EMBRACING CULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM: A MIXED-METHODS
STUDY OF EDUCATOR CULTURALLY PROFICIENT PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Embracing Culture in the Classroom: A Mixed-Methods Study of Educator Culturally Proficient Practices

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Education Claremont Graduate University & San Diego State University, 2013

The increased cultural diversity in the United States has resulted in school systems that serve many diverse communities. Research continually demonstrates the many differences that exist between the majority of teachers and the growingly diverse student population (Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Watson, 2012). The differences are evident due to cultural factors, worldviews and history of life experiences (Watson, 2012). A lack of appropriate responses to cultural differences has contributed to cultural gaps that due to race, ethnicity, gender, language and social class continue to impact on student achievement (Lindsey, Robins, Lindsey & Terrell, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the existing body of knowledge specific to cultural proficiency in the field of education. Of particular interest was to address how educators engaged in culturally proficient practices. Various studies address the importance of embedding multiculturalism and cultural diversity in the classroom. However, a need exists to understand the impact of culture in the classroom, specifically as it pertains to educators reflecting on their own culture, reflecting on their students' culture and the influence of culture on instructional practices.
This mixed-methods study aimed to document self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency of elementary school teachers and how their self-perceived levels related to their instructional practices. Additionally, through an interview process, teacher reflective practices were examined in order to learn more about how educators make sense of how their own culture influenced their students, and how their students' culture influenced them as educators and influenced instruction. The first phase of the study consisted of gathering quantitative data using two surveys in order to measure elementary school teachers' self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency. Six elementary school teachers were then selected to participate in the second phase that consisted of personal interviews and classroom observations in order to examine culturally proficient instructional practices. Finally, an analysis was conducted to examine if there were significant differences between practices and behaviors of teachers who self-reported high levels of cultural proficiency, medium levels of cultural proficiency and low levels of cultural proficiency. Results demonstrated differences between the different levels of self-reported cultural proficiency.
DEDICATION

Con mucho amor y cariño le dedico este trabajo a mis papas, Jesús José Gómez y Hermelinda Gómez Álvarez. A Dios le doy gracias porque son mis padres. También doy gracias por todo lo que me han enseñado y me siguen enseñando. Gracias por siempre creer en mi.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Over the last decades, the increasing cultural diversity in the United States has resulted in changes in student demographics such that white, middle-class students are no longer the majority of K-12 learners (Jang, et al., 2012). The San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) is currently comprised of 132,000 students in pre-school through grade 12 and is the second largest district in California. Similar to many urban school districts in the United States, more than 15 ethnic groups and more than 60 languages and dialects exist in the district (San Diego Unified School District, 2011). A challenge of teacher education programs has been to prepare educators for the culturally diverse and changing demographics of U.S. classrooms (Rueda & Stillman, 2012). Research indicates that there are extensive differences between the majority of teachers and the growingly diverse student population (Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Watson, 2012). The differences are due to cultural factors, worldviews and history of life experiences (Watson, 2012). A lack of appropriate responses to cultural differences has contributed to cultural gaps due to race, ethnicity, gender, language and social class and continues to impact on student achievement (Lindsey, Robins, Lindsey & Terrell, 2009).

Authors of numerous studies articulate the necessity for educators to understand the cultural diversity of their students (Banks, 1999; CampbellJones, CampbellJones & Lindsey, 2010; Delpit, 2002; Gay, 2006; Grant & Sleeter, 2009; Johnson & McIntosh, 2009; Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2005; Madda & Schultz, 2009; Pang, Stein, Gomez, Matas, & Shimogori, 2011; Tidwell & Thompson, 2008; Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008). It is imperative that educational institutions foster culturally competent and proficient learning environments and
provide training for educators to deliver culturally competent and proficient instruction and services inclusive of ethnic/racial, economic, linguistic, gender and sexual diversity for all students. Research demonstrates that understanding the cultural diversity of students is linked to higher student engagement and academic success (Banks, 1999; CampbellJones, et al., 2010; Gay, 2006; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Grant & Sleeter, 2009; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Kesler, 2011; Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, & Jew, 2008; Madda & Schultz, 2009; Nieto, 1996; Nuri Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, Terrell, 2005; Teel, 2008).

The study sought to contribute to the limited existing body of knowledge about cultural proficiency in the field of education. Of particular interest was to address how educators engage in culturally proficient practices. Various studies address the importance of embedding multiculturalism and cultural diversity in the classroom. However, a need exists to explicitly understand the impact of culture in the classroom as it pertains to educators reflecting on their own culture, reflecting on their students' culture, and reflecting on the influence and impact of culture on the student/teacher relationship during instruction. Guerra and Nelson (2007) suggest that in order "to create schools where each and every student is successful, educators must also address relationships, especially with students and families who have been historically disenfranchised from the educational system" (p. 59).

The goal of this mixed-methods study was to look at self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency of elementary school teachers and how their self-perceived levels relate to their instructional practices. Additionally, through an interview process, teacher reflective practices were examined in order to learn more about how educators make sense of how their own culture impacts their students, and how their students' culture impacts them as educators and influences instruction. The first phase of the study consisted of gathering quantitative
data using two surveys in order to measure elementary school teachers' self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency. After the data were collected, six elementary school teachers were selected, two of whom demonstrated higher levels of cultural proficiency, two of whom demonstrated average levels of cultural proficiency and two of whom scored lower levels of cultural proficiency in relationship to the scores of the group of elementary school teachers surveyed.

The second phase of the study was conducted using personal interviews with the six teachers selected in order to explore how self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency relate to instructional strategies. Also, the interviews were used to gather information specific to how teachers assess students' culture, including how it interacts with their own culture and instruction in the classroom. Classroom observations were conducted in order to examine culturally proficient instructional strategies. Finally, through the information gathered in the study, an analysis was conducted to examine if there were significant differences among the instructional strategies of teachers who self-perceive a high level of cultural proficiency, an average level of cultural proficiency, or a lower level of cultural proficiency relative to the scores of the teachers surveyed.

**Research Questions**

Using surveys, interviews and classroom observations, this study documented how culturally proficient instructional strategies are taking place in elementary schools in the San Diego Unified School District. The questions guiding this study were the following:

1. What are the self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency among elementary school teachers in the San Diego Unified School District?

2. How are teacher self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency related to
culturally proficient instructional practices in the classroom?

a. How do teachers assess their personal culture, including how it influences their interactions with students?

b. How do teachers assess their students' culture, including how it influences them personally and how it influences instruction?

3. Are there differences in the instructional practices of teachers who self-reported high levels of cultural proficiency, medium levels of cultural proficiency and low levels cultural proficiency?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework guiding this study was the Culturally Proficiency Conceptual Framework. The tools structuring this framework guide educators to identify approaches to serve the needs of historically underserved students (CampbellJones, et al., 2010). The framework contains four tools that provide educators a focus on individual transformation and organizational change. The first tool consists of the essential elements of cultural competence. They are five behavioral standards for measuring and planning growth toward cultural proficiency (Nuri Robins et al., 2006). Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs (1989) describe the following five essential elements: (1) Having the capacity for cultural self-assessment; (2) Valuing diversity; (3) Being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact; (4) Having developed adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity; and (5) Institutionalizing cultural knowledge. These essential elements become the standards for culturally competent values, behaviors, policies, and practices (Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 26).

The second tool is the cultural proficiency continuum, and it provides language for
describing both healthy and unhealthy practices and individual behaviors (Nuri Robins et al., 2006). There are six points on the continuum: The first unhealthy point is cultural destructiveness, which is described by behavior that seeks to eliminate vestiges of the cultures of others (Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 24). The second point is cultural incapacity, which occurs when "a system, organization or an individual is elevating the superiority of its own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures that are different from it" (Nuri Robins et al., 2006, p. 54). The next unhealthy point of the continuum is cultural blindness; this point reflects an attitude or philosophy that appears unbiased. The organization and/or individuals behave and respond as if differences among cultures do not exist and refuse to recognize any differences (Nuri Robins et al., 2006). The next three points are considered healthier points in the continuum: The culturally pre-competent point on the continuum reflects the perspective that organizations and individuals recognize that lack of knowledge, experience and understanding of other cultures limits the ability to effectively interact with others (p. 54). There are initial levels of awareness that allow individuals and organizations to move in a positive and constructive direction or they can falter, stop and possibly regress (Lindsey et al., 2008). The next healthy point on the continuum is cultural competence, which takes place when individuals and organizations interact with cultural groups in ways that recognize and value differences. Individuals in the educational settings are motivated to assess their own skills, expand their knowledge and resources and ultimately adapt their relational behavior (Nuri Robins et al., 2006). Cultural proficiency is the healthiest point of this continuum, and practices at this point of the continuum are described as engaging in honoring the differences among cultures, holding diversity in high esteem and interacting knowledgeably and respectfully among a variety of cultural groups (p. 54).
The third tool, the guiding principles of cultural proficiency, provides a moral compass for examining one's values and beliefs about the education of students different from one's own background (Terrell & Lindsey, 2008, p. 23). In *The Cultural Proficiency Journey*, CampbellJones et al., (2010) share the following guiding principles: (1) Culture is a predominant force; (2) People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture; (3) The group identity of individuals is as important as their individual identities; (4) Diversity within cultures is vast and significant; (5) Each group has unique cultural needs and (6) The best of both worlds enhances the capacity of all. The guiding principles provide a framework for how the cultural diversity of one's students should inform practices when responding to students needs (p. 23).

The fourth tool in the conceptual framework is the barriers to cultural proficiency. Nuri-Robins and her colleagues (2005) describe three categories of barriers that affect organizations and individuals: (1) Unawareness of the need to adapt and resistance to change; (2) Presumption of entitlement and unearned privilege; and (3) Systems of oppression and privilege (p. 6). The barriers serve as caveats that assist in responding effectively to resistance to change (p. 2). (A more detailed description of the tools is provided in chapter two, the review of the literature.)

The theoretical framework of cultural proficiency is designed to provide educators with tools to develop culturally proficient practices as an individual and in an organization. It additionally provides educators with a conceptual way of addressing culture within the school system. The purpose of this study is to examine self-perceived levels of elementary school teachers' cultural competence and proficiency and the extent to which their self-perceived levels are aligned with reflective and instructional strategies. The tools described
offer educators a resource with which to assess curriculum and instructional practices. This framework serves as a guide to examine educators' culturally competent and proficiently reflective instructional strategies in the research process. See Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1. Cultural Proficiency Conceptual Framework

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The survey sampling of teachers took place at seven elementary schools in the San Diego Unified School District. The researcher cannot say with confidence that the sample is representative of all teachers in all grade levels in the San Diego Unified School District. Additionally, five of the seven schools in the study are located in the southeast region of the
San Diego Unified School District boundaries. The composition of the teaching staff of this specific area differs from staff in other geographical locations of the district (Hoffman, Novakovic, Shook, Cramer, & Ruzic, 2012). The research process and design may provide a framework for future studies specific to teacher culturally proficient practices that may be applicable to district-wide research.

The first phase of the study utilizes surveys to gather specific data. Responses to the surveys inform the second phase of the study. This process relies on self-analyses of teachers to respond about their perceptions specific to cultural proficiency. As the survey is a self-response questionnaire, the data depended on teachers’ candidness and authenticity.

The study is limited to one personal interview and two full-day classroom observations for each teacher selected in order to gather information specific to culturally proficient reflective and instruction strategies. Data collection is limited to a specific amount of information based on the amount of time spent with the participants. Additionally, the researcher conducted personal interviews and classroom observations with six elementary school teachers who volunteered to participate in the second phase of the study. She cannot say with confidence that the sample is representative of all elementary school teachers who participated in the survey and cannot say that the sample is representative of teachers at all grade levels in the San Diego Unified School District.

Finally, the researcher is an employee of the San Diego Unified School District in the Race Human Relations Department and provides trainings in the area of cultural proficiency. She monitored her biases and feelings toward participants in the study.

**Significance of the Study**

The goal of this study was to identify if a relationship exists between self-perceived
levels of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient reflective and instructional strategies. Findings from this study will contribute to the body of knowledge that focuses on cultural competency and proficiency in education. Additionally, this study contributed to research specific to reflective practices examining how teachers assess their personal culture and their students' culture and its impact in the classroom. Using a mixed methods approach to gather information, the findings also contributed to documenting cultural proficiency in the classroom. Results from this study may provide insight for pre-service and in-service teachers. Scholars often discuss the importance of educators being critically aware of their culture, personal beliefs and biases so they respond in a critically conscious manner. Gay and Kirkland (2003) explain that teachers knowing who they are as people, understanding the context in which they teach, and questioning their knowledge and assumptions are as important as the mastery of techniques for instructional effectiveness.

Numerous authors have called on expanded efforts to address cultural competency and proficiency in teacher preparation programs (Johnson & McIntosh, 2009; Madda & Schultz, 2009; Pang, 2005; Tidwell & Thompson, 2008; Trent et al., 2008). In order to prepare educators to work with all students, teacher education programs must provide opportunities for future educators to explore the complexities of culture. Gay and Kirkland (2003) advocate self-reflection as a tool for becoming a culturally competent educator. Too often educators may have good intentions in the classroom, but lack of cultural and self-awareness prohibits educators from responding in a positive and affirming way to all students. The aim of this study is to contribute to addressing this gap.

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Within this research study various terms are frequently used. For consistency of
interpretation, the following terms are defined.

Barriers to cultural proficiency. The barriers to cultural proficiency are recognizable systems of historical oppression that continue to exist in the policies and practices of schools. They manifest in three distinct ways: Resistance to change, systems of oppression, and a sense of privilege and entitlement (CampbellJones et al., 2010, p. 20).

Culture. Culture is the set of practices and beliefs shared by members of a particular group that distinguish that group from other groups. Culture includes all characteristics of human description including age, gender, socioeconomic status, geography, ancestry, religion, language, history, sexual orientation, physical and mental level of ableness, occupation and other affiliations (Terrell & Lindsey, 2008, p. 16).

Cultural proficiency. Cultural proficiency is a way of being that allows individuals and organizations to interact effectively with people who differ from them. It is a developmental approach for addressing the issues that emerge in diverse environments (Nuri Robins et al., 2006, p. 2)

Cultural competence. A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or amongst professionals that enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. The word culture is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group. The word competence is used because it implies having the capacity to function effectively (Cross et al., 1989, p. 13).

Cultural proficiency continuum. The continuum represents language for describing both healthy and unproductive policies, practices and individual behaviors (Nuri Robins et
The six points along the cultural proficiency continuum are cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-competence, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency.

Culturally proficient instruction. Being a culturally proficient instructor means learning about oneself in a cultural context and creating an environment in which the learners are invited to explore the cultural contexts for who they are and how they respond and relate to one another (Nuri Robins et al., 2006, p. 16).

Culturally responsive teaching. It is way of teaching through and to students' personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments. Culturally responsive teaching filters curriculum content and teaching strategies through the students' cultural frames of reference to make the content more personally meaningful and easier to master (Gay, 2010, p. 24).

Essential elements. Essential elements are behavioral standards for measuring and planning for growth toward cultural proficiency (Nuri Robins et al., 2006, p. 2). They are the standards by which schools measure the efficacy of curriculum, the effectiveness of instructional strategies, the relevance of professional development, the utility of systems of assessment and accountability and the intent of parent and community communications and outreach (CampbellJones et al., 2010, p. 28). The five essential elements are the following: Assessing cultural knowledge, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge.

Multicultural education. Multicultural education is a popular term used by educators to describe policies and practices that recognize, accept, and affirm human differences and similarities related to gender, race, disability, class, and sexuality (Grant & Sleeter, 2009, p. 2).
Guiding principles. The guiding principles are the underlying values of cultural proficiency. They provide a moral framework for examining one's values and beliefs about the education of students (Terrell & Lindsey, 2008).

**Organization of the Study**

In chapter one, the research has provided an overview, background for the study and the theoretical framework and research questions guiding this mixed-methods research study. Additionally, this chapter describes the limitations of the study, the significance of the study and a definition of terms most frequently used in the study. In chapter two the researcher examines the literature that has influenced the development of cultural proficiency in education. It begins by looking at the various movements that have influenced this construct, including the intercultural education and intergroup movements as well as multicultural education. This chapter also examines how the health care field, mental health field and social work field have influenced the cultural proficiency construct. A definition of cultural proficiency is offered including its conceptual framework. Finally, chapter two discusses literature focusing on culturally proficient instruction and culturally responsive teaching. In chapter three, the researcher sets forth the methodology of the study and describes the study design, the setting for the study, the participants, the surveys and protocols utilized, and the data analysis utilized. In chapter four the researcher presents and summarizes the relevant findings of the quantitative phase. In chapter five, the relevant findings of the qualitative phase of the study are presented and summarized. A discussion of findings of both the quantitative and qualitative phases is presented. Finally, in chapter six the researcher summarizes the study, draws conclusions, explains the various limitations of the study and
provides recommendations for future research. References and appendices follow this chapter.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature specific to cultural competency and proficiency in education. It begins with a definition of culture and an examination of the various movements that have influenced the development of cultural proficiency in education, including the intercultural education and intergroup movements as well as multicultural education. This chapter also examines how the health care field, the mental health field and social work field have influenced the cultural proficiency construct. Next, a definition of cultural proficiency is offered including the conceptual framework of cultural proficiency. Finally, chapter two discusses literature focusing on culturally proficient instruction and culturally responsive teaching.

CULTURE DEFINED

For the purpose of this research study, it is important to define the term "culture."

There are many definitions of culture available in the literature. In this review of the literature, culture is defined as a construct much broader than the racial and ethnic differences of individuals or groups:

Culture is the set of practices and beliefs shared by members of a particular group that distinguish that group from other groups. Culture includes all characteristics of human description including age, gender, socioeconomic status, geography, ancestry, religion, language, history, sexual orientation, physical and mental level of ableness, occupation and other affiliations (Terrell & Lindsey, 2008, p. 16).

Culture is dynamic, fluid and all encompassing. Culture also refers to explicit elements that comprise the lives of humans such as food, dress and music; however, the most essential level of culture comprises the values, beliefs, norms, philosophy, and/or
expectations of a cultural group. These values and beliefs serve to direct and motivate children as they learn throughout their lives (Pang et al., 2011). This definition of culture is offered in order to better understand the constructs of cultural competence and cultural proficiency.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND PROFICIENCY CONSTRUCT**

Cultural competence and proficiency in education has its roots in many fields that have influenced the development of this construct including the intercultural education and intergroup education movements, multicultural education, healthcare, mental health and social work.

**The Intercultural Education Movement and the Intergroup Education Movement**

The Intercultural Education Movement and Intergroup Education Movement provided knowledge about issues of ethnicity, immigration, assimilation, social mobility, and prejudice. A goal of the Intercultural Movement, which began in the 1930s and continued through the 1950s, was to "make the American Creed and the values ascribed within it such as freedom, justice, and equality meaningful and real for immigrants while teaching them the importance of giving complete allegiance to their new homeland" (Grant, 2008, p. 3). Another goal of the movement was to reduce misconceptions and fears that Americans had toward immigrants arriving from Southern European countries, because most Americans were of Northern European heritage (Grant, 2008).

The Bureau for Intercultural Education was founded in 1940 as a consolidated organization that was created from the Service Bureau for Education in Human Relations and the Service Bureau for Intercultural Education. Dr. Rachel DuBois founded the former to
help educators in the New York area implement intercultural programs. During this time period, the Bureau for Intercultural Education assumed leadership over a number of influential programs in the field of intercultural education, including workshop training for teachers and scientific research in the emerging field of human relations. The organization established field centers in various cities in the U.S., and intercultural education achieved different goals based the needs of a given area (Bureau, 2010).

In San Diego, for example, a cohesive approach toward curriculum reform, teacher education, school and community relations, and multiculturalism were developed specifically in the San Diego City School District. The development of an intercultural education program in the San Diego City Schools grew as a result of increased tensions between and among the established White residents of San Diego and the tens of thousands of new residents that settled in San Diego during World War II as a result of the defense industry. These residents came mostly from the South, Mexico and Oklahoma (Pak, 2002).

As part of the Intercultural Movement, "schools, settlement houses, and newspapers published in the immigrants' native language, were agents of society that welcomed new arrivals and sought to ease their immigration and facilitate their Americanization" (Grant, 2008, p. 4). Additionally, schools put in place activities and curriculum that celebrated immigrants' cultural heritage and their contributions to the United States.

The Intergroup Education Movement developed in the 1940s. Similar to the intercultural education movement, it developed when the defense industry was at its height and needed migratory workers. Neighborhoods began to shift and racial tensions grew because blacks and other people of color relocated from rural areas into the city (Grant, 2008). The intergroup movement directed attention to race and the issues facing various
groups of people of color. Also, due to race riots, over 400 organizations were formed to address this tension. Research, specifically on the issue of prejudice, began to develop at educational institutions using the lenses of psychology, sociology and anthropology (Grant, 2008). This included the empirical work in the fields of intercultural communication and cross-cultural psychology (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Scholars in these fields examined the construct of intercultural competence as the ability of individuals or groups to understand and communicate appropriately and effectively with people from a variety of cultures (Lustig & Koester, 2002). Sevier (2009) states:

Generally speaking, intercultural/intergroup education denotes efforts among educators to bring issues of cultural diversity, intolerance, and bigotry against minorities into schools and classrooms. The existing body of scholarship on the intergroup/intercultural education has provided significant insights into the history and importance of the movement at large (p. 23).

Many intergroup educators developed through schooling and curriculum a way of examining the parallels of school segregation with society segregation. They also developed ways to infuse school knowledge with an understanding of how prejudice and discrimination in and out of school was not consistent with American values. This movement encompassed the work of many scholars who believed there were more similarities than differences among people and that the diversity of people would learn to accept and respect each other if they developed an understanding of each others' cultures (Caraballo, 2009). This movement sparked the development of multicultural education as a discipline.

**Multicultural Education**

In order to fully understand the construct of cultural proficiency it is helpful to examine the development of multicultural education as a discipline. Multicultural education, which was a product of the civil rights movement, intercultural education movement and
intergroup education movement, has demanded that schools become culturally competent so that all students have an opportunity to succeed. It has become a dynamic field developing with the purpose of providing all students with equal education and to eliminate the achievement gap between majority students and youth from culturally diverse communities (Pang et al., 2011).

In *Making Choices for Multicultural Education* (2009), Grant and Sleeter describe the emergence of this construct as an umbrella concept that deals with race, culture, language, social class, gender and disability. They describe it as a term used by educators to describe educational policies and practices that recognize, accept and affirm human differences and similarities related to gender, race, disability, class, and, increasingly, sexuality. Banks (1997) viewed education in a pluralistic society as one that should affirm and help students understand their home and community cultures. Similarly, other researchers of this field describe a major factor of multicultural education as its commitment to pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic and gender, among others) as well as the rejection of racism and discrimination, with a guiding purpose to prepare students to be active participants in a diverse, democratic society (Koppelman & Goodhart, 2005; Nieto, 1996; Pang et al., 2011).

Pioneers in the field of multicultural education, such as Banks and Grant, advocated for the educational needs of students of color and developed approaches to curriculum strategies that centered upon studying concepts such as racism, immigration and cultural pluralism from various cultural perspectives. Teacher prejudice reduction, curriculum development and integration, identity development, bilingual education and teacher development are all components of the focus of this field (Pang et al., 2011). Through its
focus on various identities, this field supports students in developing accurate self-concepts and accurate conceptions of others, and it encourages students to discover who they are, particularly in their multiple group memberships (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

Grant and Sleeter offer a typology of approaches to multicultural education as a way of addressing the various practices of it. They offer this overview in order to differentiate various approaches to multicultural education. The first approach, teaching the exceptional and culturally different, focuses on adapting instruction to student differences for the purpose of helping these students succeed more effectively in the mainstream. This approach developed in the 1960s when, in an effort to desegregate schools, many White educators "discovered" students of color and saw them as culturally deprived and therefore inferior. Many argued against this particular view, stating that students of color were different, not deficient, and that schools should accept their cultural differences. The same argument applied to accepting the differences of students with disabilities (Grant & Sleeter, 2009). A criticism of this approach was that the standard held for "success" was students eventually fitting in to mainstream society instead of creating a system that values each student as a unique cultural being.

During about the same time, and influenced by the Intercultural Education Movement of Post World War II, the human relations approach was born with educators arguing that love, respect and effective communication should be developed in schools to bring people who are different together. Grant and Sleeter (2009) offer Johnson and Johnson's description of the goal for the human relations approach:

The goal of human relations trainings are (1) to improve relationships between majority and minority citizens by eliminating prejudice and discrimination, primarily through teaching all subsequent generations to value and respect diversity among individuals; and (2) to increase participants' competencies for
interacting effectively with diverse individuals by teaching participants procedures and skills (p. 86).

This approach appeared to be effective in addressing conflicts between groups and individuals. However, a criticism maintained was that it neither validated the systemic view of existing poverty in specific communities nor addressed why systemic educational practices benefit mainstream students and marginalize others.

During the 20 years between 1960 and 1980, direct approaches were developed that aimed at broadening the cultural definition of mainstream America rather than assimilating to it. Among these approaches included the emergence of women's studies, ethnic studies, Chicano studies and gay and lesbian studies. This approach to multicultural education was labeled the single-group studies approach, which focused on providing a basis for social action by providing information (through schooling) about a specific cultural group and the effects of past and present discrimination on the group. Goals varied, but the main idea of the single-group studies approach was to empower oppressed groups and develop allies (Grant & Sleeter, 2009).

The fourth typology, the multicultural education approach, began in the late 1960s and expanded greatly during the 1970s. This approach was influenced by the maturation of the civil rights movement, the critical analysis of school textbooks, and the reassessment of the assumptions underlying the deficiency orientation (Grant & Sleeter, 2009). As mentioned previously, advocates of multicultural education state that cultural pluralism is the essence of this approach. This included the maintenance and respect of diversity and the right to participate actively in all aspects of society without having to give up one's unique identity.
The fifth approach offered by the authors emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, and it was the multicultural social justice education approach. This approach has gained recognition mainly because it extends the multicultural education approach into the realm of social action and focuses on challenging social stratification while celebrating human diversity and equal opportunity. They authors favor this approach particularly because it advocates for all of the components of what is defined as multicultural education and at the same time challenges educators to take action for inequities that exist.

Pang (2005) developed another approach—caring-centered multicultural education—that integrates theories, research and practice directly from the classroom. A main component of this approach is developing trusting relationships and having an awareness of the sociocultural context of learning. This approach encompasses a holistic view of education that focuses on caring, community and culture in the classroom environment, which generates higher levels of achievement and, according to Pang, leads to greater social efficacy. "The more effective learning community empowers and prepares all students to work toward social, political and economic justice" (Pang, 2005, p. 217).

This approach incorporates three major theories: care theory, sociocultural theory of learning and education for democracy (p. 12). Care theory is used to inform educators that relationships are the essence of teaching. It also describes "the ability of educators to identify the discrepancies between their beliefs about heartfelt and connected teaching with their actual actions" (p. 14). The sociocultural theory of learning, developed by Vygotsky, explains how learning is socially mediated. This theory maintains that "people learn through social interactions and these interactions occur within multiple cultural contexts" (Pang, p. 17). The third component is education for democracy influenced by philosopher John
Dewey. Dewey believed in the common good of all people and felt that educational institutions should be the place that fosters democracy, responsible citizenship and communication skills that enhance collaboration. These frameworks are the base of caring-centered multicultural education, "which combines the concepts, of caring, culture and community in schools" (Pang, p. 11).

Although various typologies exist, the goal to reform the structures of schooling through pedagogy, professionalism, content and student advocacy is the essence of multicultural education (Chapman, 2004). These various approaches have supported the development of cultural competency/cultural proficiency in education. The fourth typology, multicultural education, defines cultural pluralism as a critical aspect of this approach. Cultural proficiency brings to the forefront the policies and practices of an organization and the values and behaviors of an individual that enable the organization and the individual to interact effectively with a culturally diverse environment (Nuri Robins et al., 2006, p. 4). It offers educators a lens in which to assess their behavior and begin to take action based on where they are.

The development of cultural competency was a response to many of the social issues identified by the multicultural education movement. Interestingly enough, the health care field was also one of the first to tackle some of these issues.

**Cultural Competence in the Health Care Field**

In the 1950s, Madeleine M. Leininger identified the need for health care practitioners to become more culturally aware in serving the growing diversity of patients. Early in her career, Leininger observed that traditional health care interventions did not adequately address the needs and behaviors of children and adults of diverse cultural backgrounds. In
1965 she became the first professional nurse to earn a PhD in the field of Anthropology due to her concerns regarding cultural factors in healthcare. She embarked on a commitment to unite both fields, which eventually lead to the creation of the field of transcultural nursing. She developed her theory of Culture Care Diversity and Universality, one of the earliest nursing theories, and coined the term "Culturally Congruent Care" as the goal of this theory (Madeleine Collection, 2010).

Similarly, Frances C. MacGregor, a social science professor at Cornell University School of Nursing, was a pioneer in the field of cultural competence within the healthcare field. She published a variety of literature on the importance of health care professionals' development of cultural awareness, which included recognizing patients' differences in value orientations and in their attitudes toward illness (MacGregor, 1960, 1967).

In the health care field, the term cultural competence has a variety of definitions by numerous researchers and organizations, although there is substantial overlap in definitions (Brach & Fraser, 2000). Another well-known model, the Process of Cultural Competence in the Delivery of Health Care Services, is a model that defines cultural competence as "the process in which the healthcare professional continually strives to achieve the ability and availability to effectively work within the cultural context of a client" (Campinha-Bacote, 2002, p. 181). Additionally, a definition of cultural competence developed by Cross and colleagues (1989) is often used in the health care field and as a base for other definitions. It states that cultural competence is "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or amongst professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al., 1989, p. iv). The Office of Minority Health (OMH), which was created in 1986, adopted this definition.
The creation of the Office of Minority Health was one of the most significant outcomes of the 1985 Secretary's Task Force Report on Black and Minority Health. They were created primarily because "poor health outcomes for various diverse populations are apparent when comparing their health indicators against the rest of the U.S. populations" (Office of Minority Health, 2011).

A primary responsibility of this office is to improve healthcare outcomes for racial and ethnic minority communities by developing and advancing policies, programs, and practices that address health, social, economic, environmental and other factors that impact health. Another responsibility of the OMH is to improve cultural and linguistic competency in systems that support minority communities. They developed national standards that are primarily directed at health care organizations to be embedded throughout the organization and in partnership with the communities being served. The standards are as follows: culturally competent care (Standards 1 through 3); language access services (Standards 4 through 7); and organizational supports for cultural competence (Standards 8 through 14). Although these are only guidelines, they serve as a framework for creating culturally competent programs (Office of Minority Health, 2011).

Although the term cultural competence did not appear consistently in the health care literature until the 1990s, Beach, Saha and Cooper (2006) state the following:

By October 2005, more than 1,500 articles about cultural competence had been published in medical and nursing journals, over two-thirds of them since 2000. Within the past 10 years, myriad programs addressing cultural competence in health care have been developed, national standards for health care systems have been published, a recurring national conference has been established, and federal mandates to increase cultural competence have been issued (Beach et al., 2006, p. 4).

The primary reason for the expansion of this field has been the consistently demonstrated health care disparities with racial and ethnic groups in health care. Although
cultural competence is widely valued, the healthcare field still lacks in the implementation of culturally competent health care in many areas. It is certain, however, that the movement toward cultural competence in other fields has been highly influenced by the movement of cultural competence in the health care system. The mental health and social work fields are examples of this.

**Cultural Competence in the Mental Health and Social Work Fields**

In order to address how cultural competence has evolved in the mental health field, definitions of culture and cultural competence from researchers in this specific field are provided in this section. According to Whaley and Davis (2006), defining culture is of significant importance specifically because conflict exists in the mental health field as a result of the lack of clarity about what is meant when individuals in the mental health community state that they are providing adequate culturally competent services.

Howard (1991) defines culture as a construct that "can be thought of as a community of individuals who see their world in a particular manner, who share particular interpretations as central to the meaning of their lives and actions" (p. 191). Other researchers in this field define culture as a dynamic and creative phenomenon, some aspects of which are shared by large groups of people and other aspects which are the creation of small groups and individuals resulting from particular life circumstances and histories (Guarnaccia & Rodriguez, 1996; Lopez, Kopelowicz & Canive, 2002).

Whaley and Davis (2006) summarize the construct of culture based on definitions offered by previous researchers:

> Culture can be defined as a dynamic process involving worldviews and ways of living in a physical and social environment shared by groups, which are passed from generation to generation and may be modified by contacts between cultures
in a particular social, historical, and political context. Cultures vary on a
continuum of interconnection from independence (i.e., internally homogeneous)
to interdependence to complete dependence on other cultures. The latter two
forms are hybrid cultures, which probably constitute the majority in our global
community (p. 564).

Sue (1998) defined a culturally competent individual as one who "possesses the
cultural knowledge and skills of a particular culture to deliver effective interventions to
members of that culture" (p. 441). Similarly, Bhui, Warfa, Edonya, McKenzie, and Bhugra
(2007) define cultural competence as possessing a set of skills or processes that enable
mental health professionals to provide services that are culturally appropriate for the diverse
populations they serve. Lopez (1997) expressed the core of cultural competence to be "the
ability of the therapist to move between two cultural perspectives in understanding the
culturally based meaning of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds" (p. 573). All of these
definitions express the importance of delivering culturally appropriate interventions while at
the same time understanding the cultural complexities of the clients being served.

Historically, a reoccurring issue in mental health care has been the clear disparity and
disconnect between the White, middle-class population and various minority populations
specifically as it pertains to access and delivery of adequate mental health services. At the
center of the move toward cultural competence in the mental health field has been the
recognition that the field has done more damage than good to specific racial and ethnic
populations. Nonwhite ethnic populations have had their belief systems and cultural
practices labeled deviant and pathological (Monk, Winslade & Sinclair, 2008). During the
1970s when agents in the social work field began researching various ethnic groups, educator
Barbara Bryant Solomon published her first book on Black empowerment, specific to social
work in oppressed communities. Additionally, researcher, Elaine Pinderhughes introduced
the concept of cultural competence to the field of social work in 1989. Lum (2011) provides
Pinderhughes' definition of cultural competence:

   Cultural competence demands that clinicians develop flexibility in thinking and behavior, because they must learn to adapt professional tasks and work styles to the values, expectations, and preferences of specific clients. This means that practitioners must choose from a variety of strategies that are useful for the range of cultural groups and social classes, levels of education, and levels of acculturation that exist among clients (p. 5).

