This specified application of systems change theory is closely related to the theoretical drive behind CRP in that, to be effective, both approaches require the following (Pane 2010, Schein 1996):

1. Consensus is achieved between all stakeholders on a common vision;
2. The objectives of the vision are pursued systematically over time to achieve goals;
3. Goals are not pursued with the assumption that “one size fits all”;
4. Professional development and ongoing support is critical; and
5. Evaluation processes are iterative.
The problem-solving model for PS/RtI carries with it a set of assumptions, which correspond to CRP directives, which also necessitate a shift away from conventional paradigms about learning, learning disabilities, and evaluating achievement discrepancies in the classroom (Hosp, Hosp and Howell 2006). Not only does PS/RtI promote practical application of each tenet mentioned above, the model expands the stakeholder category beyond the school system and holds responsible the educator as a factor in student learning. The following responses were noted during the workshop; either directly from the presentation, extracted from references highlighted in the workshop text or provided in answers to questions posed by attendees, and is mirrored in research on the efficacy of CRP (Brown 2007, Foster 1997, Gay 2000, King 1997, Spindler 1974, Villegas and Lucas 2002).

The PS/RtI approach:

1. Is preventative, rather than curative;
2. Is multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary to broaden the team knowledge and perspective;
3. Increases parental awareness and engagement;
4. Increases educator autonomy in the classroom;
5. Promotes inclusive, rather than exclusive learning environment;
6. Places emphasis on ability, rather than restriction; and lastly,
7. Supports the belief that all children can learn.

Establishing Praxis

There are currently three federal statutes which address the rights of children with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE): Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). At the state
level, Rule 6A-6.0331, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), General Education Intervention Procedures, Child Find, and the Initial Provision of Exceptional Education Services to Eligible Students seeks to narrow the focus of requirements and provisions to comply with the aforementioned federal statutes through the state-wide implementation of PS/RtI. Based on the language used to present PS/RtI as the preferred and reliable model of change during the workshop, Hosp, Hosp and Howell’s (2006) and other scholarly research on Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM), seemed to be a key source of the evidence-based decision-making on the part of the FLDOE to implement PS/RtI as a policy mandate. The consensus achieved by the research of these scholars is that CBM and RtI are a good-fit.

Reasons behind supporting legislative change, rather than solely imploring costly on-going professional development for educators are also substantiated by research not noted by the FLDOE. Cohen (1995) builds off of sentiments relayed by O'Day and Smith (1993), by asserting that systemic educational reform concentrates efforts in two major areas: new policy instruments and reducing previously set barriers that would obstruct the execution of new reform. According to Cohen, new policy toward effective reform would construct: (1) new standards/instructional frameworks, (2) assessments that target both students’ and teachers’ progress towards achieving the new standards, and (3) changes in teacher education. Although policy seems to bear the responsibility for change, this type of systemic reform actually necessitates a change in teaching through a paradigm shift. However, Cohen also states that “reformers know that, but
assume that the policy instruments listed above would, as they often say, "drive" instruction. But that remains a conjecture, for there is little evidence of direct and powerful relations between policy and practice" (Cohen 1995: 11). Gregg (2011) then, includes: (1) teacher characteristics (i.e.: pedagogy, beliefs about knowledge construction, production and attainment), (2) structure and organization of schools, (3) policies that emphasize high-stakes testing rather than substantive learning, and (4) societal beliefs and values about the purpose and value of education. Elmore (2004) also agrees that it took nearly two decades of reform efforts following the release of A Nation at Risk for the disconnection between educational policy and practice to become visible enough to follow new reform efforts into the classroom, prompting the design of a protocol which outlines what teachers and students are expected to do. He also inquires, “whether this connection will occur and, if it does, what influence will it have?” which is a longstanding question based upon his previous research suggesting that very few, if any past reform initiatives actually reach the teaching/learning components of education (Elmore 2004: 213).

Discussion

The motivation to implement a policy that is aimed at improved student achievement and requires paradigmatic (or pedagogical) change may not only demonstrate the acknowledgment of how instructional practices influence student learning and are influenced by student culture, but also place an imperative on a more thorough investigation of the “A” (appropriate-ness) in FAPE by merging
components of CRP and PS/RtI. Rosen (2006), proposes that law is “deeply embedded in the particularities of each culture and that carving it out as a separate domain and only later making note of its cultural connections distorts the nature of both law and culture” (Rosen 2006: xii). In viewing educational policy and culture as inter-connected systems, which are bi-directional in construction and influence, it would seem that culture ought to have been incorporated into such policy long ago, especially due to the historical issues of ethnic/racial disproportionality and over-representation in special education. According to the Criteria for Eligibility (Rule 6A-6.03018(4)), there are particular findings about learning discrepancies that are no longer primary specific learning disability (SLD) determinants on their own, such as: visual, hearing, or motor disability; emotional/behavioral disability; cultural factors; high mobility rate/irregular attendance; economic factors; and limited English proficiency. Each factor mentioned has a profound influence on administrative decision-making, resource allocation, school climate, teacher instructional practices, student learning and therefore, student achievement and are all intrinsically related to each other through the convergence of culture and educational systems.

The ways in which the PS/RtI mandate recognizes and fosters such considerations as it is conveyed through policy text is somewhat ambiguous and requires further support through on-going professional development that extends well beyond the initial PS/RtI training. The resources on PS/RtI implementation provided by the FLDOE were, for the most part, technical assistance and policy
centered. While understanding the mandate itself is important, it does not speak to how and why educators may need to augment their instructional practices to create the equity in the classroom that mandate ensures and consequently requires for accurate and reliable measurement of student progress. The primary resource, from which the training presentation was taken, is the Florida RtI website. This website, “provides a central, comprehensive location for Florida-specific information and resources that promote school-wide practices to ensure highest possible student achievement in both academic and behavioral pursuits” (http://www.florida-rti.org/). However, when investigating each resource available on the website, the concepts of culture were near absent, and when mentioned, were undefined. For example, The Guiding Tools for Instructional Problem Solving (GTIPS) manual, found on the website, uses the term school culture twice, RtI culture once, and culture as a category connected to collaboration within a rubric. Finally in Appendix E: Decision-Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility, the reference to culture reads: “Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress primarily the result of factors related to culture or ethnicity?”

