

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY AND LATINX EDUCATORS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY

A Dissertation

by

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BA, New Mexico State University, 2004

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This dissertation meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher education are serving large numbers of diverse student populations due to shifts in Pre-kinder to 12th (P-12) education. To keep up with these shifts, these higher education institutions are trying to diversify faculty and staff to meet the needs of students. Following the research in cultural responsiveness, two prominent theories have emerged in P-12 education, culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching. Administrators and educators in P-12 utilize these theories when trying to improve achievement gaps in American schools. Scholars have argued that it is crucial that educators at all levels of teaching utilize cultural responsiveness so that they can better understand and meet the needs of diverse student populations. There are many studies researching and defining what cultural responsiveness looks like in P-12 education. However, a scarcity of research exists in graduate higher education. Specifically, there is a void in the literature when it comes to minority faculty lived experiences and how lived and cultural experiences of the educator translates into classroom pedagogy.

To address this void, the purpose of this study was to 1) understand how Latinx graduate faculty in graduate higher education conceptualize culturally responsive pedagogy, 2) explore the connection between Latinx graduate faculty lived, cultural experiences and learn which experiences inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education, and 3) to understand the ways in which Latinx graduate faculty lived experience informs their culturally responsive practices in graduate higher education. In this study, culturally responsive pedagogy is defined as the graduate faculty participant making meaning from their own lived experiences, in an effort to enhance both the experience of learners of culturally diverse backgrounds. In

addition, this making of meaning from their lived experience informed the graduate faculty's diversification of teaching strategies and practices in their graduate classrooms.

Participants in the study included four self-identified Latinx graduate faculty: three females and one male, all with earned PhDs in Education, self-identifying as culturally responsive faculty and teaching graduate-level courses in the College of Education at institutions of higher education. This study called for the use of a qualitative, multi-case study method utilizing Latino Critical Race theory (1995), social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), and Villegas and Lucas's (2002), culturally responsive teachers framework to analyze and interpret the data.

The data suggested that Latinx graduate faculty tap into many areas of their own narrative and lived experience to inform their pedagogy in the graduate classroom. The results of this study suggested the ways in which Latinx graduate faculty have used their lived experiences to inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education is through building bidirectional relationships or relationships that serve both parties, incorporating their knowledge of their own challenges and resiliency to create relevant classroom pedagogy, and advocating for themselves and others through persistence. The findings in the study suggested that Latinx graduate faculty have a good understanding of what culturally responsive pedagogy is; however, they grapple with implementing culturally responsive pedagogy because there is no clear guideline, and there is not enough support to carry out culturally responsive pedagogy in institutions of higher education.

This study brought insights into Latinx graduate faculty's lived experience to the table for the very first time in terms of culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education. It introduces an alternative way for leadership to evaluate and understand the perspectives and

experiences that their current staff bring into the classroom with them. It also provided the opportunity to leverage the experiences of educators in developing responsive classroom curriculum. It also provided the basis to develop professional development workshops for faculty in higher education who work with diverse student populations.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this degree, with love, to my grandparents, Enid Kalloo (Mama) and Hector Kalloo (Dada). This degree is especially dedicated to my Mama, who continued to support and encourage me, even though we were oceans apart through letters and phone calls. Mama, the last time I was able to see and talk with you was in June 2016. I promised you that I would finish this degree. I have worked hard to keep my promise and I miss you everyday.

I dedicate this journey to my family: my parents, Roy and Karen, and my sister, Daniela. Mom and Dad, thirty-one years ago you took a journey of your own from a tiny island across the ocean to a new country in a bustling city. Your sacrifice and hard work does not go unrecognized. Daniela, thank you for your support throughout this journey. I love you all!

I dedicate this work to my husband, Daniel, and our daughters, Isla Lucia, and Lena Mari, who have patiently supported me through the dissertation process. Daniel, thank you for your patience and support throughout my doctoral program. We made it through pregnancies, long commutes, papers, exams, completing and defending this dissertation, and raising two little girls. I couldn't have done this without you! Isla and Lena, with time, dedication, and hard work, anything is possible. My wonderful family, I love you!

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“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

- *Ghandi*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
ABSTRACT	v
DEDICATION	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF TABLES	xvi
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	4
Statement of the Problem	9
Purpose Statement	11
Research Questions	13
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework Summary.....	13
Methodology Summary	14
Significance of Study	16
Assumptions and Limitations	17
Delimitations	17
Operational Definitions	18

Organization of the Study	19
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	21
Culturally Relevant and Responsive	22
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Pioneers	23
Preparing Educators for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	24
Culturally Responsive Educators	25
Challenges in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Higher Education	32
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	42
Epistemology	45
Methodological Approach	46
Research Design	47
Role of the Researcher & Bias	49
Preparation for Data Collection	49
Participant Profiles	52
Confidentiality	53
Data Collection Procedures	54
Data-Storage Procedure	56
Data Analysis Procedure	56

Coding Process	57
Trustworthiness	58
Delimitations	61
Chapter Summary	61
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS	63
Participant Profile Overview	66
The Participants	67
Presentation of the Findings	78
Theme 1: Cultivating bidirectional relationships	80
Theme 2: Rebounding and Recovering through Resilience	89
Theme 3: Perseverance through self-efficacy and advocacy.....	95
Chapter Summary	101
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	103
Overview of the Problem.....	103
Purpose of the Study.....	103
Research Questions	104
Discussion of the findings	105

Research Question #1: How do Latinx faculty describe and enact their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy?	106
Research Question #2: What lived or cultural experiences have Latinx faculty identified as informing their culturally responsive pedagogy?	107
Research Question #3: How do Latinx faculty practice culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?	111
Implications for Practice.....	112
Recommendations for Future Research.....	112
Conclusions	113
REFERENCES	115
LIST OF APPENDICES	132
APPENDIX A- Participant Email	133
APPENDIX B- Survey	134
APPENDIX C – Information Sheet.....	135
APPENDIX D- Phone Script.....	138
APPENDIX E- Consent to Participate	139
APPENDIX F- Participant Questions	143
APPENDIX G- Demographic Profiles of Participants.....	144

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES	PAGE
FIGURE 1. CROTTY'S (1998) CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS.	46
FIGURE 2. TIMELINE FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	56

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES	PAGE
TABLE 1. STUDENTS BY RACE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN FALL 2019.....	5
TABLE 2. FACULTY BY RACE (2016).....	7
TABLE 3. DOCTORATES EARNED BY RACE IN 2014-2015.....	11
TABLE 4. SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT PROFILE	67
TABLE 5. OUTLINE OF FINDINGS	80

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be.”

- Maya Angelou

Prologue

As I write this dissertation, I reflect on my journey as an educator and the lived experiences that have brought me to this moment in time. Let me be clear, I believe my lived experience is defined as my perceptions, my feelings, happy moments, challenging moments, and my understanding of who I am based on all of these experiences. I am a person of color, and my pedagogy comes from a place “within”. What I mean by this is I am self-aware of my difference. My “otherness” and my “brown-ness” follows me wherever I go. Time and time again, research confirms that people like me do not earn doctoral degrees. Women and ethnic minorities are less likely to earn doctoral degrees (Castro, Garcia, Cavazos, & Castro, 2011). Before diving into the study, there is a personal sense of importance that the reader has an understanding of why the lived experience, personal narrative, and culturally responsive pedagogy has value to me. So, I must first share my own story.

The West Indian islands of Trinidad and Tobago, surrounded by the blue waters of the Caribbean Sea are two of the most picturesque islands that you can imagine. I was born in the capital city of Port of Spain, Trinidad. My mom worked in the hospital as a clerk, and my dad worked as a manager of a grocery store. I barely noticed when my parents immigrated to New York in the 1980’s, when I was five years old and left me in the care of my maternal grandparents. It is very common in the Caribbean for grandchildren to live with or spend a lot of their time with their grandparents, so it was not unusual, and it felt comfortable to me.

I spent most of my time in the house that my mom was raised in, surrounded by countless uncles, aunts, and cousins on each side of my family. Strong family ties are very

significant in West Indian culture. I attended a uniform wearing, all-girl, Roman Catholic school with curriculum based on the British school system. Teachers could spank students if they were not doing well in school, talking out of turn, or misbehaving. My life at that time was what I defined as “normal.” My skin color and features looked very similar to many people in my country, my accent sounded like theirs, and all of the things I ever knew to be true about me were still intact.

In 1991, at the age of 9, my parents felt financially ready for me to join them in the United States. I immediately noticed things that were different from my own culture like the food, people were different skin colors, and their accents were not Trinidadian. For the first time in my life, I felt “different” and out of place. I started the fourth grade in my new American school in the Summer of 1991. My new school was a coed public school where I wore whatever clothes I wanted. Children in my class would misbehave, and not one teacher was stepping up to spank them for misbehaving or not doing well in their studies. One of the most fascinating things I noticed was that the students in my new school were segregated based on language. I remember trying to figure out what qualified students for the Special Education class. After a few months of getting to know the students in that class, I figured out it was made up of students whose first language was Spanish. I vividly remember thinking to myself, why would they separate students who were trying to learn English from students who already knew English?

An impactful memory I recalled from my elementary education was taking a spelling test, like I did every Friday, in my fourth-grade class. One of the words that we had to learn that week was ‘colour.’ I was a great speller, so I was not very concerned with my test. I remembered glancing at the spelling words list that week, and I noticed that my teacher had spelled “colour” wrong. I assumed it was a mistake. I took my test, confident that I would get one hundred

percent like I always did. To my surprise, when I received the test back, I got the word ‘color’ wrong. Surely, this was a mistake, “c-o-l-o-u-r” just like I learned back in my school in Trinidad. I went directly to my teacher to inquire about this, and she promptly corrected me, “No, it is spelled “c-o-l-o-r.” Well, even though I explained to her that I learned it was spelled the other way, that was the end of the story. She went on to remind me how to spell ‘color’ in the future.

We lived in a one-bedroom basement apartment. To pay the bills, my parents were always working. My mother left her prestigious hospital job in Trinidad to become a live-in nanny to three children in New Jersey. My father worked as the manager of a video store and would often get home after 7 pm each night. I remember walking home, getting something to eat, watching about an hour of cartoons, and then sitting down to get my homework done alone. The first year of school was challenging because I was not used to going to a coed school, wearing regular clothes, not having my extended family around, and the winters were cold. In addition, I was teased because of my accent, so I prioritized learning how to sound American and blend in. Over time it was easy for me to learn how to sound American, but my parents were unable to lose their accents. They were a constant reminder that we were not American, and I found myself being embarrassed by them, of being different and being Trinidadian.

My American schooling did not help me to feel a sense of belonging; instead, it enhanced my difference. As I look back on my elementary through doctoral studies, I think about the vast number of educators that I have encountered, the majority of them white. All of them had a story, a culture, and a lived experience that I was never aware of at the time. As I reach the end of my doctoral journey with better knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy, I wonder about the lived experiences of my educators, the ways they used, or did not use, those moments to inform their classroom pedagogy? In this study, I aim to gain more understanding of the lived

experiences of Latinx graduate faculty and how these experiences have informed their culturally responsive pedagogy and practice in the graduate classroom. I have chosen to study Latinx faculty at the graduate level for geographical reasons.

Background

The face of public education in America has changed dramatically over the past 20-30 years. Prekinder through 12th grade (P-12) student populations have become more diverse, which has ultimately impacted the demographics of institutions of higher education. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the United States was often coined as a ‘melting pot’ of cultures with large populations of immigrants settling their young families all over the country. Abu-Laban and Lamont (1997) wrote, “the idea of the melting pot metaphor comes from the history of the United States as a settler-colony, the image of the Statue of Liberty and the process of immigration and ethnic diversity.” The National Center for Education Statistics (2019) reports shifts in the racial/ethnic group distributions in the enrollment of P-12 students across the United States. The percentage of White, Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska students is expected to decline through the fall of 2028. The percentage of public school students who are Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and two or more races continue to increase (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). (See Table 1).

Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) state that the ever-changing global forces and population shifts in P-12 education, due to migration and immigration patterns, have made cultural responsiveness in higher education a necessity. With the large number of diverse students in the school system, institutions of higher education are finding themselves facing the crucial need to make learning relevant and engaging for students.

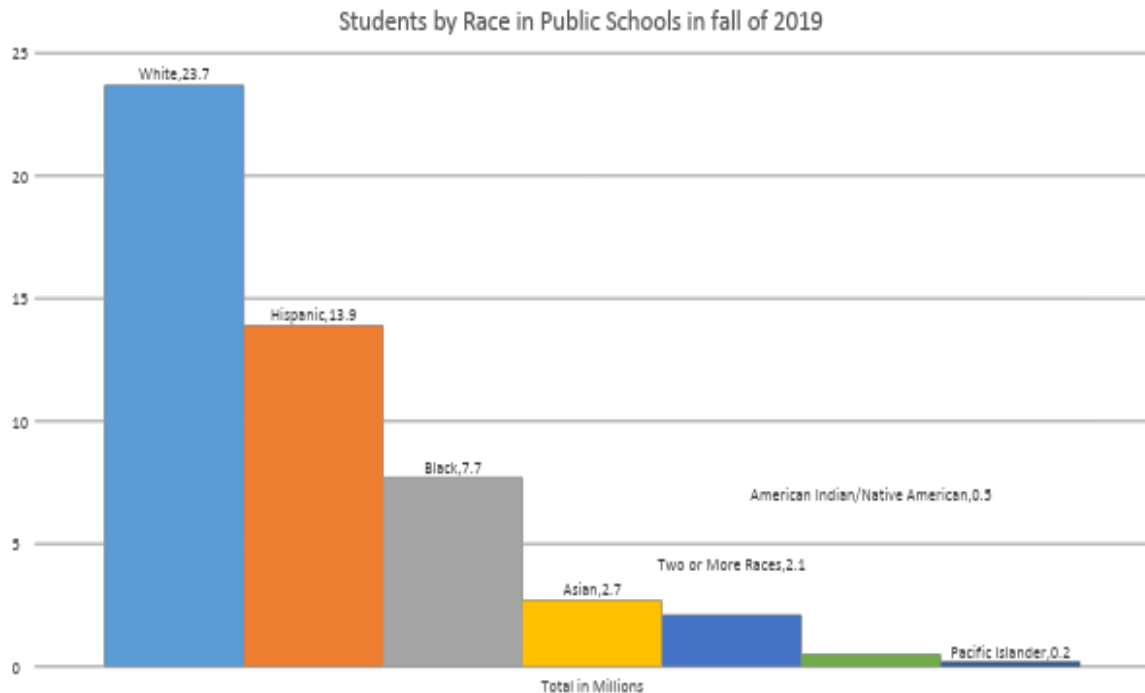


Table 1. Students by Race in Public Schools in fall 2019.

Shifts in Student Population in Higher Education

The percentage of American college students who are Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic, and two or more races has increased and will continue to increase over time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). These population shifts have made way for racially or ethnically diverse students to enroll in postsecondary education. In 2016, The Council of Graduate Schools reported all underrepresented racial minority (URM) groups monitored saw a 3.9 percent growth in first-time graduate school enrollment. This growth was more than their White, non-Hispanic/Latino counterparts. There were substantial increases in first-time enrollment, among first-time U.S. citizens and permanent resident graduate students in Fall 2015. At least 22.5% were underrepresented minorities, including American Indian/Alaska Native (0.5%), Black/African American (11.8%), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (0.2%), and Hispanic/Latino (10%). There is a clear indication that URM groups are enrolling in institutions

of higher learning and pursuing advanced degrees. In her press release, Kent (2015) writes that while URM groups are still largely underrepresented, we must continue to see growth in their enrollment to “ensure a larger impact across graduate programs and a more diverse workforce.”

Dominant white teaching culture in higher education

Population shifts in diversity have changed the traditional ‘face’ of American higher education, the needs of students, and the need for culturally responsive practices, and diverse educators. In 2016, the National Center for Education Statistics report stated that among full-time, male and female professors at degree-granting postsecondary institutions, 78 percent were White, 6 percent were black, 5 percent were Hispanic/Latino, and 10 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander. Making up less than 1 percent each were professors who were American Indian/Alaska Native and of two or more races (Table 2).

With these statistics in mind, it is likely that most traditional higher education classrooms deliver curriculum and pedagogy through a lens of white, middle-class, native English speakers. While the American and student populations have shifted in diversity, the professoriate has remained mostly White (Haviland & Rodriguez-Kiino, 2009, Hayes and Juarez, 2012). Underrepresented minority students may receive inequitable education because students are being taught by professors implementing assimilationist pedagogical practices that are not designed to pay attention to the culture or language needs of URM students (Pappamihile & Moreno, 2011). In other words, some professors may provide all students with the same curriculum and pedagogical methods without taking into account cultural differences and ways of learning.

Faculty by Race

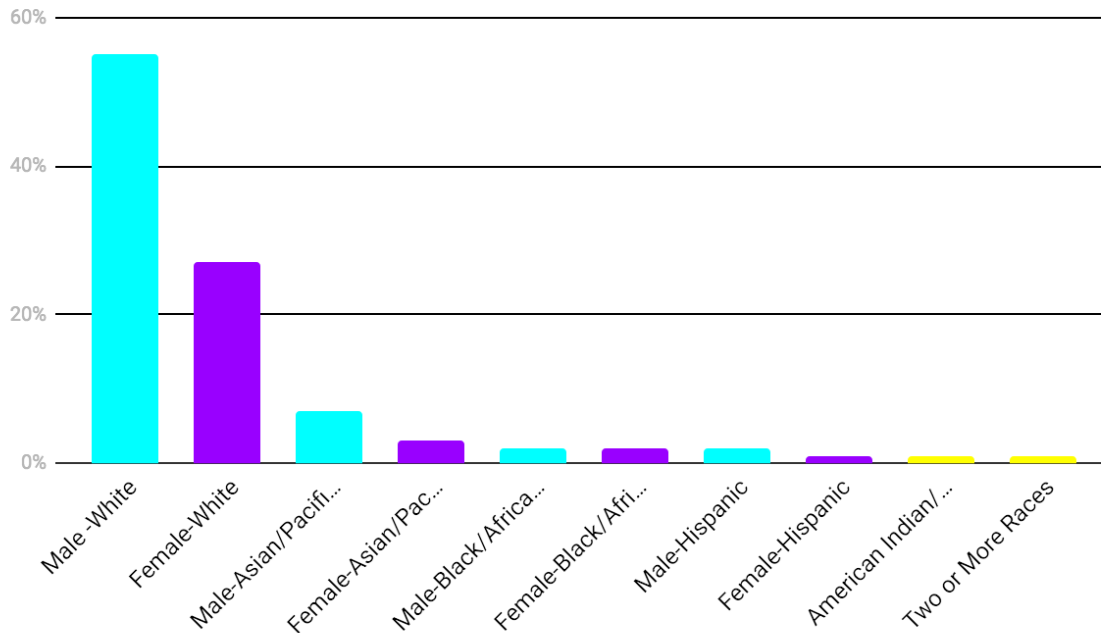


Table 2. Faculty by Race (2016)

The Need for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Higher Education

Gay (2010) defines culturally responsive pedagogy as a method using cultural characteristics, prior experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students to develop pedagogy and teaching into a more relevant and effective practice. Based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the student's and teacher's lived experiences and frames of reference, they are more meaningful, garner higher interest appeal, and are learned easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive pedagogy is an effective method to meet the academic and social needs of culturally diverse students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Howard, 2001).

According to researchers like Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) and Geneva Gay (2010), one of the most effective ways to improve the academic achievement gap is to use culturally relevant

and responsive methods. Gay (2010) discusses the importance of culturally responsive teaching, while Ladson-Billings (1995) focuses on culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) share similar principles for minorities, especially the importance of culture in learning. Culturally relevant pedagogy describes an *approach* to teaching that engages with diverse student populations (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive teaching focusing on the *action* of teaching, with a focus on teaching strategies and practices.

Colby and Ortman of the US Census Bureau (2015) reports that continued growth in diversity in the United States population will “become majority-minority by 2044.” With this in mind, it is clear that the population of adult learners in graduate education programs is and will continue to become increasingly diverse, resulting in the need to explore varying methods in educating and identifying the characteristics of cultural responsiveness in higher education. Larke (2013) writes that equity in educational outcomes for students is the overall objective of cultural responsiveness.

Distinguishing Pedagogy and Teaching

Missing from the work reviewed above is a focus on the lived experiences of graduate faculty and the personal, cultural experiences they bring into the graduate classroom with them each day. This study is grounded in the phenomenon of culturally responsive pedagogy and requires clarification on the difference between culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and my definition of culturally responsive pedagogy. Pedagogy is defined as “the *method and practice* of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept” (Oxford Dictionary, 2019). Ladson-Billings (1995) defined culturally relevant pedagogy as an *approach* that called for engaging learners from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Gay (2002) went on to define culturally responsive teaching as focusing on the *action* of teaching, with a focus on diverse teacher strategies and practices.

In this study, culturally responsive pedagogy is defined as the graduate faculty making meaning from their own lived experiences, in an effort to enhance both the experience of learners of culturally diverse backgrounds. In addition, this making of meaning from their lived experience informed the graduate faculty's diversification of teaching strategies and practices in their graduate classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

The higher education landscape has shifted to serve a vast number of minority students. Higher education indeed faces several challenges when dealing with these shifts. Two very large challenges are implementing curriculum that meets the needs of this culturally diverse student population and diversifying faculty and staff to meet the diverse student populations being served. Culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching was meant to address the needs of students in elementary and secondary schools (Larke, 2013). In other words, there is limited scholarship written about culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education and how to implement it. In higher education, there is a void in scholarly research that addresses how to specifically identify culturally responsive characteristics of faculty and the processes of implementing the practice of culturally responsive pedagogy in culturally diverse classrooms (Alvarez McHatton et al., 2009; Haviland & Rodriguez-Kiino, 2009; Wlodkowski, 2003).