The previously mentioned educators impacted the field of social work with their development of the cultural competence construct. Their work continues to be a framework for working in culturally diverse communities today.

The field of psychology has also shared a concern for the issue of cultural competence. In 1980, the American Psychological Association (APA) adopted professional competencies and recognized cultural competence as an essential element of effective practice (Lum, 2011). In 1982, a major paper on cross-cultural competencies asked that there be multicultural competencies embedded in the counseling psychology field (Lum, 2011).

In reviewing an array of the mental health literature, Cross et al.'s monograph, Toward a Culturally Competent System of Care, developed in 1989, is also widely used in mental health organizations and many fields as a framework in cultural competency and cultural proficiency. They define cultural competence as the following:

   A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or amongst professionals that enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. The word culture is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group. The word competence is used because it implies having the capacity to function effectively (p. 13).

One of the major accomplishments of this framework was the creation of a tool demonstrating the process of achieving cultural competency as it occurs along a continuum in six stages that include the following: (1) cultural destructiveness, (2) cultural incapacity,
(3) cultural blindness, (4) cultural pre-competence, (5) cultural competency and (6) cultural proficiency (National Center for Cultural Competence).

In 1992, an immense milestone in the field of counseling was reached with the creation and operationalization of 31 multicultural counseling competence standards by the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD). They were the first professional group to adopt these competencies (Lum, 2011). The AMCD has provided leadership for the American counseling profession in major sociocultural and sociopolitical domains. The competencies were created with the purpose of guiding interpersonal interactions giving attention to culture, ethnicity and race (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Clinical multicultural competence has been introduced and formalized by many organizations including the American Counseling Association (ACA), American Psychological Association (APA), Council for Accreditation and Related Education Programs (CAREP), the AMCD, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) and the National Career Development Association (NCDA) (Monk et al., 2008).

At the same time in 1992, a model defining the characteristics of a culturally competent counselor and the dimensions of cultural competence were created. According to Lum (2011), this provided the movement toward a conceptual framework. By 1993, the APA committed itself to multicultural competence. Lum states:

According to this model, a culturally competent counselor is aware of his or her values, understands the worldview of his or her culturally different clients, and uses sensitive intervention skills with his or her clients. Dimensions in cultural competence entail beliefs about racial and ethnic minorities, knowledge and understanding of the counselor's own worldview, and intervention strategy skills that can be used with minority groups (p. 6).

Another well-recognized model in the mental health field, originally published in 1986 and updated in 1993, by researcher Dr. Milton Bennett is the Developmental Model of
Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). This tool was designed for measuring intercultural sensitivity and offers insight into how individuals experience cultural differences and develop it (Barron & Dasli, 2010). The developmental stages that are components of this tool develop over time and are not fixed or rigid. Individuals may potentially slide in and out of them depending on the individual or the context (Hernandez & Kose, 2011).

The model demonstrates a continuum from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative perspective. The goal is to guide individuals and groups toward an ethnorelative stage, specifically to the integration point at the end of the continuum. This model served as a tool for addressing the inadequate services provided to minority clients.

Lum (2011) suggests that the cultural competence movement has moved in two related directions. The movement has provided those in the helping professions (social work and psychology) with a culturally focused theme for the services they provide. Additionally, cultural competence has provided expertise in the areas of research, education and training in order to develop frameworks and skills for working with diverse communities.

**Defining Cultural Competency and Proficiency**

As demonstrated in the literature documenting the development of the cultural competence construct, this term is defined in a multitude of ways specific to the field conceptualizing the construct. A preferred definition for the literature review that is aligned with the field of education (developed in the field of social work), is Cross et al.'s (1989) definition of cultural competence:

A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or amongst professionals that enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. The word culture is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and
institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group. The word competence is used because it implies having the capacity to function effectively (p. 13).

Cultural competence and proficiency extends beyond having an understanding of racial and ethnic identity. It is also inclusive of gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, geographical location, profession and many other components that contribute to one's culture. As noted in the definition, a critical aspect of cultural competence and proficiency is recognizing how to be conscious of the many components that create culture and how one can effectively work cross-culturally with others.

In *Culturally Proficient Inquiry*, Lindsey et al. (2008) also explain that cultural proficiency, used interchangeably with cultural competence in the review of the literature, is about being effective in cross-cultural situations. In the classroom, for example, students are taught using their cultural backgrounds as an asset, and their various languages and learning styles are taken into account in teaching practices. They also explain:

> Cultural proficiency is a mindset; it embodies a worldview. For those who commit to culturally proficient practices it represents a paradigmatic shift from viewing others as problematic to viewing how one works with people different from one's self in a manner to ensure effective practices (p. 21).

Furthermore, cultural proficiency requires an understanding of one's own culture, values, assumptions and beliefs – which often guide our actions (CampbellJones et al., 2010).

In *The Cultural Proficiency Journey: Moving Beyond Ethical Barriers Toward Profound School Change*, CampbellJones et al. (2010) explain:

> Educators are the products of our societal context, hence shaped by the education they received…without critical self-reflection on the values and beliefs that define our morality, teachers and school leaders are inclined to continue in unquestioning fashion the educational traditions they received (pp. ix).

Cultural proficiency involves an "inside-out process" of personal and organizational change (CampbellJones et al., 2010; Cross et al., 1989; Terrell & Lindsey, 2008). This refers to the idea of change always beginning with self. Examination of one's prejudice is an
element of caring for personal development and creating more authentic and trusting relationships with others (Pang, 2005). Viewing culture as an asset is a critical component of this practice. The conceptual framework of cultural proficiency provides insight about how to develop these practices.

**THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CULTURAL PROFICIENCY**

Trends in this research point specifically to the conceptual framework of cultural competency and proficiency that includes four tools that provide educators with ways to work on examining one's self and at the same time working effectively with others in a culturally proficient manner. The four tools are the guiding principles of cultural proficiency, a continuum of cultural proficiency, the essential elements and the barriers to cultural proficiency (Bustamante et al., 2009; CampbellJones et al., 2010; Cross et al., 1989; Lindsey et al. 2003, 2008; Nuri-Robins et al., 2005; Terrell & Lindsey, 2008).

**The Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency**

Cultural competence is a developmental process and a goal that individuals and organizations strive to achieve. The guiding principles of cultural proficiency provide a moral framework for examining one's values and beliefs about the education of students (Terrell & Lindsey, 2008). They also provide a framework for how the cultural diversity of one's students should inform practices when responding to students' needs (p. 23). CampbellJones et al. (2010) explain that the guiding principles provide educators a foundation for moral judgment. They describe the following guiding principles:

- Culture is a predominant force. Acknowledging that culture is a predominant force in shaping behaviors, values, and institutions (p. 19).
- People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture. What works well in organizations and in the community for you and others who are like you may work
against members of other cultural groups. Failure to make such an acknowledgement puts the burden for change on one group (p. 19).

- The group identity of individuals is as important as their individual identities. Although it is important to treat all people as individuals, it is also important to acknowledge the group identity of individuals. Action must be taken with the awareness that the dignity of a person is not guaranteed unless the dignity of his or her people is also preserved (p. 19).

- Diversity within cultures is vast and significant. Since diversity within cultures is as important as diversity between cultures, it is important to learn about cultural groups not as monoliths, but as the complex and diverse groups that they are (p. 19).

- Each group has unique cultural needs. Each cultural group has unique needs that cannot be met within the boundaries of the dominant culture. Expressions of one group's cultural identity do not imply disrespect for yours (p. 19).

- The best of both worlds enhances the capacity of all. When people adopt the practices of other cultures that improve their ability to communicate and problem solve cross-culturally, they are more effective both for themselves and for those with whom they work (p. 19).

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Cultural competence can be viewed as a continuum that ranges in two extremes, healthy and unhealthy practices (Cross et al., 1989). Lindsey et al. (2006) provide a framework of the continuum that equips educators to diagnose values and behaviors that can better influence practices in the education profession. There are six points in the continuum.

**Cultural Destructiveness**

"This point in the continuum includes negating, disparaging, or purging cultures that are different from your own" (Lindsey et al, 2006, p. 54). This is the most negative point of the continuum and is represented by attitudes, policies and practices that are destructive to cultures and consequently to the individuals within the culture (Cross et al., 1989). An example of cultural destructiveness in a school setting is when students are transferred out of an educational institution because they do not fit the dominant culture of the school. Another example of cultural destructiveness is experienced when a lack of cultural models are represented in school curriculum. Homophobic attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and
transgender students can be described as culturally destructive.

**Cultural Incapacity**

The next position of the continuum is one in which "a system, organization or an individual is elevating the superiority of its own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures that are different from it" (Lindsey et al., 2005, p. 54). The system or organization implicitly and explicitly relays a message of cultural superiority over the subdominant group and assumes a paternal posture towards "lesser" cultures (Cross, 1989). In an educational institution, cultural incapacity includes criticizing parents of students for their particular values and beliefs if the educators' values and beliefs differ from those of the community the student belongs to. Educators use phrases such as "Those parents are all the same, they don't care" or "Those kids always bring our test scores down." Cultural incapacity is also evident when educators have lower expectations for a particular group of students due to stereotypes and cultural ignorance.

**Cultural Blindness**

"This point of the continuum reflects an attitude or philosophy that appears unbiased. The organization and its members act as if differences among cultures do not exist and refuse to recognize any" (Lindsey et al., 2005, p. 54). They function with the belief that color or culture make no difference and that "we are all the same" (Cross et al., 1989). Policies and practices do not recognize the need for culturally specific approaches to problem solving, and services are ethnocentric and encourage assimilation (Leavitt, 2002). Cultural blindness is exhibited when educators are uncomfortable discussing cultural differences in the classroom and use phrases such as "I don't see color, I treat all of my students the same." It is also evident when cultural strengths are ignored and assimilating to the dominant culture becomes
what students and community members are to strive for. Also, because cultural differences are not recognized, in the classroom differentiated instruction is not delivered and students' individual needs are not met.

**CULTURAL PRE-COMPETENCE**

"Culturally pre-competent organizations and individuals recognize that lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of other cultures limits the ability to effectively interact with others" (Lindsey et al., 2005, p. 54). According to the authors, this point is considered a healthier point in the continuum due to awareness of the lack of information and experience. Individuals and organizations make a commitment to work toward appropriately responding to cultural differences. An example of cultural pre-competence in practice in a school system includes the celebration of Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month. Educators recognize the need to promote diversity, however, do so in a non-systemic manner. Various cultural perspectives are not embedded in the norms of the school. Another example involves token representation of people in committees.

**CULTURAL COMPETENCE**

"Culturally competent individuals and organizations interact with cultural groups in ways that recognize and value differences. Individuals in the educational settings are motivated to assess their own skills, expand their knowledge and resources, and, ultimately adapt their relational behavior" (Lindsey et al., 2005, p. 54). Cultural competent curriculum includes various cultural perspectives through texts and other resources in the general education curriculum. It also allots time and space for critical reflection of various cultural perspectives and consists of various teaching modalities to deliver information. The culturally competent agency works to hire unbiased employees, seeks advice and
consultation from the diverse community and actively decides what it is and is not capable of providing to diverse clients (Cross et al., 1989). Culturally competent organizations implement specific policies and procedures that integrate cultural and linguistic competence into each core function of the organization. They also practice principles of community engagement that result in the reciprocal transfer of knowledge and skills between all collaborators, partners, and key stakeholders (Goode, 2004).

**CULTURAL PROFICIENCY**

The healthiest point of this continuum engages in honoring the differences among cultures, holding diversity in high esteem, and interacting knowledgeably and respectfully among a variety of cultural groups (Lindsey et al., 2005). The culturally proficient institution seeks to add to the knowledge base of culturally proficient practices by conducting research and implementing new approaches based on culture (Cross, 1988). The culturally proficient individual advocates for cultural proficiency throughout the system and is a social justice advocate that seeks to improve cross-cultural relations in society. Cultural proficiency includes a commitment from educators to critically examine individual and collective practices in the educational institution and actively engage in employing practices that serve all students.

The cultural proficiency continuum serves as a guide in gauging personal attitudes, dispositions and behaviors. It also allows one to gauge the values and beliefs of the organization one serves. It gives language to describe healthy and unhealthy states of being for individuals and organizations (CampbellJones et al., 2010, p. 21).

**Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency**

Another tool described in the cultural proficiency model is the essential elements for
culturally proficient practices. Cross and his colleagues (1989) describe the five essential elements:

- Having the capacity for cultural self-assessment
- Valuing diversity
- Being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact
- Having developed adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity
- Institutionalizing cultural knowledge

As noted in a previous section, having the capacity for cultural self-assessment requires an organization to evaluate its culture and the culture of the individuals in the organization or educational environment. Being able to do so improves cross-cultural communication and improves the experience of the participants within the setting. When an institution values diversity it allows for formal and non-formal decision making groups inclusive of people whose viewpoints and experiences are different from the organization's dominant cultural group (CampbellJones et al., 2010). Also, when an organization manages the dynamics of difference it is committed to acquiring and modeling conflict resolution skills so that members of the organization recognize that resolving conflicts can result in a positive experience. Adapting to diversity is also an essential element that involves being open to learning about cultural groups different from your own and the ability to use others' cultural experiences and backgrounds in all areas of the organization (CampbellJones et al., 2010). Additionally, when an organization values the element of institutionalizing cultural knowledge, it is committed to learning about many cultural groups and perspectives and making these perspectives an integral component of the organizations' culture and practices.

**Barriers to Cultural Proficiency**

The cultural proficiency model includes the barriers to cultural proficiency.
Nuri-Robins and her colleagues (2005) describe three categories of barriers that affect organizations and individuals: unawareness of the need to adapt and resistance to change, presumption of entitlement and unearned privilege, and systems of oppression and privilege (p. 6).

Unawareness of the need to adapt and resistance to change is exemplified when educators are unwilling to look at alternative ways to practice and implement pedagogy. Expecting students and the community to change because the values, beliefs and practices held by educators are seen as the right way of doing things is detrimental to students and the community. Expecting others to change and clinging to practices that no longer serve the students or their families are forms of resistance (p. 6).

Presumption of entitlement and unearned privilege occurs when stakeholders do not recognize that they receive privileges based on who they are or the position they hold. This occurs when students receive privileges because of the community they are a part of, because they belong to specific cultural groups or because their families hold power in the community. Holding the idea that one earns these privileges based on character or hard work is a form of resistance.

Systems of oppression and privilege are evident when stakeholders do not acknowledge that racism, sexism, homophobia and classism continue to exist in our school systems and other organizations. Distributing power and privilege, consciously or unintentionally, only to members of mainstream groups or abusing power accrued through rules and roles within the school create systems of oppression and privilege (Nuri-Robins, 2005, p. 6).

The conceptual framework of cultural proficiency is designed to provide educators
with tools to develop culturally proficient practices as an individual and in an organization. It additionally provides educators with a conceptual way of addressing culture within the school system. The models described offer educators ways in which to assess curriculum and instructional practices.

**The Culturally Proficient Educator and Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Diversity is vastly increasing in our educational institutions. Educators must be prepared to effectively work cross-culturally in various settings. Culturally proficient instruction is an approach to teaching that invites the instructor to be more fully aware of the content of the instructional material and the context of the instructional practice. A culturally proficient instructor seeks to recognize what the learners bring to the instructional context and to acknowledge those contributions and perspectives in two ways: how the instructional material is delivered and how the instructor engages with the learner (Nuri Robins et al., 2006, p. 30). Educators must deliver instructional material by modeling cross-cultural communication. Also, understanding personal biases and culture orientations is a critical component of becoming culturally competent. For example, culturally competent educators understand the beliefs they carry about students from different racial backgrounds because unconsciously, lower expectations may be held for certain racial groups, and in turn, this may influence the manner in which they conduct lessons. This may lead to lower student achievement (Keengwe, 2010).

Gay (2010) advocates for teachers to master culturally responsive teaching. This way of teaching, she contends, is based on the following:

…teaches through and to students' personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments. It filters curriculum
content and teaching strategies through the students' cultural frames of reference to make the content more personally meaningful and easier to master (p. 24).

Gay states that culturally responsive teaching is validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative and emancipatory. "It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum" (p. 29). Building a bridge between the home and school experience, she maintains, is also a validating and affirming component of this type of instruction. It teaches students how to praise their own and each other's cultural heritage and, at the same time, curriculum is offered in a variety of ways acknowledging various learning styles. Culturally responsive teaching incorporates various multicultural resources in all subjects and skills taught in the classroom. For example, books that come from a variety of culturally diverse authors are readily available and used in the classroom. This type of instruction teaches to the whole child and uses all the components of the instructional system (through collaboration) to teach to the child. Culturally responsive teaching instills academic competence, confidence, courage and the will to act (Gay, 2010). It is transformative because it challenges educators to view students of color in an empowering manner and liberating because it provides students with access to information that resonates with their sense of self.

Similarly, Pang (2005) stated that culturally relevant teaching is based on the interconnections of learning and culture. It is defined as teaching using cultural bridges and cultural models of knowledge. She defined culturally relevant teaching as an approach that "responds to the sociocultural context and seeks to integrate the cultural content of the learner in shaping an effective learning environment" (p. 337). Pang describes the
importance of naturally integrating seven major key curriculum elements: (1) Personal experiences from students' lives; (2) Role models; (3) Culturally grounded stories, songs and photos (ways of expressing community, values and beliefs); (4) Language and linguistic expressions (analogies, metaphors, images, proverbs, sayings, symbols, dialect forms and phrases from home languages); (5) Multiple perspectives on the issue/theme/problem; (6) Formal subject content from traditional areas such as history, literature, art and music; and (7) Community issues (p. 361).

Ladson-Billings (1995) developed the culturally responsive pedagogy framework. She defined three criteria that constitute culturally relevant pedagogy: (a) Students must experience academic success, which includes guiding students toward competence in "literacy, numeracy, technology, and social and political skills in order to be active participants in a democracy" (p. 160); (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (p. 160).

Frameworks centered on culturally relevant pedagogy from other scholars describe similar characteristics such as knowing about the personal and cultural lives of students; affirming the diverse backgrounds of all students; building a learning community demonstrative of cultural caring; utilizing resources and issues in the community to maximize learning; establishing cross-cultural communication; promoting a culture of equity and inclusiveness; and building curriculum centered around what students already know while at the same time stretching their minds (Irvine & Armento, 2001; Kesler, 2011; Lee, 1995; Nieto, 1996; Nuri Robins et al., 2006; Tate, 1995).

Research also demonstrates that culturally responsive classroom management is a
critical piece in teaching diverse learners (Gay, 2006; Hambacher, Ross, Gallingane, & Bondy, 2007; Tenore & Milner, 2010; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke & Curran, 2004). Gay (2006) posits that teachers expect their culturally diverse students to learn and behave according to mainstream European-American cultural standards. She states that "much of the current high levels of racial disproportionality in school discipline is a reflection of teachers not understanding and incorporating the cultural values, orientations, and experiences of African, Latino, Asian, and Native Americans into curriculum and instruction" (p. 343).

Weinstein et al. (2004) suggest five essential components in becoming culturally responsive in classroom management that include: (a) recognition of one's own ethnocentrism and biases; (b) knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds; (c) understanding of the broader social, economic and political context of our educational system; (d) ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate classroom management strategies; and (e) commitment to building caring classroom communities (p. 27). Primarily, they advocate that culturally responsive classroom management is a frame of mind, where educators are critically aware of their personal beliefs and biases and so they respond in a critically conscious manner. Educators who are culturally competent are willing to courageously acknowledge their biases and beliefs in order to support equitable outcomes for all students. Similarly, Gay & Kirkland (2003) explain that teachers knowing who they are as people, understanding the context in which they teach, and questioning their knowledge and assumptions are as important as the mastery of techniques for instructional effectiveness.

Numerous authors have called on expanded efforts to address cultural competency and proficiency in teacher preparation programs (Johnson & McIntosh, 2009; Madda & Schultz, 2009; Pang et al., 2010; Tidwell & Thompson, 2008; Trent et al., 2008). In order to
prepare educators to work with all students, teacher education programs must provide opportunities for future educators to explore the complexities of culture. Too often educators may have good intentions in the classroom, but lack of cultural and self-awareness prohibits educators from responding in a positive and affirming way to all students. Gay and Kirkland advocate self-reflection as a tool for becoming a culturally competent educator.

**CONCLUSION**

The cultural competence and proficiency construct has been developed through many historical movements in education as well as various fields, including health care, social work and psychology. This construct was developed as a response to historical social inequities that impacted many marginalized communities. In education, cultural competence and proficiency is of critical importance because the cultural disconnect in the classroom continues to impact many students due to our inability to provide quality education to certain student groups (Lindsey et al., 2008). Educators working with students must develop cultural competence that allows them to respond in ways that support the full development of each child. It is imperative that educators begin with a critical awareness of the influence of culture in their own life, and only then can they be conscious of the dynamics of culture in others' environment. This process is essential in order to genuinely partake in cross-cultural work.

This review of the literature offered a conceptual framework of cultural proficiency that can be used to assess individual and organizational behavior and practices. Additionally, a framework for culturally proficient instruction was described using the essential elements of cultural proficiency to inform this practice. This work relates to the research described specific to culturally responsive instruction, in that the culture of the students is at the center
of instruction, and self-reflection is of critical importance. There is a limited amount of research documenting culturally proficient instruction in the field of education. This literature review served to guide the mixed methods study presented in chapter three.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Although various publications are available with a focus on the importance of addressing multiculturalism in the classroom, data concerning the documentation of culturally proficient instructional strategies are lacking in the literature. Additionally, missing is the documentation of teachers assessing personal and student culture as an aspect of implementing culturally proficient practices. A goal of the study was to contribute to the research and also provide practical recommendations that teachers may use in their instructional strategies. This study aimed to contribute to the knowledge of cultural proficiency in the field of education, particularly to understand how educators engage in culturally proficient practices.

STUDY DESIGN

Using a mixed-methods approach, the purpose of this study was to document elementary school teachers' self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency and the extent to which their self-perceived levels relate to their reflective and instructional practices. The purpose of gaining insight on their reflective practices was to learn more about how educators assess their own culture and its impact on students, and how their students' culture impacts them as educators and influences instruction.

The first phase of the study consisted of gathering quantitative data using two surveys and an additional question, in order to measure elementary school teachers' self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency. Statistical analysis of the data was conducted using descriptive
statistics in order to inform the study. Additionally, the first phase served to select six elementary school teachers for the second phase of the study, two of whom demonstrate high levels of cultural proficiency, two whom demonstrate average levels of cultural proficiency and two who score low levels of cultural proficiency in relationship to the scores of the group of elementary school teachers surveyed in the first phase of the study.

The second phase of the study was conducted using personal interviews with the six teachers selected in order to explore how self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency related to instructional practices. The interviews were used to gather information specific to how teachers assess their personal culture, including how it impacts their students; and how they assess their students' culture, including how it impacts them personally, and how it influences instruction. Classroom observations were also conducted in order to observe culturally proficient instructional strategies. A culturally proficient instructor "seeks to recognize what the learners bring to the instructional context and to acknowledge those contributions and perspectives in two ways: how the instructional material is delivered, and how the instructor engages with the learners" (Nuri Robins et al., 2006, p. 30). Finally, through the information gathered in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study, an analysis was conducted to examine if there were differences between practices and behaviors of teachers who perceive themselves to be culturally competent and proficient, somewhat culturally competent, and those who do not.

This study was an explanatory sequential design mixed-methods study because it occurred in two distinct interactive phases, a quantitative and qualitative phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A benefit of the quantitative phase was that a large sample size was surveyed to provide more data to inform the study. The quantitative data, and their analyses,
provided a general understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and their analyses informed the research problem by exploring participants' views more in depth. Using both research approaches, in combination, provided a better understanding of research problems than either approach could do alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The study design is presented in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1. Study Design**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Quantitative Data Collection</td>
<td>• Simple Descriptive Survey (n~112)</td>
<td>• Numeric data from surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quantitative Data Analysis</td>
<td>• Data Screening</td>
<td>• Descriptive statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Case selection</td>
<td>• Purposefully selecting two participants from each group – two who demonstrate higher levels of cultural proficiency, two who demonstrate average levels and two who demonstrate lower levels in relation to the scores of the teachers surveyed. • Developing interview questions • Developing observation form</td>
<td>• Cases (n~6) • Interview protocol • Observation protocol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
### Table 3.1. Study Design (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4. Qualitative Data Collection | • Individual interviews with 6 participants  
|                              | • Classroom observations, two full day observations per participant, a total of 12 observations | • Educator interview transcripts  
|                              | • Classroom observation protocol forms and journal                         | • Classroom observation protocol forms and journal                       |
| 5. Qualitative Data Analysis | • Coding and thematic analysis  
|                              | • Within-case and across-case thematic development                         | • Visual model of codes and themes  
|                              | • Similar and different themes  
|                              | • Cross-thematic matrix                                                   | • Similar and different themes  
| 6. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Results | • Interpretation and explanation of the quantitative and qualitative results | • Discussion  
|                              |                                                                          | • Implications  
|                              |                                                                          | • Future research |

### Setting for the Study

Currently, the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) serves more than 132,000 students in pre-school through grade 12 and is the second largest district in California. The student population is diverse, representing more than 15 ethnic groups and more than 60 languages and dialects. The general ethnic breakdown of the student population consists of 45.7% Hispanic/Latino, 23.9% White, 11.8% African-American, 6.0% Filipino, 5.1% Indo-Chinese, 3.3% Asian, 0.4% Native-American, 0.8% Pacific Islander and 3.1% Multi-Racial (San Diego Unified School District, 2011). Thirty percent of the students in the SDUSD are English Language Learners and 59.1% are eligible for free and reduced lunch meals.
Students receiving special education services total 16,062 and approximately 9,745 students come from military families.

Additionally, the San Diego Unified School District employs more than 6,500 teachers who are in classrooms at the district's various educational facilities, which include 107 traditional elementary schools, 11 K-8 schools, 24 traditional middle schools, 28 high schools, 45 charter schools, and 13 atypical/alternative schools (San Diego Unified School District, 2011).

In the 2011-2012 school year, the ethnic diversity breakdown of the 6,520 teachers in the San Diego Unified School District was 70% White, 17% Hispanic/Latino, 7% Asian, 5% Black/African-American, 0.6% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 0.4% Multi Racial or not specified (Hoffman et al., 2012).

Regarding the promotion of diversity in SDUSD, district staff and surrounding community members were invited to participate in the state of the district address delivered by the board of education in 2010. Board member John Lee Evans addressed the school district in order to formally introduce the SDUSD initiative, Vision 2020 for Educational Excellence. The overarching goal of the plan is to ensure a quality educational experience for today’s students as well as to envision and plan for students who will graduate in the year 2020 (San Diego Unified School District, 2011).

The initiative consists of a Strategic Process as a guideline for implementing research-based strategies that will provide continuous improvement at each school during the next five years. One of the quality indicators of the strategic process is 'Valuing Diversity in the Service of Students', and it states the following:

The diversity within San Diego Unified is one of our strengths. Valuing diversity to make equity a reality means that we adults need to understand, appreciate and
engage the differences among students so that all students learn to higher levels. Experiences of all students are richer when we embrace rich cultural heritages and languages other than English as learning opportunities. We also need to help students see the strengths in our diversity and how they can contribute in appropriate and respectful ways, which results in collaborative work among students of different backgrounds (San Diego Unified School District, 2011).

One of the goals of this indicator is its commitment to have every employee in the district receive cultural proficiency training, and be culturally competent by the year 2020. This commitment to cultural proficiency is a commitment to engaging students through cultural strengths and seeing diversity as an asset in order to ensure equitable outcomes for students.

The Race Human Relations & Advocacy department in the SDUSD is responsible for providing the cultural proficiency trainings to all employees. A total of seven staff members (four district counselors and three student advocates) are responsible for providing these trainings to the employees of the district. The trainings from the department are based on the conceptual framework of the cultural proficiency model (CampbellJones et al., 2010). Currently, most of the trainings are provided to teachers and other certificated staff at school sites.

**TARGET POPULATION**

The target population for the study was elementary school teachers from the San Diego Unified School District. The accessible participants were selected from seven elementary schools that have participated or will participate in a cultural proficiency training offered by the Race Human Relations Department in the SDUSD. The seven schools are Reyes Elementary, Azucena Elementary, Williamson Elementary, Tarahumara Elementary, Delicias Elementary, Alvarez Chavira Elementary and Date Gardens Elementary. Of the seven schools selected, three have participated in one or more cultural proficiency trainings
(Reyes Elementary, Azucena Elementary and Williamson Elementary) and four have not participated in trainings (Tarahumara Elementary, Delicias Elementary, Alvarez Chavira Elementary and Date Gardens Elementary). All seven schools have a strong representation of the district's diverse student population, and the teaching staff is also representative of the teaching staff of SDUSD.

The researcher has been employed with the San Diego Unified School District for the past ten years, and she is currently a district counselor in the Race Human Relations & Advocacy program. She has access to working with many schools in the district, including the seven elementary schools selected for the study. She also works providing cultural proficiency trainings to school sites, as it is a goal of the district to develop culturally proficient schools.

**Phase I: Quantitative Phase**

This section describes the Sample, Quantitative Data Collection, Demographic Information, Instrumentation, Quantitative Data Analysis, and Reliability and Validity of Phase I.

**Sample**

A non-probability convenience sample of 112 elementary school teachers was recruited for the study. This type of sample was used because the data were collected from teachers in schools that could be recruited to participate in the study (Huck, 2008). In order to obtain statistically significant results, the sample should be large enough to allow approximately 100 participants (Mertens, 2005).

**Quantitative Data Collection**

In the first phase, the first research question in the study was addressed using a simple
descriptive approach: What are the self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency of elementary school teachers in the San Diego Unified School District? The researcher gathered quantitative data combining two surveys and an additional self-assessment question in order to measure elementary school teachers' self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency. A survey facilitates the ability get information about a large number of teachers in a non-threatening way (Mertens, 2005). Teachers were recruited from schools that have participated in cultural proficiency trainings or will sign up to participate through the Race Human Relations Department. Prior to participating in the survey, the school administrator decided if the staff would take the survey on-line or the paper version. A brief presentation of the study was offered at the teacher staff meetings, and consent forms and the survey were emailed to the teachers on-line via qualtrics, an on-line survey software. A copy of the consent form is presented in Appendix A, and the surveys are presented in Appendices B-D. Follow-up emails were sent one week later to remind teachers to complete the survey. Three schools were interested in conducting the survey in paper format. The researcher provided the schools with the same presentation at the staff meeting and distributed the consent forms and the survey at the meeting. Participation was voluntary and teachers had the option not to participate in the survey. Additionally, teachers were asked if they were interested in taking part in the personal interviews and classroom observation process. Those that were interested provided personal information at the end of the survey in order to identify them as potential participants for phase two.

Demographic Information

The first section of the questionnaire contained demographic/background information about the participants. This included the variables of gender, ethnic identification, age, grade
level teaching, and years of experience in the field of education.

**Instrumentation**

The first instrument used in the teacher survey was the Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale (MTCS). The MTCS, developed by Spanierman et al. (2011), consists of 16 questions with a 6-point Likert scale response format. The responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The instrument was comprised of two subscales that are consistent with multicultural literature. They reflect "(a) self-reported skills or behaviors in implementing culturally sensitive teaching practices and (b) self-reported knowledge of culturally responsive theories, resources and classroom strategies" (pp. 455-456). Higher scores indicate higher levels of multicultural teaching competence (Spanierman, et al., 2011).

In order to test for validity of the instrument, Spanierman et al. (2011) gathered data from 506 pre-and in-service teachers in three interrelated studies. Study 1 was an exploratory factor analysis; a two-factor solution was established, and the current 16-item version was determined based on results. Study 2 consisted of a confirmatory factor analysis to test the factor structure of the MTCS determined in the first study. In the third study, coefficient alphas for MTCS skill and MTCS knowledge were 0.83 and 0.80, respectively; the alpha for the total scale was 0.88. Results revealed that the two-factor solution established in Study 1 was found to be a good fit to the data and superior to competing measures (Spanierman, et al., 2011). The authors found the Pearson product moment correlation between the two factors to be 0.66 (p < .01). Study 3 examined further validity estimates for the MTCS through positive associations between the MTCS subscales and other previously established multicultural instruments providing evidence of convergent validity. The
Pearson product moment correlations ranged from 0.42-0.53.

The second instrument that was used as part of the survey is a recommended companion to the MTCS, the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS) (Spanierman et al., 2011). The TMAS is a 20-item, 5-point Likert item, unidimensional self-report inventory of teachers' multicultural awareness and sensitivity specifically designed for teachers working in K-12 settings (Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera, 1998). The construct of multicultural awareness refers to "teachers' awareness of, comfort with, and sensitivity to issues of cultural pluralism in the classroom" (p. 1003). Ponterotto et al. (1998) reported that two measures of internal consistency were calculated as well as test-retest reliability. The revised 20-item TMAS obtained a coefficient alpha of 0.86 and theta coefficient of 0.89 (Ponterotto et al., 1998). Additionally, a 3-week test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.80 was attained utilizing a sample of teacher education students (Ponterotto et. al., 1998). "Construct validity was established through convergent correlations with related instruments resulting in three coefficients reaching moderate levels" (p. 1012). Criterion-related validity of the TMAS was assessed using the group differences approach, which examines score differences in naturally occurring sample cohorts. This approach yielded a statistically significant result specific to those who had completed professional workshops on multicultural education/training scoring higher than those who had not.

Both surveys were selected because, together, they provided a model inclusive of measuring multicultural awareness, sensitivity, knowledge and skills. The constructs are in alignment and similar to the cultural competence and proficiency literature. The MTCS is based on the following definition of multicultural competence:

Multicultural teaching competency is an iterative process in which teachers continuously (a) explore their attitudes and beliefs about multicultural issues, (b)
increase their understanding of specific populations, and (c) examine the impact this awareness and knowledge has on what and how they teach as well as how they interact with students and their families. This dynamic process involves complex interaction among micro-level systems or proximal factors (e.g., teachers and other educational personnel, students and their families, and so forth) and macro-level systems or more distal factors (e.g., political economy, race relations, public policy, and so forth) (Spanierman, et al., 2011, pp. 444-445).

Additionally, the TMAS was developed using the following construct of multicultural awareness:

…multicultural awareness refers to teacher's awareness of, comfort with and sensitivity to issues of cultural pluralism in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers high in multicultural awareness see cultural diversity as a strength and feel the responsibility to address multicultural issues in the curriculum and in the teaching/learning process (Ponterotto et al., 1998, p. 1003).

