

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES IN HEAD START SETTINGS

KATHRYN D. FERDON

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This dissertation reports the results of a research project that examined the effect teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and practices have on the relationships they build with their students and students' success in school (i.e., academic, social-emotional, and behavioral).

KEYWORDS: Preschool, Head Start, Culturally Responsive Practices, Student-Teacher Relationships, Student Success, Student Outcomes

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KATHRYN D. FERDON

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KATHRYN D. FERDON

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Adena B. Meyers, Chair

Suejung Han

Jeffrey Kahn

Leandra Parris

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CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

In a classroom where students spend on average 900-1000 hours in instruction annually (Center for Public Education, 2011), a considerable portion of that time includes interacting with classroom teachers and staff, learning the necessary academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and life skills required to successfully adapt into adulthood and the workforce. It is understandable, then, that a wide body of research suggests that the relationships teachers build with students influence students' learning in a comprehensive and substantial way. Research suggests that building positive student-teacher relationships is associated with gains in social skills, positive behavioral outcomes, increased school engagement, and gains in academic performance (i.e., mathematics and reading; Decker, et al., 2007), as well as a reduction in peer victimization among students at social risk (Elledge et al., 2015). When a student-teacher relationship is perceived as positive, teachers experience affection, warmth, and open communication with students (Pianta, 2001). Alternatively, when the student-teacher relationship is perceived as negative, the teacher is more likely to struggle with the student, perceive the student as angry, and often feel emotionally drained and believe they are ineffective with that student (Pianta, 2001). Research suggests that when these types of relationships between students and teachers occur, students demonstrate low academic performance, demonstrate low classroom engagement, and are perceived to have less social skills and greater behavioral problems (Caputi, et al., 2017; Mantzicopoulous & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003; Poulou, 2017; Roorda et al., 2011). Therefore, perceptions of the student-teacher relationship are suggested to have important ramifications for students' success in school. The research literature points towards specific teacher and student qualities that have shown to be more critical when forming the student-teacher relationship. In

their 2011 meta-analytic study, Roorda and colleagues found, among teachers who have more experience, are an ethnic majority, and identify as a male, an increased association between student-teacher relationships and academic achievement, emphasizing the importance of student-teacher relationships among these groups that are traditionally associated with more power and privilege. It is possible that these relationships become more imperative when a larger power differential is present. Similar to this idea, Roorda and colleagues also found that the relation between positive relationships and higher achievement gains is stronger among students who are from minoritized ethnic groups and low socioeconomic status, characteristics which are traditionally associated with groups who hold less power and privilege. These findings emphasize the need to empower and support students, particularly those from traditionally oppressed backgrounds, and reduce the impact of the power differential present between teachers and students. This need is further exacerbated given that elementary and secondary school teachers in the workforce are not as racially diverse as the population at large or the students within the United States, with 82% of public school teachers identifying as white and 49% of elementary and secondary students identifying as a person of color (The Department of Education's State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce Report, 2016). Therefore, culturally responsive practice (CRP), an approach for teachers and professionals, starts to address how teachers can break down and reduce power differentials to foster more positive student-teacher relationships in ways that are consistent with the child's cultural background.

Specifically, culturally responsive practice describes a process through which professionals become *aware* of the power, privilege, and oppression present within their own lives and among students; become *knowledgeable* about the cultural backgrounds and identities

closely aligned with their students; and put into action *skills* that build a safe, caring, and culturally relevant classroom environment where students feel empowered intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Qualitative, theoretical, and mixed-method literature suggests that when teachers exhibit culturally responsive practices, improved academic outcomes for African American students are observed, including increased classroom engagement and achievement gains in reading, math, and literacy skills (Boykin, et al., 2003; Boykin et al., 2004; Hollie, 2001; Lee, 2001). Within the culturally responsive practice literature, there is much left to understand when examining how culturally responsive classrooms affect students' social and emotional functioning. Additionally, there is a need for more quantitative research to support the qualitative, ethnographic, and case-study findings that suggest culturally responsive practices are effective in the classroom.

Overall, the research literature demonstrates that the student-teacher relationship carries a weighty impact on a broad range of student outcomes and also suggests the need for increasing positive student-teacher relationships where a power differential is more likely to occur.

Culturally responsive practices emphasize the need for teachers to view their students and pedagogy through a lens of cultural diversity. Effectively implementing culturally responsive strategies is theorized to help aid in increasing positive student-teacher relationships among students from traditionally underprivileged or oppressed groups.

Head Start is a well-known federally funded program that provides preschool services to children ages birth to 5 from low-income families. This program emphasizes the need for cultivating a safe environment and cultural acceptance among their diverse group of children and families, which is reflected in Head Start performance standards and laws (US Department of

Health, 2009). The student-teacher relationship literature indicates an increased need for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds to experience positive student-teacher relationships. Therefore, the present study examined Head Start classrooms and children. The current study aimed to address gaps in the literature by investigating whether teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and teaching efficacy consistent with culturally responsive practices (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and skill) significantly predicted teachers' perceptions of student-teacher relationships. In addition, the study examined teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and teaching efficacy consistent with culturally responsive practices, as well as the student-teacher relationship in relation to child outcome data (i.e., academic, social-emotional, and behavioral). Three Head Start programs were examined across the 2018 – 2019 school year, with data collection occurring in both fall and spring semesters.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Student-Teacher Relationships

Positive student-teacher relationships have been empirically found to serve as a protective factor for a host of school related concerns, such as reducing peer victimization for students at social risk and encouraging school readiness for students with executive functioning concerns (Elledge, et al., 2015; Grazinano et al., 2016). Increasing supportive student-teacher relationships is associated with gains in social, behavioral, and school engagement outcomes, as well as academic performance among African American students (Decker, et al., 2007). Alternatively, when the teacher-student relationship is strained, or high in conflict, teachers are more likely to perceive students' behaviors as troublesome and are associated with worse outcomes such as low academic achievement and classroom engagement, lower perceived social skills, and more behavior referrals (Caputi, et al., 2017; Mantzicopoulos & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003; Poulou, 2017; Roorda et al., 2011). Measurement of student-teacher relationships, as well as the empirical literature regarding predictors, outcomes, and moderating variables of the student-teacher relationship are discussed in the following sections.

Measuring Student-Teacher Relationships

Student-teacher relationships are inherently interpersonal and hierarchical, such that teachers hold authoritative power over students within educational settings. Empirical research has demonstrated there are often discrepancies between the teacher's and student's perceptions of what is considered to be an effective student-teacher relationship (Poulou, 2017). Therefore, the research literature has examined this phenomenon from perspectives of both the students and teachers.

The most common measurement of student-teacher relationships is through the perspective of the teacher. Specifically, the Student Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Pianta, 2001; Pianta & Steinburg, 1992) is frequently cited in the research literature, with both a full scale and short form available for children preschool age to the third grade (Caputi, et al., 2017; Decker et al., 2007; DeTeso, 2012; Fuhua, et al., 2015; Poulou, 2017; Silver et al., 2005). In the short-scale measure, teachers are asked to rate their relationships with multiple students. The widely-used scale is comprised of questions which measure two dimensions: closeness and conflict. Additionally, there is a total relationship score, with higher scores reflecting lower levels of conflict and higher levels of closeness. The closeness subscale measures the degree to which a teacher experiences affection, warmth, and open communication with a particular student. Teachers who rate students highly on this scale indicate they feel an affectionate relationship with the student and that students respond well to their praise, and students may share information spontaneously about themselves. Alternatively, the conflict subscale measures the degree to which a teacher perceives his or her relationship with a particular student as negative and conflictual. Teachers who rank student-teacher relationships as high in conflict are more likely to struggle with the student, perceive the student as angry, and often feel emotionally drained and believe they are ineffective with that student (Pianta, 2001).

Other studies examining the student-teacher relationship from the teacher perspective have used less standardized rating scales, such as rating relationships with students from “a very good relationship with them” to “a very negative relationship with them” and reporting percentages that reflect class-wide teacher relationships with students (Yoon, 2002). A limitation of this method is that class-wide ratings of student-teacher relationships are less accurate than

individual ratings of the students due to high variability between individual students and that the quality of student-teacher relationships differs across children in the classroom (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Student perspectives have been measured with similar methods, using rating scales to examine specific aspects of the student-teacher relationship. For instance, Onsong (2015) had 697 ninth-grade African American males fill out a questionnaire with 4 point Likert scale questions aimed to determine whether teachers treated students with respect, treated every student fairly, valued or listened to students' ideas, thought that all students could be successful, and thought that mistakes were okay if students learned from them.

Most commonly, research has used more formal measures such as the Young Children's Appraisals of Teacher Support (Y-CATS), a measure designed to explore children's perceptions of the relationship with their teacher (Caputi, et al., 2017; Mantzicopoulos & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003). The Y-CATS is intended for children between preschool age and first grade, and it includes items designed to elicit children's perceptions of the ways in which their teacher provides support, encouragement, and acceptance (warmth); perceptions of their teacher as one who provides opportunities for choice and autonomy in activities (autonomy); and perceived conflict and negativity in their relationship with their teacher (conflict). The Y-CATS response format is constructed with concrete materials, where students have to place items with which they agreed in a mailbox and a trash can for items they disagreed with.

Predictors of Student-Teacher Relationships

Mother-child relationship

Before the student-teacher relationship begins, children primarily have relationship experiences through their immediate and extended family. The literature suggests that compared to older children, young children are more strongly influenced by their relationships with adults (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987; Hargreaves, 2000; Lynch & Chicchetti, 1997). Caputi and colleagues (2017) examined the importance of the role played by children's relationships with their mothers and teachers as predictors of later academic achievement by following a group of 45 Italian children from their last year of preschool until year 4 of primary school. This is one of few studies aimed at identifying mechanisms linking early relationship quality with later child outcomes. Researchers examined students' mother-child relationships using the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (Pianta, 1992) and teachers' relationships with students using the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Pianta & Steinberg, 1992) across time. Academic achievement was then measured at the final data collection in the 4th year of the study using comprehension and math tasks, as well as teacher evaluations of academic competence. Findings indicated that reports of mother-child conflict (not closeness) significantly predicted children's academic achievement 4 years later. When there was greater conflict in the mother-child relationship, children performed worse on academic achievement measures than students who experienced less conflict in the mother-child relationship. Similarly, mother-child conflict at age 5 predicted the quality of the teacher-child relationship 2 years later, such that teacher-student relationships were more conflictual when there was greater conflict in the mother-child relationship. Other findings concluded that teacher-child conflict at age 7 partially mediated the

relation between mother-child conflict at age 5 and academic achievement at age 9. It is no surprise that the interpersonal dynamics experienced with the first caregiver continue with alternative caregivers, such as teachers. Therefore, findings indicate that if a child often argues with his/her mother during preschool, he/she will likely show similar behaviors toward teachers following the transition to school.

Social and emotional learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process of acquiring and effectively applying knowledge, attitudes and skills in five major areas of social-emotional competence (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2003, 2012). SEL programs have been implemented across schools, including Head Start, regularly (i.e., daily and weekly) with the intention of improving children's social-emotional and academic skills. In a study conducted by Fuhua and colleagues (2015), researchers used longitudinal data from 414 children previously enrolled in Head Start to examine SEL practices and academic and social-emotional skills, as well as student-teacher relationships in the third grade. Third-grade teachers rated how often they used different types of SEL activities or programs with their class since the beginning of the school year and completed the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale for each student included in the study (STRS; Pianta, 2001). Findings indicated that frequent (i.e., weekly to daily) exposure to SEL opportunities in Head Start was positively associated with favorable student-teacher relationships in the third grade, as well as better academic and social-emotional development, including increased social skills and reduced impulsiveness. Given that increased SEL opportunities early on are positively correlated with the development of students' academic

and social emotional well-being later on in elementary school, including student-teacher relationships, SEL plays a large role in student development from a young age, setting the foundation for future success, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds.

Teacher characteristics

Investigative efforts specific to teacher characteristics that may affect the quality of student-teacher relationships are few. One study, however, examined 113 elementary school teachers' levels of stress, negative affect, and self-efficacy and their predictive effects on the student-teacher relationship (Yoon, 2002). Teachers completed measures regarding their self-perceived levels of stress, particularly with behaviorally difficult students, self-efficacy in relationship building and behavioral management with behaviorally difficult students, and negative affect. Teachers also rated the student-teacher relationship by reporting the percentages of students in their class in each level of relationship, ranging from "a very good relationship with them" to "a very negative relationship with them". The results indicated that teachers' stress levels did predict the number of students with whom they had negative relationships, but not the number of students with whom they had good relationships. Therefore, when teachers reported higher stress levels, they later reported a greater number of negative relationships with students. While negative affect and self-efficacy were not directly related to the student-teacher relationship, they were correlated with teachers' stress, such that higher levels of stress were associated with more negative affect and lower self-efficacy.

As mentioned in the study above, a teacher's self-efficacy towards building a relationship and behavior management with behaviorally difficult students did not directly predict student-teacher relationships. Other research, however, has found that teachers' efficacy towards

organizing and executing social-emotional learning programs is predictive of student-teacher relationships. In a study conducted by Poulou (2017), researchers explored teachers' perceptions of their own emotional intelligence and SEL skills and how this influenced the student-teacher relationship. Teachers were given measures on their own emotional intelligence, social-emotional learning beliefs (including both their comfort in implementing SEL practices and SEL commitment to improve their skills), and measures examining their perceptions of the student-teacher relationship (STRS; Pianta, 2001). Students were interviewed for 45 minutes using The Young Children's Appraisal of Teacher Support (YCATS). Results indicated that teachers' perceptions of the student-teacher relationship could be predicted by teachers' perceptions of their own SEL skills. Teachers who felt more comfortable in implementing SEL practices were more likely to report closeness to students. According to student ratings of the student-teacher relationship, students reported greater warmth in relationships with teachers who felt more comfortable in implementing SEL practices. Therefore, a teacher's confidence and comfort in implementing social emotional learning practices strengthens student-teacher relationships from both student and teacher perspectives.

Outcomes of Student-Teacher Relationships

As has been widely discussed in the research literature, both close and conflictual student-teacher relationships are associated with a host of outcomes, including academic achievement and engagement, as well as social, emotional, and behavioral functioning. Research examining the outcomes of both favorable and conflictual student-teacher relationships are reviewed in the following sections.

Academic achievement and engagement

Academic achievement has been closely studied, and findings support that both close and conflictual student-teacher relationships significantly predict later academic achievement (Caputi, et al., 2017; DeTeso, 2012). In a study conducted by Caputi and colleagues (2017), teacher-child closeness and conflict at age 7 significantly predicted academic achievement at age 9, such that children with close relationships with their teacher performed better on academic tasks when compared to students with lower reported student-teacher closeness. Alternatively, students who reportedly exhibited greater conflict with the teacher performed more poorly on academic achievement measures than students whose relationship was described as less conflictual. Similarly, Mantzicopoulos and Neuharth-Pritchett (2003) measured longitudinal effects of student-teacher relationships and academic achievement using three cohorts of Head Start children. The Young Children's Appraisals of Teacher Support (Y-CATS) was used to explore student-teacher relationships, with dimensions of Warmth, Conflict, and Autonomy. Findings indicated that children who reported greater Conflictual relationships with their Head Start teachers tended to perform less well on achievement, as measured by the WJ- Broad Reading and Broad Math scales up to 2 years later in elementary school. Alternatively, children who reported greater Warmth with Head Start teachers performed better on reading achievement measures at the end of kindergarten. Findings suggest that academic benefits of a strong teacher-student relationship are evident early on in elementary school. In the same manner, Conflictual student-teacher relationships can adversely impact students academically at a young age.