The secondary resource for PS/RtI implementation provided by the training materials was the BEESS Resource and Information Center (BRIC) website. Again, the resources found within this site are primarily for understanding PS/RtI, General Education Intervention and ESE policy and procedures through a compendium of FLDOE memorandums on the topics. Technical Assistance Papers (TAPS) are available to read, as are links to other
relevant federal websites that address the topics. Under the Professional Development section, a link provides a wide arrangement of resources that can assist educators in their instructional planning and execution. The professional development series offered by the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) is perhaps the most comprehensive in providing educators with a series of workshop opportunities, supplemental readings, and collaborating organizations that focus on whole-instruction improvement techniques. In exploring the website and products offered, there was no evidence of culture as contributing factor of learning, as the site was centered on inclusive education for SLD students only. This is not to say that FIN discounts the existence of culturally based disproportionality or over-representation in special education, however, it is not the focus of their advocacy and support efforts.

Teacher workshops on CRP are available in a variety of formats to assist educators in acquiring knowledge on how culture effects, and is effected by, instruction in the classroom. The most recent development in CRP application which specifically addresses the use of PS/RtI models can be found on the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCREST) website, for no cost, and distributed to school administration and educators. The resources include both training manuals and PowerPoint presentations, which can be utilized either in a group setting or as handouts for individuals. NCCREST has also collaborated with the Equity Alliance at ASU and LeadScape to provide a more expansive source of technical assistance and professional development opportunities to educators working in inclusive learning environments. Textual
resources such as, “Culturally Responsive Interventions: Innovative Approaches to Working with Diverse Populations,” edited by Julie R. Ancis (2003) and “Preventing Disproportionate Representation: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Prereferral Interventions,” by S.B. Garcia and A.A. Ortiz (2006), can also provide a wealth of knowledge about the connections between culture and learning as well as how to integrate cultural responsiveness into existing frameworks such as Response to Intervention.

Data Source 2: PS/RtI Coach Focus Group

In order to gauge the practicality of model convergence, one must also explore the primary source of information and instructional support for those who are charged with implementation in the classroom. The purpose of Data Source 2, the PS/RtI Coach focus group, was to generate discourse about training, modeling and sustainability of the PS/RtI model and to identify particular model components which relate to and/or negate the ideas proposed by CRP regarding effective inclusive and differentiated instruction. The focus group consisted of five PS/RtI coaches and their Supervisor of Curriculum and Instructional Services for the school district chosen to participate in the study, and for the purposes of confidentiality are hereafter referred to as the SCIS and Canal School District, respectively.

The composition of this group consisted of three females and two males whose educational background was school psychology, with the majority of participants graduating from the University of South Florida. The focus group
took place at the Canal School District Administration Building in a small conference area in a round table configuration, where focus group questions were posed and answers were provided on a voluntary and circular basis, beginning with responses from the SCIS. Participants were allowed to speak freely and diverge somewhat from primary questions to allow for the identification of factors of influence, which may have been overlooked by the investigator. It is also important to note that no definition or explanation of CRP was delivered to the participants before the focus group, as not to lead participants toward any particular response or point of view.

Results

Preliminary coding results suggest that four of the six central CRP principles are, in fact, inherent in the PS/RtI model and are fostered and supported at multiple levels within the Canal School District system; however, very little knowledge of classroom environment and pedagogical preference was demonstrated by the focus group participants. Over the course of the focus group, 11 comments were made that explicitly incorporate these principles, and four which implied a variation of a CRP principle, as being required to effectively implement and sustain the PS/RtI model within their schools.

The most frequent factor identified within the first set of codes (Fig. 4) which was comprehensive, or more implicitly stated as whole-child or all-student learning/treatment / instruction, was present at least once in every response from each participant. Responses ranged from, “We don’t focus on a sub-group of
kids. We focus on all kids…giving all kids what they need…it’s a school improvement model for everyone,” to

“…or for Hispanic populations…those kids that are achieving, it’s not cool within their culture, [so] how do we as educators keep them engaged in learning? [and] then we would go through problem solving to determine how.”

Second to comprehensive in frequency, was the code for empowerment. Although this code was most often utilized with respect to educators, references to being empowered were coupled with the result of increased student achievement levels. For example, “like even if you do something wrong…when you go to make adjustments, if you’re true to the process, you can usually end up not sickened with the wrong practices,” or,

“We have to be humble enough that if our Professional Development isn't producing the outcomes that we want for our audience, we go back to the table…practices that really have an impact on kids, and [gives you] the stamina to stick with things.”

And even more explicitly stated, “it’s just that belief about we've got kind of an empowerment, like I can control what happens with kids’ outcomes.”

Four comments made during the focus group centered on the aspect of multi-dimensionality, more so with regard to cross-disciplinary approaches to education, rather than cross-cultural approaches to instruction. A consensus was achieved amongst the participants that the multi-dimensional qualities of the model are due to the movement from theoretical to practical application and knowledge sharing and adaptation, rather than notions of intellectual property and rigid ideas about fidelity of the model. One instance describes it as such, “Let’s go ahead and borrow and share…I’m about the collaborative process.”
Another example would be, “I see it as a melting of some models.” Another participant described the model as being multi-dimensional because it began with an administrative decision then, “includ[ed] the teachers in the conversation and then the teachers includ[ed] the students.”

Figure 4: PS/RtI Coach Frequency of Code 2.0 CRP within PS/RtI

Coding results for identifying the source of CRP knowledge within the PS/RtI coach interviews were distributed across within-school means of knowledge sharing and included self, colleagues and administration (Fig. 5). Illustrations of CRP usage and knowledge were primarily communicated through sentences beginning with, “I know,” “I believe,” or “I tell,” indicating that there is a considerable amount of ownership displayed in understanding and relaying CRP concepts. This connects to the recorded instances of empowerment and to the remarks about feeling confident in informing administration and other educators, as well as positive receipt of feedback. For example, one coach stated that “in
terms of training, what was most important, was communication skills, and then the problem-solving brainwork…we’ve built a lot into showing how to interpret different types of data,” and another coach added, “you learn content as students and then as practitioners…[to be] more like systems coaches, not data coaches.” During an explanation of how to use student data, one coach admitted, “after the RtI training, I felt more comfortable with some of the assessments…and less blame is on the kids, [and] rather some instructional factors.” Afterward, another coach supported that statement with a description of how to properly inform administration and teachers about areas for potential change. Above being able to communicate openly about possible ways to improve instruction through the teaching and sharing of CRP-like practices, it was noted by the majority of participants that CRP was not taught to them as an effective pedagogical practice for teachers. It was described as a brief lesson during the one requisite class centered on diversity in graduate school, and not as CRP, more so as culture and learning. Others reported having no formal exposure to either CRP or diversity training during their schooling. Professional development focused on CRP concepts was also absent as a reported source of CRP knowledge. In terms of reported experience using CRP, one coach told about their service in another state. The coach went on to describe the CRP practice from an ecological and behavioral perspective of cultural responsiveness, highlighting its importance in a classroom environment where Caucasian students were the minority. They went to explain,

“We had to educate teachers all the time on the difference, how to handle students from different cultures…so there were lots of
different ways to educate students, but then also just being there [for them].”