It is crucial to leverage the experiences, pedagogical methods, and teaching insights of full-time, minority professors at degree-granting postsecondary institutions to better understand the needs of diverse students in higher education. In addition, there was also a need to research these topics in graduate higher education. This is especially true since minority, graduate faculty

only make up 16 percent of full-time faculty at higher education institutions. Dewey (1963) writes, “education is essentially a ‘social process.’ He goes on to say that it is “absurd to exclude the teacher from the member of the group” as they are a “mature member” of the group and provide “the interactions and intercommunications which are the very life of the group as a community” (p.58).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017) between 2014-2015 the percentage of doctorate degrees earned is as follows: White 70 percent, Asian/Pacific Islander 12 percent, Black 8 percent, Hispanic 7 percent, American Indian/Alaska Native 1 percent and two or more races 2 percent (Table 3). While we have seen small growth in other minority groups earning doctoral degrees, there is a significant lag in the number of Hispanics (of any race) attaining these degrees. Latinos are underrepresented in graduate schools and especially in doctoral programs (Martinez, 2018). Fry (2002) adds that Latinos do not earn college degrees in the same proportion as other racial groups. The Latinx population represented the largest ethnic minority group in the United States; however, they remain underrepresented in the professoriate (Martinez, 2018).

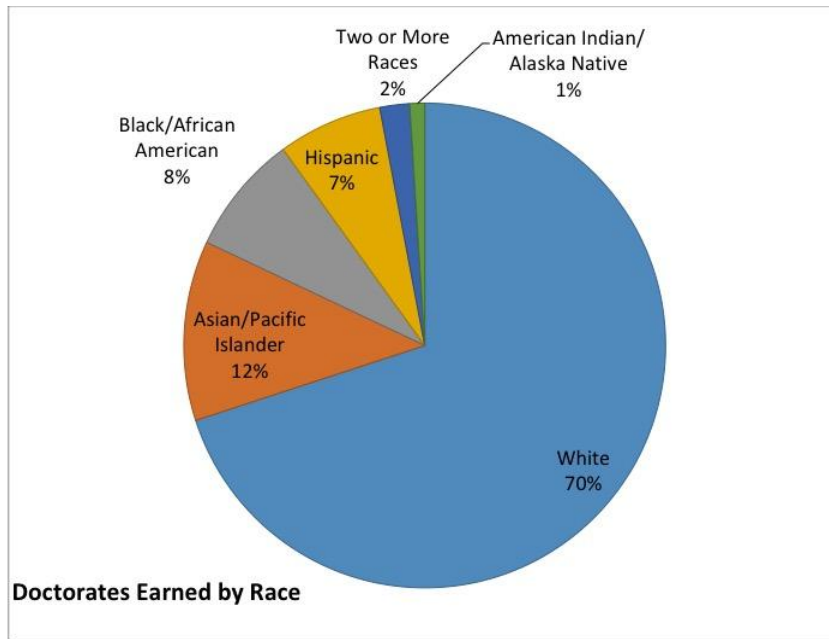


Table 3. Doctorates earned by race in 2014-2015

Latinx is defined as a person of Latin American origin or descent, used as a gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina (Oxford Dictionary, 2019). As the Latinx population grows across a wide range of ages, there is also notable growth among the Latinx population in pursuing education as a career (Feistritzer, 2011). Olarte (2017) writes that while the Latinx P-12 educator population increases, there is an urgency to understand how Latinx educators incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms. The Latinx graduate faculty group presented a healthy population to investigate, as many are first-generation college graduates who have dealt with many of the challenges that racially or ethnically diverse students face. These lived challenges often serve as motivation to make a difference in the education system (Tong, Castillo, & Pérez, 2010). In addition, there is a void in the literature researching Latinx graduate faculty experiences and the practice of cultural responsiveness in the graduate classroom in higher education.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to 1) understand how Latinx graduate faculty in graduate higher education conceptualize culturally responsive pedagogy, 2) explore the connection between Latinx graduate faculty lived, cultural experiences and learn which experiences inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education, and 3) to understand the ways in which Latinx graduate faculty lived experience informs their culturally responsive practices in graduate higher education.

Moustakas (1994) defined the lived experience as a term used to describe the individual experiences of a person/people or phenomenon that is being studied. The lived experiences in this study ranged from birth to adulthood. I conducted this study with a strong sense of urgency to focus on Latinx graduate faculty's lived experience as an essential connection to culturally responsive pedagogical practice in graduate higher education. This study focused on understanding the lived experiences of Latinx graduate faculty, and how these experiences have informed their culturally responsive pedagogy and practice in the graduate classroom. This study suggested that lived experience may influence graduate faculty members' culturally responsive pedagogical practices through the understanding and practice of self-reflection, relationships, positive and negative experiences, and upbringing.

In this study, culturally responsive pedagogy is defined as the graduate faculty making meaning from their own lived experiences, in an effort to enhance both the experience of learners of culturally diverse backgrounds. In addition, this making of meaning from their lived experience informed the graduate faculty's diversification of teaching strategies and practices in their graduate classrooms. Although much has been written about the need for culturally responsive pedagogy in P-12 and undergraduate teacher education programs, there is a void in the literature focusing on culturally responsive pedagogy at the graduate level in higher

education. In addition, very little has been written about the lived experiences of faculty and how it is used to inform pedagogy. Dancy & Jean-Marie (2014) stated that faculty are found to process their lived experiences while teaching and interacting with others.

Research Questions

The overall research question that guided this study was: In what ways does the lived, cultural experience of Latinx faculty inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?

To explore the perspectives of Latinx graduate faculty, the following research questions guided the study:

- 1) How do Latinx faculty describe and enact their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy?
- 2) What lived or cultural experiences have Latinx faculty identified as informing their culturally responsive pedagogy?
- 3) How do Latinx faculty practice culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework Summary

In this study, Latino Critical Race Theory (Valdes, 1996) and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) provided the theoretical grounding for this study. The conceptual framework guiding the study is Villegas and Lucas's (2002) culturally responsive teacher framework, which identifies characteristics of culturally responsive educators. LatCrit is used to reveal Latina/o experience of race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression, and it also acknowledges their experience with identity, immigration, sexuality, language, and culture. Vygotsky (1978) stated that individuals create meaning through interactions with each other and their environment. In

this study, LatCrit and Social Constructivism provide a pathway for critical analysis of minority educator experience through identity, social justice issues, and human socialization, with the intent to enhance the connection(s) between culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education.

As a conceptual framework, I used Villegas and Lucas' (2002) vision for preparing culturally responsive teachers to address the ambiguity surrounding culturally responsive teaching methods. Their study utilized six characteristics to define culturally responsive teachers:

- 1) Are socioculturally conscious
- 2) Has affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds
- 3) Sees themselves as both responsible and capable of equitable, educational change
- 4) Understands how learners construct knowledge and are capable of promoting knowledge construction
- 5) Knows about the lives of their students
- 6) Design instruction that builds on what their students already know while stretching them beyond the familiar

Ultimately, using the culturally responsive teacher framework helped to clarify characteristics and specific ways that Latinx faculty can make meaning of their lived experiences and inform their culturally responsive pedagogical approaches in their graduate classrooms.

Methodology Summary

With the approval of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Institutional Review Board (IRB), a qualitative, multiple-case study approach was implemented for this study. The study included four graduate faculty participants who met the following required criteria:

- Were 18 or older

- Self-identified as Latinx
- Self-identified as a culturally responsive graduate faculty
- Hold an earned doctoral degree from an accredited university
- Were teaching a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education at the time of data collection

The best approach for this study was a case study. I chose case study primarily because I needed to gather in-depth details about the experiences of each participant for an understudied subject matter. A multiple-case study design is justified for use in this study to allow for a comprehensive comparison of the similarities and differences between the data collected from each of the four cases. In addition, a case within a case method allowed me to achieve a deeper understanding between the participants, the context of the study, which was higher education, and the phenomenon of culturally responsive pedagogy. I chose to operate from a constructivist paradigm because this study focused on the lived, cultural experience of Latinx graduate faculty to gain understanding into the conceptualization of those experiences, and how the experiences inform culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom.

Semi-structured, in-person interviews were conducted with the four Latinx graduate faculty participants. The interviews were transcribed and sent to the participants to review. In addition, I set up a member check phone call to confirm that all the information collected was true and accurate. After data were collected and confirmed by the participants, I immersed myself in the data by reviewing interview transcripts from all participants. This review was necessary to understand the experiences described among all four graduate faculty participants. I then conducted open, axial, and selective coding to complete data analysis and identify themes. In open coding, I identified the participants words and made meaning of the words in order to

create a code. The purpose of this phase of the analysis was to make meaning of the participant words when answering the questions and describing their experiences. In axial coding, I combined similar open codes to reduce the number of categories created. The purpose of this phase of the analysis was to identify significant common statements and experiences from each participant and identify a smaller unit of categories. In selective coding, I compared and contrasted the categories created in axial coding, and three themes emerged. I continued to group the significant statements according to these themes and created subthemes. Constant comparison of the emergent themes, the study's theoretical/conceptual frameworks, and literature was also utilized during data analysis.

Significance of Study

There was a significant gap in the literature that deals with graduate faculty lived experience as it pertains to the impact that it has on their classroom pedagogy in graduate higher education. This research study added to the body of literature by introducing a holistic approach with an emphasis on the graduate faculty experiences as it translates into pedagogical approaches in their graduate classrooms. In addition, it added a unique contribution of specifically studying Latinx graduate faculty childhood and adult experiences as it connected to their creation of culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom. This study contributed to scholarship in several ways: 1) highlighted the lived experiences and voices of Latinx graduate faculty who have earned PhDs in graduate higher education, 2) explored the connections between Latinx graduate faculty lived experiences, and the impact on pedagogy, 3) provided insight on Latinx graduate faculty culturally responsive pedagogical practices in graduate higher education, and 4) provided insight on characteristics of Latinx culturally responsive graduate faculty in graduate higher education.

Higher education will benefit from this study, which illuminated the lived experiences as described by Latinx graduate faculty. This research gave the reader insight into Latinx graduate faculty lived experiences and the ways those experiences have informed their culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education. This study shifted the culturally responsive focus from the student to the graduate faculty member in higher education. This shift may have assisted in solving challenges experienced in implementing culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education. In addition, findings from this study may also have impacted institutional preparation and support of graduate faculty in higher education.

Assumptions and Limitations

A key assumption in this research was that the lived experience has a direct effect on culturally responsive pedagogical practices in the graduate classroom. This assumption was necessary because it allowed the data collected to provide the information necessary to answer two of the three research questions in the study.

Limitations of the study included the participants self-reporting their practices of culturally responsive methods. There was no observable data to confirm that the participants were practicing culturally responsive teaching in their graduate classrooms. Presently, there is no database that can be used to identify Latinx faculty at the higher education level. The use of one researcher for data collection and data analysis was a limitation due to a single perception.

Delimitations

The study was delimited due to its relatively small sample size of four participants, which was due to geographical restrictions and only included two large public institutions and one private institution of higher learning in Texas. The study was also delimited due to the participants having to self-identify as Latinx, self-identify as a culturally responsive graduate

faculty, hold a doctoral degree from an accredited university, and currently teach a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education.

Finally, a delimitation that occurred during data collection in this study was the malfunction of the recording device during one of the in-person interviews. The in-person interview took place with the recording device working, however, the device never recorded the session. In response to this occurrence, I emailed the participant and asked if they wanted to redo the interview or answer the interview questions by email. The participant chose to email the answers to the questions. To set up the member check phone call with this participant, I emailed their answers to the questions in addition to my field log notes. During the member check phone call, we discussed any changes that needed to be made.

Operational Definitions

The use of specific terminology allows the reader contextual understanding of the study. This study will use this list of terms and formally defined definitions.

- ***Culturally Relevant Pedagogy-*** used to describe an *approach* that called for engaging learners from culturally diverse backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1995).
- ***Culturally Responsive Pedagogy-*** In this study, I as the researcher, define culturally responsive pedagogy as the graduate faculty making meaning from their own lived experiences, in an effort to enhance both the experience of learners of culturally diverse backgrounds and inform the graduate faculty's diversification of teaching strategies and practices in their graduate classrooms.
- ***Culturally Responsive Teaching-*** used to describe focusing on the *action* of teaching, with a focus on teacher strategies and practices Gay (2002).
- ***Graduate Higher Education:*** encompasses both Master's and Doctoral level programs.

- ***Latinx***: a person of Latin American origin or descent (used as a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina) (Oxford Dictionary, 2019).
- ***Lived Experience***: a term used to describe the individual experiences of a person/people or a phenomenon that is being studied (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, the lived experience is defined as birth through adulthood. In addition, it encompasses both the lived and cultural experiences of the participants.
- ***Postsecondary education***: formal instructional programs with a curriculum designed primarily for students who have completed the requirements for a high school diploma or equivalent. This includes programs of an academic, vocational, and continuing professional education purpose, and excludes avocational and adult basic education programs. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).
- ***Racial/ethnic group***: classification indicating general racial or ethnic heritage (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).
- ***Underrepresented Racial Minorities (URM)***: Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native students (Council of Graduate Schools, 2016).
- ***White***: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Organization of the Study

This introductory chapter presented the background for the study. It introduced the study's purpose and research questions, summarized the methodology, and theoretical/conceptual frameworks. In addition, it went on to provide the significance of the study, the assumptions/limitations, delimitations, and operational definitions.

In Chapter Two I reviewed relevant literature and research that informed the study. In Chapter Three I explained the methodology of the study and the approaches used in gathering and analyzing the data. Chapter Four presented the findings that resulted from analyzing the data. Finally, Chapter Five presented a discussion of the findings organized around the research questions, and discusses the implications for practice, future research and conclusions.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To move through the stages of this study, it was necessary to complete a critical, thorough review of the current literature. The purpose of this study was to 1) understand how Latinx graduate faculty in graduate higher education conceptualize culturally responsive pedagogy, 2) explore the connection between Latinx graduate faculty lived, cultural experiences in order to learn which experiences inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education, and 3) to understand the ways in which Latinx graduate faculty lived experience informs their culturally responsive practices in graduate higher education.

The literature review provided a focus on research conducted about culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education. It allowed me to think about educator experiences, teacher-student relationships, the nuances in higher education and identifies areas of opportunity for future research in higher education. I desired to ground my pedagogical writing in culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education; however, I had a difficult time finding anchoring literature about faculty, faculty preparation, and the frameworks and methods used in higher education to create and implement culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms. In my research, I found many definitions of what culturally responsive pedagogy is in P-12 education and teacher educator programs, but I had to do more work to tie those definitions to the relatively small amount of literature written on culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education. At the postsecondary level, there is a limited amount of research on culturally responsive curriculum, faculty experiences, and the influences of professor pedagogies in the college classroom (Alvarez-Mchatton, Keller, Shircliffe, & Zalaquett, 2009; Haviland & Rodriguez-Kiino, 2009; Mitchell & Rosiek, 2006). Despite the relevance of culturally responsive pedagogy in all aspects of education, there is limited existing research that focuses on higher education, faculty, the lived

experience of educators, or how educator lived experience informs classroom pedagogy in higher education. With that in mind, this study aimed to address this gap in the literature.

In this chapter, I first addressed the use of culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally relevant teaching and went on to define how culturally responsive pedagogy is used in this study. I continued by highlighting key scholars who have researched and written about cultural responsiveness in education. I go on to review the literature in culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education to explore the topics of 1) Culturally responsive educators and 2) Challenges in culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education. Finally, I provided an overview of the theoretical/conceptual frameworks used in this study.

Culturally Relevant and Responsive

In review of the literature, it appears that scholars have used the ideas of culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching interchangeably. Terms such as culturally responsive pedagogy have become buzzwords allowing teachers to lose sight of what they need to know when trying to cultivate culturally responsive practices (Gist, 2017). Culturally responsive, also called culturally sensitive, culturally compatible, culturally congruent, and or culturally relevant, has been a staple in K-12 teaching for many years (Pappamihiel and Moreno, 2011). These theories only provide a lens into student learning and not of teacher experience preparation. In addition, the lens that has been used to describe culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally relevant teaching has been primarily situated in PK-12 learning. In this study, culturally responsive pedagogy is defined as the graduate faculty making meaning from their own lived experiences, in an effort to enhance both the experience of learners of culturally diverse backgrounds and inform the graduate faculty's diversification of teaching strategies and practices in their graduate classrooms.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Pioneers

To understand the research that has been completed about culturally responsive pedagogy, it is first important to know the key scholars and understand the foundation of their work. With this in mind, I provide the reader with a brief overview of the pioneers in culturally responsive pedagogy.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) introduced the term culturally relevant pedagogy to describe an *approach* that called for engaging learners from culturally diverse backgrounds in P-12. When utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy in building classroom curricula, academic achievement is possible through high, but attainable expectations for all students. Ladson-Billings (1995) proposed three main propositions in culturally relevant pedagogy, students must experience academic success, students must develop positive cultural competence while also succeeding academically, and students must have the ability to recognize, understand and challenge existing social inequities.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Geneva Gay (2002) built upon the work of Ladson-Billings and introduced culturally relevant teaching, which focused on the *action* of teaching, with a lens on teacher strategies and practices in P-12. In culturally relevant teaching, teachers engage and support students not only academically, but culturally as well. Gay (2002) identified five characteristics of culturally responsive teachers: 1) they have a culturally diverse knowledge base, 2) they create culturally responsive curriculum, 3) they exhibit cultural caring, 4) they establish and promote communication across culture, and lastly, 5) they establish a safe classroom environment. Gist (2017), states that in the culturally responsive and relevant work of Ladson-Billings (1995) and

Gay (2010) there are common themes of high expectations, acknowledgment of student cultural capital, critical sociocultural/political consciousness, and passion and dedication.

Preparing Educators for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

To build upon the work of Ladson-Billings and Gay, Villegas and Lucas (2002) called for teacher educators to critically examine the curricula and make issues of diversity the number one priority. Villegas and Lucas (2002) believed that the teacher was at the core of transforming the educational system. They advocated for the recognition that “colleges and universities, like elementary and secondary schools, were not traditionally designed to promote the value of diversity or to serve a racially/ethnically diverse student population” (Colbert, 2010). They offered a vision that helped to infuse multicultural issues through the pre-service curriculum of teacher educators. In addition, they believed that culturally responsive teachers are socioculturally conscious, have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, are responsive and able to bring about equitable change in schools, understand how students construct knowledge and are able to promote knowledge construction, know about their students lives, design the curriculum based on what their students already know while also learning about the unfamiliar (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). In this study, I utilized this vision as a part of my theoretical/conceptual framework.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Django Paris (2012) questioned what “it means to make teaching and learning relevant and responsive to the languages, literacies, and cultural practice of students across categories of difference and (in)equality. To answer this question, Paris introduced ‘culturally sustaining pedagogy’ which “requires that pedagogies be more than responsive or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people.” Instead, it requires that they support young people in

sustaining the cultural and linguistic competences of their communities while learning about the dominant culture.

Culturally Responsive Educators

Culturally responsive pedagogy has been defined by scholars as a way of meeting the needs, both academic and social, of culturally diverse students (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings 1995). Gay (2002), Villegas and Lucas (2002), and Ladson- Billings (2014), and others have provided examples of the educator characteristics necessary to carry out culturally responsive pedagogy in P-12 education. Culturally responsive pedagogy was not developed with higher education teaching in mind (Castillo-Montoya, 2019). In review of the literature in higher education, I identified recurring themes around the characteristics of faculty and challenges faced in higher education. I used this knowledge to push my thinking about what new areas of research needed to be addressed in higher education.

Lived experience. To help a classroom feel more collaborative, safe, and creative, teacher storytelling can be used (Shank, 2006, Noddings, 2006). Educators who accept and adopt cultural responsiveness must first look at themselves, “identify their view of the world and recognize that that one’s view is shaped by life experiences that include race/ethnicity, social class, and gender” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 7). The telling of experiences prompts the realization of the connection of who the person is and what the person experienced. The lived experience is the beginning and ending, it aims to transform into an expression that is reflexive and reflective to create meaning (Van Manen, 1990, p. 36). This reflection on the lived experiences is crucial in the pursuit of preparing educators for the ever-changing landscape of higher education. Nieto (2000) acknowledged that by reconnecting with their own backgrounds, and with the suffering as well as the triumph of their own families, educators can lay the groundwork for students to reclaim their

histories and voices. Van Manen (1990) states that ‘pedagogy requires a hermeneutic ability to make interpretive sense of a phenomena’ connecting it to situations (p. 37).

