Supporting Engagement among African American Males in World Geography Class through the Implementation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: A Self-Study

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Supporting Engagement among African American Males in World Geography Class through the Implementation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: A Self-Study

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful daughters Ava Claire and Anna Sophia, my husband Philip, and my mama Sandra Dorr. Without my Lord and this song *All My Hope is In Jesus* by David Crowder (2016), I would not have made it through.

>I've been held by the Savior  
>    I've felt fire from above  
>    I've been down to the river  
>    I ain't the same, a prodigal returned

>I'm no stranger to prison  
>    I've worn shackles and chains  
>    But I've been freed and forgiven  
>    And I'm not going back, I'll never be the same  
>    That's why I sing

>All my hope is in Jesus  
>Thank God that yesterday's gone  
>    All my sins are forgiven  
>    I've been washed by the blood

>There's a kind of thing that just breaks a man  
>    Break him down to his knees  
>God, I've been broken more than a time or two  
>Yes, Lord then He picked me up and showed me  
>What it means to be a man come on and sing

>All my hope is in Jesus  
>Thank God that yesterday's gone  
>    All my sins are forgiven  
>    I've been washed by the blood
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Thank you to my mama who has been my biggest supporter from day one. She is the best mother I could have ever hoped for and has loved me through this process. My daddy, Milton, I know that you catch a glimpse from heaven of our good days and I know you know about this one. My husband, Philip, to whom I jokingly say I finished in spite of you and your shenanigans. You are my rock, and your words of encouragement pushed me when I had all but given up. You are my best friend and the love of my life. To my girls, Anna Sophia and Ava Claire: you are my heart and you have changed everything in my life for the better. My wish is for you to dream big and love God.
Abstract

Given the reality of disenfranchised and marginalized students sitting in today’s classrooms, it is imperative that teachers meet the pedagogical needs of these students. I embarked on a self-study that would improve my personal pedagogy. Research shows that using elements from the theoretical frameworks of culturally relevant pedagogy, reality pedagogy, critical race theory, and critical race pedagogy can be an effective approach to teaching students that are marginalized. I designed and implemented three lessons that employed practitioner-applied pedagogical practices based on these four theoretical frameworks. This self-study identified the benefits and challenges of these lessons as they relate to the motivation and engagement of five African American male students that may potentially fail my course.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Student performance in the classroom continues to be a challenge for many teachers and students across the nation (Brown, 2000). Due in large part to the systemic racism that exists in the public school system, African American males earn lower standardized test scores, have increased cognitive and verbal ability gaps, and represent the largest percentage of students receiving special education services (Graham & Anderson, 2008; McNulty, Bellair, & Watts, 2013; Nichols, Kotchick, Barry, & Haskins, 2010). Recent attempts to improve educational quality for all students have narrowed the commonly used pedagogical practices of teachers to the point that content knowledge is valued over pedagogical knowledge (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Now more than ever, teachers are more likely to teach students without giving cultural or racial differences a thought, which has the potential to reproduce the social inequities facing minoritized groups in the larger society (Allen, 2015). As noted above, African American male students are particularly at-risk of being failed by the public school system. This study is an attempt to better understand and develop the skills and strategies shown to be effective in reducing the challenges to learning experienced by this group of students.

Problem of Practice

It was apparent to me that year after year, African American males failed to thrive academically within my world geography classroom. I wanted to know what I could do to
ensure that all of my students, especially these young men, were provided opportunities to achieve through improved pedagogical practices. This study examined the challenges and benefits I faced as I attempted to develop and implement culturally relevant lessons in my World Geography classroom aimed at supporting the learning of my African American male students. It is worth noting that I had developed what I thought were strong relationships and quality rapport with these students. I know where they live, go to church, and I taught many of their brothers and sisters. I know they like me as a teacher and enjoy my class in general. I know many times they depend on me to speak on their behalf or calm them down in adverse situations. Guidance or administrators call me in to handle specific students that need to be calmed or disciplined because they “like” me or want me to help them. However, this specific group—African American males—still has a disconnect between liking me, liking the subject, and thriving academically in my classroom. Knowing that there are so many positive elements within my classroom, I wanted to find a way to lessen the disconnect between “liking” me and my class and actually achieving in my class for these students.

**Theoretical Framework**

This action research study is guided by four theoretical frameworks: culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), reality pedagogy, critical race theory, and critical race pedagogy (Bell, 1980; Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2010; Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lynn 1999; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). CRP attempts to integrate divergent cultures into the overall academic program (Baker & Digiovanni, 2005) and to identify the specific teaching practices used to create a culture of success for all students, especially African American adolescent males (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Gloria Ladson-
Billings’ (1995a) seminal study of the teaching practices of educators identified by their community as successful teachers of African American students identified the best practices to engage students who are otherwise marginalized. CRP emphasizes instruction that regards and values students’ own cultures and experiences in the classroom (Abbate-Vaughn, 2006; Bergeron, 2008; Gay, 2000). CRP addresses the cultural differences between teachers and students (Ladson-Billings, 2009). CRP utilizes the backgrounds and experiences of the students to determine the teacher’s lessons and methodology (Coffey, 2013). Students and teachers may not be consciously aware, but culture determines how we think, feel, and behave, which in turn affects how we learn and teach (Gay, 2010). I will use three main components of CRP to design my lessons: creating cultural awareness/care, connecting culture and learning, and high expectations (SanGregory, 2009).

Reality pedagogy is another theoretical framework guiding this study. Reality pedagogy developed by Christopher Emdin (2016) supports the pedagogical techniques of collaboration, co-teaching, and competition used in this study. Reality pedagogy approaches the classroom with the ideals that each student has a distinct perspective and they should be given the opportunity to express their perspectives (Emdin, 2016).

This action research study is also guided by elements of critical race theory (CRT). Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) took CRT and linked it to education, where the main tenets are the permanence of racism, counter-stories, intersectionality, interest convergence, and social justice (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 2001 McCoy, 2006). CRT provides many tools to help a teacher to implement social justice activism in order to create an environment that
demonstrates learning is valued for all students and ensures all students are given an equal opportunity to obtain a quality education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-storytelling will be used in this study.

Finally, critical race pedagogy is the last theoretical framework guiding the study. Marvin Lynn (1999) coined the term critical race pedagogy. The pedagogy has four main components: understanding the endemic nature of racism, understanding the power dynamics in schooling, importance of self-reflection, and the liberatory practice of teaching and learning (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). This specific self-study draws from the beliefs of Bell (1980), Lynn (1999), and Jennings and Lynn (2005) focusing on the endemic nature of racism by using counter-storytelling as a pedagogical tool and lens to understanding race.

Research Question

This study is a specific form of self-study because it is a systematic study of and reflection on a teacher’s efforts to improve teaching practice. In this case, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Critical Race Theory, Reality Pedagogy, and Critical Race Pedagogy formed a practitioner-applied pedagogy (Bell, 1980; Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2010; Groenendijk, Janssen, Rijlaarsdam, & van den Bergh, 2013; Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lynn 1999; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This self-study focuses on teaching African American males and identifying the pedagogical factors that play a substantial role in increasing achievement. The purpose of the study is to describe how pedagogy can act as a motivator in African American males. The primary research question of this study is:
1. What benefits and challenges do I encounter when developing culturally relevant lessons for African American males?

This question led to two sub-questions that I addressed as follows:

   a) How do the activities promote, or constrain, students’ learning by integrating culturally relevant pedagogy within the content of world geography?

   b) How do student responses to the pedagogy support the changes I am making as I instruct this course in teaching cultural relevance and the content of world geography?

**Methodology**

**Action Research**

Action research methodology provides an effective framework to answer the specific problem of practice found within my classroom because it allows me, the researcher, to identify a specific problem of practice and to describe a potential solution. Action research is different from traditional research because the teacher-researcher method is “truly a systematic inquiry of one’s own practice” (Mertler, 2014, p. 4). I am the teacher and researcher. Action research is a cyclical process that provided me the opportunity to implement practitioner-applied pedagogy based on CRP, CRT, reality pedagogy, and critical race pedagogy, analyze and reflect using a CRT lens, and change my teaching practice. This action research study was an attempt to solve the problem of the opportunity gap found in my world geography classroom that is impacting African American males by using practitioner-applied pedagogy.
Data Collection and Analysis

This action research study will be a qualitative study that employs a self-study approach. Self-study refers to teachers’ systematic and critical examination of their actions and their context as a path to develop a more consciously driven mode of professional activity (Samaras & Freese, 2006, p. 11). As both the teacher and researcher, all aspects of this action research project were completed with the goal of improving my pedagogical practices and increasing student learning and achievement. I want to implement more culturally relevant teaching practices in hopes of benefitting all students but specifically five African American males that were enrolled in my World Geography course. In a qualitative self-study, data collection often includes journaling, observations, communications, videotaping, and work samples (Schulte, 2005). In this study, the data collection consisted of surveys, memos, observations, interviews, lesson plans, and journaling within three-lesson cycles. To address the problem of practice, I sought ways to improve pedagogical practices by implementing practitioner-applied pedagogy by using student surveys, observations, and interviews because they were crucial to determining the impact of the lesson. Qualitative researchers assert that logic progresses from specific to general and prefer detailed, empathetic descriptions written directly and informally (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). These questions guide this self-study, and data was collected through lesson plan evaluations, memos, surveys, observations, interviews, and journal entries. The data was analyzed, coded, and triangulated. The results will be discussed using CRT.
Participants and Positionality

My role as teacher-researcher was significant because I studied my own teaching practice. This research study took place at Green High School (pseudonym), a predominately White school located in the Southeast United States. I implemented practitioner-applied pedagogy in my world geography classroom. I observed the entire class, but focused my efforts on the views, perceptions, and beliefs about my practitioner-applied lesson cycles of five African American males who were enrolled in my course. These students are often marginalized based on academic achievement, behavior, and socioeconomic status. I also interviewed many students after each lesson cycle, but only focused on this specific group. All students and parents were informed of my research and provided consent (Appendix A).

In this study, I was positioned as an insider (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). Action research should be conducted by or with insiders to an organization (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Insider status in a self-study purports to contribute to knowledge base, improved and critiqued practice, and self/professional transformation (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I am the teacher-researcher of the world geography classroom and of my own pedagogical practices. I realized that I was unsuccessful as teacher with a specific student group because of my biases and wished to improve my pedagogical practices. I embarked on this journey of researching pedagogy that empowered African American boys in my classroom. However, from the first reading of my initial research I met resistance from my professor. My professor stated that my writing was biased and he mentioned that my writing could be interpreted as racist. I was baffled and crushed. I began to reflect on my beliefs and practices. I almost
changed my entire study, but decided that it was too important to quit. I needed to become better for my students and learn how recognize my own biases and attempt to work against them. I am a White female teacher teaching black students. This is problematic because of implicit biases that I have as a White female. Through this study, I continued to notice issues I faced with my own Whiteness. Using a critical race theory lens, I began to see my own unintentional embracement of colorblindness and deficits regarding inequities in schools (Boutte, 2014).

**Significance and Limitations of the Study**

Previous research reveals that young men, specifically young African American men, are less motivated and perform academically lower than their White peers (Bonner & Adams, 2012; Ferguson, 2012; Howard, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013; Ward, 2012. As a result, researchers have become interested in developing pedagogy that meets the needs of African American males (Emdin, 2016 Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1997). This study seeks to determine how practitioner-applied pedagogy focused on reducing the impact of institutionalized and systemic racism can impact African American male students in a World Geography classroom. The findings from this study may have three new applications in the education of African American males. First, development of culturally rich instruction for the world geography classroom may enhance and improve the school environment. This would help African American males feel that education is attainable, important, and pertinent (Bonner, 2009; Ward, 2012). Second, the study would provide opportunity for positive social change for both the student and the teacher. It offers an in-depth look at what works in teaching African American males. Third, the active application of the CRT could potentially affect
the systemic barriers students face within the confines of their educational institutions. Ultimately, if CRP can positively impact African American male achievement in the high school classroom, social change in the community could mean higher graduation rates, better jobs, and overall improvement in their futures.

This qualitative action research self-study has a few inherent limitations. The study focuses on me and the impact of a series of lessons on five African American males in a world geography classroom. This study is an important precursor to determine the impact of CRP in the high school classroom on African American males. The study also may be limited to the researcher’s perceptions and how I have designed the research question and gathered data. This study was situated in a majority White, middle-class, suburban school community; thus, the findings may not be transferable to urban and rural school communities with different demographics. Other limitations could be addressed by incorporating a quantitative research study or a longitudinal study that would measure the long-term impact of CRP. Finally, my identity as a researcher and teacher can be viewed as subjective. During a self-study, being both the researcher and the researched can be a limitation, although the proponents of self-study do not view this point as a limitation, and they even consider these multiple roles as an advantage to examine one’s teaching (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Safrina, 2013).

Organization of the Dissertation

The remaining chapters present a review of the existing literature and research, and proposed methodology, findings, and summation. Chapter 2 sets forth the existing research literature, including culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), reality pedagogy, critical race theory (CRT), and critical race pedagogy (Bell, 1980; Emdin, 2016; Gay,
Chapter 3 details the research methodology and procedures to be utilized in the proposed study. This action research design will use a qualitative self-study. Chapter 4 will present the research findings of the study as they pertain to the posed research question. Chapter 5 summarizes and discusses the action research study and the implications of the findings. Recommendations of further research projects are also outlined.

**Definitions**

*Achievement gap:* Achievement gap refers to the race-based performance gap between White and minority students.

*Assessment:* The way the learners’ achievement and progress in a learning process is measured (Keeves, 1994; Reeves & Hedberg, 2009).

*Critical race pedagogy:* Critical race pedagogy is a term coined by Marvin Lynn (1999) and focuses on four main components: recognizing and understanding the endemic nature of racism, understanding the power dynamics inherent in schooling, importance of self-reflection, and the liberatory practice of teaching and learning.

*Critical race theory (CRT):* Critical race theory in education is a field of study that prioritizes race and racism and how they have negatively impacted/informed the schooling experiences and outcomes of children of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

*Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP):* Culturally relevant teaching, a term coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995a) to describe “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 12); a non-traditional pedagogy that builds on the
thinking, experiences, and traditions of ethnically diverse students; A pedagogy of opposition means that this type goes against the traditional way of teaching. The term “culturally relevant pedagogy” (CRP) is associated with other terms such as culturally responsive, culturally sensitive, culturally centered, culturally reflective, and culturally relevant teaching (Gay, 2010). Although the terms are slightly different, they contain some of the same core precepts.

*Low socioeconomic status (SES):* Low-SES students are designated as such when their parent(s) or guardian(s) apply and qualify for free or reduced school meals.

*Reality Pedagogy: *Reality pedagogy is a pedagogical style designed by Christopher Emdin (2016) that focuses on four pedagogical techniques: collaboration, co-teaching, competition, and cogenerative dialogues.

*Self-Study: *A genre of qualitative research methodology in which the researcher conducts inquiry on his or her own pedagogy for the purpose of improving practice.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter 1 detailed the purpose of this self-study, which is to answer this primary research question:

1. What benefits and challenges do I encounter when developing culturally relevant lessons for African American males?

This question led to two sub-questions that I addressed as follows:

a) How do the activities promote, or constrain, students’ learning by integrating culturally relevant pedagogy within the content of world geography?

b) How do student responses to the pedagogy support the changes I am making as I instruct this course in teaching cultural relevance and the content of world geography?

This literature review will provide a discussion of the literature that focused on culturally relevant teaching practices and how they may apply in motivating African American male youth in my classroom. The review will also include effective culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), reality pedagogy, critical race theory (CRT), and critical race pedagogy. (Bell, 1980; Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2010; Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lynn 1999; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), which are the frameworks that I use to design this self-study. This is significant because there are few self-studies on
African American males being taught with varying pedagogical styles. The chapter closes with a summation of methodology employed in this action research self-study.