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of classroom learning environments in the schools implementing PS/RtI, four comments were made that alluded to the ideal environment being scaffolded and student-centered (Fig. 6). There were no responses implying that teacher-centered/driven instruction was either promoted or observed by PS/RtI coaches during classroom visits. On the other hand, full student autonomy in the form of student-driven instruction was not acknowledged as an observable behavior either. These results imply that there is a belief among the PS/RtI coaches that students have a limited amount of autonomy with regard to peer-to-peer instruction, and that minimal teacher intervention is required when conducting basic classroom learning activities. CRP notes this as the preferred manner of classroom management,
providing empowerment to both student and teacher and resulting in increased perceptions of self-efficacy.

Figure 6: PS/RtI Coach Frequency of Code 4.0 Classroom Learning Environment

CRP concepts are believed, by the majority of interviewed PS/RtI coaches, to be inherent in the PS/RtI model when implemented with fidelity (Fig. 7). Likewise, it was also reported through a combination of CRP and PS/RtI practices, not only will educators achieve the goals of PS/RtI, which are student-centered and luti-tiered, but also strengthen student-teacher relationships and teacher perceptions of how culture may effect learning in individual students, allowing them to delivery tiered intervention strategies more effectively. CRP acknowledges the use of multi-tiered instruction as being highly efficient in several ways, including: varying length of learning activities for individual students, utilizing multiple examples to allow for information retention and
transference across contexts, and allowal and validation of multiple student responses to questions to illustrate a variety of ways to understand and interpret the presented information.

A wide variety of explanations were given in response to the following question: What role do you believe culture has in student learning, and with regard to teacher instructional practices, and how does it relate to PS/RtI? The first response had to do with clarification of culture, as in teacher/student culture, not the collective school culture. One coach spoke for divided camps of educators who do and do not believe that culture has a relationship to cognitive ability, while another addressed known differences between cultural views of education including desire to learn or importance of education. A third response focussed on language barriers, and the difference between learning styles of non-English speaking and bilingual students, stating that they, “definitely think it has a role.”

The next coach to respond changed the focus of the question from PS/RtI coach to educators, based on their experience within the Canal School District. The first statement, “I think awareness is not is as strong in our schools as it probably should be,” was agreed with by the SCIS. A follow up question was posed about a visible or told reflective process exhibited by teachers in the district. Two themes emerged concerning reflective processes of teachers, (1) amount of time in the process has influence on its fluency across contexts, and (2) it is demonstrated more so by prompting by being asked the question, “what is going on in your classroom and what can you do about it?” Another described
the PS/RtI process as requiring self-reflection in addition to being equitably preventative and proactive as CRP, which makes the PS/RtI model the preferred method of service delivery. They went on to state,

“When a specific thing happens to an individual student that we tried to do or we tried to be culturally sensitive, I always come back and say, ‘okay, we planned this, it’s great that we tried it, but the real question is, is it working? And that to me, is really the defining feature of our RtI.”

![Figure 7: PS/RtI Coach Frequency of Code 5.0 Beliefs and Attitudes about CRP within PS/RtI](image)

Discussion

Ideas about culture and responsiveness were incorporated into nearly every response concerning descriptive accounts of PS/RtI model core principles about student learning, mostly acknowledging that each student has different learning styles and may require tailored instruction based on those learning styles. In this way, CRP and PS/RtI are similar, with the central tenet of each is
that accommodating and supporting individual student needs is critical to the learning process and responding to those needs as required improves student achievement, builds and strengthens the student-teacher relationship. These mutually beneficial qualities foster a collective school culture that is student-centered as well as offering opportunities for growth and expansion of educator practices.

The PS/RtI coaches also displayed various ways of explaining and categorizing “culture” and the respective impacts it has on student learning and teacher instructional practices. Recognizing that culture is multifaceted, and not limited to racial/ethnic categories, is the key to its incorporation into instruction. PS/RtI perceptions of culture as a learning tool proved positive overall, although participants tended to provide ethnic and linguistic examples most often. This was to be expected however, as the demographic characteristics of the Canal School District students are largely Latino and of either first or second generation immigrant status. Cultural competency of teachers was a concern of several PS/RtI coaches indicating that there is a need for a professional development effort centered on diversity, as one participant explicitly stated. PS/RtI coaches relayed their teacher and administration meeting as frequent, sometimes as much as once week if necessary, and meetings with other PS/RtI coaches were monthly. Professional development considerations are often a topic of conversation, but follow-through from the district is required.

The discussion surrounding critical teacher characteristics for effective PS/RtI implementation revealed many similarities to those of CRP and included:
open-mindedness, ability to self-reflect, the use of iterative problem-solving methods, adopting the teacher as student philosophy despite amount of years in-service and lastly, ability to adapt to the changing classroom environment. The PS/RtI coaches posited some recommendations for teachers to increase or expand upon these qualities, for example, one participant suggested self-motivated professional development by reading published research on differentiated instruction and whole-student learning. Another recommended exploring alternative lesson plans and collaborating with other teachers during lesson planning periods. CRP proponents also support collaboration and sharing of knowledge about differentiating instruction and/or introducing new styles of instruction because it has proven effective for teachers new to CRP as a way to answer how to begin treating culture as a tool for learning in inclusive environments.

Compounding these ideas with the multi-tiered instruction of PS/RtI has the possibility of not only increasing student achievement beyond what has been documented for each as a separate model, but also fostering a more cohesive teacher-to-teacher relationship within schools. In turn, the support to succeed academically will be sustained over the course of years each student spends within that school. Resultantly, with every grade promotion, the student would become more confident, independent and proactively engaged in their learning process. Continuous student success also has the potential to act as a motivation for teachers to continue these professional development efforts, or act
as a catalyst of change for those who have not yet adopted culturally responsive instructional practices.