As a part of a larger secondary school study conducted by Onsongo (2015), researchers specifically examined the relation between student-teacher relationships and math achievement

(Algebra I performance), among 697 ninth-grade African American male students. To measure student-teacher relationships, students completed a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Questions were aimed to determine whether teachers treated students with respect, teachers treated every student fairly, teachers valued or listened to students’ ideas, teachers thought that all students could be successful, and teachers thought that mistakes were okay if students learned from them. Algebra I achievement was measured by a test completed in the course. Results revealed that student-teacher relationships influenced academic engagement, and in turn, academic engagement influenced Algebra I achievement. Small significant effect sizes were found for the association between student-teacher relationships and academic performance, such that when teachers treated students with respect, treated students fairly, and listened to their opinions, African American male students performed higher in Algebra I than students who rated low student-teacher relationships. This study suggests that for this set of African American males, the student-teacher relationship indirectly influenced math achievement, with classroom engagement partially mediating the relation between relationships and achievement.

Other research, conducted by DeTeso (2012), also points to the mediating role of classroom engagement. In DeTeso’s study, the predictive power of student-teacher relationships and classroom engagement on reading comprehension was examined among 255 second-grade students in a high socio-economic school district. Teachers rated students on the degree of conflict and closeness in the student-teacher relationship, as well as classroom engagement. Significant indirect effects were found from student-teacher closeness to reading comprehension gains, via classroom engagement. Therefore, when the student-teacher relationship is close,

classroom engagement increases, and classroom engagement then leads to greater gains in reading comprehension.

Meta-analytic approaches have also been used to examine the relation between student-teacher relationships and student achievement and academic engagement. Roorda et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis based on 99 studies collected from published journal articles, in-press papers, dissertations, book chapters, conference papers, and a conference poster, and included students from preschool to high school across the USA, Canada, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Africa. Results indicated positive associations between teacher-student relationships and both engagement and achievement. For example, when teacher-student relationships are positive, there are positive outcomes, such as higher scores on achievement measures and greater engagement among students. Alternatively, where there is more teacher-student conflict, lower student engagement and weaker performance on achievement are observed.

Typically, research (e.g., Baker, 2006; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Ladd et al., 1999) has expected to find stronger associations for negative rather than positive aspects of the teacher-student relationship, given that previous research focusing on elementary-aged students have found more significant findings for negative student-teacher relationships (Roorda et al., 2001). Meta-analytic study (Roorda et al., 2011) has shown that this is true for primary school studies examining engagement, in which negative teacher-student relationships have a somewhat stronger relation with classroom engagement as compared to positive and close student-teacher relationships. When examining secondary schools, these effects were no longer true, with positive aspects of the teacher-student relationship being just as strongly correlated as negative aspects of the teacher-student relationship to engagement and achievement.

Social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes

Research regarding social and emotional outcomes demonstrate positive correlations between student-teacher conflict and perceptions of social skills difficulties as well as behavioral concerns among students. Alternatively, research examining the benefits of warm student-teacher relationships on these outcomes finds that while there are some benefits, close student-teacher relationships have a greater impact on students during secondary years of schooling, as compared to primary grades. (Roorda et al., 2011).

As mentioned previously, the longitudinal study by Mantzicopoulos and Neuharth-Pritchett (2003) was conducted across three cohorts of Head Start students to examine a wide set of outcomes for student reported student-teacher relationships. In this study, teachers completed ratings of social skills and problem behaviors in addition to the aforementioned student-teacher relationships form (Y-CATS) and academic measures. Findings indicated that conflict was consistently negatively associated with measures of social skills. Children with high scores on the conflictual teacher relationship scale tended to be perceived by their teachers as significantly less skilled across the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS; Gresham & Elliot, 1990) in the domains of Cooperation, Assertion, and Self-Control as compared to children with low conflictual teacher relationship scores. Ratings of behavioral concerns followed a similar pattern, with conflictual relationships positively relating to teachers' perceptions of more problem behaviors (Mantzicopoulos & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003). Additionally, students with warmer student-teacher relationships were more likely to be observed with higher self-control and more positive emotionality during preschool years.

Similarly, the study conducted by Poulou (2017) also examined the effects of student-teacher relationships on emotional and behavioral functioning. Ninety-eight elementary school teachers from public schools completed the Student-Teacher Relationships Scale- Short Form (STRS-SF) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a screener used for the detection and treatment of child behavior problems, for 617 students aged 6- to 11-years-old. The study found that teachers were less likely to report emotional, conduct, and hyperactivity difficulties among students when they perceived closeness in the student-teacher relationship. Additionally, teachers were more likely to report hyperactivity and peer difficulties when they perceived greater conflict in the student-teacher relationship. This is consistent with other empirical evidence, suggesting that the quality of the teacher-student relationship is related to perceptions of children's social, emotional, and behavioral functioning, such as in Silver et al.'s (2005) study, in which teacher-student conflict and closeness were associated with the perceived development of externalizing behavior problems.

Research has further examined the relation between student-teacher relationships and social-emotional and behavioral outcomes among students of color. A study conducted by Decker and colleagues (2007) examined the association between the student-teacher relationship and outcomes for 44 elementary African American students who were identified by their teachers as having behavior problems and at a higher likelihood for a special education referral. Students were identified by their teachers as having behavior problems, including behaviors such as fighting, swearing, pouting, bothering others, and being hyper. Twenty-five teachers reported on their relationship with the student using the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Pianta, 2001), and students completed a relatedness scale, which assessed two dimensions of

students' relationship experiences with their teacher: Psychological Proximity Seeking (i.e., the student's desire to be psychologically closer to the teacher) and Emotional Quality (i.e., the overall emotional tone of the relationship from the student's perspective). Both students and teachers also completed the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS; Gresham & Elliot 1990). Results indicated that although teachers tended to rate the student-teacher relationship as negative with the students, students generally rated themselves as wanting to be closer to their teachers and viewed their relationships with teachers positively. Therefore, relationships with the teachers were important to the students even though the teachers seemed to view the relationships with their students negatively. This finding suggests that even when student-teacher relationships are strained, they may still be a source of support and a factor that can promote positive outcomes for students with perceived behavioral concerns.

Additionally, Decker et al.'s findings suggest that the student-teacher relationship was particularly important in predicting social-emotional functioning (Decker et al., 2007). When examining the teacher's report of the student-teacher relationship, students' relationships with their teachers were related to outcomes in the areas of social skills and engagement. As teachers reported increased positive student-teacher relationships, students' social competence and engagement also increased. A student's perception of the student-teacher relationship (i.e., Emotional Quality) was the most important predictor of behavior referrals and academic engaged time. When students felt they had a positive relationship with their teacher, the amount of behavior referrals they received decreased and the amount of time they spent on-task increased. Therefore, the student-teacher relationship was related to student engagement irrespective of the source of the relationship data (student or teacher).

Moderators of the Effects of Student-Teacher Relationships

According to the empirical literature, student-teacher relationships have shown to be more critical for children with certain demographic factors over others (e.g., people of color, low socioeconomic status, and male gender). Both teacher and child level factors have been identified as moderators between student-teacher relationships and outcome measures, such as academic achievement and engagement. Teacher-level variables, such as gender, ethnicity, and teaching experience, and child-level variables including ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, gender, race, and grade level affect the potency or impact the student-teacher relationship has on academic achievement and engagement. Findings for each are discussed below.

Teacher factors

Meta-analytic study (Roorda, et al., 2011) has demonstrated that teacher ethnicity and teaching experience moderate the relation between positive teacher-student relationships and academic achievement. The association between positive relationships and higher achievement scores were stronger in samples where there were more ethnic majority teachers. Similarly, among teachers with more teaching experience, there was a stronger relation between positive student-teacher relationships and achievement. Finally, the teacher's gender moderated the relation between the student-teacher relationship and classroom engagement, such that the associations were stronger in samples with more male teachers. Explanations as to how these findings about teacher factors occur are unclear and limited, with little empirical evidence to understand why teachers from ethnic majorities, who have greater teaching experience, or are male experience stronger associations between relationship quality and academic and engagement outcomes. It is important to note, however, that all three groups that emphasize the

elevated importance of positive student-teacher relationships (i.e., males, experienced teachers, and Caucasian teachers) are also groups who traditionally hold greater power and privilege. It is possible that when power differentials are higher between teachers and students, building a positive relationship is particularly important.

Child factors

Among children, there are certain demographic factors (e.g., grade level, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) that influence the strength and direction of the effect of strong student-teacher relationships. Roorta and colleagues' (2011, 2017) meta-analytic studies examined student-teacher relationships and academic achievement and engagement, with child grade level, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status as moderating factors. The findings are discussed below.

This meta-analytic study demonstrated that as children age, the relation between positive student-teacher relationships and academic achievement and engagement becomes stronger. Grade-level results indicated that children in primary grades had stronger associations between conflictual student-teacher relationships and outcomes (i.e., achievement and engagement) as compared to secondary grades. Effect sizes for close student-teacher relationships and high achievement were larger in studies conducted in secondary grades. When children were in a secondary grade level, as compared to primary grade level, the associations between close student-teacher relationships and achievement were stronger. This was also true for close relationships and increased engagement, where older children yielded a stronger association between a close student-teacher relationship and student engagement. Therefore, when children

are young, research is more likely to find an effect for conflictual student-teacher relationships, and when children are older, the effects of a close student-teacher relationship are more evident.

Another consistent finding in the literature is that teachers' relationships with children differ by gender (e.g., Birch & Ladd, 1997, 1998; Kesner, 2000). Research (Mantzicopoulos & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2008) has found that male students, as compared to female students, report more conflictual relationships with their teachers, regardless of their grade level. Similarly, Roorda and colleagues (2011) studied the relation between gender and academic engagement and achievement. Researchers found that gender was a significant moderator of the association between the male gender and both close and conflictual student-teacher relationships and classroom engagement. Specifically, males' classroom engagement was more likely to be influenced by student-teacher relationships, with close student-teacher relationships increasing the likelihood the child would be more engaged within the classroom. For females, results demonstrate larger effect sizes for close relationships and achievement, such that when females perceive a stronger, closer relationship with their teacher, they demonstrate more achievement gains (Roorda et al., 2011; Roorda et al., 2017).

Research regarding the moderating role of child ethnicity has been limited in scope, with few studies explicitly examining this factor. Roorda and colleagues (2011), however, used meta-analytic techniques to find that student race moderates the relation between positive relationships and higher achievement, such that effect sizes were larger in samples with more students of color. This research suggests that students of color benefit more than their Caucasian counterparts from a positive student-teacher relationship when examining academic achievement as an outcome variable. Other research (Mantzicopoulos & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2008) has found

that conflict scores on the Student Teacher Relationship Questionnaire (STRS) were particularly pronounced for African American males, such that African American males were reported by teachers to have greater conflictual relationships with teachers as compared to females and White males. This finding could help to explain why some racial groups could potentially benefit more than their white counterparts from a close student-teacher relationship. More research is needed in this area to delineate the effects of student-teacher relationships for different demographic groups.

Similar to students of color, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds experience greater exposure to adversity, which have been linked to decreased educational success (Sheridan & McLaughlin, 2016), lower literacy skills (Reardon, et al., 2013), and high school dropout (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Research has focused on the relation between student-teacher relationships and a variety of outcomes (e.g., educational success, literacy, high school dropout, achievement, and school engagement) among students with low socioeconomic status (Mantzicopoulos & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003; Fuhua, et al., 2015). In the meta-analytic study by Roorta et al. (2011), the moderating role of socioeconomic status was examined and found that associations between the student-teacher relationship and outcome variables (i.e., achievement and engagement) were stronger among students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, as compared to more affluent students. Therefore, low socioeconomic students could benefit more than their affluent counterparts from the protective effects of a strong student-teacher relationship.

It is important to note that the studies described above found that the importance of student-teacher relationships was elevated among students of color and students from low

socioeconomic backgrounds as compared to their more privileged counterparts. The research regarding teacher characteristics has demonstrated an opposite effect, with an elevated need for promoting a positive student-teacher relationship among teachers traditionally associated with groups who hold greater power and privilege. Therefore, it is again possible that when power differentials are higher between teachers and students (e.g., privileged teachers and minoritized students), building a positive relationship is more impactful than student-teacher relationships where there are less power and privilege differentials. This need for a positive student-teacher relationship is echoed in the research done by Decker and colleagues (2007) in which African American students who had behavioral concerns rated themselves as wanting to be closer to their teachers even when teachers rated the student-teacher relationship as negative. Overall, the research on students of color, emphasize this need for support from their teachers, which fosters a host of positive social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for students as described above. Culturally responsive practice, an approach for teachers and other professionals, starts to address how teachers can begin to understand their own privilege, learn about their students' cultural backgrounds, and incorporate relevant skills in the classroom to produce an environment in which students are being advocated for and supported. The following sections discuss what it means to be culturally responsive, the effects on students when teachers engage in culturally responsive practices, and how to become a culturally responsive educator.

Culturally Responsive Practice

Defining Culturally Responsive Practice

Culturally responsive practice (CRP) is referred to by many names, including culturally responsive teaching, culturally responsive education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally

responsive pedagogy. These terms have several common emphases that weave together to form what we define as culturally responsive practice. One emphasis to any definition of culturally responsive practice in the research literature is that learning to be culturally responsive is an ongoing, long-term, and often discomfoting process, in which cultural diversity becomes a lens through which teachers view students and pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Weinstein, et al., 2003). The process to become culturally responsive is a life-long process where people must continually strive to challenge blind spots and biases, both implicit and explicit, and be responsive when faced with new situations.

Definitions regarding culturally responsive practice also include the development of three components of cultural competency, including awareness, knowledge, and skills (Gay, 2010; Weinstein, et al., 2003). The first aspect of culturally responsive practice, awareness, has at times been described as a predisposition or prerequisite to developing knowledge and skills, in which teachers recognize that everyone holds beliefs, biases, and assumptions about human behavior that are culturally bound, and the recognition that there are cultural, racial, ethnic, and class differences among people. Building knowledge involves acquiring “cultural content knowledge” in which teachers must learn, for example, about students’ backgrounds and cultural norms for interpersonal interactions to demonstrate an openness and willingness to learn about the aspects of culture that are important to students and their families. The formation of skills then involves the development of practical strategies to make a culturally responsive classroom emerge for the benefit of teaching children from diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social class backgrounds. Overall, culturally responsive research (Kincheloe & Hayes, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009)

emphasizes pedagogy that uses student culture in order to maintain cultural relevance and transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture.