The minority faculty’s reflection on the lived experience was important to this study. The acknowledgement of the lived experience of minority professors mattered because this allowed them to bring their whole selves’ to the classroom. “Who one is as a person affects who one is both as a learner and a teacher. Life and learning are intertwined” (Olsen, 2016, p. 27). Gay (2010) writes that personal stories give way to many functions in learning. It is most effective when factors such as experiences, cultural background, community, and ethnicity are integrated and included in the classroom environment (Gay, 2010). Ginsberg (2015) states that stories allow people to construct meaning in their learning. Asking someone to tell their personal story, a family story allows for a better understanding of the person and can change assumptions. In an article about narrative inquiry and its use as pedagogy in education, Huber, Caines, Huber, and Steeves (2013) sought to understand how the voices of people and the telling of stories is important work in education and communities. They focused on the nature of stories and how the telling of these stories informs us of who we are, who we have been, and who we have become. Clandinin & Connelly (1999) makes connections in their work about the understanding of educator personal knowledge with professional knowledge.

Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) created a culturally responsive teaching framework, which focused on educator theories of intrinsic motivation in culturally responsive pedagogy. The four conditions of cultural responsiveness for students and instructors were 1) the creation of inclusive learning environments, 2) personal development through self-reflection, 3) meaning-making through student and teacher identities, and 4) validation of student competence (Ginsberg and Wlodkowski, 2009). They believed that teachers must relate classroom content to the

backgrounds of their students. In her dissertation, Jenkins (2015), utilized this framework while researching the experiences of white professors and their motivations and pedagogical transformations in pursuit of culturally responsive pedagogy in their higher education classrooms. Jenkins interviewed seven white, self-identified culturally responsive professors (3 men, 4 women) who were in adult education, higher education or in an education-related field. Findings from the study highlighted that the white professors were motivated through strong convictions about education, and their belief that in order to create a better society, it was their moral obligation to implement culturally responsive pedagogy in their higher education classrooms. The professors in her study told and reflected on their lived experiences to make meaning out of what made them culturally responsive in their classrooms in higher education.

Han, et al (2011) conducted one of the only studies on the topic of culturally responsive pedagogy in a higher education setting where seven, culturally responsive teacher educators, of different races and ethnicities, set out to understand how they defined, enacted and navigated their roles as culturally responsive educators. The educators interviewed each other and engaged in prolonged team meetings as the method of their study. One of the main findings from the study included the importance of building relationships with students when practicing culturally responsive pedagogy. In addition, they found that understanding one's own culture and student cultures built bridges between teaching and learning. They described it as "the core of culturally responsive pedagogy at all levels" (Han, et al, 2011).

Self Reflection. Most postsecondary professors do not fully understand how culture plays a central role in the learning process and the classroom (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009; Pappamihel & Moreno, 2011). Reflection was a term used by Dewey (1933), however, Schon (1983) introduced reflective practice as a way to learn about and improve classroom practices

(Mcalpine & Westin, 2000). Educators who lack engagement in self-reflection do not question their practices or change their beliefs about teaching (Sherin, 2004). Culturally responsive pedagogy is contingent upon the critical reflection of the teacher on their race and culture (Howard, 2003). The idea of cultural capital is critical here as teachers bring their social practices, beliefs, language, and values to the classroom. In his article, Howard (2003), writes about the importance of teacher reflection as a tool for creating culturally responsive classroom practices, specifically when within teacher educator programs.

In all of the above-mentioned writings, scholars cite the importance of educator competence in the area of cultural responsiveness. The goal of this charge is to understand how culture impacts learning. Taking one multicultural course in college has not been proven to produce culturally responsive educators (Taylor, 2013). In their study, Lucey and White (2017) examined the process of self-reflection and mentorship in relation to teaching a diversity and culturally responsive pedagogy course in graduate higher education. The participants were broken up into mentor, mentee roles. The mentor was a white male teacher educator. The mentee was a white female teacher educator. The length of the study was 16 weeks and the professors engaged in email dialogue about teaching the course. The study revealed three important findings: 1) a compassionate mentoring process is necessary, 2) reflective dialogue is important, and 3) the opportunity to engage in critical self-reflection supported the teaching of the course.

Identity. To understand self-reflection it is also important to include research on identity. Erikson (1946) stated that a person's education begins while their personal and social identities are being formed. Gee (2000) defined identity as the way in which we act and interact in a given context that others see as a way of being. There is a call for educators to be mindful about the relationship between ethnic and cultural identity, teaching and learning (Conrad, et al., 2010).

Identity is critical to reflecting on experiences that shape one's life to create meaning and especially important when shaping pedagogy in the classroom. Educators must be willing to place the critical eye on themselves, their own racial identity, as well as how those identities may be divergent from the identities of their students, and how white privilege affects them (Neito, 2000, Brown-Jeffy and Cooper, 2011). Educators of all backgrounds must be willing to engage in significant self-reflection about their own racial and cultural identities to understand the assaulting stories they tell without conscious awareness and to examine their own understanding and beliefs (Tatum, 2008, Jenkins 2015). Teachers who are ready to recognize their own cultural identities and how these identities shapes learning is a crucial first step in learning (Freire, 1998).

Adjust teaching practices. Faculty can bridge a gap in cultural differences through culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive educators continuously adjust their teaching practices to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students. Educators must construct and reconstruct their practices so it is culturally relevant and provide meaning for their students (Howard, 2003). Mayhew and Grunwald (2006) found minority faculty were more likely to incorporate diversity curriculum in their classroom than their White counterparts. Culturally responsive educators organize social relations in their classrooms, where the students are seen as the teachers and leaders (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally responsive educators' knowledge operates at a micro level, focuses on teacher-student relationships at a macro- level, understanding political and historical layers of schooling and a "critical consciousness in students of color" (Brown & Crippen, 2017). In all of the above mentioned writings, scholars cite the importance of educator competence in the area of cultural responsiveness. The intent of this charge is so that there is an understanding of how culture impacts learning.

Relationship building. Effective mentorship allows minority faculty to understand and navigate the academe (Zambrana, et al, 2015). It is important for faculty to interact with each other and form mentoring relationships in pursuit of learning from and building their cultural responsiveness together. Lucey & White (2017) write “we conceptualize mentorship as rooted in social constructivist principles which involve social interaction and the co-construction of knowledge between individuals.” Outside and regardless of the institution of education, relationships are there to provide support and foster critical thinking. If the professional relationship is healthy, the likelihood of successful outcomes is high.

In addition, forming relationships with students, families and their communities enables the teacher to discover the “funds of knowledge” being offered (Moll, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). Much of the literature in K-12 shows that teacher practices that are consistent with culturally responsive pedagogy highlight student-teacher relationships. An expert in multicultural education, Banks (2009) asserts that when teachers know their students and families social, cultural, and language backgrounds, and use it to create curricula, student achievement increases. In addition, creating a welcoming, caring classroom environment helps to build relationships and determines “whether the majority of students learn anything at all” (Wilson & Corbett, 2001, p. 42).

Resilience. The concept of resilience can be found in disciplines such as psychology or psychiatry with the intent to understand the traits that enable thriving during adverse situations (Gu & Day, 2007. Merriam-Webster (2019) defines resilience as the ability to easily recover from or adjust to misfortune or change. Resilience and motivation are not the same thing, “motives are the “whys” of behavior (Nevid, 2013). Burdick (2015) highlights in his article the importance of relationships in increasing resiliency and goes on to say “if your network is strong, you are more

likely to recover from adversity.” Brene Brown’s (2010) work on wholehearted living speaks directly to the resiliency of minority faculty. As a human behavior researcher, she described five main characteristics of resilient people: 1) they are resourceful and are good at problem-solving, 2) they are more likely to seek help, 3) they believe that they can do something that will help them manage their coping feelings, 4) they have social support, and 5) they are connected with family and friends.

The experiences of resilient educators illuminates that individuals do not create the circumstances they are born into and highlights that some situations are imposed on the individual (Jefferies, 2000). In a dissertation conducted on P-12 teacher purpose and resilience to remain in the teaching field, the following findings revealed that resilience was facilitated by goal orientation, personal optimism, mindful tenacity, emotional wisdom and strong social purpose goals (Groundwater, 2016). Resilient teachers are those who have endured challenging situations and are able to show that regardless of their situation they were able to rise (Jackson, 2001).

Perseverance. Merrim-Webster (2019) defines perseverance as the effort put forward to achieve something despite difficulties, discouragement, failures or opposition. Psychologically, teachers can make a difference in the lives of their students, especially those who have exhibited grit (Duckworth, 2016, p. 28). There has been some research written in the areas of perseverance, however, there has been a scarcity of research studying the narrative of lived experience and the connections between the ways that classroom curriculum is created, especially in higher education (Thachil, 2013, Mayfield, 2018). In a study, Robertson-Kraft and Duckworth (2014) studied grit and perseverance in teachers effectiveness and retention rates. Their results indicated that grit and perseverance are both predictors in teacher retention and effectiveness.

McNeely-Cobham & Patton (2015) conducted a study where they sought to understand how perseverance and self-efficacy contributed to the career success of five tenured, black women faculty working at two predominantly white institutions. They investigated the level of self-efficacy to understand the participant behaviors, attitudes, and strategies. The findings suggested that a high level of self-efficacy was found among the participants and facilitated perseverance to their goals.

Challenges in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Higher Education

Roadblocks in the pursuit of culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education are impactful in this study because they are a part of the lived experience of my participants. I found it important to include work that has been done in this area to provide additional context to the reader.

Diversifying Faculty. The student populations of institutions of higher education has shifted over the years however, the faculty population has changed very little. Due to the increase of minority high school graduates, there is a higher number of minorities enrolling in college, increasing the need for minority faculty in higher education (Akombo, 2013). Scholars writing about higher education state that as student populations continue to shift, the challenges that faculty will face teaching these students will rise (Haviland & Rodriguez-Kiino, 2009; O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Colleges/ universities have struggled with not only diversifying campus staff but also employing open, global-minded faculty to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Institutions of higher learning are struggling to increase representation of minority faculty to meet the demand of diverse student populations (Harris, Joyner and Slate, 2010, Cora-Bramble, Zhang and Castillo-Page, 2010). Turner and Gonzalez (2008) write that institutions across the

country are tirelessly trying to diversity their faculties, however, these efforts are not successful because faculty of color are: 1) underrepresented in the academy and 2) their achievements in the are seldom recognized.

Maruyama and Moreno (2000) completed a study to understand university faculty opinion on the importance of diversity on campus and in the classroom. They deployed a questionnaire to 1,500 faculty in higher education. Findings showed that the majority of faculty believed that diversity in the classroom played a role in helping faculty members develop new pedagogical practices in their classrooms. An interesting finding in the study was that senior faculty members (tenure and rank) were less likely to address issues of diversity. Minority and female faculty reported that diversity was less accepted at their institutions, but they reported that there were benefits to diversity, they felt better prepared and were more likely to address diversity issues.

Many institutions have sought to diversify faculty, with the premise that students could relate to same-race professors and the intent of it positively impacting retention and persistence (Mitchell and Rosiek, 2006; Harris, Joyner and Slate, 2010). It is impossible for institutions to meet the diverse needs of each student in each class. Mitchell and Rosiek (2006) write, if we want to strengthen affiliations between racially or ethnically diverse students and their instructors, we will need more than diversity in the faculty body. Warren (2014) conducted a study on culturally responsive pedagogy and found that teachers' background, experience, and disposition impacted their interactions with culturally diverse students.

Professional Development. The growing diversity of the student population, along with many teachers' limited experience with diversity issues means that the demand for culturally competent educators should not be overlooked (Tatum, 2000). Colleges and universities are

serving diverse student populations, and culturally responsive teaching practices are necessary. Institutions of higher education are one of the few remaining places where emphasis is placed on critical thinking, dialogue, and debate (Lindman and Tahamont, 2006). There is buy-in to develop culturally responsive faculty who can communicate with diverse students however, there are no overarching models that exist for developing culturally responsive university faculty (Taylor, 2013). From this knowledge, there is a need to provide continuous professional development around cultural responsiveness in the academy.

Villegas & Lucas (2002) made connections about the value of teacher education institutions and how we educate culturally responsive educators. They found that institutions that were committed to training culturally responsive educators and diversifying faculty must know that colleges and universities were not designed to promote diversity or to serve culturally/ethnically or racially diverse student populations. Richards (2011) writes that in conversations with White, Hispanic, and African-American middle-class education graduate students, they displayed “minimal understanding of themselves in terms of culture and ignored race and culture as important factors in learning. Several authors (Caffarella & Merriam, 2000; Lee & Sheared, 2002; Nieto, 2000) cited that diverse student populations often find that their personal experiences are not relatable to what is being taught in their classrooms. Nieto (2000) writes, “the curriculum lets students know whether the knowledge they and their communities value has prestige within the educational establishment.” Teachers must experience caring educational environments that support them to accept responsibility for their personal biases and privilege (Lucey & White, 2017). Leaders at institutions of higher learning lack strategies in supporting their faculty in creating culturally responsive curriculum that is relevant to diverse student populations (Castillo-Montoya, 2019).

Instructional Challenges. There is buy-in to develop culturally responsive faculty who can communicate with diverse students however, there are no overarching models that exist for developing culturally responsive university faculty (Taylor, 2013). As bell hooks (1994) writes, teaching to transgress is not easy and that educators need to embrace discomfort in the face of great potential. Lindman and Tahamont (2005) write that curriculum changes at institutions of higher education are difficult to implement for various reasons such as administrators, faculty or staff resistance based on investment of a particular teaching method or institutional structures that are already in place. There have been a number of attempts to define what beliefs and practices culturally responsive teachers use however, may not be aware that their classroom practices are culturally responsive. While many researchers have sought to better understand culturally responsive pedagogy, “It appears there is a missing piece in applying the knowledge to actual classroom practices” (Rychly & Graves, 2010, p. 47). What makes culturally responsive pedagogy difficult to execute could be the lack of guidelines or methods which identify teacher behaviors as culturally responsive especially in higher education. Nieto (2000) states that it is false to assume that all students learn the same way, this color-blind education advocated by many dominant culture teaching professionals place minority culture students at a disadvantage in both K-12 and postsecondary education. The culturally responsive educator may be challenged with engaging controversial curriculum with students who may have never confronted or discussed these topics and may challenge their belief systems (Larke and Larke, 2009).

Retention and Graduation. Institutions of higher education recognized that retention and student academic success of Underrepresented minorities (URM) students have and will continue to be an issue. In a study by Roka, Grodsky & Horn (2010) on college completion rates, it was found that graduation rates fluctuate based on race and ethnicity and URM groups struggle to

succeed academically in higher education. Tate (2017) conducted a National Student Clearinghouse Research Center study and determined that white students graduate at a rate of sixty-two percent, Hispanic/Latino students at a rate of forty-six percent and black/African American students graduated at thirty-eight percent.

Schools and colleges successfully graduate a disproportionately low number of low-income, racially and ethnically diverse students (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 1995). At the national level, racial and ethnic diversity continues to grow and it is imperative that educators at institutions of higher education are both personally and professionally prepared to effectively educate members of this diverse, global community. Colleges and universities are tasked with educating and graduating a thriving, successful, diverse workforce to contribute and sustain a healthy economy through meaningful, relevant, and motivational pedagogy. Graduate-level educators are not only challenged with ensuring that all students are engaged in-class curriculum, but they also engage in research with students and assist in supporting them in attaining a master's or doctoral degree. Larke (2013) states, professors must develop more inclusive teaching strategies that are responsive and relevant to the changing student populations on their campuses, in order to effectively deliver their courses.

Theoretical/Conceptual Frameworks

Latino/a Critical Race Theory

Latino/a Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) was conceived in 1995 by legal scholars during a conference titled 'Representing Latina/o Communities: Critical Race Theory and Practice.

“Latcrit theory emerged at that moment partly in reaction to this continuing marginality and invisibility of Latinas/os in law, theory, policy and society” (Valdes, 1996, p. 153). To clarify, LatCrit was born out of Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Valdes, 1996) and is used to reveal

Latina/o experience of race, social class, gender, and other forms of oppression. But unlike Critical Race Theory, it also acknowledges their experience with identity, immigration, sexuality, language, and culture (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). LatCrit builds on CRT by adding the perspectives of Latino/a experiences. LatCrit allowed me to articulate the Latinx experience “through a more focused lens of the unique types of oppression they encounter” (Huber, 2010). LatCrit emphasizes that people of color have individual stories to tell based on their own experiences and these experiences should inform their insights (Olden, 2015). In other words, the purpose of the emergence of LatCrit was to address other existing types of oppression and their intersectionality with race.

A foundational scholar of LatCrit, Frank Valdes (1996), argued that critical race theory has limited the scope to black and white groups causing the movement against racial subordination to narrow to specific groups and omitting others within a multicultural society. LatCrit recognizes that Latino/a denomination is made up of diverse national origins, races and ethnicities. The relationship between Latino/a group commonalities and differences is interesting to LatCrit theorist because these conclusions can lead to meaningful information for other subordinated groups that have also been working toward equality (Valdes, 1996).

A LatCrit framework was most appropriate for this study because I sought to better understand the unique and individual lived, cultural experiences of Latinx doctoral faculty through the telling of their own stories. It is important to recognize that lived realities vary, but can also share commonalities and provides the basis for developing frameworks that illuminate the intersection of experiences with other forms of oppression (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). Through listening to their stories, I gained a better understanding of their cultural backgrounds, beliefs and educational experiences to understand the connections between their culturally

responsive classroom pedagogy. In addition, utilizing LatCrit as a theoretical framework instead of Critical Race Theory, allowed me to conceptualize and expand analysis to address issues such as language, accent, ethnicity, educational inequality, identity, power and privilege of dominant racial groups.

Social Constructivism

While there are a number of theories associated with constructivism, I chose to use social constructivism as a theoretical framework because of its grounding in social aspects and cultural influence. Social constructivism is a social and cultural model of learning. This study utilized Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism which stressed that social interaction is necessary in the learning process. Vygotsky (1978) asserted that cognitive development varied across cultures and the environments that children grow up in, influence how they think (Loyens & Gijbels, 2008). In other words, individuals create meaning through interactions with each other and their environment. Estep (2002) writes learning is influenced by the person's culture and the social situations that shape the experience. In social constructivism, "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences- meanings directed toward certain objects or things" (Creswell, 2007, p. 8).

A social constructivism framework was appropriate for this study as the lived experiences of the participants in the study also included social interactions and relationships with others. Allowing participants to construct meaning through their lived experience, allowed them the opportunity to reflect on how these relationships translated to their approach and practices in terms of culturally responsive pedagogy.

A Vision for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers

As a conceptual framework, I used Villegas and Lucas' (2002) vision for preparing culturally responsive teachers to address the ambiguity surrounding culturally responsive teaching methods. Their study utilized six characteristics to define culturally responsive teachers:

- 1) Are socioculturally conscious
- 2) Has affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds
- 3) Sees themselves as both responsible and capable of equitable, educational change
- 4) Understands how learners construct knowledge and are capable of promoting knowledge construction
- 5) Knows about the lives of their students
- 6) Designs instruction that builds on what their students already know while stretching them beyond the familiar

To assist the reader in understanding these six characteristics I explicate what each area means as described by Villegas and Lucas (2002).

Sociocultural consciousness. This strand of the framework calls for teachers to examine their own identities. Although some teachers have a strong social and cultural sense, they also need to engage in “autobiographical exploration, reflection, and critical self-analysis.” This strand is the awareness that life experiences along with variables such as race, ethnicity, social class, and gender all play a part in the way we see the world.

Affirming attitude toward students from diverse backgrounds. The teacher's role is to add to, rather than replace what personal attributes students bring to the classroom. Teachers see all students, whether poor, brown, or having an accent as learners who have had experiences and know concepts that can be built upon to learn even more.

Commitment and Skills to Act as Agents of Change. Teachers need to view themselves as an agent of change. Even with the recognition that schools have served to maintain social inequities, teachers need to believe that social transformation is possible in schools.

Constructivist views of learning. Teachers help students to connect relationships between what they already know and believe to the new ideas and experiences they are exposed to. Central to student learning is the knowledge they bring from their personal and cultural experiences.

Learning about students. Teachers need to know about students' experiences outside of the school setting. Ladson-Billings (1994) states, "teachers who know about their students' hobbies and favorite activities as well as what they excel at outside school can systematically tie the children's interests, concerns, and strengths into their teaching, thereby enhancing the motivation to learn."

Culturally responsive teaching practices. Teachers not only need to know their students well, but they need to use what they know about their students to enhance learning. Culturally Responsive teachers create a classroom community where all students are encouraged to understand and make sense of new concepts, instead of memorizing information.

Using Villegas and Lucas' (2002) framework of culturally responsive educators, allowed me to discover how the educators in my study made pedagogical decisions as "sources and resources of knowledge and skill" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 79). The diverse backgrounds of educators are valuable resources when implementing cultural responsiveness in the classroom. Ultimately, using the culturally responsive teacher framework helped me understand specific ways that Latinx faculty can make meaning of their lived, cultural experiences and inform their culturally responsive pedagogical approaches in their graduate classrooms.

Summary

In Chapter 2, a thorough review of the literature was conducted about culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education. After reviewing the literature, it was evident that there were multiple gaps in the literature. For this study, I identified minority faculty narrative exploring lived experiences, and in what ways these experiences inform culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education as a gap in the literature.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I identified and described the research methods used in the study. This chapter contents included: a) purpose and research questions for this research study, b) research paradigm c) the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study, d) the methodological approach, e) the research design, f) participant selection, g) data collection, h) data analysis, i) trustworthiness, g) delimitations, and h) chapter summary.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to 1) understand how Latinx graduate faculty in graduate higher education conceptualize culturally responsive pedagogy, 2) explore the connection between Latinx graduate faculty lived, cultural experiences and learn which experiences inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education, and 3) to understand the ways in which Latinx graduate faculty lived experience informs their culturally responsive practices in graduate higher education. The overarching research question guiding this study was: in what ways do the lived experiences of Latinx doctoral faculty inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?