**Historical Background**

The world in which we live is becoming more competitive and globally connected each day. The United States Department of Education (USDOE) states “Our mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (USDOE, 2015a, para. 5). The kindergarten through 12th-grade public school experience should foster excellence and provide access for our students and future leaders of the United States. A significant first step made toward improving education for all students was made by President Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1965. He signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) into law (USDOE, 2015b, para. 1). The purpose was to assist school districts around the country by providing funding to districts serving low-income students. The ESEA also provided federal grants for textbooks and library books, created special education centers, and created scholarships for low-income college students (USDOE, 2015b). The textbook and library access of the 1960s is what technology access is to the 21st century. President George W. Bush reauthorized the ESEA in 2002, signing into law with a new name: No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Many parents, educators, and elected officials have recognized that a strong, updated law is necessary to expand opportunity for a growing diverse student population (USDOE, 2015b). On January 12, 2015, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan created a new vision for ESEA by calling on Congress to create laws and initiatives that will improve access to high-quality preschool, foster innovation, and advance equity and access for all students (USDOE, 2015b). There are two federal
mandates that affect each state’s schools and teachers: the adequate yearly progress (AYP) and highly-qualified teachers (HQT). The AYP is a measurement that local education agencies such as schools and school districts use to close the opportunity gap for all minority students by a minimum of 10% each year (Butler, 2007). Over time, NCLB’s prescriptive requirements became increasingly unworkable for schools and educators. The Obama administration created a better law that focused on the clear goal of fully preparing all students for success in college and careers. In December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law.

According to Hung, Young, and Lin (2015), to close the opportunity gap that separates disadvantaged children, the U.S. government reports that technology can make it possible to improve effective teaching and increase achievement. According to research provided by the Schott foundation, during the 2007–2008 school year, 47% of 17 African American males did not earn a diploma with their classmates four years after starting high school (Holzman, 2010). Densely populated cities such as New York City, Chicago, and Detroit had even worse reports, where almost two-thirds of the high school population of African American males did not receive a high school diploma (Allen, 2015). The American school system is failing the African American male, according to Ladson-Billings (2009). The lack of resources available to low-income and/or students of color has created a cumulative academic debt that has made it almost impossible for historically marginalized students to achieve at the levels that mainstream students have reached. The blame is often placed on the individual African American male rather than the systemic issue (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The opportunity gap will never be completely
closed because the debt owed to historically marginalized students is too large (Allen, 2015).

**Theoretical Framework**

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

CRP attempts to alleviate the opportunity gap between African Americans and their White peers. CRP is the comprehensive development of education pertaining to African American youth (Conner, 2010). Ladson-Billings (2009) presented the notion that historical accounts, cultural aspects, and modern world affairs specific to African Americans are not in existing curricula. Authentic learning may not occur for low-income youth because of the disparities in high-income and low-income pedagogy (Conner, 2010). Noguera (2003) asserted that educational practices often have the effect of favoring privileged students due to mainstream pedagogical practices, enhancing the opportunity gap for African Americans. Various scholars (e.g., Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003) suggested that school curricula only reflect the mainstream culture (i.e., the White middle class) and do not accommodate African Americans’ learning needs (i.e., teaching methodology, content, and textbook material). Perry et al. (2003) and Tyack (2003) suggested that curricula only reflects the mainstream culture, and Blacks are ignored in school and text. Valenzuela (2008) called leaving out Black students from curricula and text subtractive schooling, where schools subtract these identifications from Black students, which is socially and academically detrimental. Lane (2006) argued that schools in America alienate cultural learning because of NCLB and other state mandates.
Ladson-Billings (1995a) identified this pedagogical approach as CRP. CRP has three main components: academic excellence, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Teachers allowing students to choose academic excellence, utilizing the students’ culture as a vehicle for learning (Conner, 2010). Ladson-Billings (2009) stated culture is important because it maintains an individual’s values and identity, and provides an opportunity for African American students to experience academic achievement through a cultural connection. CRP empowers African American students to achieve academically (Conner, 2010). Ladson-Billings (2001) stated that “classroom teachers who utilize culturally relevant pedagogy as a framework for their instruction build upon the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frame of reference, and performance styles to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them” (p. 52). Ladson-Billings (2009) promoted the idea that teachers who practice culturally relevant methods see their teaching as an art rather than a skill. Reis and Kay (2007) stated that components of CRP used by educational practitioners must demonstrate awareness of students’ learning styles, maintain high expectations of the content, and be culturally competent to use students’ culture as a basis for learning. The educational disconnect needs a teacher that emphasizes belonging in the classroom and builds a strong rapport with students (Ferguson, 2012).

The term culturally responsive teaching as termed by Geneva Gay (2000) is used interchangeably with the term culturally relevant pedagogy by Ladson-Billings (1995). The major difference is that CRP deals specifically with African American students meanwhile, culturally responsive teaching is normally applied to many ethnicities. Geneva Gay focuses on these characteristics of culturally relevant pedagogy: teacher
caring, teacher attitudes/expectations, multicultural curriculum, culturally informed discourse, and cultural congruity (Gay, 2010). Teachers need to learn how to convert knowledge base about ethnic and cultural diversity into culturally instructional strategies (Gay, 2000).

Mary Jo SanGregory (2009) devised these characteristics of CRP as a marriage of both the works of Ladson-Billings (2009) and Gay (2002) in a similar self-study. SanGregory (2009) identified three characteristics of CRP that will be used to guide this study: creating cultural awareness and care, connecting culture and learning, and achieving high expectations for all students. These characteristics were implemented in the design of the lessons.

Creating cultural awareness and a caring environment within the classroom is a must when attempting to build relationships with marginalized students. Teachers using CRP must establish caring rapport and positive atmosphere built on trust (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Richard Lavoie (2008) also emphasized students’ need for belonging and affiliation within the school. Many times, the first bridge to belonging is built between the teacher and the students. The teacher must work purposefully to have an open door and approachable rapport with students. Connecting culture and learning is another component of CRP. It is important as a White female teacher to recognize that I do not have the same cultural frames of reference or point of view as students (Banks et al., 2005). The disparity between home and school cultures for White students and Black students further widens the opportunity gap (Gay, 2000). Richard Lavoie (2008) also mentioned the importance of autonomy and ownership in learning. Students want to know why they need to know something and what is it going to do for them. Teachers
must supply authentic lessons that students feel have purpose, application, and direction that relate to their lives.

The final component for creating an effective CRP is high expectations for all students. Culturally responsive teachers believe that all students can succeed (SanGregory, 2009). The disparity in achievement is often because the teacher does not understand what the student needs, which is at the core of this research study. Lowering expectations for students who are struggling in the classroom is not the answer. The “deficit model” supports that failure is inevitable for some student, meanwhile the core beliefs of CRP supports that all students can achieve.

**Reality Pedagogy**

Reality pedagogy is a teaching approach that has a goal of meeting each student on their emotional or cultural landscape (Emdin, 2016). In reality pedagogy the teacher delivers the content and the student shapes how best to teach the content. Christopher Emdin (2016) discussed in his book *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood* four effective teaching techniques that helps to engage African American students by building a classroom community. The techniques include co-teaching, competition, collaboration, and cogenerative dialogues. Co-teaching gives students a sense of ownership of their learning when they are asked to research, employ, and present information to their peers. The pedagogy of co-teaching “provides counter narrative to the pedagogy of poverty that inscribes an anti-school identity” (Emdin, 2016, p. 92). Students that become part of the co-teaching process become deeply engaged, self-motivated, and committed to academic success. Competition allows students to work together as teams to produce quality work that is evaluated by the class to determine who produced the best product. This constant
idea of working together, sharing, and democratically deciding who has the best project/product allows African American males to buy into the learning process through competition (Emdin, 2016). Collaboration is way to build a community within the classroom. Students begin to really know who each other are, if they constantly work together in different heterogeneous groups. It allows the students time to develop relationships within the classroom to foster ties outside the classroom. Co-teaching, competition, and collaboration pedagogy can be supported through the use of student laptops, which were also used as a pedagogical tool in each lesson. Students’ comprehension of material increases significantly when multimedia facilitates learning objectives, technology has the ability to transform the educational content and motivate students towards lifelong learning (Valdez et al., 2004). This research study focuses on collaboration, co-teaching, and competition and does not use the pedagogical component of cogenerative dialogues. Emdin (2016) states that cogenerative dialogues should be voluntary and happen in a relaxed setting such a meal time or with snacks, during lunch or after school. Because of the design of cogenerative groups, I felt that my focus students would not or could not participate based upon scheduling therefore providing limited or inaccurate data.

**Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory in education is a field of study that prioritizes race and racism and how they have negatively impacted/informed the schooling experiences and outcomes of children of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Ladson-Billings (2009) indicated that CRT is grounded in eradicating all forms of racism, racial subordination, and discrimination. In education, some of the main tenets of CRT are the permanence of
racism, counterstories, intersectionality, interest convergence, and social justice (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 2001; McCoy, 2006). When challenging racism, CRT’s counter-story telling method is useful. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) characterized counter-story telling as a method of telling a story that critiques the myths held by the majority. CRT includes exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes. Decuir and Dixson (2004) affirmed that counterstories help to serve as a voice for disenfranchised groups. Counter-storytelling helps us to understand the experiences of other people (Degado & Stefancic, 2001). The use of counter-storytelling destructs the disparities of the human race and highlights the similarities. CRT was used to influence pedagogy by implementing a counter-storytelling narrative in each lesson cycle.

**Critical Race Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy is a construct that challenges the inequalities found in the context of schooling in the United States (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). Critical pedagogy relies on three theories: Social Reproduction, Cultural Reproduction, and Theories of Resistance (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). In response to the complexities of race, scholars created a new theoretical construct within the context of critical pedagogy, Critical Race Pedagogy (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). Critical Race Pedagogy is a term first coined by Marvin Lynn (1999) and based on his research with African American urban school teachers. In Critical race pedagogy has four main components: recognizing and understanding the endemic nature of racism, understanding the power dynamics inherit in schooling, importance of self-reflection, and the liberatory practice of teaching and learning (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). Since that time, critical race pedagogy has expanded
to incorporated other groups such as Latinos (Solorzano and Yosso, 2000), focusing on their experiences. According to Lynn, Jennings, & Hughes (2013) there is more research and work to do in order to develop critical race pedagogy for educators. They state that researchers should draw on the work of Derrick Bell focusing on his student-centered humanist pedagogy (Bell 1980, Delgado and Stefancic 2005). Critical race pedagogues draw parallels between Bell’s humanist student-centered pedagogy and the tenets of critical race pedagogy (Lynn, Jennings, & Hughes, 2013). Bell believed “that the use of chronicles and storytelling hold the possibility for helping us to name extant challenges and illuminate further possibilities of CRP as a tool for battling globalized oppression at the intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality in education” (Lynn, Jennings, & Hughes, p. 604, 2013). This specific self-study draws from the beliefs of Bell (1980), Lynn (1999), and Jennings and Lynn (2005) by using counter-storytelling as a pedagogical tool and lens to understanding race.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 details how this self-study uses elements from four theoretical frameworks in order to create lessons and pedagogical tools to support students and attempt to answer my research questions. I titled the conceptual framework designed for this study practitioner-applied pedagogy. I used various elements of the following theoretical frameworks: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Critical Race Theory, Reality Pedagogy, and Critical Race Pedagogy (Bell, 1980; Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2010; Groenendijk, Janssen, Rijlaarsdam, & van den Bergh, 2013; Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lynn 1999; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). My conceptual framework was created to support the needs of my students and my self-study.
African American Male Students

In his study, Anthony Brown (2009) recognized that although teachers held a common concern over the conditions of African American male students and believed that education could help provide solutions, each teacher held different conceptions of achieving the goal. This allows teachers to search for pedagogical styles that help their students and specific situation, supporting my creation of practitioner-applied pedagogy. The broad discourse on Black male school achievement is filled with examples of their school failure, under preparedness, and vulnerability. The common discourse places deficits on the students and provides little hope for wide-scale school reform. These beliefs are a detriment to forward-thinking policy and practice needed to reverse institutionalized racism (Warren, Douglas, & Howard, 2016).
Bryan Hotchkins (2016) states that black males experience systemic racial microaggressions in the form of discipline, academic tracking and hegemonic curriculum. Deficit perceptions about Black students as held by White teachers and administrators serve as racial microaggressions within K–12 context. The study completed by Hotchkins (2016) specifically looks at the racial microaggressions of prejudicial White teachers on Black male students and student response. The overall findings detail that cumulative impact racial microaggressions negatively impacts academics, social skills, and self-image of Black males (Hotchkins, 2016).

Flennaugh (2016) believes that there is too little research on the Black male experience in schools because the research either looks at the individual or the institution perpetuating a false dichotomy. He also states that much of the scholarship has focused on deficits and has neglected to include a student voice. Flennaugh’s (2016) study focuses on the student voice to acknowledge the strategies used by successful Black males in schools. The study explored the use of identity maps and students’ narratives.

The disparity of achievement between Black and White males becomes more apparent as students become older. The opportunity gap between White and minority students widens by as much as two grade levels by the sixth grade (Alexander & Entwistle, 1988). In 2014, the National Center for Education Statistics reported a 23-point reading gap between Black and White secondary students. A pervasive trend in African American male underperformance compared to African American females is apparent at the secondary level. In a study completed by Roderick (2003), African American male students in Chicago schools saw a dramatic decline between eighth and ninth grade. The study also reported that only 40% of the males graduated compared to
80% of the female population. In a study completed by Elin Borg (2013), boys were found to underperform in subject areas across the board when compared to their female counterparts. Some research shows that the reason for the gender gap in achievement is because female students tend to work harder than males (Borg, 2013): “Research on the underachievement of boys in school is often linked to a male ‘anti-school culture’ discourse, in which academic hard work is seen as incompatible with characteristics most associated with hegemonic masculinity” (Borg, 2013, p. 136).

Behavior is a factor because African American males are suspended, tracked into lower classes, retained, and drop out because of discipline issues and teacher biases (Weber, 2010). Students that are constantly out of class because of behavior issues are not only missing class but begin to feel marginalized and no longer a part of the school environment (Kindlon & Thompson, 2002). The hegemonic masculinity that affects achievement can also account for many males having the preconceived notion that school is not for them. Often these students act out to prove their masculinity. Fortin and others (2015) in their study also noted the frequency of boys having been sent to the office or to detention over the previous year was also greater than girls. This study suggests that behavior and achievement are closely linked together. Poor classroom behavior and the consequences that correlate to poor behavior further ostracize students by increasing their beliefs that they do not belong in the classroom environment (Kindlon & Thompson, 2002).

Socioeconomics is another major factor. Swain (2006), in a study of poverty and education, identified the home of impoverished African American students as a factor in educational problems. American adolescents face innumerable risks, but African
American adolescents are particularly vulnerable (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995). Research conducted by Gutman and Midgley (2000) found that African American children living in poverty begin to experience significant academic decline in early adolescent years. This is significant because the students in this study are in their early adolescent years.

**Effective Instruction for African American Male Students**

Currently few classrooms across the nation support the needs of African American males. A study completed by Hoffman (2003) examined the data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study in 1998 that followed over 24,000 eighth-grade students to the tenth grade. The study found school involvement had little to no impact on the societal factors facing urban youth such as male joblessness and high poverty. Having teachers with good organization, multiple strategies, and good classroom structure is inconsequential to African American male students (Sanchez & Colon, 2005). Effective instruction for African American male students takes all of the issues of poverty, lack of parental support, and discipline issues and tries to edify the student by rebuilding rapport, belonging, and a sense of educational ownership (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Culturally relevant pedagogy offers opportunity and equity to a highly marginalized group of students (Howard, 2003).