The researcher did not find in the literature a survey that measured the specific construct of cultural proficiency that exhibited strong reliability and validity. However, the two surveys in the study were developed from frameworks that are in alignment with the cultural competence and proficiency construct.

In addition to the two surveys, a question was asked in order to assess teachers' cultural proficiency levels based on the cultural proficiency continuum. The teachers were asked the following question from Cultural Proficiency, Changing the Conversation and selected from the responses of the cultural proficiency continuum: Where do you place yourself along the continuum with respect to the various student cultural groups at your school?

The points of the continuum are the following:

1. Cultural destructiveness - Educating in a manner that you seek to eliminate the cultures of others in all aspects of the school and in relationship with the community served.
2. Cultural incapacity - Educating in a way that you trivialize other cultures and seek to make the culture of others appear to be wrong.
3. Cultural blindness - Educating where you don't see or acknowledge the culture of others and you choose to ignore the discrepant experiences of cultures within the school.
4. Cultural pre-competence - Educating with an increasing awareness of what you and the school don't know about working in diverse settings. At this level of development you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction or you can falter, stop and possibly regress.

5. Cultural competence - Educating with your personal values and behaviors and the school's policies and practices being aligned in a manner that is inclusive with cultures that are new or different from you and the school.

6. Cultural proficiency - Educating as an advocate for life-long learning for the purpose of being increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of cultural groups in your school and community. Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 14).

The Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale (MTCS), the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS) and the additional cultural proficiency self-assessment question answered the first question of the study and served to identify potential participants for the second phase of the study.

**Quantitative Data Analysis**

To ensure the study was statistically valid and reliable, the researcher conducted an analysis using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) in order to answer the first research question. Descriptive statistics were conducted in order to find means, medians, modes and standard deviations for the instruments utilized in the study. Means were calculated to determine the average response and the standard deviation was calculated to determine the variability of responses compared to the mean. Additionally, in order to select the participants for the second phase of the study two options were proposed as the criteria for selecting cases for the personal interviews and classroom observations.

Option one consisted of forming groups based on the scores of the surveys by dividing each scale into thirds. For the MTCS, higher scores indicate higher levels of multicultural teaching competence, and for the TMAS higher scores indicate higher levels of multicultural awareness and sensitivity. The low cultural proficiency group would have been
selected from those who scored 16-32 on the MTCS and 20-40 on the TMAS. The medium cultural proficiency group would have been selected from those who scored 33-79 on the MTCS and 41-79 on the TMAS. The high cultural proficiency group would have been selected from those who scored 80-96 on the MTCS and 80-100 on the TMAS.

Given the fact that it was not known if participant scores would fall within the defined ranges, a second option for forming groups was proposed. Option two consisted of selecting participants for the interviews and classroom observations based on means and standard deviations. The low cultural proficiency group was defined as more than one standard deviation below the mean on two scales for the group. The medium cultural proficiency group was defined as plus one or minus one standard deviation from the mean on both scales for the group and the high group was defined as more that one standard deviation above the mean on two scales for the group.

Given the absence of participants who scored extremely low on either of the scales, option two was used. Groups were defined as high, medium and low relative to the performance of the entire group. This leads to a limitation as the high, medium and low groups are relative to the group performance and not the possible scores on the scales. Group labels should be interpreted with caution. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 demonstrate both options.

**Reliability and Validity**

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the study, the researcher selected two instruments that have previously demonstrated adequate to high levels of reliability and validity. Ensuring instrument reliability is imperative because, in order to be useful, data collection instruments must be consistent. The purpose of measurement is to get an accurate estimate of a particular attribute. Accuracy is achieved by minimizing sources of errors and
obtaining an estimate of how much error remains (Mertens, 2005). Also, it is appropriate to use the method of internal consistency when the instrument has been designed to measure a particular attribute that is expected to manifest a high degree of internal consistency (Mertens, 2005). The researcher additionally established the reliability of the instruments through internal consistency measures using the Cronbach's coefficient alpha formula. Results presented in table 3.3 include Cronbach's alpha scores 0.87 for the MTCS Skill subscale, 0.93 for the MTCS Knowledge subscale, 0.93 for the MTCS total score and 0.79 for the TMAS demonstrating higher levels of reliability.
Table 3.3. Selection Criteria for Phase II Option Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TMAS</th>
<th>MTCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 SD</td>
<td>&lt;1 SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proficiency Group</td>
<td>Proficiency Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Validity describes the extent to which an instrument measures what it was intended to measure (Mertens, 2005). The researcher selected two instruments, the MTCS and the TMAS, which established construct and criterion-related validity in the studies conducted by the authors of the instrument.
Table 3.4. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis for Valid Cases of Instruments and Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument Subscale</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Valid Cases</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MTCS Skill</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCS Knowledge</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMAS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phase II: Qualitative Phase**

This section describes the Interview Protocol, Qualitative Data Collection, Interviews, Classroom Observations, Classroom Observation Protocol, Qualitative Analysis, and Establishing Credibility and Validity in Phase II. Questions two and three of the research study were also answered:

2. How are teacher self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency related to culturally proficient instructional strategies in the classroom?
   a. How do teachers assess their personal culture, including how it impacts their students?
   b. How do teachers' assess their students' culture, including how it impacts them personally, and how it influences instruction?

3. Are there differences in the instructional practices of teachers who self-
reported higher levels of cultural proficiency, medium levels of cultural proficiency and low levels cultural proficiency?

A qualitative methodology inclusive of personal interviews and classroom observations was utilized. A total of six elementary school teachers were purposefully selected to provide data to address the research questions for the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Two teachers who scored higher levels of cultural proficiency on the surveys, two who scored average levels on the survey and two who demonstrated lower levels of cultural proficiency, relative to the scores of the teachers surveyed, were selected.

**Interview Protocol**

One of the essential elements of cultural proficiency is the practice of assessing culture. The personal interviews focused specifically on how teachers assess their personal culture and their students’ culture in the classroom. Nuri Robins et al. (2006) describe culturally proficient instructors in this way:

Culturally proficient instructors are aware of their own learning styles and the learning styles of their students. They also know about their own culture and the effects their own culture may have on the other people in the classroom. They realize that instructors play a powerful role in the classroom.... They understand the powerful effect of culture on what takes place in the classroom. Knowing your own culture and how others interact with you is critical to culturally proficient instruction (pp. 110-111).

The questions that guided the teacher personal interviews were modified from


A copy of the interview questions can also be found in Appendix D.

1. How do you define culture?
2. How do you describe your culture?
3. Does your culture influence how you interact with your students during instruction? Why or why not?
4. How do you learn about your student's culture?
5. Does knowledge you have about your students' culture influence how you interact with your students, why or why not?

6. Does the knowledge you have about your students' culture influence how you deliver instruction, why or why not?

7. What opportunities during instructional time do you provide for students to share about their culture?

8. What opportunities during instructional time do you have to share with your student's information about your culture? (Nuri Robins et al., 2006, p. 115).

9. Can you give an example (critical incident or event) where you utilized student cultural knowledge in your instruction?

The personal interviews were the first step in understanding and answering question number two, parts a and b:

a. How do teachers assess their personal culture, including how it impacts their students?

b. How do teachers' assess their students' culture, including how it impacts them personally, and how it influences instruction?

**Qualitative Data Collection**

Participants were selected for the personal interviews and classroom observations from the pool of teachers who indicated they were interested in participating in the second phase of the research study. Additional consent forms were provided in order to participate in the personal interviews and classroom observations. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix E.

**Interviews**

The researcher met with the teachers after school hours at their convenience and at their school site. She ensured that interviews were held in a comfortable environment and that the participants felt safe ensuring confidentiality in their responses. As an employee of the San Diego Unified School District, the researcher made certain that the participants understood that their responses would not impact on their teaching position in the district in any way. In order to make certain that she gathered information accurately, an audio-
A recorder was used during the personal interviews along with research note taking. This was the most appropriate method that increased the transferability of the data. After the interviews, the audiotapes were transcribed and themes were highlighted.

**Classroom Observations**

The classroom observations focused on gathering data for question two and three of the research questions selected for the study: "How are teacher self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency related to culturally proficient instructional strategies in the classroom?" and "Are there differences in the instructional practices of teachers who self-reported high levels of cultural proficiency, medium levels of cultural proficiency and low levels of cultural proficiency?" Observations allow a researcher to collect data on a variety of behaviors and interactions about phenomena being studied and also help researchers to develop more holistic perspectives and understandings about them (Frechtling & Sharp, 1997). The purpose of the classroom observations was to observe teacher instructional strategies that were aligned with their cultural proficiency survey score. A culturally proficient instructor values the learner as a thinker and a doer, honors and respects the cultural identities of all learners, designs experiences that build on prior knowledge and experiences of the learner, and values diversity and inclusion (Nuri Robins et al., 2006). Additionally, the classroom observations provided the researcher an opportunity to gather data on ways in which teachers view their diverse classrooms as "opportunities to include and engage all learners in the teaching and learning experience" (Nuri Robins et al, 2006, p. 43).

**Classroom Observation Protocol**

Each teacher was observed a total of two days of instructional time. Prior to beginning the classroom observation process, the researcher obtained consent from the
principals to visit the classrooms to conduct the observations. Also, consent was obtained from the teachers to observe for two days of instruction. This allowed the teacher to know that the researcher would attend the classroom prior to attending. In the role of the observer, the researcher used very detailed notes to record observations using the observation protocol and a notebook as a critical component of this process. The observation protocol was adapted from various resources that focus on classroom observations and culturally proficient instructional strategies (Education Alliance, Brown University, 2006; Farr, Sexton, Puckett, Pereira-Leon & Weissman, 2005; Gay, 2010; Pang, 2005; Van Tassel-Baska, 2003). A copy of the observation protocol can be found in Appendix F. During the interview process, the researcher was mindful of her biases and documented any reactions to the observation in order to ensure that the observation bias was minimal. After the classroom observations, observation forms, and notes were transcribed and themes were highlighted.

**Qualitative Analysis**

Data from personal interviews and classroom observations were transcribed into word processing files. Once transcribed into these files, data analysis began by generating a list of themes and codes that provided evidence reflective of broader perspectives (Mertens, 2005). The themes were used to discuss and compare to the existing body of literature related to culturally proficient instruction. The researcher specifically focused on the essential elements of cultural proficiency in order to organize and guide the qualitative research. Additionally, in order to analyze the data for other possible emerging categories, the three steps of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) Grounded Theory Approach (open coding, axial coding and selective coding) were implemented. Grounded theory is defined by Creswell (2007) "...as a research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation of a process, action, or..."
interaction" developed from the research participants (p. 63). Strauss and Corbin (1990) define open coding as the "analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are identified in the data" (p. 101). In the process of axial coding, categories are connected to develop themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Selective coding, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) is the process of integrating and refining the theory. The researcher used the selective coding process in order to choose a theme (an essential element) as a main category and relate other categories that connected to it. The researcher conducted the coding process via Dedoose, a web-based quantitative and qualitative analysis tool, which assisted in the coding process. The themes and categories were used to further discuss educator culturally proficient practices. Additionally, the themes and categories were utilized in the analysis to discuss in relationship with the quantitative phase of the study.

**Establishing Credibility and Reliability**

When conducting qualitative research, it is essential that credibility be established to exhibit internal validity when addressing how participants feel and how the researcher demonstrates their points of view (Mertens, 2005). In order to establish credibility, several techniques were incorporated including prolonged and substantial engagement, progressive subjectivity, member checks and triangulation (Mertens, 2005). During the personal interviews, the researcher attempted to gain the perspectives of the participants during 45-minute sessions. She summarized and used clarifying statements in order to ensure that she accurately obtained their points of view. A journal of thoughts, feelings and reactions were kept, in order to monitor personal views and biases. Another technique incorporated was member-checking, in which the researcher took summaries of the findings back to the participants in the study and asked whether the findings were an accurate reflection of their
experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Finally, the data was triangulated, by checking consistency between the survey results, personal interviews and classroom observations.

**Phase III: Mixed Methods Phase**

A sequential explanatory mixed methods design was used in order to answer the questions: "How are teacher self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency related to culturally proficient instructional strategies in the classroom" and "Are there differences in the instructional practices of teachers who self-reported high levels of cultural proficiency, medium levels of cultural proficiency and low levels cultural proficiency."

Data from both phases were examined in order to address both questions and interpret how findings from both sources compare.

**Research Permission and Potential Ethical Issues**

For this research study, appropriate procedures were followed in order to collect data from individuals and sites. Ethical issues were considered in compliance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and district policies. The study was presented to the San Diego Unified Dissertation Review Board in order to acquire permission for the study and address any potential concerns. Participant consent forms were submitted demonstrating that teachers were voluntarily participating in the study and had guaranteed rights. The confidentiality of the participants was protected. Participants taking the paper surveys did not provide any identifying information unless they were interested in participating in the second phase of the study. Participants taking the on-line survey gave only their e-mail as an identifying factor, and their contact information only if they were interested in being potential participants in the second phase of the study. Participants in the second phase had pseudonyms, and the school they work at had a pseudonym as well. All of the data acquired
is being kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home and will be destroyed a year after the study. Online surveys will remain confidential and are protected with a password. Results of the study have been provided to the district, but no names of the participants are linked to the data.

**Researcher's Resources and Skills**

The researcher conducted both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study that included the surveys, personal interviews and classroom observations. As a district counselor and primary trainer in the Race Human Relations and Advocacy (RHR&A) department of the San Diego Unified School District, the researcher has acquired knowledge of the construct of cultural proficiency in education. This assisted her in conducting the personal interviews and classroom observations. Also, because she is an employee of the district, the RHR&A department assisted in finding potential school sites to participate in the study. In the first phase of the study the researcher contacted the school site principal, scheduled a time to attend a staff meeting and inform the teachers about the study and send e-mails introducing the on-line survey or distributed the consent form and surveys as a paper version. She analyzed the data to answer the first research question.

In the second phase of the study, teachers were selected to participate in the personal interviews and classroom observations based on the results of the on-line or paper surveys. The researcher provided cultural proficiency trainings for some of the teachers at specific school sites, and this may have provided a sense of trust ensuring them that the researcher is knowledgeable about the topic and the challenges that the teachers face at their specific school site. At the same time, because the researcher is an employee of the district, having observed their classroom practices may have caused some concern for the participants. The
researcher ensured participants that her position was not to evaluate them for the purpose of the district but rather to gain insight that will contribute to the body of knowledge specific to culturally proficient practices in education.
CHAPTER 4

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to explore how teacher self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency relate to culturally proficient instructional strategies in the classroom. Additionally, this study seeks to explore if there are differences in the instructional strategies of teachers who self-perceive as having a high level of cultural proficiency, an average level of cultural proficiency, or a low level of cultural proficiency in relation to the scores of the teachers who participated in the first phase of the study. An explanatory mixed-methods design was utilized for this study in order to gain a deeper understanding of self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency and the manner in which the self-perceived levels are implemented during instruction. A goal of this study is to contribute to the existing body of literature of cultural proficiency in education, with an emphasis on culturally proficient instructional strategies.

The first phase of this explanatory mixed methods study consisted of gathering quantitative data from teachers in seven elementary schools in the San Diego Unified School District, the second largest school district in California (California Department of Education, 2013b). This chapter describes the results of the quantitative phase through descriptive analyses in order to answer the first research question of the study.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

Elementary school teachers from seven public elementary schools in the San Diego Unified School District were recruited for the study. The schools participating in the study
included Williamson Elementary, Azucena Elementary, Date Gardens Elementary, Tarahumara Elementary, Delicias Elementary, Reyes Elementary and Alvarez-Chavira Elementary. Five of the seven elementary schools, Williamson, Date Gardens, Tarahumara, Delicias and Reyes Elementary schools are located in the Southeast area of San Diego. Azucena Elementary is located in central San Diego, and Alvarez-Chavira Elementary is located in La Jolla, in the northern area of the San Diego Unified School District boundaries.

The participants were selected from seven elementary schools that have participated or will participate in a cultural proficiency training offered by the Race Human Relations Department in the SDUSD. Participation was voluntary, and teachers completed a consent form prior to completing the survey. The characteristics of the participants in the study are summarized in Table 4.1. Of the 112 participants, 8% teach at Williamson Elementary, 13.4% teach at Azucena Elementary, 22.2% teach at Date Gardens Elementary, 8% teach at Tarahumara Elementary, 8.9% of the participants teach at Delicias Elementary, 10.7% teach at Reyes Elementary and 27.7% of the participants are teachers at Alvarez-Chavira Elementary. Approximately 16.1% are male and 83.9% are female. Additionally, data revealed the self-described ethnicities of the participants involved in the study are 8.9% African-American, 54.5% Caucasian, 2.7% Filipino, 26.8% Hispanic/Latino, 0.9% Southeast Asian and 8% self-described as "other." Results of the data also demonstrated that 2.7% of the participants are in the range of 20-29 years of age, 26.8% are in the range of 30-39 years of age, and 36.6% of the participants fall in the range of 40-49 years of age. Also, 23.2% of the teachers in the study indicated their age range to be 50-59 years of age and 10.7% of the participants identified 60 years of age or older.
Another demographic characteristic used in this study was years teaching in the education field. Of the 112 participants, 4.5% indicated that they have taught 0-5 years, 17% revealed they have taught 6-10 years, while 25% of the participants indicated they have taught 11-15 years. Results also showed that 24.1% of participants in the study have taught 16-20 years, 18.8% have taught 21-25 years, 3.6% have taught 26-30 years and 5.4% of the participants have taught for 31 years or more. Participants were additionally asked to indicate the grade level they are currently teaching: Approximately 12.5% of the participants teach kindergarten, 17.9% of the participants teach 1st grade, 11.6% of the participants teach 2nd grade, 19.6% teach 3rd grade, 8.9% teach at the 4th grade level, 11.6% teach at the 5th grade level and 0.9% teach 6th grade. Those who selected "other" in the category of grade level teaching indicated teaching two or more grade levels and various grade levels specializing in the areas of special education, computers and technology and music/orchestra.

Table 4.1. Characteristics of Survey Participants as Frequency and Percentage

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<th>Frequency</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Alvarez-Chavira Elementary</td>
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<td>27.7</td>
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<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
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<td>African-American</td>
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<td>Filipino</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian</td>
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<td>.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>20-29 year old</td>
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<td>30-39 year old</td>
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<td>40-49 year old</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-59 year old</td>
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<td>60 years old or older</td>
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<td>0-5 years</td>
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<td>6-10 years</td>
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<td>11-15 years</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>16-20 years</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 years or more</td>
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(table continues)
Table 4.1. Characteristics of Survey Participants as Frequency and Percentage (continued)

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<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Grade Level Teaching</td>
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<td>Kinder</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.6</td>
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<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
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<td>.9</td>
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<td>Teaches 2 grade levels</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
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<td>Teaches more than 2 grade levels</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
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<td>Special Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer and Technology</td>
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<td>.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music/Orchestra</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
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<td>Missing</td>
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**ANALYSIS OF MTCS AND TMAS SCORES**

The first question that guided the quantitative phase of this research study was "What are the self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency among elementary school teachers in the San Diego Unified School District?" A descriptive statistical analysis was conducted that included calculating individual items, total scores and subscales for the Multicultural Teaching Competencies Scale (MTCS), individual items and total scores for the Teacher Multicultural Attitudes Survey (TMAS), and scores for the Cultural Proficiency self-assessment item. The statistical analysis was conducted in order to answer the first research question.
The mean, median, mode and standard deviation for each of the 16-items on the MTCS, based on a six-point Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, are presented in table 4.2. Scores were reversed for one negatively stated item on the MTCS: *I rarely examine the instructional materials I use in the classroom for racial and ethnic bias*. An analysis of each item demonstrates that elementary school teachers participating in the study self-reported higher levels of multicultural teaching competency with the following four items based on mean scores. The item, *I establish strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic minority parents*, had the highest mean of 4.98 (SD = 0.89) followed by *I often promote diversity by the behaviors I exhibit*, which had a mean of 4.89 (SD = 0.90). *I make changes within the general school environment so that racial and ethnic minority students will have an equal opportunity for success* demonstrated a mean of 4.89 (SD = 0.97) and *I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching* had a higher mean of 4.80 (SD = 0.84). An analyses of each item also demonstrated that participants in the study reported lower levels of multicultural teaching competency with the following four items on the MTCS. The item *I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories*, had the lowest average of 3.80 (SD = 1.20) followed by *I consult regularly with other teachers or administrators to help me understand multicultural issues related to instruction*, which had a mean of 3.90 (SD = 1.33). *I am knowledgeable about the various community resources within the city I teach* demonstrated a mean of 4.10 (SD = 1.07) and *I plan school events to increase student's knowledge about cultural experiences of various racial and ethnic groups* had a mean of 4.12 (SD = 1.42).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item (Number on Survey)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching (#1)</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>I plan my activities to celebrate diverse cultural practices in my classroom (#2)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan school events to increase student's knowledge about cultural experiences of various racial and ethnic groups (#3)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My curricula integrate topics and events from racial and ethnic minority populations (#4)</td>
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<td>4.64</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>I make changes within the general school environment so that racial and ethnic minority students will have an equal opportunity for success (#5)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>I consult regularly with other teachers or administrators to help me understand multicultural issues related to instruction (#6)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>*I rarely examine the instructional materials I use in the classroom for racial and ethnic bias (#7)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4.69</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1.12</td>
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<td>I often include examples of the experiences and perspectives of racial and ethnic groups during my classroom lessons (#8)</td>
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<td>4.58</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.90</td>
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Table 4.2. Mean, Median, Mode and Standard Deviation for Items of the MTCS (continued)

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<tr>
<th>Survey Item (Number on Survey)</th>
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<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
<td>I often promote diversity by the behaviors I exhibit (#9)</td>
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<td>4.89</td>
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<td>.90</td>
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<td>I establish strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic minority parents (#10)</td>
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<td>4.98</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.89</td>
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<td>I am knowledgeable about particular teaching strategies that affirm the racial and ethnic</td>
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<td>4.38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>identities of all students (#11)</td>
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<td>I have a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy (#12)</td>
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<td>4.15</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories (#13)</td>
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<td>I am knowledgeable of how historical experiences of various racial and ethnic minority</td>
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<td>4.44</td>
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<td>groups may affect students' learning (#14)</td>
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<td>I understand the various communication styles among different racial and ethnic minority</td>
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<td>4.56</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am knowledgeable about the various community resources within the city I teach (#16)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates negatively stated item
The mean, median, mode and standard deviation for each of the 20 items on the TMAS, based on a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, are presented in Table 4.3. There were a total of seven negatively stated items on the TMAS. Scores were reversed on all negatively stated items prior to statistical analysis. An analysis of each item on the TMAS demonstrates that elementary school teachers participating in the study self-reported higher levels of multicultural sensitivity and awareness with the following five items based on mean. The item, *I find the idea of teaching a culturally diverse group rewarding*, had the highest mean, 4.68 (SD = .51). The negatively stated items, *teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom* demonstrated a mean of 4.52 (SD = 0.85) and *Being multiculturally aware is not relevant for students*, showed a mean of 4.51 (SD = 0.66). The items, *regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of a classroom, it is important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity*, had a mean of 4.48 (SD = 0.75) and *I can learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds* demonstrated a mean of 4.46 (SD = 0.70). An analyses of each item also demonstrated that participants in the study self-reported lower levels of multicultural sensitivity and awareness with the following five items on the TMAS based on means. The item, *it is the teacher's responsibility to invite extended family members (e.g., cousins, grandparents, godparents, etc.) to attend parent-teacher conferences*, had the lowest mean of 2.77 (SD = 1.23) followed by *I believe the teacher's role needs to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally different backgrounds*, with a mean of 3.49 (SD = 0.91). The item, *as classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes increasingly challenging*, had a mean of 3.63 (SD = 1.21) and *when dealing with bilingual students, some teachers may misinterpret different
communication styles as behavior problems 3.87 (SD = 0.72). Finally, negatively stated items, 
sometimes I think there is too much emphasis placed on multicultural awareness and 
training for teachers and today's curriculum gives undue importance to multiculturalism and 
diversity both had means of 3.93 (SD = 96, 91).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item (Number on Survey)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find the idea of teaching a culturally diverse group rewarding (#1)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching methods need to be adapted to meet the needs of a culturally diverse group (#2)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes I think there is too much emphasis placed on multicultural awareness and training for teachers (#3)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have the responsibility to be aware of their students' cultural backgrounds (#4)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is the teacher's responsibility to invite extended family members (e.g., cousins, grandparents, godparents, etc.) to attend parent-teacher conferences (#5)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is not the teacher's responsibility to encourage pride in one's culture (#6)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes increasingly challenging (#7)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Table 4.3. Mean, Median, Mode and Standard Deviations for Items of the TMAS (continues)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item (Number on Survey)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe the teacher's role needs to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally different backgrounds (#8)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When dealing with bilingual students, some teachers may misinterpret different communication styles as behavior problems (#9)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes increasingly rewarding (#10)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds (#11)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Multicultural training for teachers is not necessary (#12)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In order to be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom (#13)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural awareness training can help me work more effectively with a diverse student population (#14)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Students should learn to communicate in English only (#15)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Table 4.3. Mean, Median, Mode and Standard Deviations for Items of the TMAS (continues)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item (Number on Survey)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Today's curriculum gives undue importance to multiculturalism and diversity (#16)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds of students I am/or will be working with (#17)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of a classroom class, it is important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity (#18)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Being multiculturally aware is not relevant for students (#19)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom (#20)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates negatively stated items

The mean, median, mode and standard deviation for the MTCS total and subscales (skills and knowledge), the TMAS total and the Cultural Proficiency Continuum self-assessment question are presented in Table 4.4. Total scores were calculated in two ways: (1) total scores were calculated for the surveys with no missing values and (2) total scores were calculated using mean substitution for missing values on individual items. Means were specifically calculated to determine the average response, and the standard deviation was calculated to determine the variability of responses compared to the mean.
Total scores calculated for surveys with no missing values demonstrated that elementary school teachers who participated in the study self-reported higher levels of multicultural teaching competence based on total scores of the MTCS. The highest possible score for the MTCS is 96 and the lowest score is 16. Scores are based on 92 of the total 112 participants who responded to all items on the survey. The total score mean was 71.4 (SD = 11.6), with a median of 72 and a mode of 64. Similarly, total scores calculated using mean substitution for missing values on individual items demonstrated that participants self-reported higher levels of multicultural teaching competence. The total score mean was 71.6 (SD = 11.2), with a median of 71.8 and a mode of 64. Scores are based on 112 of the participants included.

The subscales comprising the MTCS are based on multicultural teaching skills and multicultural teaching knowledge. The highest possible score in the MTCS multicultural teaching skill subscale is 60 and the lowest possible score is 10. Results are based on 101 of 112 participants answering all items on the subscale. Results of the multicultural teaching skills subscale for individuals who had no missing values demonstrated a skill subscale mean of 45.6 (SD = 7.1) with a median of 45 and mode of 42. Results of the multicultural teaching skills subscale for scores calculated using mean substitution for missing values on individual items demonstrated a mean of 46.2 (SD = 7.1) with a median of 46 and mode of 42. Results are based on 112 participants included. Total scores calculated both ways indicate that elementary school teachers self-reported higher levels of multicultural competence in their practice.

The highest possible score on the multicultural teaching knowledge subscale is 36 and the lowest possible score is 6. Results are based on 98 of the 112 participants who responded
to all items on the subscale. Results of the multicultural teaching knowledge subscale for scores that had no missing values indicate an average total score of 25.5 (SD = 5.6) with a median of 26 and a mode of 24. Additionally, results of the multicultural teaching knowledge subscale for scores calculated using mean substitution for individual items demonstrated a mean of 25.4 (SD = 5.4), with a median of 25.7 and a mode of 24. Results are based on 112 of the participants included. The scores demonstrate that participants self-reported higher levels in the area of multicultural teaching knowledge.

The highest possible score for the TMAS was 100 and the lowest possible score was 20. In observing scores for the TMAS, results demonstrated that elementary school teachers had generally positive self-perceptions of multicultural sensitivity and awareness. The mean total score for participants with no missing values was 81.8 (SD = 7.8), with a median of 82 and a mode of 85. Scores are based on 105 of the 112 participants who responded all items on the scale. Additionally, results of the TMAS for scores calculated using mean substitution for individual items demonstrated a mean score of 81.7 (SD = 7.9), with a median of 82 and a mode of 85. Results are based on 112 of the participants included in the study.

The highest possible score of the Cultural Proficiency Continuum self-assessment is 6 and the lowest possible score is 1. Results for the Cultural Proficiency (CP) Continuum self-assessment demonstrate a mean score of 5.11 (SD = 0.69), with a median of 5 and a mode of 5. Based on the CP Continuum self-assessment, elementary school teachers self-reported high levels of cultural proficiency. Overall, total scores the MTCS, TMAS and the CP Continuum self-assessment question indicated that teachers participating in the study self-reported high levels of multicultural teaching competence, knowledge sensitivity and awareness, as well as cultural proficiency.
All responses were considered normally distributed since skewness and kurtosis statistics were less than 1.5.
### Table 4.4. Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis for Subscales and Overall Total Scores for MTCS, TMAS and CP Continuum Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MTCS Total Score</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCS-1 Total Score</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCS Skills Subscale</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCS-1 Skills Subscale</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCS Knowledge Subscale</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTCS-1 Knowledge Subscale</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>-.41</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMAS Total Score</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMAS-1 Total Score</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Proficiency Continuum Self-Assessment Score</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>-.31</td>
<td>-.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Included in Table 4.5 are the frequencies and percentages for the cultural proficiency continuum self-assessment item that was included on the teacher survey. Responses for this item ranged from cultural proficiency to cultural destructiveness. Overall, teachers rated themselves higher on the cultural proficiency continuum, with 28.6% identifying as culturally proficient, the highest point on the continuum. Over half of the 112 participants, 54.5%, self-reported as culturally competent along the CP continuum, and 16.1% rated themselves culturally pre-competent. A total of 0.9% of participants rated themselves culturally blind, and no participants in the study self-reported cultural incapacity and cultural destructiveness.
Table 4.5. Frequencies and Percentages for Cultural Proficiency Continuum Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Proficiency</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Pre-Competence</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Blindness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Incapacity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Destructiveness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to examine levels of cultural proficiency, relative to the scores of the teacher surveyed, a crosstabulation analysis was performed using a chi square test. Participants were categorized into three categories according to their scores on the MTCS and TMAS. The low group was defined as more than one standard deviation below the mean on the scale for the group. The middle group was defined as plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean of the group. The high group was defined as one standard deviation above the mean on the scale for the group. Table 4.6 demonstrates results of the analysis. Of the 86 participants, who responded to all items on both surveys, 1.2% scored low on both the MTCS and TMAS. A total of 10.5% of participants demonstrated a medium score on the TMAS and a low score on the MTCS, and 1.2% scored high on the TMAS and low on the MTCS. Additionally, 15.1% of participants scored low on the TMAS and demonstrated a medium score on the MTCS. Over half, 52.3% of participants, demonstrated a medium score on both the MTCS and the TMAS. A total of 4.7% of participants scored high on the TMAS and had a medium score on the MTCS. A total of 4.7% of the participants had a medium score on the TMAS.
and a high score on the MTCS, and 10.5% of the participants scored high on both surveys. Overall, results demonstrated that most participants in the study self-reported medium levels of multicultural teaching competence and knowledge and medium levels of multicultural awareness and sensitivity.

Table 4.6. MTCS and TMAS Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MTCS</th>
<th>TMAS</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>% of Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( X^2 \) is not valid due to 44.4% of cells having expected frequencies less than five.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The quantitative findings for the first research question demonstrated data specific to identifying self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency of the teacher participants in the study. Below is a brief summary of findings pertinent to the quantitative research questions of the first phase of the study.

1. Each item on the MTCS was examined and participants self-reported at higher levels when responding to specific items (reported from highest to lowest): (1) *I establish*
strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic minority parents, (2) I often promote diversity by the behaviors I exhibit, (3) I make changes within the general school environment so that racial and ethnic minority students will have an equal opportunity for success and (4) I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching all yielded higher average scores. Participants self-reported at lower levels when responding to specific items (reported from lowest to highest): (1) I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories, (2) I consult regularly with other teachers or administrators to help me understand multicultural issues related to instruction, (3) I am knowledgeable about the various community resources within the city I teach and (4) I plan school events to increase students' knowledge about cultural experiences of various racial and ethnic groups all yielded lower average scores.

2. Each item on the TMAS was also examined, and participants self-reported at higher levels when responding to the following specific items (reported from highest to lowest): (1) I find the idea of teaching a culturally diverse group rewarding, (2) Teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom (negatively stated item), (3) Being multiculturally aware is not relevant for students (negatively stated item), (4) Regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of a classroom, it is important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity and (5) I can learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds all reported higher average scores. Participants self-reported at lower levels when responding to specific items (reported from lowest to highest): (1) It is the teacher's responsibility to invite extended family members (e.g., cousins, grandparents, godparents, etc.) to attend parent-teacher conferences, (2) I believe the teacher's role needs to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally different backgrounds, (3) As
classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes increasingly challenging. (4) When dealing with bilingual students, some teachers may misinterpret different communication styles as behavior problems. (5) Sometimes I think there is too much emphasis placed on multicultural awareness training for teachers (negatively stated item) and (6) Today's curriculum gives undue importance to multiculturalism and diversity (negatively stated item) all yielded lower average scores.

3. Based on the total scores of the Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale (MTCS), Teacher Multicultural Awareness Survey (TMAS) and the cultural proficiency continuum self-assessment, the majority of teacher participants self-rated medium to higher levels of cultural proficiency, including multicultural teaching competency and knowledge and multicultural sensitivity and awareness. The MTCS yielded an average total score of 70.5 based on a high possible score of 96 and a low score of 16. The TMAS yielded an average total score of 81.4 based on a high possible score of 100 and a low score of 20. Participants also rated their level of cultural competence by answering the cultural proficiency continuum self-assessment question, and results demonstrated an average total score of 5.11 based on a high possible score of 6 and a low score of 1, demonstrating higher levels of self-rated cultural competence and proficiency.