Scholarship related to the cultural responsiveness of teachers (Kincheloe & Hayes, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009) has also emphasized the need for empowerment to be at the core of cultural competence. Specifically, culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 2009). For the purpose of this study, a frequently cited definition for culturally responsive teaching developed by Gay (2010) will be used, in which culturally responsive practice is the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them. Culturally responsive lenses teach to and through the strengths of students from minoritized backgrounds, which is validating and affirming to students (Gay, 2000).

Effects of Culturally Responsive Practice

Surprisingly, little research has been conducted concerning culturally responsive practices in early childhood settings (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). As a result, the literature review has been expanded to include the research for older grades, including high school and beyond. The review below highlights how culturally responsive pedagogy has been studied thus far, including ethnographic research, case studies, and qualitative research with minimal quantitative data.

The current quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical literature regarding effective culturally responsive pedagogy suggests fostering a culturally responsive classroom environment

(through changes in instructional practice, classroom organization, and motivation management) leads to improved academic outcomes for students of color, such as increased classroom engagement (Foster, et al., 2003; Hu-Pei Au, 1980; Jordan, 1985; Lee, 2001; Vogot, et al., 1987), broad achievement gains (Boykin, et al., 2003), improved mathematics performance (Boykin, et al., 2003), improved reading comprehension (Bell & Clarke, 1998; Boykin, et al., 2004), and improved literacy skills (Hollie, 2001). The current literature regarding the effects of culturally responsive practice on student social and emotional functioning is minimal. Therefore, observed academic gains will primarily be discussed below.

One known culturally responsive model for increasing reading skills is The Kamehameha Elementary Education Project (i.e., Project KEEP), an effective reading program that was accommodated to the culture and language of public-school students in kindergarten to third grade. Project KEEP focused on making modifications to instructional practice, classroom organization, and motivation management. For example, the program used comprehension instead of phonics as the basic reading emphasis, the classroom was organized into teacher-independent centers with heterogeneous leveled groups (as compared to work alone individual desks), and it emphasized high rates of teacher praise and encouraged teachers to incorporate the home culture of Hawaiian children. After making changes in these three areas, the program observed an increase in standardized tests for reading, with students scoring at or above grade level norms. Overall, this program has been well researched using pre-post evaluations across two ethnic groups and several decades. Project KEEP has demonstrated that culturally responsive pedagogy is related to aspects related to achievement gain, such as increased engagement and on-task behavior (Hu-Pei Au, 1980; Jordan, 1985; Vogt, et al., 1987). This

project has demonstrated that developing a program that is culturally compatible requires adaptations in instructional practice, classroom organization, and motivational management. Project KEEP developers stressed that what works to improve achievement for one culture (e.g., Hawaiian children) will not necessarily work for another. Project KEEP also suggests that it is not necessary that all school practices be completely congruent with natal cultural practices or that the home culture must be replicated to engage in culturally responsive educational practices. Rather, KEEP developers recommend building practices that mesh with the child's culture in ways that generate academically important behaviors.

Other culturally responsive research has examined the effects of a Language Affirmation Program on literacy. Hollie (2001) conducted a study to better understand the intersections between the ways that English Language Learners use language and reason in the routine practices of classrooms. Researchers followed African American students in Los Angeles who were a part of a Language Affirmation Program, a program designed to serve the language needs of students of color not proficient in standard American English. The program makes use of research-based instructional strategies to facilitate the acquisition of standard American English without devaluing the home language and culture of the students by acknowledging African American Language (AAL) and integrating that linguistic knowledge into instruction. The Language Affirmation Program included building on teachers' knowledge, understanding, and positive attitude toward nonstandard languages and the students who use them; integrating linguistic knowledge into instruction with second language acquisition methodologies; employing a balanced approach in literacy (incorporating phonics and language); designing instruction around the learning styles and strengths of Standard English language learners; and

infusing the history and culture of standard English language learners into the instructional curriculum. The program used pre-posttest standardized achievement measures (i.e., Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Language Assessment measure), along with anecdotal observational evidence, among an experimental group (i.e., the Language Affirmation Program) and a control group (i.e., traditional standard language awareness approaches). Although students across both groups demonstrated gains, those in the experimental group had significantly better literacy outcomes than those who were not in such a program. Specifically, students being taught traditionally (i.e., through standard language awareness approaches) increased their use of African American Language by 8.5%, while students in the Language Affirmation Program demonstrated a 59% reduction in their use of African American Language writing. Hollie argues that it is important to have all of the elements of the systemic approach (the Language Affirmation Program) to achieve the literacy outcomes desired.

Previous research has also found that when aspects of students' home culture are incorporated into academic learning environments, academic performance and motivation gains are observed quantitatively (Foster, et al., 2003; Lee, 2001). A research study conducted by the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR; Boykin, et al., 2004) conducted a two-part study examining the effects of high vs. low communal learning conditions for both math performance and reading comprehension among low-income African American elementary students. Researchers measured student's endorsement of communal beliefs and activities occurring in the home, preference for communal attitudes and behaviors, and cooperative and individual orientations within the classroom environment. Additionally, the classroom environment was manipulated to foster either communal (i.e., several students at a

table) or individual work (i.e., individual desks facing the front of the room) environments. In part one, students completed a pre/post- test measure in mathematics. Students were also individually assessed weekly to measure progress over time. The 48 students were equally divided by gender from grades 3-6, and 12 students were randomly selected from each grade. In both the experimental conditions, teachers read a prompt that was either instructing students to work individually (low-communal group) or in groups (high-communal group) to complete the math assignment. The control condition lessons included a lecture, practice, and review, where the teacher reviewed problems and encouraged students to follow along with their manipulatives. Results demonstrated that the more students reported communal beliefs and activities in the home, the greater the preference for communal attitudes and behaviors at school. Similarly, the higher the preferences for communal attitudes and behaviors, the higher the ratings toward cooperative learning contexts. The research also indicated that students in the high communal learning context performed significantly better on the math posttest than students in the low communal learning context. Similar methods have been applied to areas of reading comprehension, with similar findings to math performance, such that performance under the high communal learning condition was significantly higher than the performance of the low communal learning condition on posttest measures of achievement gains.

Other evidence of positive academic effects when incorporating students' home culture includes work done by Allen and Butler (1996). Researchers sought to further establish that contextual factors informed by cultural experiences could influence the performance on a learning task. Low-income African American and middle-income White children listened to stories read under two contexts that differed in the degree to which movement and music were

integrated with the story. In the high-movement context, children were instructed how to coordinate movement with a musical accompaniment while listening to the stories. The low-movement group allowed little movement opportunity and did not play music. A multiple-choice test was then used to yield three scores related to cognitive processing (i.e., encoding, inferring, and mapping). Examiners used repeated-measures ANOVAs to examine within-group differences. Results indicated an interaction between ethnicity and condition, such that African American students performed better under the high-movement context while White children performed better under the low-movement context. It is also important to note that when the best performances for each group were compared (i.e., African American and White students), both groups performed comparably in regards to cognitive processing. Therefore, this research, as well as previous work by Allen and Boykin (1991, 1988) demonstrates that low-income Black children can perform at levels equal to their more economically advantaged and traditionally privileged peers if certain factors derived from their cultural experiences are incorporated into task contexts.

Similarly, research has examined the effects of racial imagery (Black and White characters) and cultural themes (African American and Euro-American) in reading content on comprehension and recall in African American children (Bell & Clark, 1998). Participants were evenly distributed into three conditions (i.e., a story with Black characters and African American themes, a story with White characters and Euro-American themes, and a story with Black characters and traditional Euro-American themes) according to their gender and reading ability. Students were asked six questions following the story to elicit recall of the story's characters and events and their level of comprehension. Results indicated that within this sample of children,

stories with Black characters, as compared to White characters, facilitated more efficient comprehension of the story. Additionally, students listening to the story with Black imagery and culturally related themes recalled and comprehended events better than the story treatment with Black characters and culturally distant themes. Findings suggest that African American students process information more efficiently when stories incorporate their sociocultural experiences. These findings are consistent with other research suggesting that when African American children encounter characters that look like them and whose stories mirror their own experiences and culture, they are more likely to find the activity appealing and be more successful academically (Gangi, 2008; Heflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001).

Becoming Culturally Responsive

As is discussed above, teacher expectations and instructional behaviors significantly impact, pivot, and shape the educational experiences and outcomes of racially diverse students. Thus, teaching methods should not be left to chance, taken for granted, or assumed that pedagogical responsiveness to cultural diversity will emerge naturally within educational settings. Research has also demonstrated that when teachers have had the benefit of multicultural teacher-education preparation, they are less likely to embrace cultural deficit views, or the assumption that a student will perform poorly given their socioeconomic status or familial origin (Irvine, 2003). Moreover, teachers who have learned culturally responsive pedagogy are more confident and believe they are effective in their instruction of diverse children (Pang & Sablan, 1998). Gay, well known for her work in multicultural education, outlines the three necessary components for becoming a culturally responsive teacher, including acquiring personal and professional self-awareness, a knowledge base about ethnic and cultural diversity in education,

as well as skill development, which includes dialoging about cultural diversity (Gay, 2010). Each component of culturally responsive practice is outlined below.

Knowledge

Culture is the contentious concept that is at the center of culturally responsive pedagogy, which involves the way we walk and talk, the foods we eat, our celebrations, and our values and beliefs. Culture is constructed by the interaction of structures of power in society, determining the meanings, values, and practices that frame that society, and are passed down and learned from elders and previous generations. For many students of color, culture is stressed to be assimilated, acculturated, or oppositional to the dominant culture (Heinz, 2003). As a part of building teachers' knowledge base, teachers must work to acknowledge that cultural, ethnic, and class differences exist among people (Weinstein, et al., 2003). Often in an attempt to strive to be fair and impartial, many teachers begin to facilitate "color blindness" (Nieto, 1994) and believe that groups are static, monolithic, and homogeneous. Thus, becoming culturally responsive starts with gaining a knowledge base about ethnic and cultural diversity in education, including learning about an ethnic group's histories, heritages, and contributions to better understand important aspects of their students' cultures given that culturally specific information, traditions, and beliefs are often handed down generationally.

For example, a large part of African American culture also consists of generationally passed beliefs and practices rooted in African cultures which give order, meaning, and pleasure to social, political, economic, aesthetic, and religious norms (Sefa Dei, 1994). There is a communal relation to one another, the earth, and spirit that has served as the basis for survival of Africans in the hostile world of the diaspora which demonstrate the ancient African roots and

subsequent responses including spirituality, resilience, humanism, communalism, orality and verbal expressiveness, personal style and uniqueness, realness, emotional vitality, and musicality/rhythm (Lee, 2005). While this is true for much of African American culture, individuals within each culture demonstrate within group variability, such that the individual may not equally share the same values, beliefs, and traditions of their broader cultural group (Guitierrez & Rogoff, 2003). When teachers assume the cultural knowledge about a student based on predetermined cultural norms, interactions over time may lead to stereotyping and further alienation of the student. Therefore, teachers should not only gain a general knowledge base of different diverse groups, but balance this knowledge with the individual student, and what is of importance in their family culture.

While understanding a group culture is important, educators must use this knowledge to work with what each child brings into the classroom. The knowledge gained about both group culture and students' individual cultures is not sufficient alone; but is foundational in building the following two components of cultural responsiveness: awareness and skill.

Awareness

Good and Brophy (2003) suggest that most teachers are unaware, in any systematic way, of what they do while in the act of teaching. This finding is partially due to the rapidness of classroom settings, but it can also be attributed to the fact that many teacher-education programs have not historically equipped teachers with specific tools for developing continuous self-awareness in the classroom. Recent years have sought to shift teacher-education programs to include this aspect of self-awareness in greater strides. Gay (2010) echoes this need for self-awareness, emphasizing the importance of acquiring personal and professional self-awareness. In

order for teachers to understand the cultural needs of students of color, they first need to examine their own blinders, or privilege, which can obstruct educational opportunities. Doing so requires self-analysis of what they believe about the relationship among culture, ethnicity, and instructional behaviors; the expectations they hold for different demographics of students; and how those beliefs and expectations translate into instructional behaviors (Gay, 2010).

One way to assist teachers become more aware and understand how they interact with ethnically diverse students is to record segments of instruction (Gay, 2010). Teachers can use video recordings to critically analyze the quality of interactions they have with different students. For example, this might include what kinds of questions are asked of boys vs. girls, of Latino, African, Native, Asian, and European Americans; who is praised and who is criticized; to what extent experiences and perspectives of different ethnic groups are woven into instruction; which students are encouraged to think deeper and extend, clarify, or refine their verbal contributions, etc. Identifying interactional patterns allows teachers to design strategies for change, beginning with strategies to abort the negative and accelerate the positive for all students.

Another common model for building self-awareness is the Teacher Perception Framework, which focuses on building reflective practice among pre-service teachers (Bennett, 1995). The model is designed to develop skills related to pedagogical self-awareness, self-analysis, and self-reflection. Teachers are asked to declare their personal perspectives on teaching philosophies and study their own self-recorded observations to determine whether their assumed behaviors and actual behaviors are aligned. When teachers notice incongruences, they are challenged to explain and resolve them. Teachers are also asked to self-reflect often and be

interviewed to heighten awareness. While this method is not primarily used for analyzing cultural thoughts and behaviors of teachers, it can be adapted to do so.

A similar method to the Teacher Perception Framework (Bennett, 1995) has been evaluated qualitatively, where preservice teachers work to increase their awareness through self-reflection. Cohen-Phillips (2008) conducted a mediated lesson study in which early childhood teachers learned to reflect as practitioners when they studied culturally specific constructs within an online class to examine increases in cultural awareness. Three African American early childhood teachers who were teaching in different settings (i.e., faith-based primary school, a home school, and a government-funded pre-school agency) participated in the study. Teachers were taught concepts related to culturally appropriate teaching, met together weekly to identify gaps between curriculum, implementation, and research goals, and engaged in monthly seminar workshops where cultural information was presented. Participants were asked to create cultural autobiographies, a reflective activity to show how personal history and background shaped instructional strategies and cultural awareness. At the end of the study, teachers participated in exit interviews to assess how mediated lesson study might have changed teacher awareness of the influence culture has in effective teaching. Results indicated three primary themes in that participants experienced greater empowerment as teachers, increased in cultural awareness (as measured by creating questions, activities, and reflections on their lessons), and reflectivity on how culture could impact teaching and learning. While one of the three teachers were able to translate cultural awareness skills and knowledge into classroom practices, self-awareness in isolation does not necessarily give rise to the development of skills necessary to engage in culturally responsive pedagogy.

Skill

While it is important to build a large base of cultural knowledge and become aware of privilege and oppression, learning must be taken to the next step where educators build alliances and engage in action for social change. Building an environment supportive of dialogs allows individuals to talk openly and deeply about cultural differences and racial inequities, clarify and articulate thinking about the role of race and racism in teaching and learning, and commit themselves to an active anti-racist educational agenda. Teachers must be willing to commit to *passion* in supporting significant changes in educational policies, programs, and procedures to achieve academic equity and social justice; take *actions* to educate ethnically and racially diverse students to their highest potential; and *persist* in staying focused on anti-racism regardless of what pressing concerns may be in education (Gay, 2010).