A qualitative case study completed by Daniel Bullock (2013) closely relates to this qualitative action research study because they both are concerned with motivation, students, CRP, and take place within the context of the social studies classroom. It is well documented that students like social studies classes the least of all school subjects (Goodlad, 1984, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2001; Shaughnessy & Haladya, 1985, as
Teachers struggle with the lack of student interest in the subject, which translated into low motivation (Heafner, 2004). Teaching methods in the social studies classroom typically consist of direct lecture, reading from the textbook, and taking tests and quizzes that assess a student’s ability to retrieve memorized information (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2010). Bullock’s (2013) qualitative case study explores a collaborative teaching model, implementing CRP. Data collection is similar in Bullock’s (2013) study because of classroom observations and interviews. Themes emerging from the data included those centered on the integration of CRP and the integration of technology within project based learning in this particular classroom, and recommendations for future research include different means of integrating CRP and technology in hopes to increase motivation and achievement (Bullock, 2013).

LaShaune Smith (2014) completed a qualitative case study research design similar to this study because it focuses on pedagogy that fosters achievement and motivation using CRP. Smith’s (2014) study examined two research questions: (a) What community referents are perceived as important in conceptualizing culturally relevant practices in a high school-level statistics class?; and (b) How do classroom interactions affect the implementation of culturally relevant practices in a high school-level statistics class? Smith’s (2014) study provides evidence that culturally relevant teaching does exist at the secondary level. Teachers of African American students revealed the ways they enact elements of CRP. The teachers who participated in the study demonstrated CRP in four ways that replicated or extended previously published research literature. Teachers believe all students can learn, value the culture and language of their students, and care about all students. Teachers that demonstrate CRP believe that their work is a calling and
that they can make a difference in students’ lives. Finally, the conclusion of this study is that high school-level students in classes that are taught by teachers who use culturally relevant teaching seem to care for each other; they collaborate with and actively encourage one another in the learning process (Smith, 2014). The results of the study showed that caring teaching methods and collaborative learning foster a positive learning environment for marginalized students (Smith, 2014).

Mary Jo SanGregory (2009) completed a self-study to explore the efficacy of pedagogical practices that help teachers and teacher candidates use a culturally relevant approach to teaching multicultural literature. SanGregory’s (2009) research closely relates to this study because she identifies three characteristics of CRP that will be used in this study: cultural care and awareness, connecting culture and learning, and high expectations. She modeled these techniques as she taught teachers how to implement the techniques of CRP. The results of the self-study were positive because the teacher candidates seemed to respond to using CRP as a pedagogical technique.

Rien Safrina’s (2013) self-study also helped guide this study. Safrina’s (2013) study examined the design and implementation of CRP in her music education course. This study helped me to create the research questions that would guide my self-study. She also implemented surveys, observations, interviews, and teacher journaling. Through the self-study, she changed her attitude towards her own teaching practice based on the results of her findings.

Carlos Blair (2009) conducted a qualitative case study that used CRT as a framework to study primary teachers working with African American male students. The study focused on counter-storytelling as the lens in which to understand the school’s
policies and procedures and how they can enhance and diminish the experience of African American males. This study helped to guide the CRT lens for this study by focusing on counter-storytelling as the CRT focus for my research.

**Methodology**

This action research study will use a qualitative self-study approach. Qualitative methods seek to explore the behaviors, beliefs, and feelings of the participants (Mertler, 2014). Qualitative data are direct quotations, observations, and the interview is the most frequently used method of those available to gather qualitative data (Saint-Germain, 2001). Qualitative research allows for more depth via the usage of open-ended responses to questions. Qualitative research aims to get an understanding through first-hand experience, truthful reporting, and reports of actual conversations. It aims to understand how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how their meaning influences their behavior (Saint-Germain, 2001). The researcher is attempting to describe the participants’ responses in a very individual and personal way.

Social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946), one of the first proponents of using action research, emphasized connecting the research process with the action needed to solve the problem. Some educational researchers have become personally involved in creating change by developing curricula, student advocacy, and implementing programs within the classroom. In this vein, researchers have called for action research that is a process of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). As noted by Kuzu (2009), educators who plan and implement the action research find the opportunity to better understand the problem. It allows the teacher-researcher to interpret, change, and improve her own educational practices in the process. For this reason, the researcher
assumed the role of implementer in this study and ensured that the action plan served the purposes of the study by directly observing developments throughout the study. According to Victor Rios (2010), action research is a process through which the researcher utilizes the resources available in an attempt to generate positive change in the lives of marginalized youth. He continued by stating that this process may begin with a qualitative design in which the researcher seeks to uncover the actions, culture, perceptions, worldviews, and meaning-making generated by young people. Action research seeks to produce interventions from the data collected and analyzing these interventions becomes a source of knowledge (Rios, 2010).

The explanation of the statement of the problems drew attention to the rationale for the use a self-study case study design. Merriam (1998) stated that case study design is a qualitative inquiry that is inductive focusing on the process, understanding, and interpretation. Merriam (1998) continued by stating that a case study provides an opportunity for an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, social group, or phenomenon. Yin (1984) gave a technical explanation of a case study. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a current phenomenon within a real-life context, and occurs when the boundaries are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984). Schramm (1971) said that the essence of a case study is to illuminate decisions, why they were implemented, and what is the result.

This self-study is a systematic study of and reflection on a teacher’s own teaching practice in order to improve practice (Groenendijk et al., 2013). Self-studies should promote insight and interpretation. The self-study researcher has an obligation to seek to improve the learning situations not only for himself but for the benefits of students and
other educators (Samaras & Freese, 2006). Data collection will include lesson plan evaluations, observations, interviews, surveys, and teacher journaling in order for the teacher to self-study her own practice. Improving one’s own practice benefits the larger educational system by promoting personal, professional, and program renewal (Samaras & Freese, 2006, p. 14). There has not been extensive literature about self-studies to improve pedagogy for African American males.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Action research is mostly commonly accredited to Kurt Lewin, in the mid-1940s. He constructed a theory of action research, which described action research as “proceeding in a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of planning, action and the evaluation of the result of action” (p. 35). Lewin argued that in order to understand and change certain social practices, scientists have to include practitioners from the real social world in all phases of research. This construction of action research theory created by Lewin made action research a method of acceptable inquiry and research.

According to Mertler (2014), the action research model uses four phases in the action research process: planning, acting, developing, and reflecting. The first phase of the action research paradigm—planning—is required to identify a problem of practice, focus on the research and devise a question. The planning process is two-fold, and the second half is the development of a research plan. Action research can be used effectively to bridge the gap between theory and practice, to improve educational practice, to empower teachers, to provide professional growth opportunities for teachers, to identify educational problems, to develop and test solutions, and to expand the
knowledge base (Mertler, 2014). According to Mertler (2014), the second phase of the action research design is the acting phase. During this phase the researcher collects data to determine how the study answered her problem of practice. The third phase of an action research study is developing (Mertler, 2014). The researcher uses the data collected to make decisions about what can be changed or modified within the action research study. Mertler (2014) lists reflection as the final phase of the action research process. Reflection is such an important part of lesson and curriculum planning because it allows time for the teacher-researcher to look back on what was really strong within the lesson and areas that may need improvement. Reflection gives the teacher the opportunity to improve that lesson not only for the next year but also apply those changes as needed to future lessons for his students. After reflection, I am preparing an action plan to continue in my self-study and pedagogical reform.

Data analysis is an essential part of qualitative action research. It involves organizing what the researcher has seen, heard, and read so that the researcher can make sense of what she has learned (Glesne, 2006). It is the process of bringing out the meaning of the data to discover what is underneath the surface of the classroom (Hubbard & Power, 2003). To begin the self-study of my pedagogy, I created a CRP rubric to analyze the lessons and activities that I created (Appendix T). Through this self-study, I collected data, including surveys, memos, lesson plans, observation checklists, journal entries, transcripts of observations, transcripts of interview, audio-recordings, and videotapes. In order to organize the data, I coded, dated, and labeled all transcripts and journal entries. Data collection and analysis happened very close together due to my insider researcher status and the cyclic nature of this study (Merriam, 2002). The initial
data analysis of Lesson 1 allowed for categories to be created that were responsive to the surveys, memos, observation and interview transcriptions, and journal entries (Merriam, 2002; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). In qualitative research, the researcher needs to move beyond organizational categories to substantive and theoretical categories with the coding (Maxwell, 2005). Maxwell (2005) stated such a process needs to be planned and clearly articulated when describing the data analysis.

**Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the pertaining literature that contributes to and determines a need for this research study. Specifically focusing on CRP, reality pedagogy, CRT, and critical race pedagogy (Bell, 1980; Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2010; Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lynn 1999; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This study seeks to improve my pedagogical techniques by answering this primary research question:

1. What benefits and challenges do I encounter when developing culturally relevant lessons for African American males?

This question led to two sub-questions that I addressed as follows:

a) How do the activities promote, or constrain, students’ learning by integrating culturally relevant pedagogy within the content of world geography?

b) How do student responses to the pedagogy support the changes I am making as I instruct this course in teaching cultural relevance and the content of world geography?

In this study, I hope to shed more light on the development of CRP lessons and CRT. In the next chapter, I give an in-depth overview of the method and methodologies
that will guide the data collection procedures and data analysis processes that will be engaged in the interpretation of the data.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used in this study, how it positioned me as a researcher, and how it inform the design of this self-study. It discusses the rationale for the study, context and participants, methodology, and data analysis. I am researching myself and my own teaching practices in order to better serve and educate African American males. The five males in this study are considered marginalized because of academics, behavior, and socioeconomic status, specifics that were detailed in the literature review. In this self-study, I worked with the entire class, but my research focuses on my pedagogical techniques regarding five African American males. Over a course of 12 weeks, I implemented three practitioner-applied lessons. I collected the data from each lesson: the lesson plan, student surveys, memos, student observations, student interviews, and teacher-researcher journals. This chapter will outline the research methodology associated with the primary research question:

1. What benefits and challenges do I encounter when developing culturally relevant lessons for African American males?

This question led to two sub-questions that I addressed as follows:

a) How do the activities promote, or constrain, students’ learning by integrating culturally relevant pedagogy within the content of world geography?
b) How do student responses to the pedagogy support the changes I am making as I instruct this course in teaching cultural relevance and the content of world geography?

**Rationale for the Selected Methodology**

Action research will be employed to answer my problem of practice found inside my specific classroom. Action research is different from traditional research because the teacher-researcher method is “truly a systematic inquiry of one’s own practice” (Mertler, 2014, p. 4). My action research was conducted using a qualitative self-study. Qualitative research seeks to understand the phenomenon of a specific situation, contrasting from quantitative research that can be replicated (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative studies also explore beliefs, opinions, and attitudes (Bruton, 2012). This is a self-study because I am researching my own practice and pedagogy. Self-study derives from a personally situated inquiry about your personal experience and context (Berry, 2004).

**Context and Participants**

At this time of this study, I was employed as a regular education classroom teacher in a suburban high school in the Southeast United States. I have 16 years of experience teaching at the high school level. I am certified in three content areas: social studies, Spanish, and English speakers of other languages (ESOL). I have worked with the State Geographic Alliance and became a teacher consultant for them in 2006. Multiculturalism and languages have always interested me. I felt that the growing Latino sect in our community had specific needs that were not being met because of a language barrier. I began studying Spanish and became a Spanish teacher the first four years of my
career. Then I realized that the students who needed to be helped were not being helped within my school, so I became the ESOL teacher. I was the first bilingual teacher at the school to serve these students. Previous ESOL teachers did not speak a foreign language. My skill set helped this marginalized group of students overcome a language barrier to their education. I entered back into the regular education classroom because of funding and program shifts. Through these experiences, I felt that I could also serve these and many more students in a positive way. All diploma-track students take world geography in the ninth grade, and it is typically the first social studies credit earned of the three graduation credits required. I have specifically taught world geography for 12 years. Within that time, I have consistently observed ninth-grade African American male students impacted by the educational system’s opportunity gap. Language barriers seemed to be the biggest barrier to success for my ESOL students, but I could not understand the barriers that the African American males in my class were facing within the educational system. This problem led me to this study. As this study progressed, I began to understand that the academic issues my students were facing were the result of my pedagogical deficits and the institutional barriers that were to be uncovered over the course of my study. While this was a self study, I paid particular attention to five African American male students who were entering the ninth grade for the first time. Caleb (pseudonym) is a 14-year-old student, he is funny and he comes to see me several times throughout the day. Jalen (pseudonym) is a 16-year-old student, he will turn 17 in the summer and often says my class is his reason for coming to school on B days. Peter (pseudonym) is 15 years old and makes me check all of his work everyday to make sure he is doing it correctly. Steven (pseudonym) is 15 years old and makes the class laugh
each and everyday. Zay (pseudonym) is 14 years old and is very quiet. He will stay after class and tell me a personal story each day I teach him.

Research Methods

Implementations of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is a pedagogical style that aims to increase achievement and encourage students that come from culturally diverse backgrounds. My action research was guided by elements of four related theoretical frameworks; culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995a), reality pedagogy (Emdin, 2016), critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, Solorzano & Yosso, 2000), and critical race pedagogy (Lynn, 1999). I felt that an alternative pedagogical style could help my often-marginalized students academically succeed in the world geography classroom so I designed three practitioner-applied lessons. I used the work of Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995b) to develop lessons that provided high expectations. I used the works of Geneva Gay (2002) to help shape the lesson itself by allowing students to examine the information using pedagogical styles such as creating cultural awareness and care, and connecting the culture and content that support CRP. I used the work of Tyrone Howard (2003) to shape the cyclical design of this study. This study was a series of iterative lessons providing time of reflection and revision between each CRP lesson. I created Lesson 1, implemented it, reflected on my data, and then made changes to Lesson 2, and then again for Lesson 3. I used the work of Christopher Emdin (2016) as the basis of a three-lesson cycle design focusing on collaboration, co-teaching, and competition. I developed lessons that united my world geography standards and CRP instruction
addressing the needs of my African American students. The paragraphs that follow explain the topics of my pilot lesson and the three practitioner-applied lessons designed for the study.

**Pilot lesson.** The pilot lesson (Appendix B) topic was Hurricane Harvey and the aftermath in Houston, Texas. We watched clips of the devastation of Hurricane Harvey in Houston and the relief efforts. The main focus of the lesson was to implement collaboration as a pedagogical tool to build a sense of cultural care and awareness. The lesson was designed to align with state standards and objectives to maintain high expectations. The lesson also connected culture and content by giving student family scenarios that are reflective of a non-majoritive familial composition (Appendix C). The students had to use the family scenarios to design a plan of whether or not the push-and-pull factors allowed the family to stay in Houston or made them leave. The students used their laptops to create an infographic to share with the class. The infographic was designed on a collaborative online tool that allowed the students to share their work with each other as they work together. The students shared their decisions with the class and submitted their online group assignment to me.

**Lesson 1.** Lesson 1 (Appendix D) topic was Hurricane Maria and the aftermath in Puerto Rico. We began the lesson by watching real video footage of the devastation in Puerto Rico. I focused on building a positive environment within the classroom focusing on cultural awareness and care by providing students opportunity to work in a collaborative group. Again, the lesson was designed to align with state standards and objectives to maintain high expectations. The lesson also connected culture and content by giving student family scenarios that are reflective of a non-majoritive familial
composition (Appendix E). Students had to take the facts about their family scenario and apply them to a real life situation. The students had to determine whether or not they must leave or stay in Puerto Rico by analyzing push-and-pull factors. Students decided whether to stay in their home country or leave and explain the information on an infographic. Again, the student used their laptops to collaborate and create the infographic. The groups then presented their information. Each group submitted their assignment to me. The class returned to normal seating and I began to read a newspaper article (Appendix F) to them. This added counter-storytelling component to this lesson because the article stated race was the issue that caused little media attention to Puerto Rico’s devastation and slow response time to assist the hurricane victims. The counter-storytelling named the issues of race, denouncing the White hegemonic stories that are normally heard. The counter-storytelling fostered discussion and reflection about racism.