To accomplish the purpose of this study, here are the three research questions guiding this multiple-case study:

1. How do Latinx graduate faculty describe and enact their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy?
2. What lived or cultural experiences have Latinx graduate faculty identified as informing their culturally responsive pedagogy?
3. How do Latinx graduate faculty practice culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?

With the reader in mind, I distinguished the difference between research questions one and three. Question one asks how the participants described and enacted their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy. I drew from the study how the participants described and clarified culturally responsive pedagogy and went on to tie this description to action when dialoguing about culturally responsive pedagogy. In question three, I asked the Latinx graduate faculty participants how they used their lived experience to inform and put culturally responsive pedagogy into practice in their own graduate higher education classrooms. I remind the reader that the four participants in the study have all earned Ph.D.'s in their field. In addition, I use lived experience as defined by Moustakas (1994), a term used to describe the individual experiences of a person/people or a phenomenon that is being studied. The lived experience in this study ranges from birth to present, and the experiences described by the participants reflect this spectrum of time. This study suggests that lived experience may inform a Latinx graduate faculty member's culturally responsive pedagogical practices through the understanding and practice of self-reflection, relationships, positive, and negative experiences and upbringing.

A thorough review of the literature was conducted, and the research questions were developed after a gap was identified in minority, faculty narrative exploring lived experiences, and in what ways these experiences inform culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education as a gap in the literature. I believed that a better understanding of Latinx graduate faculty lived experience and how it informs their culturally responsive classroom pedagogy would help us to understand how these experiences are impactful and a necessary part of graduate higher education.

This study is critical because it contributes to the literature on new, holistic ways of thinking about the implementation of cultural responsiveness, specifically in graduate higher

education. This study contributed to scholarship in several ways: 1) highlighted the lived experiences and voices of Latinx graduate faculty who have earned PhDs in graduate higher education; 2) explored the connections between Latinx graduate faculty lived experiences, and the impact on pedagogy, 3) provided insight on Latinx graduate faculty culturally responsive pedagogical practices in graduate higher education, and 4) provided insight on characteristics of Latinx culturally responsive graduate faculty in graduate higher education. In addition, findings from this study also has the potential of impacting institutional preparation and support of faculty in graduate higher education.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework Summary

In this study, Latino Critical Race Theory (Valdes, 1996) and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) provided the theoretical grounding for this study. The conceptual framework guiding the study is Villegas and Lucas's (2002) culturally responsive teacher framework, which identifies characteristics of culturally responsive educators. LatCrit is used to reveal Latina/o experience of race, social class, gender and other forms of oppression, and it also acknowledges their experience with identity, immigration, sexuality, language, and culture. Social constructivism states that individuals create meaning through interactions with each other and their environment. In this study, LatCrit and Social Constructivism provide a pathway for critical analysis of minority educator experience through identity, social justice issues, and human socialization, with the intent to enhance the connection(s) between culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education.

As a conceptual framework, I used Villegas and Lucas' (2002) vision for preparing culturally responsive teachers to address the ambiguity surrounding culturally responsive teaching methods. Ultimately, using the culturally responsive teacher framework helped me

understand characteristics and specific ways that Latinx faculty can make meaning of their lived experiences and inform their culturally responsive pedagogical approaches in their graduate classrooms.

Epistemology

It is essential to highlight the plan of study as it grounds the reader in my foundational beliefs as the researcher. Crotty's (1998) work, which I illustrated in Figure 2 below, highlights the importance of the four components of the research paradigm. Creswell (2007) writes that researcher assumptions allows them to make a choice on the methodological approach they will use in a study. In addition, after pondering the ontological and epistemological stances, the researcher then further develops their research by introducing a paradigm or worldview.

There are at least four paradigms that are applied in education research: positivist, constructivists (interpretivist), critical, and pragmatic (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The positivist paradigm aims to provide conclusions based on measurable outcomes, as is most often used in quantitative studies. The critical paradigm focuses its stance on social justice issues. The pragmatic paradigm uses a mixed-methods approach as a way to understand human behavior.

With these paradigms in mind, I chose to operate from an interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. This paradigm lies in discovering and understanding the underlying meaning of events and activities. This paradigm was utilized because this study focused on the lived experience of Latinx graduate faculty and how they conceptualize their experience while creating their classroom culturally responsive pedagogy. The central tenet of the Interpretivist/Constructivist paradigm is to understand the human experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1989).

Theories of constructivism were developed to address development and learning among different age groups. Constructivists aim to interpret and understand particular situations or

phenomena. In other words, people learn by doing rather than observing. Kivunja & Kuyini (2017) state that in a constructivist paradigm, emphasis is placed on understanding the individual and their interpretation of the world around them.

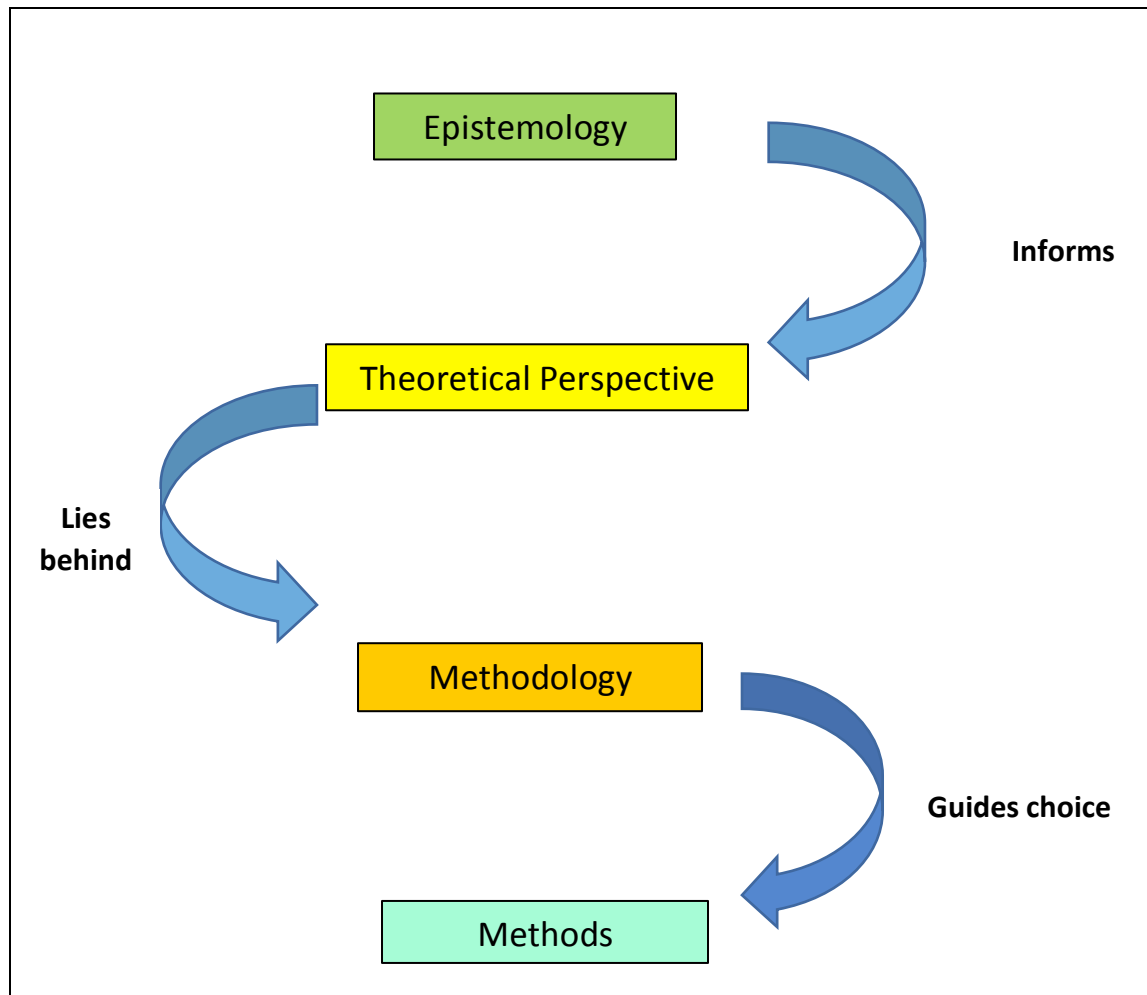


Figure 1. Crotty's (1998) conceptualization of the four elements of the research process.

Methodological Approach

This study used a qualitative methodological approach to collect data on the lived experiences of Latinx doctoral faculty. Lincoln & Guba (1985) stated that qualitative methods are most appropriate for researching the nuances of human behavior within a social context and capturing the complexity of the human experience. A qualitative methodological approach was

used to gain a clear, in-depth understanding of the individual participant experiences and perceptions. Qualitative research is employed to make sense of actions and experiences and requires that the researcher listens well to others, interpret, and retell what they have heard (Glesne, 2016). Qualitative methodology included ethnographic, grounded theory, case study, narrative, and phenomenological designs (Schram, 2006). The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of Latinx faculty and if, and how, these experiences inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom. To achieve a better understanding of the lived experience of each participant, employing a qualitative inquiry method was the best way to gather data for this study.

Research Design

Case Study. The best approach for this study was a case study primarily because I gathered as much in-depth details about the experiences of each participant for an understudied subject matter. A case study is depicted as a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context (Miles & Huberman 1994). In this study, I am making a case for a group of individuals, within the context of higher education, and studying the phenomenon of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Stake (1994) argues that a “case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of the object to be studied” (p.134). Creswell (2014) defines case study research as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a case or cases, gathering detailed data using multiple sources of information (i.e., interviews, documents, etc.), and reports a case description. Gustafsson (2017) defines a case study as “an intensive study about a person, a group of people, or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units” (p. 2). Yin (2009) states that in comparison to other methods, the strength of the case study method emanates from the ability to examine a “case” within its “real-life context.”

Multiple-case study. For this study, I employed a qualitative multiple-case study design to allow for a comprehensive comparison of the similarities and differences between the data collected from each of the four cases. Creswell (2007) writes in a multiple-case study, the researcher purposely utilizes multiple-case studies to illustrate different perspectives on the issue presented. A multiple-case study, using semi-structured interview questions, was used to explore four Latinx faculty culturally responsive classroom practices from their own perspective and from within the context of their lived experience. Instead of testing a hypothesis, a qualitative multiple-case study method was appropriate to help provide meaning and understanding of the complexities found in this research topic (Merriam, 2009).

This multiple-case study was conducted over a three month period of time. It was designed to examine Latinx faculty lived experience and understand in what ways the lived, cultural experience informs their cultural responsiveness in the graduate classroom. Findings from multiple-case studies are considered stronger, making the study more robust (Yin, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008). The research design is the “logical sequence that connects the empirical data to the research questions and then to its conclusions” (Yin, 2009). I chose to conduct a case study research design, specifically a multiple-case study, because the goal of the study was to illuminate the voices of Latinx graduate faculty and expand the scholarly research concerning the lived experiences of graduate faculty and their practice of culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education.

Four Latinx graduate faculty were chosen for this study after a survey was sent out to sixty-eight (68) faculty teaching in the College of Education at two large, public universities and one private university. The four participants were chosen from the responses received because they met the criteria for the study. The four Latinx graduate faculty participants were

interviewed in person, and they provided in-depth, vivid details of lived experiences based on the questions they were asked (Appendix F). This information was gathered and analyzed to answer, in what ways do the lived experiences of Latinx doctoral faculty inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom? This multiple-case study provided details based on the following criteria: self-identify as Latinx, self-identify as a culturally responsive educator, hold an earned doctoral degree from an accredited university, currently teaching a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education. This study was grounded in the phenomenon of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Role of the Researcher & Bias

According to Patton (2002), the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry. The researcher is the primary person in this study to collect data through observation, field notes, journaling, and collecting and analyzing interview data. Litchman (2010) adds the qualitative researcher is immersed in the research; through them, the data is developed, and meaning is made.

Researcher bias can influence the outcome of a study. It was vital that I was aware of my subjectivity and positionality when conducting this study. The researcher cannot remove subjectivity, yet the researcher needs to remain aware of it throughout the study (Peshkin, 1988). I put aside any prejudices and assumptions that could hinder the validity of the study. It was important that throughout the study, I stayed neutral and open-minded and allowed my participants to freely participate to ensure a valid, quality research study.

Preparation for Data Collection

Interview Questions

The interview guide was developed to frame general questions to explore participant childhood, educational experiences, teaching practices, and professional experiences. The interview questions guided the line of inquiry and provided external validity to the research design (Yin, 2014). A semi-structured interview was conducted to allow additional follow up questions to gain clarity. A semi-structured interview is used when the researcher wants an in-depth exploration of the participant's experience, and the meaning they connect to the experience (Adams, 2010). A sample of the interview guide is provided in Appendix F.

Participant Sampling

Sampling, as defined by Saldana (2011), is used to collect a spectrum of perspectives. Saldana (2011) adds that the correct number of participants depends on many factors; however as long as you have rich interview data, you have “sufficient corpus for analysis.” The sample used for this study was four Latinx graduate faculty who self-identified as culturally responsive educators from two large, public universities and one private university in Texas. In addition, they must also hold a PhD from an accredited university and must have taught a graduate-level course at a college or university in the College of Education. Coyne (1997) states that sample selection has a direct effect on the quality of qualitative research. I utilized purposeful criterion-sampling when identifying the participants for this study. With the use of purposeful criterion sampling, the researcher can identify specific characteristics of interest that are unique to the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002).

Introducing the Study to Prospective Participants

I used the following steps to contact Latinx graduate faculty for participation in the study:

1. Email addresses were gathered from the public website for all doctoral faculty in the College of Education at two public universities and one private university in

Texas. All faculty contacted have earned a doctoral degree as their degrees were identified on the website.

2. The prospective participant names and emails were categorized under the institution they were employed on a spreadsheet.
3. All graduate faculty identified as having doctoral degrees and working in the College of Education, at the three institutions were blind copy emailed on the participant recruitment email. The participant recruitment email (Appendix A) included an attachment of information about the study (Appendix C) and an invitation to click on the participant survey link.

The following questions were included in the survey link (Appendix B) :

- 1) Name
- 2) Are you 18 years or older?
- 3) Do you self-identify as Latinx (a person of Latin American origin or descent (used a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina)?
- 4) Which university or college are you currently employed with?
- 5) Which department/program are you currently teaching in? Example: College of Education.
- 6) Are you currently teaching graduate-level courses?
- 7) Do you consider yourself a culturally responsive educator?
- 8) Please provide your email address and phone number.

Participant Selection

Participants were chosen based on meeting all of the criteria for the study:

- Be age 18 or older
- Self-identified as Latinx graduate faculty

- Self-identified as a culturally responsive graduate faculty
- Hold an earned doctoral degree from an accredited university
- Teach a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education during the time that data was being collected.

Only those who responded to the email or filled out the survey were contacted. A telephone call or email was sent to respondents who filled out the survey and met all of the participant requirements to establish a date, time, and location of the interview.

Participant Profiles

To provide more information on each participant, I briefly introduced the participants in this chapter and provided more in-depth information in the findings chapter of this dissertation. In this chapter, I presented the participants by using a case number and the pseudonym that I choose for each participant.

Case 1- Dr. One: She was born and grew up in South Texas, with her parents and three siblings. Dr. One is the only girl and has four brothers. She self identifies as a Latina. Her father was a public school educator and was eventually a school superintendent. She grew up in a middle-class family where English was her native language, although she did speak Spanish with her grandparents. She attended public school for her P-12 education and has earned a bachelor's, master's and, PhD in the United States. She has over twenty years of teaching experience in higher education and is currently a professor at a large public university in Texas.

Case 2- Dr. Two: She was born in Colorado and grew up in a small town in New Mexico. She is biracial with a Caucasian father and a Latina mother and has two brothers. She self identifies as a Latina, and her primary language is English. Her parents are well educated, and both attended college. Dr. Two's father was a teacher and later a school superintendent. Her mother holds a doctorate in Nursing. Her parents divorced when she was in high school. She

attended public school for her P-12, and she has earned a bachelor's, masters and PhD in the United States. Dr. Two has been teaching for a total of thirteen years, with most of her experience in P-12 education. She has worked in higher education for two and a half years and currently works as an Assistant Professor at a large, public university in Texas.

Case 3- Dr. Three: Dr. Three was born in Texas and grew up with her parents and her two siblings in a border town in Mexico. She is the middle child of three girls. Her father is from Mexico and her mother, a Mexican American, is from the United States. Her father was a medical doctor in Mexico, and her mother was a stay at home mom, although she earned a certificate in Medical Technology. Dr. Three self identifies as Mexicana, and she is a single mother of one child. She attended private school in Mexico and earned a bachelor's, master's and PhD in the United States. Dr. Three has been teaching for a total of eighteen years with five of those years in P-12 education. She has been teaching at the university level for thirteen years and is currently a full-time Associate Professor at a private university in Texas.

Case 4- Dr. Four: He was born in Mexico, and his family immigrated to Texas in the United States when he was a few months old. He described it as "bringing him across the river." He self identifies as Mexican American and is one of six children. His father never had the opportunity to attend school and is illiterate, and his mother completed up to the fourth grade in Mexico. His parents never learned to speak English, so Spanish was the primary language in his household. He attended public school for his P-12 education and he has earned a bachelor's, masters and PhD in the United States. Dr. Four has been in education for forty-eight years with the majority of his career in P-12 administration. He has taught in higher education for fifteen years and is currently a full time professor at a large, public university in Texas.

Confidentiality

There is a reasonable expectation that participant information will be managed in a confidential manner (Litchman, 2006). Confidentiality was kept within the terms of the consent to participate in a research study form signed by each participant at the beginning of their interview (Appendix E). The consent form informed the participant that names, institutions, and all personal data and information gathered from the study would remain confidential and anonymous. To honor participant confidentiality and uphold IRB ethical standards the following steps were taken throughout the study: 1) participant names were replaced with pseudonyms, 2) any physical details that could identify specific participants were omitted, 3) specific details and quotations that could attribute specifically to a participant was omitted. Kaiser (2009) writes, the researcher must consider if presenting specific questions and examples could lead to the identification of their participants through deductive disclosure.

Data Collection Procedures

In this study, each participant engaged in one face-to-face interview and one follow up member check phone call as the primary approaches to data collection. Interviews occurred at a time and place chosen by the participant to ensure privacy and comfort for the participants. Three participants, Drs. One, Two, and Four, were interviewed face-to-face in their university office. One participant, Dr. Three, chose to interview at my office. A consent form was provided to the participants prior to the interviews to inform and assure all personal data gathered for this study will remain anonymous and private (Appendix E). Each participant signed their consent form before the interview was conducted. I used a personal audio recorder to record the interviews. During and after each interview, I used a field log to write thoughts, impressions, and observations. Creswell (2014) writes that the researcher reflects on their role in the study; their background, culture, and experiences and how these shape their interpretations for data analysis.

It was the intent that each face-to-face interview was audio recorded; however, one of the four participants (Dr. Two) face-to-face interviews did not record due to malfunction of the recording device during the interview. I completed this entire face-to-face interview and immediately recognized that the recording did not record after leaving the interview. I immediately emailed the participant and asked if she wanted to set up another face-to-face interview or respond to the questions via email. The participant chose to respond via email to each question and emailed me all of her answers to the questions. I provided my field notes to Dr. Two to review for accuracy and approval and confirmed that she approved during our member check phone call.

For both the face-to-face interviews and the member check phone call, I used a semi-structured interview format (Appendix F). Wengraf (2004) writes, in a semi-structured interview, questions are prepared beforehand; however, these prepared questions are designed to allow the interviewer to ask improvised questions that are still applicable.

The three recorded interviews were transcribed. The three transcribed interviews were individually sent via email to each of the participants for review and approval. Before sending the transcripts, I listened to the audio in tandem with the transcripts for accuracy. In the email sent to the participants to review the transcript, I asked that each participant identified a day and time that they would be available for a phone call to discuss the transcripts and answer any additional questions. This process, also known as a member check, was conducted for all four participants in the form of one follow up phone call to confirm that the participants approved their initial answers and gain any clarifications from the interviews. This multiple-case study was conducted over a short, intensive period of time, as exhibited in Figure 2 below.

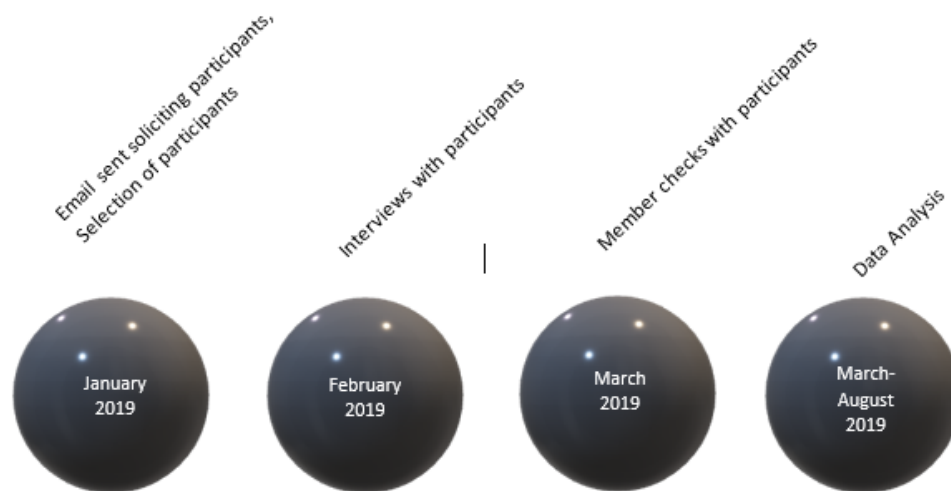


Figure 2. Timeline for data collection and analysis

Data-Storage Procedure

As data were collected, each item was stored safely and securely. Each interview recording was uploaded to a computer, the interviews were transcribed, and all field notes were typed and securely stored with the corresponding interview data. All data were stored on a secured, locked, and password-protected computer. Printed materials used during and after data analysis was locked in a desk drawer in my home office.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis began with my review of the studies purpose and research questions, rereading transcripts, and reviewing field notes. The process was repeated for all four participants. Data analysis consisted of three phases of coding: open, axial, and selective. This method includes breaking down interview transcripts into units of meaning, identifying categories based on relationships, and ultimately, through constant comparison creating themes (Strauss and Corbin, 1997). This study used a general inductive approach for data analysis.