Skills that arise from culturally responsive awareness and knowledge are built on the foundation of forming meaningful relationships with students and understanding how relationships can be distanced and strained (i.e., Reciprocal Distancing; Maital, 2000). Various theories, such as Relational-Cultural Theory (Ladson-Billings, 2009), the 4R's Theory (Wyngaard, 2007), and the use of non-traditional teaching and learning (Shade, 1992), hypothesize differently how teachers should apply these skills practically within the classroom. Theoretical and qualitative findings are discussed below.

As mentioned above, some research suggests ways in which student-teacher relationships can become strained when teachers' lack culturally responsive skill. Maital (2000) conducted a study in which reciprocal distancing was proposed to explain interpersonal processes that lead to persistent problem behavior following cross-cultural transitions. Specifically, this study

examined a four-year consultation project with teachers in an early education program for Ethiopian immigrant children in Israel. In the model proposed, difficulties evolved from a dynamic sequence of interactive processes between a helper and the one being helped. This “mutual distancing” was likely to occur when students who lack (either real or perceived) competencies needed for success interact with teachers who expect the student to perform and who are committed to achieving this end. Da Verona and Omer (1992) defined reciprocal distancing as a “process of progressive disengagement resulting from a series of ‘interactive failures’ that occur between those committed to helping a student acquire competencies and the person being helped” (pp. 390-391). Culturally different teachers and children are likely to be placed in such contexts with a downward spiral put into motion when each one fails to meet the other’s expectations. For example, both teachers and children come in with their expectations for a successful encounter based on experience from their cultures. If teachers and children come from very different cultures, this expectation may not be met, which could include developmental expectations or expectations concerning when or how to demonstrate skills. From the teacher’s perspective, the child may not be meeting those expectations and if the mismatch persists, both the child and teacher are likely to become frustrated and disappointed, leading to a mutual sense of failure. Teacher’s hurt may lead a child to try to withdrawal from future learning tasks, but teachers may also reject a child’s renewed attempts to participate. A teacher’s anger and guilt may then lead to labeling the child as a way of attributing the failure to stable characteristics of the child or situation. The child may internalize these labels of pessimism about change, and reciprocally provides a rationalization for the continuing failure of educational efforts. The study found evidence for disengagement as well as joining of teachers and

challenging children despite frustration and difficulty. A key factor found in teachers being open to change was their appreciation of the need for cross-cultural sensitivity and readiness to become aware of their own beliefs about culture. Therefore, when students and teachers have mismatched cultural backgrounds, it is imperative teachers have a willingness to become more knowledgeable about typical psychological reactions to cross-cultural encounters and use culturally responsive skills and strategies to break this chain of interactions. Theories and studies suggested to build cultural skill are discussed below.

Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT; Ladson-Billings, 2009) is a feminist, multicultural-based counseling theory that emphasizes skills that build growth-fostering relationships with others which are built on mutual empathy, bidirectional development, and mutual empowerment given that misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and denial of life experiences result in emotional and relational disconnections, which can lead to distress (Comstock et al., 2008; Jordan & Dooley, 2000). RCT states that misunderstandings occur as a result of relational interactions, racism, cultural oppression, sexism, and other social injustices that can lead an individual to relate to others in inauthentic ways, feeling like they are unable to bring full aspects of themselves into relationships (Comstock et al., 2008; Jordan & Hartling, 2002). Therefore, teachers effective in implementing RCT use students' previous experiences and knowledge important to students' cultures to build upon current curriculum, including the integration of music and dance, relating concepts to family and kin, and utilizing familiar communication styles (e.g., call and response and storytelling/narratives) which are believed to promote positive student-teacher relationships based on observational case studies. Culturally responsive educators also attend and support students' well-being by attending to relational aspects,

including: responding to student feelings, holding high expectations, recognizing students publicly, and sharing information about themselves (Cholewa & Goodman, 2014).

Another theory, the 4R's Theory (Relationships, Respect, Responsibility, and Relevancy), is believed to be a way not only to conceptualize culturally responsive practice, but a theory that can be practically applied in classroom settings through the use of effective teaching practices (Soto & Swadener, 2005; Wyngaard, 2007). This theory was derived from a study in which high school African American student perspectives were collected to understand how teachers can be culturally responsive. Qualitative findings indicate that the relationship between students and teachers was most important. Student-teacher relationships, according to Wyngaard (2007), can be formed one of three ways: (1) for the educator to demonstrate trustworthiness, care, and an interest in African American students' lives, (2) for the teacher to share their personal opinion or other significant information about significant issues outside of school, or (3) for the educator to understand the life experience of individual students in their classroom and not be perceived as judgmental toward students' experiences. Other R's, such as respect and responsibility, are focused on teachers providing safe learning environments, valuing and honoring student voices, and acting in a professional manner toward students. The final R, Relevancy, emphasizes the need for teachers to link prior knowledge, a student's life outside of the classroom, and their future to provide a means for motivation. It is important to note that given that the 4R's theory was developed from high school student perspectives, results may not generalize to younger populations, such as Head Start children.

Other theories outline specific skills educators should use when interacting with students of color. Shade (1992), for example, suggests that successful teachers of African American

students use non-traditional approaches to teaching and learning, using intense group work, which differs significantly from the traditional quiet-room teaching with individual work. Other preferences described by Shade (1992) for successful learning among African American students include:

1. Learning through observation and modeling activities,
2. Having high energy levels and needing a variety of tasks and high movement,
3. Contextualizing material,
4. Processing materials through kinesthetic activities, visual images, auditory materials, interactive processes, and print-oriented approaches,
5. Demonstrating knowledge in performance rather than in tests,
6. Being highly creative and imaginative and integrating aspects of this into the cognitive curriculum.

These preferences for learning lead to a communal and person-oriented perspective, such that educators are using African American students' culture to inform teaching practices while also maintaining attention to individual differences.

Hanley and Noblit (2009) note that all components of culturally responsive practice (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and skill) must be put into practice in order for an educator to be effective in cultural responsiveness. For example, increasing a teacher's awareness of their biases and assumptions influences changes in behavior and help to develop an increased need for more knowledge; knowledge about different cultural groups help educators understand the cultural backgrounds of their students and is a method of learning more about effective skills for

individual students; and the implementation of skills are continuously made effective by the combination of awareness and knowledge that is rooted in theory and data.

Culturally Responsive Practice in Head Start Classrooms

Head Start programs provide preschool services for children ages birth to 5 from low-income families, and work to promote school readiness by supporting their development in a comprehensive way (Office of Head Start, 2017). For instance, one of the program's primary goals is to provide beneficial and effective early learning experiences so that the stage is set for future school success. Head Start is well known for its long history of providing services to diverse students and families, with 76.5% of enrolled students identifying as students of color (Program Information Report, 2016). It is clear that Head Start staff serve a highly diverse group of children and seek for children to benefit from the preschool services so that gaps in school success are reduced.

Assaf (2012) conducted a qualitative study examining Head Start teaching staffs' (assistant teachers and lead teachers) perceptions of culturally responsive and quality instructional practices for young children from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Two focus groups were conducted, one for instructional assistants and one for teachers. Participants responded to open-ended interview questions regarding their experiences and understanding of preschool children, families, and personal experiences related to culturally responsive practices. The Multicultural Efficacy Scale (Guyton & Wesche, 2005), a scale measuring attitudes and understanding of the larger sociocultural issues surrounding the integration of culturally responsive practices, was used to supplement focus group discussion and opinion. This study found that while instructional assistants felt they had average comfort in providing and

integrating culture into their classroom, half of the Head Start teachers reported low multicultural efficacy, indicating their discomfort in providing sociocultural experiences and a lack of knowing how to integrate culture into curriculum and teaching practices. Additionally, focus group findings indicated that basic cultural awareness skills, such as respecting various points of view, seeing the positive value in all members of a community, or understanding that not all children or their families have or want the same things from the classroom were rarely communicated. Findings found in Assaf (2012) reiterate the need for teaching staff to have more tools and knowledge about culturally responsive teaching practices, especially within Head Start settings.

Critique of Culturally Responsive Practice

There is one critique of culturally responsive approaches that should be noted. Critiques of culturally responsive practices fear that these approaches will stop the teaching of traditional content, such as evidenced by the Ebonics debate in the 1990s (Perry & Delpit, 1998). This debate focused on the use of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) as a standard dialect. While linguistics research in the twentieth century supported the dialect, educators and social commentators believed AAVE was a grammatically inferior form of English and advocated for its removal in the public education system. In December of 1996, the Oakland, CA school board ruled that Black students would perform better in school and more easily learn American English if textbooks and teachers incorporated AAVE in teaching children to speak Standardized English rather than assuming a child who speaks AAVE is substandard. More recent research has continued to understand why African American students are overrepresented in special education, with hypotheses rooted in the Ebonics debate. The response to the AAVE

debate, however, has been clear, with scholars emphasizing the importance of reinforcing cultural knowledge and establishing the legitimacy of African American English to support positive racial identity and enable African American students to master the demands of the educational system. As some qualitative and mixed-method studies have shown, effective culturally responsive practices are related to achievement gains (Allan & Butler, 1996; Bell & Clark, 1998; Boykin et al., 2004), supporting the need for validating the culture of students of color.

Conceptual Framework

As mentioned above, Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT; Ladson-Billings, 2009) emphasizes skills that build growth-fostering relationships given that misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and denial of life experiences result in emotional and relational disconnections, which can lead to distress (Comstock et al., 2008; Jordan & Dooley, 2000). RCT states that misunderstandings can occur as a result of relational interactions, racism, cultural oppression, sexism, and other social injustices that lead an individual to relate to others in inauthentic ways, feeling like they are unable to bring full aspects of themselves into relationships (Comstock et al., 2008; Jordan & Hartling, 2002). Specifically, the interpersonal process of these misunderstandings is theorized to occur through Reciprocal Distancing (Maital, 2000) where difficulties evolve from a dynamic sequence of interactive processes between a helper and the one being helped, or as in the present study, the teacher and student. These ‘interactive failures’ are put into motion when each one fails to meet the other’s expectations, which may be partially due misunderstandings described in RCT (e.g., racism, cultural oppression). This process of distancing is theorized to lead to less close student-teacher

relationships and more conflictual interactions/relationships because of the mutual sense of failure. For example, the child may try to withdraw from future learning tasks and teachers may reject a child's renewed attempts to participate, causing conflict between the teacher and the student.

Alternatively, close student-teacher relationships are theorized to develop when teachers use students' previous experiences and knowledge important to students' cultures to build upon current curriculum as is described in RCT. A key factor in teachers being open to changing how they interact with students is their appreciation of the need for cross-cultural sensitivity and readiness to become aware of their own beliefs about culture (Maital, 2000). Therefore, when students and teachers have mismatched cultural backgrounds, it is imperative teachers have a willingness to become more knowledgeable about typical psychological reactions to cross-cultural encounters and use culturally responsive skills and strategies to break this chain of interactions to build positive relationships with their students.

The Current Study

As described by the current literature, the student-teacher relationship becomes more important when teachers are in a position of privilege (Roorda et al., 2011). Culturally responsive practice is a proposed answer to address this power differential by educating teachers through the use of building awareness, knowledge, and skills so that teachers can continually challenge their biases and connect and engage with students from backgrounds different from their own. This study aimed to connect two bodies of literature, including student-teacher relationships and culturally responsive practices, and examined the role of cultural responsiveness among teachers as a predictor for student-teacher relationship quality. Outcome

data were also examined, including the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic functioning of pre-school children across three Head Start settings.

This study was unique given that the current body of literature has not previously examined student-teacher relationships and culturally responsive practices. Quantitative measurement of culturally responsive practices is rarely found in the research literature, which brings a novel opportunity in the present study. While academic outcomes have been a focus in the culturally responsive research literature, this study is the first, to my knowledge, to quantitatively examine the effects of culturally responsive practices on children's social-emotional well-being and behavioral outcomes. It is also important to note that this study is one of few to focus on culturally responsive practice in an early childhood context. There is currently a need to understand the observable effects of culturally responsive practices on the relationships teachers build with their students, given that student-teacher relationships are heavily associated with a broad range of child outcomes and success. This study examined the role of culturally responsive practices as a predictor for the formation of strong student-teacher relationships and child outcomes among preschool children across several Midwestern counties.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses are addressed:

1. Is culturally responsive awareness, knowledge, and skill among Head Start teachers associated with positive and close student-teacher relationships?
 - a. Teachers who exemplify awareness, knowledge, and skill consistent with culturally responsive practices, as compared to teachers who report lower levels of cultural

- awareness, knowledge, and skill, will report more positive, close student-teacher relationships with students, including students from racially diverse backgrounds.
2. Is culturally responsive awareness, knowledge, and skill among Head Start teachers associated with students' growth in academic, social-emotional, and behavioral domains?
 - a. Teachers who exemplify awareness, knowledge, and skill consistent with culturally responsive practices, as compared to teachers who report lower levels of cultural awareness, knowledge, and skill, will have students who exhibit greater growth in academic, social-emotional, and behavioral functioning across the academic school year, including students from racially diverse backgrounds.
 3. Are reports of student-teacher relationships associated with students' growth in academic, social-emotional, and behavioral domains?
 - a. Teachers who report less conflict and greater closeness in the student-teacher relationship, as compared to teachers who report greater conflict and less closeness, will have students who exhibit greater growth in academic, social-emotional, and behavioral functioning across the academic school year, including students from racially diverse backgrounds.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Recruitment and Participants

Three Head Start programs across several Midwestern counties agreed to be a part of the present study. For each participating program, trained researchers attempted to recruit the lead teacher of each classroom for the study, but when the lead teacher was unavailable or chose to not participate, an assistant teacher was invited to participate in the study. The goal was to recruit one teacher from each classroom during preservice all-staff meetings. Each student's parent in the consenting classroom received a consent letter, in which they are asked to either check yes or no for participation and return the letter to the classroom teacher. Student participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (a) consent from the legal guardian provided, (b) consent from the student's teacher, and (c) the child was enrolled in a Head Start preschool classroom (students in Early Head Start classrooms were not included in the present study).

Measures

Teacher Demographics and Education Form

The teachers completed 13 demographic and educational questions related to their race, education in school, languages spoken, and years taught, as well as short answer questions related to the demographics of their classroom. The form can be found in Appendices (Appendix B).

Contemporary Critical Consciousness Scale

The Contemporary Critical Consciousness Measure (CCCM; Shin, et al., 2016) is a self-report measure for teachers with nineteen, 7-point Likert scale items ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The items were developed to assess the critical consciousness associated with racism, classism, and heterosexism. The scale aims to measure critical

consciousness, or awareness, of how oppressed or marginalized people begin to think critically about inequitable social conditions and take action to change them (Freire, 1972). For example, teachers would rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed to statements such as “All Whites receive unearned privileges in U.S. society” and “Poor people without jobs could easily find work but remain unemployed because they think that jobs like food service or retail are beneath them.” Some items were reversed scored. Reliability estimates for the subscales of the CCCM were $\alpha=0.787$ (Race), $\alpha=0.877$ (SES), $\alpha=0.877$ (heterosexism), and $\alpha=0.900$ (total scale score). To increase the likelihood teachers would complete this measure in conjunction with other measures described within this study, the scale was reduced to 13 items by only using the racism and classism subscales of the critical consciousness scale (Appendix C). For the purposes of the present study, only the total score was used to determine levels of cultural awareness using an abbreviated version of the Contemporary Critical Consciousness Measure. Higher scores on the scale reflect a greater degree of critical reflection (i.e., more cultural awareness regarding race and socioeconomic disparities).