Lesson 2. Lesson 2 topic (Appendix G) was the fictional construction of an oil pipeline through Canada’s First Nations’ land. This fictional scenario was used to compare what happened in the Dakota Pipeline construction to what could potentially happen in our scenario. We began the lesson by watching clips from the Dakota Pipeline Protests. I focused on building collaboration as well as adding a component of co-teaching through student-designed presentations. Students used their laptops to make any type of presentation that they wanted. They could use any program available as long as it fully answered the questions. Students became stakeholders (Appendix H) representing all parties (environmentalists, First Nations people, oil consumers, oil company) involved in the construction of the pipeline. Based on their stakeholder status, they had to determine why they supported or opposed the construction of the pipeline in Canada.
They had to give three reasons why they made their decision. They submitted the presentation in an online format to me. The lesson connected culture and content by giving students a variety of ways of co-teaching their presentation through song, rap, handshakes, and symbols. A counter-storytelling element was added to the lesson by providing student with an article about the Dakota Pipeline (Appendix I), pointing out how a real pipeline was moved from White-controlled land to Native American territory because of race. The counter-storytelling narrative exposed the true issues of White privilege and power over land control. The narrative fostered discussion and reflection on the true reasons decisions are made by government and people with power.

**Lesson 3.** Lesson 3 topic (Appendix J) was the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest to build a school and road in a remote area of Peru. The lesson incorporated two short video clips about a group of students who wanted to go to school but lived in the slums and could not afford to go. Another video clip showed how a group of children in the poorest region of Paraguay were now going to school and had created an orchestra out of trash. This lesson used three CRP pedagogical styles: collaboration, co-teaching, and competition (Emdin, 2016). To connect to culture, students were allowed to choose a real-world example of a child that wanted to go to school (Appendix K). Students placed themselves in that child’s shoes to develop a letter or presentation about why school would be important to them. Students could work together to create a letter or presentation creating another collaborative process. Students competed by choosing the best letter or presentation from each group. Students presented their letter or presentation to the class. Students again competed to see which letter or presentation was the best overall. Lesson 3 also implemented a counter-storytelling narrative (Appendix L) that
exposed how race impacts poverty and education in South America. The article exposed how people of color or darker skinned Brazilians were denied equity and access to higher education based on their inability to pass tests to get into the colleges. They lacked the preparation that other students had because their primary schooling was not equitable to other institutions for the more privileged. This counter-narrative exposed the true reasons students are denied access to education and how cyclical poverty is always an issue. The counter-storytelling fostered group discussion and reflection.

Data Collection Methods

My research questions are: What benefits and challenges do I encounter when developing a culturally relevant lesson for African American males? As I mentioned previously, my research study is a qualitative self-study. I collected data from my lessons and from my students about the lessons. The qualitative data I collected was discussed and analyzed using CRT in order to examine the benefits and challenges of CRP. Data was collected during and after each lesson cycle. The data collection procedure for this qualitative action research design has six parts: surveys, memos, lessons, semi-structured interviews with students, student observations and teacher journals. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research employing the use of interviews and observations to gather data is better equipped to answer the questions of how and why a particular group interprets their experiences in the manner they do. The use of a qualitative research design allowed participants to answer questions providing insightful responses than other types of research (Huggins, 2015; Padgett, 2009).
Data Analysis

Overview of Data Analysis

In this self-study, it is common practice to analyze the data and make changes as one goes along, which I did throughout the 12-week study. Data collected and analyzed simultaneously by practicing teachers can be used to inform best practices. Triangulation was a strategy used to compare the multiple sources of data (Mertler, 2014). Mertler (2014) states that this two-way flow of information give shape and new direction to educational research. Triangulation is the process of relating multiple sources of data in order to establish their trustworthiness and consistency of the facts while trying to account for their inherent biases (Mertler, 2014, p. 11). Maxwell (2005) stated such a process needs to be planned and clearly articulated when describing the data analysis. I developed a matrix using Maxwell’s (2005) recommendations that assisted in triangulating the data. After, triangulating and reflecting upon the data from each lesson cycle, I made changes for the next lesson. The purpose of self-study is improvement, to make changes and find the evidence that represent the improvement (Russell, 2002). After triangulation and restructuring each CRP lesson, I examined the data from each lesson to determine if the changes were benefiting the students. In order to determine the effectiveness of the lessons, I specifically looked at promoting student learning and student responses to the pedagogy.

Survey. The first data collection procedure was a series of three student surveys (Appendices M, N, O). The overarching purpose of the surveys was to provide a platform to build a sense of cultural awareness and care, a characteristic of CRP. The student surveys were implemented to elicit personal information about the students’ home life,
interests, and their thoughts about learning and education. In efforts to not overwhelm them and make the data meaningful, the surveys prior to each lesson went from broad questions to more specific. The first survey was teacher-generated and asked students open-ended questions about their interests and hobbies (Appendix M). The second survey asked students a series of questions about how they believe that they learn best (Appendix N). I wanted to see if the way the students’ perceived themselves learning best coincided with my instructional activities. This survey contributed to cultural awareness and care by allowing students the ability to voice how they like to learn in the classroom. The third survey was the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale (Goodenow, 1993) designed to measure youths’ perceptions of belonging and psychological engagement in school (Appendix O). The results of the surveys were written into memos. Memos can be summaries of your major findings or they can be comments and reflections on particular aspects of your evaluation (Mertler, 2014). This survey allowed me as the researcher to see exactly how the students perceived themselves as members of a school community and what I could do as the teacher to help cultivate school membership ties to a disenfranchised group. These three surveys helped me understand my students in a different way, therefore enabling me to know them better and create better lessons.

**Observations.** Observation was another data collection procedure that was used. It was full participant observation, where I, as teacher-researcher, observed my students working collaboratively during three CRP lessons. Observation is the selection and recording of behaviors of people in their usual environment and is useful for generating in-depth descriptions of organizations or events, for obtaining information, and for
conducting research when other methods are inadequate (Saint-Germain, 2001). Due to the difficulty of maintaining the dual role of both the observer and instructor, I videotaped each class to capture what students said during the lessons. Glesne (2006) stated that a verbatim script is not necessary but some are important. The observations were videotaped and the responses of the participants were transcribed, open-coded, and themes were identified. I compiled verbatim quotes from the videotape in the observation transcriptions organized by each lesson. The videotaped lessons were destroyed to protect student anonymity. As soon as possible after each lesson, I watched the videotape to transcribe the lessons. Transcripts were analyzed line by line. Codes were given names to describe the processes observed such as (Pos.) for positive, (Neg.) for negative, and (Conn.) for connection. While a pre-established coding system was not used, emerging categories consistent with student feelings toward themselves, the lesson, and their group were used. I analyzed all of these data from each lesson cycle in order to make modifications to the next cycle. I developed initial codes based upon my readings and interpretation of initial data. Examples of my coding and categories included observations (OB), interviews (IN), surveys (S), journal (J), students’ feelings about themselves (SF), students feelings’ about the lesson (SL), and students feelings’ about collaboration (SC). I wanted to know participants’ perception of the lessons and what they found interesting or challenging in the class. For that purpose, I prepared coding to create categories. Table 3.1 shows examples of excerpts from the observation transcripts and coding.
Table 3.1

*Observation Transcription*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Transcription: OB</th>
<th>Coding/Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caleb (Neg.) said “I guess that means we lose because I am Black.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalen (Neg.) said “I am Black, Black people don’t like school. I don’t like to work remember?”</td>
<td>ST: Students feelings’ about themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter (Pos.) said “Mines gonna be better this time.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven (Pos.) said “Mines gonna be cool. I got this.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zay (Pos.) said “Remember how my grade was better?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalen (Pos.) said “My group worked harder than them.”</td>
<td>SC: Students feelings; about collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter (Neg.) said “Ya’ll going to help me? Ain’t that why we in a group? Ya’ll stupid.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zay (Pos.) said “Let’s work together, but you got to do something.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interviews.** Data was also collected from semi-structured student interviews (Appendices P, Q, R, S) that occurred at the end of each of the three lesson cycles. Several students were interviewed after each lesson, but the responses of the focus group were recorded and transcribed. The purpose of the interviews was to see how the student experienced the lesson. Interviews are the most effective tool for understanding the experiences others have had regarding a particular situation (Hatch, 2002). The interview questions were semi-structured but open-ended, which allowed the participants to elaborate (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Each participant received the same questions, which increased the reliability of the study (Gall et al., 2003). Follow-up questions were used if the researcher felt that it was necessary to bring about more important data (Yin, 2009).
Flexibility within the interviews allowed for greater conversation between the researcher and the participant resulting in more extensive data (Yin, 2009). The elaboration in the interviews yielded a plethora of data, which ultimately decreased the bias of the researcher (Gall et al., 2003; Huggins, 2015). I recorded the interviews and transcribed the interview responses. The purpose of the interview was twofold: (a) to understand the students’ experience; and (b) to give me an opportunity to ask for feedback on pedagogy and learning. The recorded responses of the focus participants were transcribed, open-coded, and themes were identified. The interviews were destroyed to protect student anonymity. Transcripts were analyzed line by line. Codes were given names to describe the processes observed. While a pre-established coding system was not used, emerging categories consistent with student feelings toward themselves, the lesson, and their group were used.

**Lessons.** Three lessons were designed for this study. Each lesson has been explained in the previous section of this chapter and the complete lesson plans are found in the Appendix. Ladson-Billings (1995b) stated that culturally relevant teachers utilize students’ culture as an instrument for learning. Teachers who use CRP provide students with a curriculum that builds on their prior knowledge and cultural experiences through cultural awareness and care, connecting content to learning, and maintaining high expectations (SanGregory, 2009). The lesson were analyzed using a CRP rubric (Appendix T). I created a CRP rubric based standards, objectives, characteristics of CRP, and pedagogical styles that support CRP. Standards are an important component to CRP. CRP demands that all students, but especially culturally diverse students, be held to the highest academic standards. Regardless of social inequities, students must be provided
with the standards, objectives, and questioning tools to achieve academic proficiency. Ladson-Billings (1995a) maintained that culturally relevant teaching “requires that teachers attend to students’ academic needs, not merely make them ‘feel good’” and that it is imperative to have students “choose academic excellence” (p. 160). The techniques of the specified pedagogy CRP (collaboration, co-teaching, and competition) are also a category of the rubric. The three characteristics of CRP also became categories of the rubric: creating cultural awareness and care, connecting culture and learning, and high expectations. Components of CRP communicate high expectations, connecting culture and care (Gay, 2000; SanGregory 2009). Teachers must make sure that they let each student know that you expect them to engage, perform, and achieve at a high level, rather than making excuses in your own mind for them (Gay, 2000).

**Journal.** Recently, qualitative research has emphasized the importance of other types of data collection besides observations and interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Teachers’ documents and reflections on their lessons are important parts of educational research. Based on this emphasis, this study included teachers’ documents written for three lessons in order to reveal teachers’ understanding. Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) definition of a relevant document is “official documents produced by organizational employees for record-keeping and dissemination purpose” (p. 64). Applying this definition, lesson plans and teacher journaling were used for data collection. Teacher reflections after each lesson were kept in a journal. The purpose of journaling is that teachers can evaluate their teaching through their own reflections. The data was organized into themes that correlate with the themes found from the interview and
observation data. I as the teacher-researcher revised my lesson based on my journal entries, student interviews, and student observations.

**Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness**

Validity is an essential part of action research: “Making sure that action research adheres to ethical standards is a primary responsibility of the educator-researcher” (Mertler, 2014, p. 106). Student participation in the study was on a voluntary basis. Adults, and specifically children, should never feel coerced or compelled to participate in research (Mertler, 2014). The results of the action research project were confidential and participants’ identities are anonymous. The intent is to benefit someone or some group and contribute to human knowledge or be useful in the field of education (Mertler, 2014). Research should never cause any harm or provide an unsafe environment to any participant. The planning, design, execution, and results should all have the essential principle of honesty. Educators must realize the power and influence that they have over their students, and if the research harms or takes advantage of a situation/student in any way, then the research must cease and/or the student removed from the study. Action research should benefit all students, but if for some reason the research has the potential to distract or harm students with special academic needs, other instruction may need to supplement that specific student’s needs and/or they may need to be removed from the study.

**Ethical Considerations**

I was granted permission by the school district, the principal of my school, and the University of South Carolina’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the
study. Many measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality, quality, and credibility of the data. I used pseudonyms for all students and kept student work, observation field notes, and interview responses in a secure location. I also used a pseudonym for the school and limited details to maintain confidentiality. Parsons, Hewson, Adrian, and Day (2013) suggested that when implementing action research, there should be consideration of ethics. These include informed consent, protecting confidentiality, minimalizing harm, and ensuring anonymity. Because this action research study was a self-study case study, there was minimal risk involved; one teacher (self) was the subject of the study. Students provided insight into lesson through interviews and observations. Student permission forms prior to the study gave a brief overview of the study, guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity, and provided the right to opt-out of the study at any time to ensure informed consent. To provide confidentiality, data from the study was kept secured in a locked file, and the school and teacher-participant were given pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. The teacher-researcher (self) was included in all aspects of this action research project with hopes to improve my pedagogical practices, with an overall goal of increasing student growth and achievement.

**Conclusion**

Action research in conjunction with a narrative case study is an excellent way for a teacher to improve classroom instruction and practices. The process of action research provides educators with the vehicle that enables learning through a disciplined process of critical reflection, meaningful experiences, and self-directed inquiry (Brown, 2002). Teachers that participate in the action research process are examining what it means to make disciplined statements about teaching (Freeman, 2002). Teaching is highly
complex, and most teachers have few opportunities to explore common problems and possible solutions, or share new pedagogical approaches (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

The action research process is collaborative and investigative, where practitioners work together to design and follow through with research on practical problems in their classrooms (Brown, 2002). In action research within a classroom, it is paramount to determine instructional goals and devise the path students must take to reach them. Student learning must never be sacrificed for research: “Good and ethical teaching involves looking carefully and closely at student work that is generated in teachers’ classrooms to better understand students’ progress and what adjustments can be made to instruction to help all students learn” (Dana & Yendel-Hoppy, 2014, p.148). By using an action research method within a classroom, the research is more meaningful and the potential to have a greater impact on learning. It allows for greater periods of reflection and provides concrete evidence of what the research is trying to determine.

**Action Plan**

Although my initial approach may have reflected unintentional biases that I have as a White teacher teaching Black males, through my literature review and development of my methodology, I am making changes and working towards giving students a voice. I have realized that even in my terms and discussions about students, I impart deficits and meritocratic characteristics that I must change in order to be effective. Chezare Warren (2015) warns again the good-intentioned White teachers. I must make sure that my intent and empathy are not clouding good teaching practice and my attempts at practitioner-applied pedagogy (Warren, 2015). An action plan will be developed based on the analysis of the data, discussion of the data, and my conclusions.
Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

This action research self-study examined my efforts to enact lessons that demonstrate practitioner-applied practices. I documented and studied the impact of my efforts to better support five African American males with respect to their motivation and engagement.

As the teacher-researcher conducting this study, I designed and implemented three lessons that employed CRP practices. I identified the benefits and challenges of these lessons as they relate to the cultural care, learning connections, and expectations of five of my students noted to be at risk of failing my course. I conducted this study in the context of my ninth-grade world geography classroom during the fall semester of 2017. The entire class participated in the instruction, but my analysis focused on the responses of five males: Caleb, Jalen, Peter, Steven, and Zay. This data was used to help me make iterative improvements in my lessons. This self-study considered the following research question:

1. What benefits and challenges do I encounter when developing culturally relevant lessons for African American males?

This question led to two sub-questions that I addressed as follows:
a) How do the activities promote, or constrain, students’ learning by integrating culturally relevant pedagogy within the content of world geography?

b) How do student responses to the pedagogy support the changes I am making as I instruct this course in teaching cultural relevance and the content of world geography?