4. When responding to the cultural proficiency self-assessment, teachers rated themselves higher on the cultural proficiency continuum, with over 28% identifying culturally proficient, over 54% identifying culturally competent, and over 16% rating themselves culturally pre-competent. Less than 1% of participants rated themselves culturally blind, and no participants self-reported cultural incapacity and cultural destructiveness on the continuum.
5. The results of a crosstabulation of levels on the MTCS and the TMAS indicated that of the 86 participants who completed all items on both surveys, 52.3% of participants demonstrated a medium level on both the MTCS and the TMAS. Additionally, 15% of participants demonstrated a high level on the MTCS and low level on the TMAS. Also, 11% demonstrated high levels on both instruments, and 11% demonstrated a high level on the TMAS and a low level on the MTCS.

This chapter focused on the quantitative findings of elementary school teachers' self-reported levels of cultural proficiency, in order to answer the first question guiding the study, "What are the self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency among elementary school teachers in the San Diego Unified School District?" Elementary school teachers, participating in the study, self-reported levels of multicultural teaching competency in the areas of skill and knowledge and multicultural awareness and sensitivity. The following chapter includes significant findings from the personal interviews and classroom observations. Chapter five also includes the third phase of the study consisting of an analysis and discussion of findings across both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study.
CHAPTER 5

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to address the second question framing the study, the second phase of the study consisted of collecting qualitative data from elementary school teachers that would answer, "How are teacher self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency related to culturally proficient instructional strategies in the classroom? (a) How do teachers assess their personal culture, including how it impacts their students? (b) How do teachers' assess their students' culture, including how it impacts them personally, and how it influences instruction?" The cultural proficiency conceptual framework guided the research questions in this study. Two sources of qualitative data were obtained in order to understand the question in more detail: Educator personal interviews and classroom observations. The rationale for selecting these data was to understand how teachers understand and reflect on issues of culture in the classroom through interviews and to observe the practices as they are taking place through classroom observations.

This chapter begins with a description of the participants involved in the second phase of the study including how participants were selected to be involved in the qualitative phase. Next, findings during the personal interviews and classroom observations are summarized according to the three groups selected to be part of the second phase of the study: the high cultural proficiency group, the medium cultural proficiency group and the low cultural proficiency group. In particular, findings related to the five essential elements of cultural proficiency and emergent categories are presented through the reflective and instructional practices of the teachers. This chapter also presents the third phase of the study,
which is the integration of both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. In particular, the third phase was used to find consistencies and inconsistencies between self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency and reflective and instructional practices of the teachers participating in the second phase. It also was used to examine differences in the instructional strategies of teachers who self-perceive as having a high level of cultural proficiency, a medium level of cultural proficiency, or a low level of cultural proficiency relative to the scores of the teachers surveyed.

**DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 112 elementary school teachers participated in the survey portion of the study. Of the 112 participants, a total of six teachers were selected to take part in the personal interviews and classroom observations. Participants selected for the second phase of the study were divided into three groups based on the survey portion of the study. The low cultural proficiency group was defined as more than one standard deviation below the mean on two scales for the group. The medium cultural proficiency group was defined as plus or minus one standard deviation of the mean on both scales for the group, and the high group was defined as more than one standard deviation above the mean on two scales for the group. The six participants selected were divided in three categories: (1) two participants who self-reported high levels of cultural proficiency, (2) two who self-reported average levels of cultural proficiency and (3) two who self-reported low levels of cultural proficiency relative to the scores of the teachers surveyed. Selection of participants for the three groups was based on total scores for the Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale and the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey.

Participants interested in participating in the second phase of the study were asked to
provide their contact information in order to indicate they were interested. In the initial survey, 15 participants expressed an interest in participating in the personal interviews and classroom observations. Two of those did not complete the full instruments and so were not selected as potential candidates for the second phase. The remaining 13 potential participants for the qualitative portion of the study are presented in Table 5.1. Of the thirteen potential teachers for the second phase of the study, participant #1 and participant #2 were selected to take part in the group that scored lower levels of cultural proficiency relative to the scores of the participants surveyed. Participant #3 was originally randomly selected; however, she changed her mind about participating in the study. There were no potential participants who scored low on both surveys, and so participants who scored low on one instrument were selected. In the categories where there were more than two potential participants, the teachers were selected based on simple random sampling. Simple random sampling means that each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected (Mertens, 2005). The researcher randomly drew names in the categories that included more than two potential participants. In the category that included the participants who scored average levels of cultural proficiency, participant #5 and #8 were randomly selected from a total of five participants. Participants #7 and #10 do not have classrooms and are resource teachers who conduct a "pull-out" program at their school site, and participant #6 did not respond to the e-mail from the researcher. There were no potential participants who scored high on both instruments, so participants who scored high on one instrument were selected. Only two of the potential participants scored high on one of the instruments, and those were participants #12 and #13, and both were selected to be in the category of participants demonstrating higher levels of cultural proficiency relative to the scores of the group.
Table 5.1. Overview of the Selection Process for the Qualitative Phase of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MTCS &amp; TMAS</th>
<th>&lt;74</th>
<th>74-90</th>
<th>&gt;90</th>
</tr>
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Table 5.1. Overview of the Selection Process for the Qualitative Phase of the Study (continued)

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Note. Participants' name in bold were selected for the qualitative phase of the study using simple random sampling. * Participants unable to participate in study.
In order to answer the research questions specific to the qualitative phase of the study, the researcher collected data through personal interviews and classroom observations. The transcriptions from six teacher interviews and 12 observations (two full day observations per teacher) provided a large quantity of research in order to examine how self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency are related to culturally proficient strategies in the classroom. An analysis of the data collected resulted in the researcher utilizing the essential elements of cultural proficiency as themes to examine the data. The essential elements of cultural proficiency are an integral component of the cultural proficiency theoretical framework. They are the following: (1) Assessing cultural knowledge, (2) Valuing diversity, (3) Managing the dynamics of difference, (4) Adapting to diversity and (5) Institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Additionally, new themes emerged that focused on factors related to teacher delivery of culturally proficient instructional strategies. A description of the themes and categories that emerged from the interviews and classroom observations are presented in Table 5.2. The themes were used to analyze data in order to address the question, "How are teacher self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency related to culturally proficient instructional strategies in the classroom?" Additionally, the main purpose of the interviews was to answer the questions, "How do teachers assess their personal culture, including how it impacts their students?" and "How do teachers assess their students' culture, including how it impacts them personally and how it influences instruction?" These questions are answered throughout the discussion, but in particular within the theme of assessing cultural knowledge.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2. Essential Elements and Emerging Categories</th>
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<td>Essential Element of Cultural Proficiency</td>
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<td>Assessing Cultural Knowledge</td>
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<td>Valuing Diversity</td>
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<td>Adapting to Diversity</td>
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<td>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge</td>
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**HIGH CULTURAL PROFICIENCY GROUP: EVA AND KIM**

Eva has been a teacher for 25 years, and 22 of those years have been in the San Diego Unified School District. Most of her teaching experience has been in special education, kindergarten and first grade. She is a teacher at Azucena Elementary, which has a student population that is 98% Hispanic, 81% English Language Learners, and 100% of the student population are categorized as socioeconomically disadvantaged. She has been teaching transitional kindergarten for the past two years. "A transitional kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate for those students who will have a fifth birthday between the month of October and December of the academic school year," as stated by the California
Department of Education (2013a). According to Eva, the grade was created in response to parents and educators feeling that the typical kindergarten curriculum is not developmentally appropriate for that specific age group.

Kim, the second teacher selected in the high group has been teaching for 11 years and all have been at Date Gardens Elementary. Date Gardens Elementary has a student population comprised of 37% Hispanic students, 29% African-American students (the school district categorizes African-American and African students in the same group), 24% Indo-Chinese, 4% White and 1% Asian. Approximately 44% are English Language Learners, and 100% are categorized as socioeconomically disadvantaged. Kim has taught various grade levels and is currently teaching third grade.

**Essential Element #1, Assessing Cultural Knowledge**

Across personal interviews and classroom observations, the first essential element, assessing cultural knowledge, was evident for both participants in the high group in reflective and teaching practices. Assessing cultural knowledge is described as the ability to evaluate the culture of organizations and/or the culture of individuals in the educational environment. The ability to do so improves cross-cultural communication and improves the experience of the participants within the setting (CampbellJones et al., 2010). Two categories emerged from this essential element: assessing personal culture and how it influences interactions with students and assessing student's culture.
The first category that emerged under the essential element of assessing cultural knowledge is assessing personal culture and how it influences interactions with students.

During the interview, when Eva was asked about her personal culture, she responded:

I have a spiritual culture, where my intent is to always be a better person and to always grow in compassion for myself and for others. Then there's my Latina culture, which is from my parents. Then I have an artistic culture, which started in college, and which I carry on, informally. I don't belong to any artistic guilds or the museums or anything, but it's very important to me. I make time to do art.

Eva felt that her culture was very important for her in her role as an educator. She defined culture as a system of values, habits, actions and rituals, which are learned from your family. As an adult, you continue them or you shift them, depending on your needs. She was very clear that her culture influences how she interacts with students:

My spiritual culture helps me to stay focused on the positive, treat the whole child, focus on building their self-esteem, and have them feel like they're part of the community… that what they say and do is important, and that they know they belong to us and to each other. Then my Latina culture affects the way I interact with parents. My mom was very afraid of school. I want to make sure I give my parents my cell number. I want to make sure that school is accessible to them.

Eva places high value on community building and all students feeling like they belong. She expressed the importance of making her classroom environment really positive because her classroom is, for many of her students, their first introduction to school.

Additionally, Eva believes sharing her culture with her students contributes to community building and connecting with students: "In writer's workshop I write a lot about when I was five and things that happened to me, like falling off the swings, getting lost." She expressed that for her it is important that students feel safe and understood.
Similarly, Kim defines culture as beliefs, customs and religion of a particular group. The group could be a social group or an economic group, and how it works together, the things they normally do, and the things they have in common culturally. When asked to define her personal culture, she stated:

I think of my African-American culture, coming from Louisiana, very persistent, hardworking, very trusting and kind. I think more character traits that I would define as being family oriented, very respectful, and friendly. Just like the Southern way of getting along with everyone and taking people at face value. Always doing your best. Coming from a single mother of eight, very independent, and strong willed.

Many of Kim's experiences that shaped her as an educator came from her experiences growing up in Louisiana. Her experiences in the school system there influenced her idea of what it means to be a teacher and how she supports students. She endured challenging times both in the community that she grew up in and in the educational system. Kim strongly believes that her culture has an effect on how she interacts with her students:

My upbringing does [affect how I interact with students] because things were not always given to me. Coming from Louisiana, it was mostly black and white. I have often shared that with the students. They don't know what I had to endure, so I talk about my school years when I had a Caucasian teacher that did not call on me for a whole year, because of the color of my skin, because we got bussed out. I had to live that. That would tear a child down, but what I did was I used education. She didn't recognize me in the classroom when I raised my hand, but she had to recognize me at the end of the year, because I made straight A's, so I got it that way. I just say sometimes people going to get you down.

Kim is very transparent with her students about her cultural upbringing. She shares about how she witnessed many difficult things growing up. She witnessed how poverty and drugs drastically impacted her family. Her brothers’ dropping out of school also impacted them, and being the youngest of eight children, she was impacted by the death of two of her brothers. She shares her experiences with her students during classroom discussions because she wants to relay the message that their personal choices will have an impact on their future.
Although she had teachers that stereotyped her (she was bussed out of her community and attended school in a different area), she also had teachers who believed in her, and she had her mother and brothers that pushed her:

Even though my mom didn't graduate, she was pushing me, and my brothers didn't graduate, but they were pushing me. They said, "Look, Kim, you're gonna do it." They just kept pushing and pushing and believing in me. I saw the bad choices that people made, and I saw the outcomes since I am the youngest of eight. I had a choice, and they had choices.

Kim believes that her culture, what she has seen, what she has done and what she chose not to do, influences what she does with her students because she had the opportunity to make many choices in life. She wants her students to understand there are no bad students; there are only students who make bad choices. She stresses that for her, this work is about passion, she wants the best for her students. Her passion lies with helping others: "I just want to save someone's life because somebody did it for me."

Both Eva and Kim reflect on their own culture and how their culture impacts the students in their classrooms. They both discussed the importance of culture as a significant factor that impacts them personally and the classroom environment. Additionally, they both addressed the importance of understanding the culture of their students and methods they use to assess their culture.

**ASSESSING STUDENT CULTURE**

The second category that emerged from the essential element assessing cultural knowledge was assessing student culture. Both Eva and Kim considered it important to understand various aspects of their students' cultures in order to make instruction and the classroom culture stronger. When asked about how she learned about her students' cultures, Eva responded:
On the first Friday before school starts, we meet all the parents. We have an orientation. I ask parents about what their expectations are for school, what are their concerns, what are their worries. Some of the parents, I see them almost every day, so they're able to talk about it. I try to ask them about their families, too, like how are their little ones doing, just so they'll know that I care about them. Then if something really serious happens, they'll be more likely to talk to me about it.

Connecting with parents was a theme that was important to Eva. During the classroom observations it was evident that parents felt comfortable walking in and out of the classroom as school began and students were eating breakfast. She responded to any questions or concerns and communicated in their home language, both Spanish and English. It was evident that she knew about the home life of her students, and additionally she made sure the students' home life was represented in class. On the tables where students sit in groups, each student's name with a picture of a parent was taped to their individual seating area. Also, pictures of students reading with their families were displayed on a bulletin board in another area of the classroom.

Another way that Eva described learning about her students' cultures is through writer's workshop. Sometimes the students write about their storybook assignments, but other times they write about themselves. She described this process as an opportunity for her to learn about them, where they go, and what they do with their parents. "At this age they're very free, and they want to talk a lot. They want to share a lot, so I try really hard to make time to listen to them, and acknowledge what they're saying," she said. As students share about events that take place in their lives or what home life is like for them, she also shares about her experiences, "Yep, that happened to me when I was little. My parents would yell when I was little, and I would go under the table, because some of them [students] say things like that." Eva wants her students to feel that they are not alone, that sometimes things like that happen and that they are safe.
Additionally, a strategy Eva uses to get to know her students is during the morning message, which they participate in every day. They write a message for the class that begins with "Dear 205" (Their classroom number). "In our morning message, I try to get them to tell me about something that happened to them that we can write about. Then I'll share something about me too," she said. Eva highly values having a good sense of the culture of the students that are in her class:

I'm very aware that they're second language learners. I'm very aware that they come from busy families. A lot of them have brothers and sisters. I'm flexible about forgetting folders or homework or things like that because I know it's very hectic. They're only five.

She also stressed the importance of understanding that her students are English Language Learners and strategies to support them in English language development are essential to their learning: "Academically, I try to use the second language strategies to help them understand. They can speak to me in Spanish or English, even though I'm encouraging their English," she said. She sees having more than one language as an asset and supports students being strong in both. "At parent conferences I always tell them [parents and students] that having two languages is like having two dollars. You double whatever you have. Sort of always maintain that. I think that's very hard to do," she said.

For Kim, assessing student culture is important in creating a classroom environment where student learning is facilitated. "When they first come in, I have a questionnaire for them. I want to know who they are, things that they like, that they have siblings, their favorite things, things they don't like in school," she said. She also stated that it is important for her to know about their aspirations: "I want to know if they have goals, do they plan on going to college and which college, I get a little idea of them and then push my views on it a little bit, like getting them thinking about college," she said.
Another strategy she uses that focuses on assessing student culture is talking to students specifically about their culture and then accessing specific cultural traditions in order to have the class learn about each other. "I talk with the students and ask, 'What do you want to present to the class to help us learn more about you?' It's about appreciation," she said. After the students present about their culture and family traditions, they compare for differences and commonalities. "We all have family gatherings. We all have music. We have food. There's so many things that we have in common that it just makes you overlook the differences, and the kids love it, and the parents embrace it," she said.

A point that Kim stressed is never assuming that her students know what she is talking about and never assuming she knows everything about her students:

I have to make sure that they understand what I am saying. I have my Somali babies. I have my Vietnamese babies. I have my Hispanic American and my African-American babies. You can't assume that students know just because they can read a word. When I did the lesson today and I asked who understands, did you see how many people shrugged their shoulders today? Not everybody understood probably like four or five people. They didn't know that, so you just cannot automatically assume.

Kim made a reference to an Envision Math lesson she was giving students that focused on division and estimating quotients. Although all students appeared to be engaged in writing and solving the math word problem, when she asked students about the division question, only one student replied, and so she checked-in with all students for understanding. She shared the following:

I have to … I know some things are prevalent in some cultures. They may be privy to some knowledge, but I teach my babies as if they know nothing. I start everything from scratch and I build, I build, I build. It is like a KWL [a graphic organizer where the K symbolizes what you already know, the W symbolizes what you want to learn and the L symbolizes what you learned after the lesson has been presented]. …Tell me what you know about this, this and this, so I can get an idea.
Overall both Eva and Kim value assessing cultural knowledge. Another aspect of assessing cultural knowledge is assessing how students learn best (Nuri Robins et al., 2006). Eva ensures that she includes various modalities of learning during instructional time. During her visit in Eva's classroom, the researcher observed partner work, group work, whole group instruction, students presenting information, students guiding conversations, re-enactments, rhyming games, physical activity to learn pronunciation of new words, social time to engage in conversations, community station, silent reading, drawing, writing stories, writing about feelings, computer work, puzzles, solving problems with manipulatives, singing, poetry, writing on white boards, and other modalities that engaged the diversity of learners.

Although Kim had a much stricter and controlled environment, the researcher was able to observe a variety of learning modalities such as partner talk, partner work, whole group instruction, the use of graphic organizers to facilitate discussions and writing, partner writing, individual writing, group reading, silent reading, the use of cultural references in various lessons, the use of various texts and media that promote diverse points of view, one-on-one support, a discussion of real life situations to facilitate learning, active math games, mad libs, a game of silly scenarios to engage students in discussions, and the use of media such as Envision Math on the promethean board while students sit together on the rug.

**Essential Element #2, Valuing Diversity**

Across the personal interviews and classroom observations, the second essential element, valuing diversity, was a theme for both participants in the high group in terms of reflective and teaching practices. "A teacher who values diversity teaches with the intention of valuing diversity and paying attention to those things that reflect diversity in the
classroom," writes Nuri Robins et al. (2006, p. 126). It is about fostering a learning community and recognizing that diversity will always be present in the classroom, and it needs to be acknowledged in classroom materials, in instructional practices, and in the attention the educator gives to the diversity of students in the classroom. Two categories that emerged from the essential element valuing diversity are valuing diversity in instruction and community.

**Valuing Diversity in Instruction**

The element of valuing diversity was evident in teaching practices of both Eva and Kim. Eva teaches a classroom of 19 students who are all classified as Hispanic except one, who is African-American. Of the 19 students, 17 are classified as English Language Learners. Although many of her students are from a similar ethnic background, Eva attempts to bring out each student's unique voice in her teaching lessons. Eva shared the following:

In writer's workshop I start with a mini lesson. I model that I'm thinking of something to write about. I'll go, I'll think out loud, and then I'll decide on an idea that I think is exciting or that means something to me that day. I'll model drawing and then adding the words. Then I hide that piece of paper because it's my idea and my writing and I want them to show me their ideas and their writing. They sit at their tables, and then we pass around a block, and they take turns asking the person with the block, "What are you going to write about?" Then they tell them. Then the block gets passed around.

Her students get to share their ideas and experiences with the other students in a community setting. The other students get to listen to the ideas and experiences of their classmates. During a classroom visit, the researcher observed students sharing their personal stories to the class during a lesson focused on learning about shapes. After Eva drew a lion with shapes that included a medium circle in the middle of the chart paper, a curvy round circle for the mane, a snout as an upside down triangle (like a pizza slice as she described),
two ovals (like footballs) for eyes with smaller ovals on the inside of the ovals, and a curvy line for a mouth, she then shared with students that it was their turn.

Brian volunteered, walked to the front of the group and said "draw an oval in the middle then seven circles in the middle, the circles for the eyes." Brian told a story about how he saw a frog when he was at the park with his family.

Next Marissa shared about how she saw a frog at the park. Eva thanked Brian for drawing a frog and then said it's Cuauhtemoc's turn. Cuauhtemoc walked to the front of the room. He said, "Draw an oval in the middle, draw an oval next to it, draw a curvy line next to the oval."

A student raises his hand and yells "dog!"

"He got it!" Cuauhtemoc yells, pointing at the boy… "It's a dog!" Cuauhtemoc shares with the class that he has a dog.

The researcher observed Eva instructing many lessons where the student voice was important. All of her lessons required active student participation and sharing. Eva shared, "Throughout the day I have a really strong belief that they [the students] need to teach and learn from each other." Another practice that was evident in the observation was how she acknowledged each student throughout the day as they were participating in class work. She made positive statements such as "Good job, Juan!", "Good work, Maria!", "You got it, Ali!" and "Yay, Ryan!"

During lessons she made a conscious choice to address students as she was teaching. For example, during a writing lesson, she said, "Did you hear what Jason said? He was showing you how to draw a C. Penelope this is how you draw a C." She demonstrated using body movements. "Look! Sara is ready; she has her hand on her shoulders, does it look like
this? Now it's going to get really hard," she stated in a low voice. All students responded, "Nooooo!" Eva answered, "Everyone say, I can do it!" Students then responded, "I can do it!"

Kim has an ethnically diverse classroom that includes African-American, Somali, Hispanic and Vietnamese students. She sees valuing diversity as an opportunity for learning to take place. "Sometimes the kids will come dressed in their attire and we get to learn more about their culture. It's cultural pride because we all have something," she said. Kim actively includes lessons that appreciate the cultures of the students in her class and acknowledges cultures that are not represented. She shared, "I celebrate every holiday on the calendar. So far we celebrated Hanukkah, Chinese New Year, we learned African-American celebrations, and we celebrated Ramadan. We celebrate the holidays and we have lessons about them."

An observation the researcher made during a vocabulary lesson was how she used examples given by the students. For example, as she defined the word pungent, she gave an example of a Mexican candy a student had shared about, chamoy. This caused many students to smile and nod; some said, "I know what chamoy is!" In the interview, she also described a lesson that focused on learning about money. "I drew a carne asada burrito, rice, sambusa, fried chicken and foods from various cultures so the kids could pick what they wanted to write about in the math word problem. They mixed it up and they picked from different foods," she said. She, like Eva, stressed the importance of learning from each other in the classroom.

A concern that she shared was that she also wants to prepare her students for a competitive society:
I respect cultural norms, but I want them to socialize and be well rounded. Even though some of my Vietnamese students may be shy and reserved, they need to be social, so for a lot of my lessons you turn and talk to your neighbor. I respect that cultural norms, but at the same time I want them to ease into it, so they can have that balance.

COMMUNITY

A category that emerged from the essential element of valuing diversity was community. An initial observation the researcher made in the classroom was the manner in which Eva took attendance both mornings. As she called names, students pointed out to her which students were absent. She responded, "Everyone close your eyes, think about Elias and Nayeli, imagine them feeling better and returning to class, and everyone say Elias Joson we hope you feel better." All students repeated what she said. Then, she said, "Nayeli Jaramillo, we hope you feel better." All students repeated with their eyes closed. Eva described this as a ritual for her class when taking attendance because she wants students to know that when they are absent, they are missed and the class looks forward to their return. In her schooling experiences growing up, she witnessed teachers speaking rudely of students when they were absent, so for her, it is important that her students know they belong to the classroom community.

Eva expressed a strong value about creating community in the classroom. During the interview she expressed the importance of her students feeling like they belong, support each other, and are part of the community. Throughout the day, the researcher observed Eva give positive reinforcement and encourage relationship building. During lessons she made comments like, "Good job friends! Let's all repeat, I am ready to work! (students repeat), You are ready to work! (students repeat), I am awesome! (students repeat) You are awesome! (students repeat). They recited this in a circle holding hands. Eva shared:
Throughout the day I have a really strong belief that they need to teach and learn from each other. I want them to talk things out and to be caring about each other because I think it doesn't matter if you're very intelligent. If you don't have a good sense of yourself or care about others you might not go very far.

Although the conversation specific to community was not as prevalent in the interview with Kim, during the observations, the researcher had the opportunity to experience an expression of community taking place in the classroom. Kim took opportunities to have discussions with her students about concerns they have. In a conversation where the topic was bad habits, a student shared, "I know a friend who has a really bad habit because my dad works with him, and he actually hides to smoke." Kim responded, "When you have to sneak around to do something that's bad for you, you are probably making a bad choice." Another student shared, "Me and my mom's friend and her daughters were outside of our house, and this one man was drunk, screaming, yelling around our house." Kim then responded, "I grew up in apartments, and when you have someone who has no common sense you let the cops handle it." Jenny raises her hand. She says, "My dad's mom smokes a lot, and sometimes she sneaks out of the house and smokes." Kim then told a story about being in the hospital with a lady that couldn't breathe because of her husband's second hand smoke. Students were making comments about their personal lives and sharing some of their personal concerns. These conversations that included all students participating in the dialogue were observed three times by the researcher.

During the interview, Kim shared that parent involvement and participation is critical for her when it comes to building community and a successful class environment:

When I see my parents, I saw one this morning, that's the first thing I do [greet them]…because it's family. Your babies are in my care. I treat them like they're mine, so we are family here. Every year I've always had 100% participation from parents. Always. I think that's one of my biggest accomplishments … my interaction with parents, the community, and the partners.
Both Eva and Kim value a sense of community in their classrooms and with the parents of their students. Another theme that stood out in the interviews and classroom observations is how they manage the dynamics of difference in their classrooms.

**Essential Element #3, Managing the Dynamics of Difference**

The personal interviews and classroom observations also gave the researcher the opportunity to learn about how the third essential element, managing the dynamics of difference, was embedded in the reflective and teaching practices of both Eva and Kim. Managing the dynamics of difference is described as the manner in which individuals and/or organizations manage conflict and how committed they are to acquiring and modeling conflict resolution skills so that members of the organization recognize that resolving conflicts can result in a positive experience. Two additional categories that emerged from this essential element were caring environment and organization. Eva described how class meetings provide an opportunity for her classroom to manage differences:

Most of the time we do it [solve conflicts] in class meetings, where one person will tell what happened, then another person will tell their side. You get story one. Then you get story two. I tell them, "You're not going to get in trouble. You're not going to get a sad note. What's the most important thing? It's very hard to do, but the most important thing is to tell the truth." Almost like 99% of the time, they will tell the truth. Then we'll just applaud them for telling the truth. We'll talk about what we can do better next time. I'll try, we'll kind of rehearse it during the day and like the next day before recess if it's something that happened at recess, what to do instead. We act it out. Then from the class meeting I can tell what kids could help be problem solvers, and I'll call them out and praise that.

During the observations in the classroom, when a conflict took place in the classroom, Eva had a conversation in private with the students. If the conflict took place during instruction, she took time to have a 2-minute conversation quietly with the student or students. No one else was able to hear the conversation, which was usually about discussing
the problem or the behavior and asking the student what they could do different or how the
students could solve the conflict with each other. In some instances, students began to cry in
the classroom when there was a conflict with another student, or a decision was made that
they were not in agreement with. In one situation, a student was upset because the teacher
talked with her (privately) about saying something that was not nice. The student became
upset and began to cry. Eva acknowledged her feelings and shared that she understood why
she was upset. She asked the student to take some time to calm down and when she was
ready and felt trust, she could join the group at the rug. Five minutes later the student walked
over to the rug to join the group. Eva acknowledged her, and the students gave her a silent
clap.

When students did not follow the class rules or behaved in a manner that hurt another
student, they wrote a letter to their friends apologizing and drew a picture of them. Before
they delivered the letter to the student they hurt, they showed the letter to Eva and apologized
to her. Eva accepted their apology and asked them to share the letter and picture with the
friends whose feelings they hurt.

Another strategy Eva is developing is teaching students to be leaders in managing
conflict. She currently selects two sheriffs every morning (all students have a turn) to assist
her with the responsibilities of the day. They help to pass out breakfast, make sure students
are in a straight line when they leave the classroom, help pass out papers during class, and
other responsibilities. "Being a sheriff gives them the chance to be a problem solver, a
leader, a helper, a doer. They practice all those skills of getting along with others, and they're
in charge of dealing with power," she said. Her goal is for the sheriffs to learn how to
support students in managing conflict.
Kim believes one way that differences are managed is by students learning about each other, culturally. As mentioned before, she provides opportunities for students to learn about their differences, and to also see the commonalities that connect them to each other. When a problem takes place in the classroom, Kim believes in addressing it in the moment. "I need to let them know how to handle social situations. I just have to. That is my job. I tell them, I am not always going to be with you, so what did you do and how do you handle that? I want them to think," she said.

During an observation, the researcher observed Kim have a community conversation with her students specific to a conflict in the classroom. The day before, the students had a substitute teacher, and the substitute teacher left negative remarks about many of the students' behavior. Kim asked the students, "When I'm not here, what do I expect?" The students replied, "For us to have integrity always." Kim then gave them a strong lecture on character education because of their behavior the day before. She discussed the importance of having integrity and strong social skills. "I have high expectations for you always!" she said to them raising her voice. Then she said, "If you're at table one and you didn't show integrity to the highest level, stand up." Four students stood. "Table two if you were out of character and you didn't do the right thing, stand up," all students stand, except one. "I have Harmony sitting down, does anyone disagree with that?" No one responds. Table 3 then stands when she asks them about their integrity. Then Kim says, "Why do you think I'm doing this? You have to be respectful at all times...smarts are important but personality is very important too." After they sit back down, students all raise their hand and want to contribute to the topic. One student said, "You're doing this so we can do better every day."
Another said, "So we can reflect." Another student adds, "So when we grow up, we can do a good job."

When students had conflict with each other, she encouraged them to talk to each other respectfully first before bringing it to an adult. She shared with them, "You have to give each other a chance. Give them an opportunity before you say I'm going to tell the teacher."

**Caring Environment**

A category that emerged from the essential element of managing the dynamics of difference is environment of caring. Both Eva and Kim demonstrated caring and facilitated a caring learning environment that at times prevented conflict from escalating or taking place.

For many of Eva's students, her classroom is their first introduction to the school system. Many times, it is difficult for them to understand some of the rules and practices that take place. When students get upset and begin to cry, Eva hugs them, pats their back or shares kind and caring words with them. She also teaches students to support each other and show kindness when one of them is having a tough time. A situation the researcher observed was when a student, Diana, began to cry because someone opened the fish tank and her table was responsible for it that day. Eva said, "It's okay Diana. Everyone say, It's okay, Diana." All students repeated what Eva said. The students then demonstrated kindness to Diana. All the students at her table surrounded her and made sure she was okay. The sheriff for the day sat next to her and rubbed her back while she cried with her head down. One student tickled her to make her smile. Diana raised her head, laughed and began working again. The student said, "Teacher I was tickling her and she was laughing! Diana was sad and now she's feeling better!"
The researcher observed various situations where the students supported each other through caring behavior. Additionally, Eva demonstrated caring behavior and validated their behavior through positive remarks. For example, when it was time to transition to another activity, she made statements such as, "Everyone Freeze! Everyone begin to sing… I am awesome! You are awesome! I am proud of you, you are sharing, you are caring, please clean up and sit at your table for lunch."

During the interviews, Kim demonstrated a strong sense of caring for her students by conveying the message that for her it is critical that all of her students understand the material and are part of the classroom community. Because growing up she experienced having teachers who neglected aspects of her learning, she believes it is unjust to do the same. She wants to make sure all students are moving academically. She sees every situation as an opportunity to learn something new, academically or socially. Kim shared that part of how she demonstrates caring is being honest with her students and giving them advice about the real world. During the classroom visits, the researcher observed Kim having conversations with her students about the importance of being honest with each other and respecting each other. Throughout the observation, she saw Kim make sure her students were understanding the material and not falling behind. She encouraged asking questions and getting one-on-one support from her.

**Organization and Predictability**

Another emergent theme under the essential element of managing the dynamics of difference that both Eva and Kim demonstrated in their teaching practices was organization and predictability in order to reduce conflict in class. During the classroom visits the researcher observed Eva's classroom being one where predictability was evident with the
schedule of the day's events. She began her mornings with breakfast, the announcement of sheriffs for the day, and then a song (which required students to move around), followed by writers workshop, the morning message, a bathroom break, literacy, literacy stations, recess, shapes and vocabulary, stations, lunch time, rest time, math and then stations again. The only difference was that on Wednesdays she taught science in the afternoons. Overall, her schedule was predictable and what was evident in the class were the smooth transitions that took place mostly via chants and songs that positively affirmed her students work. "1, 2, 3, eyes on me! 1, 2, 3, *ojos aquí!*" she said.

Students responded with the same chant. Then students sang, "I am a reader, I am a writer, I am a talker, I am the best!" They continued singing using hand gestures, "I believe in me, because, because I can do anything, I can do anything! I can do anything, because, because, I believe in me!" Students then tell other students: "I believe in you because I believe in me!" This chant was one of many Eva used to transition to a new activity. Additionally, she utilized music to set the mood for the learning environment. When they were writing independently she had classical music in the background. When they were resting after lunch she had meditation music.

When Kim communicated with her students, she communicated in a very stern, clear manner. Most of the time, she raised her voice when calling attention to issues taking place in the classroom. The researcher observed her to be very stern about following class rules, and she lectured her students when class rules were not followed. Additionally, she was organized with her class schedule and required her students to make transitions in an organized manner. Her classroom was also well organized and neat. During the interview, Kim discussed the importance of having a schedule and being organized in order to avoid
conflicts. She feels that students do better in a classroom setting that is predictable for them because many of her students have hectic lives outside of the classroom. When discussing her organized schedule, she stated, "They love it, because they want structure. They want organization. They want consistency. They want it. They become confident and talk for themselves."

When the researcher first arrived to the school, she met Kim's class as they lined up on the blacktop ready to walk to their classroom. The students walked quietly in a straight line and when they arrived to the classroom, they automatically lined-up outside the classroom (still in a straight line), pulled out their homework folders from their backpacks and waited as Kim let each student in one by one. She shook the hand of the student who was first in line and said to him, "Good morning, Mario." She looked at Mario directly, and then Mario responded, "Good morning, Miss Rogers." He handed her his folder and walked in to class to sit at his table. "Good morning, Valeria," Kim said and shook her hand. Valeria then responded, "Good morning, Miss Rogers." She handed Kim the homework folder and walked in. Kim proceeded to do this with every student making sure she greeted each of them.

Another strategy Kim used was that she assigned students to be table leaders to facilitate organization at the tables, such as passing out materials and collecting homework. She also assigned computer monitors to distribute and collect laptops that students used to type papers and for the learning upgrade program.