Data Source 3: PS/RtI Teacher Interviews

Over the course of two weeks, PS/RtI teacher interviews were conducted in two schools varying greatly in demographic characteristics of students. Participants were chosen by district coordinators who also arranged for each teacher’s class to be covered during the time of the interview, which lasted approximately 30 minutes during the school day. The first school, Stepford Elementary School was located in an upper-middle class neighborhood, composed primarily of Caucasian students and teachers, while the second, L.B.J Elementary School, was located in a lower to lower-middle class neighborhood and displayed a greater amount of student and teacher diversity (Table 2). Also, Stepford Elementary was ending year three of implementation, while L.B.J. Elementary was entering year two of implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Pseudonyms for Teacher Participants and Sites</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stepford Elementary School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Ackerman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Beverly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L.B.J. Elementary School</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Adelbert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Benson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Clermont</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Results

Stepford Elementary School

The two PS/RtI teachers interviewed at Stepford Elementary School were remarkably contrasting in their approach to teaching (Table 3). Ms. Ackerman
displayed a strong commitment to CRP use within the PS/RtI framework, noting that the CRP qualities were not inherent in the model itself, but rather, a personal approach to instruction. Both of their time spent as in-service teachers fell within the five to ten years span, with Ms. Ackerman still seeking on-going teacher education. Both participants self-identified as White and their ages both fell within the 25 to 35 year range. The primary similarity found in their responses to interview questions centered on their ongoing commitment to understanding all the different learning styles found within their inclusive education environments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Stepford Elementary PS/RtI Teacher Coding Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Interviewed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ms. Ackerman</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.0: Identified CRP within PS/RtI</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1: Comprehensive</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2: Emancipatory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3: Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4: Multi-dimensional</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5: Transformative</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.6: Validating</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3.0: Source of CRP Knowledge</strong></td>
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<td>3.1: Self</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2: Colleague</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3: Professional Development</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4: Administration</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4.0: Classroom Learning Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1: Teacher-Centered</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2: Student-Centered</td>
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<td>4.3: Teacher-Driven</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4: Student-Driven</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.5: Scaffolded</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.0: Beliefs and Attitudes about CRP within PS/RtI</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1: CRP is embedded within PS/RtI</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2: CRP is not embedded within PS/RtI</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.3: CRP is preferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.4: CRP is not preferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5: PS/RtI is preferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.6: PS/RtI is not preferred</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7: CRP &amp; PS/RtI is preferred</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.8: Undecided/indifferent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Both teachers made many comments about their teaching practices that either directly or indirectly corresponded to central tenets of CRP (Fig. 8). Some aspects were described as personal views on quality teaching, such as empowerment and validation, while others referred more to the PS/RtI model addressing comprehensiveness and multi-dimensionality of instruction. However, one teacher stated that even with the implementation of PS/RtI, there are still concerns about learning success that must be accommodated, as she explained with vocabulary lessons with ELLs, “they’ll just never get it, if they don’t know what it is, they don’t know what it is.” There was no further explanation about what else they could do to enhance the learning process. The other teacher also made a comment about ELLs students with regard to obtaining external support for learning, asserting that, “[the district] won’t do anything with them with language…there is no support for ELLs students”. Language is a shared concern between these teachers, however their views about ability to learn are quite different, with one perspective asserting that the student may be the issue, the other asserting it is district support. In this particular instance, it would seem that the first teacher believes that the PS/RtI model has many of the qualities of CRP, and yet still does not assist with language instruction. The latter believes that the PS/RtI model does not possess enough CRP qualities to place the necessary amount of importance on language instruction.
The majority of responses that indicated personal awareness of culture as a learning tool came from Ms. Ackerman, although she did mention that she did not know the formal label of the pedagogy (Fig. 9). Ms. Beverly was not aware of CRP as an instructional practice either, and only made one statement about self-reflection as a necessary problem-solving activity, as she said, “I look at their test scores as a reflection of me.”
Ms. Ackerman believes her classroom environment to be student-centered, and for the most part instruction is scaffolded (Fig. 10). On the other hand, Ms. Beverly relayed several comments pertaining to her authority in the classroom, describing a more teacher-centered and teacher-driven environment. Ms. Ackerman explained an instance of where her students pick an activity to complete as she moves about ensuring that the boys do not “run the show” and makes herself available to assist if necessary. An account given by Ms. Beverly described a punitive process if a Tier II student did not complete the given assignment due to their behavioral issues. When asked if the student improves their behavior after they are prohibited from recess, she answered, “[no] I have to threaten him, then it just adds to the behavioral issues [he already has], and he brings down the momentum…it’s his own self-image.” This is a prime example of how positive reinforcement could be a more effective strategy at improving not only the students academic achievement, but also provide an opportunity for
empowerment, validation and whole-child learning. However, PS/RtI does not specifically address positive reinforcement, only moving the child from Tier II to Tier III intervention. As both teachers noted, children do not like to be singled out as Tier II or Tier II students and taught separately. If this practice causes embarrassment, low expectations of improvement can be assumed, which is why CRP in Tier I instruction is important.

Figure 10: Stepford Elementary Frequency of Code 4.0: Classroom Learning Environment

An obvious contrast was also seen in the ways Ms. Ackerman and Ms. Beverly perceive the ways in which the PS/RtI model is an effective service delivery model in an inclusive learning environment (Fig. 11). Ms. Ackerman clearly stated that it was not preferred and that CRP components are not embedded within the model. Yet, she did not explicitly state that CRP is the preferred method of instruction either. Ms. Beverly, conversely, praised the
PS/RtI model as the best model of service delivery and made no specific mention of beliefs about inherent CRP qualities. The one factor upon which they both agreed is the frequency of progress monitoring increasing from nine to six weeks with the implementation of the PS/RtI model. While CRP describes the most effective progress monitoring as daily, PS/ RtI requiring more consistent and frequent monitoring is a step in the CRP direction.

![Figure 11: Stepford Elementary Frequency of Code 5.0: Beliefs and Attitudes about CRP within PS/RtI](image)

L.B.J. Elementary School

The three PS/RtI teachers interviewed from L.B.J. Elementary demonstrated many similarities in their beliefs about student learning and instructional practices, despite their varying backgrounds (Table 4). Ms. Adelbert is a teacher who self-identifies ethnically, rather than racially, falls within the age range of 50-60 years and has been an in-service teacher for 21 years. Ms.
Benson, who self identifies as Native American, falls within the age range of 40-50 years, and has been an in-service teacher for 30 years. Ms. Clermont self identifies as White, falls within the age range of 40-50 years, and has been an in-service teacher for two years. L.B.J. Elementary School was described by all three teachers as a Title I, 96% free and reduced lunch eligible school, serving low-income predominantly Latino immigrant and Black students.