Inductive analysis is used by the researcher to conduct detailed readings of data to create concepts, themes, and interpret data (Thomas, 2006).

I considered using data analysis software; however, I decided to code and analyzed all data by hand. Saldana (2011) states that you gain intimate familiarity with your data by reading and rereading; also you may make meaning of new details that you were not aware of before. It is the researcher's job to organize and draw meaning from the data during data analysis (Litchman, 2006). Constant comparison was used throughout the data analysis process in order to properly code the data.

Coding Process

Coding is a method of discovery that allows the researcher to look at each section of data and make meaning (Saldana, 2011). For this study, transcripts were reviewed and arranged by research questions, interview questions, and participants answers. All participants were identified under the pseudonyms Dr. One, Dr. Two, Dr. Three, and Dr. Four to protect their identities and maintain full anonymity.

Open, Axial and Selective Coding

In conducting open coding, one table was created per research question. I used a three-column table that identified the participants quotes, my meaning-making of the quotes, and creating a descriptive code. Saldana (2011) writes that descriptive coding is useful when the researcher is utilizing different types of data, such as transcripts, field notes, etc. In open coding, I identified the participants words and made meaning of the words in order to create a code. The purpose of this phase of the analysis was to make meaning of the participant words when answering the questions and describing their experiences. A total of one hundred and twenty open codes were gathered at the end of open coding for all three research questions. In axial

coding, I combined similar open codes to reduce the number of categories created. The purpose of this phase of the analysis was to identify significant, common statements and experiences from each participant and identify a smaller unit of categories. In selective coding, I compared and contrasted the categories created in axial coding, and three themes emerged. I continued to group the significant statements according to these themes and created subthemes. Constant comparison of the emergent themes, the study's theoretical/conceptual frameworks, and literature was also utilized during data analysis.

Trustworthiness

Saldana (2011) stated, "trustworthiness, or providing credibility to the writing, is when we inform the readers of our research process" (p. 136). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the criterion of credibility is used in research within the Interpretivist/Constructivist paradigm to validate the extent of the data and data analysis are believable, trustworthy, or authentic. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria to establish trustworthiness of a research study involves:

- 1) Credibility- confidence in the truth of the finds

Techniques for establishing credibility: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, member checking.

- 2) Transferability- showing that the findings are applicable in other contexts

Techniques for establishing transferability: Thick description

- 3) Dependability- showing the findings are consistent and could be repeated

Techniques for establishing dependability: inquiry audit, member checking

- 4) Confirmability- degree to which the finds of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

Techniques for establishing confirmability: confirmability audit, audit trail, triangulation, reflexivity.

There are a series of techniques that could be used to meet the four criteria listed and achieve trustworthiness in the study. This study utilized the following: researcher reflexivity, thick descriptions, member checks, and triangulation to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

Research Reflexivity

Reflexivity is defined as the writer's ability to recognize the biases, values, and experiences that they bring to a qualitative research study (Creswell, 2007). In this study, I wrote a reflexive journal that was kept during the research process as a means of ensuring trustworthiness and tracking and reflecting on research decisions. Litchaman (2010) says that although there are many meanings of trustworthiness, it is summarized as an in-depth view of the role of the researcher and the procedures involved in the research. Creswell (2007) states, "good qualitative research contains comments by the researcher about how their interpretation of the finds is shaped by their background such as gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin."

The reflective journal kept a record of the purpose and significance of the topic, interviews scheduled with details such as the interviewee's name, date, time, location, and phone number. After each interview, observation notes were written about the setting of the interview, interview interactions, reactions to the collected data, and new questions that arose from interviews. This reflective journal also helped to ensure that I represented the experiences of the participants and my own. Glesne (2011) states that a field log, includes reflecting on your questions and research interactions from the onset of your research to presenting the findings.

Thick description

Thick description, first used by Ryle (1949) and later adopted by Clifford Geertz (1973), refers to the researcher's task to describe and interpret behavior within its particular context (Ponterotto, 2006). In this study, I provided background information for each participant and specific information about their lived experiences and pedagogy. In addition, I included examples and quotes from the participants which were provided to highlight and support findings in the study. These thick descriptions were included so the reader could relate to and understand the participants in the study. Ponterotto (2006) writes that a thick description would involve a complete description of the participants in the study without compromising anonymity. He goes on to say that thick description facilitates the readers ability to formulate a picture of the participant to include demographic and psychological characteristics.

Member Check

Member checks are a necessary process that qualitative researchers should undertake because it is the "heart of credibility" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), its purpose is to eliminate researcher bias during data analysis (Anney, 2014). A member check was conducted after each interview was transcribed to establish the accuracy of the collected data. In this study, a member check was conducted by emailing each of three participants their individual transcript to review, clarify, add ideas and verify. The participant whose interview did not record was sent my field notes to review, clarify, add ideas, and verify. In this email, the participants were asked to review the transcripts and respond with any changes. They were also asked to identify a day, time, and phone number so that a member check phone call could be set up to gain more clarification and to verbalize amendments to the document. After reviewing the documents, all four participants emailed to set up a member check phone call. Two of the participants responded with changes in an email, and during the phone call, I asked clarifying questions. One participant waited to

discuss changes during the member check phone call, and one participant had no changes. All participants engaged in the member check phone call with me.

Triangulation

Triangulation draws on multiple sources and methods to confirm and support the data findings (Creswell, 2009). Trustworthiness was established by using triangulation in this study drawing from the following forms of data: audio-recorded interviews, transcripts, field notes, and the researcher reflexivity journal. These forms of data were compared and contrasted against each other in multiple iterations to validate findings that emerged from the data.

Delimitations

The study was delimited due to its relatively small sample size of four participants, which was due to geographical restrictions and only included two large public institutions and one private institution of higher learning in Texas. The study was delimited due to the participants having to self-identify as Latinx, self-identify as a culturally responsive graduate faculty, hold a doctoral degree from an accredited university, and currently teach a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the methodology for the study. A qualitative, multiple-case study approach was taken for this study. The study included four graduate faculty participants who self-identified as Latinx, held PhDs from an accredited university, teaching graduate level coursework, and who indicated they were culturally responsive educators. Semi-structured, in-person interviews, were conducted with the four Latinx graduate faculty participants. The interviews were transcribed and sent to the participants to review. In addition, I set up a member check phone call to confirm that all the information collected was true and accurate. I then

conducted open, axial, and selective coding to complete data analysis. In open coding, I identified the participants words and made meaning of the words in order to create a code. In axial coding, I combined similar open codes to reduce the number of categories created. In selective coding, I compared and contrasted the categories created in axial coding and three themes emerged. Constant comparison of the emergent themes and study's frameworks and literature was also utilized during data analysis.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This chapter opened with the purpose statement and research questions to ground the reader in the focus of the study. This is followed by a brief discussion of the methodology and procedures used to collect and analyze the data. Participants profiles preceded the presentation of the findings of the study. A summary of the findings of the study also included the alignment of the theoretical frameworks which were Latino/a Critical Race Theory (1995) and Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and the conceptual framework which was Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). Finally, the three themes that emerged from the analysis of data are introduced based on the key insights from the four in-depth interviews with study's participants.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

Using a multicase-study approach, the purpose of this study was to: 1) understand how Latinx graduate faculty in graduate higher education conceptualize culturally responsive pedagogy, 2) explore the connection between Latinx graduate faculty lived, cultural experiences and learn which experiences inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education, and 3) to understand the ways in which Latinx graduate faculty lived experience informs their culturally responsive practices in graduate higher education. The lived experience in this study ranges from birth to present.

The overall research question that guided this study was:

- ❖ In what ways does the lived experience of Latinx graduate faculty inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?

To explore the perspectives of Latinx graduate faculty, the following research questions guided the study:

- 1) How do Latinx graduate faculty describe and enact their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy?
- 2) What lived or cultural experiences have Latinx graduate faculty identified as informing their culturally responsive pedagogy?
- 3) How do Latinx graduate faculty practice culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?

With the reader in mind, I distinguished the difference between research questions one and three. Question one asks how the participants described and enacted their understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy. I drew from the study how the participants described and clarified culturally responsive pedagogy and went on to tie this description to action when dialoguing about culturally responsive pedagogy. In question three I asked the Latinx graduate faculty participants how they used their lived experience to inform and put culturally responsive pedagogy into practice in their own graduate higher education classrooms. A thorough review of the literature was conducted and the research questions were developed after a gap was identified in minority, faculty narrative exploring lived experiences, and in what ways these experiences inform culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education as a gap in the literature.

Methodology Summary

A qualitative, multiple-case study approach was implemented for this study. The study included four faculty participants who met the following required criteria:

- Be age 18 or older
- Self-identified as Latinx
- Self-identified as a culturally responsive graduate faculty member
- Hold a earned doctoral degree from an accredited university

- Teach a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education when data was being collected for the study

The best approach for this study was a case study primarily because I needed to gather as much in-depth details about the experiences of each participant for an understudied subject matter. A multiple-case study design, is justified for use in this study to allow for a comprehensive comparison of the similarities and differences between the data collected from each of the four cases. In addition, a case within a case method allowed me to achieve a deeper understanding between the participants, the context of the study which is higher education, and the phenomenon of culturally responsive pedagogy. In addition, I chose to operate from a constructivist paradigm because this study focused on the lived, cultural experience of Latinx faculty to gain understanding into the conceptualization of those experiences, and how the experiences inform classroom culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom.

Semi-structured, in person interviews were conducted with the four Latinx participants. The interviews were transcribed and sent to the participants to review. In addition, I set up a member check phone call to confirm that all information collected was true and accurate. After data collection was collected and confirmed from the participants, I immersed myself in the data by reviewing interview transcripts from all participants. This review was necessary to understand the experiences described among all participants. I then conducted open, axial, and selective coding to complete data analysis and identify themes. In open coding, I identified the participants words and made meaning of the words in order to create a code. The purpose of this phase of the analysis was to make meaning of the participant words when answering the questions and describing their experiences. In axial coding, I combined similar open codes to reduce the number of categories created. The purpose of this phase of the analysis was to identify

significant common statements and experiences from each participant and identify a smaller unit of categories. In selective coding, I compared and contrasted the categories created in axial coding and three themes emerged. I continued to group the significant statements according to these themes and created subthemes. Constant comparison of the emergent themes, the study's theoretical/conceptual frameworks and literature was also utilized during data analysis.

Participant Profile Overview

This section provided a brief life history of each participant, why they believed they were culturally responsive and where they are now. The lived experience was a critical component of this study, understanding the personal background and educational experiences of the participants was important as it provided context in building rapport with the participants. To honor and “protect the anonymity of participants” (Creswell, 2005, p. 208) each of the four Latinx graduate faculty participants was assigned pseudonyms ranging from Dr. One through Dr. Four. Dr. One, Dr. Two and Dr. Three were all female and Dr. Four was the only male in the study. All four participants met all of the participant requirements for the study: self-identify as Latinx, self-identify as a culturally responsive educator, hold a earned doctoral degree from an accredited university, currently teaching a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education. All participants identified as Latinx in the initial screening survey, but hold their own definitions of their identity. The three female participants were born in the United States and the male participant, Dr. Four was born in Mexico. Three of the participants received PK-12 public schooling in the United States and Dr. Three attended a private school in Mexico. One out of the four participants, Dr. Four, was a first-generation student.

The participant ages at the time of this study ranged from early thirties to early sixties. The participants all hold PhD degrees, and their fields of study were grounded in education and

included Curriculum and Instruction, Multicultural Education and Education Leadership. The participants all worked as full time faculty at universities. Three of the participants were employed at two large public universities and Dr. Three is employed at a private university. All of the universities used in this study were located in Texas. Dr. One and Dr. Four worked at the same university. The participants were not all tenured faculty, Dr. Two is an Associate Professor, Dr. Three is an Assistant Professor and Dr. One and Dr. Four are tenured Professors. A similarity between the participants was that they have published work on topics in relation to cultural responsiveness. In addition, they were all raised in predominantly Hispanic communities. Three in person interviews took place in the participant's office and one interview took place in my office. I presented an annotated snapshot of the participants in Table 4. However, a more in depth summary of the participant information is also presented in Appendix G.

	Gender	Country of Birth	P-12 Schooling	First Language	Parents Education	Current job
Dr. One	Female	United States	United States	English	Graduated from college	Professor
Dr. Two	Female	United States	United States	English	Graduated from college	Associate Professor
Dr. Three	Female	United States	Mexico	Spanish	Graduated from college	Assistant Professor
Dr. Four	Male	Mexico	United States	Spanish	No college	Professor

Table 4. Summary of participant profile

The Participants

Dr. One: *“Culture is not just about race and ethnicity, it defines who people are.”*

Dr. One has over twenty years of teaching experience in Higher Education and was a professor at a large public university in Texas. Dr. One, grew up in South Texas, with her parents and three siblings. She was the only girl and had four brothers. She self identified as a Latina. She described her father as reflective, very quiet and her mother as reactive, much like her. Her father was a public school educator and was eventually a school superintendent. She grew up in a middle class family where English was her native language, although she did speak Spanish with her grandparents. She went on to talk more about her family background:

Out of my four grandparents only one is an immigrant from Mexico, even though they do speak Spanish. I don't fit the mold of growing up Spanish speaking, low income, mine is a very different background.

Throughout her interview, Dr. One reiterated the importance of education to her family. Although education was very important to the family, Dr. One did not want to be an educator. Very early on she decided she did not want to teach like her father, instead she wanted to be a medical doctor. After struggling in her undergraduate science classes she decided it would be best to pursue a different degree as medicine was not the best fit for her. She decided that she would major in Business. After graduating with her Bachelor of Science in Finance, she worked in a bank for a few years, however at the time many people were losing their jobs and she was looking for a backup plan.

Dr. One's father continued to encourage her to explore studying education and finally she conceded and replied to her father, "Fine, I'm going to try it out and let's just see if I like it." She decided to obtain her emergency certification while teaching a bilingual first grade class. Dr. One liked teaching, taught second grade for four years before deciding to earn her Master's Degree. She located a program that funded her Master's in Bilingual Education degree while

continuing to teach second grade. A few months before completing her Master's degree a trusted professor encouraged her to apply for a Ph.D. doctoral program. She applied for this Ph.D. because there was funding available. She graduated with her Masters in May and started her Ph.D in Bilingual Education at another University in September. She earned her Ph.D. in approximately three and a half years. As soon as she graduated she secured a tenure track position at a Texas university.

While Dr. One had many profound experiences over the course of her life, the most relevant, life changing experience that she described was moving away for the first time to a new city and larger university to pursue her doctorate. Dr. One had never experienced racism and discrimination because she grew up in a city "where everyone was Latino." She describes this experience as "eye-opening" as she was one of very few minorities at her university. She said to cope, she gravitated to other Latinos, "and that's what worked for me in my doctoral program, we were a group of Latinas that got together, and so that was what supported me through the process.

Dr. One defined culturally responsive teaching as getting to know students. She went on to say, " We know that culture and language are not separated. So in order to be culturally responsive, you have to get to know students." She describes her classroom practice as follows:

There is very little of that banking education where I have all the information, and I'm just depositing it in students' heads. We do a lot of tell 'us', a lot of discussion, a lot of small group partner work so that students are talking with each other, sharing perspectives, sharing ideas, or sharing experiences. We engage in discussions and debates that students will construct their own understanding of the information.

According to Dr. One, the main reason she chose to teach in a culturally responsive manner is because of the “injustice and unfairness that happens in our education system, we have to make changes.” Dr. One enjoyed her teaching career and worked as an agent of change in higher education.

Dr. Two: *“These experiences growing up have impacted how I teach, how I interact with others, and the way that I approach conversations with colleagues and students.”*

Dr. Two has been teaching in elementary and higher education for a total of thirteen years. She has worked in higher education for two and a half years and currently works as an Assistant Professor at a large, public university in Texas. Dr. Two was born in Colorado and grew up in a small town in New Mexico. She was biracial with a Caucasian father and a Latina mother. She had two brothers. She self identifies as a Latina and her primary language is English. Her parents were well educated and both attended college. Her father was a teacher and later a school superintendent. Her mother earned a doctorate in Nursing. Her parents divorced when she was in high school. Her ambitions have always included becoming a teacher. It took her six years to earn her Bachelor’s degrees as she switched colleges in her junior year due to failing out of her first university. After graduating with her Bachelor’s degree she secured a job teaching Kindergarten. She continued teaching PK-12 while earning her advanced degrees. Most of her PK-12 experience is in Kindergarten. Dr. Two earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, a Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction and a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialization in Literacy Education and Cultural Studies.

Dr. Two described the foreign exchange program that she was a part of in high school as her most impactful life experience. She highlighted this experience because she was able to

experience another culture. In addition, as an outsider she was able to relate to both the rich and the poor; much like she tries to do with different populations that come into her classroom.

I traveled to Brazil as a foreign exchange student for a year. This experience taught me a lot about independence, cultural differences, diversity, and self identity/awareness. In Brazil, there were two groups, the wealthy and the poor. There is no middle class.

Foreign exchange students were placed with the wealthy and although I lived with a wealthy family, I understood the stance of the poor.

She believed the racism that she experienced in her own family because of her biracial background, coupled with her experience in Brazil enhanced her consciousness of oppressive behavior. She went on to say:

Because we experienced life in this way, I do believe it shaped how I see others. As I grew older and gained awareness/critical consciousness, I confronted some of the issues that I saw. However, I could not stand for the way that my mom was treated and/or the way that my brothers and I were treated because we were ‘different’ (by our white grandparents).

When asked to define culturally responsive pedagogy, Dr. Two talked about the importance of knowing students and meeting them where they are. She said it is important for students to know themselves, teachers to know themselves and for students and teachers to know each other. Dr. Two elaborated:

The ability to recognize ‘who’ your students are, ‘what’ they bring to your classroom and ‘how’ they connect to the material and then finding ways to meet them where they are. I also believe it includes this idea of affirming students and recognizing their strengths. Often times, students experience negative interactions in classrooms which impact their

entire educational experiences due to the teachers inability to teach through culturally relevant pedagogical practices. I would also note that teaching through a culturally relevant lens requires teachers to confront their own biases. You must be comfortable in your own identity too.

Dr. Two believed that she was a culturally responsive educator because of the experiences she has had, the education she has received and the literature she has read. She went on to say that more often than not, teachers enter the classroom to be “the savior” to the students and this model is a deficit. She believed in “meeting students where they are and connecting with them where they are in that moment of time.” She enjoyed helping students be aware of their own identities through the pedagogy that she uses in the classroom. She said in my classroom:

I build community. I learn about my students. I provide examples and activities that allow students to learn about themselves and others. I push my students to areas of discomfort to approach some of the stereotypes that they believe.

Dr. Three: *“People talk about a lot of things they don’t know about, they haven’t lived what I have lived”*

Dr. Three has been teaching for a total of eighteen years in both public schools and in higher education. She earned a PhD in Multicultural Special Education in six years. All of her degrees were earned in the United States. She has taught at the university level for 13 years and is a full time Associate Professor at a private university in Texas. The university she taught at serves a predominantly white population. On a personal note, she described herself as the single mother of one child.

Dr. Three was born in Texas and grew up with her parents and her two siblings in a border town in Mexico. She was the middle child of three girls. Her father was from Mexico and

her mother, a Mexican American, was from the United States. Her father was a medical doctor in Mexico and her mother was a stay at home mom, although she earned a certificate in Medical Technology. Both of her sisters earned their Bachelor's degree and she is the only one with a doctorate.

She self identified as Mexicana. She went on to add, "I am a proud Mexicana, even though I was born in the United States." Dr. Two received her elementary and secondary education in Mexico at a private Catholic institution. It is important to note that Dr. Three comfortably code switched between English and Spanish frequently in her interview. Her primary language is Spanish, although she did learn English through private lessons as a child. She described herself as privileged to take English classes while living in Mexico because not everyone had the opportunity or money to do this.

I only spoke Spanish, but I was learning English at school because in Mexico, you have one English class. And then, I also took private lessons, so very privileged that I had the opportunity to take those English classes."

As a child, she was very interested in languages. She added, "I guess I was interested in how languages worked, how do you manage two, three, four languages?" She was especially interested in sign language because she had a neighbor who was deaf. She elaborates:

She had a disAbility with a capital "A" because she did lots of great things. But she used sign language, and I was just fascinated by her use of sign language. So she taught me a little bit of sign and I continued to be exposed to both English and Spanish, always interested in that.