**Essential Element #4, Adapting to Diversity**

Across the personal interviews and classroom observations, the fourth essential element, adapting to diversity, also emerged as a theme for both participants in the high
group both in reflective and teaching practices. Adapting to diversity involves being open to learning about cultural groups different from your own and the ability to use others' cultural experiences and backgrounds in all areas of the organization (CampbellJones et al., 2010).

For Eva, a distinct cultural characteristic of her students is that her class is their first introduction to a full day of school:

Being five years old, this is really the first time, even though most of them have had preschool, but this is the first time they have to be with other kids and the teacher figure, for six-and-a-half hours, and that's a long day for them. I'm very aware of that. I try to give them lots of breaks.

In order to meet a specific need of her students, Eva provides a restroom break in the morning before recess, where they all walk in line singing songs together as a class, and one in the afternoon, after lunch. She also provides some rest time after lunch, where students put their heads down on their desk, the lights are dimmed a bit, and there is soft, meditation music playing the background. She does this, so they are rested and grounded, after running around at lunchtime. She creates opportunities to sing, dance and move around if she notices her students are feeling restless. Her instruction is conducted in a manner in which she constantly assesses the behavior of her students and adapts according to their specific needs.

Eva has also adapted her instruction to meet the needs of English Language Learners. During the classroom observation, the researcher observed Eva reading Little Red Riding Hood, a book that is a part of the mandated curriculum. She began by singing a song, "Dear readers, it's time to think, stand tall, it's time to learn, it's time to think!" Then she said, "This is very exciting! We have a new story about a devious wolf and we have a game! We're going to take turns! Are you sitting on your apple?" Eva stood up to show pictures from the book as she began to tell the story of Little Red Riding Hood and how she met a shy and
hungry wolf on her way to visit grandma. "Devious is another word for bad or sneaky," she explained. Her voice changed when the wolf was talking.

"Oh no!" some of the students said.

Then she responded, "Talk to your partners, what's going on?" Eva checked with each of the partner groups as they partner-talked to make sure they understood what took place in the story. Some students said, "The wolf wants to take the bread." Others said, "He wants to hurt her." She responded, "Do you tell people where you live?" She asked because Little Red Riding Hood told the Wolf that she is going to her grandmother's house. The students responded, "No!" She added, "No, we don't, we never tell strangers where we live." After a portion of the book was read, the students preceded to act out the scene in the forest. Half of the students played the wolf and half played Little Red Riding Hood and partnered up. They began to act out the scene. "Okay, wolves look mean! Wolves, walk around being mean and snarling," she said. Then, she added, "Can you walk around the forest? Howling, crawling, snarling." The students who were playing the wolves did. "All the Little Red Riding Hoods, you have to find your wolf, then say, where are you going wolf?" she said. Students laughed and were being silly. When students lost focus, Eva said, "Touch heads, ears and nose," to get their attention again.

Eva was struggling getting them back on track, so they took a break. Then she got partner volunteers as the others watched them perform. "Was the wolf scary?" she asked.

"No!" responded the students.

Eva said, "He was friendly but inside he wanted to eat her." The actors received a round of applause, and she said to everyone, "Give yourself a pat on the back!" All students
gave themselves a pat on back. "And give someone a high five," she said. They all gave each other high fives. "Good job!" she said.

Eva then instructed the students to go to their group tables and draw Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf. As they finished their drawing, Eva meets with each of them asks them what the story is about, to check for understanding. One student was trying to explain the story and was stuck. She then switched from explaining in English to switching to Spanish to finish. Eva nodded that she understood and said, "Okay, thank you." Students were able to switch to Spanish if they needed to. The activities that included having a conversation about the story and connecting it to a life situation, changing voice tones, partner talks, group acting, drawing, and verbally telling Eva what was taking place in the story, provided support for students who are learning a new language.

Kim recognizes the vast diversity in her class and in the school community. During the interview and classroom observations, the researcher experienced how Kim adapts to diversity and at the same time maintains her cultural values in the classroom and with parents. When discussing how she greets parents, she stated:

I give the Vietnamese women a kiss on the cheek, and I can give the Vietnamese men hugs. They'll take a hug. Somali men, I just do the handshake, and we just do this [gesturing quick handshake]. I respect the culture.

In her interactions with parents, Kim describes that she hugs parents as a way of greeting them because it is part of her culture and she lets parents know that it is. In the interview she stated that not every parent may like a hug, but they are used to it now. However, with Somali parents she doesn't hug, she does a quick handshake, out of respect for their culture. While she has adapted to diversity in that instance she also maintained her culture and perhaps imposed her culture on some of the parents who were not comfortable with hugging at the beginning. At the same time, the success she has with parent
participation is significant. As mentioned in a previous chapter, Gay (2010) emphasizes that building a bridge between the home and school experience is a validating and affirming component of being a culturally responsive educator.

Another expression of how Kim adapts to diversity is the classroom conversation she has with her students during instruction when they bring up relevant issues to their life. An example of this is when children have talked to her, during class discussions about their religions, and had specific conversations because her students were expressing a specific aspect of their culture. "The Somali students [who are Muslim] were sharing how they pray, then the Vietnamese students were telling us about Buddha, and that's okay. They know I go to a place on Sunday, but I can't really tell them where I go," she said. They discuss various ways that religious holidays are celebrated in their specific cultures, and Kim provides the time for those discussions. These discussions have provided the students the opportunity to engage in cross-cultural communication and learn how to assess and adapt to each other's cultural practices.

As previously mentioned, Kim described that in her teaching practices, she provides instruction as if all her students are English Language Learners. She also shared that because some students come with specific knowledge because of their cultural upbringing and others do not, she never assumes that students know what she is talking about. She provides various opportunities for the students in her class to discuss prior knowledge before speaking about the topic. During English Language Development, Kim asked the students, "What are synonyms?"

Some students began to answer, "Words that are the same," but others did not know what synonyms were.
"Where is the synonyms chart?" she asked a student.

The student pointed to the synonyms chart readily displayed in the room, and the student answered, "Words that are the same or similar." The students began to read a sentence on the Promethean board, "The shade moved close." They have to select the synonym that best fit: *near, wide, quickly*.

Kim said, "Compare and justify with the person sitting next to you and when you finish show me thumbs up." The students began to partner talk and discuss the sentence. A healthy chatter was evident in the classroom. When all partner groups raised their thumbs, Kim asked for the answer.

Most students answered, "Near," and one student said, "Wide." "Show me what wide looks like," she asked all the students. Students demonstrated wide by stretching their hands far apart. Once all students gave the correct answer and she asked if there were any questions about the sentence, she moved on to the next one.

**Essential Element # 5, Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**

The personal interviews and classroom observations provided the researcher with insight about how Eva and Kim demonstrate the fifth essential element, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, in their reflective and teaching practices. When an individual or organization values the element of institutionalizing cultural knowledge, a commitment exists to learn about many cultural groups and perspectives and making these perspectives an integral component of the organizations' culture and practices (CampbellJones et al., 2010). During the interview Eva shared that she is very aware that her students are, mostly all, second language learners. She also discussed that she is very conscious that they are only five years old, and it is their first time being at school for a long period of time and being
separated from their parents. In her classroom, part of the culture she has institutionalized is attending to the social emotional growth of her students. In order to support students transitioning in to school culture and feeling a strong sense of self and community, Eva places a strong emphasis on developing a healthy sense of self, relationship building and developing trust with each other:

I try to pick topics and activities that they are interested in. We used to have a birthday center because everyone turns five in November, so we had a birthday disco area where we had music, and they could dance. That was to celebrate their birthdays… I have lots of stories about how to deal with fear, how to let go of, not let go, how to know that it's okay to be here without mom, about school, lots of books about getting acquainted to school and how to interact with friends…Since they go to kindergarten again next year they give the time to really talk about the social emotional aspect of children.

Eva's classroom strongly emphasized visuals that focused on social emotional learning. For example, one area of the white board had pictures of faces with different feelings, and stated: *Feelings can grow: Bothered, mad, livid and enraged.* Another area demonstrated the "I Care" Rules: (1) We listen to each other. (2) We care about each other's feelings. (3) We use caring language. (4) Hands are for helping not for hurting. (5) We are responsible for what we say and do. The "I Care" Rules were also posted on the door with a picture of each of them. Another area demonstrated a large poster that read, "Hands are for helping, we are best friends!" The poster had every student's handprints on it. A corner of the room was a community center, and it read, *I am a good citizen.* Students spent time in the community center socializing with each other. At the center of her classroom, she had a chart paper hanging that read in big letters: *Dear 101, I love you! Evita.*

During instruction, she also provides many visuals. "I have a lot of visuals, like pictures of behavior and a lot of drawings. If I'm talking about something, I'll bring in the real
thing, things like that," she said. She described a situation that took place on Halloween where students' culture was embedded in instruction:

In October, after Halloween, all the kids were excited and everything, and, there was a rumor, in the school that there were ghosts in the bathroom, because it echoes. Going to a public bathroom is new for kinders because they usually go with their parents. One of the parents said that her child was too afraid to go, and that there were ghosts in the bathroom. Even though we have a big demonstration on how to use the bathrooms, we went back and went through it. They said that the flushing scared them. We talked about that. Then we made posters about, "Don't be afraid of the bathroom." Think of something else. Think of something happy. Then we'd go in pairs. Actually we still went as a whole class. Sometimes it was during the day, we'd go in pairs. That's something from them that we addressed, and we made it academic.

In order to support the English Language Learners in her class, Eva fills her instruction with culturally relevant strategies that include physical involvement with language, the use of multiple sources to present information, acting out words and interactive activities. She shared the following:

We work a lot at this grade level with phonemic awareness, to play with the sounds. So if they touch something that rhymes with "ball," "wall." They have to really start listening to the sound. Because their tendency is to say, "ball," "bat," "bucket," "blue." They're listening, but it's only to the first sound.

The researcher observed Eva playing a game in which she asked students to touch something in the room that rhymes with look. The students ran to touch books. Then she asked them to touch something that rhymes with blue. The students ran to the shelves and touched the glue. The game continued on as they practice rhyming and the students appeared to be enjoying the game.

Additionally, the research observed Eva using other strategies. In class she told her students, "Dear 205, (saying it aloud while touching the words with her hand) today we read. Can you pick someone to write new?" Students picked Penelope. Then Eva said using a robot voice, "Hand on shoulders, like a robot, nnn-eee-www." Eva used her hand gestures to
begin the word on top of her shoulder and ran her hand down her arm as she sounded out the word new. "I'm going to write it, and you can trace over it. Stand up and read your words to two people," she said. Eva has institutionalized many of these strategies in order to meet the needs of her students.

During the class visits, the researcher had an opportunity to observe Kim's physical classroom, and it represented her students and the instruction that took place in class. One area had a writer's workshop wall entitled, We Are College Bound. Up on that wall were student essays discussing where they want to attend college. Along one side of the wall were class-made posters for her students that focused on English language development topics that they could easily access, such as homophones, sequence words, paragraph structure, sentences, adjectives and nouns. Another area displayed student essays entitled, "If I could live anywhere in the world." This area also represented a geography section. She had a math corner with math vocabulary and sentence starters for discussing math word problems. Everywhere around the room, she had displayed books of inspiring women for Women's History Month. She had books of Rosa Parks, astronaut Mae Jemison, boxer Laila Ali, Mary McLeod Bethune, Anne Frank, astronaut Ellen Ochoa, Michelle Kwan, Helen Keller, Amelia Earhart, and other books such as Woman Inventors and Famous Asian Americans. Kim's class library had a selection of multicultural literature available for students to check out. During the interview, Kim discussed the importance of putting her students' essays up on the wall:

I want them to know they are valued and their thoughts are appreciated and acknowledged. At one point they had their New Year's resolutions up, and their dreams. I've taken those down [She has new work up], but their voices are heard and their culture rings out.
During the classroom visits, the researcher observed the students in Kim's class completing an essay on how one of the women, in the many books she had available, inspired them. She asked them to write about what aspects of their character impacted them. After selecting a book for their essay, they began brainstorming with a graphic organizer in the shape of a flower, and jotting down an idea on each petal. After that was complete, they wrote essays about what they learned and how they were inspired. They received extra support from Kim when they had questions as they were completing the essay. She checked in with each of them to monitor their progress and answer any concerns.

Both Eva and Kim exhibited the essential elements of cultural proficiency in their reflective and instructional practices. Many of the practices taking place in Eva and Kim's classrooms can be categorized in more than one of the essential elements. For example, the strategies Eva has implemented to meet the needs of her students that are classified as English Language Learners can be categorized within the essential element of adapting to diversity and also within the essential element of institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Kim, for example, utilized classroom dialogue with her students in order to assess the cultural knowledge in her classroom and teach about adapting to diversity as well. Both teachers in the high group demonstrated the essential elements in their reflective and teaching practices and also demonstrated alignment with their cultural proficiency self-perceived scores.

Discussion of Findings

In the personal interviews and classroom observations with Eva, the researcher was able to identify evidence of the essential elements throughout aspects of reflective and instructional practice. Eva demonstrated strong cultural self-awareness, including how her culture impacts the students she works with. She demonstrated cultural knowledge about her
students and how she uses the cultural knowledge during instruction to create a culture of community in the classroom. The researcher also documented how she tailors instruction to meet the needs of her specific student population. Eva also discussed the strategies she uses to manage the dynamics of difference in the classroom and the ways in which she is taking teachable moments for students to begin to learn how to manage conflict as well. One strategy is through classroom meetings and another is by assigning leadership roles. The researcher observed one way in which Eva has adapted to diversity, through the instructional strategies focused on supporting English Language Learners. Additionally, Eva demonstrated the essential element of institutionalizing cultural knowledge through instructional practices focused on her students' specific needs, including their social-emotional concerns. This was evident during instruction and in the physical classroom space.

Eva's culturally proficient reflective and instructional practices demonstrated consistency with her total scores on the MTCS, TMAS and cultural proficiency self-assessment. Eva's total score for the MTCS was 79; on a scale ranging from 16 to 96. Items that she indicated strongly or moderately agreeing with that were evident in her reflective and instructional practices included items such as *I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching and I promote diversity by the behaviors I exhibit.* On the TMAS, Eva's total score was a 94, on a scale ranging from 20 to 100. An item that she indicated strongly agreeing to was *Teacher's have the responsibility to be aware of their students' cultural backgrounds*, and an item she strongly disagreed with was *Students should learn to communicate in English only.* On the cultural proficiency self-assessment, Eva self-reported she was a 6, which was the highest possible score.
During the personal interviews and classroom observations with Kim, the researcher identified evidence of the essential elements throughout aspects of her reflective and instructional practices. Kim demonstrated knowledge of her personal culture and shared how her students were affected by it. She also shared how she assessed her students' cultures through questionnaires at the beginning of the year and through dialogue with her students. Kim demonstrated how she values diversity in her classroom by including culturally relevant themes in her teaching and assigning her students presentations of cultural celebrations meaningful to them. She discussed managing the dynamics of difference through community conversations as conflicts happen in the classroom so that students learn from them in the moment. One of the ways she demonstrated adapting to diversity was by tailoring instruction and by addressing the needs of English Language Learners and other students in her class. Additionally she is institutionalizing cultural knowledge by addressing various points of view in history and literature in class.

Kim's culturally proficient reflective and instructional practices demonstrated consistency with her total scores on the MTCS, TMAS and cultural proficiency self-assessment. Kim's total score for the MTCS was 96 on a scale ranging from 16 to 96. Items that she indicated strongly agreeing with that were evident in her reflective and instructional practices, included items such as *I establish strong supportive relationships with ethnic and minority parents* and *I plan my activities to celebrate diverse cultural practices in my classroom*. On the TMAS, Kim's total score was a 93 on a scale ranging from 20 to 100. An item that she indicated strongly agreeing to was *Regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of a classroom, it is important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity*, and an item she strongly disagreed with was *Teaching students about cultural diversity will only
create conflict in the classroom. On the cultural proficiency self-assessment, Kim self-reported she was a 6, which was the highest possible score.

**Medium Cultural Proficiency Group: Elizabeth and Margaret**

Elizabeth has been a teacher for 10 years and is currently a third grade teacher at Delicias Elementary in the San Diego Unified School District. Delicias Elementary has a student population that is 76% Hispanic, 17% African-American, 2% Indo-Chinese, followed by 1% Filipino and 1% Pacific Islander. The students classified as English Language Learners are 65% of the school, and 100% of the student population are classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged. In Elizabeth's classroom, the majority of her students are Hispanic, followed by African-American students.

Margaret has been teaching for 13 years in the same classroom at Date Gardens Elementary. Prior to that, she taught for the American Red Cross in a volunteer program at a private high school for 11 years. Date Gardens Elementary has a student population comprised of 37% Hispanic students, 29% African-American students (the school district categorizes African-American and African students in the same group), 24% Indo-Chinese, 4% White and 1% Asian. Approximately 44% are English Language Learners, and 100% are categorized as socioeconomically disadvantaged. Margaret is currently teaching fourth grade.

**Essential Element #1, Assessing Cultural Knowledge**

Across personal interviews and classroom observations, the first essential element, assessing cultural knowledge, was evident for both Elizabeth and Margaret in some of the reflective and teaching practices.
ASSESSING PERSONAL CULTURE AND HOW IT INFLUENCES INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

Elizabeth defined culture as "Your history, from where your family or people are from. It could also be regional, like a place where people have certain celebrations or religions." She also expressed that she felt people use culture as part of their identity to help describe themselves and their place in the world. When asked to define her personal culture, Elizabeth shared the following:

I'm very like San Diegan. I grew up here and I am from not too far away from here. I think my parents really didn't emphasize our background too much. My mom's dad was adopted. They don't even know where he came from, and my dad's parents are mostly Irish. I don't know… That was never really what defined us. My parents were always really about education and being an individual and making your own decisions. I didn't grow up with a whole lot of cultural emphasis. I'm kind of the boring white mix, European decent, but I think a lot of it came from being a part of a community like here in San Diego, certain schools or activities. I was in orchestra for many years. That really helped define me. Then in college, I did a lot of dancing [swing dancing], so I was more with that kind of group of friends.

When asked if her personal culture influenced how she interacted with students during instruction she did not know, although she did feel that in social occasions, like recess, conversations about culture have taken place. Elizabeth stated:

I rarely share about myself just because I like to stay focused on the work, but I do a lot of talking to kids out on the playground and at recess, and we do a lot of field trips at our school, and that is a really good time. Kids love to ask me about my own children, and my husband.

She also shared that she likes to play Irish music like jigs, for example. "They all think that's all really funny, but none of them have really figured out why I like to do it. They are like, oh like St. Patrick's Day, and I say, yep, that's right," she said. During the interview, Elizabeth shared that she gets very caught up in the reading, writing and math. "That's what I'm supposed to teach all day, and that's what I push them to do," she said.
On the other hand, Margaret defined culture as being so many different things. She shared that culture is language as well as social economic level. "Culture is your education, your perspectives and your geographical location, which changes," she said. For Margaret, culture has many facets to it. "Culture's a difficult thing to keyhole or to define in a limited manner because it is so diverse," she added. When asked to define her personal culture, she shared the following:

My personal culture is all over the place. My one set of grandparents were European immigrants…My Irish grandmother came from a convent in Ireland and was devoutly Catholic. She gave me my name, Margaret. I took Communion in the Catholic Church and definitely would not be a Catholic anymore or not a Catholic after reaching adolescence…my grandfather was Austrian. He was a criminologist for LAPD and, because of that, he was a good friend with the Gypsies and some of my memories, as a little kid, four and five year old, were the Gypsies in Los Angeles…My mom was a nurse. My dad was going to school to become an artist, and, because of babysitter problems, there were times that I would go with him to the Art Center in Los Angeles and sit by the model's stand because they didn't have a babysitter…My mother's parents were from Ohio, very Midwestern.

During the interview, Margaret was very passionate about describing her culture. Along with information about her family's culture, she shared an experience that completely changed her life and her view of culture. "When I was 17, I was part of an experiment and was offered a scholarship, and I circumnavigated the globe on the University of the Seven Seas as a 17-year-old and a high school student," she said. She left Los Angeles on February 5th and docked in New York on June 24th. "It was an incredibly eye-opening experience and an incredibly politically advantageous time," she said. Margaret described traveling to Tahiti, New Zealand, the Straits, Sydney, Melbourne, Singapore, India, Sri Lanka, Mombasa, Somalia, Djibouti, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Greece, Italy, Algeria, Morocco and Madeira.

She shared many of the experiences she had that shifted her perspective of the world.

"Maybe that's part of the reason I feel so strongly that it's such a global culture. Students
have to be able to adapt to diversity. Not only change some things but also value other things, because you don't want to lose it," she said.

During the interview, Margaret shared that her students are very curious. "They always ask, how old are you, and how old is your husband. They have no social filters," she remarked. Margaret said she has shared about how she grew up in LA, and that she has a background in art. She has also shown her students her father's artwork, and shared about some of the trips she has taken. Margaret stated that she shares with her students, to some extent, but it's not a focused lesson. "It's just as it occurs," she said.

When asked if her culture influences how she interacts with her students during instruction, she responded:

Yes, it does, maybe too much. I try and influence their attitudes about being open to differences and also valuing their own backgrounds. When I tell the kids, it's a gift if you still speak a second language, it's a gift you need to treasure, because it really is. It will be with them the rest of their lives. They shouldn't ignore it or feel embarrassed about it because that's really a gift for the rest of your life, that you have that ability. So, treasure it and nurture it.

Elizabeth and Margaret had different expressions of personal culture. Elizabeth expressed a connection to her San Diego culture and stated that family background was not discussed very much in her upbringing. However, she did express a connection to her Irish culture. During the personal interview with Margaret, she demonstrated the importance of her personal culture, and all of the significant people and experiences that have impacted her sense of culture. Both shared their culture with students mostly in social situations.

**Assessing Student Culture**

When asked about how she learned about her students' cultures, Elizabeth responded with the following statement:
Usually, I try to talk to kids outside of class, like playground and lunch, and that is how I really get to learn more about their personal lives. Occasionally, it will come up in writing when a student is writing a story. We do a lot of personal narratives, and if they are writing about themselves, sometimes that comes out.

Elizabeth discussed that for her, connecting with students outside of instruction, was how she learned about her students. She described an interaction she had with an Islamic student that she tried to get to know better by asking her about her culture during recess on the playground. "Culture is not necessarily part of the instruction. When culture comes into my instruction, it is mostly like literacy, and it will be like a theme in a book or in social studies, especially celebrating holidays and those kinds of things," she said. She described an example used in literacy:

We just had St. Patrick's Day. We read a story about a leprechaun, and we're working on tricksters. He's a good example of a trickster, and so that is the kind of time I can bring in culture into the instruction, but I have to say it never occurs to me in math or science.

She also shared that she learned the most about her students' cultures by meeting their parents during conferences and nighttime events that the school puts on, such as testing night, literacy night, and Mother and Father's Day celebrations. "It's when I see them [students] with their parents that I learn more about where they come from, and there are a lot of kids that maybe I just don't quite understand until I meet their parents," she said.

During the interview Elizabeth also shared that the biggest challenge at her school site is the culture of poverty. "There are so many kids that have nothing at home. Literally have nothing and that's a big challenge…we do free lunch, we do a free breakfast, getting those kids fed, getting them here and trying their best," she said. She felt that this was a big challenge "especially when I have no parent support at all."

Elizabeth also shared how she assesses students' culture and works with them according to their individual life circumstance. "One of the kids has a really rough home life,
and so my interactions with him are challenging because he does have such a rough home life," she said. Elizabeth shared that the student never brings back anything signed, and his home phone number is always disconnected. "There is really difficult communication, and I think it just makes it harder for him to really concentrate and focus during school," she added. Because of his life circumstance, Elizabeth expressed being very patient with him, and as a result he has been doing really well in class. "He assaulted two teachers last year…and being a mom to him has been what I have tried to do this year…I give him a lot of personal attention and really try to encourage him…the negatives don't work. It's got to be all positives," she said.

In the interview, Margaret reiterated that she had a very curious and talkative group. She shared that she learned from her students mainly through personal interactions with them and having conversations. Margaret expressed interest and concern for the home and personal lives of her students. "I learn about them because they share, sometimes too much with me," she said. She shared the story of a student who had just shared with her the day before that her dad hit her, and the student was really mad at her dad because he hit really hard. Margaret was going to share the information with the counselor. During the interview she shared each of her students' situations from her perception. One example she mentioned was a student named Trisha:

I can tell you Trisha lives with her grandmother and older brothers and uncles. Her mom has not really been a part of her life, for years. Her dad, she saw for the first time in three years at Christmas. She's a striving kid but she's very lonely. She's very lonely. I think she feels isolated, gender-wise as she's looking for a woman role model. Her grandmother's a very older Vietnamese lady who has very traditional views and wears a hat and Trisha is not.

In describing the life of another one of her students, Evelyn Tran, she described the mother as "one of those dragon mothers." She described the definition of a dragon mother as
the following: "The mothers that are so … they stress their kids so much. They have to excel." Margaret's initial rule was that if you got a basic or below on a test she wanted students to take it home to their parents and have them sign it, so that parents were well informed about what was going on. "She [Evelyn] had a hysterical meltdown…the only time she got a basic on a test. She was going to be kicked out of the house," Margaret said. According to Margaret, Evelyn was shaking hysterically when she shared this information. Because of the student's reaction, Margaret made arrangements with her to work on answering the questions on the test after school, so that her parents didn't have to sign the test paper. During the interview Margaret shared information about each of her students, and it was apparent that she cares very much for the students she has in her class. At the same time, there were also some generalizations made about parents. For example, Margaret referred to a mother as "one of those dragon mothers," and when discussing another student's father, she described him as "a typical Somali man who is off doing his thing" because she expressed the student's father was not very active in the student's life. She did, however, share that those generalizations did not apply to all of the parents in her class from a similar ethnicity and was conscious that they were generalizations based on some of her experiences of only some parents.

Overall, Elizabeth and Margaret had different ways in which they expressed the assessment of their personal culture. However, they expressed similar ways in which they learn about their students' culture, through personal interactions and conversations. Both shared that they do not purposely provide opportunities during class to share about their personal culture, only as it occurs, but their student's culture inevitably emerges during writing assignments or class conversations regarding a topic that may connect.
Essential Element #2, Valuing Diversity

Across personal interviews and classroom observations, the second essential element, valuing diversity, was evident for both participants in the medium group in many of the reflective and teaching practices.

Valuing Diversity in Instruction

During the classroom visits, the researcher observed how Elizabeth paired students and grouped students in a way that demonstrated the essential element of valuing diversity. During math, Elizabeth selected partners, a mix of gender and ethnically diverse partners. They found a comfortable place to sit and solved math problems together, focusing on explaining how they came to the correct answer. Afterwards, students met at the rug as a group, and the partners had to stand in the front with the class microphone and demonstrate their math problems on the Promethean board and discuss how they came to the answer. In the interview, Elizabeth shared the following:

The ability mixing is challenging, especially since I don't want certain kids to stand out, like Joseph, my new kid, who's got an IEP. I don't want him to stand out, but his ability is so low, that it is really hard for me to partner him up with anybody, and my class is great. Usually somebody will pick him, which is fantastic, and if I purposely pair him up, it works out too. I have really nice kids too. They know I expect them to help each other, and I have that expectation of, if you're done, you need to help someone else.

The researcher observed how Elizabeth prioritized diversity in her student grouping, and she also employed various modalities for learning to take place. During a day of observation, the researcher observed group work, partner work (assigned and self selected), individual work (in a comfortable place selected by the student and assigned seating with privacy boards), whole class work on the rug, and casual and social conversations specific to the subject matter. Additionally, the researcher noticed how the students accessed the whole classroom for their learning and they moved around the classroom with a natural flow.
Margaret expressed how she holds discussion about diversity during literacy, especially when books lend themselves to the discussion. When the students were reading the Diary of Anne Frank they were engaged in a discussion of the atrocities Hitler ordered and the Nazis committed.

Because Hitler was being described as a fanatic, one student asked, "What are fanatics?"

Margaret used an example of terrorist groups, like Al-Qaeda, being fanatics to answer the student's question. Margaret was also mindful that she had Muslim children in her class. "Well, they were extreme groups of the religion. They are Muslims but they're an extreme group of Muslims. There are a huge number of people in the world who are Muslim who have no hostility towards anyone," she said. She then shared, "Hitler was a fanatic. He felt justified in singling out a religious group and killing them. We've had this before. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church, at one time, had the Inquisition. They singled out people that didn't believe in their religion and did horrible things." She wanted her students to understand that no religious group or ethnic group should be singled out. Additionally, she wanted her students to understand that ethnicity does not signify religion. "You can be an Arab and be Jewish or Christian; it doesn't mean that you are Muslim. Those are separate areas of your culture" she said. She also shared, "You can be Asian and be Christian, it doesn't mean you're a Buddhist."

Another characteristic of the essential element valuing diversity is respecting the learners and encouraging them to respect each other. Margaret had a very calm and patient demeanor when instructing and communicating with her students. A reason why students may have shared many of their personal and home concerns with Margaret could have been
because she communicated with them in a respectful manner. The researcher observed students feeling comfortable approaching her with questions and concerns. During instruction, the students continually raised their hand to participate. The researcher observed communication and interaction that did not come with judgment, criticism, annoyance or any other way of being that may have caused students to feel uncomfortable. Overall, her demeanor was one of approachability, care and concern.

COMMUNITY

During the interview, Elizabeth shared that she values community, and in the past she has done a community circle, where she asks questions, and they go around in a circle answering them. She feels that this year has been more challenging because of the different schedule with morning breakfast, then English Language Development (ELD), then power hour (which is the small group for literacy), and so by the time she begins her class it is like 10:45 am. She did share that in September, she focuses on community building activities, such as scavenger hunts, so that her students get to know each other. "I also have several homework activities I do in September where they have to bring certain things from home to share with the class," she said. Elizabeth also encourages her students to help and support each other in class:

Unless it's a test. I am very clear, but the rest of the time, it is fine to share answers at your table. It is fine to have a partner. When we take notes on the carpet, usually some of the kids are slower, and I will be like, "Okay copy off your neighbor." I mean that's fine. As long as they're not taking a test, you're welcome to share your information.

Thus, during the interview and in the classroom, Elizabeth emphasized students needing to help each other out.
During the personal interviews with Margaret, there were no explicit discussions focused on community; however, the researcher did observe that overall students got along well with each other in the classroom. Also, they felt very comfortable approaching Margaret to discuss personal and classroom concerns. The overall environment of the classroom was respectful.

Elizabeth values an environment where students support each other academically and learn from each other. It was very evident for the researcher during the observation. She also values setting the tone for the school year, through community building activities in September. Another theme that stood out in the interviews and classroom observations is how both Elizabeth and Margaret manage the dynamics of difference.

**Essential Element #3, Managing the Dynamics of Difference**

The personal interviews and classroom observations also gave the researcher the opportunity to learn about how the third essential element, managing the dynamics of difference, was embedded in the reflective and teaching practices of both Elizabeth and Margaret.

**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**

During the interview Elizabeth discussed how she manages conflict in the classroom: "It depends on the student. Some students have a lot more leeway than others. Like Casey is such a frequent flyer that he gets a wider berth than some of the other kids." Elizabeth shared that she gives verbal warnings first and if the verbal warning is not followed she puts the students name on the board, which for her is still a warning. "There is no consequence, but that's your warning, if you don't fix it, then you are going to owe me recess, or we call home,
but I'm really good at being very clear verbally, like this is what you need to fix," she said. During the observation, the researcher observed Elizabeth giving verbal warnings to her students, and the students re-directing their behavior. On one occasion, a student used an inappropriate word, and then Elizabeth called his attention and continued with the lesson. Some students made the sound "Ooooh," she then said, "Don't give attention to a negative comment," and continued the lesson. When asked how she handles conflict between students, she stated the following:

It depends on the kids, but I try to separate, listen to both sides, but I usually punish everybody. You're both involved. You're both guilty of something, and usually they sit out. They get a timeout. It depends on how escalated the situation is. I'm really against touching each other. That's my biggest … don't touch anybody ever. I will occasionally write a referral. I think I've only done like two this year, where if you're touching another kid and it caused the other kid harm, then you're going to the office, and hopefully Mrs. McMillan [the principal] will talk to you and change your behavior.

Elizabeth also shared that she likes to talk things out and that she likes to make kids write apology letters to each other. She stated that she would like to call home, but she feels like there are a lot of students that nothing will change if she does, so she chooses to take care of it herself.

Margaret shared that in her classroom she manages conflict by talking with the students involved in the conflict. For her, it depends on how serious it is. A lot of times she calls them to the back of the classroom and talks with them individually in order to resolve it. She shared about some of the discussions she has had with one of her students who was diagnosed autistic and who tends to focus on something to the extent that it's hard to get him to re-focus on something else. She resolves it by talking to him, trying to reason, and by really anticipating what's going to set him off. In her classroom, Margaret has three students who have been diagnosed with learning disabilities. The researcher observed that two of the
students, Juan and Rodolfo, sit in the back of the classroom, and Rodolfo, in particular, sits in
the back near the door separated from all the students. Rodolfo had a difficult time staying in
his seat and following instructions. The only time he focused was when he was on the
computer. At other times he was distracted or having side conversations with other students.
There were moments when instruction took place, and he was interrupting instruction by
calling Juan's attention. Almost every one of the students ignored him. Margaret at times
ignored his behavior, and at other times she approached him individually to redirect his
behavior. Rodolfo and Juan eventually left class for most of the day for special education
pull out.

**Caring Environment**

In her classroom, Elizabeth has established an environment where students are
continually encouraged to help and support each other. She also models the same for her
students. The researcher observed students working together and helping each other when
they needed it.

In the interview, when Margaret described each of her students, it was evident that
she cares about their personal and school experiences. During the observations, the
researcher observed how Margaret as a teacher demonstrated care with her students through
her personal interactions and how students approached her to have personal conversations
with her. She exhibited her patience, especially when working one-on-one with students who
needed a lot of support. She expressed her feelings about her class in this way:

This is a very interactive group….they're willing to take a risk to say their
opinion. That's important. They have to feel that way. They have to be able to
ask a question. This is a nice group of kids. They really do get along pretty well.
We have our spats. I feel so strongly about cruelty or bullying. They know my
feelings about that. They'll be very careful.
**Organization and Predictability**

During the classroom visits the researcher observed Elizabeth's classroom being one where organization and predictability were evident. The schedule was clearly posted on the board, visible for all students to see and explaining the day's events. She went over the schedule because there were some changes to it and answered all questions the students had about it. She referenced it throughout the day. The classroom was well organized. Students were seated in groups, the rug area was well defined and close to the Promethean board, and the library was in a specific corner of the room. The classroom was spacious, and everything seemed to be neatly organized, which created an atmosphere where students knew the expectations, knew where things went, and knew what areas they could utilize during instruction. Elizabeth emphasized that organization is a positive way to avoid conflict. "If they know their expectations, they shouldn't have any problems following them. I'm a big believer in preventative. If I'm doing everything I'm supposed to be doing, monitoring them, having the schedule posted, then usually nothing escalates into a conflict between students," she said. She emphasized the importance of having routines in place, for example, students knowing that homework is turned-in in the morning. Because of the organization in her classroom and the consistency and predictability, Elizabeth shared that she rarely has any behavior problems in her classroom. Additionally, during moments of transition from one subject to the next, the students transitioned smoothly without chaos and/or difficulties.