Table 4: Comparison of L.B.J. Elementary Teacher Coding Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L.B.J. Elementary PS/RtI Teacher Coding Results</th>
<th>Ms. Adelbert</th>
<th>Ms. Benson</th>
<th>Ms. Clermont</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.0: Identified CRP within PS/RtI</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1: Comprehensive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2: Emancipatory</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3: Empowerment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4: Multi-dimensional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5: Transformative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6: Validating</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3.0: Source of CRP Knowledge</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1: Self</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2: Colleague</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3.3: Professional Development</td>
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<td>3.4: Administration</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td><strong>4.0: Classroom Learning Environment</strong></td>
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<td>4.1: Teacher-Centered</td>
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There were many descriptive instances, given by all three teachers, of CRP usage fitting within the PS/RtI framework (Fig. 12). Only one teacher, Ms. Adelbert, did not directly express emancipatory or validating practices, although some accounts did refer to them through more so through the categories of empowerment and transformational. The significantly higher occurrence of all categories compared to responses from Stepford Elementary School teachers may be a result of greater diversity of students and teaching staff, or, quite possibly the age of the teachers interviewed. Teachers interviewed from L.B.J. are much older than those interviewed from Stepford, leading to more life experience and exposure to diversity, as well as the opportunity to see how educational practices change over a longer period of time.

When asked about their teaching practices related to culture and diversity in the classroom, two teachers provided personal experiences growing up as students in other countries. The other teacher acknowledged the diversity in her current classroom as an enlightening experience. Ms. Benson, coming from a military background, stated when she was growing up in another country, she first had to learn the native language and then English. She went on to explain, “the barrier of language is a big a detriment…if teachers don’t have that awareness, then it’s a hindrance to teachers,” placing the onus of both awareness and cultural relevance on the teachers, rather than the student. She also noted that building self-esteem and confidence in the student through knowing the student and providing positive influence is a primary goal of hers as a teacher because it promotes student learning and achievement. Ms. Adelbert
specifically stated that, “RtI is about the whole-child [and] RtI takes full responsibility of meeting that child’s needs,” when asked about how PS/RtI addresses diversity. Ms. Clermont alone provided four of the seven comments pertaining to the code for transformative and three of the seven comments pertaining to multi-dimensional, providing “then” and “now” comparisons of education through time.

![Figure 12: L.B.J. Elementary Frequency of Code 2.0 CRP within PS/RtI](image)

Not one of the teachers interviewed from L.B.J. Elementary had formal exposure to CRP through pre-service or in-service training (Fig. 13). The majority of CRP components exercised in their classrooms was through self-development and sharing of best practice with other teaching staff in the school. One account was given where administration played a role in encouraging professional development in differentiated instruction, while one account targeted
a personal professional development effort on behalf of the individual teacher, who also planned to share what she learned with the other staff at the school.

Student-centered and scaffolded learning environments were described by all three teachers, with two teachers providing specific accounts of consistently used student-driven activities (Fig. 14). Ms. Adelbert described one student-driven practice as such, “we have read-alouds [and] role playing, clearly indicat[ing] their cultural differences and how you can be more appreciative of who you are.” The same teacher described a lesson in student accountability stating, “they chart their own progress, giving them more accountability to see how well they do…how much growth they are making and how and what kind of quality instruction they are receiving.” This shows a combination of student-driven comprehensiveness, empowerment, validation and self and teacher...
assessment and is by all CRP standards, an ideal learning environment for all students. CRP describes this as the optimal platform for emancipation and transformation that leads to long-term student academic achievement and success.

Figure 14: L.B.J. Elementary Frequency of Code 4.0 Classroom Learning Environment

The general consensus among teachers interviewed from L.B.J Elementary School is that CRP components are not actually embedded within the PS/RtI framework for instruction, and that PS/RtI instruction is not the preferred service delivery model for culturally diverse students, which is different from asserting that PS/RtI is not the preferred service delivery method for all students. Statements were made that, in order to effectively teach culturally diverse students, more professional development in the areas of diversity awareness and cultural styles of learning are required, along with increased levels of self-reflection. While all teachers understand the perspective on
achievement relayed through PS/RtI training, they do not all believe that it acknowledges and treats the different levels of diversity seen in their particular classrooms and they, as educators must find a way to compensate for that.

![Figure 15: L.B.J. Elementary Frequency of Code 5.0 Beliefs and Attitudes about CRP within PS/RtI](image)

**Discussion**

All interviewees relayed that the move to a PS/RtI inclusive teaching environment is difficult, especially without prior formalized training in differentiated instruction. Years in service has proven to a prime factor in understanding how to properly differentiate instruction, whether the knowledge came from trial and error teaching moments or the “quick and dirty” training provided by the district upon PS/RtI implementation. Teachers who spent more time in service had a wider variety of experiences to share during the interview.
process that related less to PS/RtI and more to a personal CRP-like commitment to self-development as an educational instructor over time. Also, teachers from Stepford Elementary School, who taught in a less diverse environment, had fewer examples to share that pertained to diversity outside learning style, behavior and language than did teachers interviewed from L.B.J. Elementary School.

Thinking about these cultural factors as influential to learning can be hindered by lack of exposure, if it is not already a personal perspective embraced by the teacher as an individual. Likewise, acknowledging the many other cultural factors that influence student learning, such as: socio-economic status, nutritional status, immigrant status, racial/ethnic composition, and religion, are just as critical, as they also have a profound effect on student learning. As proponents of CRP state the relationship between culture and learning is not one-way and student-centered, it is in fact bi-directional and influences the ways in which educators teach and perceive student ability. In requiring differentiated instruction through the implementation of PS/RtI, there is a certain amount of responsibility placed on teachers to understand this relationship; however, it does not appear to have breadth and depth as that of CRP.

All interviewees reported that time management and required paperwork to implement PS/RtI with fidelity was frustrating, yet the increased frequency of progress monitoring from every nine weeks to every six weeks was helpful to teachers and more beneficial for students. As mentioned earlier, CRP asks educators keep a mental list of progress and development of students on a daily
basis, requiring no actual paperwork, but requiring time outside of class to reflect upon each student individually, the students as a group and one’s self as an educator. All interviewees included self-reflective practices as crucial to student success and the majority stated that student achievement scores serve as a reflection of teacher efficacy. Interpersonal relationships between student and teacher can assist in that process, as well as foster a more comprehensive understanding of the student as an individual. Resultantly, there are increased levels of inter-subjectivity in the teacher and a more thorough understanding of their efficacy in the classroom. In terms of paperwork and time management, a more concrete relationship that develops over time will decrease the amount of bracketed time spent analyzing the student’s progress on paper.