Equity Consciousness Assessment

Given aspects of culturally responsive practices are often measured through ethnographic and qualitative means, there are little known quantitative measures with assessing individual’s cultural knowledge. Hatt and Hoff (N.D.), created the Equity Consciousness Scale (ECM; Appendix D), a compiled list of competency statements based off the culturally responsive research literature. There are a total of 75 statements across three subscales: attitudes and beliefs (21 questions), knowledge (23 questions), and practice (31 questions). Participants rate on a 5-point Likert scale items ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) their agreement

to statements such as “I can define types of racism” and “I can articulate the differences between individual vs. communal learning contexts and their influences on students.” No known reliability or validity data have been collected at this time. Given measures for cultural awareness and skill had been identified, the present study created an abbreviated and adapted version of the Equity Consciousness Scale. Only the knowledge scale was used, and the scale was narrowed from 23 questions to 10 questions so that teachers would have an increased likelihood to complete all measures for the study.

Multicultural Efficacy Scale

The Multicultural Efficacy Scale (MES; Appendix E), developed by Guyton and Wesche (2005), is a 4-point Likert scale, and is a measure in which teachers respond to items related to culturally responsive practice indicating the following: A = *I do not believe I could do this very well*; B = *I could probably do this if I had to, but it would be difficult for me*; C = *I believe that I could do this reasonably well if I had time to prepare*; or D = *I am quite confident that this would be easy for me to do*. This scale asked questions related to culturally responsive practice and the teachers’ attitude and ability to integrate such methods of teaching into his/her/their practice (i.e., Cultural Skill). Examples of questions include “I can analyze instructional materials for potential stereotypical and/or prejudicial content” and “I can help students work through problem situations caused by stereotypical and/or prejudicial attitudes.” Guyton and Wesche (2005) suggested from their findings that a score of 1 or 2 on an individual item is a low score, that a score of 3 is average, and that 4 is a high score. Item scores are summed up to make a total efficacy score, in which A (*I could not do this very well*) is scored as a 1-point answer, and D (*I am quite confident that this would be easy for me to do*) is scored as a 4-point answer. For

efficacy, suggested score ranges are 0 to 54 (low), 55 to 66 (average), and 67-80 (high).

Cronbach's alpha for scores from the efficacy scale was $\alpha = .93$, within the good range for internal reliability (Guyton & Wesche, 2005). It is important to note that validity of scores from the instrument (e.g., external, concurrent, and construct validity) has not been tested.

The original scale (Guyton & Wesche, 2005) includes 35 items, 20 of which were used in the present study as a single efficacy factor. Similar to Assaf (2012), the scale has been modified to only include items related to teacher efficacy, removing subscale questions regarding teacher attitudes and experience as teacher attitudes are being measured by the Teacher Multicultural Attitudes Survey.

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale

The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale- Short Form (STRS-SF; Appendix F), created by Pianta (1992), is a 15-item, teacher-report instrument with 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Definitely does not apply*) to 5 (*Definitely Applies*). This measure is designed to measure the teacher's perception of conflict (8 items) and closeness (7 items) with a specific child. Items include statements such as, "If upset, this child will seek comfort from me" and "Dealing with this child drains my energy." Some items were reverse coded. Development and psychometric analysis of the STRS-SF suggests the 15-item instrument shows good internal consistency ($\alpha > .80$), with high consistency with the full 28-item STRS measure ($r > .90$) (Settanni et al., 2015). Validity studies conducted by Pianta indicate that the STRS measure correlates in predictable ways with concurrent and future measures of academic skills, including performance on standardized tests (Hamre & Pianta, 2001), behavior problems and competencies in elementary classrooms (e.g., Pianta, 1994; Pianta et al., 1995), and peer relations (Birch & Ladd, 1998).

Outcome and Performance Data

As a part of Head Start regulations, academic, social, emotional, and behavioral measures are regularly obtained for each child enrolled in the Head Start program.

Academic functioning

The Teaching Strategies GOLD is an authentic, observation-based assessment system used to progress monitor academic functioning for children from birth through kindergarten. Head Start locations complete the GOLD quarterly (i.e., October, January, April, and July). It measures all areas of development and learning with performance tasks for selected predictors of school success in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Teaching Strategies GOLD can be used to assess all children, including English-language learners, in which two objectives specifically address English-language acquisition. There are a total of 38 objectives which are organized into nine areas of development and content-area learning, including social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, English-language acquisition, and the arts. An example of one question from the literacy objective is “Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet (a) identifies and names letters, (b) uses letter-sound knowledge.” The measure is usually rated by teachers who rate the child’s knowledge, skills, and behaviors on a 10-point scale from level 1 which represents skills of typical children from birth to 1-year-old up to level 9 indicating kindergarten readiness. Teachers are also given the option to rate the child’s skill as “not yet,” which is lower than a level 1 score. A confidence interval of scores for each year between birth and kindergarten are given for every domain, indicating which ratings are typical for specific ages (birth-1, 1-2 years, and 2-3 years) and for various

classes/grades (preschool 3, pre-k 4, and kindergarten). It is important to note that these bands do not include typical ratings for English Language learners.

The Teaching Strategies Gold has demonstrated high construct validity with factor analyses yielding a 9-factor model, which have become the 9 areas of development and content-area learning described above (Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment Scoring System Technical Summary Report, 2011). Tests of reliability indicated strong internal consistency, with estimates ranging from $\alpha = .96$ for the physical scale to $\alpha = .98$ for the cognitive scale. As the measure is an observation-based assessment, interrater reliability was assessed and found to be high, with all but one being above .90, and the lowest correlation still being high at .80. The highest level of interrater reliability was found in the literacy scale (Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System Technical Summary Report, 2011). When compared with the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement, the GOLD demonstrated variable convergent validity, ranging from .33 to .68 (Miller-Nains, et al., 2017).

Social-emotional and behavioral functioning

Head Start locations vary in their use of social-emotional and behavioral measurements. One of the measures used to evaluate current social-emotional functioning is the Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2) while others use the Brigance Screens III. The ASQ:SE-2 is used as a developmental screening tool for social-emotional concerns within some Head Start locations, while other Head Start programs use the Brigance Screens III, a measure to screen for potential developmental delays and giftedness in language, motor, self-help, social-emotional, and cognitive skills. Both measures were collected once per year in the fall to screen students who may need additional social-emotional support.

Behaviorally, Head Start programs do not have a formal behavioral measure, but rather use data such as “the number of children for whom an individual mental health assessment was conducted” as well as “the number of children for whom a referral for mental health services were conducted.” Given Head Start programs use different social-emotional measures to determine social-emotional difficulties and only measure student’s social-emotional functioning once per year, a separate social-emotional-behavioral screener was used for the purposes of the present study.

Therefore, an adapted and shortened social-emotional measure from Kamphaus and Reynolds (2015) Behavioral and Emotional Screening System, 3rd Edition (BASC-3 BESS) was used to gain student’s social-emotional-behavioral wellbeing in both the fall and spring. The BASC-3 BESS offers a reliable, quick, and systematic way to determine behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses of children and adolescents in preschool through high school. The original measure assesses a wide array of behavioral, emotional, and academic problems and included 20 questions. Raters marked the degree to which each statement applied to the child, ranging from “Never” to “Almost Always.” The BASC-3 BESS has proved to be a diagnostically accurate predictor of externalizing problems and school problems, supported by a 2-year longitudinal study of K-5 students in which the BASC-3 BESS was associated with a variety of student outcomes, including conduct problems, social skills, special education placement, and grades (Chafouleas, et al., 2012). In efforts to increase teacher response rates to completing social-emotional-behavioral measures on each participating student in conjunction with other measures indicated above, the original social-emotional screener was shortened to 7 items with the same Likert scale (Appendix G).

Procedure

Three Head Start programs across several Midwestern counties were contacted to be a part of the present study. For each participating program, trained researchers recruited classroom teachers for the study at the three Head Start Programs during preservice all-staff meetings which occurred in August. Researchers explained the purpose of the study and handed out teacher consent forms to all teachers interested in the study. Researchers collected the forms after consent was obtained. Within the first month of classes, each student in the consenting classroom received a consent letter to take home to parents. Parents selected whether they were or were not interested in the study, as indicated on the form. Parents were be asked to bring the signed consent form back to the Head Start teacher.

For the following 2 months (October to December 2018), trained researchers administered teacher packets to each site, which included the following: a demographics and education form, the Contemporary Critical Consciousness Measure (CCM), the Equity Consciousness Assessment, the Multicultural Efficacy Scale (MES), and a Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS-SF) as well as a social-emotional-behavioral screener for each child with informed consent in the study. Measures were counterbalanced to control for order effects. Researchers distributed the packets and informed teachers that if they have questions, they could ask the researcher and the researcher would answer their question. Once teachers complete the survey, they placed their completed survey packet in a manila envelope and returned the envelope with its contents to the researcher.

Based on the preference of the Head Start Program, either one teacher was pulled at a time from each classroom at a given site during the school day when children were present or all

teaching staff members from a given site completed the measures during a time with no children present on site (e.g., teacher planning). For example, if the first method was preferred and there were five classrooms at one site, one teacher was pulled out of each classroom at the site to complete the packet of materials (i.e., five teachers). Once the first round of teachers finished the packet of materials, another teaching staff from each classroom was pulled to complete the packet (i.e., another five teachers). This process was completed a total of three times so each teacher had opportunity to complete all measures. If the second method of data collection was preferred where teachers complete measures when no children are present, the researchers set up a time with each site for teachers to complete the measures. For example, if there were five classrooms at a given site, all 15 teachers completed the packet of materials at one time. Researchers rescheduled makeup packet administrations for any participating teachers absent during data collection.

To obtain child outcome data, including academic, social, emotional, and behavioral functioning, as well as measures of classroom climate, the researcher was given access to the online portal at each Head Start program to retrieve information for each consenting student in the study, including the GOLD, ASQ-SE, the Brigance III Screens, behavioral referral data, and classroom climate. According to Head Start performance standards, data were available beginning in October/November.

In addition to fall data collection, data were collected again in the spring semester (i.e., March – May 2019). The same teacher packets were administered and the same child outcome scores were also obtained with the same methodology from fall semester.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The results will be presented in four sections. First, participants and the handling of missing data are described. In section 2, descriptive statistics on the various measures and correlational analyses will be presented. Section 3 describes intraclass correlations to justify the use of multilevel modeling. In section 4, the results of hypotheses 1 through 4 using multilevel modeling will be presented, as outlined in Chapter 2.

Participants and Missing Data

Teacher and student participants in the present study were sought from four Head Start programs across several midwestern counties during the fall of the 2018 – 2019 school year. Among the other three Head Start programs, 16 classrooms, 27 teachers, and 108 students gave consent to participate in the study. The lead teachers from each of the 16 classrooms were included in the analyses below. Prior to the fall data collection, five students (4.6% of the 108 students) withdrew from the Head Start program for reasons unrelated to the study (e.g., dropped out of the Head Start program, moved, or participated in full day early childhood services through the school district). Therefore, the final fall sample included 103 students and 16 teachers/classrooms who responded to the questionnaires in the fall. An additional seven students (6.5% of the 108-student sample) were lost to attrition because they withdrew from the Head Start program prior to spring data collection for similar reasons to fall.

Within the teacher-reported data (i.e., information regarding culturally responsive practices), one teacher did not complete two of the three scales (i.e., awareness and skill) and was lost to attrition by spring data collection. To address these missing teacher data, deletion methods, as well as single and multiple imputation methods were considered for handling the missing data (Enders, 2010). Single arithmetic mean imputation was determined most

appropriate to fill in the missing data. Therefore, the missing values were filled in with the arithmetic mean of the available cases.

Descriptive Statistics

The present study included 96 students across 16 classrooms and three Head Start programs in Illinois during the 2018–2019 school year. Table 1 lists the frequencies and percentages of lead teachers' reports on demographic data, including sex, race, age, languages spoken, education status, and years teaching. All 16 lead teachers who participated in the study were female, with the majority of teachers identifying as White (56%), followed by African American/Black (19%), and Hispanic/Latino (13%). One lead teacher identified as Biracial (i.e., White and Hispanic/Latino) and another Multiracial (i.e., White, African American, and Latino). Teachers' ages ranged from 24 years old to 59 years old, with two teachers declining to provide their age. About two-thirds (69%) of teachers reported they spoke English only, while 31% of teachers identified as bilingual, speaking both English and Spanish. The majority of teachers had obtained an associate's or bachelor's degree (66%). One teacher had obtained some college and another some graduate education. Teachers' courses of studies included early childhood development, early childhood/elementary education, or a related field. According to teacher report, total teaching experience ranged from 1.5 years to 35 years. Thirty-one percent of teachers had been teaching in total five years or less. Teachers' experience at Head Start ranged from 1.5 years to 30 years, with the largest proportion of teachers (37%) working at Head Start programs five years or less. Nineteen percent of teachers had been teaching between 11 and 15 years, while another 19% had taught 16 to 20 years at Head Start programs.

Table 2 lists the frequencies and percentages of students' demographic information, including their sex, race, age, language, and dual enrollment status. Out of the 108 students

participating in the study, 55 (51%) were female and 53 (49%) were male. The majority of students were reported as Hispanic/Latino (30%), followed by African American/Black (21%) and White (20%). Fourteen students (13%) identified as biracial (i.e., White and Hispanic/Latino and White and African American/Black) and 17 students did not have race reported in their student files. In regards to age, 29% of students were 3 years old, 36% were 4 years old, and 35% were 5 years old by the end of spring 2021. The majority of students reported to be monolingual, with 55% of students speaking only English and 1% speaking only Spanish (total monolingual = 56%), while 29% of students identified as bilingual (i.e., English and Spanish [27%] and English and French [2%]). Sixteen percent of students did not have information regarding their languages spoken. Finally, 14% of students were dually enrolled, indicating they attended both a Head Start program and preschool for special education services. The remaining students were either solely at Head Start (72%) or information about their dual enrollment status was missing (14%).

Descriptive statistics for both student- and teacher-level variables are indicated in Table 3 (student-level) and Table 4 (teacher-level). At the student level, 103 students in fall and 96 students in spring completed academic information (GOLD), Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) ratings, and social-emotional-behavioral functioning screeners (i.e., fall and spring ratings). At the teacher-level, 16 teachers completed the three measures examining culturally responsive practices (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and teaching efficacy).