Another observation made by the researcher was that students had assigned duties in order to facilitate organization. For example, she had line monitors, students that were responsible for closing the door when the class left the classroom, and students responsible for the class library. A chart with the names of all the leaders and their duties was hanging on the wall.
Margaret stated during the interview that one way in which conflict is managed in her classroom is through a seating chart and line order. She also described providing an incentive and reward system by earning tickets for an auction:

They're mad for these tickets now because we started having an auction. We had two auctions. I've been trying to show them how an auction works. They use tickets instead of money. We have four or five prizes. Then, they get into it. They love the tickets. We set the rules. I'm not keeping track of your tickets. Your tickets are your tickets to be responsible for, because if this becomes a problem, we'll do away with the tickets. I don't want it to be a distraction from instruction. I want it to help with instruction.

**Essential Element #4, Adapting to Diversity**

During the classroom observations, the researcher observed that Elizabeth liked to do a lot of activities that are hands on where students got to move around. "I think that's partly because of their age. They really only have a half an hour attention span. I do try to plan a lot of groups for some things, partners for something, carpet for some things to mix it," she said. Aside from utilizing activities that meet the needs of their age, Elizabeth is mindful of having many second language learners in her class: "I do make sure I have a lot of visuals. Like you saw me show the Brain POP video. I like to do nice short visual clips that really illustrate things." She also shared that she likes to do hands on activities, especially with science.

During the observation, the researcher watched an activity where the students were measuring the volume of the liquid in syringes, beakers and graduated cylinders. They worked in their group together to answer the questions. Because the vocabulary was coming up on a test, Elizabeth wanted the students to see, touch and smell during the activity so they really were able to learn the vocabulary. Students each had a basket full of syringes, beakers and graduated cylinders and took turns looking at each item, measuring its content and recording answers. The students were all very engaged in the activity (except one who seemed a bit distracted). When they completed that part of the activity they had to answer
the questions out loud as a whole class activity. "Tommy, how many millileters did you get for the red liquid?" Elizabeth asked. Tommy gave the class the answer. Elizabeth said, "Does anyone agree or disagree with his answer?" Some students answered with slightly different responses because there were various syringes with red liquid distributed in the different groups. "Jesse, what did you get for the green liquid?" Students continued answering as a class, agreeing and disagreeing with each other. She then asked them to write the temperature. "What do we use to measure temperature?" She passed out thermometers. "Celsius is a metric unit, now we're reading the temperature in Fahrenheit, which is another system," she explained. Students complete the worksheets as they learn how to use the thermometer. When students finished the worksheet, they took turns answering the questions in the whole group, passing a microphone around as they answered. It seems that the students enjoyed using a microphone to answer questions:

Most of the kids couldn't even say thermometer. That's challenging because they need to see it, feel it, hold it, and some of it is their socioeconomic group. They're not exposed to that stuff. Some of it is their age… and some of it is language.

An observation that the researcher made is that during the interview, on three separate questions, Elizabeth described receiving no parent support with her students: "I don't get parent support from most students, so I will utilize other classes [for discipline]." She commented wanting to call home but feeling like nothing is going to change, when she is trying to discipline students.

Margaret demonstrated the essential element of adapting to diversity when she was explaining the need to be sensitive during a lesson from the week before when they read Anne Frank's Diary:

It brought up so many conflicts and the reasons for conflict, because I know their background, being very aware of being sensitive to not put them in a position where they felt uncomfortable or singled out. Both, explaining to the Vietnamese
children about the Vietnam War and their grandparents maybe being in prison, their feelings about that and then my Somali children, who are Muslim. You've got to be careful that you don't paint that group, as a whole, as some villain, because they aren't. I warn them all the time too, about stereotyping. You can't stereotype people. That's one of the ills of our society sometimes.

On various occasions during the interview, Margaret talked about being sensitive to her students' cultures and background during conversation in class.

**Essential Element #5, Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**

The personal interviews and classroom observations provided the researcher with insight about how Elizabeth and Margaret demonstrate the fifth essential element, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, in their reflective and teaching practices. When discussing how her students' culture is embedded in curriculum, Elizabeth responded:

I'm not really good at phrasing my questions to target that, but it does come up, especially during literacy, especially depending on our topic. Like the book we just read, *Mr. Lincoln's Way*, one of the issues was racism, and so some of the kids talked about their own experiences or seeing it. It really only comes up in literacy, and I don't usually initiate it unless we are doing more like a social studies type thing.

Elizabeth stated that when her class talks about racism, the students seem very knowledgeable about it. She shared that in January they had read a piece by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and issues of race came up. "It's hard for kids to identify with the books unless they've had a personal experience...Some kids were like, oh yeah, that happened to me, and the rest of the kids were like, Huh? What? I don't get it," she said. She shared that African-American students in her class understood the concept of racism easily. "A lot of my Hispanic students, which is the majority of my class, didn't quite catch on as easily. They were like, oh, that happened a long time ago. Well, it could still happen today," she said. She shared that they were having a difficult time understanding the concept. "It was more
something that happened in books. Whereas I'm sure they have examples in their personal lives, but they were having trouble making those kinds of connections," she said.

Elizabeth shared that she likes the students to make personal connections to things when they read: "We're doing a lot of response to literature. After you read a book you write about it, and I do encourage them to add a connection." Elizabeth encourages personal connections because she feels that makes the story more real to her students. "I don't think I ever point out the cultural aspects. In some books it's really obvious, but in most it isn't," she said.

Elizabeth stated that a huge factor that impedes her from institutionalizing culture knowledge as much as she would like is the focus on the California State Testing. She shared that she begins to integrate culture into lessons after the CST is done in May. "I do swing dancing lessons that's [sic] from the African-American community, and we watch some video clips, and we learn to dance. Those are times I can really bring it into my instruction," she said. She also shared that an art teacher comes in once a week and that students learn various forms of cultural art. "We're making maracas [this week], and we are going down to the museum, the Mingei Museum, which their whole thing is cultural [sic] and diversity, and it is art of the people. That's their thing," she said.

As mentioned in a previous section, Elizabeth has integrated strategies that support Second Language Learners, and the strategies have become part of the everyday curriculum. Among some of her colleagues, Elizabeth is known as the graphic organizer queen because she believes in using them to support students. The researcher observed strategies that she used in class during a literacy lesson that was focusing on folktales, specifically fairytales, fables and legends. First, she asked what students knew about each of the folktale styles and
if they could give examples of each. When describing Fairytales students selected "Cinderella and Rumpelstiltskin," for fables students listed "The Fox and the Crow and Zomo," and for legends, the students selected "Mulan and Leprechaun."

Elizabeth then instructed, "Discuss with your partner what makes a fairytale." Students began to discuss with a partner on the rug. Elizabeth next got their attention by counting down from five to one. Students raised their hand to answer the question, "What is a fairytale?"

Paloma said that a fairytale has magical characters in it.

Francisco said that it starts with "Once upon a time" and ends with "and they lived happily ever after."

Then Elizabeth said, "Now turn around and discuss the elements of a fable with your partners." After the students did, she called on students who raised their hand and who had not answered a question yet. After the students discussed elements of a fable and a legend, they moved on to the next part of the lesson.

Elizabeth then divided the class into three sections. One group was assigned to write elements of a fairytale on stickies, the next was assigned elements of fables on stickies and the last group was responsible for elements of legends on stickies. They each wrote one element on the sticky. She had chart paper up with three sections for each of the stickies. After they took time to write on their stickies, they met at the rug as a group and shared with their partner what each of them wrote. Afterwards, they took turns reading their sticky with the microphone. Once they read it, they walked to the chart paper and placed the sticky in the appropriate section. Afterwards, Elizabeth read a fable, Rumpelstiltskin, and the students completed a paragraph describing the elements that make Rumpelstiltskin a trickster.
Students read their paragraph out loud that described Rumpelstiltskin. She then read Zomo, an East African fable, and the students had to write in their journals why Zomo is a trickster. This assignment demonstrated many strategies that Elizabeth used to teach about elements of different folktales. The students seemed engaged throughout the lesson because they were completing a variety of tasks.

In the classroom, the researcher observed that there were multicultural books and books with diverse characters on the cover available for the students to check out in the class library. There were also some multicultural books displayed in the front of the classroom that were part of the folktale genre she discussed in class, such as Zomo, the Rabbit: A Trickster Tale from West Africa. There was a corner displayed with student self-portraits and student essays. Another area displayed students' multiplication scores on paper cars. The display was titled "Multiplication Races"; the cars were on a road and the higher the score the closer to the finish line the student's car was.

In Margaret's classroom, during the observations, the researcher watched how almost all of the students in her class participated in class discussions when a new theme was being introduced. For example, during a life science lesson, a student asked, "Why is it called life science?"

Margaret responded, "That's a great question! Because it's about living science. We're not going to start with animals or insects; we're going to start with plants." The first activity Margaret began with was creating a graphic organizer on chart paper that was divided into three sections: what they know, what they want to know and what they learned (after the lesson was completed). When she asked students what they know about plants, almost all of the students raised their hands.
"They produce seeds," responded Andrew.

Tania then said, "They do photosyn...thesis, whatever that's called."

Trisha shared, "They make air for humans and they breathe what we let out."

Ryan shared, "They need soil to grow."

Other students shared, "Plants have roots, they need sun, they make food, and they're green because of chlorophyll." The students then began discussing what they want to learn as a class.

One student shared, "How do they make roots while they grow?"

Another student wanted to know, "How do plants breathe?" and another shared, "How can plants be sunburned?"

One student, being silly, asked, "Can I put clothes on a plant?"

The students laughed and the teacher laughed and then shared with them that just like we wear clothes to stay warm, plants get covered up to keep from freezing too. A strategy she used to acknowledge students is to write their name next to whatever they shared on the graphic organizer. The researcher observed that when she was using a graphic organizer to discuss a topic, the students seemed to be highly engaged in the class discussion.

The researcher also observed Margaret having a discussion with a student about the essays the students were assigned to write in order to learn about a particular animal of their choice. One student, Soraya, chose to write about elephants. She approached Margaret to read a passage about the business of killing elephants for their tusks in order to sell ivory. As the student was reading, Margaret shared about how a lot of them get killed in central Africa and the student began to share her frustration about that. "What did the poor elephants do to
people?" she asked Margaret. Then she said, "That would be like elephants going around ripping people's skin off to sell!"

Margaret responded, "I know. I agree with you." After sharing her frustration, Soraya went back to her seat and continued her writing assignment. Margaret continued helping other students with their writing assignments.

Margaret shared that one of the ways in which culture is integrated into curriculum is through the books that the students read in class that spark discussion. For example, the students were reading *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell, and Margaret shared about the issues it brought up in class, specifically about stereotypes with gender roles. "The men are killed, most of them, and the women have to take on the role in this primitive society of being the hunters and the fishermen. They do a better job than the men and the men resent it," she explained. Margaret shared about the main character Karana: "She has been told, if she makes weapons, they'll fall apart in her hands and she'll be killed, because women don't make weapons." For Margaret this book provided a great opportunity to discuss stereotypes and gender roles.

An observation that the researcher made was that in the classroom there was some evidence of many multicultural books readily available for students to checkout. Also, she did observe one corner that had student work displayed; however, the rest of the class did not demonstrate student work or any visuals reflective of student culture.

**Discussion of Findings**

Both Elizabeth and Margaret exhibited the essential elements of cultural proficiency in some of their reflective and instructional practices. Elizabeth does not share about herself to her students except in social occasions. She also shared that she learns more about her
students in social situations and through parent nights as she meets her students' parents. She does not embed the practice into her instruction because she focuses more on math, literacy and other academics, which she feels pressured to teach her students. In learning about how the essential element of valuing diversity showed up in her teaching, Elizabeth shared that she works with students individually according to their life circumstance. She provides different interventions for different students depending on their specific needs. She values mixing partners and groups in class so that she maximizes on opportunities for learning to take place. She also values students learning from each other and supporting each other in class. When discussing the essential element of managing the dynamics of difference, Elizabeth discussed how she deals with discipline in the classroom. Although there was no discussion of a system that she uses for students to learn about managing conflict, it was evident that a lot of unnecessary conflict is avoided through her organization strategies in class. Elizabeth expressed the essential element of adapting to diversity through integrating teaching strategies that support students who have shorter attention spans because of age and strategies that support Second Language Learners. When discussing how she institutionalizes cultural knowledge in the classroom, Elizabeth shared that she has no time to implement culture in her class until after the CST, because of the pressure to do well on the test. The researcher did observe, however, Elizabeth implement strategies to support Second Language Learners and the use of a multicultural book during a literacy lesson.

Elizabeth's reflective and instructional practices demonstrated some consistency with her scores on the MTCS, TMAS and her cultural proficiency self-assessment score. Elizabeth's total score on the MTCS was 64 on a scale ranging from 16-96. An item that she slightly disagreed with was I often include examples of the experiences and perspectives of
racial and ethnic groups during my classroom lessons. She shared that conversations about racial and ethnic groups only happen if her students bring it up or if the text discusses the issue. Elizabeth indicated slightly agreeing with *I often promote diversity with the behaviors I exhibit*, which was evident in the manner in which she implemented valuing diversity. She indicated slightly agreeing to the item *I establish strong supportive relationships with minority parents*. The analysis of this question can only be based on the interview with Elizabeth, and there were some inconsistencies because she mentioned on three occasions feeling that she did not have parent support, so she tends to handle conflicts without them.

On the TMAS, Elizabeth's total score was a 76, on a scale ranging from 20 to 100. An item that she indicated strongly agreeing to was *I find the idea of teaching a culturally diverse group rewarding*. An item she disagreed with was *I believe the teacher's role needs to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally different backgrounds*. Her cultural proficiency self-assessment score was a 4, which self-identified her as culturally pre-competent.

Margaret expressed a deep understanding of her personal culture and shared that she mostly shares it with her students during informal situations. She also expressed an understanding of her student's cultures and was well informed of many of their life situations. She stated that her students share a lot of their personal information with her. She demonstrated that she valued diversity as she discussed being mindful of many of the cultural issues her students may face, for example, the Muslim students in her class being stereotyped as terrorists. She also had a demeanor that was respectful of the students in her class. During the interview, she expressed having discussions with students, based on required text, that focused on issues such as gender roles and the impact of war on different communities.
Margaret's reflective and instructional practices demonstrated some consistency with her scores on the MTCS, TMAS and her cultural proficiency self-assessment score. Margaret's total score on the MTCS was 72 on a scale ranging from 16-96. An item that she slightly agreed with was *I am knowledgeable of how historical experiences of various racial and ethnic minority groups affect students' learning*. This was demonstrated as she described the discussion she had with students as they read books such as Anne Frank, and students wanted to discuss the Vietnam War and some of the experiences of their grandparents. She also indicated slightly agreeing with *I plan my activities to celebrate diverse practices in the classroom*. She indicated moderately agreeing to *I have a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy*, and although there was evidence of some aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy, there were some inconsistencies with that score during the interview and classroom observations. On the TMAS, Margaret's total score was an 83 on a scale ranging from 20 to 100. An item that she indicated strongly agreeing to was *In order to be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences in the classroom*, and Margaret demonstrated that she was aware of the cultural differences of her students and had discussions with them about it. Another item she agreed with was *I am aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds of students I am/or will be working with*. Margaret did share knowledge about each of her students' cultural backgrounds. At the same time, she made generalizations about specific cultural groups. On the cultural proficiency self-assessment, Margaret self-identified as culturally competent, selecting a 5.

**LOW CULTURAL PROFICIENCY GROUP: DEBBIE AND CATHERINE**

Debbie has been a teacher for 29 years and has taught kindergarten, sixth grade, gate tech teaching third through sixth pullout, and bilingual fifth and sixth grade. She currently
teachers first grade and has taught first grade for about 25 years. She is a teacher at Reyes Elementary, which has a student population that is 38% Hispanic, 28% Filipino, 21% African-American, 4% White, and 2% Asian, Pacific Islander and Native American. Currently, 33% of students are classified as English Language Learners and 70% are identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Catherine, the second teacher selected in the low CP group has been teaching for 16 years, and all have been at Date Gardens Elementary. Date Gardens Elementary has a student population comprised of 37% Hispanic students, 29% African-American students (the school district categorizes African-American and African students in the same group), 24% Indo-Chinese, 4% White and 1% Asian. Approximately 44% are English Language Learners, and 100% are categorized as socioeconomically disadvantaged. Catherine has taught kindergarten and first grade. She is currently teaching first grade.

**Essential Element #1, Assessing Cultural Knowledge**

The researcher was able to identify across the personal interviews and classroom observations how the first essential element, assessing cultural knowledge, was demonstrated for the low cultural proficiency group.

**ASSESSING PERSONAL CULTURE AND HOW IT INFLUENCES INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS**

The first category that emerged under the essential element of assessing cultural knowledge is assessing personal culture and how it influences interactions with students.

Debbie defines culture as race, country, food, and a passion, like surf culture or music culture. She also defined it by activities like skiing culture. "It's really a group of people who tend to do or enjoy or dress or speak similar ways, but even within any culture you're
going to have great variances," she said. When asked about her personal culture, Debbie responded:

I come from a British culture. My dad is Welsh, so I'm half Welsh... Well, a quarter Welsh and half Canadian. My family culture is very British influenced. I come from Southern California, so I have the California culture. That would pretty much be my culture. Southern California... More casual... I know when my brothers pick me up at the airport in flip flops and I fly to San Francisco or back East and people are in suits, you definitely see the difference of Southern California. It's very laid-back, casual. You have the Hispanic influence of mañana sometimes, but just sort of a slower-paced and a little bit more casual in the way you dress.

Debbie expressed that her culture did not often influence her interactions with her students, that maybe her personality influenced her interactions because, for example, she gives hugs (as part of her personality), so students that may not be in her class will come see her to get hugs. However, she did share that her background of living in Mexico and Spain and studying Spanish has become a part of her personal culture, and this has influenced her ability to speak Spanish with the students, especially if they are crying. She also shared the following:

I think it's a fine line to define if I'm being culture or being a personality. My personality is trying to be fun with them... hugging and loving... one time I called a kid pumpkin. "I'm not a pumpkin," [she said]. I said, "What's your name, pumpkin?" And she said, "No." Just your language, I say, "Piece of cake," and the kids are like "What's a piece of cake?" Some of the terms that come from the English language somewhere.

Debbie shared that sometimes she shares some aspects of her personal culture, for example sharing with them what she did on the weekend or sending them postcards in the summer when she goes to Montana to visit her nephews. "Then I share a video of growing up. My dad is a veterinarian, and we had a lion at our house, and so they see the animals," she said. Debbie also shared that she emphasizes manners in her class very much because that is a big part of who she is. "Like saying thank you... when I pass out stuff the first kid
who says thank you gets two…the teachers will say the next year, your kids are really good at saying thank you…I don't know if that's social or cultural," she said.

In contrast, Catherine defines culture as everything that makes up a child in a family. She describes culture as their background, the way they speak, the way they dress, the food that they eat and all those related things. In other words, she believes culture is a conglomeration of what the person is made of. She describes her own culture in the following way:

Mixed. Irish and German and from the United States. My parents were born in the United States, but their parents were not. Second generation, I guess. That is my cultural background. My mother's side, we were always taught Irish songs. Mother loved to sing, so we heard a lot of Irish songs. Dad lived with my grandparents. We lived in a two-family house in New York where I grew up on Long Island… we had the upstairs, it was German, and downstairs was English…But we never learned to speak German until I went to college and took a few classes… American backed by German and Irish.

Catherine feels that her culture does influence her interactions with her students sometimes. "Once in a while, I hear my father. My father was very quiet; mom was more vocal," she said. Her dad was an engineer and her mom was a homemaker. "We had seven children in the family. Mom was the disciplinarian and everything else that went along with being a homemaker. I hear myself say things and repeat them and go, Oh my gosh, that sounds just like my mother," Catherine said. In particular, during times when Catherine is disciplining the students, some of the expressions she says, remind her of what her mother said to her.

Catherine stated that sometimes she shares personal information with the students. Because she values geography very much and learning about where people come from, sometimes she shares about the places she visits, for example, her trip to Ireland. "I do bring back some things for the children. When I went to Scotland I bought a little Nessie doll back,
and we talked about the folktale of that, the Loch Ness monster. I try to find things when I go to bring back to share with the children," she said. She wants them to know there are other places out there they can go visit and see.

Both Debbie and Catherine feel that aspects of their culture sometimes influence their interactions with students in their classrooms. Additionally, they both addressed how they learn about their students' cultures.

**ASSESSING STUDENT CULTURE**

When asked about how she learned about her students' cultures, Debbie responded with the following:

With the Hispanic students, I've been fortunate by having three sort of fake brothers that have lived with me from different parts of Mexico… I've studied Spanish, and I lived one summer in Spain and four summers in Guadalajara, Mexico. I have somewhat of a fairly good understanding of Hispanic culture. With the Filipino students, I've attended Filipino fairs and learned their contributions, like the yo-yo and there's an artist named Ricky Nierva that's from San Diego that does art for *Monsters, Inc.*, and I have his book in our class. He's done art for *Finding Nemo*. Being able to share with them some of the people from their culture and what they've done. But there's less, I know … I took some Tagalog classes, but it was cancelled due to lack of attendance, so I've learned to count in Tagalog, but I only know very few words. African-American culture, I probably don't know enough of, and Somali culture I only know one word, *asantay*, which is thank you. I don't know enough of Somali culture or African-American culture.

Debbie shared that when working with her students, having knowledge about language helps her understand that in most languages the rule is to put the adjective after the word, like *casa blanca*, whereas in English one would say *white house*. This makes her more sensitive to when students make an error. For example, if a student says, "Bear brown," Debbie understands they are making a "smart mistake." She shared that understanding how foreign languages work is helpful because it helps her understand typical errors students may
make. Debbie felt that understanding her students' cultures also influences how she interacts with students:

We celebrate Cinco de Mayo, but we also celebrate the 16th of September, and we love to tell people when they come in, "Why do you think it's Cinco de Mayo?" And we like to be smart and know that it really is not Mexico's birthday, and to teach them the real birthday of Mexico… But I don't have as much ability to, again, with the Filipino, Somali, African-American cultures to do that.

Catherine described learning about her student's cultures by asking questions. She shared that for her it is critical to listen to students and parents:

I pay attention when there's something I don't know. I talk to the parents and get a good background, especially during parent conference time. I like to know all about the students. I don't just teach the child academically; I teach the whole child. I want to know where they're coming from, what problems there may be, what I can do to help. And even the parents, if I need to, sometimes I counsel the parents.

Catherine shared that a lot of the in-depth learning takes place during parent conference time. Sometimes she has conversations with parents out in the hallway when they visit. She discussed the importance of listening and retaining cultural information parents have shared with her:

If someone [a student] has the same culture and they listen, and this child [from the same culture] is doing something different or there's something going on here, I figure I find out why and try to apply it [the cultural knowledge], change it, do whatever I need to do so the child's successful. Sometimes I'm not sure it's working.

She shared that having knowledge about her students' culture helps her deal with each child because each child has a different way of being, and their parents have a different way of handling the child.

**Essential Element #2, Valuing Diversity**

Across personal interviews and classroom observations, the second essential element, valuing diversity, was evident for both participants in the low cultural proficiency group in some of the reflective and teaching practices.
VALUING DIVERSITY IN INSTRUCTION

During the interview, Debbie shared that as much as possible she likes her class to learn about a lot of cultures. "We learn about China, we learn about Mexico, we learn about Ireland. As much as possible, when you pull down the map, this is where Philippines is, this is where Africa is," she said. She shared the importance of broadening the students' worldviews. Additionally, Debbie values the importance of books in her class. She is an avid book collector, and she believes in the power of reading books to her students in order to help their academic skills to develop and their worlds to broaden:

When I go to these book things or go to garage sales I buy them books. If I know Jessica likes gymnastics, I give her a gymnastics book, or Rihanni has long, long hair so I gave her a Rapunzel book. Or so-and-so has a new baby at the house, they get a new baby book. Or Carlos, who is just brilliant and he's my youngest kid, I just give him all sorts of hard books.

She also shared that sometimes she buys books if the characters are diverse and gives them to her students too. Although some of the books may not be culturally relevant, Debbie attempts to give students' books that demonstrate a characteristic or student trait they have. Students also have an opportunity to share about who they are during show and tell. During the classroom visits, the researcher observed the process of students participating in show and tell.

One student said, "Good morning boys and girls, today I am sharing something that starts with the letter r and ends with the letter k." The students guessed until one of them got the right answer: "A rock." The student brought the rock from home and shared that he collects them.

Another student said, "My name is Alanna and I have something to show you… it has an eraser and it starts with the letter p." Students in the class guessed it was a pencil. Alanna revealed a glittery pencil and shared with the class that it was her favorite pencil.
Students have show and tell twice a week, and it helps students get to know each other while at the same time developing their verbal language and their ability to speak in front of people.

Another observation the researcher made was during a classroom visit the students were practicing for the grandparent's show the school was hosting. The students practiced a performance of "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," an R&B/ Soul song written in 1966 by Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson, which they were going to perform the next day. The students recited the song they had memorized and had hand movements to go with it.

One of the first observations the researcher made in the classroom visits, which demonstrated the essential element of valuing diversity, was how Catherine began the mornings with the students in her class. She selects a new student everyday to have the role of first chair for the day. That morning she selected Chris Nguyen to be first chair and be responsible for holding the wand and pointing at the news for the day while all students were following along: "Today is Monday April 1st. The first chair is Chris Nguyen. Today's weather is partly cloudy. Today is Monday, tomorrow will be Tuesday and yesterday was Sunday." Then Chris walked to the other chart: "Sing a song of seasons, spring time is the best, let's put on our rain coats, now we are all dressed. In the rain, we love to play, and this is what we hear: pitter-patter, pitter-patter that's our season cheer." Then Chris said, "This is the name of the month of the year." Then Chris picked a student to call on: David.

Then David read, "April is the name of the month of the year."

Chris said, "This is the number of the year." Chris then picked another student: Zoraya.

Then Zoraya responded, "2013 is the number of the year."
Chris then said, "This is the number of the day of the month." He pointed to Jenny.

Jenny responded, "One is the day of the month."

This activity continued until students completed it. Students take turns being first chair, and they have responsibilities where their voice is heard throughout the day, and they get to call on students to participate along with them.

Catherine also shared that in her class, when children want to discuss something important to them, she encourages sharing. The only time she stops or redirects is when a student may go too deep into religion that they begin preaching. During Ramadan, students come up and explain what their religion is and what they do. The Hispanic students in her class also discuss how they celebrate Christmas or the 16th of September. She also shared that in class, through biographies, they touch all the different cultures for all people:

I've got tons of books of different people from different cultures in a biography box, and we read those, and we speak along to, so they know there are other people out here, people do some really good things, and this is where we are now because of these people. They helped out and they did what they did.

Catherine wants to make sure all of her students are comfortable with who they are and they know what their background is. "I like them to know they're all children; they are all people, but we have different cultures. We have different foods at home, we have different ways to dress, we have different religions. I want them to know all those things," she said.

**COMMUNITY**

Debbie consistently takes photos of her students in order to document the various activities they participate in, and she can share the pictures with the students' families. An activity that the researcher observed during the classroom visits was an activity where students made a spring card for the parents titled, "Some Bunny Loves You." Debbie took pictures of her students wearing bunny ears to place at the center of the card. She assigned
the students to write a letter to their parent(s) saying why they love them, and she said, "It can't be because they buy you stuff!" Debbie gave the pictures to the students to place at the center of their cards. She made copies of the same picture for each of the families students have. For example, Naya has three families she lives with - her father's family, her mother's family and her grandparents. She was aware of all of the family households of each student and asked students to make a card for each household.

During the classroom observations the researcher observed Catherine meet with the students on the rug to discuss situations affecting their classroom and to begin new lessons or for reflection about the lesson learned. For example, after recess she gathered all the students on the rug to inform them that one of the students, David, was not feeling well and had to go to the nurse's office. She also shared with the students that Genevieve's mother had picked up Genevieve during recess because they had to evacuate their home due to a fire in the canyon. On another occasion, after the students had been testing for most of the morning, the students met at the rug and Catherine asked them how they were feeling, because they had been testing so long. Students had the opportunity to share, mostly about how tired they were. The researcher observed that Catherine had a ritual of beginning and ending on the rug, which provided a sense of community.

**Essential Element #3, Managing the Dynamics of Difference**

The personal interviews and classroom observations also gave the researcher the opportunity to learn about how the third essential element, managing the dynamics of difference, was embedded in the reflective and teaching practices of both Debbie and Catherine.
MANAGING THE DYNAMICS OF DIFFERENCE

On two separate occasions during the classroom observations, the researcher observed how conflict is handled in Debbie's class. On one occasion two girls were arguing about a situation, and Debbie stopped what she was doing and asked the girls, "Who is going to solve the conflict?" The girls looked at each other and did not respond. Debbie continued with the lesson and the girls seemed to get over the conflict. On another occasion, Debbie pulled three students to the side after recess because she was told the three students were fighting at recess. One student pushed someone, and Christina, another student, slapped one of the boys. Debbie spoke to them about her expectations and how they should be friends and get along with each other.

Tyree told Devon, "Sorry man," and Devon apologized to Tyree as well. They both apologized to Christina, and she apologized to them. When conflict took place in class, the researcher observed Debbie bring it to the student's attention and address it in a quick manner.

Catherine shared during the personal interview that she tries to get students to talk nice with each other and to talk over problems. "Let's not blame each other, let's find out and have the children talk," she said. Sometimes she recommends students go to counseling, especially if they are having many difficulties. She also encourages students to have a clear mind and be positive when they come in to class. She lets her students know that they are going to be safe in class because she wants them to feel comfortable in class and know that they will not get picked on. Sometimes she has had to remove children from the room when they have behaved in a manner that is no longer acceptable, for example, hitting another student. She also stressed that she keeps in touch with the parents and they do provide a lot
of support: "If I say you know your child is having this difficulty or that difficulty and most of them are involved and still come to me and say, I'm having a problem with this. And we will work out something together."

Additionally, during the observation, the researcher watched two girls have conflict on the rug. One was being mean to the other girl. Catherine asked both girls to stand up and have a conversation about how to solve the conflict. She was helping the girl who was being mean come up with ideas about what to say to the girl to whom she was being mean to. Both girls apologized to each other.

**Caring Environment**

During the interview, Debbie expressed how important students are to her: "This work is really exciting; it keeps me going. The kids, their love and hugs… today you saw a moment that is probably going to make me cry." She was referring to one of her students, Santiago, who wrote "beautiful sentences." Santiago is a student who came in at the beginning of the year not knowing the alphabet. "It's those moments where they blossom. It's so exciting. I tell people I'm a kid person…Kids give me joy. I love seeing the world through their eyes, and how excited they get over really simple things," she said.

On the first day of the class visits, the researcher observed Catherine walking around the class while students were eating breakfast, and she asked them how they were doing as they ate their breakfast. Shortly after, Catherine introduced a lesson that was based on some of the behavior issues she had seen the week before. "We need to have a lesson on friendship. Today we are going to work on some sentences. What behaviors do you want your friend to have? It also means that you must have those behaviors," she said. Catherine passed out the whiteboard, "We are looking for words that show what we expect from
people. I'm going to write a word about my friend. We're going to think about something very nice a friend does." Catherine wrote a sentence, *My friend is kind.* All the students read it together. Then she wrote on the whiteboard, *My friend is helpful.* All the students read it together. Next, the students wrote sentences on the whiteboard. Students wrote similar sentences such as *My friend is helpful, My friend is kind* and *My friend helps me feel better.* The students each took a turn standing in front of the group and sharing what they wrote on their whiteboard. After everyone had a turn, Catherine asked, "What does being kind mean? How do you know you are being kind?"

A student said, "When you and your friend are nice to each other, you feel happy."

Catherine asked, "What does it mean when your friend is being nice?"

Students answered, "It means when you talk about them kind they are happy," "They say good words," "A friend says you are okay and they help you" and "You feel comfortable with them when they are nice."

Catherine responded, "What does comfortable mean?"

Students replied, "That you are nice," "You feel good with them," and "You feel okay with them." After the discussion, Catherine assigned journal writing. The topic was, "What is a friend?" Some students cheered and they seemed excited. The students went back to their desks and began writing.

"Oh my gosh, Genevieve is already writing!" Catherine said. She checked in with different students and also redirected students back to their work. When they finished, students shared their journal entry with the class.

Dorian read what he wrote: "A friend is a person who is nice to you. A friend is a person who helps you. If you fall down, they will help you get up and ask you if you are
okay. When I have a friend sometimes they need help to spell a word, and so I help them."

Catherine wanted to remind her students to be kind to each other.

**Organization and Predictability**

During the classroom visit, the researcher observed Catherine sharing the day's schedule with her students as they ate breakfast. Additionally, she had schedules in place for students taking turns to use computer programs. The students seemed to be aware of their computer schedules. Another strategy observed was her playing the xylophone to get students attention, when she wanted silence. The practice of meeting at the rug to begin an activity and to end an activity helped Catherine with organization and predictability.

Students have specific rows they sit in when they meet at the rug, and this time on the rug also provides an opportunity for closure with activities.

**Essential Element #4, Adapting to Diversity**

During the interview, Debbie described an interaction with a student that had taken place in her class that day:

> It is interesting that one student today wrote her wish was that she would be blonde. When I was a bilingual teacher, the kids, when we would do self-portraits, they would want to be blonde, and I've have to get the mirror out and come against that. That this is not okay. Look at yourself, this is who you are. That's why at the end of her story when she wanted to be blonde I wrote, but your mom won't recognize you, to kind of push back against it a little bit.

Debbie described being sensitive to the issue of what she called "the blonde thing."