All interviewees remarked that district support and leadership, professional development efforts, and “teacher buy-in” need improvement in order for PS/RtI to work as well in practice as it does in theory. This finding is reflective of the Belief Survey results in the categories of infrastructure, perceptions of self-efficacy and consensus conducted by The Florida Project. This is where ongoing improvement efforts need to focus, because these factors are inter-related. For instance, if the district provided more support, not just in service for students, but for ongoing professional development for teachers, teachers would then perceive themselves as more efficacious. The result of this combination would be consensus. The essential decision to achieve this result would be answering, what kind of professional development? Longitudinal cohort and panel studies and case-comparative research support CRP as both a stand-alone and

Gay (2010), proposes that there are four topics related to what is called pedagogical caring in CRP: “(1) characterizing caring; (2) predominant teacher attitudes and expectations toward ethnically and culturally different students; (3) effects of teacher expectations on instructional behaviors and students’ achievement; and (4) becoming more culturally competent in classroom caring” (Gay 2010: 49). In one manner or another, all teachers interviewed expressed caring about their students. For all but one, the expression was directly related to students as individuals, as members of a classroom and as members of a greater society. This was an important factor for teachers specifically when explaining their differentiated instruction. All but one teacher, acknowledged that different expectations of both instructional and learning behaviors were necessary in order for whole-child instruction to occur despite ethnic or cultural differences, meaning that, all children do not learn the same way, at the same rate or through the same modes. Lastly, all teachers interviewed made reference to wanting to build cultural competence in their classrooms, although each teacher had a different perspective of which culture. Some referred to the various cultures and backgrounds of students, some mentioned whole-classroom culture and another addressed school culture.
For the purpose of this study, student background and culture is the focus; though the other types of culture mentioned by participants are existent within the educational system and can be treated in the same manner. Teel and Obidah (2008), have made recommendations on how to develop cultural competence in the classroom which include: first, determining your current level of cultural competence; second, finding a mentor; third, becoming familiar with students’ communities and partnering with them; becoming knowledgeable about the students; and lastly, becoming and remaining invested in student academic achievement. Montgomery (2001) described CRP-based classrooms as, “specifically acknowledg[ing] the presence of culturally diverse students and the need for these students to find connections among themselves and with the subject matter and the tasks the teacher asks them to perform" (Montgomery 2001:4). A set of five guidelines for teachers to follow in order to maintain a culturally responsive classroom was also provided that is in direct alignment with Teel and Obidah (2008). These guidelines are: (1) conduct self-assessments to determine the knowledge of self and others’ cultures; (2) use varied culturally responsive methods and materials for each lesson; (3) establish classroom environments based on respect for individuals and their cultures; (4) establish interactive learning environments; and (5) employ culturally aware assessments (Montgomery 2001).
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

Major Trends

Three major trends were identified throughout the course of analysis pertaining to: (1) what characterizes quality teaching, and the effects on student achievement; (2) PS/RtI educators practicing CRP without their knowledge; and (3) suggested improvements on the PS/RtI model.

Several core principles of CRP were acknowledged as keys to student learning and success in the PS/RtI training. Likewise, many examples of ways to implement PS/RtI with fidelity included: (a) providing a learning environment which acknowledges and treats all learning styles, including cognitive and cultural differences, (b) differentiated instruction to meet the needs of individual students, (c) frequent and consistent progress monitoring, and (d) teacher self-reflective practices. All interviewees, both PS/RtI coaches and teachers, made reference to either already implementing the practices recommended by Teel and Obidah (2008) and Montgomery (2001), needing to implement these guidelines or supporting/believing that these guidelines would have a positive effect on student achievement. This is an example of the first identifiable trend across all data sources. It would suggest that culturally responsive practices are acknowledged by PS/ RtI proponents and implementers not only as beneficial to student learning, but also as improving teacher quality and instruction.
The second trend identified across two of the three data sources is that despite a lack of prior knowledge of CRP as a formal instructional strategy, CRP practices and principles were already being taught to teachers through PS/RtI coaches and training, in addition to being applied in the classroom during both pre- and post-PS/RtI implementation by choice. Differentiated instruction, in particular, is an integral element of both CRP and PS/RtI. Therefore, PS/RtI is subsequently utilizing aspects of CRP to enhance the efficacy of the PS/RtI model, though PS/RtI practitioners may not explicitly recognize that relationship. The outcomes of differentiated instruction, as relayed by PS/RtI coaches and teachers, are invaluable when compared to conventional teacher-centered instructional practices and implementation of discrepancy models for service delivery.

A third trend seen primarily across PS/RtI teachers, with a few concessions made from coaches, is that PS/RtI does not adequately treat all student learning disparities and that teachers must implement alternative strategies to address this issue in their classrooms. In evaluating the model’s efficacy in increasing student achievement, teachers, on the whole, agreed that the PS/RtI model is: (1) missing ELLs students through lack of district support for services, (2) not fully accommodating teacher needs for additional support staff in classroom during Tier II and III learning periods, (3) not thoroughly examining all kinds of student data, and that standardized test scores are not sufficient in gauging whole-child learning and progress, and finally, (4) providing opportunities for professional development efforts centered on instructional improvement. It is
within these areas of concern that CRP can assist with resolve, although it would place the responsibility primarily on the teachers if CRP-focused professional development efforts are not supported by the district and sustained by the coaches.

Demystifying CRP

Culturally Responsive, or Culturally Relevant, Pedagogy, is not a widely taught or accepted strategy for classroom instruction because it appears to entail a litany of change. The way CRP is sometimes presented, would propose a total undoing of all conventional teaching practices, complete internal re-evaluation of self, an overhaul of the educational system and/or the commitment to post-modern perspectives on dismantling all systems of authority. In reality, CRP is not that convoluted or exhausting. It begins and ends with a single belief, the same belief upon which PS/RtI is based, the belief that all children can learn.

It is not to say that CRP is undemanding, in fact, for inclusive learning environments, it is more taxing because teachers are managing cultural differences on top of cognitive differences. Educators that are tasked with teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds in one inclusive learning environment must account for multiple styles and display attitudes toward students that reflect an appreciation of those differences (Sparks 1994). This is the bottom-line of CRP, however it is not easily streamlined and does require an amount of personal change. This is, perhaps the reason for this practice
remaining a personal choice for instruction, rather than becoming a legislative mandate.

For teachers, the first step toward achieving a culturally responsive learning environment is surrendering the *teacher as authority of knowledge* philosophy. Next, a rigorous effort need be made to return to studentship, accepting that students bring with them a valid set of knowledge that can be applied all classroom activities, from which both student and teacher can learn. CRP is an iterative process of problem-solving, similar to the approach taken by PS/RtI, so the practice lastly requires teachers to revisit and revise past teaching efforts if the object is being met. Brown and Doolittle (2008) have constructed a fundamental set of considerations for incorporating CRP tenets into a PS/RtI framework, targeting Tier I learning environments, illustrating how the two models can work together to reduce referral rates of culturally diverse students without complicating or augmenting the foundations of PS/RtI (Table 5). If this set of premises is accepted by teachers at the level of core instruction or Tier I environments, progress can then be made toward increasing academic achievement for all students.