After graduating from High School in Mexico, Dr. Three wanted to stay in Mexico and study to become a Medical doctor like her father. She added, "But I was a very proud Mexican,

we have great universities in Mexico.” Her dad encouraged her to go to school in Mexico, but her mother insisted that her children were educated in the United States; like she was. She ended up going to University in the United States as her mother wanted. Just like her father, she was well on her way to pursuing medicine. Dr. Three started taking her biology courses and quickly realized that she was the one who was explaining concepts to her classmates. Dr. Three said:

Thinking back to my high school years, school always came naturally for me. My classmates would come over to my house whenever we were having an exam, I would be the one explaining things to them, because I had very good grades.

Dr. Three said this was the moment, that although she was good in Biology and thought she wanted to be a medical doctor, she really liked sharing her knowledge and helping people. She said “that’s when I decided to take courses in education.”

Dr. Three combined her passion for teaching with her passion for language. She said, “Ok well, maybe I’ll go into bilingual education, because I do speak very good Spanish, so maybe I can help students who are learning English. However, after much thought and consideration Dr. Three added:

Part of my experience, having been based in a border town, was that I knew a lot of people who were in school in Mexico, and they moved to the States and they had been retained a year or pushed back because of the language. So then I thought, I already understand English and Spanish. Okay, well maybe I’ll go into special education instead. Because if I’m already bilingual, I may be able to figure out when it is a language difference, when it is a learning disability. And, you know, I may have a greater impact there.

Dr. Three went on to earn her Masters of Arts in Education specializing in Deaf Education at a University in a neighboring state. She taught public school for five years, one year at a High School and four years at an Elementary school and all in special education. She quickly figured out that she did not want to be a high school teacher, especially after having a student tell her he was going to kill her:

I was teaching in a self-contained special education classroom. And then I eventually moved, I did that for a year only because quite honestly, high school was not my thing, it was a very challenging environment.”

Dr. Three described an impactful moment in her lived experience when she was teaching a little girl with disabilities. She went on to talk about the importance of doing whatever it takes in the face of challenges. Dr. Three said of that experience:

When I worked for the public school, I mean seeing one of my students blossom was a great experience because, she was a little girl who wouldn't- I mean literally, when I met her she was hiding under the table. And people would tell me, 'Es como un animalito' because she was curled into a ball and she wouldn't come out. By the time I left, not that I did this, but she was so self-confident, she was the same as the other students. So I mean, this influenced me as an educator, knowing that when there's challenges, you just have to keep trying and keep working and just do whatever it takes.

Dr. Three defined culturally responsive pedagogy as:

Knowing your lived experience, knowing the power or privilege that you may or may not hold, knowing what are the biases, the assumptions that you bring into work and with different populations. Know that about yourself, so do a self-introspective, that piece first and then get to know your students. And when I say students, not just the student, but get

to know the families, get to know the communities, get to know the cultures they come from.

Dr. Three believed that being vulnerable is key in the culturally responsive classroom. She double clicked on the importance of everyone in the classroom practicing vulnerability in pursuit of getting to know each other and building community.

I make myself vulnerable. Part of making myself vulnerable is that I start with an ‘about me’, and then we do an ‘about us’ and then we do an ‘about class.’ I talk about being from my national tristate, it gives me a different perspective from the one that other people may have. And that a perspective that I hope to share with them. I asked them to think about their lived experience.

Dr. Four: *“How did my lived experience get me here? I learned from bad experiences, being humiliated, punished for being poor, being different, speaking Spanish.*

Dr. Four has been in education for forty-eight years. He has taught in higher education for fifteen years and is currently a full time professor at a large, public university in Texas. He will be retiring in the next year.

Dr. Four was born in Mexico and his family immigrated to Texas in the United States when he was a few months old. He described it as “brining him across the river.” He self identified as Mexican American. He was one of six children. His siblings all finished high school and two earned doctorates, two earned undergraduate degrees, and two earned Associate’s degrees. His father never went to school and is illiterate, and his mother attended up to fourth grade in Mexico. His parents never learned to speak English, so Spanish was the primary language in his household. He went to school in the United States his entire life. After graduating high school he went to college not far away from his home and earned a BA in Spanish, he went

on to earn a Master of Education in Guidance and Counseling and eventually earned a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership. He was an elementary school teacher for about eight years, school counselor for eleven years and a principal for three years.

Dr. Four had many negative experiences in elementary school which he highlighted throughout his interview. He described his most impactful lived experience as one where a teacher at his elementary school “almost destroyed him psychologically.”

I’ll tell you, I had a fifth grade teacher, I spoke Spanish, so she turned to look. She asked, Who was that? An it was me who spoke Spanish. And at the same time, I was chewing gum, and I’m not supposed to chew gum, right? So she made me stand on the side of the desk the whole day with the gum on my nose.

He went on later in the interview to say that when he went back to his elementary school to become the principal and the teacher he described above was still there.

And my office was underneath the classroom. I could almost feel the pain, I mean, but the teacher didn’t remember. She did that to so many kids.

Dr. Four went on to add,

I had to forgive her so that I could be fair with her. But I was always watching to see if she was doing that to kids. She retired after my first year. I think she knew she couldn’t live up to the caring expectations that I had.

He defined culturally responsive pedagogy as “knowing your students as deeply as you can, and as deeply as they allow you to know them.” Dr. Four tries to utilize this best practice in his own classroom. He said he practices culturally responsive pedagogy through self-discovery by:

Requiring our students to write an autoethnography. Who they are growing up, their history of their family, and so on. Then they write a professional autoethnography, how

did they get there, what they're doing right now? In their last semester, they do a transformational autoethnography, which speaks to what happened to you since you started to now.

He tells another story of when he was in elementary school and the impact it had on him as a principal and in his culturally responsive practices.

All my life my name was not easy to pronounce for anybody. And all my life, either my name got skipped when roll was being called at the beginning, or it was butchered. And so, I think the reason I'm really good with names is because of that experience. I tested that theory with many of my students. I would call them out in the hall as they were going by, and I'd call them by their name, and they would turn around and say, how do you know my name? Why do you know my name? I would answer, well, because you're important here.

Dr. Four's passion for teaching was clear as he called it a vocation really, "a calling".

I quickly realized that I wasn't really teaching the students; I was just letting them find out. Giving them space, not even giving them the space, because the space doesn't belong to me; it belongs to all of us. Helping and guiding them to claim their space, and take charge of their own learning.

Presentation of the Findings

Using a multicase-study approach, this study explored and examined the lived experience of Latinx faculty. The theoretical frameworks LatCrit (1995) and Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and the conceptual framework, culturally responsive teachers (Villegas and Lucas, 2002) were used to analyze the participants lived, cultural experiences and determined how these experiences informed their culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate level

classroom. The data revealed three broad themes, that aligned with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and the study's three research questions, emerging from lived experiences, and ultimately informing the participants culturally responsive pedagogical practices. This section will present the findings that emerged from the data.

The three themes that emerged from the data in this study were:

- 1) Cultivating Bidirectional Relationships
- 2) Resilience by Rebounding and Recovering
- 3) Perseverance through Self- Efficacy and Advocacy

The Latinx graduate faculty participants in this study were eager to share information and stories about their lived experience from early childhood to present. They answered questions about their personal backgrounds, beliefs, educational experiences and cultural backgrounds. They presented topics about influential and key experiences, people and times of their lives that have influenced and shaped who they are today as educators. They described times when they or someone they knew experienced injustice, and pivoted back to why they choose to be culturally responsive in their classroom pedagogy. They described their desire to “be the change” in education for present and future student populations.

There were many similarities amongst the participants culturally responsive classroom pedagogies. Many of the recurring codes within the data revealed that there were a number of lived experiences that influenced their beliefs about education, their classroom practices and the importance of cultural responsiveness. The findings suggested that their lived experiences informed their culturally responsive pedagogical practices based upon both internal and external factors.

To assist the reader in the organization of this chapter, the following table was created to summarize the presentation of findings of this study.

<p>Presentation of Findings</p> <p>1) Cultivation of Bidirectional Relationships</p> <p>A) Strong Family Relationships</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Caring Mother</i> 2. <i>Family Values</i> 3. <i>Expectations for success</i> <p>B) Significant Mentoring Relationships</p> <p>C) Relationships with Students</p> <p>2) Recovering and Rebounding by Resilience</p> <p>A) Feelings of Internal Conflict</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Am I good enough?</i> <p>B) Working through External Conflict</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Discrimination</i> 2. <i>Prejudice</i> 3. <i>Racism</i> <p>3) Perseverance through Advocacy and Self- Efficacy</p> <p>A) Self Efficacy</p> <p>B) Advocating for Others</p>
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Table 5. Outline of Findings

Theme 1: Cultivating bidirectional relationships

According to the findings, relationship building throughout the participants life was instrumental in shaping their ideas about cultural responsiveness in their classrooms. Their relationships, both positive and negative, personal and professional, have been highlighted in this section of the findings. Three sub themes emerged during data analysis under the theme of Cultivating bidirectional relationships: 1) strong family relationships, 2) significant mentoring relationships and 3) building relationships with students.

The theme of cultivating bidirectional relationships aligned with the theoretical framework of social constructivism used in the study. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism premised that social interaction is necessary in the learning process. In addition, this theme aligned with the Villegas and Lucas' (2002) framework, particularly characteristic number five which states that the culturally responsive educator should know about the lives of their students. This section clarified the connections between the participant interviews and cultivating directional relationship as it emerged through data analysis. The findings go on to present the intersection of creating meaning through interactions with others and the environment. In this study, social constructivism allowed me the opportunity to construct meaning through their lived, cultural experience, and afforded me as the researcher the opportunity to reflect on how these relationships informed their approach and practices in terms of culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom.

Strong Family Relationships

Caring Mother. Participants described their mother's as strong, caring, supportive women. Each participant described the ways in which their mothers modeled what true caring feels like. When describing their cultural responsiveness in the classroom, they all highlighted caring as an instrumental characteristic of their teaching style. The descriptions of "motherly" caring referred to in the study happened at different points of each participants life ranging from childhood to adulthood hood.

Dr. One shared a memory she had as an adult when her mother came to help her decorate her classroom. She made a connection to her childhood and how her mother always made sure that the family home was relaxing, comfortable and always decorated. She went on to describe the conversation her mother had with her that day:

You have to make your classroom smell nice, my mother said. So, she bought me one of those potpourri kettles that would bubble and steam. She added, We're going to put this in your room in the corner. Nobody will see it but your room is going to smell nice. And she would say, Your room needs to look nice. You have little first graders, so let's fix it with little stuffed animals and kid-sized furniture.

Dr. Three had similar positive interactions with her mother. Sh wrote in her dissertation acknowledgements that her mother was "the wind beneath her wings." She also mentioned caring as a trait of her mother that lingers with her. Dr. Three described her mother as someone who knew the value of a good education. Her mother had a degree in medical technology however, she never practiced because she got married and chose to stay home and care for her children. Dr. Three describes a moment in time when she is an adult with her mother:

We had a little pochito, a little Beetle, I remember it was a very windy day, I remember the Beetle swaying back and forth, and she drove me to school even though the wind was dangerously strong. My mom would drive me back and forth to college and push me to do things, she was always very supportive. She would also help me with my high school homework because she loved learning. Whenever we had a question she would say, let's ask Collier (Encyclopedia) and would sit and read with us.

Dr. Four acknowledged that if it was not for his parents, he feels like he would have "gotten lost in the shuffle of school." His mother had a fourth grade education from Mexico and did not speak English but he remembered the way she supported him. He had vivid recollections of his mother helping him through the tough days he endured at school when he was a child:

After a day of emotional and physical abuse at school, my mom would repair me, and get me ready for another day of battle the next day. But she knew that something was wrong,

all the time. She couldn't help us with homework or anything like that, but she always helped us by asking, How was your day? How do you feel? So I survived those experiences because of this, the support at home.

Dr. Four acknowledged that many kids may not have this type of support at home. He said that he never pretended to be a substitute for parents, “but I can care as an educator.”

Family Values. Each participant described familial values as part of their immediate family circle. According to the participants, these family values set the tone for both the immediate and extended family and not just them. Everyone was expected to adhere to family values as the families had strong relational ties with each other. In the case of all four participants, as highlighted in the interview answers below, education was the main focus of family values.

Dr. One described education as a value of both her immediate and her extended family. She described her family as well educated and quotes one of her grandfathers, the patriarch of her extended family:

He was one of those believers that you can't take somebody's education away from them once you have it, so my aunts and uncles were all in education and did really, really well in school. In my family, education was the primary focus. I have uncles and aunts that have PhDs in education.

Dr. Two stated that education and higher education were something that were of high value in her home.

My parents “ensured that we were prepared to enter school with an understanding that the teacher and those in authority were knowledgeable about the content they were teaching.

Dr. Four ended up returning home after completing college to help his family because they were going through a difficult financial period. He highlighted how they helped him financially with getting his education. Dr. Four elaborated:

After college, my parents were struggling financially so I went home to help them. They helped me through college, and so they put every penny they had to help me and my siblings. So I will tell you the reason I survived was not because I was so strong; it's because I had support at home.

Expectations for Success. All four participants stated it was either a spoken or unspoken expectation that they did well in school, graduate from high school and go to college.

Dr. One said that she was not a studious high school student but she got *As* and *Bs*. She went on and said:

I just did what I had to do. I always knew I would go to college. But I'm your typical good student, I do whatever I'm told and I enjoyed school. I have uncles and aunts that have Ph.Ds in education. And that was the big push, you have to do good in school. We expect you to do well in school. And so, since that was the expectation that was what we did. And everyone in my family is successful.

Dr. Two stated that:

Growing up, higher education was something that her parents spoke of as an expectation of their children. Both my mom and dad graduated college and it was something that they wanted for their children too.

Dr. Three said that her dad was a very typical traditional Mexican macho man so if you asked him about his daughters going to college, he would instead say they would get married and

have children. On the other hand, her mother would not have allowed it. “My mom, always pushed us and knew we would go to college.”

Dr. Four said “Even though my parents had no idea what college was, they always knew they wanted us to go to college.”

Significant Mentoring Relationships

It is impactful to call out that all of the mentors mentioned in this study were teachers who taught at various stages of the participants education. For each of the participants, they described pivotal times in their lives when these supportive mentors arrived and impacted their lives. Mentors may have only made an impact for a year or they continued on for many years. Mentoring promotes healthy development when it is done in a supportive way that affirms the experiences of both parties to generate a caring and trusting relationship (Lucey & White, 2017). As mentioned by the participants, these mentor relationships were crucial in impacting the trajectory of their lives.

Dr. One met her mentor while she was in her master’s program.

While I was teaching and working on my master’s degree there was a professor who had just finished his Ph.D. He said to my group, you should all work on your Ph.Ds. There’s funding; there’s a need. You should really do it. So, I said well why not? I’m going to do it. I’m not married. I don’t have children. I’ll apply. So I applied and got in. The thing that turned it around for the Ph.D in particular was that professor that encouraged me to work on my Ph.D. He really pushed me. He actually became my mentor and was on my dissertation committee.

Dr. Three was excited to talk about her experiences with her mentor(s) as they all arrived at times that changed the trajectory of her education:

I was very lucky, because I had a professor who knew about my interest in deaf education and she put me in contact with someone who had a grant for minority educators interested in deaf education and wanting to pursue their Master's degree. This was why I ended up doing my Master's degree.

Dr. Three went on to describe her PhD mentor whom she formed a relationship with while still teaching Elementary school. She was having a difficult time understanding and implementing language difference and learning disability and started researching journal articles. She ended up emailing the authors of a journal article to ask questions.

They gave me lots of research-based practices and strategies that I could implement in my classroom. Then at the end of the year Dr. X emailed and basically asked me if I would be interested in applying to the university she was working at.

Dr. Three ended up going to the university and recalled how her mentor impacted her after having a hard time in her Ph.D. program.

One of the things Dr. X did, in that year, as a fellow, she really helped me with the research, took me under her wing, and we developed conference proposal together, so I could see what it was like. In the second year, she helped me find opportunities to be back in the field.

Dr. Four described his mentor(s) entering his life in the third grade while he was in elementary school. He talked about how these two teachers were critical in his completion of school and going on to pursue his doctorate degree.

Mr. G., was a recent graduate of one of the top universities in the Southwest. He made us sing his university school song every morning, as loud as we could, so that everyone knew we were singing the song. He convinced all of us that we were all going to go to

that university – all 45 of us. I give him credit for making me believe that I was smart. I would say about 30-some years later, I was thinking about Mr. G. at my university's commencement, because he's the one that inspired me to go to the school he attended to get my doctorate.”

Dr. Four went on to say there was only one other time where a teacher made an impact in his life and it was right after the third grade.

After I left the third grade, I had another good fourth-grade teacher, Ms. K. who taught me how to read and write in Spanish. Mr G. and Mrs K. were very critical and I give them credit for me surviving the rest of my school experience, because I didn't have very good experiences after that. But they're the ones that kinda gave me the grounding, the foundation.

Building Significant Relationships with Students

The four doctoral faculty participants interviewed all verbalized the importance of building strong relationships with their students when practicing cultural responsiveness in the graduate classroom. They went on to describe the experiences they have had, and how they use these practices to build these significant relationships with their students.

Dr. One explained the importance of caring about students. She honed in on the importance of developing relationships and rapport with students. She went on to say:

They have to know that you do care about them, that you respect them and their life experiences. So, to be culturally responsive I have to get to know students. I have to know their funds of knowledge. What are they bringing to the classroom? And in this case, because I'm working with master's and doctoral level students, what do they want to get out of this? What's their purpose for getting the postgraduate degree? And then,

tapping into that and trying to bring that into the classroom so that – again, so that you're connecting and making it meaningful for them.

Dr. Two also believed that the ability to connect with students is important. She said, it was important to be familiar with their lived experiences, their needs, strengths, and goals to help support them throughout their program.

I think that overall it means so much to a student when they know that you genuinely care about them and their success so I make every effort to let the students know that they are a priority of my work. I was able to connect with parents and students because I realized that it was important to shop in their communities, get gas from their community, go to the mall in their community so I could understand where my students were coming from.

Dr. Three agreed that building relationships with students is an important part of cultural responsiveness. Dr. Three experienced this relationship with her teachers and mentors. She went on to describe how she builds relationships in the classroom:

If you don't get to know your students they won't want to learn from you. So, they need to get to know you, you need to get to know them. One of the things that I usually get comments on, on my evaluations, is that students appreciate that I make myself vulnerable. It's okay to not have the answers to everything, but that you do need to find out, and keep questioning and keep asking, you know, maintain that curiosity.

Dr. Four talked about the importance of “authentically learning who your students are, and where they come from”. He placed great emphasis on spending time relationship building with his students to impact learning.

We do an hour of reflection at the beginning of each of my classes and I want to know how are you feeling about life, your feelings, your health? When you learn about them,

you cannot help but to develop a caring relationship. I think showing respect, and treating graduate students with dignity, and acknowledging that they are capable, and acknowledging their strengths, respecting who they are.

Theme 2: Rebounding and Recovering through Resilience

Another major theme that emerged from the data was resilience. Merriam-Webster (2019) defined resilience as the ability to easily recover from or adjust to misfortune or change. Although it may be assumed that all people possess the resiliency trait, it is usually enhanced when individuals from minority populations succeed despite the adversity they face. The four participants in this study all dealt with different types of internal conflict and external conflict that required them to “continue on.”

The theoretical framework of Latino/a Critical Race Theory aligned with this theme because it not only highlighted the Latino/a experience within race, social class, gender and other forms of oppression, but it also acknowledged the Latinx graduate faculty experience with identity, immigration, sexuality, language and culture. In the findings presented below the participants described their personal internal and external conflicts and illustrated examples of hardships they have faced and remember. These lived, cultural experience describe moments of racism, discrimination and prejudice that the participants endured and highlighted their ability to recover and move forward. In this study, LatCrit allowed me to articulate, illuminate and analyze the oppressive lived experiences of Latinx faculty and allowed the opportunity to make connections in how these moments have informed their approach and practices in terms of culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom.

Feelings of Internal Conflict

Am I good enough?

Dr. One described her first year of teaching college and the struggle she faced with her predominantly white class:

So, initially, when I first got to the current university I work at, I will say the dynamics of the classrooms was certainly more White students than minority, Latino, and African American students. So, when I was talking about culturally relevant instruction or institutionalized racism I got a lot of resistance – right? I even got, a few comments that "This professor – because I'm a White I'm not going to get a fair share" even though they got *As* in the classroom. It wasn't like they weren't getting bad grades, but they didn't like having – they felt uncomfortable having discussions about race or ethnicity in schools.

She went to add her feelings about being a minority teacher in what was, in those days, a primarily white student demographic at her university.

When I got pushback in the classroom, Well, it was a little frustrating. And of course, I was a new faculty, so – tenure track faculty, so you're always a little unsure about "Is it them? Is it me? Is it the topic of discussion?" and trying to work through that.

I mean, I think, again, being the minority, feeling a little like, you have those feelings like, "Do I belong here? Am I supposed to be here?"

She went on to describe similar feelings in her Ph.D program:

I grew up in a place where there were so many Latinos. It was a little off putting to be the only minority in the classroom and the only Latina. So I always paid attention to it. I mean being the minority, feeling like, Do I belong here? Am I supposed to be here?

Dr. Two described her feelings of being different and not “belonging” because of her biracial background.