My goal in conducting this current study in my world geography course was to improve my own teaching practices by implementing CRP. I collected data from my students, my lessons, and my teacher journal. The data from my students consisted of surveys, memos, observations, and interviews focusing on cultural awareness/care, connecting culture and learning, and high expectations. This chapter will detail the findings of the research questions and a discussion of the findings using the CRT lens of counter-storytelling. The following section is organized chronologically, beginning with the pilot study and followed by the three CRP lessons for this study.

Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study to guide my research study. According to Baker and Digiovanni (2005), practicing research instruments and procedures is advantageous to the researcher and the research study. The pilot study’s participants are the same as the research study. The pilot study spanned over two 90-minute class periods, in which students learned about the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey and the impact the storm had on Houston, Texas. The lesson plan (Appendix B) focused on exposing students to a real-world event with the students providing a real-world solution to a problem. I used the main elements of CRP to design this lesson: creating cultural awareness/care, connecting content to learning, and high expectations. I wanted to connect something that students
were hearing about on the news to our content to show both authenticity and relevance between geography and real-life. I wanted to gradually integrate CRP pedagogy, so I began with collaboration. I began the lesson by showing video clips of Hurricane Harvey and the aftermath. I then allowed the students to divide themselves into groups of four. They were given different non-majoritive family scenarios (Appendix C) of hurricane victims. Non-majoritive families are family groupings that are indicative of the students that I teach, where students are raised in single parent homes by a mother, a grandparent, or a sibling. The students had to answer questions based on push-and-pull factors to determine if the family should stay in the Houston area or leave. Students had to collaborate and create an infographic using their laptops and a collaborative online tool called Canva. The students electronically submitted their group work to me. The data collected from the pilot study indicated several weaknesses based on lesson evaluation, student observation, and student interviews. The weaknesses were found in each of the components of CRP in this study that will be explained in the next section: cultural awareness and care, connecting culture and learning, and high expectations.

Cultural Care/Awareness

In efforts to create cultural care and awareness, it was important for me to know the participants of the study in order to be able to develop learning activities that the students find interesting and engaging. Prior to the pilot study, I did not get to know my students. As a result, the pilot study indicated a huge weakness in the classroom environment regarding cultural awareness/care. Students placed themselves in groups, and according to Emdin (2016), students need to feel comfortable within their collaborative groups.
Journal Entry: Pilot Lesson (09/11/2017)

I told students to create groups of four. It seemed very easy for most of the students and I saw quickly that we became a very divided and segregated classroom. The two groups with the African American males were all male groups and the other males in the groups would be considered as well. The students grouped themselves by ability, gender, and socioeconomic status. They only want to work with people like themselves. The lesson observation revealed similar findings.

Observation Transcription: Pilot Lesson (09/10/2017)

Peter: I don’t know any of these people except Jalen.

Caleb: They are too White to work with me.

These findings revealed that not only do I not know enough about my students, the students do not know much about each other. The concept of cultural awareness is to see how cultural differences impact the learning process and to be sensitive to these differences in order to improve learning (Gay, 2002; Hunt, 2009; Shaw, 2012). This finding led to the development of strategies to get to know one another: I needed to know them, and they also needed to know each other. I knew my students from demographic information found in our online student record system, but I did not know other information about their lives. As a result of these findings, I decided that I must develop a student survey to learn more about my students.

Connecting Culture and Learning

The next component of CRP is making cultural connections to learning. Student observations in the pilot lesson were transcribed from a video recording. I used the code
NPC for no prior connection to learning. The transcriptions that revealed no connection to learning are as follows:

Observation Transcription: Pilot Lesson (9/10/2017)

Steven (NPC): We ain’t gotta worry about hurricanes here.

Caleb (NPC): What are you talking about? When did this happen?

Peter (NPC): If it ain’t on Youtube, I do not know about it.

Zay (NPC): It doesn’t flood here because we have mountains.

The pilot lesson did not provide a clear connection between culture and learning. I assumed that students were aware of the news and major events happening in the world. I quickly realized that many of my students do not watch the news or have access to television beyond Netflix or Youtube. The lesson provided a real-world problem, but students did not connect with the lesson because they felt that hurricanes and flooding were not relevant to their lives. The idea of a hurricane was surreal to many of my students because they have never experienced a hurricane or extreme flooding. We were out of school for two days because of wind and rain from the subsequent hurricane, Hurricane Irma. Many of the students thought we were out for wind and rain but did not make a connection to the hurricane. The observation transcripts demonstrated that students had no prior learning about the topic, making it impossible to make a connection to the content.

The lesson ended with the submission of their collaborative assignment. My journal entry also indicated that there was no prior connection (NPC) to learning.
Journal Entry: Lesson 1 (09/11/2017)

The lesson had no real meaning for the students and I need to make some adjustments for ending the lesson. The lesson seemed to leave the students without any sense of closure or ending. I think that the students had more things that they would like to discuss and know about from the lesson.

Specifically, the lesson did not allow for any class discussion or reflection. CRP demands that students evaluate issues that impact culturally diverse students by disrupting the dialogue and providing counternarratives that name racism and speak against it (Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Howard, 2003). There were many issues that could be addressed in discussing Hurricane Harvey victims such as poverty, race, and inadequate housing. The lessons for the research study will have a component that allows students to connect the world geography content to the culture by using elements of CRT to help students with the content.

**High Expectations**

The pilot study lesson did not provide high expectation for learners, which is a major component of CRP. The lesson was created to meet the South Carolina World Geography Standard 1.1: **Analyze physical characteristics of the environment that result in opportunities and obstacles for people.** In order to meet the standard, students had to be able to answer these two essential questions: What factors shape our view of a particular place or region? What are push and pull factors that make people leave or stay in a certain place or region? Ladson-Billings (1995a) maintains that culturally relevant teaching requires that teachers attend to students’ needs by setting higher standards (p. 160). During the interview, students voiced frustration within the lesson.
Interview: Pilot Lesson (09/12/2017)

R1: Was the rubric easy to understand?

Zay (Frus.): I didn’t read the rubric, it was long.

Caleb (Frus.): I wish I knew what one (a completed project) looked like.

Based on the findings from my journal entry and student frustration (Frus.) revealed in the interviews, I made modifications to Lesson 1. Lesson 1 implemented an example and a clearer rubric to assist students. My journal entry provides data explicating my reflection on high expectations.

Journal Entry: Pilot Lesson (09/11/2017)

My lesson did not provide these students with the opportunity to succeed. Students seemed unengaged and had little knowledge of the hurricane. The scores on the infographic for my focus students were ten to fifteen points lower than the rest of the class. My directions require more clarity and I think an example and rubric clarification is needed. The lesson also seemed to take too long fostering off-task behaviors. The students seemed to grow tired of the assignment. Some of the students indicated in the observation that they were confused and the rubric was too long. Students seemed off task and did not know what I expected.

The lesson was analyzed using a CRP lesson rubric (Appendix T). The lesson quality received an overall score of 8 out of 15 points. The lessons for the research study will closely follow the lesson evaluation tool to insure high expectations. As indicated above, my journal entry supported the low rubric score of high expectations. These findings indicate modifications that were needed for Lesson 1 and will be discussed in the next section.
Modifications for Lesson 1

The pilot study was an invaluable tool that allowed me as the teacher-researcher to make changes to support my practitioner-applied lesson, pedagogy, and students. I must develop a way to know my students better by fostering cultural care, connecting learning and culture, and increasing high expectations. The list below highlights the main modifications for the next chapter, followed by a paragraph detailing each change.

- Create a student survey.
- Provide more background information and implement a newspaper article as a counter-story.
- Provide a project example, clarified rubric, and shorten the lesson to one class.

The pilot study allowed me to notice the lack of cultural care and awareness in my classroom. I realized that the students did not know each other, and I did not know them very well. The first modification was the development of a student information survey (Appendix M). I wanted to know their likes and dislikes in order to better serve them as their teacher. I began Lesson 1 with the survey.

Another modification that I made based on my findings was that the students did not connect to the content. They needed a more authentic approach to learning on their level. The need to be provided more information at the beginning of the lesson and more time to reflect at the end of the lesson. I must provide basic knowledge prior to the lesson so students have more time to connect to the content. I assumed that they knew more about current events than they did. I think that spending more time at the beginning of the lesson is imperative to student learning. I have to build their knowledge base and connect
the learning as much as possible. They also needed more time at the end of the lesson. My students needed the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their learning. I felt that an authentic approach to learning would be incorporating a newspaper article telling the story about issues hurricane victims faced. I specifically felt that providing students with a counter-story would be an effective way to make students think about the real issues people face.

The final modifications for Lesson 1 involved high expectations. Lesson 1 provided a sample project and a simplified rubric. It was designed to only take one 90-minute class period in hopes that students would stay on task. The pilot study allowed students to work at their own pace, which allowed for too much off-task behavior. I wanted the students to have a specified time in Lesson 1 so they could see a definite beginning, middle, and end to the time they had to work.

Lesson 1

Cultural Awareness/Care

I administered a survey prior to each lesson to get to know the students better. The pilot study revealed that I did not know the students well enough to design pedagogy that would fit their needs. Through their responses to the surveys, I learned information about their family, academic, cultural, and personal background information that the school database does not provide. It is important for teachers to know their students in depth in order to build trust between the teacher and student (Gay, 2002 Ladson-Billings, 2009). It also helps the teacher provide meaningful experiences in the classroom. I implemented this survey prior to Lesson 1 to identify other pertinent information about the students.
The survey is located in Appendix M. Taking time to talk to students helped to foster cultural awareness/care, which is vital to CRP. Memos were generated from the student background data, as shown below.

Lesson 1: Student Background Memos (10/21/2017)

**Caleb** comes to class each day smiling and laughing, and he always has a story to share. He is diagnosed as ADHD but does not take his medication according to his mother. He is often on my floor, on his phone, lying across desks, or dancing. Caleb has been absent 6 days and has received 7 referrals. He lives with his mother and siblings. He enjoys basketball. He has a smartphone and “loves” to play videogames. He does not like school but likes working with his friends. He is kind and mannerable.

**Jalen** is always late to class but with a very inventive excuse that causes the class to smile. He is behaviorally and academically the least successful of the five students included in the study. Jalen has an IEP and receives academic support every other day for 90 minutes. He is on a second grade reading level. Jalen has been absent 29 days and has received 19 referrals first semester. He lives with his grandmother. He has a smartphone, says “snapchat is life,” and enjoys video games. He does not like school but likes working with his “bros.” He is funny and well liked by his classmates.

**Peter** comes to class with his earbuds in his ears and finds me to ask me if I have watched the latest football or basketball game. He always asks what team I pull for and he always seems to pull for the opposite one. He has many behavioral issues. He has four referrals and six absences. Peter has a 504 plan and receives extra time on major assignments. He lives with mom, sister, and grandmother. He has a smartphone and enjoys playing video games, specifically “NFL games.” He does not like school but likes math. He does not like working in groups. He is extremely loud and keeps to himself unless he is talking about the NFL.

**Steven** is always on time to class and says “good afternoon Ma’am.” He is pleasant in class. He has missed 11 days and has 2 referrals. Steven lives with his mom and four siblings. He is extremely impoverished, he wears the same clothing daily, smells of kerosene, and on one occasion roaches crawled from his backpack. Steven is constantly eating in class, mainly leftover items that others give him from their lunch such as apples and oranges. He does not have a smartphone but enjoys video games. He likes school, working with his “homeys,” and basketball. He is funny and likes to make others laugh.

**Zay** comes into class like a mouse, sits down, and gets all of his supplies out. He is a very quiet young man. He has missed 3 days and has 1 referral. He lives with his sister and his nephew. He smells of kerosene and consistently wears the same clothing. He has a smartphone and says videogames are “a waste of time.” He
likes working with his friends and says that he really doesn’t have much of a hobby because he “watches his nephew a lot.” He is always ready to learn and prepared for class.

**Connecting Culture and Learning**

One important element of CRP is to connect learning to student culture. As previously stated, the pilot lesson was about Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath in Houston, Texas. Students failed to connect with the learning and content because they had no prior knowledge, Texas geographically is far away, and hurricanes normally do not impact our lives. Students must have prior knowledge to be able to connect to the content to make it more meaningful (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978). I felt that the pilot lesson laid the foundation for Lesson 1.

Lesson 1 of the research study attempted to connect the content to students’ knowledge from the pilot lesson. The topic for Lesson 1 was the devastation of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, the aftermath, and American response. I began the lesson with video clips of Hurricane Maria’s devastation in Puerto Rico. Students were given a clear set of questions, an example, and a modified rubric based on the adjustments needed from the pilot lesson. Students had to work collaboratively to create an infographic. Students were allowed to connect to the material by providing students with family scenarios (Appendix E) that addressed the situation. For example, one family scenario was:

*Family 5: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Maria. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is devastated, and you have no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. You live with your sister and her husband and your two-year-old nephews. Your house is completely gone. Your sister’s husband has family in several major cities in the USA. They are all calling to see if your family would like to come stay with them.*
He is confident he can find a job there because he is a truck driver and can easily switch to another city.

The family scenarios provided in the lesson were representative of diverse cultures because they portrayed non-traditional family situations. During the observation, students responded to the cultural aspects of the lesson in the following ways.

Observation Transcription: Lesson 1 (10/23/2017)

Zay: I live with my sister too.

Caleb: We have a new girl in my math class and I think she is from Puerto Rico.

Peter: We moved because of my mom’s job too.

My journal notes also support an improvement in student connection to learning.

Journal Entry: Lesson 1 (10/25/2017)

Students seemed to respond well to family scenario portion of the lesson. They liked to talk about the families and make-up more details about their lives. Jalen said it was like making a real life movie. This lesson made me feel that students are connecting with the lesson in an authentic way.

**High Expectations**

In order to maintain high expectations for my students, I designed a lesson that used collaboration with technology as the vehicle. The lesson was created to meet the South Carolina World Geography Standard 1.1: *Analyze physical characteristics of the environment that result in opportunities and obstacles for people.* In order to meet the standard, students had to be able to answer these two essential questions: What factors shape our view of a particular place or region? What are push-and-pull factors that make people leave or stay in a certain place or region? Students worked together to create an
infographic for each family scenario in Puerto Rico explaining why the family should stay in Puerto Rico or leave. My observations, revealed in my journal entry (10/25/2017), stated that “collaboration created problems for these students.” They like working together, but the off-task behavior was too excessive to create a conducive learning environment. The coded data from the observation transcripts exposed three main themes that emerged from students working together on this lesson: students feelings’ about themselves (ST), students feelings’ about collaboration (SC), and students feelings’ about the lesson (SL). Students’ feelings about the collaborative group revealed frustration in the group (Frus.). Students’ feelings about the collaborative group (SC) are highlighted in the findings below.

Observation Transcription: Lesson 1 (10/25/2017)

Caleb (Frus.): My group ain’t helping me. I am making my White boy do most of it.

Jalen (Frus.): I don’t like my group because I am Black.

The lesson was analyzed using a CRP lesson rubric (Appendix A). The lesson quality received an overall score of 10 out of 15 points, which is a two-point improvement from the pilot lesson. Lesson 1 closely followed the lesson evaluation tool to insure high expectations but still did not succeed in making students stay on task and failed to foster high expectations for work ethic, participation, and ownership of the lesson.
Counter-Storytelling

The counter-storytelling component of this lesson is two-fold because counter-storytelling is used in the content of the lesson to expose a racial issue in a new perspective. The CRP Lesson 1 content exposed a racial bias and attempted to address the root of the problem by looking at Hurricane Maria’s impact on Puerto Rico. The last checkpoint of Lesson 1 specifically details a counter-story article (Appendix F) by targeting the response time to Hurricane Maria victims, exposing that American interest is less because Puerto Ricans are not White. The article detailed how Puerto Ricans have never even been offered full citizenship and are considered one of the “lesser” races. Therefore, helping Puerto Ricans would be different if they were White. Geneva Gay (2010) stated that CRP fosters counter-storytelling by reversing hegemonic trends by studying a range of ethnic individuals and groups and detailing issues within race, class, ethnicity, and gender. Figure 4.1 details how counter-storytelling is applied directly within the content of the lesson.