Table 5: Adapted NCCRESt Considerations for Classrooms Implementing PS/RtI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIER I: General Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GUIDING QUESTIONS</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| INSTRUCTION/INTERVENTION | All students receive high-quality, research-based instruction by qualified staff.  
| | Universal screening of academics and behavior of all students to identify those who need close monitoring or intervention.  
| | Appropriate instructional interventions are developed such as individually designed instructional units, or different instruction using the general education curriculum.  
| | Research-based interventions are implemented for at least 8 – 12 weeks and progress is monitored.  
| | Culturally responsive instruction is fundamental at this tier and not an add-on. |
| SERVICE PROVIDER | If the course topics remain the same, what new research, examples, and writings can illustrate these topics?  
| | Is there a new thematic approach to this material that will help to put cultural diversity in the foreground?  
| | How do I integrate new material so that it is not simply an “add-on”?  
| | What teaching strategies will facilitate student learning of this new material? |
| NECESSARY SERVICE PROVIDER SKILLS | Able to:  
| | Provide developmentally, culturally, linguistically and experientially appropriate instruction and assessment to all students;  
| | Deliver culturally responsive instruction;  
| | Describe behaviors/areas in observable terms and establish baselines and identify the elements that will lead to success in the identified problem area; and  
| | Identify instructional and student variables that may contribute to a solution. |
Future Research

Smylie (1995), asserts that increased student achievement, at the most fundamental level, can only be achieved if teachers receive consistent support from their school administration. The ongoing achievement gap and disproportionality of culturally diverse students currently in special education does not substantiate that these students are not achieving or underachieving, rather it demonstrates a continuing deficit in the current educational system where proper support, service provision and professional development for teachers on instructional strategies is concerned. Personalized, or differentiated, instruction is the central tenet of the PS/RtI model, meaning that individual student needs are evaluated and the respective instruction is provided in order for all students to become academically successful. The implementation of PS/RtI is meant to close this achievement gap through inclusive learning environments and differentiated instructional practices; however, findings from the data gathered during this study propose that the level of support, in all required aspects, is unsatisfactory.

Future research focused on innovative professional development efforts, such as CRP, becoming incorporated to mandated service delivery models such as PS/RtI can offer promise for improvement in the areas of teacher quality and student achievement. In order for this to occur, three things must happen. First, these two aspects must be acknowledged as inter-connected and inter-dependent. Second, they must be viewed as subject to bi-directional cultural
influence, and third, sustainable progress toward these goals must integrate cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary approaches to education.
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Perry, T., and L.D. Delpit

Ravitch, D.

Rosen, L.
Santamaria, L.J.

Scherff, L., and K. Spector

Schein, E.H.

Shor, I.

Smylie, M.

Sparks, W. G.

Spindler, G.D.

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Teel, K.M. and Jennifer E. Obidah

Villegas, A.M., and T. Lucas
Whitehurst, G.J.

Wyngaard, M.V.
Appendix 1: Research Protocols

PS/RtI Coach Interview

1. Can you provide a description of the PS/RtI model, including background and training?
2. Could you explain the measures PS/RtI model takes to proactively engage students in their learning process? What kinds of instruction did you receive on diversity awareness or cultural sensitivity during your training as a PS/RtI coach?
3. What roles does culture have in student learning? What about in teacher instructional practices?
4. How does the PS/RtI model accommodate the amount of diversity in culture and learning styles exhibited in inclusive education?
5. What is unique about the PS/RtI model when compared to other service delivery models of instruction?
6. How often do you meet with teachers and other PS/RtI coaches as a group to discuss progress and professional development considerations and concerns?
7. What are the critical teacher characteristics needed for an effective implementation of the PS/RtI model?
8. What are the core recommendations that you make to teachers when preparing them for PS/RtI implementation?
PS/RtI Teacher Interview

1. Can you explain what your understanding is of the PS/RtI model, including background information on the model and relevant training received?
2. Can you describe your feelings about teaching students with different levels of understanding in one inclusive environment?
3. PS/RtI teachers must be both organized and flexible, explain the ways in which you go about maintaining this balance.
4. What are the key factors that you believe contribute to a child’s learning process? What factors do you find to be difficult to manage?
5. How do you feel the PS/RtI model addresses the diversity seen in your classroom? What suggestions would you make to improve the PS/RtI model used in your classroom?
6. Describe a teaching strategy that you use to maximize the learning potential of all students in your classroom.
7. Can you describe what it means to be culturally responsive?
8. Describe any multi-cultural, gender-fair classroom practices that you have used in the classroom. How do you incorporate cultural sensitivity or awareness into the curriculum?
9. How do you evaluate your own teaching skills to ensure growth and development?
10. What do you feel is the best service delivery model for all students? (I.e.: Discrepancy model, PS/RtI model, PBS model etc.)
PS/RtI Classroom Observation

1. Socio-demographic composition of classroom, students and instructors
2. Instructional strategies informed by Response to Intervention model
3. Instructional strategies informed by Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
4. Instructional style and student responsiveness
5. Instances of cultural awareness
6. Instances of cultural unawareness
7. Differentiated instructional practice
8. Motivational and reinforcement strategies
9. One-on-one teacher/student instruction and peer pedagogy
10. Incorporation of multi-cultural content in curricula
## Appendix 2: Qualitative Codebook

### Codebook for Qualitative Interviewing of PS/RtI Coaches and Teachers

#### 1.0 Codes Used to Indicate Demography of Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 male</td>
<td>1.3 White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 female</td>
<td>1.4 Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.6 Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Years in Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.7 20-25</td>
<td>1.11 0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 25-30</td>
<td>1.12 5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 30-40</td>
<td>1.13 10-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 40+</td>
<td>1.14 15-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.15 20+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.0 Codes Used to Identify CRP within PS/RtI Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Comprehensive Whole-child instruction that includes treatment of social, political, emotional and intellectual methods of delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We focus on all kids, giving all kids what they need”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Emancipatory The authentication of knowledge produced in the classroom in order to liberate students from traditional canons of learning, knowledge production and reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“And in that process we also talk about differentiation as being part tier one, in a gradual release of responsibility”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Empowerment Support for risk-taking, multiple perspective and a commitment to achievement and success of every student in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I am concerned about the tone of some of these policies [aimed at data evaluation]…it doesn’t leave room for mistakes”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Multi-dimensional Incorporates cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary approaches to curriculum content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I have like my one little boy who loves to tell us that he is from Honduras and is teaching us how to say things like he just did this story about rice n’ beans and how the grandmother was cooking…for the cumpleanos…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.5 Transformative