Being that I grew up in a family where I had two VERY different cultural experiences I learned a lot from each side of my family. My father's family was very traditional and for lack of no other way to say it felt like they were better than other people. They definitely demonstrated their White privilege and looking back they even treated my brothers and I different from the other grandchildren who were not Latino. On my mother's side of the family it was much different. My mother is the youngest of 16 children and the only one in her family to attend college and earn a terminal degree. However, it always seemed like she was never 'good enough' in my grandparents' eyes. They always wanted something 'more' for my father it seemed.

Dr. Three described her experience in her predominantly white Ph.D program and her struggle with feeling like she didn't belong:

I mean, just getting adjusted to being in my Ph.D. program was quite an experience. I remember sitting down in my mentors office, you know, after attending my first class, and just saying, "I just want to go back to the classroom. You know, this is not what I signed up for. You know, people talking about lots of things and, they haven't lived what I've lived. I mean, because they were talking about working with kids who come from poverty, and working with kids, you know, who don't speak English.

It is important to note, Dr. Three opened the interview very conscious of her accent because of comments that have been made over the years. "I am sorry, I get a little nervous when I am being recorded, my accent is really- I'm very self-conscious." She added that in one of her work evaluations "there were comments made about my accent and making things difficult to understand."

External Conflict

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as the act, practice or an instance of discrimination categorically rather than individually (Merrim-Webster, 2019). The participants described instances of discrimination for their students and themselves through their interviews.

Dr. Three talked about teaching elementary school in a predominantly Hispanic community, where the majority of the staff was white. She described the feeling over getting “rid of” or outcasting the students who were different.

And I was out in a portable, so just being in a portable, you know, started making me question, Okay, how come everyone – I mean, so they're telling me they want to include kids who are bilingual and have special needs, but the reality is that, you know, we're outside the building. But then whenever I walked by the general ed classrooms, they had a lot less kids. So was it, you know, was special ed really about meeting the students' needs? Or was it about getting rid of kids teachers didn't want to work with, you know, both bilingual and special ed?

She went on to follow up her story with how she addressed the comments from the grandmother with her young students.

I asked all the students to stand up and stand around the circle placing their arm towards the middle. Then I asked them to describe what they saw. The students shared different comments but the one that remains with me to this day is one of my students who said, “Ms. Piper, I think I am a Grover too!” and proceeded to tell the class that when she put her arm next to mine, we were the exact same color. It was in this moment that I realized that my dissertation work would focus on identity development of Black Elementary Aged Children. Had I not used CRP in that moment, I believe I would have left an

impression on my students that I was not comfortable talking about race and differences in identity.

Dr. Four solemnly described an experience with discrimination in elementary school.

In elementary back then, there were only two sections. One was for Spanish speakers, and one was for the smart ones, who were the English speakers. And that technically was the message – the smart ones were the kids who spoke English, and their parents spoke English.

Prejudice

Prejudice is defined as the beliefs and thoughts someone holds about a group (Merriam-Webster, 2019). Dr. Two described a moment she had in her classroom when she dealt with prejudice from one of her students family members.

During Reading Week in my Kindergarten class, I invited my students families, people from the community, etc. to come read their favorite children's book to my students. I taught in a school that was 98% Black. One of my students grandmothers came to read to the class and chose a book about Elmo and Grover. As she was reading aloud she would tell the students that they are Elmo but I was Grover. Throughout the entire reading she continued to point this out to the students, practically on every page. I didn't know what the significance was so I listened and waited patiently for her to tell us. Well, at the end of the story she said that the kids were Elmo's because they were all cute, nice, and Black and I was a Grover because I was not.

Dr. Three mentioned the prejudice she faced in her Ph.D. program:

There were lots of assumptions made about who I was as a Latina who was in a Ph.D. program. People were saying, aren't you behind? They told me to my face, what are you doing here, you're not supposed to be here.

Dr Four talked about graduation from high school and never hearing from his high school counselor.

My high school counselor never called me to fill out any forms for financial aid or anything, so I went to see her. She said to me, I didn't call you because you're not college material.

Racism

Racism is defined as a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race (Merrim-Webster, 2019).

Dr. Two described a vivid memory of racism within her extended family. Dr. Two is biracial, with a white father and a Latina mother. She went on to describe the situation:

When my (white) grandparents died they left money for all of the grandchildren. For my cousins, my grandparents left cash so they could do whatever they wanted with their money. For me and my brothers they allocated where we would be able to spend our money, such as buying a house, etc.

Dr. Three talked about a situation she faced when trying to publish in a tier-one research journal. She talked about how this journal continued to reject her because she was a Latina writing about special education which she describes as a predominantly white field.

So for tenure, my publications were in top-tier journals, but they were all in the Latino arena. Which is where I want to publish, but those may not always be viewed the same

way as top-tier journals. I remembered that one of the comments that I got in one of my reviews was that I hadn't published in a very well known Journal, which is another top tier journal. This journal was not interested in what I had to say, I did submit, I got lots of rejections and I tried different special education journals and just kept being rejected. I remember saying, they don't want to hear what I have to say because special education is a very white field. When you present the same manuscript to another journal that's also a top journal in the field of Latino education and it's accepted, well it means well you know, I mean, it's biased.

Theme 3: Perseverance through self-efficacy and advocacy

Merrim-Webster (2019) defined perseverance as the effort put forward to achieve something despite difficulties, discouragement, failures or opposition. This theme aligned with the theoretical framework used in this study created by Villegas and Lucas (2002). The two strands of their characteristics of culturally responsive educators that spoke most to this theme was sociocultural consciousness and commitment and skills to act as agents of change. In sociocultural consciousness the participants know who they are, what motivates them and an awareness of their life experiences. In commitment and skills to act as agents of change it states that teachers need to view themselves as change makers. I used the data gathered and analyzed each strand of the characteristics of culturally responsive educators and drew from the data that self-efficacy and advocacy aligned with the framework created by Villegas and Lucas (2002). Data from this study suggested that perseverance had a significant impact on these Latinx graduate faculty as they moved forward in life and made decisions in their graduate classroom practices. The first part of this theme focused on the Latinx graduate faculty's own

confidence and self-efficacy. The last section looked at how this confidence translated into advocacy for others in direct correlation with cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. Self-efficacy theory is defined by a stakeholder's belief in his or her ability to be successful when attempting a specific task (Bandura, 2000). If individuals do not believe that they can be successful, then they have no incentive to attempt an action (Bandura, 2000).

Dr. One did not want to follow in the footsteps of her father and pursue a career in education. She wanted to forge her own path in her family legacy however, when the finance career she was already invested in took a nose-dive she picked herself up and asked what else she could do. She weighed her options and took control of the situation by embarking on a career she initially did not want, but willing to try, and ended up loving.

So I actually have a BBA in finance. And I did banking for a little while, a couple of years when I came out of the university but at that time banks were merging and restructuring and people were losing jobs. And I thought, Uh oh, I'd better have another plan.

Dr. Two talked about her experience going off to college for the first time. She said that she had a boyfriend, lots of parties to attend and so many distractions. She took ownership and said that she "failed miserably." She went on to explain what she did to right the wrong, with college. Although she knew it would take her longer to graduate, she was motivated, and she decided it was best to switch schools.

I went to a university right out of high school. I choose to attend XYZ university and failed miserably. I had a boyfriend, college parties, and many other distractions. During my junior year, my best friend and I decided to attend ABC University. I lost most of my college credit from XYZ university. It took me six years to earn my bachelor's degree.

Dr. Three told a story about her father:

My dad was a medical doctor in Mexico, he was the only boy in the family, so he was the only one who got to go to school. And because being a doctor, priest or teacher in Mexico, I mean those are very highly-regarded professions. He was encouraged to go into the medical field. I mean, to this day, he doesn't say that he regrets it or anything, but in the conversations that I have had with him, he says, You know, I really wanted to be an architect. His friends would ask him if his three daughters would be doctors and he would say no. They will probably get married and have children. I love my dad dearly, but he's a very traditional Mexican macho man.

Dr. Three went on to say that she did not want to follow the Mexican traditional path her father had laid out for her of getting married, having kids and staying at home. She went on to take her own path and control her own destiny.

So then, when I did go to JKL University, I thought I wanted to be like dad (become a doctor), and prove him wrong. I guess there's always been a part of me that's like, Well you told me I can't do something? Well, let me show you."

Dr. Four told a story about his motivation to keep going after his high school counselor didn't reach out to him about going to college.

I always knew he would go to college however, my high school counselor did not call me in to fill out the college paperwork. She said it was because I was not college

material. That made me more determined, and I did all the stuff myself, went to college, and graduated with my Bachelor's in three years.

Advocating for Others

Under the theme of perseverance, the data pointed to the importance of advocating for others on community social justice issues, student issues and institutional barriers.

Dr. One told a story about how her family would have discussions around the dinner table about social justice issues her father was facing as a board member:

So, since my father was an educator – he was a teacher but he was also an administrator, he served as a school board member in the Valley, there – we always at home had discussions of race and ethnicity because of conflict between White Board members and Hispanic board members. we were a middle class family, but with some sense of agency as a middle class family, but I think we still as – my parents – I mean, just the fact that we had those discussions was significant. I don't think my dad was culturally relevant but I would use the word "social justice" to describe him. He was thinking "What is right for Latino families? What is – what can we – what should the school be doing for Latino families? So, what do we do for families that don't speak English? What do we do for migrant families, that kids are coming in after school has started and leaving before it ends?" And – because he also worked as a migrant educator. We/Latinx are already service-oriented. Right? We – that's how we are with our family. We take care of our family. We take care of our community. I think, also the issues of injustice and unfairness that permeate through our education system that we – kind of keeps pushing us to "We have to make these changes."

Dr. One described a Latina group that has formed at her university to support and advocate for each other as faculty.

So, for example, there are two – in my department there are two junior tenure track faculty that are Latinas. So, this week, for example, I'm meeting with both of them to talk about "Okay, where are you in the research? Let's –" It's very informal, but it's mentoring. But what helped here particularly is that we had – there was in the College of Education a lot of Latinas. We have a good number of Latinas here – in fact, more than across the university, I think. And so, we created our own collaborative group. And because we were all Latinas but also doing research with Latino populations, that's kind of what brought us together. And so in that collaborative we helped each other professionally but also socially and personally. And so, we would share, like, "I know I'm having this situation with a student" and somebody else would share "I know. I did too. This is how I handled it." And so, together as a collaborative, as a group, we – and actually, we've written several articles about navigating the tenure track process because academia is not very welcoming for people of color, for women. And so – and because we were women and women of color then we worked with each other; we collaborated with on projects to navigate that system.

Dr. Two described a scenario where one of her students, felt comfortable enough to “come out” to her. She described what unfolded when her student entered the classroom and what she did to advocate for the rights of her student.

I had a student who would always take all of my classes. My colleagues joked that he must have a crush on me because he would take all of my classes. Surely enough I was teaching a Children's Literature class and there he was. One night I was in my office very

late when there was a knock at my door. It was the student and he was covered in sweat. I thought this is odd, but invited him into my office and he closed the door. I pulled up a chair next to me so we could talk. He told me that he felt very comfortable in my classes and felt like he could tell me what was going on with him. He said he was transitioning and he felt comfortable enough now that he would do it in my class. He said it would be a slow transition but it would be happening. I reassured him that it would be ok and told him that if there was anything that I could do I would be more than happy. The next class he showed up fully transitioned in a tight black dress, heels, makeup and his hair done. A few girls in the back giggled as she (the student) walked in. I went over and asked them if there was something funny and they said no. I talked to the student who transitioned and asked if she would be comfortable with either emailing the class, speaking to the class or allowing her to speak to the class about the transition. I did not want the giggles and laughs to continue. The student agreed to drafting an email and having me send it to the class.

Dr. Three spoke about her elementary students and the injustices that their families face. Her students would tell her about the field planes spraying their parents while they were migrant working, being afraid of going home because border patrol was in their neighborhood the day before and they didn't know if their families would still be there.

I went to a lot of home visits, and I would get in trouble at school because my principal would always tell me, don't go or take someone with you. But nobody wanted to go with me and I had to go because I wanted to see why my students didn't come to school, or how come they weren't bringing homework back. That took me out to the colonia, and realizing that my kids had no running water, their living conditions were unacceptable.

You know, being a first-world country or whatever we call ourselves, you know, and to think that these kids lived in these situations, and that the school was oblivious as to what their situation was.

Dr. Four went on to describe his teaching philosophy and the importance of advocacy in his work.

My philosophy of administering, about how I worked with children and how I advocated for them, was from a social justice perspective, all the time. Some teachers jumped on board. Many others thought it was too much work to care. Unfortunately, sometimes people have really painful experiences, and they want other kids to have the same pain, experience the same pain they did, because "I made it, so you can make it, too." So I really don't believe in that philosophy.

He describes a time when he was the superintendent and talking with the board:

Look, it's okay for you to protect privilege for your kids, and I'm not trying to take that privilege away. I just wanna give everybody the same privilege, right? Isn't it great that everybody has it?" But, no, a lot of people who are scared about social justice is, they not only want to protect their privilege; they want to deny privilege to you, as well. So that was a major fight, all the time. And it all revolves around how did I develop that philosophy of advocacy for kids who have been historically not underserved, but unserved.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to: 1) understand how Latinx graduate faculty in graduate higher education conceptualize culturally responsive pedagogy, 2) explore the connection between Latinx graduate faculty lived, cultural experiences and learn which experiences inform

their culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education, and 3) to understand the ways in which Latinx graduate faculty lived experience informs their culturally responsive practices in graduate higher education. There were four Latinx graduate faculty participants in this study, three women: Dr. One, Dr. Two, Dr. Three, and one man, Dr. Four. Through their stories, and through thorough examination of the data collected, I highlighted the three important connections between the lived experience in relation to building classroom pedagogy in their higher education classrooms. Three broad themes emerged from the data: 1) cultivating by directional relationships, 2) resilience by rebounding and recovering and 3) perseverance through self-efficacy and advocacy. Within the theme of cultivating by directional relations were the sub-themes of strong family relationships, significant mentoring relationships and relationships with students. The participants revealed how building strong relationships over their lifetime has impacted their lives and ultimately translated into their classroom pedagogy.

The second theme, resilience by rebounding and recovering revealed two sub-themes which were: internal conflict and external conflict. Each participant shared the personal internal conflicts they have felt and the external conflict of social issues they have encountered. Lastly, the final theme of perseverance through advocacy and self-efficacy was introduced. The participants shared stories of difficult situations that they turned around because of their motivation to keep going and the importance of advocacy for others in their work.

Chapter V presented an overview of the significance of the study, the purpose and research questions, a discussion of the findings specifically by research questions, implications for practice, future research, and conclusions.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Organization of this Chapter

To discuss the findings of this study, I first identified the gap in the literature that the study sought to fill. I then reminded the reader of the three themes that emerged in the data. I go on to use each research question to discuss the results, illuminate implications for practice, recommendations for future research, and end with conclusions.

Overview of the Problem

The student populations in higher education are becoming increasingly diverse, highlighting the need for more faculty to be culturally responsive in their pedagogical practices. In addition, there is a need for growth in the number of minority faculty serving this diverse, higher education student population. In the body of literature, there is limited research that speaks to culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education. There is a dearth of literature in the narratives of graduate faculty lived experiences and in what ways lived experiences informs culturally responsive pedagogy. Faculty self-reflection and understanding of their own experiences has an impact on the ability to create and execute on culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom. Faculty who accept and adopt cultural responsiveness must first look at themselves, “identify their view of the world and recognize that that one’s view is shaped by life experiences that include race/ethnicity, social class, and gender” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 7).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to:

- 1) understand how Latinx graduate faculty in graduate higher education conceptualize culturally responsive pedagogy

- 2) explore the connection between Latinx graduate faculty lived, cultural experiences and learn which experiences inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education
- 3) to understand the ways in which Latinx graduate faculty lived experience informs their culturally responsive practices in graduate higher education.

This study focused on understanding the ways that the lived experiences of Latinx graduate faculty informed their culturally responsive pedagogy and practice in the graduate-level classroom. I remind the reader that all of the participants in the study have earned PhDs. I also remind the reader that I use lived experience as defined by Moustakas (1994), a term used to describe the individual experiences of a person/people or a phenomenon that is being studied. The lived experiences in this study range from birth to adulthood. This study suggested that lived experiences may influence a faculty member's culturally responsive pedagogical practices through the understanding and practice of self-reflection, relationships, positive and negative experiences, and upbringing.

This study added to the literature that focused on culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education. The study highlighted a new topic that explored the lived experiences of minority, Latinx graduate faculty in pursuit of understanding the ways their lived experiences informed their culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education.

Research Questions

The overarching research question that guided this study was:

- ❖ In what ways does the lived experience of Latinx faculty inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?

To explore the perspectives of Latinx doctoral faculty, the following research questions guided the study:

- 1) How do Latinx graduate faculty describe and enact their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy?
- 2) What lived or cultural experiences have Latinx graduate faculty identified as informing their culturally responsive pedagogy?
- 3) How do Latinx graduate faculty practice culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?

Discussion of the findings

Through data collection and multiple iterations of data analysis, the results of this study suggested the ways in which Latinx faculty have used their lived experiences to inform their culturally responsive pedagogy in graduate higher education is through building bidirectional relationships or relationships that serve both parties, incorporating their knowledge of their own struggles and resiliency in their classroom pedagogy, and advocating for themselves and others. The findings in the study suggested that Latinx faculty have a good understanding of what culturally responsive pedagogy is however, they struggle with implementing culturally responsive pedagogy because there is no clear guideline on how to implement it, and there is not enough support to carry out the curriculum across the university. All four participants expressed that their lived experience certainly drives their classroom culturally responsive pedagogical methods.

Through open, axial, and selective coding, three themes emerged to identify the ways in which the lived experience of Latinx faculty informed their culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom. The three themes were: 1) cultivating bidirectional relationships, 2) resilience by rebounding and recovering, and 3) perseverance through self-efficacy and advocacy

for others. To move through the discussion of the findings that emerged from the data, I will answer the three research questions.

Research Question #1: How do Latinx faculty describe and enact their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy?

To answer this question, I drew on the participants' description of culturally responsive pedagogy and what they think the action would look like in the classroom. From this question, I learned more about the participants understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy. To describe and enact their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy, the data identified the following: strong relationships with students, relevant curriculum, and learning with and from their colleagues.

Relationship with Students. The findings indicated that the participants describe building strong relationships with students as an important part of culturally responsive pedagogy. Most educators would agree that getting to know your students and their families is important to teach effectively, and it also helps in the learning process (Edwards & Edick, 2013). The participants believed that through the process of cultivating strong relationships with students, it was easier to hold students accountable for their schoolwork since mutual trust was established. In other words, spending time with their students during class time, office hours, or other times to gain an understanding of their students past and present experiences. Knowing student experiences helped the graduate faculty member to find ways to implement curriculum that is applicable to the students' lives. Good teaching involved using students' cultural and familial knowledge and using it in support of their learning (Neumann, 2014). In addition, this action of getting to know the students' lives also opened doors to understand the students' abilities, to include strengths and weaknesses. The participants also spoke about supporting students through mentoring.

Although mentoring helped the participants get to know their students better, it also provided an opportunity to show their students that they supported them and provided moments of encouragement.

Relevant curriculum. Another area raised in the data was relevant curriculum. The participants described enacting relevant curriculum as applying material that challenges student/teacher thinking, curriculum that engages the teacher-student and student-student in dialogue, and the action of sharing and learning from each other. Learning that is cooperative, collaborative, and community-oriented allows for a distinguished process of social inclusivity (Vygotsky, 1978). To enact this, they believed that the educator must be vulnerable and willing to share real stories about themselves, be open-minded, and self-aware.

Learning with and from colleagues. The data showed that strong relationships with colleagues was described as an important part of culturally responsive pedagogy. This could be carried out by learning more about culturally responsive pedagogy best practices and new concepts in collaboration with colleagues. They also spoke about more support from colleagues when facing institutional roadblocks. In universities, communities of collaboration do not usually “spontaneously self-generate,” they result from time, energy, and commitment in creating them, and they are often very difficult to sustain (Dinkleman, 2011).

Research Question #2: What lived or cultural experiences have Latinx faculty identified as informing their culturally responsive pedagogy?

Family and Mentor Support. In their interviews, the participants revealed how being supported by their family and mentors over their lifetime impacted their lives, and ultimately translated into their beliefs about building classroom relationships, and the way they practiced culturally responsive pedagogy. Comer (2001) writes, “no significant learning occurs without a

significant relationship.” Specifically, in describing the relationship with their mothers, the participants described how they learned how to care by the examples their mothers set. Through the interviews, I identified the participants’ desire to ensure that their students felt genuinely cared for, much like they did by their own mothers. The participants’ positive and negative educational, and personal and professional experiences led them to want their classroom pedagogy to feel welcoming and supportive. The four participants described the spoken and unspoken expectations of attending college and being held to high educational expectations by their family.

As explained by the participants, mentors were able to guide them in ways their extended and immediate family could not. All mentors described in this study helped guide the participants on their educational journey. In this study, the mentors were teachers at various stages of the participants’ education. They encouraged them to apply for programs, degrees, and find opportunities. Mentors served as extended families and modeled what non-familial help and caring looked like.

These results were important because they show a correlation in the data that illuminated the connection between the sub-themes of this finding. The data showed that bidirectional relationships, where both parties gain from the relationship, was extremely prevalent in the research gathered for this study. In familial relationships, the participants learned what personal, genuine caring looked like, and in turn, they gained from this knowledge by being able to develop and implement this behavior in their own classroom teaching. In direct correlation, the participants built relationships with mentors who were able to teach and develop them and in turn the participants were able to apply the knowledge to build academic and career success. what they learned. In the interviews with the participants, and in review of the data, there was a

direct tie between what the participants experienced in their own lives, how their relationship experiences informed their culturally responsive pedagogy, and practice it in the classroom.