Top journalists and government figures rarely mention race as a factor in understanding the negligent response to the hurricane or the U.S. presence in Puerto Rico more generally. But unlike American citizens living in the States, Puerto Ricans were not entitled to fundamental rights such as voting for president or electing a proportional, voting delegation to Congress. The reasons against full citizenship are also entangled in racist logic. For some policymakers, the risk was that given their makeup as “lesser races,” the people of Puerto Rico simply could not understand “Anglo-Saxon principles.”

Figure 4.1. Excerpts from The Crisis in Puerto Rico Is a Racial Issue. Here’s Why (Negron Muntaner, 2017).

During the interview, students responded to several questions that specifically targeted their feelings about the counter-story narrative. The findings are below.
R1: Did you learn something from the reading activity? What?

Peter (Conn.): Puerto Ricans were treated bad like slaves.

Zay (Conn.): If you know about the past, you can prevent those things from happening again.

As a result, the counter-story narrative allowed the students to make connections (Conn.) to learning that they were not able to make in the pilot lesson. The students responded to the newspaper article and information in a positive way. They found the information interesting and appalling, creating an environment for cultural care and awareness.

**Modifications for Lesson 2**

Lesson 1 had four main issues, and modifications were made for Lesson 2 focusing on cultural care by using a survey to gather student information and high expectations focusing on groups, pedagogy, and technology. The following list indicates my major findings from Lesson 1:

- Implement a survey to determine students’ beliefs about learning.
- Augment collaborative groups.
- Utilize co-teaching as a pedagogical tool.
- Assist students with access and equity to technology.

Cultural care and awareness was taken into account again in Lesson 2 by providing students with another survey that focused on how students believe they learn best. I do not think that students give much thought to the learning process and the efforts
that teachers put forth to encourage achievement. I wanted students to tell me how they think they learn best and then employ those techniques within the next lesson. I wanted students to have ownership of learning and realize what I am willing to modify in hopes that they feel empowered within the walls of my classroom.

Group work was a consistent issue during the pilot lesson and Lesson 1. Grouping has created a challenge in maintaining high expectations in the research study. The groups must increase their productivity in the collaborative group. I let them choose their groups for the pilot study and for Lesson 1, but I modified the self-selected groups slightly in Lesson 2 to foster on-task behavior. I maintained some of the friendships within each group, but attempted to divide the behavior issues. I wanted the students to feel comfortable, but they must stay on-task. The self-selected groups also segregated the class by gender, class, and race, which does not build a positive environment and is not a component of CRP (Emdin, 2016).

Also, another modification for Lesson 2 was the addition of a CRP component, co-teaching. Students have less time for off-task behavior if each member has to present something to the class. Co-teaching demands that each student actively participate in the lesson. The goal of co-teaching is to show the student that there is value in being fully engaged in school and their education (Emdin, 2016). It also allows students to express themselves in the classroom (Emdin, 2016).

The final modification for Lesson 2 was technology. I attempted to maintain high expectations by using technology as both a collaborative and assessment tool. This became another major challenge found in Lesson 1 because students did not have the technology to be successful. Teachers are heavily encouraged to incorporate technology
in each lesson. For Lesson 2, I addressed these issues and made modifications to assist students.

**Lesson 2**

**Cultural Care/Awareness**

I administered a second survey (Appendix N) that focused on how the student believes he learns best. I wanted to take the students’ views into consideration when thinking about pedagogical design and to see if their beliefs aligned with the pedagogical design of CRP. They had to choose two categories that they felt were representative of their favorite learning style. The five students results were very much alike.

Memo: Lesson 2 (11/01/2017)

Each of the five students chose the interpersonal category first, which supports collaboration. The interpersonal category description was group work, collaboration in groups or pairs, activities with others, and group discussions. The other selections were more divided: three chose kinesthetic learning, one chose naturalistic learning, and one chose musical learning. Kinesthetic learning allows students to move freely about the room to complete their work. This is a viable option within my class for students to move from station to station or checkpoint to checkpoint.

The fact all five boys choose interpersonal learning is significant because it supports collaboration, which is a major pedagogical technique used in this study. It is also important to note that three boys chose kinesthetic learning. This suggests that I may want to consider movement in Lessons 2 and 3. In Lesson 2, students were constantly moving from individual seats, to group seating, back to individual, and then they had to stand to present with their group. The interview asked students questions about Lesson 2. The responses were coded (Pos.), indicating a positive reaction to the question.
Interview Transcription: Lesson 2 (11/08/2017)

R1: Did you find this assignment more engaging than other assignments or tests?

Why?

Jalen: I like how you teaching us. I can’t stand just sitting there all the time.

Peter: You got us moving so much, I can’t sleep anymore.

Caleb: We get to work with each other again, that is how I like learning.

These findings show that students had a positive experience with co-teaching and collaboration, and because of kinesthetic learning, students were constantly moving about the room.

**Connecting Culture and Learning**

Lesson 2 connected culture and learning by providing students with another real-world scenario, building a pipeline through Native Peoples’ territory. Students began the lesson by watching the Dakota Pipeline demonstrations, which revealed the positionality of people from both sides of the issues. The students were then given a fictional letter about building a new pipeline in Canada through territory that belongs to the First Nations’ People of Canada. The students had to assume the identities of stakeholders in a fictional Canadian Pipeline project. They could choose to support or oppose the pipeline by choosing to be an oil-producing company or Asian consumers of oil, or an environmentalist or First Nations’ group. The students returned to their groups from CRP Lesson 1 and the students did not identify well with becoming a stakeholder. The student observation revealed a theme, once coded and categorized, found in Lesson 2, of
students’ feelings about the lesson. The transcriptions below were the negative coded (Neg.) explicatives from students.

Observation Transcription: Lesson 2 (11/07/2017)

Caleb (Neg.): Who cares about Canada or South Dakota?

Jalen (Neg.): Them Indians crazy and don’t own that land.

Steven (Neg.): Who cares about Indians and that cold place. They need to move anyway.

The interview also revealed the same codes because four of the students responded negatively to the content of the lesson.

Interview Transcription: Lesson 2 (11/08/2017)

R1: How did you like the assignment?

Caleb (Neg.): It was better than notes. Who cares about them Indians and Asians. Black people gots other stuff to worry about. I liked them families better last time.

Peter (Neg.): It was ok, not as good as the hurricane one. The other one was about real people.

Steven (Neg.): I liked it ok, better than some stuff, but I liked the last one better.

Zay (Neg.): I like learning this way. We should not let people hurt the Indians anymore.

My journal entry also reflects that students responded negatively to the content of the lesson.
Journal Entry: Lesson 2 (11/06/2017)

Today was a tough day, students were not engaged with the content of the lesson. They could not identify with being a stakeholder such as an Asian Oil Consumer. I think that students did not relate to this topic very well because they do not feel a connection between Native Americans and themselves. We do not live in an area where there are Native Americans and beyond television we do not discuss the fact that they are still a group of marginalized people in our country.

High Expectations

In order to maintain high expectations for my students, I designed a lesson that used collaboration and co-teaching as the main pedagogical styles, and the vehicle for assessment was technology. Adding co-teaching as another pedagogical tool helped the students stay on task and was a positive modification. The lesson was created to meet the South Carolina World Geography Standard 8: *The student will demonstrate an understanding of how human actions modify the physical environment; how physical systems affect human systems; and how resources change in meaning, use, distribution, and importance.* In order to meet the standard, students had to be able to answer these essential questions: How will different groups in the same region respond to human changes to the physical environment? How will humans mitigate potential hazards to the environment? Students worked together to create a presentation for each stakeholder scenario in the Canadian Pipeline Project explaining why pipeline should or should not be constructed through a First Nations territory. The off-task behavior decreased during Lesson 2 because students had to collaborate and co-teach, but behavior problems were still an issue in comparison to the rest of the class. They like working together, but the off-task behavior created issues between the students. The coded data from the
observation of Lesson 2 revealed several themes. One theme was students’ feelings about collaboration. They revealed that they were frustrated too.

Observation Transcription: Lesson 2 (11/07/2017)

Peter (Frus.): Ya’ll going to help me? Ain’t that why we in a group? Ya’ll stupid.

Zay (Frus.): Let’s work together, but you got to do something.

My journal entry also reflects that collaboration is an issue.

Journal Entry: Lesson 2 (11/06/2017)

Overall, the behavior was much better. I know that the collaboration portion of the lesson continues to be challenging because the groups with the focus students seem to do less work and are a behavior issue. The collaborative groups had to come together and co-teach their stakeholders’ perspective on the content, they must create a presentation and implement a song, rap, handshake, and symbols. The collaborative groups including the five participants had the weakest presentations, but had the most creative and innovative song, rap, handshake, and/or symbol. I am reminded of the survey, when one of the students stated that they enjoyed learning by using music. I think that this may be a great tool to use in future lessons.

Lesson 2 was analyzed using a CRP lesson rubric (Appendix A). The lesson quality received an overall score of 11 out of 15 points, which is a one-point improvement from Lesson 1. Lesson 2 closely followed the lesson evaluation tool to insure high expectations. The lesson added the CRP strategy of co-teaching, which increased productivity and encouraged more ownership of the lesson. Students had to contribute because they would have to present to their peers and each student had a part to play. The fact that students were also frustrated with their group members’ off-task behaviors helped some of the students try to stay more focused.
One of the final modifications I made for this lesson to ensure high expectations was to help students with access and equity to technology. I reminded the students for two classes that laptops were needed for the CRP lesson date. At the beginning of the CRP lesson I asked students to make sure that their laptops are charged, and if not, I gave them an opportunity to charge their laptops. One student still did not have a laptop, so he borrowed mine.

**Counter-Storytelling**

The counter-storytelling component of this lesson in Lesson 2 content exposed a racial bias and attempted to address the root of the problem by looking at the construction of the real world issue, the Dakota Pipeline on Sioux’ land. The final student task of the CRP Lesson 2 specifically detailed a counter-story by targeting the land issue, exposing that United States government’s interest is less about land rights and more about profitability because Sioux’ people are not White. Figure 4.2 details the counter-storytelling narrative used in Lesson 2.

Journal Entry: Lesson 2(11/06/2017)

I think that the counter-storytelling was the best part of the lesson because the student got to see factual information that supported overt racism. The students also voiced that the were intrigued by the article and could not believe that Native American land had been taken from them. Steven said Indians keep getting a bad deal. You would not think that people would care if they Indian anymore. They did not hurt anybody. The counter-storytelling narrative helped to build cultural care and awareness about other disenfranchised groups.
Just to rehash the story briefly, this pipeline had originally been set to carry its freight of crude oil under the Missouri River, north of Bismarck. But the predominantly White citizens of that town objected, pointing out that a spill could foul their drinking water. So the pipeline’s parent company, Energy Transfer Partners, remapped the crossing for just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. This piece of blatant environmental racism elicited a remarkable reaction, eventually drawing representatives of more than two hundred Indian nations from around the continent to a great encampment at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri Rivers, near where the pipeline was set to go.

Figure 4.2. Excerpts from *Trump’s Pipeline and America’s Shame* (McKibben, 2017).

**Modifications for Lesson 3**

There were three main modifications for Lesson 3 involving connecting culture and learning and high expectations:

- Create scenarios that are relevant to students.
- Utilize competition as a pedagogical tool.
- Add a component where students are allowed to be creative.

In order to maintain high expectations of these students, I addressed these issues in Lesson 3. The first issue is that students did not connect to the learning because they found the topic irrelevant and boring. The second issue is that students were still struggling with high expectations during collaboration because of off-task behaviors. The third modification was a result of success in Lesson 2 because my students thrived when they were allowed to implement a creative element such as a song, rap, handshake, or symbol.

The lesson was weak in connecting culture and learning because students did not identify with the scenario or the people involved in the pipeline project. The students voiced in the interviews that they liked Lesson 1 better because it dealt with “real people”
(in the family scenarios). Lesson 2 dealt with stakeholders such as First Nations’ groups, Asian consumers and environmental agencies, and because these students had no prior learning about these groups, it was difficult for them to make a connection.

Observation Transcription: Lesson 2 (11/07/2017)

Jalen (Neg.): Them Indians crazy and don’t own that land. All this probably Trump’s fault. This is boring.

Peter (Neg.): I don’t like learning about this stuff, but I guess we need gas and shit like that.

Upon reflection, I should have used very specific scenarios that involved people around their age. Lesson 3 implements a scenario that includes people their age and a problem more relevant to their lives. Another modification was the implementation of another CRP instructional strategy because students still struggled with off-task behaviors in the collaborative groups.

Journal Entry: Lesson 2 (11/07/2017)

I know that collaboration portion of the lesson continues to be challenging because the groups with the focus students seem to do less work and are a behavior issue, but were better than lesson one. I think that adding one more CRP strategy will help keep the lesson flowing and students focused. Therefore, the lesson incorporated the last CRP pedagogical technique used in this study which is competition.

As previously noted, I did see success and creativity when students had to implement a symbol, rap, handshake, or song. Lesson 3 also implements more techniques that incorporate student creativity through music and diverse forms of learning assessment.
Lesson 3

Cultural Awareness/Care

At the beginning of Lesson 3, I implemented the final survey to the students. It was the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale (Goodenow, 1993). After surveying, observing, and interviewing student throughout three CRP lessons, I realized that my students did not feel a sense of belonging in my classroom. An example of how disenfranchised they are came from my observations in Lesson 2, which lead to the survey for Lesson 3.

Observation Transcription: Lesson 2 (11/09/2017)

Peter Neg.): I guess that means we lose because I am Black.

Jalen (Neg.): I am Black. Black people don’t like school. I don’t like to work, remember?

Therefore, I used a survey to collect data to measure these students’ sense of school belonging and the results. According to Shade, Kelly, and Oberg (1997), students become a part of the classroom when they enter the doors, but how they feel and their comfort level depend on their sense of belonging. I focused on specific questions (5, 7, 9, and 14) from the survey to determine how the students felt about my class, my lessons, and me as their teacher. Those questions revealed students perceptions about teachers that are pertinent to my self-study.

Survey Questions 3: Lesson 3 (11/24/2017)

Question 5-R1: Most teachers at my school are interested in me.
Question 7-R1: There is at least one teacher or adult I can talk to in my school if I have a problem.

Question 9-R1: Teachers here are not interested in people like me.

Question 14-R1: Teachers at my school respect me.

The students could respond using a 1–5 scale, 1 representing not at all and 5 representing completely true. The results to Question 5 revealed that all five students did not think that “most” of their teacher were interested in them. The results to Question 7 revealed that only two of the students did not think they can trust a teacher on campus if they have a problem. The results to Question 9 revealed that one felt that teachers were not interested in people like him. The results to Question 14 revealed that three students felt that teachers do not respect them. This information influenced the way I presented Lesson 3. I started with questions and a class discussion that asked students about how they feel about school. Then I presented the question: What if you never had the opportunity to go to school? We discussed the pros and cons. We then watched a video clip about students who did not have a school in South America. The second video clip was about students that were recently given the opportunity to go to school and begin music classes. The idea for the school stemmed from a music teacher who saw a great need in the area. Then, I presented some of my personal reasons for becoming a teacher and how I feel that my job is making sure that they not only learn but also feel like they are respected and cared for in the school. I think that taking time prior to Lesson 3 was very important in establishing care, determining the overall purpose of the lesson, and connecting them to learning.
Connecting Culture and Learning

Students were presented with the problem of no school in a very remote area of South America. They had to assume the identity of a local child that wanted to go to school. Each group was given a student scenario (Appendix K). The students had to look at all of the factors that would make a child want to go to school. The group had to create a letter or presentation that went to government officials in the area and stressed the need of a school to be built on the new road.

Observation Transcription: Lesson 3 (11/29/2017)

Jalen (Conn.): I can understand how bored he is and why he wants to play soccer with his friends at a school. I get really bored in the summer.