Preliminary correlational analyses were conducted among student-level variables, as denoted in Table 5, including academic performance (GOLD), student-teacher relationships (closeness and conflict), and social-emotional-behavioral functioning. Correlational analyses

revealed close student-teacher relationships in the fall are significantly and positively associated with close student-teacher relationships in the spring ($r = .63; p < .01$), academic performance in the fall ($r = .29; p < .01$) and spring ($r = .31; p < .01$), and social-emotional-behavioral functioning in fall ($r = .29; p < .01$) and spring ($r = .28; p < .01$). Therefore, when teachers report close student-teacher relationships with their students in fall, teachers are likely to report a positive student-teacher relationship in spring, and students are likely to exhibit positive academic performance and adaptive social-emotional-behavioral functioning across the academic year (fall and spring semesters). Close student-teacher relationships were also significantly and negatively associated with fall ($r = -.35; p < .01$) and spring ($r = -.36; p < .01$) conflictual student-teacher relationships. Therefore, when a teacher reports a close student-teacher relationship in the fall, they are less likely to report conflictual relationships with that student across the school year.

Conflictual student-teacher relationships in the fall were positively associated with conflictual student-teacher relationships in the spring ($r = .67; p < .01$). Conflictual student-teacher relationships in the spring were also negatively correlated with spring academic performance ($r = -.25; p < .05$) and social-emotional-behavioral functioning ($r = -.29; p < .01$). Therefore, students with conflictual relationships with their teachers in the spring tended to perform more poorly on the GOLD academic assessment, and exhibited more social, emotional, and behavioral problems across the school year. Finally, students' fall GOLD academic performance was positively correlated with spring academic performance ($r = .78; p < .01$), as well as fall ($r = .94; p < .01$) and spring ($r = .70; p < .01$) social-emotional-behavioral functioning. High academic performance in the fall was associated with high academic

performance on the spring assessment. Similarly, high academic performance was associated with positive social, emotional, and behavioral functioning across the school year.

Table 6 includes the relations between teacher-level variables, including cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and teaching efficacy (cultural skill), in which the variables are not statistically correlated with one another. Table 7 examines the correlations between level-1 and level-2 variables, which were aggregated at level-1 variables, and based on $N = 16$. $*p = .05$; $**p = .01$. There was a negative relation between student-teacher conflict in the fall and cultural skill ($r = -.52, p = .05$), in which the more cultural skill a teacher reported, the less student teacher conflict there was in the fall.

Intraclass Correlations

To determine how much variance in the dependent measures (i.e., student-teacher relationships, academic information, social-emotional-behavioral functioning) were due to group membership (i.e., teacher/classroom), intraclass correlations (ICC) were computed to form a ratio of unexplained variance to the total unexplained variance. Therefore, one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) models (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) were conducted for each outcome variable. When examining spring academic performance, the analysis revealed an ICC of .37, suggesting that 37% of the variance in spring academic performance was attributable to being with the same teacher. Likewise, the ICC for students' spring social, emotional, and behavioral functioning was an ICC of .45, indicating 45% of the variance was attributable to teachers' culturally responsive practices. Variance due to group association was also examined among close and conflictual student-teacher relationships. The ICC analyses revealed an ICC of .32 (32%) for close student-teacher relationships and .34 (34%) for conflictual student-teacher

relationships. Given the ratio of shared variance was greater than .05, multilevel modeling was justified for hypotheses 1 through 4 (Braschel et al., 2015).

Tests of Hypotheses

The first hypothesis speculated that teachers' culturally responsive awareness, knowledge, and skill would significantly predict spring student-teacher relationships according to the student-teacher relationships scale (see Tables 8 and 9). Teachers who exemplify awareness, knowledge, and skill consistent with culturally responsive practices, as compared to teachers who report lower levels of cultural awareness, knowledge, and skill, would report more positive, close student-teacher relationships with students. Alternatively, teachers who report awareness, knowledge, and skill inconsistent with culturally responsive practices, would report more negative, conflictual student-teacher relationships with students. Hierarchical linear regressions using a means as outcomes model (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) were conducted to examine whether teachers' culturally responsive beliefs, knowledge, and skills predicted close or conflictual student-teacher relationships. Hierarchical linear regressions yielded nonsignificant results for culturally responsive awareness, knowledge, and skill predicting close student-teacher relationships ($p = .94$, $p = .66$, and $p = .59$, respectively). Similarly, hierarchical linear regression also yielded nonsignificant results for culturally responsive awareness, knowledge, and skill predicting conflictual student-teacher relationships ($p = .95$, $p = .44$, and $p = .75$, respectively). Thus, the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that teachers' culturally responsive awareness, knowledge, and skill would predict students' academic growth and social-emotional-behavioral functioning in the spring (see Tables 10 and 11). Teachers who exemplified awareness, knowledge, and skill

consistent with culturally responsive practices, compared to teachers who report beliefs inconsistent with culturally responsive practices and lower levels of cultural awareness and skill, would predict greater academic student growth and better social-emotional-behavioral functioning among students. Alternatively, teachers who reported beliefs inconsistent with culturally responsive practices and lower levels of cultural awareness, knowledge, and skill would predict lower academic student growth and lower social-emotional-behavioral functioning. Hierarchical linear regressions using a random coefficients regression model were conducted to examine whether teachers' culturally responsive beliefs, knowledge, and skills predict academic growth and social-emotional-behavioral functioning. Fall GOLD performance and social-emotional-behavioral functioning were included as predictors to control for baseline academic performance and social-emotional-behavioral functioning. Hierarchical linear regressions yielded nonsignificant results for culturally responsive awareness, knowledge, and skill predicting academic growth, as measured by the GOLD ($p = .07$, $p = .86$, and $p = .71$, respectively). Though culturally responsive awareness predicting academic performance was approaching significance, this hypothesis was not supported. The hierarchical linear regression yielded mixed results for culturally responsive awareness, knowledge, and skill predicting social-emotional-behavioral functioning ($p = .03$, $p = .17$, and $p = .54$, respectively). Thus, teachers' culturally responsive awareness significantly and positively predicted student social-emotional-behavioral functioning in the spring, such that teachers who exhibited greater culturally responsive awareness predicted better social-emotional-behavioral functioning in the spring compared to teachers with less awareness.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that student-teacher relationships in the fall would predict students' academic growth and social-emotional-behavioral functioning in the spring (see Tables 12 and 13). Teachers who reported less conflict and greater closeness in the student-teacher relationship, as compared to teachers who reported greater conflict and less closeness, would have students who exhibited greater academic student growth and better social-emotional-behavioral functioning across the school year. Hierarchical linear regressions using a random coefficients regression were conducted to examine whether student-teacher relationships predicted academic growth and social-emotional-behavioral functioning. Fall GOLD performance and social-emotional-behavioral functioning were included as predictors to control for baseline academic performance and social-emotional-behavioral functioning, though random effects were not specified for student-teacher relationships. Hierarchical linear regressions yielded nonsignificant results for close and conflictual student-teacher relationships predicting academic growth, as measured by the GOLD ($p = .76$ and $p = .68$, respectively). Similarly, hierarchical linear regressions yielded nonsignificant results for close and conflictual student-teacher relationships predicting social-emotional-behavioral functioning ($p = .38$ and $p = .60$, respectively). Thus, this hypothesis was not supported.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings

A wide body of research suggests that the relationships teachers build with students influence students' learning in a comprehensive and substantial way. Building positive student-teacher relationships is associated with gains in social skills, positive behavioral outcomes, increased school engagement, and gains in academic performance (i.e., mathematics and reading; Decker, et al., 2007), as well as a reduction in peer victimization among students at social risk (Elledge et al., 2015). Alternatively, when conflictual student-teacher relationships occur, students demonstrate low academic performance, have low classroom engagement, and are perceived to have less developed social skills and greater behavioral problems (Caputi, et al., 2017; Mantzicopoulous & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003; Poulou, 2017; Roorda et al., 2011). Other research (Roorda et al., 2011) found certain teacher qualities, such as identifying as an ethnic majority and male, as well as having greater teaching experience, increased the relation between student-teacher relationships and academic achievement, suggesting the importance of student-teacher relationships among groups that are traditionally associated with greater power and privilege. It is possible that relationships become more important when there is a larger power differential, such as how 82% of elementary and secondary school teachers in the workforce identify as white while 49% of elementary and secondary students identify with a minoritized background (The Department of Education's State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce Report, 2016). Therefore, culturally responsive practices (CRP) starts to address how teachers can break down power differentials to foster more positive student-teacher relationships in ways consistent with the child's cultural background.

Previous research focused on understanding the impact of culturally responsive practices through qualitative, theoretical, and mixed research methods. This body of literature suggests that when teachers exhibit the markers of culturally responsive practices (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and skill), students from minoritized groups exhibit improved academic outcomes, including increased classroom engagement and achievement gains in reading, math, and literacy skills (Lee, 2001; Boykin, et al., 2003; Boykin et al., 2004; Hollie, 2001). Effectively implementing culturally responsive strategies is theorized to improve the quality and closeness of student-teacher relationships among students from historically oppressed groups. There is a need, however, for more quantitative research to support the qualitative, ethnographic, and case study findings that suggest culturally responsive practices are effective in building positive student-teacher relationships and fostering positive academic, social-emotional, and behavioral outcomes in the classroom.

Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to connect two bodies of literature, including student-teacher relationships and culturally responsive practices, and examine the role of cultural responsiveness among teachers as a predictor for student-teacher relationship quality. Outcome data were also examined, including the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic functioning of preschool children across three Head Start settings. As a result, the following hypotheses were developed: (1) teachers who exemplify awareness, knowledge, and perceived skill consistent with culturally responsive practices, as compared to teachers who report lower levels of cultural awareness, knowledge, and skill, will report more positive, close student-teacher relationships with students; (2) teachers who exemplify awareness, knowledge, and skill consistent with culturally responsive practices, as compared to teachers who report lower levels

of cultural responsiveness, will have students who exhibit greater growth in academic, social-emotional, and behavioral functioning across the academic school year; and (3) teachers who report less conflict and greater closeness in the student-teacher relationship, as compared to teachers who report greater conflict and less closeness, will have students who exhibit greater growth in academic, social-emotional, and behavioral functioning across the academic school year. These hypotheses were investigated using hierarchical linear modeling, with student data at level 1 and teachers/classrooms at level 2 (Table 14). Correlational analyses were conducted among student and teacher level variables. Intraclass correlations were then calculated for each hypothesis to form a ratio of variance explained by group membership to the total variance at level 2 for each hypothesis to justify the use of hierarchical linear modeling. Multilevel modeling procedures were then used to test the predicted associations among variables for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Given the smaller-than-anticipated sample, hypotheses regarding student race as a moderator were unable to be conducted.

Consistent with the literature regarding student-teacher relationships, correlational analyses demonstrated a wealth of significant positive associations between student-teacher relationships in the fall and spring student-teacher relationships, academic performance, and social, emotional, and behavioral functioning. Student-teacher relationships appeared to remain consistent throughout the school year, with close relationships in the fall positively associated with close relationships in the spring and conflictual relationships in the fall positively associated with conflictual relationships in the spring. Teachers who reported close student-teacher relationships in the fall (as compared to conflictual relationships) were also positively associated with higher academic performance and better social, emotional, and behavioral well-being both

in the fall and in the spring semesters. Alternatively, conflictual student-teacher relationships in the fall were negatively associated with academic functioning in the spring, and conflictual student-teacher relationships in the spring were negatively associated with social-emotional-behavioral functioning. Therefore, when the student-teacher relationship was conflictual, students demonstrated poorer social-emotional-behavioral functioning and lower academic performance. Findings regarding conflictual student-teacher relationships were consistent with the research literature, such that when student-teacher relationships are high in conflict, teachers are more likely to perceive students' behaviors as troublesome and are associated with worse outcomes such as low academic achievement and classroom engagement, less perceived social skills, and more behavior referrals (Caputi, et al., 2017; Mantzicopoulos & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003; Poulou, 2017; Roorda et al., 2011). It is plausible the negative effects on students in conflictual student-teacher relationships, such as performing more poorly on academic assessments, exhibiting underdeveloped social skills, and developing externalizing behavioral concerns, may also be seen more significantly over the course of several years beyond preschool (Caputi, et al., 2017; Mantzicopoulos & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003).

Primary findings in the present study revealed that although teachers' reports on culturally responsive practices (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and skill) did not significantly predict academic functioning or student-teacher relationships (close or conflictual) in the spring, teachers' cultural awareness in the fall did significantly and positively predict students' social, emotional, and behavioral functioning in the spring. Specifically, teachers who reported greater cultural awareness in the fall significantly predicted better social, emotional, and behavioral well-being among their students in spring. The social-emotional learning (SEL) research

literature has identified social-emotional competencies as among the most important abilities supporting early school success and the growth of academic competence during elementary school (Denham, et al., 2012a; Jennings & DiPrete, 2010; Romano, et al., 2010). Though teachers' culturally responsive practices (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and skill) did not significantly predict student academic performance in the spring, the significance of cultural awareness predicting academic growth p -value was 0.07. It is plausible there may be an association given that previous literature suggests culturally responsive pedagogy leads to improved academic outcomes, such as improved mathematics performance (Boykin, et al., 2003), reading comprehension (Boykin, et al., 2004; Bell & Clarke, 1998), and literacy skills (Hollie, 2001). It is likely the present study was underpowered to detect this relationship due to a low sample size. Therefore, future research on culturally responsive awareness and academic performance warrants further consideration with larger sample sizes due to the existing literature and the present study findings approaching significance.

Interpretations and Implications for Practice

As indicated above, student-teacher relationships were positively correlated between the fall and spring semesters. Specifically, if a student-teacher relationship began positive or close, the student-teacher relationship continued to be rated close in the spring. Likewise, poor student-teacher relationships (i.e., conflictual) in the fall were consistent with poor student-teacher relationships in the spring. Close student-teacher relationships denote warmth, affection, and openness while conflictual student-teacher relationships indicate discordant and coercive interactions (Poulou, 2017). These findings suggest the initial relationships teachers and students build with each other at the beginning of the year have a lasting relational impact during the

school year. Given the significant associations and broad research base suggesting positive student-teacher relationships predict both short- and long-term social-emotional (Decker, et al., 2007; Elledge et al., 2015), behavioral (Caputi, et al., 2017; Mantzicopoulous & Neuharth, 2003) and academic outcomes (Roorda et al., 2011), close, strong relationships with students are imperative to develop from the beginning of the school year. Within the present study, close student-teacher relationships in fall were also positively correlated with academic growth and social-emotional-behavioral wellbeing in the spring, which adds further evidence for favorable outcomes among students with close student-teacher relationships during the school year. Thus, not only will a close student-teacher relationship in the fall facilitate continued closeness later in the year, but it could lead to better academic and social-emotional wellbeing, consistent with what is found within the existing body of research literature.