Injustice in school. The personal, educational experiences described by all four participants were ones where they faced injustice in their own educational settings. The participants remembered these experiences and discussed the meaning they made out of these experiences. They went on to tie their lived experiences to the way they create and execute pedagogy in their classrooms. Many of the participants described moments of educational resilience while describing the conflicts they experienced. Educational resilience pertains to students who possess and confront “risk factors” that predict failure for most students from similar circumstances (Morales & Trotman, 2004). These results matter because it points to the ways that the lived experience informs the Latinx graduate faculty culturally responsive pedagogy in terms of moving past obstacles. It also speaks to possible retention techniques that faculty of diverse student populations in higher education can use. The participants in this study all faced self-doubt and social injustice in one or more points of their lives because they were minorities. Burdick (2015) highlights in his article the importance of relationships for their increase in resiliency and goes on to say “if your network is strong, you are more likely to recover from adversity.” The use of their own examples of self-doubt and injustice in the classroom informs the instructor on how to continue to build culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom. In turn, it also points to the need for more diverse faculty populations to build bridges with students.

The participants shared stories of difficult situations that they turned around because of their motivation to keep going in the face of obstacles. “Teachers with higher self-efficacy might develop challenging activities and help students to succeed and persevere” (Maddux, 1995). In

addition, the participants described the importance of advocacy for others in their work. The participants built strong relationships with their students by utilizing reflective curriculum in their classrooms such as autoethnography. Holding students to high expectations and committing to being change agents in the classroom.

This result is very important because, statistically these four Latinx graduate faculty should not have earned doctoral degrees. What set them apart? They persevered because they exhibited behaviors of self-efficacy. An individual decides to translate knowledge into action based on the individuals own perceptions of his/her/their capabilities (Bandura, 1997). The participants rose up despite society and social environments. They took their own path and believed they could be successful. The participants used this knowledge and believed each and every student in their class had the ability to succeed, and they created curriculum and moments to exhibit that. They are role models for their students that they too can achieve when the odds are not in their favor. In pursuit of this achievement, they held steadfast in their commitment to advocacy. They create spaces, groups, and took action to be agents of change. They do not work within the status quo, but they stay within their morals and ethics.

Seeing others experience injustice. In addition, to experiencing injustice in their own schooling, the participants all described times where they witnessed injustice in the school systems for which they worked. These injustices ranged from the segregation of students based on language, disability, sexual orientation, and social class. “Given the overt and covert ways that society ascribes negative cognitive characteristics to the lower socioeconomic classes and people of color, this negative connotation is often internalized” (Morales, 2008). From these experiences, the participants placed emphasis on not repeating or helping others to not repeat these behaviors.

Institutional beliefs. Within their own institutions, the participants talked about the ability to overcome pushback as informing their culturally responsive pedagogy. Institutions committed to preparing culturally responsive educators must acknowledge that institutions of higher education, like elementary and secondary schools, were not created to serve diverse populations or place value on diversity (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). They described being resilient or recovering and rebounding, from their own negative administrative feedback, ignorant behavior from colleagues, and lack of support in the pursuit of culturally responsive pedagogy. In other words, in culturally responsive pedagogy, the educator will be a change agent through pushing forward and advocating regardless of the institutional opinion.

Research Question #3: How do Latinx faculty practice culturally responsive pedagogy in the graduate classroom?

Building relationships with students. The participants described building relationships with students outside of the classroom, such as knowing and understanding the community in which the student lived and worked. Students live in communities that educate them on a daily basis. Teachers may say that their work centers around students and the classroom; however teachers need to have “sociocultural and sociopolitical obligations to the communities they serve” (Fasching-Varner & Dodo Seriki, 2012). The participants went on to say that knowing this information helped them to recognize who students are and what they bring to the classroom.

Classroom community. The participants talked about encouraging students to push past areas of feeling uncomfortable and speak freely and safely in the classroom environment. They described moments where the students did peer sharing, and the instructor was also involved in sharing. This is important so trust is built in the classroom, and students move past the feelings of being censored to feelings of safety. A classroom community where both the educator and the

students thinking is pushed, collaboration is encouraged, diverse perspectives are embraced, and self-reflection is applauded.

Presentation of curriculum. The participants stated that they practice thinking through their curriculum prior to presenting it. They include topics that encourage discomfort to push critical thinking. They encourage students to self-reflect, to learn past what they already know. They also think through what might be affecting the students in the classroom, how they address every learning style in their class, how do they make relevant connections for every student, and making sure they themselves understand the concepts they are presenting and without bias.

Implications And Recommendations

As a result of this study and the current research published about culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education, I discussed implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

Implications for Practice

A few implications for practice included encouraging educators and other researchers to push thinking and take a closer look at educators' lived experiences as a viable contribution to culturally responsive pedagogy. This study brought insights in Latinx, minority, doctoral faculty lived experience to the table for the very first time in terms of culturally responsive pedagogy. It introduced an alternative way for leadership to evaluate and understand the perspectives and experiences that their current staff bring into the classroom. It also provided the opportunity to leverage the experiences of educators in developing responsive classroom curriculum. In addition, it highlighted the opportunity to create professional development workshops for faculty in higher education who work with diverse student populations.

Recommendations for Future Research

The majority of literature written on culturally responsive pedagogy reflected the work of K-12 scholars. The current literature on culturally responsive pedagogy also placed a spotlight on the student experiences and not the educator/faculty. There is a call for more understanding into the experiences of culturally responsive, minority faculty in higher education. Additional studies using other minority groups would add to the literature and close the gap on the experiences and use of culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education of other racial groups. This study helped to fill a gap in the literature on culturally responsive pedagogy as informed by the lived experiences of Latinx graduate faculty in graduate level higher education.

Furthermore, there is a need for a definition of the theories of culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education. These terms have also been used in relation to P-12 teaching and there is a significant gap in defining these terms in higher education.

Conclusions

The idea of bringing your whole, true self to the classroom is a concept educators frequently forget as they are caught up in the bureaucracy of what they are taught and told education should look like. The concept of culturally responsive pedagogy is complex. It is even more complex for minority professors because of the depth of their experiences. This study highlighted an area that had not been explored in previous studies, graduate higher education. It produced results on 1) highlighted the lived experiences and voices of Latinx graduate faculty who have earned PhDs in graduate higher education; 2) explored the connections between Latinx graduate faculty lived experiences and the impact on pedagogy, 3) provided insight on Latinx graduate faculty culturally responsive pedagogical practices in graduate higher education, and 4)

provided insight on characteristics of Latinx culturally responsive graduate faculty in graduate higher education.

This urgent call for culturally responsive pedagogy in higher education is situated in my belief that the current practices and philosophies of institutions of higher learning are failing miserably. They are failing the staff, the faculty, the students and the community. Culturally responsive pedagogy offers an intervention for higher education to reverse the systematic issues that it has faced for hundreds of years.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	PAGE
APPENDIX A- Participant Email	133
APPENDIX B- Survey	134
APPENDIX C – Information Sheet.....	135
APPENDIX D- Phone Script.....	138
APPENDIX E- Consent to Participate	139
APPENDIX F- Participant Questions	143
APPENDIX G- Demographic Profiles of Participants.....	144

APPENDIX A- Participant Email



Greetings.

My name is Reanna Aguilar and I am a doctoral candidate working with my committee chair, Dr. Corinne Valadez, on my dissertation at Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi. My dissertation research study will explore the lived experiences of Latinx doctoral-level educators, teaching in the College of Education, and how their experience has informed their culturally relevant pedagogy in the graduate classroom. I am emailing to ask if you are interested in being a participant in my study. If so, could you take about 10 minutes to complete a survey for this research project? Participation is completely voluntary, and your answers will remain confidential.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please see the attached information sheet. After reading the information sheet, the participation survey is located on the bottom of the sheet.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact: Reanna Aguilar, Co-PI at 575-571-0779 or email Reanna.aguilar@gmail.com with questions at any time during the study. You may also contact the Principal Investigator, Corinne Valadez at Corinne.valadez@tamucc.edu

Thank you for your time.

Reanna Aguilar
Doctoral Candidate
Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi

APPENDIX B- Survey

The survey link will be included in the information letter and the survey will be conducted through surveymonkey.com

- 1) Name
- 2) Are you 18 years or older?
- 3) Do you self-identify as Latin X (a person of Latin American origin or descent (used a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina).
- 4) Which university or college are you currently employed with?
- 5) Which department/program are you currently teaching in? ex: College of Education.
- 6) Are you currently teaching graduate level courses?
- 7) Do you consider yourself a culturally responsive educator?
- 8) Please provide your email address and phone number.

APPENDIX C – Information Sheet

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Latinx Educators in Higher Education: A Case Study

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may change your decision on whether to participate in this research study.

Why is this research being done?

The goal of this research study is to explore the lived experiences of Latinx doctoral educators, teaching in the College of Education, and how their experience has informed their culturally relevant pedagogy in the graduate classroom. It aims to understand how lived experiences informs culturally responsive teaching. There is a growing number of minority educators in the field of higher education, and this study would add to the literature on minority educator experiences and culturally responsive teaching of diverse populations in higher education.

Who can be in this study?

We are asking you to be a part of this research study because you have identified as a Latinx doctoral-level educator, culturally responsive educator and are currently teaching higher education courses.

To be eligible to be in this study, you must:

- Be age 18 or older
- Self-identify as Latinx
- Self-identify as a culturally responsive educator
- Hold a earned doctoral degree from an accredited university
- Currently teach a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education

What will I be asked to do?

Those interested in participating will be asked to complete a pre-screening survey to see if you meet the above criteria. Being in this study involves being interviewed once. The in-person interview will last for approximately 2 hours. There will be a member check phone call which will last approximately 1 hour.

If you choose to be in this study, the following things will happen:

- Your participation will involve the Co-PI collecting information about you from your own account.
- You will be asked to answer some questions during in person interviews and you will be audio recorded.
- You will be asked to review transcriptions and approve that the information is true to the best of your knowledge.

What are the risks involved in this study?

This research involves minimal risks or risks that are no more than what you may experience in everyday life. The main risk may include:

- **Confidentiality risk:** Your participation will involve collection of information about you. There is a slight risk of loss of confidentiality. Your confidentiality will be protected to the greatest extent possible. You do not have to give any information to the study that you do not want to give.

What are the alternatives to being in this study?

Instead of being in this study, you may choose not to be in the research study.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

While the theory behind Culturally Relevant Pedagogy has been around for a while in P-12 teacher preparation programs, what appears to be missing is research around Culturally Relevant Pedagogy about doctoral prepared faculty in graduate higher education programs. There is a gap in the literature that connects these issues with higher education. The findings necessitate a need for exploration into the nuances of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and the lived experiences of culturally responsive educators. The population of adult learners in graduate education programs is becoming increasingly diverse, resulting in the need for more culturally responsive educators. Research on faculty lived experiences and instructional pedagogies can inform and guide others about significant trends and issues concerning Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in higher education. By being in this study, you may help researchers learn more about the correlation between lived experiences and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in higher education in the future.

Do I have to participate?

No. **Being in a research study is voluntary.** If you choose not to participate, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

What if I change my mind?

You may quit at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may decide not to participate or quit at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi or any cooperating institution being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is confidential. When information collected about you includes identifiers (like names, addresses, phone numbers and social security or individual taxpayer identification (ITIN) numbers), the study can involve confidential information. All research records will be kept securely. Research records will be seen only by authorized research team members. We will share your information only when we must, will only share the information that is needed, and will ask anyone who receives it from us to protect your privacy. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any report that might be published or presentation.

Who can I contact with questions about the research?

Reanna Aguilar is the Co-PI in this research study. You may call Reanna Aguilar at 575-571-0779 or email Reanna.aguilar@gmail.com with questions at any time during the study. You may also contact the Principal Investigator, Corinne Valadez at Corinne.valadez@tamucc.edu

Who can I contact about my rights as a research participant?

You may also call Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Institutional Review Board (IRB) with questions or complaints about this study at irb@tamucc.edu or 361-825-2497. The IRB is a committee of faculty members, statisticians, researchers, community advocates, and others that ensures that a research study is ethical and that the rights of study participants are protected.

By clicking [HERE](#) you are consenting to participate in this study, and you are 18 years of age or older.

APPENDIX D- Phone Script

Hello,

In conjunction with Texas A&M University Corpus Christi, I am conducting a research study exploring the lived experiences of Latinx doctoral-level educators, teaching in the College of Education, and how their experience has informed their culturally relevant pedagogy in the graduate classroom. This study is through the Department of Curriculum and Instruction under the supervision of my committee chair, Dr. Corinne Valadez. As you may know, there is limited research on the correlation between Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and the lived experiences of faculty at the doctoral level.

Because you have been identified as a Latinx, doctoral-level educator who teaches a graduate course in the College of Education your opinions are important to this study. Thus, I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about this.

Participation in this study is voluntary and would involve two interviews at a location we will discuss. There are no known or anticipated risks to your participation in this study. The questions are quite general.

You may decline answering any questions you feel you do not wish to answer. All information you provide will be considered confidential and grouped with responses from other participants. You will not be identified by name or institution in any report or publication resulting from this study. The data collected through this study will be kept for a period of 3 years.

You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

This study has been reviewed and approved through the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Institutional Research Board (IRB). If you have questions, you can contact them at 361-825-2497 or irb@tamucc.edu.

For all other questions, or if you would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact: Reanna Aguilar, by phone 575-571-0779 or by email at Reanna.aguilar@gmail.com. Reanna Aguilar is the Co-PI in this research study. You may also contact the Principal Investigator, Corinne Valadez at Corinne.valadez@tamucc.edu

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Yours sincerely,

Reanna Aguilar, Co-PI

APPENDIX E

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY- CORPUS CHRISTI

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Latinx Educators in Higher Education: A Case Study

WHO IS DOING THIS STUDY?

Reanna Aguilar is doing this research study. Other research professionals may help her.

We are asking you to be a part of this research study. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before you make a choice.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

The goal of this research study is to explore the lived experiences of Latinx doctoral educators, teaching in a College of Education, and how their experiences have informed their culturally relevant pedagogy in the graduate classroom. It aims to understand how lived experiences informs culturally responsive teaching. There is a growing number of minority educators in the field of higher education, and this study would add to the literature on minority educator experiences and culturally responsive teaching of diverse populations in higher education.

WHO CAN BE IN THIS STUDY?

We are asking you to be a part of this research study because you have identified as a Latinx doctoral-level educator, culturally responsive educator and are currently teaching higher education courses.

To be eligible to be in this study, you must:

- Be age 18 or older
 - Self-identify as Latinx
 - Self-identify as a culturally responsive educator
 - Hold a earned doctoral degree from an accredited university
 - Currently teach a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education
-

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IN THIS STUDY?

Those interested in participating will be asked to complete a pre-screening survey to see if you meet the above criteria. Being in this study involves being interviewed once. The in-person interview will last for approximately 2 hours. There will be a member check phone call which will last approximately 1 hour.

If you choose to be in this study, the following things will happen:

- Your participation will involve the Co-PI collecting information about you from your own account.

- You will be asked to answer some questions during in person interviews and you will be audio recorded.
- You will be asked to review transcriptions and approve that the information is true to the best of your knowledge.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?

This research involves minimal risks or risks that are no more than what you may experience in everyday life. The main risk may include:

- Confidentiality risk: Your participation will involve collection of information about you. There is a slight risk of loss of confidentiality. Your confidentiality will be protected to the greatest extent possible. You do not have to give any information to the study that you do not want to give.

If you have any of these problems or changes in the way you feel about being in the study, you should tell the study team as soon as possible.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

There may be no direct benefit to you from being in this research study. While the theory behind Culturally Relevant Pedagogy has been around for a while in P-12 teacher preparation programs, what appears to be missing is research around Culturally Relevant Pedagogy about doctoral prepared faculty in graduate higher education programs. There is a gap in the literature that connects these issues with higher education. The findings necessitate a need for exploration into the nuances of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and the lived experiences of culturally responsive educators. The population of adult learners in graduate education programs is becoming increasingly diverse, resulting in the need for more culturally responsive educators. Research on faculty lived experiences and instructional pedagogies can inform and guide others about significant trends and issues concerning Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in higher education. By being in this study, you may help researchers learn more about the correlation between lived experiences and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in higher education in the future.

WHAT ABOUT EXTRA COSTS?

Participation in this study will not result in any extra costs to you. You will not have to pay anything extra if you are in this study aside from the personal time and travel costs it will take to come to all of the study visits.

WHAT WILL I RECEIVE FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not receive any payment for participating in this study.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO BEING IN THIS STUDY?

Instead of being in this study, you may choose not to participate.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A STUDY PARTICIPANT?

Being in a research study is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you choose not to participate, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

What if I change my mind?

You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

WHO SHOULD I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

Reanna Aguilar is the Co-PI in this research study. You may call Reanna Aguilar at 575-571-0779 or email Reanna.aguilar@gmail.com with questions at any time during the study. You may also contact the Principal Investigator, Corinne Valadez at Corinne.valadez@tamucc.edu

You may also call Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Institutional Review Board (IRB) with questions or complaints about this study at irb@tamucc.edu or 361-825-2497. The IRB is a committee of faculty members, statisticians, researchers, community advocates, and others that ensures that a research study is ethical and that the rights of study participants are protected.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

The purposes, procedures, and risks of this research study have been explained to me. I have had a chance to read this form and ask questions about the study. Any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction. A copy of this signed form will be given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

Print name of Participant _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent _____ Date _____

Print Name of Person Obtaining Consent _____

Appendix: Study Participants

Up to 5 will be in this study at about 3 different institutions of higher education.
To be eligible to be in this study, you must:

- Be age 18 or older
- Self-identify as Latinx
- Self-identify as a culturally responsive educator
- Hold a earned doctoral degree from an accredited university
- Currently teaching a graduate course at a college or university in the College of Education

Appendix: Study Procedures - Collecting Information

Your participation will involve collecting information. The following information will be

- You do not have to give any information to the study that you do not want to give. By signing this form you are authorizing the collection and use of the information outlined in this form.
- We will ask for your contact information, including your telephone number, so that we can call you to clarify inform or obtain any missing information.

Appendix: Study Procedures- Questionnaire

You will be asked about your upbringing, schooling and teaching. Some questions may be embarrassing or uncomfortable to answer.

You do not have to answers questions you do not want to and stop at any time.

Appendix: Confidentiality

When information collected about you includes identifiers (like names, addresses, phone numbers and social security or individual taxpayer identification (ITIN) numbers), the study can involve confidential information.

A research record will be created and kept on a secure and locked computer. All research records will be maintained in a confidential manner. We will share your information only when we must, will only share the information that is needed, and will ask anyone who receives it from us to protect your privacy.

Appendix: Withdraw

If you withdraw from the study early for any reason, the information that already has been collected will be kept in the research study and included in the data analysis. No further information will be collected for the study. The information that already has been collected will be de-identified (the information cannot be traced back to you individually). Because you cannot be identified from the information there is no further risk to your privacy. This information will continue to be used even after you withdraw.

APPENDIX F- Participant Questions

Interview Questions for Faculty

- 1) Tell me about yourself.
- 2) Tell me about your educational experiences.
- 3) Why did you choose to teach and how long have you been teaching?
- 4) Tell me about life and education experiences that influenced you as an educator?
- 5) How long have you been a graduate level instructor?
- 6) What do you think it means to be a good teacher at the college level?
- 7) How do you define culturally responsive teaching?
- 8) Why do you think you are a culturally responsive educator?
- 9) How do you practice culturally responsive teaching in the classroom?
- 10) What challenges do you face with culturally responsive teaching?
- 11) Can you describe a time that you had difficulty utilizing culturally responsive teaching in your classroom? How did you handle the situation?
- 12) How do you think your upbringing, your life experiences has informed your culturally responsive teaching in the classroom?
- 13) How do you think colleges/universities could better support culturally responsive teaching?
- 14) How do you think colleges/university could better support it's Latinx educators?

Phone Call member check for Faculty:

- 1) Have you had the ability to review the transcript from our initial interview?
- 2) Are you able to verify that the information collected is true to the best of your ability?

APPENDIX G- Demographic Profiles of Participants

	Dr. One	Dr. Two	Dr. Three	Dr. Four
Place of Birth	Texas	Colorado	Texas	Mexico
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Male
First Language	English	English	Spanish	Spanish
Parents Higher Education	Dad, Masters	Dad (Masters Degree), Mom (Doctor of Nursing)	Dad (Medical Doctor), Mom (degree in Medical Technology)	Dad, None, Mom, None
Siblings	3 male siblings	2 male siblings	2 female siblings	5 siblings
P-12 Schooling	Texas	New Mexico	Mexico	Texas
Degrees Earned	Bachelor in Business Administration, Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction	Bachelor of Science in Education, Master of Arts in Education	Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, Master of Education in Guidance and Counseling *holds multiple professional certificates
Highest Degree Earned	Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction specializing in Multilingual Studies and Educational Psychology	Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialization in Literacy Education and Cultural Studies	Ph.D. in Multicultural Special Education	Ph.D. in Educational Leadership
Employment Geo. Location	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas
Current Position	Professor	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor
Years of Experience teaching in higher education	20 years	2.5 years	13 years	15 years