Caleb (Conn.): No wonder she wants to go to school, I hate watching my brothers in the summer.

My journal entry also noted positive finding regarding students connecting to the content of the lesson.

Journal Entry: Lesson 3 (11/29/2017)

Students seemed to enjoy this topic more because the children in the scenarios were their age and they could identify with them on a personal level. The students also identified with the necessity of school and the benefits of attending school for children their age.

High Expectations

In order to maintain high expectations for my students, I designed Lesson 3 to incorporate another CRP technique competition as well as collaboration and co-teaching.
Again, the vehicle for assessment was technology. The lesson was created to meet the South Carolina World Geography Standard 6: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement. The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement. WG-6.4 Explain the advantages and disadvantages of daily life in rural and urban areas. In order to meet the standard, students had to be able to answer these essential questions: How does daily life in rural and urban areas differ? How does economy drive political and environmental changes? Students had to again create a group presentation or letter. The presentation or letter could be video recorded, dramatized, set to music, or made into a rap or a song. The presentation options were limitless. I found that allowing for this type of creativity increased both engagement and motivation in my students. Then, I announced that the best presentation would win a prize.

Observation Transcription: Lesson 3 (11/29/2017)

Zay (Pos.): I am going to make sure my group wins.

Peter (Pos.): I sing better than Gucci, so ya’ll better watch out.

The competition element added motivation, but some chaos and arguments were documented in my journal.

Journal Entry: Lesson 3 (11/29/2017)

I thought competition would be fun! They did not even know what the prize would be, but they started to get excited and loud. I had to intervene when the students were yelling about how the idea of another student was lame and they would lose. I reminded them that it needed to be simple and they only had the ninety minute class period to work. Creating the actual document to submit electronically to me seemed to get lost in the excitement of creating a dynamic presentation that would win a prize. The same issues of turning the assignment in
persisted, but the discussion and collaboration were more on target because the students discussed at length what their presentation would say and what it would sound like.

Lesson 3 was analyzed using a CRP lesson rubric (Appendix A). The lesson quality received an overall score of 12 out of 15 points, which is a one-point improvement from Lesson 2. Lesson 3 closely followed the lesson evaluation tool to insure high expectations. The one-point improvement from Lesson 2 was the result of the implementation of the third teaching technique, competition. Collaboration, co-teaching, and competition allowed for more movement, direction, and ultimately higher expectations as students prepared their assignments.

Counter-Storytelling

Again, the counter-storytelling component of this lesson in Lesson 3 content exposed a racial bias and attempted to address the root of the problem by revealing how children of the Amazon and children who are darker skinned in South America have unequal and unfair chances of education. The final task of the lesson was for students to read another counter-story. Figure 4.3 is an excerpt from the article.

Access to preschool and kindergarten is lower for Brazilians of color, thus putting them at a deficit as they go into primary and secondary school. They are more likely to repeat grades and less likely to complete high school. The resources allocated to the schools that Brazilians of color attend are lower than those of the Whiter students.

Figure 4.3 Excerpts from Race A Factor in Access to Education in Latin America Diaspora (Arnette, 2015).
Interview Transcription: Lesson 3 (11/28/2017)

R1: Did you learn something from the reading activity? What?

Steven: I am glad I live here, I am so Black they wouldn’t even let me in kindergarten there.

Caleb: Me and Jalen okay, but Steven, Zay, and Peter would be screwed in South America. They so Black.

Zay: School don’t like Black people anywhere. That is why you get in trouble so much Caleb.

Conclusion

The findings of this research study revealed in order to promote cultural care and awareness, connecting culture and learning, and maintain high expectations, several strategies must be used during the CRP lesson to ensure success for my students.

- Implement a survey that allows students to share information about themselves.
- Provide extensive background information to the lesson that builds on prior learning.
- Scenarios that are authentic and relatable to students.
- All three components of CRP collaboration, co-teaching, and competition must be used for the lesson.
- Counter-storytelling narratives to provide perspectives of real people.
Cultural Care/Awareness

It was obvious that the more I discovered about my students, the more I felt that I could help them. I think that with each survey students learned more about themselves as well. I think that slowly they were discovering that the information I was asking from them was changing how I taught the lesson. I think that prior to each lesson different surveys would allow for informative discussions fostering cultural care and awareness.

Connecting Culture and Learning

The next big lesson learned from this study was that these students and many others did not have the prior learning connections that I assumed that they had. I needed to spend a great deal of time before the lesson assessing what students know and did not know. I also needed to find innovative ways through videos and discussion to provide students with enough background information to understand the lesson. Another aspect of this self-study detailed that students needed to connect with the content. The students connected with all of the lessons except for Lesson 2, the Canadian/Dakota Pipeline. The students did not relate to the stakeholders and did not relate to the Native American/First Nations people involved in the lesson. I must make sure that the scenarios are authentic, relatable, and relative to students.

High Expectations

I also discovered that in order for me to set high expectations and for students to meet them, they are most successful when all three CRP strategies are employed. The collaborative portion of each lesson was always a challenge but improved with each
Collaboration improved because the demands and expectations of the lesson increased. The collaborative groups also voiced their frustrations with each other and over time they began to work things out. The strategy of co-teaching helped each collaborative member realize the importance of their role in the group because they were responsible for teaching their peers a portion of the lesson. The strategy of competition motivated the students to do better than their peers. The multiple strategies allowed for movement and transition that allowed the lesson to flow and students were able to move about the room and work together.

**Counter-Storytelling**

This portion of the lesson seemed to tie all of the pieces together by providing the perspectives of real people. The students were very interested in the true stories of people that lived or experienced the real situation. They seemed to connect with the stories of the people raising cultural care and empathy for others. Moving forward, I will continue to provide student with poignant counter-stories that point out racism and bias.

Finally, I have realized through this self-study that closing the opportunity gap for these students starts within my classroom. They explicitly detail how they are different from the rest of the class, exposing how marginalized they feel. In my classroom, these students will be celebrated for those differences. I will continue to provide lessons that implement practitioner-applied pedagogy and provide opportunities for them to succeed. I will continue to build cultural care and awareness, connect culture and learning, and high expectations through lessons that expose issues that are relevant to them and meet
the world geography standards. I will tell the stories of others who have also felt marginalized so they can see that they are not alone.

Summary

Based upon my finding from this self-study, I will design an action plan that will serve my current and future students. My action plan will continue to focus on implementing practitioner-applied lessons for the remainder of this school year in order to gather more data and information from my students to improve my lessons and their success. My action plan will also continue to next school year by incorporating what I have learned through this self-study and preparing effective practitioner-applied lessons. I am still working on my theory and practice of practitioner-applied pedagogy. I need to work on my counter-storytelling pedagogy and develop this process more for my students. Aronson and Laughter (2016) suggest that focusing on social justice foundations are utmost importance which may be the direction needed for the upcoming year. I also need to work on my own critical consciousness by constantly being aware of my own implicit biases and intentions (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). The action plan for the remainder of this year and next year will be detailed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Action Plan

My goal throughout my career has been to teach children right where they are, no matter the situation. My students have compelled me to learn more about the powerful tool of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). It became my quest to help those I teach learn in a way that will break down the barriers in education for students. To remedy this, I launched a self-study of my own, teaching by developing lessons and teaching in a way that would empower these individuals. The self-study attempted to answer the primary research question:

1. What benefits and challenges do I encounter when developing culturally relevant lessons for African American males?

This question led to two sub-questions that I addressed as follows:

a) How do the activities promote, or constrain, students’ learning by integrating culturally relevant pedagogy within the content of world geography?

b) How do student responses to the pedagogy support the changes I am making as I instruct this course in teaching cultural relevance and the content of world geography?

Discussion of the Changes

This self-study implemented three types of practitioner-applied pedagogy: collaboration, co-teaching, and competition. The study employed multiple data collection
methods: surveys, memos, CRP lessons, observations, interviews, and teacher journal. I used the Critical Race Theory (CRT) tenet of counter-storytelling as instructional tool. As a result of these research findings, I plan to continue implementing iterative cycles of practitioner-applied lessons in order to help my current students and prepare for next year. I will continue to collect and analyze the data using CRT so I can continue to make modifications that will impact student learning. Next year, I will begin the school year creating an environment of cultural awareness and cultural care, make adjustments to the CRP lessons, and provide opportunities for students to find, research, or create their own counter-stories. The action plan for this year and next is detailed in the following.

This Year

The findings from Lesson 3 have provided a clear direction for the next practitioner-applied lesson. The following strategies must take place:

- Implement a survey that allows students to share information about themselves.
- Provide extensive background information to the lesson that builds on prior learning.
- Use scenarios that are authentic and relatable to students.
- Use three components of reality pedagogy—collaboration, co-teaching, and competition—in the lesson.
- Employ counter-storytelling narratives in order to provide perspectives of real people with technology.
Cultural Care/Awareness

I plan to continue implementing the iterative cycles of practitioner-applied lessons throughout the remainder of the year. The lessons will start with surveys that continue to ask students more questions about their lives, their perceptions of learning, and their views about school. I think that this is vital in order to understand my students and to determine how I need to design the lessons. I think that the survey gives the students a platform of discussion so they can be decision makers in how they learn. I think it also helps them to realize what I am doing as a teacher to try to change my pedagogy to fit their needs.

Connecting Culture and Learning

I will spend more time frontloading the students with background information about the lesson in hopes that students will begin making connections to prior learning. The students seem to respond best to lessons that have scenarios about people like them. I will continue to implement lessons that have scenarios of teenagers facing similar issues. They also really like lessons that are relevant to current issues. I will attempt to find current events that align with the content.

High Expectations

I will continue to implement lessons that have three components of reality pedagogy: collaboration, co-teaching, and competition. I will spend more time on fostering quality collaboration and modeling what good collaborative skills are for my
students. I will also implement more creativity into the lessons by providing students opportunities to present or co-teach with songs, rap, or artwork.

**Counter-Storytelling**

I will continue to provide students with counter-storytelling narratives that name racism and expose how it is being used in the past and present to subjugate humans based on color. This fosters invaluable conversation and class discussion. I will continue to give students time to reflect on their readings and suggest solutions.

**Next Year**

My action plan for next year will focus on the following strategies:

- Promoting cultural care and awareness from day one.
- Implementing more surveys prior to the first practitioner-applied lesson.
- Weekly class discussions about behaviors and expectations.
- Practitioner-applied lessons with engaging and interesting scenarios.
- Mini-lessons exposing students to reality pedagogy.
- Students finding their own counter-storytelling narratives.

My data collection will begin before the first day of the school year. I will analyze my student rosters and school records in the weeks prior to the school year starting. I will use that data to ascertain my focus group. On the first day of school, I will purposefully seek out those students, call them by name, and introduce myself to them individually. I will attempt to call them by name each time I see them and begin building rapport as soon as possible. I will call home within the first week of school to touch base with parents to strengthen the relationship between home and school. Each class period will
start with information from the news and articles about current events. The school year will begin with knowledge-building information about world events. Ultimately, I will begin incorporating elements of CRP to foster cultural care and awareness, connecting culture and learning, and high expectations.

**Cultural Care/Awareness**

I will begin the next school year with major modifications that focus on setting the tone for a CRP classroom. One of my first tasks for next year is to work on creating, building, and growing relationships between students and the teacher from the beginning of the year. I plan to begin the year with a personal history project where students get to bring in pictures of their family and personal stories and share them with the class. I would start the year by presenting my own story to them, with hopes of gaining their confidence and building trust. Ladson-Billings (1995a) stated that good teachers keep the relationships between themselves and student fluid and equitable. Students would present part of their family history to the class and would make a visual representation of their own story that would decorate the classroom. Part of creating an engaging learning environment is to create a community of learning. I plan to institute a bi-weekly reflective journal that students will keep in class and complete every Friday that they are in my class. They will choose between several writing prompts or counter-stories that are designed to connect their personal lives and reflections to our lesson. These journal entries could consist of through-written responses, drawings, poems, or songs. The goal of this daily journal is to give students some choice in their classroom activities, form of expression that supports multiple learning styles, and creativity. The overall goal of this journal would be to engage students in the curriculum and for me as their teacher to be
able to read their reflections to see if they were responding positively or negatively to what and how they were learning.

As stated by Gay (2002) and Ladson-Billings (2009), culturally responsive teaching is a concept that has brought awareness of the need for teachers to be caring, sensitive, and responsive to the cultures of their students. Its main purpose is to get teachers to connect with students’ cultures and to help students connect with their cultural and social identities in ways that make them aware of their own culture. Cultural care and awareness is helpful in learning any subject, which is made more effective and relevant (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings 2009). I will start the year with ice-breaker activities in an attempt to make each student know the other students in the class. It will be my goal to make sure each person in the class knows the names of all of his classmates. Surveys will become a common routine in the class so I can elicit information to guide the students’ learning. We will collectively establish class routines, rules, and goals weekly in order to reach a consensus about what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior within the classroom. Each week we will take time to address any issues that arose during the previous classes.

**Connecting Culture and Learning**

Connecting culture and learning is a very challenging aspect of CRP because the knowledge base of each individual student is very different. In addition to acquiring a knowledge base about ethnic and cultural diversity to build cultural care and awareness, teachers need to learn how to convert it into culturally responsive curriculum designs and instructional strategies that connect the culture to learning (Gay, 2002). Each lesson will
continue to begin with video clips and introductory information. I will assume that the students know nothing about the subject and then build a knowledge base from that point forward. Building the knowledge base may take two or three classes prior to implementing the CRP lesson. Within each CRP lesson, I provided a scenario in which students played a role as individual affected by a problem. They worked in collaborative groups to find solutions to the problem. It is difficult to find a scenario and topic that will interest and engage students. From my findings in the self-study, Lesson 2 did not interest them at all. It will be my goal for next year to find a way to change that lesson and create a scenario that students will find interesting because the story of the Dakota Pipeline Project is an important story to tell.

**High Expectations**

Next year, I will make three major changes with the CRP lesson. As Geneva Gay (2002) stated, culturally responsive teachers are academically empowering by setting high expectations for students with a commitment to every student’s success. At the beginning of this research study, I implemented CRP by using collaboration, and with each subsequent lesson, added another component, co-teaching, then competition. During each of the lessons, collaboration was a constant issue with off-task behavior. I will create all of the collaborative groups instead of allowing students to choose. I will explicitly describe the requirements and expectations of each group member. I will also begin with a very short, 20-minute collaborative assignment. During the assignment I will focus on who is working and who is not. I will conclude the short assignment with a self-evaluation, giving students the opportunity to see if they believe they were good
collaborators. I will also privately speak to the students that did not meet my expectations of collaboration.

Next, I will implement a short, 20-minute co-teaching lesson where students can practice decision making about presentations and present a small mini-lesson. This will give students an opportunity to work out issues that may arise when working with others and having to speak to the class. This will also give me the opportunity to address any issues or fears that students have about presenting to the class. We would discuss the proper behaviors of audience members. After students have had the opportunity to learn the expectations of collaboration and co-teaching, I will implement the first practitioner-applied lesson. The first practitioner-applied lesson will have all three components: collaboration, co-teaching, and competition. I think that previous short lessons will prepare students for my expectations.

I will also implement more technology with laptop-based assignments. According to Radosevich and Kahn (2006), educators should look to digital technologies to solve the problems of student motivation and engagement. Students’ comprehension of material increases when multimedia facilitate learning objectives. Technology has the ability to transform the educational content and motivate students towards lifelong learning (Valdez et al., 2004). Research shows that technology properly deployed in the classroom can enhance the learning process by making it more interactive and allow for curriculum customization to match the learners’ developmental needs as well as personal interests (Radosevich & Kahn, 2006). Digital technologies as educational tools must be used in a purposeful and meaningful way and must be integrated with the relevant pedagogical and content knowledge in a purposeful manner (Blessinger & Wankel, 2013). I did not want
my frustrations with technology and student equity and access to technology to defeat me. As Emdin (2016) stated, I did not want to return to the “status quo” of not using technological tools with these students because of frustrations and limitations (p. 190). I want to perpetuate the enthusiasm that technology so often brings to the classroom. I plan on using different storytelling software to help students create counter-stories based on the lesson.