Building positive relationships teachers and students begins on the first day of the school year and can be built in a multitude of ways, both at individual levels (i.e., individual teachers) and systems levels (i.e., school-wide). On an individual level, teachers should take into consideration children's differing needs, interests, styles, and abilities to formulate developmentally and individually appropriate strategies. Within the classroom, teachers need to shift their focus such that there is just as much of a focus on getting to know and guide their students as teaching academic concepts (Pattison, et al., 2011). Studies suggest that storytelling can help build teacher-student relationships (Mello, 2017). Telling personal anecdotes during class or making storytime a regular activity can help teachers to connect with their students (Lehigh University College of Education, 2016). Teachers can learn how to construct positive comments by giving specific compliments (e.g., "good job" vs "your art project is so colorful")

and avoiding back-handed compliments (e.g., “you’re not as bad as you used to be”; Bluestein, 2012). At a school-wide level, there are evidence-based interventions that can be implemented as a part of the school day across the school, such as the Students, Teachers, and Relationship Support (STARS) Program (Hamre & Pianta, 2001), which has teachers enhance their relationships with students by scheduling positive interactions each day and then mastering effective conduct management strategies. Another program frequently implemented within classrooms settings is Caring School Community (CSC), an elementary program that seeks to strengthen students’ connectedness to school by creating a classroom and school community and developing supportive student-teacher relationships, as well as opportunities for students to interact and collaborate in cooperative groups (Battistich, et al., 2000).

Hierarchical regressions found that one specific aspect of culturally responsive practices (i.e., teacher cultural awareness) significantly predicted students’ social, emotional, and behavioral wellbeing across the school year, indicating one specific aspect of culturally responsive practices to target when seeking to improve social, emotional, and behavioral functioning in students. Cultural awareness involves understanding the importance of acquiring personal and professional self-awareness, which includes examining one’s blinders and privilege; analyzing what one believes about the relationships among culture, ethnicity, and instructional behaviors; the expectations one holds for different demographics of students; and how those beliefs and expectations translate into instructional behaviors (Gay, 2010). Teachers’ levels of cultural awareness could impact how they perceive student behavior, discipline, code emotional responses, and shape coping strategies.

Because most educators choose to teach because they care deeply about the academic, social, emotional, and physical welfare of children, it is relevant to explore strategies for how teachers become culturally aware. Ultimately most teachers, even ‘good’ ones are likely to contribute to racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of oppression during the daily routine of teaching (Broughton, 2019). To develop greater cultural awareness, teachers can reflect on their own cultural system (Lillis & Hayes, 2007) and recognize that they may hold “attitudes and beliefs that can detrimentally influence their perceptions of and interactions with individuals who are ethnically and racially different from themselves” (American Psychological Association, 2003; p. 382). Additionally, some research indicates individuals who verbally describe their own behavior may change their future behaviors (Tourinho, 2006). Therefore, teachers may increase their cultural awareness by talking about their interactions with students with a professional community in group discussions, written forums, journals, mentorship meetings, verbal feedback sessions, or self-reflective exercises (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia 1998). Finally, there are several self-assessment tools that teachers can use to become more aware of their own cultural identity, such as Harvard’s Project Implicit (2011), whose goal is to educate the public about bias and disparities and allows professionals to examine their own internal biases.

On a school-wide level, models such as The Professional Development School, which focus on providing authentic learning and experiences for pre-service teachers and experienced teachers, have been utilized by U.S. colleges of education in collaboration with school districts as an innovative approach to prepare culturally aware and responsive teachers in order to better serve racially and ethnically heterogenous student populations (Jiang, et al., 2016). Additionally,

school systems can assist teachers in their development of cultural awareness by identifying an individual or individuals within the organization who can be charged with ensuring that cultural awareness is addressed and guide the development of cultural awareness in other members. As a school system, it is also recommended schools incorporate cultural awareness training into their professional development agendas (Fong, et al., 2016).

Therefore, focusing on cultural awareness in teachers could greatly change how students develop positive social, emotional, and behavioral functioning in preschool. Although the current study did not produce significant findings between all three aspects of culturally responsive practices and academic achievement, significant positive correlations were indicated between teacher cultural awareness and academic functioning in spring, which is consistent with the research literature. Therefore, teachers' awareness toward cultural differences can help lay the foundation of social-emotional functioning, setting the stage for academic growth in future grades, as indicated in the literature.

Other aspects of culturally responsive practices (CRP), including a teachers' self-reported knowledge and skill in implementing culturally responsive practices, were not significantly correlated with student outcome variables and did not significantly predict student social, emotional, and behavioral functioning nor academic functioning in the spring, diverting from the existing research. The pattern of associations among the culturally responsive scales (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and skill) may provide some explanation for the present findings. The associations suggest self-reported cultural awareness are negatively associated with self-reported knowledge and skills, such that those who reported greater awareness indicated less knowledge and cultural skill. It is plausible then, that as a teacher's cultural awareness increases, teachers

become more aware of their need to improve their cultural knowledge and skills. The existing literature states building culturally responsive skill involves building an environment supportive of dialogs that allow individuals to talk openly and deeply about cultural differences and racial inequities, clarify and articulate thinking about the role of race and racism in teaching and learning, and commit themselves to an active anti-racist educational agenda (Gay, 2010).

Research has demonstrated children can not only recognize race from a very young age, but also develop racial biases by ages 3 to 5 and can express biases based on race (Aboud, 2008). Although children at this age can express biases, adults often dilute discussions of race because they believe young children cannot understand the complexities of this issue (Hirschfeld, 2008) and often think that pre-school aged children are too young to have some of these discussions, and thus may not discuss racial differences their children saw in media, on playgrounds, or in stores at this age (Katz and Kofkin, 1997). Additionally, research has indicated teachers often have difficulty navigating potential controversial topics, especially when the teacher may have limited background knowledge in relation to the given topic. As such, topics can result in discomfort, which may lead to topics being minimized or avoided (Samuels, 2018). This results in a superficial multicultural education that focuses only on the celebration of culture and individual heroes and leaves out any discussion of structural inequalities (Hirschfeld, 2008; Lewis, 2003; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001).

Therefore, the present study connects to a broader need for relational social justice in education. Relationships of trust are fundamental to teaching about social justice and to being receptive as learners in classes (Kitchen, et al., 2020). Teachers have the ability to play a role in improving students' school climate by building intentional relationships with students.

Intentional relationship building on the part of teachers and educators can go a long way in fostering respect, openness, and acceptance in the classroom. Together they can lead to educators thinking deeply about themselves, schools, and schooling as they move towards a vision of a more equitable and just society.

Strengths and Limitations

This study is unique given that the current body of literature has not previously examined student-teacher relationships and culturally responsive practices (CRP) in relation with one another. Quantitative measurement of culturally responsive practices is rarely found in the research literature, which brings a novel opportunity in the present study. The current study contributes to the literature by quantifying measures of the three primary aspects of culturally responsive practice: awareness, knowledge, and skill, whereas past researchers have primarily examined culturally responsive practices through qualitative and mixed methods as well as observation. While academic outcomes have been a focus in the culturally responsive research literature, this study is the first, to my knowledge, to quantitatively examine the effects of culturally responsive practices on children's social-emotional well-being and behavioral outcomes. It is also important to note that this study is one of few to focus on culturally responsive practices in an early childhood context. There is currently a need to understand the observable effects of culturally responsive practices on the relationships teachers build with their students from a young age, given that student-teacher relationships are heavily associated with a broad range of child outcomes and success (Caputi, et al., 2017; Decker, et al., 2007; Mantzicopoulous & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003; Poulou, 2017; Roorda et al., 2011).

The current study has some limitations within the findings that need to be interpreted carefully. First, the present study's reliance on self-reported teacher data is a possible limitation. While self-report data are economical and can measure constructs that would be too difficult to obtain with behavioral and physiological measures, relying on self-report could lead to some potential biases, including image management, a lack of introspective ability, as well as response bias. However, the potential bias that results from the self-reported data was minimized insofar as was possible by assuring participants' data would be deidentified.

The teacher's perspective on the student-teacher relationship may have impacted the significance of the hypotheses in the present study. The research literature describes both a teacher perspective and a student perspective in the student-teacher relationship (Caputi, et al., 2017; DeTeso, 2012; Onsongo, 2015). The present study focused on teachers' perceptions of the student-teacher relationship as compared to students' perspectives. This is a limitation of the study given some studies have demonstrated a discrepancy between these perspectives, though noted in primarily secondary school settings (Onsongo, 2015). It is possible the student perspective of the student-teacher relationship may be a better predictor of later academic and social-emotional outcomes and should be examined in future research.

Another limitation to teacher self-report data is that it is difficult to distinguish whether a reported change in student behavior is a change in the teacher's perception of the student or observable (actual) changes in behavior. On the BESS, it is difficult to tease apart whether a student's social, emotional, and behavioral wellbeing, as rated by the teacher, is a reflection of the teacher's perception of their student's social-emotional growth or wellbeing, or actual changes in the student's social-emotional behavior. The BESS may present more of a perspective

that is “through the eyes of the teacher” rather than indicating pathology or true social-emotional concerns. It is plausible ratings of the student on this scale present both teacher’s perceptions of behavior as well as actual behavior but would benefit from future examination given the significant finding in the present study between teachers’ culturally responsive awareness and teachers’ perceptions of students’ future social, emotional, and behavioral wellbeing.

Finally, while this sample does a good job of representing students within Head Start settings in Midwestern counties, this population is geographically restricted and was small in size for the anticipated analyses. Nevertheless, although the sample size for the study was small, the findings indicate some correlations and trends that are worthy of future investigation.

Directions for Future Research

The present study leads to recommendations for future research. Future research should consider examining the effects of culturally responsive practices and student outcomes longitudinally. Though the present study did not indicate a relationship between culturally responsive knowledge and skill with student outcomes after one school year, the broader research literature suggests there may be more pronounced effects of cultural responsiveness longitudinally, as students’ progress through elementary and secondary schooling. Since implementing culturally responsive strategies is theorized to improve the quality and closeness of student-teacher relationships among students from historically oppressed groups, there is a continued need for more quantitative research to support the qualitative, ethnographic, and case study findings that suggest culturally responsive practices are effective in building positive student-teacher relationships and fostering positive academic, social-emotional, and behavioral

outcomes in the classroom given that many of the present study's findings were not statistically significant.

It is likely the present study was underpowered to detect some relationships given the low sample size, particularly regarding the moderating effect of race. Therefore, future research that includes larger numbers of teachers, classrooms, and students is needed in order to more fully understand the associations between culturally responsive practices, student-teacher relationships, and student outcomes. This study warrants further consideration and investigation with larger sample sizes given the previous research (Roorda, et al., 2011, 2017) indicating some students, such as students from minoritized and historically oppressed groups, may be more highly affected by the effectiveness of a teacher's cultural awareness, knowledge, and skill. With a larger sample size, information regarding the moderating effect of race could be examined. Therefore, it is important that future research focuses more on students who are more highly impacted by a teachers' cultural awareness, knowledge and skill.

As indicated in the present study's limitations, the student's perspective on the student-teacher relationship, as compared to the teacher's, is also worthy of future investigation given it may be a better predictor of later academic and social-emotional outcomes. This could be examined through the use of established assessments, such as the YCATS, which is intended for young children to report their perspective of the student-teacher relationship by placing items either in a mailbox or trash can based on the statement given to them. Another limitation worthy of future research includes teasing apart whether changes in students' social, emotional, and behavioral well-being is a change in the teacher's perception of the student or observable (actual) changes in behavior. Rather than having a perspective that is "through the eyes of the teacher," it

would be helpful to have a more objective measure to indicate true social-emotional concerns. One potential way to measure this would be to have an objective observer trained on concrete criteria indicating social-emotional-behavioral challenges (e.g., cries, requires 2+ prompts or redirections) observe the student behavior, though this may prove to be a time-consuming method. Another potential way to reduce teacher perception could be to use more concrete, specific language in the rating scales teachers complete. For example, instead of the teacher rating whether a student appears sad, they would rate how often the student cried over the past 14 days (e.g., 7 out of 14 days). This could reduce potential biases and the effect of teacher perceptions because they are not having to interpret or infer about the child's behavior, but rather report objectively how often the child's observed behavior occurred.

Conclusions

With children spending on average 900-1000 hours in instruction annually (Center for Public Education, 2011), there is a need not only to understand the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes of students, but the processes through which they build success in the classroom in order to provide training to teachers and replicate effective strategies for students. This includes developing strategies for culturally responsive practices among teachers and building positive student-teacher relationships, which can increase the likelihood of positive student social-emotional wellbeing and academic outcomes. The present study found that teachers who reported greater cultural awareness in the fall were more likely to have students with better social, emotional, and behavioral well-being in the spring. This study provides among the first evidence that a teacher's cultural awareness and close student-teacher relationships are quantitatively and significantly important in the development of student's social, emotional, and

behavioral wellbeing in preschool settings. Therefore, it is imperative to target teachers' cultural awareness and help them recognize their own predispositions, in which everyone holds beliefs, biases, and assumptions about human behavior that are not culturally bound, and the recognition that there are cultural, racial, ethnic, and class differences among people. Developing cultural awareness promotes a sense that school is a safe place which significantly impacts young children's social, emotional, and behavioral wellbeing in a positive way. Given that social-emotional functioning appears to play a key role in later academic development, understanding its contextual contributors is a worthwhile endeavor for future research.

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APPENDIX A: TABLES

Table 1.
Teacher Demographics

Demographic Variable	Frequency (<i>n</i> = 16)	%
<u>Sex</u>		
Female	16	100
Male	0	0
<u>Race</u>		
White	9	56
African American/Black	3	19
Asian	0	0
Native American/Pacific Islander	0	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0
Hispanic/ Latino	2	13
Biracial	1	6
Multiracial	1	6
<u>Age</u>		
20 – 29	5	31
30 – 39	3	19
40 – 49	4	25
50+	2	12
Missing Data	2	12
<u>Languages Spoken</u>		
English Only	11	69
Multilingual (Spanish & English)	5	31
<u>Highest Education Achieved</u>		
High School Diploma	0	0
Some College	1	6
AA/BA	14	88
Some Graduate	1	6
Masters/ PhD	0	0
<u>Major</u>		
Early Childhood Education	7	44
Elementary Education	3	19
Child Development	2	12
General Studies	1	6
Psychology	2	12

Early Childhood Education and Child Development	1	6
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Total Years Teaching

1 – 5 Years	5	31
6 – 10 Years	2	12
11 – 15 Years	1	6
16 – 20 Years	3	19
21 – 25 Years	2	12
26 – 30 Years	2	12
30+ Years	1	6

Years Teaching at Head Start

1 – 5 Years	6	37
6 – 10 Years	1	6
11 – 15 Years	3	19
16 – 20 Years	3	19
21 – 25 Years	2	13
26 – 30 Years	1	6

**Frequency counts were rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore, cumulative percentages may not exactly equal 100.*

Table 2.
Student Demographics

Demographic Variable	Frequency (<i>n</i> = 108)	%
<u>Sex</u>		
Female	55	51
Male	53	49
<u>Race</u>		
White	22	20
African American/Black	23	21
Hispanic/ Latino	32	30
White and Hispanic/Latino	4	4
White and African American/Black	10	9
Missing Data	17	16
<u>Age</u>		
3 Years Old	31	29
4 Years Old	39	36
5 Years Old	38	35
<u>Languages Spoken</u>		
Monolingual	-	-
English Only	59	55
Spanish Only	1	1
Bilingual	-	-
English and Spanish	29	27
English and French	2	2
Missing Data	17	16
<u>Dually Enrolled Status</u>		
No Dual Enrollment	78	72
Dually Enrolled	15	14
Missing Data	15	14

Table 3.