She shared, "In Mexico, it's a big deal, and it's on the commercials. *La Rubia* [blonde] of the year and *guera* [fair skinned]...I've had one or two students that have had issue with the light skin, dark skin thing." Debbie wanted the student to be happy and proud of who she is.

Evident in Debbie's instruction was how interactive and physical her instruction was in the classroom in order to support English Language Learners. At the beginning of class
she wrote the date on the Promethean board: Today is 3/21/2013. She asked her students, "Anything interesting you see?"

They answered, "They're odd numbers," and "It's counting down 3-2-1."

Debbie responded, "You are so smart! I was thinking 1-2-3, and you saw something better." She began discussing the book she was going to read to the class. She wrote on the board, and she asked her students, "How do you spell wish?" Students responded, and she finished writing, Sometimes wishes do come true but sometimes you might not like them. "Oh look what I noticed!" she said. "A conjugated word some and times. Act it out."

Students repeated, "Some" with one fist and "Times" with the other fist, and they bumped their fists together saying, "Sometimes!"

Debbie responded, "Sometimes wishes do come true and you might not like it. Show me might."

Students responded, "M-I-G-H-T," as they are clapping to each letter.

Debbie said, "Today our story reminds me, reminds me like review, revisit… remind means in our mind again, rewind is to wind again. This story reminds me of another story." She began to sing a song, "Sounds like e, but it's a y" to describe how you say story. "What other stories are about wishes?" she continued.

Students said, "King Midas," "Chocolatina," and "I Wish I Had Duck Feet."

As Debbie is talking students are writing in their journals taking notes. One student said, "You're going too fast!" as she was writing. Debbie slowed down.

Eventually Debbie began to read the book, Ben's Three Wishes. She said, "Sometimes the title gives us clues… I think I know who Ben is." She was referring to the Rhinoceros with pink polka dots on the cover. "I think the title is going to be in the middle, I
think we know it's, fake, fake fiction," she said. She later explained they say *fake, fake fiction* to get their mouths ready for the word *fiction*.

"I see three as a magic number!" Debbie continued. She placed the book on the Promethean board screen and said, "Benjamin was a little, brown Rhino."

Some students said, "Double describing!" referring to the description *little, brown.*

In the book, Ben wanted to look different, and Debbie said, "What do we call someone who keeps wanting more?"

Students responded, "Greedy!"

Debbie continued reading and then said, "Tell your partner if he's going to follow mom's directions."

This type of interactive dialogue was evident in most of Debbie's instruction. As she was teaching she had songs, call and response, visuals, acting out, counting games, students sharing, partner talk, journal writing and connections to other subjects. That particular day, she connected the concept of three wishes, to literacy, writing, vocabulary development and math. The students were engaged and responsive to the songs, chants and interactions.

During writing, the students were allowed to ask how to spell a word after they had tried and after they looked at their personal dictionary, which Debbie made for them, and the students continued to add words to.

During the interview with Catherine, she discussed some ways in which she has adapted to diversity in her classroom:

I try to remember their cultures when I'm teaching. I don't want to do anything to make a child be uncomfortable. When one of the children touched, I don't remember what it's called, her scarf thing [referring to the student's *hijab*], she was pulling on it so we had a talk. That's a religious piece of clothing this child is wearing. You don't play with anything that has to do with religion. This is something sacred to her, and you keep your hands off it, that type of thing. So we
talked about different things that people wear for religious reasons, and we have to be respectful of that even if you don't have a religion, but you should be respectful of other people's religions...because we do have obvious signs of religion with the Muslim children.

During instruction, the researcher observed a science lesson where Catherine used certain strategies to support English Language Learners. Students were excited when Catherine announced it was time for science. She passed out science books, and they read a passage together about how wheat is used for food. She read, along with the students, but they were a bit distracted because they were testing earlier and were somewhat fidgety. They got ready to plant their seeds for the rest of the science lesson. "We are going to remember our plants need water and sun," Catherine said. She passed out paper towels and plastic bags. The students folded the paper towels to get them ready. Catherine took the students outside to sit on a bench while she wet their paper towels. After she was done, they came back in to the classroom, and she passed out the seeds, and they placed their seed in the plastic bag along with the wet paper towel and hung the plastic bag on the window. The students seemed excited learning about seeds by having their own seed to observe in its growth process. Catherine then asked them to write in a journal what they did and had them draw a picture of the steps they took.

**Essential Element #5, Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**

Debbie had a collection of multicultural books available for her students. She also shared that her books do not reflect all of the students in her class:

I do try and have books in the class that have the children represented with African-American culture. With Filipino culture I don't have that many books, but I have a selection of Asian books that have Japanese and Chinese pictures, so that it's somewhat represented, the kids with dark hair. But I wish there were more books that would help them to see themselves in books that we read. But I try to be conscious of that.
She explained that she reads the *Five Chinese Brothers* written in 1938 by Claire Hutchet Bishop to her students and creates activities based on the book. A student wrote an essay titled, "The Five Mexican Brothers," and another wrote, "The Seven Somali Sisters." Although, the book, *The Five Chinese Brothers*, appears to have a multicultural theme, it has also been criticized for its blatant racial stereotypes of people of Asian descent (McNair, 2003). Although she was providing multicultural literature for her students, she was not aware that the book has stereotypical illustrations and themes. Additionally, it does not provide adequate or positive representation of the Filipino students in her class. Debbie shared that she sees this book as a super hero book that could interest students and not so much as a book with negative stereotypes.

During the two days of her visit, the researcher observed Debbie read, and she included many books in her lessons. Some of them had multicultural themes, for example, *The Three Wishes: A Spanish Folktale* by Celenia Chevere, and some books taught lessons about self-worth, like *Ben's Three Wishes* by Jean Waricha. As mentioned in the previous section, Debbie provided many strategies that support English Language Learners, including props.

In one lesson she asked students to close their eyes and take a deep breath. She said, "Today students we are going to write about something you wish for. I wish I had the power to… I got a powerful ring from a leprechaun. I want you to close your eyes and think about who gave you your ring and what you wish for." The teacher gave them a gold ring and the students appeared to be very excited to begin writing the story of their wish.

The researcher also observed the students practicing the 'I Have a Dream' speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The students recited the speech, and they all knew the words to
They were going to perform it for a grandparent's celebration the next day. They also performed a skit in class about Rosa Parks and the bus incident. Students volunteered to perform it, and all the students knew the lines to each character in the skit. She selected students for each character, randomly.

During her interview, Catherine shared that she feels that students do not know very much of their history:

I've noticed in the last five years now it's sad. I have to teach African-American children their culture. The parents are not doing it any longer. I know they're going through their everyday lives...but I have to talk about Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. I have to teach them all the different things that these people did to advance the rights for black people. The parents are not saying it anymore. ...We try to figure out what is going on with their home countries, for the children not from the United States and point out why they are here...wars, or things like that. Just try to give them a good sense of where they came from. I always think unless you know where you've been you don't know where you're going.

Catherine believes it is important for students to learn history from a cultural perspective. She shared during the interview that she has many biographies of people from various cultures who have contributed to the creation of the United States. She shares them with her students so that students acquire a variety of cultural perspectives. At the same time, she also may have the assumption that parents are not teaching their children about their history and culture or that history and culture is limited to what is traditionally taught in the school system (i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks). Additionally, the essential element of institutionalizing cultural knowledge emphasizes both teacher and student being learners in the process of exchanging knowledge and institutionalizing cultural perspectives.

**Discussion of Findings**

Debbie and Catherine exhibited the essential elements of cultural proficiency in some of their reflective and instructional practices at varying levels. Debbie shared that her culture
does not often influence her interactions with students; however, her development of the Spanish language based on her life/cultural experiences has helped her to work with Hispanic students. She also shared that she lacks cultural knowledge in order to support the African-American and Filipino students in her class. She demonstrated the essential element of valuing diversity by sharing a variety of books with her students, especially those that reflect the culture or specific characteristics of the students. In the analysis of the category specific to community, the researcher found that Debbie demonstrated a way in which she values the families of the students and is aware of the family make-up of each of them. She continually shares pictures with the families of her students. The essential element of managing the dynamics of difference was demonstrated, to some extent, in the observations as Debbie handled conflict in her classroom using quick behavior interventions; however, they appeared to be non-systemic. She also demonstrated the essential element of adapting to diversity by gently addressing a student on the issue of colorism or internalized oppression. This element was also demonstrated in her instruction, which consistently utilized English Language Learner strategies. Finally, while the element of institutionalizing cultural knowledge was demonstrated in her classroom via the inclusion of multicultural books and ELL strategies, the selection of some of the multicultural texts may not reflect the students in her class.

Debbie’s reflective and instructional practices demonstrated consistency with her scores on the MTCS, some consistency with the TMAS and some consistency with her cultural proficiency self-assessment score. Debbie’s total score on the MTCS was 54 on a scale ranging from 16 to 96. Two items that she strongly disagreed with were I consult regularly with other teachers or administrators to help me understand multicultural issues related to instruction and I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories. She
also indicated slightly disagreeing with *I am knowledgeable about particular teaching strategies that affirm the racial and ethnic identities of all students*, which Debbie discussed during the interview when she shared that she does not always know how to culturally support the African-American and Filipino students in her class. On the TMAS, which measures multicultural awareness and sensitivity, her total score was an 84 on a scale ranging from 20-100. Two items that she indicated agreeing with were *I believe the teacher’s role needs to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally different backgrounds* and *When dealing with bilingual students, some teachers may misinterpret different communication styles as behavior problems*. Debbie discussed during her interview that her understanding of the Spanish language has helped her understand different communication styles, and this has assisted her in supporting some of the students in her class. Her cultural proficiency self-assessment score was a 4, self-identifying as culturally pre-competent.

During the interview, Catherine shared that her culture influences how she interacts with students because she often hears her parents in the interactions with the students in her class. She assesses student culture by listening to the parents when she meets them at parent conferences or when they come to school. During the observations, Catherine demonstrated that she values diversity by selecting a first chair everyday to conduct the morning news and handle other responsibilities in class. She also shared some of the conversations she has had with the students particularly about religion. She demonstrated community through the ritual of meeting with students on the rug to discuss issues that affect the class. She described managing conflict by attempting to create a safe environment and assisting students in solving their own problems. She was also observed facilitating a lesson on friendship in order to support student social interactions with each other. Catherine discussed the
importance of adapting to diversity through conversations with her students about sensitive issues such as religion. She also shared that she values institutionalizing cultural knowledge and continually reads texts that show the contributions of various cultural groups.

Catherine's reflective and instructional practices demonstrated some consistency with her scores on the MTCS, TMAS and cultural proficiency self-assessment score. Catherine's total score on the MTCS was 73 on a scale ranging from 16 to 96. An item that she moderately agreed with was *I establish strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic minority parents.* Catherine discussed that she learns about the students in her class mostly through their parents, and she feels the parents are very supportive. She also indicated slightly agreeing with *I have a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy.* Catherine demonstrated, during the observation, some of the ways in which her instruction is culturally responsive. On the TMAS, which measures multicultural awareness and sensitivity, her total score was a 70 on a scale ranging from 20-100. Two items that she agreed with were *In order to be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom* and *Multicultural awareness training can help me work more effectively with a diverse student population.* Catherine discussed how in her class they often have discussion about cultural differences between the students. Her cultural proficiency self-assessment score was a 5, self-identifying as culturally competent.

**DISCUSSION OF THEMES AND EMERGENT CATEGORIES**

The researcher utilized the essential elements of cultural proficiency as themes to examine the data, as they are an integral component of the cultural proficiency theoretical framework. Additionally, new categories emerged that focused on factors related to teacher delivery of culturally proficient instructional strategies. These categories became
subcategories within the essential elements of cultural proficiency, as they were connected to the themes explored in the study. The categories, subcategories and their relationships are presented in Figure 5.1. The first essential element, assessing cultural knowledge had two emerging subcategories that were related. They included (a) assessing personal culture and (b) assessing student culture. Nuri Robins et al. (2006) define a culturally proficient instructor as one who assesses cultural knowledge by first understanding his/her own culture in order to have a greater appreciation of how diverse learners interact with the instructor. They emphasize that a culturally proficient instructor should have a deep understanding about what they value and how they learn best. Additionally, another component they describe is learning how to assess and be sensitive to their students' cultural backgrounds, experiences and learning styles. The two subcategories that emerged were connected with research defining how educators assess cultural knowledge. Participants in the study demonstrated various ways in which they assess their personal culture and make sense of how it influences their interactions with students. Certain participants, such as Eva and Kim, also demonstrated the way in which they assess their students' culture in the classroom.
The second essential element, valuing diversity had two subcategories: (a) valuing diversity in the classroom and (b) community. Nuri Robins et al. (2006) describe the essential element of valuing diversity in practice:

To value diversity is to teach with the intention of valuing diversity and to pay attention to those things that value diversity in the classroom. As an instructor who values diversity, you foster a learning community, recognizing that diversity is always present in your classroom, even when such diversity is not strongly evident. You organize your classroom so that materials, instructional delivery systems and patterns of attention to learners fully acknowledge diversity…when viewed as a whole, your behaviors illustrate that you value diversity, revealing your commitment to the learning community (pp. 126-127).
The subcategories that emerged connected to the essential element of valuing diversity. Participants in the study exhibited different ways in which they value diversity in the classroom and how the community of learners is influenced as a result. Additionally, some of the participants showed that as they brought out the unique voices of the students in their classroom, the learning community became stronger. Students learned about each other and established connections that created more opportunities to learn. For example, in Catherine's classroom, she invited students on the rug at the beginning of lessons, or at the end of lessons, to reflect on learning that took place or to discuss situations affecting the classroom community. The researcher observed how students were involved in reflective dialogue during their time on the rug.

The third essential element, managing the dynamics of difference, had three subcategories that included (a) managing the dynamics of difference in the classroom, (b) caring environment and (c) organization and predictability. An educator who practices this essential element understands that conflict is a natural state of affairs and creates a constructive and instructive environment for managing conflict (Lindsey et al., 2005). Participants demonstrated in the observations and in the personal interviews the numerous ways they manage conflict in the classroom. Another emergent category under this essential element was caring environment. Many participants in the study encouraged a caring and kind environment as a strategy to manage conflict. A critical indicator of both internalizing and externalizing behavior problems seems to be the extent to which students sense support from others. As students sense support from caring adults they may be more likely to experience success in school (Mihalas, Alvarez, McHatton, Morse, & Allsopp, 2009).

Although the theoretical framework of cultural proficiency in education does not address
caring environment as a strategy in managing the dynamics of difference, the category emerged from the observations and interviews. Organization and predictability was another category that emerged. Kaufman and Moss (2010) via Kaufman (2000, 2001) describe classroom organization as "the physical structures and procedural systems – rather than behavioral guides – that promote ease of classroom movement and learning efficacy" (p. 111). Good organization seems to lessen student's frustration and disruptive behavior and increase academic and social interactions (Kaufman & Moss, 2011). Predictable and consistent classroom routines provide a classroom environment where fewer issues need to be negotiated (Howes & Ritchie, 2002). One of the main strategies described in the cultural proficiency theoretical framework is the ability to learn effective strategies for resolving conflict among students and adults in order to facilitate dialogue and understanding (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, Lindsey & Terrell, 1999). Although the cultural proficiency framework does not address organization and predictability, many participants in the study discussed this as a factor for reducing chaos and conflict from classroom disorganization.

The fourth essential element, adapting to diversity, had one category that emerged that was adapting to diversity in the classroom. An educator, who practices this essential element, makes changes in order to adapt to the needs of students and the learning community (Nuri Robins et al., 2006). Participants in the study exhibited ways in which they adapt to the needs of the students in varying degrees. For example, almost all of the participants demonstrated instructional strategies that supported English language learners in the classroom. Participants such as Eva and Debbie demonstrated these strategies at higher levels.
The fifth essential element, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, had one category that emerged, institutionalizing cultural knowledge in the classroom. Nuri Robins et al. (2006) describe the essential element of institutionalizing cultural knowledge as having two components: learning about other cultures and learning how other people experience those cultures. This was evident among participants such as Kim, who utilized literacy to learn about others' cultures and hold a discussion with students about what they learned. A master code list is presented in Appendix G.

**Discussion of Findings across Groups**

In order to answer the third question guiding this research study – "Are there differences in the instructional strategies of teachers who perceive themselves to have a high level of cultural proficiency, a medium level of cultural proficiency, or a lower level of cultural proficiency?" – an examination of the three groups was conducted in order to look at similarities and differences using the essential elements of cultural proficiency as a framework to guide the analysis. Findings of this analysis using the framework of the essential elements of cultural proficiency are presented in Table 5.3.

**Assessing Cultural Knowledge**

In the area of assessing cultural knowledge, the high CP group expressed a deep understanding of personal culture and its influence on their relationships with students. They also openly shared their personal culture with their students as a way of connecting with them and providing instruction. The medium CP group and the low CP group also expressed an understanding of their personal culture; however, they expressed that it sometimes influenced their interactions with students, and they were most likely to share their personal culture during informal settings, not necessarily as a way of providing instruction.
Additionally, the high CP group intentionally provided opportunities to build relationships with their students and families and the assessment of their students' culture was embedded in their instructional practices. In the medium CP group the students' culture was not embedded into the curriculum developed by teachers, but it came up unintentionally through required text or during social interactions. Additionally the medium CP group made some assumptions about parenting styles, but they did say they valued the importance of learning about students through meeting their parents. The low CP group expressed the importance of understanding others' cultures; however, the focus was not always on the experiences or cultures of their own students. Similar to the other groups, the low CP group also realized the importance of learning about students' culture through parent conferences and interactions.
Table 5.3. Analysis of Instructional Practices of Teachers Based on the CP Group and the Five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessing Cultural Knowledge</th>
<th>Assessing Personal Culture:</th>
<th>Assessing Personal Culture:</th>
<th>Assessing Personal Culture:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers expressed a deep understanding of their own cultural background and how it influences their relationship with their students</td>
<td>• Teachers conveyed an understanding of their own culture</td>
<td>• Teachers expressed an understanding of their culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers openly shared their own personal culture with students as a means to connect with students and provide instruction</td>
<td>• Teachers were less likely to share their own personal culture with students, when teachers shared it was likely to occur during informal settings</td>
<td>• Teachers expressed that their culture sometimes influenced their interactions with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Student Culture:</td>
<td>• Teachers intentionally developed opportunities to build relationships with students and their families</td>
<td>Assessing Student Culture:</td>
<td>Assessing Student Culture:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assessment of students’ culture is embedded in the instruction of these teachers</td>
<td>• Students’ culture is not embedded into curriculum developed by teachers</td>
<td>• Some teachers expressed the importance of understanding others’ cultures; however, teachers may not focus on cultural experiences of their own students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Rather students’ culture is brought into the classroom unintentionally or during social situations</td>
<td>• Teachers also realized the importance of learning about students’ culture through parent conferences and interactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Table 5.3. Analysis of Instructional Practices of Teachers Based on the CP Group and the Five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High CP Group</th>
<th>Medium CP Group</th>
<th>Low CP Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valuing Diversity</td>
<td><strong>Valuing Diversity in Instruction:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Teachers developed students’ voices and a community setting that is safe for students to reveal their cultural selves, personal stories and learn from one another&lt;br&gt;• Teachers capitalized on students’ culture and infuses their cultural experiences into instruction</td>
<td><strong>Valuing Diversity in Instruction:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Teachers may place students in balanced and diverse groups&lt;br&gt;• Teachers created opportunities for student dialogue regarding acceptance and respect&lt;br&gt;<strong>Community</strong>:&lt;br&gt;• While teachers understood the importance of creating community, it occurred during the beginning of the year&lt;br&gt;• Opportunities for creating community was centered around academic support</td>
<td><strong>Valuing Diversity in Instruction:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Teachers may focus on personal, character, or trait-based aspects of diversity&lt;br&gt;• Teachers may introduce students to foreign cultures/places&lt;br&gt;• Teachers may encourage dialogue in class specific to students’ culture, acceptance and respect&lt;br&gt;<strong>Community</strong>:&lt;br&gt;• Teachers were aware of the different family configurations at home and created opportunities to provide classroom updates through community dialogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 5.3. Analysis of Instructional Practices of Teachers Based on the CP Group and the Five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managing the Dynamics of Difference</th>
<th>Managing the Dynamics of Difference</th>
<th>Managing the Dynamics of Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High CP Group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Medium CP Group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Low CP Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers viewed classroom conflict as teachable moments</td>
<td>Teachers managed classroom conflict and used behavioral interventions/ consequences</td>
<td>Teachers managed classroom conflict and used behavioral interventions in a quick manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers managed conflict through community dialogue</td>
<td>Caring Environment: Teachers encouraged students to show care by supporting one another academically</td>
<td>Teachers tried to establish a safe environment in the classroom where students can solve their own conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Environment: Teachers demonstrated kindness and care and strongly encouraged students to practice kindness and care</td>
<td>Teachers demonstrated care through personal interactions with students and creating a bully-free learning environment</td>
<td>Caring Environment: Teachers expressed a genuine care for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers created a learning environment where no student is left behind</td>
<td>Organization &amp; Predictability: Teachers believed that organization, behavioral rewards, and structure helped prevent student conflict and behavior problems</td>
<td>Teachers conducted a classroom lesson on friendship and kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization &amp; Predictability: Teachers understood the importance of developing routines, structure, and consistency for students who may not have this in their lives</td>
<td>Organization &amp; Predictability**: Teachers possessed a daily schedule for students to follow and reference throughout the day.</td>
<td>Organization &amp; Predictability**; Teachers created structured seating arrangements to create order in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers established rituals as a way to create smooth transitions at the beginning of the day and between instructional blocks</td>
<td>(table continues)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.3. Analysis of Instructional Practices of Teachers Based on the CP Group and the Five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High CP Group</th>
<th>Medium CP Group</th>
<th>Low CP Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adapting to Diversity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adapting to Diversity:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adapting to Diversity:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers were conscious of students’ developmental needs</td>
<td>- Teachers were conscious of students’ developmental needs of students and used hands-on activities</td>
<td>- Teachers used ELL strategies in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers embedded ELL strategies into the classroom instruction</td>
<td>- Teachers used ELL strategies in classroom instruction</td>
<td>- Teachers took opportunities to discuss the importance of respecting one another’s religion and internalized oppression (colorism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers possessed an awareness of cultural norms of students from culturally different backgrounds</td>
<td>- Teachers were mindful of presenting different historical perspectives to students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutionalizing Culture Knowledge</th>
<th>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge:</th>
<th>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge:</th>
<th>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers brought students’ life experiences into the curriculum</td>
<td>- Teachers used current curriculum, especially in language arts and social studies, to discuss issues related to culture</td>
<td>- Teachers understood the importance of having literature culturally reflective of their students; however, the literature used in the classrooms reinforced stereotypes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers used literacy as a forum to understand their own life experiences and learn about life experience of those culturally different than themselves</td>
<td>- Discussions related to culture may happen if the text possess these issues</td>
<td>- Teachers also assumed parents were not educating students about their culture and felt responsible for teaching children their cultural history</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Valuing Diversity

The high CP group developed a community setting where students were able to reveal their cultural selves, share personal stories, and learn from one another. The teachers in this group capitalized on students' culture and infused their cultural experiences into their instruction. They also valued the importance of community/family and reinforced opportunities for students to develop student-to-student relationships through dialogue in a systemic way. The medium CP and low CP group also created opportunities for student dialogue regarding acceptance and respect of different cultures. The medium CP group encouraged placing students in diverse groups in order to encourage diversity. This group saw the importance of establishing community; however, they focused on community building only in September, which is the beginning of the school year. The low CP group mainly focused on diversity specific to personal, character or trait-based aspects or as foreign cultures and places. They saw the importance of family configuration and family dynamics and provided classroom opportunities for community dialogue.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

The teachers in the high CP group viewed conflict as a teachable moment and tended to work through conflict through community dialogue with their students. Teachers in this group modeled kindness and care and encouraged their students to be kind and caring with each other as well. They also demonstrated care by creating an environment where they were very explicit about no child being left behind. This group understood the importance of developing routines, structure and consistency and established rituals as a way to create smooth transitions at the beginning of the day and between instructional blocks. The
medium group demonstrated the ability to manage conflict mostly using behavioral interventions and consequences. This encouraged students to show care by supporting one another academically, through personal interactions, and by creating a bully-free learning environment. Similar to the high group, the medium group also believed that organization prevented conflict; however, during their interviews behavioral interventions and rewards were also discussed as a way of handling conflict. The low CP group managed conflict by using behavioral interventions. The teachers also emphasized establishing a safe environment in the classroom where students can solve their own conflict. They expressed a genuine care for students and conducted a classroom lesson on friendship and kindness. Similar to the high and medium CP groups, they possessed a daily schedule for students to follow and reference throughout the day. They also created structured seating arrangements to create order in the classroom.

ADAPTING TO DIVERSITY

A commonality all teachers in the groups shared was an awareness to integrate strategies that support English Language Learners. Eva, Elizabeth and Debbie, who represented all three categories, implemented ELL strategies at higher levels than their counterparts. Additionally, teachers in the high CP group were conscious of students' developmental needs and possessed an awareness of the cultural norms of students from various different backgrounds. Similarly, teachers in the medium CP group were conscious of students' developmental needs and integrated activities to meet those needs. Teachers in the medium group were mindful of presenting different historical perspectives to students. The low CP group took opportunities to discuss the importance of respecting one another's religion and addressed issues of colorism in a specific situation with one student.
INSTITUTIONALIZING CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Teachers in the high CP group deliberately integrated students' life experiences into the curriculum and used literacy as a forum to understand their own life experiences and learn about the life experiences of their students. Teachers in the medium CP group used current mandated curriculum, especially in social studies and language arts, in order to discuss issues of culture. Different from the high CP group, the discussions related to culture took place only if the texts possessed the topic. Teachers in the low CP group understood the importance of having literature culturally reflective of their students; however, the literature used in the classroom sometimes reinforced stereotypes. They also assumed that parents were not educating students about their culture and felt responsible for teaching students about their culture.

Key findings focusing on the high, medium and low cultural proficiency groups specific to the essential elements of cultural proficiency were presented in this chapter. This involved analyzing personal interviews and classroom observations. The five essential elements were discussed and additional subcategories emerged that were part of specific essential elements: (1) Assessing cultural knowledge, (a) assessing personal culture, (b) assessing student culture; (2) Valuing Diversity, (a) valuing diversity in instruction, (b) community; (3) Managing the dynamics of difference, (a) caring environment, (b) organization and predictability; (4) Adapting to diversity and (5) Institutionalizing cultural knowledge. A summary of mixed methods findings, after the analysis of each group, was presented. This next chapter presents the overall findings of the study and presents implications necessary for facilitating culturally proficient practices in the classroom, in
schools and district-wide. It also includes limitations of the study and concludes by offering suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 6

OVERALL FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore elementary school teachers' self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency and the extent to which their self-perceived levels relate to their reflective and instructional practices. The purpose of gaining insight on their reflective practices was to learn more about how educators assess their own culture and its impact on students, and how their students' culture influences them as educators and influences instruction. Another goal of this study was to explore if there are differences in the instructional practices of the teachers who self-reported high levels of cultural proficiency, medium levels of cultural proficiency and low levels cultural proficiency. Findings of this study demonstrated that there are differences in the instructional practices of teachers who self-reported high, medium and low levels of cultural proficiency. Additionally, self-reported levels of cultural proficiency do not necessarily match instruction happening in the classroom. These findings may offer insight to developing culturally proficient instructional practices that are grounded in research. Studies continue to demonstrate that when teachers understand the cultural diversity of their students, it is linked to higher student engagement and academic success. It is essential to develop culturally proficient educators that can support student success. This final chapter opens with overall findings of the study and presents implications necessary for facilitating culturally proficient practices in the classroom, in schools and district-wide. Finally this chapter concludes with a discussion specific to the limitations of this study and offers suggestions for future research.
OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE STUDY'S RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first question guiding this study was the following: What are the self-reported levels of cultural proficiency among elementary school teachers in the San Diego Unified School District? The aim of the first phase of the study was to explore self-reported levels of cultural proficiency among elementary school teachers. Quantitative results demonstrated that based on the Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale (MTCS), the Teacher Multicultural Awareness Scale (TMAS) and the cultural proficiency continuum self-assessment question, elementary school teachers self-reported medium to higher levels of cultural proficiency, including multicultural teaching competency and knowledge as well as multicultural sensitivity and awareness. A more detailed review of the MTCS revealed that teachers self-reported higher levels when responding to the following specific items: (1) I establish strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic minority parents, (2) I often promote diversity by the behaviors I exhibit, (3) I make changes within the general school environment so that racial and ethnic minority students will have an equal opportunity for success and (4) I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching. The MTCS has two subscales that include multicultural teaching skill and multicultural knowledge. All items participants self-reported higher levels for are from the multicultural teaching skill subscale. An analysis of the TMAS revealed that teachers self-reported at higher levels when responding to the following items: (1) I find the idea of teaching a culturally diverse group rewarding, (2) Teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom (negatively stated item), (3) Being multiculturally aware is not relevant for students (negatively stated item), (4) Regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of a classroom, it is important for all students to be aware of
multicultural diversity and (5) I can learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds. Most participants indicated valuing diversity based on the survey results.

When teachers responded to the cultural proficiency self-assessment, teachers rated themselves higher on the cultural proficiency continuum. Most of the teachers in the study self-identified as culturally competent and culturally proficient. Additionally, when conducting an analysis relative to the scores of the teachers surveyed, over half of the participants demonstrated a medium score on the MTCS and the TMAS. This demonstrated that over half of the teachers surveyed self-reported medium levels of multicultural teaching skill and knowledge as well as multicultural awareness and sensitivity. Also, 11% of teachers reported high scores on both instruments, and there was only one participant who reported low scores on both instruments.

The purpose of the second phase of the study was to answer the question: How are teacher self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency related to culturally proficient instructional strategies in the classroom? Data analysis demonstrated that teachers in the high group demonstrated consistency between their self-perceived levels of multicultural teaching skill and knowledge and multicultural awareness and sensitivity and their instructional practices. In examining their responses on the MTCS, for example, Eva indicated strongly or moderately agreeing with items such as I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching and I promote diversity by the behaviors I exhibit. Items that Kim indicated strongly agreeing with on the MTCS included items such as I establish strong supportive relationships with ethnic and minority parents and I plan my activities to celebrate diverse cultural practices in my classroom. These items were evident in both of their reflective and instructional practices.
Teachers in the medium cultural proficiency group demonstrated some consistency with their self-perceived levels of multicultural skill and knowledge and multicultural awareness and sensitivity and their instructional practices. For example, Elizabeth indicated slightly agreeing with "I often promote diversity with the behaviors I exhibit," which was evident in the manner in which she implemented valuing diversity. She also indicated slightly agreeing to the item "I establish strong supportive relationships with minority parents." There were some inconsistencies based on the interview because she mentioned on three occasions feeling that she did not have parent support, so she tends to handle conflicts without them. On the TMAS, an item that Margaret indicated strongly agreeing to was *In order to be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences in the classroom*, Margaret demonstrated that she was aware of the cultural differences of her students and had discussions with them about it. An item she agreed with was *I am aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds of students I am/ or will be working with.* Margaret did share knowledge about each of her student's cultural backgrounds. At the same time she made generalizations about their parents based on culture.

Teachers in the low cultural proficiency group demonstrated consistency with their self-perceived levels of multicultural teaching skill and knowledge and multicultural awareness and sensitivity and their instructional practices. For example, on the MTCS, Debbie indicated slightly disagreeing with *I am knowledgeable about particular teaching strategies that affirm the racial and ethnic identities of all students,* which Debbie discussed during the interview when she shared that she does not always know how to culturally support the African-American and Filipino students in her class. Catherine indicated slightly agreeing with "I have a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy." Catherine
demonstrated, during the observation, some of the ways in which her instruction is culturally responsive, for example, the classroom lesson on friendship built around some of the needs of her students.

Additionally, the researcher was seeking to understand how teachers assess their personal culture, including how it influences interactions with their students and instruction. During the personal interviews the researcher gained an understanding of how teachers assess cultural knowledge. The high cultural proficiency group expressed a deep understanding of their own cultural background and how it influenced their relationship with their students. They both openly shared their own personal culture with students as a means to connect with the students and provide instruction. Participants in the high cultural proficiency group also intentionally developed opportunities to build relationships with students and their families, and assessment of students' culture was integrated into the instructional practices.

Participants in the medium cultural proficiency group conveyed an understanding of their own culture and were less likely to share their own personal culture with students. When they did share their personal culture it was more likely to occur during informal settings. The culture of their students was not embedded into the curriculum developed by teachers; instead, students' culture was brought into the classroom unintentionally or during social situations. Additionally, they made some assumptions regarding parenting styles and school involvement but did state that they valued the importance of learning about their students through their parents. Participants in the low group expressed an understanding of their culture and also expressed that it sometimes influenced the interactions they have with their students. They expressed the importance of understanding others' cultures from a global perspective; however, they may not focus on the cultural experiences of their own students.
during instruction. They did express the importance of learning about students' cultures through parent conferences and parent interactions.

The third question guiding the study was the following: Are there differences in the instructional strategies of teachers who perceive themselves to have a high level of cultural proficiency, an average level of cultural proficiency, or a lower level of cultural proficiency? An examination of the three groups was conducted in order to look at similarities and differences using the essential elements of cultural proficiency as a framework to guide the analysis. The essential elements of cultural proficiency are the following: (1) Assessing cultural knowledge, (2) Valuing diversity, (3) Managing the dynamics of difference, (4) Adapting to diversity and (5) Institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Results demonstrated that in the area of assessing cultural knowledge, the high CP group expressed a deep understanding of personal culture and its influence on their relationships with students. They also openly shared their personal culture with their students as a way of connecting with them and providing instruction. The medium CP group and the low CP group also expressed an understanding of their personal culture; however, they expressed that it sometimes influenced their interactions with students, and they were most likely to share their personal culture during informal settings, not necessarily as a way of providing instruction. Additionally, the high CP group intentionally provided opportunities to build relationships with their students and families and the assessment of their student's culture was embedded in their instructional practices. In the medium CP group, the student's culture was not embedded into the curriculum developed by teachers, and it showed up unintentionally through required text or during social interactions. The low CP group expressed the importance of understanding others' cultures; however, the focus was not always on the
culture of their own students. Similar to the high group, the medium and low CP group also realized the importance of learning about students' culture through parent conferences and interactions.