Convergence of conventional instructional practices with new and creative alternatives that respect and promote cultural differences during the learning process

"Like my intern that just left, upstairs they do a lot of active movement, active learning...always sounds like chairs being moved around…"

### 2.6 Validating

Legitimacy and applicability of culture to classroom learning environment

"Ya know here you go, here's the teacher mic. Teach us what you know [about your culture]...tell me and they blossom"

### 3.0 Codes Used to Identify Source of CRP within PS/RTI Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Self</td>
<td>Personal choice to utilize CRP in classroom, either from (3.1.1) value system or (3.1.2) pre-service training</td>
<td>&quot;Like the course I took in grad school…yeah that one course&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Colleague</td>
<td>Encouragement and support from other coaches or teaching staff</td>
<td>&quot;Because when you build the support, you build the skills, the teachers will be more successful&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Professional Development</td>
<td>Attendance of PD workshops centered on CRP created interest</td>
<td>&quot;I went to a workshop called Assessment for Learning, not assessment OF learning.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Administration</td>
<td>Required or preferred instructional conduct within school or district as directed by principal, school board, superintendent etc.</td>
<td>&quot;Teaching practices, because as a new teacher in this county years ago we had to take that&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.0 Codes Used to Identify Classroom Learning Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Teacher-Centered</td>
<td>Teacher is focal point in classroom</td>
<td>&quot;If I have to threaten [him], he doesn’t want to do it…and then it leads to adding on more to his behavior [issues] and he brings down the momentum, and it’s own self-image.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Student-Centered</td>
<td>Student is focal point in classroom</td>
<td>&quot;If I, as the teacher, remain the keeper of knowledge, then it’s never going to happen&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Teacher-Driven</td>
<td>Activities in classroom are chosen and directed by teacher.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.4 Student-Driven
Activities in classroom are chosen and directed by student
"I have a portfolio…they chart their own progress…giving them more accountability"

### 4.5 Scaffolded
Activities are agreed upon by teacher and student, modeled by teacher and student directed
"We have read alouds…role playing [that] indicate [the students] cultural differences"

### 5.0 Beliefs and Attitudes about CRP within PS/RtI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.1</strong> CRP is embedded within PS/RtI</td>
<td>Agrees that CRP properties are inherent in the PS/RtI framework</td>
<td>&quot;I mean, it’s preventative and proactive&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.2</strong> CRP is not embedded within PS/RtI</td>
<td>Disagrees that CRP properties are inherent in the outlined PS/RtI framework</td>
<td>&quot;As [RtI] pertains to learning academically, culturally? No…RtI is not helping me with that&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.3</strong> CRP is preferred</td>
<td>CRP is the preferable method of instruction</td>
<td>&quot;You have to learn how to differentiate your instruction…[what's needed] for every child can reach his or her potential.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.4</strong> CRP is not preferred</td>
<td>CRP is not the preferable method of instruction</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **5.5** PS/RtI is preferred | PS/RtI is the preferable method of instruction | "Before RtI, I looked at student data as colors…it didn’t mean anything to me…I had immediate buy in."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.6</strong> PS/RtI is not preferred</td>
<td>PS/RtI is not the preferable method of instruction</td>
<td>&quot;[Could just] take away the RtI of it, just look at the need of the child and then empower me to help them&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.7</strong> CRP/PS/RtI is preferred</td>
<td>The use of CRP within PS/RtI is the preferred method of instruction</td>
<td>&quot;…believing that PS/RtI can do it by itself…no, there has to be more&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.8</strong> Undecided/Indifferent</td>
<td>Did not explicitly indicate a preference between the two</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

Ableism: a set of practices and beliefs that assign inferior value to people who have developmental, emotional, physical, or psychiatric disabilities.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): the measure by which schools, districts, and states are held accountable for student performance under Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The law requires states to use a single accountability system for public schools to determine whether students are making progress toward meeting state academic content standards.

Cultural Responsiveness: the recognition and acknowledgement that society is pluralistic. Cultural responsiveness is a complex concept involving the acceptance and acknowledgement of other people’s cultures and cultural values. There are many dimensions of culture including: language, space and proximity, gender roles, family roles, grooming and presence, and value of education.

Differentiated Instruction: the process of ensuring that what and how a student is taught and demonstration of knowledge acquisition are relative to specific student needs.

Discrepancy Model: assesses whether there is a significant difference between a student’s scores on a test of general intelligence and scores obtained on an achievement test. The IQ-achievement discrepancy model is the approach traditionally used to identify children with learning disabilities and is referred to as a “wait-to-fail” model.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE): term used to describe special education services and programs for students with a disability or for students who are gifted.

Homogeneity: of uniform structure or composition throughout.

Inclusive Education: based on the right of all learners to a quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches lives. Focusing particularly on vulnerable and marginalized groups, it seeks to develop the full potential of every individual. The ultimate goal of inclusive quality education is to end all forms of discrimination and foster social cohesion.

Interpretive Model: offers explanations and articulations of experiences and practices and the testing of theory, which occurs through transmission, application, and critical reflection.
Interventions: curricular and instructional adjustments made to address core instructional issues. Interventions may also be provided to students in small groups or individually, in addition to and aligned with core instruction in order to target a specific skill or concept.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): a term used within Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1975 (IDEA) to describe the optimal learning environment for students with disabilities, encouraging that they have maximum extent possible.

Over-representation: disproportionate representation of minorities, such as linguistic, racial and/or ethnic groups, in special education programs.

Paradigm: the set of underlying assumptions and intellectual structure upon which research and development in a field of inquiry is based and applied.

Pedagogy: teaching method, the principles, and methods of instruction that impart knowledge or skill to the learner.

Prescriptive Model: uses guides that are placed in advance, which direct what follows using four strategies: select the objective, define the objective, use the objective to prescribe materials and procedures for instruction, and to use the objective to prescribe evaluation.

Problem Solving: a self-correcting and systematic process of finding solutions through identifying problems, analyzing data, designing and implementing probable solutions, and measuring their effectiveness.

Qualitative Research: associated with the subjective quality of a thing or phenomenon, such as: feel, taste, expertise, image, leadership, and reputation.

Quantitative Research: relating to, or expressible in terms of quantity or involving the measurement of quantity or amount, such as: frequency, chronicity, distribution, or correlation.

Research-Based Instruction: involves the application of rigorous systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational activities and programs.

Scaffolding: a gradual development of skill to execute or complete an academic task whereby the teacher introduces a task providing maximum assistance, then the student replicates the task independently.