Student-Level Descriptive Statistics

Variable	<i>N</i>	Mean	SD	Min	Max	α
<u>Fall Gold</u>	103	221	54	97	376	.98
Fall Physical	103	29	5	13	17	.91
Fall Language	103	42	8	21	63	.94
Fall Cognitive	103	44	9	19	69	.95
Fall Literature	103	36	15	13	86	.92
Fall Mathematics	103	28	10	11	57	.91
<u>Spring Gold</u>	96	300	71	154	497	.99
Spring Physical	96	35	7	19	52	.94
Spring Language	96	53	10	32	80	.97
Spring Cognitive	96	56	12	32	87	.97
Spring Literature	96	56	20	20	119	.95
Spring Mathematics	96	300	71	17	76	.95
<u>Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS)</u>						
Fall STRS Closeness	103	36	4	24	40	.83
Fall STRS Conflict	103	12	6	7	29	.92
Spring STRS Closeness	96	36	4	25	40	.83
Spring STRS Conflict	96	12	6	7	30	.92
<u>Social-Emotional-Behavioral Functioning (SEB)</u>						
Fall SEB	103	43	9	17	66	.84
Spring SEB	96	56	12	33	83	.85

Table 4.

Teacher-Level Descriptive Statistics

Variable	<i>N</i>	Mean	SD	Min	Max	α
<u>Culturally Responsive Practices</u>						
Awareness	16	44	9	29	58	.71
Knowledge	16	34	6	25	50	.91
Teaching Efficacy	16	51	10	33	73	.91

Table 5.
Relations Among Student-Level Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Fall STRS Closeness	-							
2. Fall STRS Conflict	-.35**	-						
3. Spring STRS Closeness	.63**	-.23*	-					
4. Spring STRS Conflict	-.36**	.67**	-.43**	-				
5. Fall GOLD	.29**	-.10	.22*	.02	-			
6. Spring GOLD	.31**	-.13	.37**	-.25*	.78**	-		
7. Fall SEB	.29**	-.14	.14	-.04	.94**	.66**	-	
8. Spring SEB	.28**	-.19	.32**	-.29**	.70**	.96**	.63**	-

* *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.*

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.*

Table 6.
Relations Among Culturally Responsive Practices

Variable	1	2	3
1. Cultural Awareness	-		
2. Cultural Knowledge	-.21	-	
3. Cultural Skill	-.40	-.03	-

Table 7.

*Correlations between level-1 and level-2 variables used aggregated level-1 variables and are based on N = 16. *p = .05; **p = .01.*

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<u>Level 1 variables</u>								
1. Fall SEB								
2. Spring SEB								
3. Fall STRS Closeness								
4. Spring STRS Closeness								
5. Fall STRS Conflict								
6. Spring STRS Conflict								
7. Fall Academic								
8. Spring Academic								
<u>Level 2 variables</u>								
9. Awareness	-.30	.07	-.46	-.33	.18	.13	-.27	.05
10. Knowledge	.12	.38	.33	.37	-.05	-.30	.13	.21
11. Skill	.14	.20	.26	.32	-.52*	-.11	.22	.25

Table 8.

Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) Predicting Close Student-Teacher Relationships

<i>Fixed Effect</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t Ratio</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Model for CRP					
Intercept, γ_{00}	35.40	10.80	3.28	10.80	0.01
CRP Awareness, γ_{01}	-0.01	0.09	-0.07	9.22	0.94
CRP Knowledge, γ_{02}	-0.07	0.16	-0.45	13.29	0.66
CRP Skill, γ_{03}	0.05	0.09	0.56	11.13	0.59
<i>Variance</i>					
<i>Random Effect</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>se</i>			
Residual	10.78	1.69			
Intercept	7.40	4.28			

Table 9.

Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) Predicting Conflictual Student-Teacher Relationships

<i>Fixed Effect</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t Ratio</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Model for CRP					
Intercept, γ_{00}	22.27	17.35	1.28	11.74	0.22
CRP Awareness, γ_{01}	-0.01	0.15	-0.66	10.31	0.95
CRP Knowledge, γ_{02}	-0.20	0.25	-0.80	14.78	0.44
CRP Skill, γ_{03}	-0.05	0.14	-0.32	12.41	0.75
	<i>Variance</i>				
<i>Random Effect</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>se</i>			
Residual	27.90	4.34			
Intercept	19.08	10.43			

Table 10.

Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) Predicting Spring GOLD Performance

<i>Fixed Effect</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t Ratio</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Model for CRP					
Intercept, γ_{00}	-60.69	124.88	-0.49	16.85	0.66
CRP Awareness, γ_{01}	2.07	1.08	1.92	18.81	0.07
CRP Knowledge, γ_{02}	0.27	1.49	0.18	26.23	0.86
CRP Skill, γ_{03}	-0.35	0.93	-0.38	20.38	0.71
Fall_GOLD, γ_{04}	1.12	0.05	20.78	3.43	0.00
	<i>Variance</i>				
<i>Random Effect</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>se</i>			
Residual	426.03	69.42			
Intercept	3410.39	2634.55			
Intercept and Fall Gold	-6.82	7.65			
<i>Fall Gold</i>	0.01	0.02			

Table 11.

Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) Predicting Spring Social-Emotional-Behavioral Functioning (SEB): Estimation of fixed effects

<i>Fixed Effect</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t Ratio</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Model for CRP					
Intercept, γ_{00}	-51.40	31.15	-1.65	12.21	0.12
CRP Awareness, γ_{01}	0.67	0.28	2.39	11.99	0.03
CRP Knowledge, γ_{02}	0.57	0.39	1.47	10.15	0.17
CRP Skill, γ_{03}	0.15	0.23	0.63	10.44	0.54
Fall SEB, γ_{04}	0.99	0.11	9.12	5.31	0.00
	<i>Variance</i>				
<i>Random Effect</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>se</i>			
Residual	13.77	2.51			
Intercept	318.03	188.49			
<i>Intercept and Fall SEB</i>	-5.01	3.73			
<i>Fall SEB</i>	0.10	0.08			

Table 12.

Student-Teacher Relationships Scale (STRS) Predicting Spring GOLD Performance: Estimation of fixed effects

<i>Fixed Effect</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t Ratio</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Model for STRS					
Intercept, γ_{00}	50.18	30.58	1.64	71.59	0.11
STRS Closeness, γ_{01}	0.24	0.77	0.31	81.21	0.76
STRS Conflict, γ_{02}	0.18	0.42	0.42	77.81	0.68
Fall Gold, γ_{03}	1.08	0.05	21.77	4.58	0.00
	<i>Variance</i>				
<i>Random Effect</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>se</i>			
Residual	13.77	2.51			
Intercept	1937.87	1366.31			
<i>Intercept and GOLD</i>	-1.58	3.79			
<i>Fall GOLD</i>	0.00	0.01			

Table 13.

Student-Teacher Relationships Scale (STRS) Predicting Spring Social-Emotional-Behavioral (SEB) Functioning: Estimation of fixed effects

<i>Fixed Effect</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t Ratio</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Model for STRS					
Intercept, γ_{00}	12.99	6.73	1.93	41.36	0.06
STRS Closeness, γ_{01}	0.13	0.14	0.88	63.33	0.38
STRS Conflict, γ_{02}	-0.04	0.08	-0.52	61.22	0.60
Fall SEB, γ_{03}	0.94	0.11	8.97	4.85	0.00
	<i>Variance</i>				
<i>Random Effect</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>se</i>			
Residual	14.33	2.76			
Intercept	205.50	120.69			
<i>Intercept and Fall SEB</i>	-3.19	2.74			
<i>Fall SEB</i>	0.08	0.08			

Table 14.

Factors at Each Hierarchical Level

<i>Hierarchical Level</i>	<i>Variables</i>
Level-2	Teacher/Classroom Level Cultural Awareness Cultural Knowledge Teaching Efficacy Teacher Demographics
Level- 1	Student Level GOLD (Academic level) Social-Emotional-Behavioral Student Demographics

APPENDIX B: TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS AND EDUCATION

Teacher Demographics and Education

Teacher Demographics			
Name:		Age: (in years)	
Race: (You may circle more than one)	White (1) Black or African American (2) Asian (3) Native American/Alaska Native (4) Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (5) Hispanic/Latino (6)	Highest level of education achieved:	Less than High School (1) High School (2) Some College (3) AA Degree BA (4) Degree (5) Some Graduate (6) Master's (6) PhD (7)
What was your major when you achieved your highest degree? (If applicable). Please check all that apply:			
Not Applicable (1) English as a Second Language (ESL) (5) Early Childhood Education (2) Child Development (6) Elementary Education (3) Other (Please Specify): (7) Special Education (4) _____			
Languages spoken Fluently:			
Years teaching at current job:		Total Years Teaching:	
Classroom Demographics:			
Number of children currently in your class(es) total:			
Number of children from a minoritized background:			
Number of children with identified disabilities (IEPs) in your classes:			
Number of dual language learner children in your classes total:			
Total number of languages in your classes:			

APPENDIX C: CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS MEASURE

Contemporary Critical Consciousness Measure

<i>Awareness</i>	
<p>Read each of the following statements. Using the 1 – 7 scale below, please rate your level of agreement with each statement. 1 = <i>strongly disagree</i>, 2 = <i>disagree</i>, 3 = <i>slightly disagree</i>, 4 = <i>neither</i>, 5 = <i>slightly agree</i>, 6 = <i>agree</i>, 7 = <i>strongly agree</i>.</p>	
1. All Whites receive unearned privileges in U.S. society.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
2. The overrepresentation of Blacks and Latinos in prison is directly related to racist disciplinary policies in public schools.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
3. All Whites contribute to racism in the United States whether they intend to or not.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
4. More racial and ethnic diversity in colleges and universities should be a national priority.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
5. Reverse racism against Whites is just as harmful as traditional racism.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
6. Poor people without jobs could easily find work but remain unemployed because they think that jobs like food service or retail are beneath them.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
7. Social welfare programs provide poor people with an excuse not to work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
8. Most poor people are poor because they are unable to manage their expenses well.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
9. Raising the minimum wage takes away the motivation for poor people to strive for better paying jobs.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
10. Overall, Whites are the most successful racial group because they work the hardest.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

11. Raising minimum wage would hurt businesses and make it too hard for them to provide jobs.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
12. Asian Americans are proof that any minority can succeed in this country.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
13. Preferential treatment (e.g., financial aid, admissions) to college students that come from poor families is unfair to those who come from middle or upper class families.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

APPENDIX D: EQUITY CONSCIOUSNESS ASSESSMENT

<i>Knowledge</i>	
<p><u>Directions:</u> Please read each competency statement below and evaluate your multicultural competence using the following 5-point scale. 1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither disagree or nor agree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly Agree</p>	
1. I can define types of racism (i.e., dysconscious, individual, structural, societal).	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
2. I can define and identify deficit thinking.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
3. I have a strong understanding of how socialization regarding race occurs for children.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
4. I can give examples of how stereotypical beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse students impact the teacher-student relationship.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
5. I can articulate the differences between individual vs. communal learning contexts and their influences on students.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
6. I have a strong understanding regarding the history of civil rights in the United States for communities of color, especially those represented in my classroom or school.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
7. I can discuss how culture affects the help-seeking behaviors of students.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
8. I can name key strengths of communities of color, especially those represented in my classroom or school.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
9. I have a strong understanding of the rights and ways to support undocumented students and families.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
10. I am aware of the histories and life experiences behind different music genres developed by people of color, especially the communities of color represented in my school.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤

APPENDIX E: MULTICULTURAL EFFICACY SCALE

MULTICULTURAL EFFICACY SCALE

Modified 07/2017 for this study

Directions: To the best of your knowledge, self-asses your own ability to do the various items listed below. Many of the items refer to you as a teacher. Please indicate this reference point below.

Key: (A)= I do not believe I could do this very well.

(B)= I could probably do this if I had to, but it would be difficult for me.

(C)= I believe that I could do this reasonably well if I had time to prepare.

(D)= I am quite confident that this would be easy for me to do.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 1. I can provide instructional activities to help students to develop strategies for dealing with racial confrontations. |
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 2. I can adapt instructional methods to meet the needs of learners from diverse groups. |
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 3. I can develop materials appropriate for the multicultural classroom. |
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 4. I can develop instructional methods that dispel myths about diverse groups. |
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 5. I can analyze instructional materials for potential stereotypical and/or prejudicial content. |
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 6. I can help students to examine their own prejudices. |
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 7. I can present diverse groups in our society in a manner that will build mutual respect. |
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 8. I can develop activities that increase the self-confidence of diverse students. |
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 9. I can provide instruction showing how prejudice affects individuals. |
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | 10. I can plan instructional activities to reduce prejudice toward diverse groups. |

- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 11. I can identify cultural biases in commercial materials used in teaching.
- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 12. I can help students work through problem situations caused by stereotypical and/or prejudicial attitudes.
- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 13. I can get students from diverse groups to work together.
- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 14. I can identify school practices that may harm diverse students.
- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 15. I can identify solutions to problems that may arise as the result of diversity.
- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 16. I can identify the societal forces that influence opportunities for diverse people.
- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 17. I can identify ways in which various groups contribute to our pluralistic society.
- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 18. I can help students take on the perspective of ethnic and cultural groups different from their own.
- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 19. I can help students view history and current events from diverse perspectives.
- Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ 20. I can involve students in making decisions and clarifying their values regarding multicultural issues.

APPENDIX F: STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP SCALE- SHORT FORM

STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP SCALE – SHORT FORM

Robert C. Pianta

Child: _____ Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

Please reflect on the degree to which each of the following statements currently applies to your relationship with this child. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

Definitely does not apply 1	Not really 2	Neutral, not sure 3	Applies somewhat 4	Definitely applies 5
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1.	I share an affectionate, warm relationship with this child.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	This child and I always seem to be struggling with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	If upset, this child will seek comfort from me.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	This child is uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	This child values his/her relationship with me.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	When I praise this child, he/she beams with pride.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	This child spontaneously shares information about himself/herself.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	This child easily becomes angry with me.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	It is easy to be in tune with what this child is feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	This child remains angry or is resistant after being disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Dealing with this child drains my energy	1	2	3	4	5
12.	When this child is in a bad mood, I know we're in for a long and difficult day.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	This child's feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	This child is sneaky or manipulative with me.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	This child openly shares his/her feelings and experiences with me.	1	2	3	4	5

1992 Pianta, University of Virginia.

APPENDIX G: ADAPTED SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL-BEHAVIORAL SCREENER

Social-Emotional Screener

Adapted from Kamphaus & Reynolds (2015) Behavioral and Emotional Screening System, 3rd edition

Please reflect on the degree to which each of the following statements currently applies to your relationship with this child. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Almost Always 4
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1.	This child worries.	1	2	3	4
2.	This child has poor self-control.	1	2	3	4
3.	This child is sad.	1	2	3	4
4.	This child has a short attention span.	1	2	3	4
5.	This child is easily upset.	1	2	3	4
6.	This child has trouble concentrating.	1	2	3	4
7.	This child disobeys.	1	2	3	4