In the area of valuing diversity the high CP group developed an environment where students were able to share their cultural selves through personal stories and learn from one another. This group capitalized on students' culture and infused their cultural experiences into instruction. They valued community/family and systemically reinforced opportunities for students to develop student-to-student relationships through dialogue. The medium CP and low CP group also created opportunities for student dialogue regarding acceptance and respect of different cultures. The medium CP group encouraged placing students in diverse groups in order to encourage learning through the diversity of students represented in the classroom. One of the participants in the medium group valued community building and focused on it only in September. The low CP group mainly focused on diversity specific to personal, character or trait-based aspects or as foreign cultures and places. They saw the importance of family configuration, family dynamics and provided and invested time for community dialogue to discuss important issues affecting the students.

In the area of managing the dynamics of difference, teachers in the high CP group viewed conflict as a teachable moment and managed conflict through community dialogue with their students. Teachers in this group modeled kindness and care and encouraged the same from their students. They also demonstrated care by establishing an environment explicit about no child being left behind. This group discussed the importance of developing routines, structure and consistency. They established rituals as a way to create smooth transitions at the beginning of the day and between instructional blocks. The medium group
demonstrated managing conflict mostly using behavioral interventions and consequences. They encouraged students to show care by supporting one another academically, through personal interactions and by creating a bully-free learning environment. Similar to the high group, the also believed that organization and predictability prevented conflict, and it was demonstrated in the observations. The low CP group managed conflict by using behavioral interventions. They emphasized establishing a safe environment in the classroom and encouraged students to solve their own conflict. They expressed a genuine care for students and conducted a classroom lesson on friendship and kindness. Similar to the high and medium CP groups, they possessed a daily schedule for student to follow and referenced it throughout the day. They also created structured seating arrangements to create order in the classroom.

In the area of adapting to diversity, a commonality all teachers shared was an awareness to integrate strategies that support English Language Learners. The strategies were evident in varying degrees within teachers in the same groups. Eva, Elizabeth and Debbie, who represented all three categories, implemented ELL strategies at higher levels than their counterparts. Teachers in the high CP group were conscious of students' developmental needs and had an awareness of the cultural norms of students from various backgrounds. Similarly, teachers in the medium CP group were conscious of students' developmental needs and integrated activities to meet those needs. Teachers in this group were mindful of presenting different historical perspectives to students. The low CP group took opportunities to discuss the importance of respecting one another's religion and made reference to issues of internalized oppression in one situation with a student.
In the area of institutionalizing cultural knowledge, teachers in the high CP group deliberately integrated students' life experiences into the curriculum and used literacy as a forum to share their life experiences and learn about the life experiences of their students. Teachers in the medium CP group used current mandated curriculum, especially in social studies and language arts in order to discuss issues of culture. Different from the high CP group, the discussions related to culture took place if the texts possessed the topic. Teachers in the low CP group understood the importance of having literature culturally reflective of their students; however, the literature used in the classroom sometimes reinforced stereotypes. They held a belief that parents were not educating students about their culture and felt responsible for teaching students about it.

**Implications for Facilitating Cultural Proficiency for Teachers, Schools and District-Wide**

The purpose of this study was to understand and explore self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient reflective and instructional practices of elementary school teachers in the San Diego Unified School District. Based on the findings of the study, the following section provides implications for further developing culturally proficient instructional practices among teachers, school-wide and district-wide.

1. *Understanding how one's culture influences interactions with students and understanding that sharing personal culture during instruction and in informal settings may nurture relationships with students.* Participants in the high cultural proficiency group expressed a deep understanding of their personal culture and its influence on interactions with their students. Eva, for example, defined her spiritual culture as one where she values all of her students feeling like they are part of a community. As a result, she places high value on community building and is deliberate about creating opportunities for her students to feel like they belong. She has also integrated her cultural self during instruction by way of sharing experiences she has had that help build connections with students. Additionally, participants in the medium cultural proficiency group utilized social and informal settings to share cultural aspects of their lives as a way of connecting with their students. Professional development opportunities focusing on cultural proficiency must include opportunities to
reflect on personal culture and its influence on interactions with students and explore ways to formally incorporate such knowledge into instruction.

2. **Assessing student culture as a critical aspect of facilitating culturally proficient instruction.** Participants who demonstrated high levels of cultural proficiency focused on assessing their students' culture as part of their instructional practices. They saw the value of learning about their students in order to facilitate instruction. For example, Kim created a questionnaire to give to her students when they first come in to her class, and she also assigns presentations for her students to present cultural practices and traditions in their family. Participants in all groups also saw the value of learning about their students through parent interactions. Professional development opportunities that explore different ways to assess knowledge about students' culture and use it as a basis for instruction need to be developed and prioritized.

3. **Understanding that when students' voices and their diverse cultural perspectives are an integral part of instruction, teachers are most likely to engage student learners.** The researcher observed that when discussions took place that included the diverse perspectives of students during instruction, students appeared to be more engaged. Additionally, when students had the opportunity to work in diverse groups and partners, students were also engaged in the process as they learned from each other. Professional development that explores ways to include the diversity of student voices and cultural perspectives during instruction must be created.

4. **Developing opportunities throughout the day to nurture the classroom community.** Teachers in all groups that demonstrated practices nurturing the classroom community created opportunities for students to be vulnerable in sharing aspects of their lives and also created opportunities for students to learn more about the teacher. Additionally, verbal participation and engagement were higher during those opportunities.

5. **Understanding that conflict and tension is natural and when healthy ways of managing conflict are integrated in the classroom environment, opportunities for learning to take place.** As an essential element of cultural proficiency, managing the dynamics of difference describes conflict as a natural part of an organization where interactions between different cultures are taking place. It is critical for district staff to provide professional development that supports educators to develop strategies to solve conflict and to implement strategies in the classroom environment that support students in learning how to work through difficult situations with other.

6. **Understanding the importance of organization, predictability, routines and rituals as strategies that enhance instruction.** It was evident in the observations with all groups that when teachers demonstrated organization and predictability by implementing routines and rituals, instruction was maximized because students were prepared and ready for their tasks. Professional opportunities must take place that allow teachers to exchange valuable information about organization strategies, routines and rituals, that will help support other teachers in developing their own.

7. **Knowing that when strategies such as role-playing, songs, chants, visuals, repetition, the use of body language and hands-on learning are utilized during instruction, all students, and especially second language learners, benefit because they are more engaged in the learning process.** There were teachers in all of the groups that demonstrated strong strategies to
support second language learners. These strategies must be shared in the school communities. Providing opportunities for educators who understand and have the knowledge of English and second language acquisition to provide professional development in their school communities is essential.

8. *Multicultural books and literature offer diverse perspectives that all students can learn from.* They may also be a source of inspiration for students. Teachers in all groups referenced using books to begin critical discussions. Additionally, teachers such as Catherine, uses biographies in order for students to learn about the contributions of different people. It is critical that multicultural literature is free of stereotypes and negative descriptions and images of the diverse communities the books describe. The curriculum and instruction department along with the Race Human Relations & Advocacy department must provide schools with a list of appropriate multicultural books that promote positive images of diverse communities. Additionally, professional development must include discussions that allow critical dialogue about literature being used in classrooms.

9. *Understanding that learning how to engage in healthy discussions specific to race, gender, class, sexual orientation and other constructs that can be challenging or uncomfortable to discuss can benefit students because they also begin to learn to dialogue about differences.* Some of the participants in the second phase of the study expressed not knowing how to begin those conversations or facilitate them. Additionally, participants in the first phase of the study self-reported at lower levels when responding to item: I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories. District staff responsible for providing cultural proficiency training must provide educators with strategies to support staff in facilitating challenging conversations.

10. *When cultural proficiency is evident systemically in school practices because the school leaders prioritize it, staff also becomes more conscious of culturally proficient instruction.* Catherine described that as she learns about her students through their parents, she also offers support for parents that the school offers. A homework class that helps parents with homework strategies in Spanish is one example. School leaders must prioritize cultural proficient practices school-wide.

11. *Understanding the importance of learning about culturally proficient instruction beyond surveys and general training.* Overall, elementary school teachers surveyed in this study self-reported medium to higher levels of cultural proficiency. Based on the findings of the teachers participating in the second phase of the study, teachers in the high group demonstrated consistency with their self-reported scores and teachers in the medium and low group demonstrated some consistency with their self-reported scores. Surveys do not necessarily reflect an accurate representation of the instructional practices taking place in the classroom. District staff responsible for conducting research and interventions in the area of cultural proficiency, such as the Race Human Relations & Advocacy department, must look beyond surveys, and engage in learning more about teacher instructional practices through personal discussions and classroom observations. Additionally, professional development must be tailored to meet the specific needs of teachers at specific school sites.

12. *Understanding that the cultural proficiency journey is a process and everyone has different strengths and weaknesses.* It is important that, as teachers develop culturally proficient instructional practices, they do so in an environment that is safe so that honest
dialogue can take place. Many teachers went through teacher credential programs not learning how to work with the diversity of communities that exist in our educational system. In order for educators to grow in this process, they must feel safe having honest dialogue about this work. District staff, trainers and leaders must provide a safe space to have discussions with educators about cultural proficiency no matter what cultural proficiency level educators are at.

**RESEARCH STUDY LIMITATIONS**

This study explores self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction practices among elementary school teachers in the San Diego Unified School District. It is important to discuss the limitations related to this study and its research design, collection techniques and sample population selected for the study.

The surveys utilized for the study, the MTCS and the TMAS, are two strong instruments in the field of education that measure issues related to multicultural teaching. However, a limitation to this study was that the two surveys did not measure the essential elements of cultural proficiency, which was the framework guiding this study. The MTCS was designed to measure multicultural teaching and knowledge, and the TMAS was designed to measure multicultural awareness and sensitivity. The researcher selected the two surveys because they are two measures that exhibited strong reliability and validity, and she did not find in the literature an instrument measuring cultural proficiency that demonstrated strong reliability and validity. It was challenging to triangulate the data analyzed in the quantitative phase of the study and the qualitative phase because while the constructs were very similar, there were differences in the frameworks of the constructs.

Another limitation related to this study is that the researcher is an employee for the San Diego Unified Race Human Relations & Advocacy department. This serves as a limitation because participants may not have responded as authentically because the researcher is a district employee. The researcher attempted to address this issue by
explaining that her role with the study being conducted was strictly as a researcher and that their responses would not have any consequences on their positions in the school. She also provided this information on all consent forms and literature distributed to the participants and discussed it during the personal interviews.

A limitation related to the sample population used in this study is the transferability of the findings to the larger teacher population. The first phase of the study was limited to seven elementary schools in the San Diego Unified School District. The findings from the seven schools may not reflect the multicultural teaching skill, knowledge, awareness and sensitivity of other teachers at schools in the San Diego Unified School District. Additionally, there were six elementary school teachers selected to participate in the second phase of the study. Findings of this study may not be transferable to the larger teaching population because this study focused specifically on elementary school teachers who teach in three different schools with specific needs based on their student population. Teachers in this study may not be accurate reflections of the general teacher population in the San Diego Unified School District. Also, the six teachers who volunteered to be observed may have been the most open to be observed conducting classroom instruction. Their practices may not reflect the practices of teachers who would be placed in the same level of cultural proficiency according to their survey scores.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study contributes to the body of knowledge documenting culturally proficient instructional practices in the field of education. Specifically, this study explored, through mixed-methods, how teacher self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency are related to culturally proficient instructional practices. Additionally, it was also important to understand
if there are similarities and differences in the instructional practices of teachers who self-reported a high, middle or low level of cultural proficiency. While this study offered insight into exploring educator culturally proficient instructional practices, it was also limited to the time and context of the study. While the researcher was able to gain some valuable knowledge during the personal interview and classroom observations, being able to observe educators during a longer period of time may have also been useful to gain a deeper understanding of the practices taking place in the classroom. However, another perspective may be that district personnel and leaders responsible for evaluating instructional practices may not have the time to be in a classroom for full days over a long period of time. A future study may focus on observing classrooms for culturally proficient instructional practices using long-term case studies. It may be of value to study one teacher for an entire year.

Ladson-Billings (1994) conducted an in-depth study of two classrooms in a study focusing on successful teachers of African American students. Also, the researcher examined educator culturally proficient practices through the framework of the essential elements of cultural proficiency. Each element deserved further exploration, and it may be of value to focus on one or two of the essential elements and expand on how they show up in the classroom and in the school site. For example, the third essential element is managing the dynamics of difference. A research study could focus on how conflict is managed in the classroom between students, between adults and students and how conflict is managed at the school site among adults. This deserves further exploration, especially documenting programs that support positive ways of managing conflict. This study focused on documenting the voices of the teachers involved in the study. The student voice is critical in order to understand if culturally proficient instructional practices are having an impact on the
students receiving them. Future studies may also include interviewing students in order to further understand their perspective with this work. Additionally, it may be of value to include parent voices to better understand how it impacts them. An additional recommendation for a future study is to examine culturally proficient instructional practices with teachers in the same grade level. It would be valuable to document how teachers provide CP strategies for required text and for the same age group of students they are working with. This would support the researcher with various strategies to analyze based on similar content teachers in the same grade are required to implement. A final recommendation would be conduct research focusing on validating instruments that focus on specific cultural proficiency constructs, such as the essential elements of cultural proficiency and the cultural proficiency continuum. This would support future work that could facilitate analyzing instructional strategies that focus on this specific construct. Each of the 12 implications also offers recommendations for future research.

**Final Reflections**

The purpose of this study was to offer insights about elementary school teacher's culturally proficient instructional practices. A goal of this study was to examine how teacher's self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency are related to their culturally proficient instructional practices. Another goal was to look at similarities and differences between the groups with self-reported high, medium and low levels of cultural proficiency. In this study, the voices and perspectives of teachers who reported various levels of cultural proficiency were heard through both personal interviews and classroom observation. While there are various ways to further enhance this research, the researcher hopes this study contributes to how educators look at cultural proficiency in education. She hopes that educators are
inspired by the voices and experiences of the teachers who participated in the study and pushes them to continue to engage in developing cultural proficiency in educational settings. Additionally, the researcher would like this study to serve as a model for the San Diego Unified School District to continue to address the issue of cultural proficiency in the classroom and school-wide.
REFERENCES


competence. In K.M. Teel & J.E. Obidah (Ed.), *Building racial and cultural competence in the classroom strategies from urban educators* (pp. 144-151). New York: Teachers College Press.


APPENDIX A

EDUCATOR CONSENT FORM FOR SURVEY
Appendix A: EDUCATOR CONSENT FORM FOR SURVEY
San Diego State University and Claremont Graduate University
San Diego Unified School District

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mariana Gomez, doctoral candidate in Education from the joint-doctoral program at Claremont Graduate University and San Diego State University. The results will be used in generating data for a doctoral dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the PhD program. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently employed at an elementary school in the San Diego Unified School District. The study will be supervised by Dr. Rafaela Santacruz, dissertation co-chair at San Diego State University and Dr. Philip Dreyer, dissertation co-chair at Claremont Graduate School.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this research study is to explore how elementary school teachers' self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency relate to their reflective and instructional practices. The purpose of gaining insight on teacher reflective practices is to learn more about how educators assess their own culture and its impact on students. The researcher also seeks to understand how their students' culture impacts educators' instruction.

PROCEDURES
Participation in the survey should take 20 minutes of your time. The survey portion of this study will involve responding to 37 questions specific to self-reported awareness, knowledge, and behaviors in implementing culturally sensitive teaching. The on-line survey will be sent via e-mail with a link to qualtrics, a secure web survey tool. Or, if your school site selected, you will be completing the paper survey during your staff meeting. You will only be asked your name and contact information if you choose to participate in the second portion of the
study (only for the purpose of follow-up). At the end of the survey, you will be asked to indicate if you are interested in taking part in the personal interview and classroom observations portion of the study. If you indicate that you are interested and are selected to participate in the second phase, you will be contacted 1-2 weeks after the survey completion.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The risks associated with this project are minimal. However, because of the personal nature of the questions asked, you may reflect on unpleasant memories while responding to the surveys. If you experience discomfort at any point, you may discontinue the survey at any time. Additionally, you may choose to skip any survey question if at any point you experience discomfort. This will not affect your participation in the survey portion of the study. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Responses to the survey will be anonymously coded and any identifying data will be kept separate.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS
The researcher cannot guarantee that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study. However, there may be some benefits. You may reflect on your personal levels of cultural proficiency and how it impacts your instructional practices. The reflection and implementation of culturally proficient instructional practices has significant implications for student outcomes and future research.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Your responses to the survey will be identified by code number and will be kept separate from any information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Your personal responses will not be linked to your name or be reported in a manner that allows for your identification. Additionally, if you select to be a potential participant in the second phase of the study, your contact information will remain confidential and will only be used to contact you if you are selected to participate. During
the research process the records will be stored in a locked drawer to maintain security. Additionally, on-line material will be secured by password. When the research is over, all documents will be maintained for three years and then destroyed.

INCENTIVES TO PARTICIPATE/COST
You will not be paid to participate in this study and there are no costs with this research.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study, while greatly appreciated, is entirely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you can always change your mind and stop at anytime you want. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not affect you employment status or any personal consideration or right you have.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY
You can ask me any questions about the study and I will do my best to answer them for you. If you have any questions about the study at a later time, you can contact me at marianalamaste@yahoo.com.

An institutional review board (IRB) is a committee that has been formally designated to monitor, and review research involving humans, with the aim to protect the rights and welfare of the research subjects. If you have questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant, you may contact an Institutional Review Board (IRB) representative in the Division of Research Affairs at SDSU (phone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu) or an IRB representative at CGU (phone: 909-607-9406; email: irb@cgu.edu). These review boards are responsible for ensuring the protection of research participants.
CONSENT OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read and understood the description of this study. I have asked and received satisfactory answers to any questions I had. I agree to participate in the study and I understand that I can withdraw at any point from the study. By signing below, I give my consent for the data of my survey to be used for the purposes of research by the investigator.

________________________________________________________________________
Write your name here (please print)

__________________________________________________________________________  ______
Your Signature                                      Date

__________________________________________________________________________  ______
Signature of Investigator                           Date
APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Appendix B: Demographic Information
San Diego Unified School District
Claremont Graduate University/ San Diego State University

School Code

___ 1   ___ 2   ___ 3   ___ 4   ___ 5   ___ 6

Gender

___ Male   ___ Female

Ethnicity (you may check multiple choices)

___ African   ___ African-American   ___ Caucasian (European descent)

___ Central/Southern Asian   ___ Latino   ___ Filipino   ___ Northeast Asian

___ Pacific Islander   ___ Southeast Asian   ___ North African/ Middle Eastern

___ Other ______________________

Age
Years teaching in the education field

___ 0-5 years  ___ 6-10 years  ___ 11-15 years  ___ 16-20 years  ___ 21-25 years

___ 26-30 years  ___ 31 years or more

Grade Level Teaching

___ Kinder  ___ 1st grade  ___ 2nd grade  ___ 3rd grade  ___ 4th grade

___ 5th grade  ___ 6th grade  ___ Other (please specify) _____________
APPENDIX C

MULTICULTURAL TEACHING COMPETENCY SCALE
APPENDIX C: Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Moderately Agree
6 = Strongly Agree

1. ___ I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching.

2. ___ I plan my activities to celebrate diverse cultural practices in my classroom.

3. ___ I plan school events to increase student's knowledge about cultural experiences of various racial and ethnic groups.

4. ___ My curricula integrate topics and events from racial and ethnic minority populations.

5. ___ I make changes within the general school environment so that racial and ethnic minority students will have an equal opportunity for success.

6. ___ I consult regularly with other teachers or administrators to help me understand multicultural issues related to instruction.

7. ___ I rarely examine the instructional materials I use in the classroom for racial and ethnic bias.

8. ___ I often include examples of the experiences and perspectives of racial and ethnic groups during my classroom lessons.
9. ___ I often promote diversity by the behaviors I exhibit.

10. ___ I establish strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic minority parents.

11. ___ I am knowledgeable about particular teaching strategies that affirm the racial and ethnic identities of all students.

12. ___ I have a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy.

13. ___ I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories.

14. ___ I am knowledgeable of how historical experiences of various racial and ethnic minority groups may affect students' learning.

15. ___ I understand the various communication styles among different racial and ethnic minority students in my classroom.

16. ___ I am knowledgeable about the various community resources within the city I teach.
APPENDIX D

TEACHER MULTICULTURAL ATTITUDE SURVEY
Appendix D: Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey
Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera (1998)

Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Uncertain = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5
(Circle One)

1. I find the idea of teaching a culturally diverse group rewarding. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Teaching methods need to be adapted to meet the needs of a culturally diverse student group. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Sometimes I think there is too much emphasis placed on multicultural awareness and training for teachers. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Teachers have the responsibility to be aware of their students' cultural backgrounds. 1 2 3 4 5

5. It is the teacher's responsibility to invite extended family members (e.g., cousins, grandparents, godparents, etc.) to attend parent-teacher conferences. 1 2 3 4 5

6. It is not the teacher's responsibility to encourage pride in one's culture. 1 2 3 4 5

7. As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes increasingly challenging. 1 2 3 4 5

8. I believe the teacher's role needs to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally different backgrounds. 1 2 3 4 5

9. When dealing with bilingual students, some teachers may misinterpret different communication styles as behavior problems. 1 2 3 4 5

10. As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes increasingly rewarding. 1 2 3 4 5

11. I can learn a great deal from students with culturally different 1 2 3 4 5
backgrounds.

12. Multicultural training for teachers is not necessary. 1 2 3 4 5

13. In order to be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom. 1 2 3 4 5

14. Multicultural awareness training can help me work more effectively with a diverse student population. 1 2 3 4 5

15. Students should learn to communicate in English only. 1 2 3 4 5

16. Today's curriculum gives undue importance to multiculturalism and diversity. 1 2 3 4 5

17. I am aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds of students I am/or will be working with. 1 2 3 4 5

18. Regardless of the racial and ethnic make up of a classroom class, it is important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity. 1 2 3 4 5

19. Being multiculturally aware is not relevant for students. 1 2 3 4 5

20. Teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom. 1 2 3 4 5

Where do you place yourself along the continuum with respect to the various student cultural groups at your school? (Check One)

The points of the continuum are:

1. ____ Cultural destructiveness - Educating in a manner that you seek to eliminate the cultures of others in all aspects of the school and in relationship with the community served.

2. ____ Cultural incapacity - Educating in a way that you trivialize other cultures and seek to make the culture of others appear to be wrong.
3. Cultural blindness - Educating where you don't see or acknowledge the culture of others and you choose to ignore the discrepant experiences of cultures within the school.

4. Cultural pre-competence - Educating with an increasing awareness of what you and the school don't know about working in diverse settings. At this level of development you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction or you can falter, stop and possibly regress.

5. Cultural competence - Educating with your personal values and behaviors and the school's policies and practices being aligned in a manner that is inclusive with cultures that are new or different from you and the school.

6. Cultural proficiency - Educating as an advocate for life-long learning for the purpose of being increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of cultural groups in your school and community. Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy.

Thank you for your participation in the survey!

The second phase of this study consists of examining culturally proficient instructional practices in education through a 45-minute personal interview and two full day classroom observations. Your participation in the second phase will support the researcher in further examining how self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency are aligned with instructional practices. Similar to the survey phase, this second phase is completely voluntary and will have no impact on your current position in the district. If you are interested in participating in the second phase of the study consisting of a personal interview and two classroom observations, please provide you contact information. Your personal information will remain confidential and will only be used for contact purposes. Thank you for your participation!
**If interested, please provide your name, school site and the best way to contact you in the space below.**

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Appendix E: Participant Interview Questions
Claremont Graduate University/ San Diego State University
San Diego Unified School District

1. How do you define culture?
2. How do you describe your culture?
3. Does your culture influence how you interact with your students during instruction? Why or why not?
4. How do you learn about your student's culture?
5. Does knowledge you have about your students' culture influence how you interact with your students, why or why not?
6. Does the knowledge you have about your students' culture influence how you deliver instruction, why or why not?
7. What opportunities during instructional time do you provide for students to share about their culture?
8. What opportunities during instructional time do you have to share with your student's information about your culture? (Nuri Robins et al., 2006, p. 115).
9. Can you give an example (critical incident or event) where you utilized student cultural knowledge in your instruction?

Modified from Culturally Proficient Instruction, A Guide for People Who Teach (Nuri Robins et al., 2006).
APPENDIX F

EDUCATOR CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS
Appendix F: EDUCATOR CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS
San Diego State University and Claremont Graduate University
San Diego Unified School District

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mariana Gomez, doctoral candidate in Education from the joint-doctoral program at Claremont Graduate University and San Diego State University. The results will be used in generating data for a doctoral dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the PhD program. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently employed at an elementary school in the San Diego Unified School District. The study will be supervised by Dr. Rafaela Santa Cruz, dissertation co-chair at San Diego State University and Dr. Philip Dreyer, dissertation co-chair at Claremont Graduate School.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this research study is to explore how elementary school teachers' self-perceived levels of cultural proficiency relate to their reflective and instructional practices. The purpose of gaining insight on teacher reflective practices is to learn more about how educators assess their own culture and its impact on students. The researcher also seeks to understand how their students' culture impacts educators' instruction.

PROCEDURES
During the previous survey portion of the study, you volunteered as a possible participant to the personal interview and classroom observations. The personal interview portion of the study will last approximately 45 minutes. Interview questions will focus specifically on how teachers assess their personal culture and their students' culture in the classroom. The interviews will take place at the school site of the participant at a time convenient to him/her.
Personal interviews will be audio-recorded, transcribed and reviewed. If you choose not to be audio-recorded, you will not be asked to be part of the study.

Additionally, you will also be asked to take part in two classroom observations beginning a week after the personal interview. The purpose of the classroom observations will be to observe teacher instructional practices that are aligned with their self-reported levels of cultural proficiency. Each observation will last a full instructional day. Each participant will be observed a total of two times. Both classroom observations will be completed within two-weeks of each other. The researcher will complete an observation protocol during each observation and take notes.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The risks associated with this project are minimal. However, because of the personal nature of the questions asked, you may reflect on unpleasant memories while responding to the interviews. If you experience discomfort at any point, you may discontinue the interview and/or observations at any time. Additionally, you may choose to skip a question during the interview if at any point you feel discomfort or uneasiness and still continue with the rest of the interview. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR SOCIETY
The researcher cannot guarantee that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study. However, there may be some benefits. You may reflect on your personal levels of cultural proficiency and how it impacts their instructional practices. The reflection and implementation of culturally proficient instructional practices has significant implications for student outcomes and future research.
CONFIDENTIALITY
All research materials will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Your personal responses will not be linked to your name or be reported in a manner that allows for your identification. Confidentiality will be ensured by using pseudonyms for participants and name of school and looking for generalizations within the experiences. These interviews will be audio-recorded. If you decide to participate in the interview, but do not want to be audio-recorded then you will not be asked to be part of the study. During the research process the audio files will be stored in a password-protected computer to maintain security. When the research is over, all paper and electronic data files will be maintained for three years then destroyed.

INCENTIVES TO PARTICIPATE/COST
You will not be paid to participate in this study and there are no costs with this research.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study, while greatly appreciated, is entirely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you can always change your mind and stop at anytime you want. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not affect you employment status or any personal consideration or right you have.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY
You can ask me any questions about the study and I will do my best to answer them for you. If you have any questions about the study at a later time, you can contact me at mariananamaste@yahoo.com.

An institutional review board (IRB) is a committee that has been formally designated to monitor, and review research involving humans, with the aim to protect the rights and welfare of the research subjects. If you have questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant, you may contact an Institutional Review Board (IRB) representative.
in the Division of Research Affairs at SDSU (phone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu) or an IRB representative at CGU (phone: 909-607-9406; email: irb@cgu.edu). These review boards are responsible for ensuring the protection of research participants.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and you have had a chance to ask questions about the study. You have been given a copy of this consent form. You have been told that by signing the consent form you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Please check each one of the boxes to indicate what you would like to do:

☐ No, I do not want to be in the research study.

☐ Yes, I want to be in this research study.

Please check box to indicate your consent for the following:

☐ I give permission to be audio recorded in the interview.

________________________________________
Write your name here (please print)

________________________________________  ____________
Your signature  Date

________________________________________  ____________
Signature of Investigator  Date
APPENDIX G

CULTURAL COMPETENCE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST
Appendix G: Cultural Competence Observation Checklist
San Diego Unified School District
San Diego State University/Claremont Graduate University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 = Effective</th>
<th>2 = Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>1 = Ineffective</th>
<th>N/O = Not Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of thoughtful planning and implementation of the behavior by the teacher, eliciting many appropriate student responses. The teacher was clear and sustained focus on the purpose of learning.</td>
<td>Evidence of some planning and/or implementation of the behavior by the teacher, eliciting some appropriate student responses. The teacher was sometimes clear and focused on the purpose of learning.</td>
<td>Evidence of little or no planning and/or implementation of the behavior, eliciting minimal appropriate student responses. The teacher was unclear and unfocused regarding the purpose of learning.</td>
<td>The listed behavior was not demonstrated during the time of the observation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classroom Environment and Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Environment</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>N/O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulletin boards reflect diversity of students in classroom (inclusive of diversity of languages)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom library resources representative of students diverse cultures and native languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student work displayed in the classroom</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Relevant, engaging useful visuals throughout classroom

**Comments:**

### Additional Comments:

## Classroom Climate

There is a climate of respect for students' and teacher's ideas, questions and contributions

**Comments:**

Interactions reflect cooperative working relationships among students.

**Comments:**

A climate of care, community, and interconnectedness exists.

**Comments:**

Overall classroom climate is positive.
### Risk-taking is safe.

**Comments:**

- Communication of high expectations for all students, belief in each student's potential.

**Comments:**

- Student's culture and home lives are resources/assets in the classroom.

**Comments:**

- Conflict is dealt with in a constructive manner.
  - Peace-path
  - Conflict mediators
  - Healthy discussion of conflict
  - Peace strategies encouraged
  - Reminders of classroom norms in a positive manner
  - Discussing problem, coming up with collective solutions

**Comments:**

### Additional Comments:
### Teacher Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Role</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>N/O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactions and instruction reflect teacher knowledge and appreciation of students' home life and cultural perspectives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses to students' language use reflect affirmation and respect for students' home languages and dialects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher shares personal and cultural connections.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher learns about students' culture and community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher demonstrates and communicates high expectations for all students to succeed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher demonstrates ethic of care and values relationships building trust in the classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comments:**
## Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>N/O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum is appropriately challenging for most or all students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum and materials used reflect attention to students’ interests and range of cultural backgrounds.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of cultural songs, poetry, pictures, reading and hands-on activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful activities/ experiences connected to curriculum (i.e. role models, addressing community issues)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural events/ celebrations and community events are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
embedded into the curriculum.

Comments:

Students' prior knowledge and/or life and home experiences are incorporated into lessons.

Comments:

Teachers use a variety of resources (other than textbooks) for lessons and study.

Comments:

Developed integrated units around universal themes.

Comments:

Additional Comments:

Instructional Strategies

A wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles are used to meet the needs of students.

- visuals, photos, maps, films
- role-playing, simulations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate strategies used with English Language Learners to promote academic progress and ELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• graphic organizers, pictures, activities, emotional or affective connections, brainstorming for knowledge of topic being studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student self-grouping is permitted/encouraged at times. Encouragement of student interactions across racial/ethnic/gender/linguistic lines (may also be evident from students).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional strategies are differentiated to meet the learning needs of a range of students (i.e. students speaking other languages, needing more learning time).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperative learning strategies are used that allow students the choice of working alone or in groups on certain projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Varying participant/activity structures encourages participation of all students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
A variety of methods used for assessing student progress, does not rely strictly on written formats.

### Student Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Engagement</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>N/O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are active participants in sharing cultural contributions and connections.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students praise their own and each others' cultural heritages and experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are engaged in active listening.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing as an intellectual activity is evident in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students assist, support and encourage each other.

Comments:

Additional Comments:

Adapted and modified from:


APPENDIX H

MASTER CODE LIST
### Appendix H: Master Code List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Construct</th>
<th>Essential Elements and Themes</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Child Code</th>
<th>Grandchild Code</th>
<th>Code Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Proficiency Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>Adapting to Diversity</td>
<td>Adapting to diversity in the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The way in which educator's makes changes in order to adapt to the needs of students and the learning community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Cultural Knowledge</td>
<td>Assessing cultural knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning about one's own culture, other's cultures, how the school reacts to others' cultures, and what you need to do to be effective in cross cultural situations (CampbellJones et al., 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing personal culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is the manner in which teacher's described their own culture and the awareness of how it influenced their students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing student's culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is the process that teacher's utilized to learn about student's cultures in and out of the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student culture influencing instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is the manner in which teacher's utilized instruction to learn about student's culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student's culture influencing them personally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is how teacher's described that learning about student's culture influenced them personally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Information</td>
<td>Definition of culture</td>
<td>Awareness of student's personal needs</td>
<td>How teacher's described an awareness of student's individual needs and described how they supported the student.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge</td>
<td>Institutionalizing cultural knowledge in the classroom</td>
<td>How teacher's defined culture during the personal interview.</td>
<td>Information teacher's provided about their student's grade, ethnicity, and gender.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of Language/English Language Learner Strategies</td>
<td>Issues of Language/English Language Learner Strategies</td>
<td>The instructional strategies teachers use to learn about other cultures and to learn about how other people experience those cultures.</td>
<td>Instructional strategies teachers utilize to support students who are English language learners.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Dynamics of Difference</td>
<td>Managing the dynamics of difference</td>
<td>The way in which teachers create a constructive and instructive environment for managing conflict (Lindsey et al., 2005).</td>
<td>Caring environment How teachers encouraged an environment where teacher and students demonstrate caring and kindness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and predictability</td>
<td></td>
<td>The physical structures and procedural systems that promote ease of classroom movement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and predictability</td>
<td>The physical structures and procedural systems that promote ease of classroom movement and learning efficacy (Kaufman, 2010). Predictable and consistent classroom routines provide a classroom environment where fewer issues need to be negotiated (Howes and Ritchie, 2002).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent interactions/parent views</td>
<td>The way in which teachers interacted with parents in the classroom and the views they had about reaching out to parents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leadership</td>
<td>How teachers provided leadership opportunities for students in the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing Diversity</td>
<td>To value diversity is to teach with the intention of valuing diversity and to pay attention to those things that value diversity in the classroom. Fostering a learning community, recognizing that diversity is always present in the classroom,</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>