**Counter-Storytelling**

My action plan would incorporate using counter-storytelling narratives as a way to conclude each practitioner-applied lesson. I think that this is a powerful tool in my classroom because it points out many issues that are ignored. Students also respond to the counter-stories in a very empathetic and personal way, fostering social change and critical thinking. It would be my goal for next year to have students find their own counter-narratives that support our lessons in addition to the ones I provide. I want them to be able to recognize racism and bias in media and current events. They will be able to access counter-stories from the Internet and reproduce them in their own words via technology. I want them to able to search for the truths that are so often left out of the national news.

**Conclusion**

This self-study helped me to see students as valued members of the learning community, bringing to it their unique backgrounds, perspectives, knowledge, and skills. I acknowledged that it is important to see and to know my students both as individuals, and this knowledge better prepares me to design CRP lessons. As a teacher educator, I
have gained many advantages by conducting this self-study. I became aware of my teaching styles, areas of expertise, and weaknesses. As a result, I have become more capable of enhancing the educational opportunities and options I provide in my classroom. During this self-study, I changed my attitude toward my own teaching practice because it taught me to remain open to new possibilities situated within my own daily practice.

Throughout this self-study, I looked at all of the tenets of CRT and wondered why I chose counter-storytelling as both a learning strategy. My job is a storyteller. As a history teacher, I tell the stories of real people and real events. I have always tried to tell the stories of people both ordinary and extraordinary. I try to tell their stories of truth, hope, and inspiration—stories that tell us who they were and how they impact who we want to be. I found myself telling the stories of these boys and ultimately telling the story of my dad. He was a tenth-grade drop-out who never had the opportunity for his real story to be told. He never fully understood why I wanted to be a teacher, but somewhere in all of that, he was the reason.

**Final Reflection**

As Bryan and Milton Williams (2017) stated, “cultural behaviors are influential in the development of the personal and professional identity of teachers. Culturally relevant teachers should also possess relational and ideological dispositions, which enable them to see potential and cultivate success in Black children” (p. 212). I know that I fall short as culturally relevant pedagogue because of implicit biases and good intended White teacher empathy (Warren, 2015). I am determined to work to eliminate the biases that I can control in order to serve my students through practitioner-applied components of
culturally relevant pedagogy. This entire process has helped me change my consciousness of pedagogy and race. It has changed the way I think about my students and the way I develop curriculum. It has made me painfully aware of where we are in education and the opportunity gaps that systemic and institutionalized racism has placed on our Black students both male and female. I also realize that being White and female will never allow me to truly know the positionality of my Black male students, but constant self-reflection and continued scholarship is a good place to start.
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Appendix A: Student Permission

September 6, 2017

Dear Parent:

My name is Audra Brown, I am a teacher at XXXXXX High School and a current doctoral student at the University of South Carolina.

I am conducting an action research study to examine student motivation and engagement. I will be asking students questions about certain lessons, assignments, and assessments. I will record the lessons and interviews. The data collected will be confidential and anonymous.

If you have any questions concerning this research or your student’s participation, please feel free to contact me at xxx-xxx-3215 or at AudraBrown@xxxxxxxx.k12.sc.us.

Sincerely,

Audra Brown
B.A. Anderson College
M. Ed. Clemson University
National Board Certified Teacher

By signing below, I give consent for my child/student to participate in the above-referenced research study.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____________________________

Student’s Name: _____________________________

Parent Signature: _____________________________
Appendix B: Pilot Lesson

CRP Pilot Study
South Carolina World Geography Standard 1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human characteristics of places, including the creation of regions and the ways that culture and experience influence the perception of place.
Indicator 1.1: WG-1.1
Analyze physical characteristics of the environment that result in opportunities and obstacles for people.
Essential Question: What factors shape our view of a particular place or region? What are push and pull factors that make people leave or stay in a certain place or region?
Objectives:
I can identify characteristics of place.
I can understand reasons why people move into a region.
I can understand reasons why people move out of a region.
I can analyze push and pull factors.
I can analyze characteristics of the environment.
I can generate an infographic that will detail what “my family” should do in response to their situation.
Lesson Synopsis:
Students will watch a video clip of Hurricane Harvey’s devastation in Texas. Discuss geographically how and why this region was impacted by flooding. Students will look at topographical maps of this region of Texas and one of the United States. Students will be divided into heterogeneous groups and choose a family scenario out of a hat. The family scenario provides specific information about the family that will guide the decisions that the students must make. Students must evaluate all the needs of the family. Students must evaluate if the family should stay or leave the area. Students will research areas in the United States that would be a new home for the family. They will create an infographic detailing the characteristics of place for the family. The infographic is a digitally enhanced formative assessment using the Chromebook to complete it and a program called Canva. This lesson fosters collaboration as students work together to answer questions and create an infographic. Canva allows students to share the projects with each other so they can work on the assessment simultaneously.

Setting the stage-class lesson, lecture, and discussion:
1. Watch video clips of Harvey’s devastation.
2. Locate Houston on a map.
3. Identify characteristics of place for Houston and surrounding areas.
4. Identify push and pull factors.
5. Analyze why people would or would not move into region: cultural ties, religion, employment, schools, transportation etc…
6. Analyze specifically what Houston and the surrounding area has to offer its residents. Why do people like living there?

Formative Assessment:
1. Discuss what an infographic is.
2. Show an example of an infographic.
3. Divide students into heterogeneous groups.
4. Allow students to choose their “family”.
5. Allow students time to analyze what push and pull factors their family will face.
6. Allow students time to analyze characteristics of place that their family will need.
7. Checkpoint 1: Students should answer the following questions.
   A. Should they stay or should they go?
   B. Why should they stay or go?
   C. What should they be looking for in an area to meet the needs of the family?
8. Pass out infographic rubric and review with students.
9. Checkpoint 2: Students should open their canva account and answer the following questions.
   A. What is your main idea?
   B. What is your canva template?
   C. How are you going to divide this task into smaller parts?
10. Checkpoint 3: Students should have the following information on their infographic.
    A. What is your family’s new location?
    B. What are the human characteristics of place for the location?
    C. What are the physical characteristics of the place for the location?
    D. What are the opportunities that the place has to offer the family?
11. Checkpoint 4: Submit Infographic
Appendix C: Hurricane Harvey Family Scenario

Family 1: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Harvey. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is underwater and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. You were living in an apartment with your mom, two sisters, and baby brother. The apartment complex had not decided whether to rebuild. They have not offered to help with any type of temporary housing. You are currently living in a motel until your family decides what to do next. You have limited savings and need to find affordable housing, schools, and daycare for your family. Mom also needs a new job, because the factory that she worked at is also underwater.

Family 2: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Harvey. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is underwater and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. You were living in the house that your grandmother was born in. She is 86 and she lives with you, your mom, your dad, baby sister, and niece. She has never lived anywhere else, but the house is completely ruined. The flood insurance will only pay for 75% of what the house is worth, rebuilding on the same property is impossible because the water level is still too high. The family is trying to determine where to live because grandmother may have to be in nursing care in the near future. Dad’s job is landscaping, but there is nothing to landscape because of the flood.

Family 3: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Harvey. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is underwater and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. Your dad is a manager at the local Wal-Mart. It is totally gone because of the flood and employees are offered jobs at other Wal-Mart stores in the country. You and your sister will be graduating from high school in the next two years and going to college. Your current school is underwater and you will have to go to another local school for the next few years. Wal-Mart has offered to help you and your family move to any area and provide temporary housing until your dad can buy another house.

Family 4: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Harvey. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is underwater and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. Your mom is the local pastor and your house and your church are completely underwater. Your mom needs to help others from the church, but also needs to take care of you and your two younger brothers. Your grandfather lives many hours away and has space for all of you to live. She is jobless and homeless because of Harvey.

Family 5: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Harvey. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is underwater and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. You live with your sister and her husband and
your two-year-old nephews. Your house is completely underwater. Your sister’s husband has family in several major cities in the USA. They are all calling to see if your family would like to come stay with them. He is confident he can find a job there because he is a truck driver and can easily switch to another city.

Family 6: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Harvey. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is underwater and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. You live with your grandmother. She works a nurse at the local nursing home. All of the patients have been moved to other facilities, because the facility she works at is too damaged to reopen. She knows she can find work anywhere because she is a nurse. She also knows you will be going to college soon. You want to continue playing high school basketball and get a scholarship to a successful basketball university. She is not sure where to find a new house and a new job.
Appendix D: Lesson 1 Plan

CRP Learning Cycle One
South Carolina World Geography Standard 1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human characteristics of places, including the creation of regions and the ways that culture and experience influence the perception of place.
Indicator 1.1: WG-1.1
Analyze physical characteristics of the environment that result in opportunities and obstacles for people.
Essential Question: What factors shape our view of a particular place or region? What are push and pull factors that make people leave or stay in a certain place or region?
Objectives:
I can identify characteristics of place.
I can understand reasons why people move into a region.
I can understand reasons why people move out of a region.
I can analyze push and pull factors.
I can analyze characteristics of the environment.
I can generate an infographic that will detail what “my family” should do in response to their situation.
Lesson Synopsis:
Students will watch a video clip of Hurricane Maria’s devastation in Puerto. Discuss geographically how and why this region was impacted by the hurricane. Students will look at topographical maps of this region of the Caribbean. Students will be divided into heterogeneous groups and randomly assigned one of six possible family scenarios. The family scenario provides specific information about the family that will guide the decisions that the students must make. Students must evaluate all the needs of the family. Students must evaluate if the family should stay or leave the area. Students will research areas in the United States that would be a new home for the family. They will create an infographic detailing the characteristics of place for the family. The infographic is a digitally enhanced formative assessment using the Chromebook to complete it and a program called Canva. This lesson fosters collaboration as students work together to answer questions and create an infographic. Canva allows students to share the projects with each other so they can work on the assessment simultaneously.

Setting the stage-class lesson, lecture, and discussion:
1. Watch video clips of Maria’s devastation.
2. Locate Puerto Rico on a map.
3. Identify characteristics of place for San Juan, Puerto Rico and surrounding areas.
4. Identify push and pull factors.
5. Analyze why people would or would not move into region: cultural ties, religion, employment, schools, transportation etc…
6. Analyze specifically what San Juan, Puerto Rico and the surrounding area has to offer its residents. Why do people like living there?

Formative Assessment:
1. Discuss what an infographic is.
2. Show an example of an infographic.
3. Divide students into heterogeneous groups.
4. Allow students to choose their “family”.
5. Allow students time to analyze what push and pull factors their family will face.
6. Allow students time to analyze characteristics of place that their family will need.
7. Checkpoint 1: Students should answer the following questions.
   A. Should they stay or should they go?
   B. Why should they stay or go?
   C. What should they be looking for in an area to meet the needs of the family?
8. Pass out infographic rubric and review with students.
9. Checkpoint 2: Students should open their canva account and answer the following questions.
   A. What is your main idea?
   B. What is your canva template?
   C. How are you going to divide this task into smaller parts?
10. Checkpoint 3: Students should have to following information on their infographic.
    A. What is your family’s new location?
    B. What are the human characteristics of place for the location?
    C. What are the physical characteristics of the place for the location?
    D. What are the opportunities that the place has to offer the family?
11. Checkpoint 4: Submit Infographic
12. Checkpoint 5: News article and reflection
13. Checkpoint 5: Complete exit ticket
Appendix E: Hurricane Maria Family Scenario

Family 1: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Maria. You have had no power or running water for 77 days. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is underwater and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. You were living in an apartment with your mom, two sisters, and baby brother. The apartment complex is a total loss. They have not offered to help with any type of temporary housing. You are currently living in a single motel room until your family decides what to do next. You have limited savings and need to find affordable housing, schools, and daycare for your family. Mom also needs a new job, because the factory that she worked at is also gone.

Family 2: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Maria. You have not had power in 77 days. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is underwater and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. You were living a house that your grandmother was born in. She is 86 and she lives with you, your mom, your dad, baby sister, and niece. She has never lived anywhere else, but the house is completely ruined. Rebuilding on the same property is impossible because the roads and bridges are destroyed. The family is trying to determine where to live because grandmother may have to be in nursing care in the near future. Dad’s job is landscaping, but there is nothing to landscape because of the hurricane.

Family 3: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Maria. You have had no power for 77 days. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is destroyed and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. Your dad is a manager at the local Wal-Mart. It is totally gone and employees are offered jobs at other Wal-Mart stores on the mainland. You and your sister will be graduating from high school in the next two years and going to college. Your current school is opening only as a shelter for the homeless and you will have to go to another local school for the next few years. Wal-Mart has offered to help you and your family move to any area and provide temporary housing until your dad can find a house.

Family 4: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Maria. You have had no power for 77 days. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is gone and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. Your mom is the local pastor and your house and your church are completely gone. Your mom needs to help others from the church, but also needs to take care of you and your two younger brothers. Your grandfather lives many hours away and has space for all of you to live. She is jobless and homeless because of Maria. She is thinking that she may send you and your brothers to the mainland and she will stay behind.

Family 5: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Maria. You have had no power for 77 days. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is
devastated and no idea as to when you will be able to live again in that area. You live with your sister and her husband and your two-year-old nephews. Your house is destroyed. Your sister’s husband has family in several major cities in the USA. They are all calling to see if your family would like to come stay with them. He is confident he can find a job there because he is a truck driver and can easily switch to another city.

Family 6: Your family has just lost everything in Hurricane Maria. You have had no power or running water for 77 days. You must make decisions on where to live. Your entire community is gone. People are living in tents. You live with your grandmother. She works a nurse at the local nursing home. All of the patients have been moved to other facilities, because the facility she works at is too damaged to reopen. She knows she can find work anywhere because she is a nurse. She also knows you will be going to college soon. You want to continue playing high school basketball and get a scholarship to a successful basketball university. She is not sure where to find a new house and a new job.
Appendix F: Puerto Rico Newspaper Article

Excerpts from: *The Crisis in Puerto Rico*

By: Frances Negrón-Muntaner (2017)

The relative surge in coverage about Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria has floated previously avoided terms like “colony” to describe the island’s troubled relationship with the U.S. rather than the misleading “commonwealth,” part of the official names of states like Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Top journalists and government figures rarely mention race as a factor in understanding the negligent response to the hurricane or the U.S. presence in Puerto Rico more generally. In other words: Puerto Rico’s crisis is not generally seen as a racial matter. But it should be. To start, the rationale to acquire colonies in the Pacific and Atlantic on the heels of the Spanish-American War of 1898 rested on the notion of White racial superiority. The entire legal edifice that defines Puerto Rico as an unincorporated territory that “belongs to but is not part of the U.S.” is unapologetically racist. Through a series of decisions known as the Insular Cases (1901-1922), the Supreme Court opted to create a new body of law to distinguish incorporated territories on the path to statehood from the newly gained possessions (Guam, Philippines, Puerto Rico), and justify that the U.S. Constitution would not entirely apply. The main reason given was that territorial inhabitants were unfit and not mature enough to self-govern or be part of the union because of their condition as “uncivilized” and “alien races.” Through the little-known Jones-Shafroth Act of 1917, Congress extended U.S. citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico. But unlike American citizens living in the
States, Puerto Ricans were not entitled to fundamental rights such as voting for president or electing a proportional, voting delegation to Congress. The reasons against full citizenship are also entangled in racist logic. For some policymakers, the risk was that given their makeup as “lesser races,” the people of Puerto Rico simply could not understand “Anglo-Saxon principles.” For others, the fear was that political incorporation would enable non-Whites to make laws for or govern not only themselves but also the “whole American people,” and even “[give] the republic its presidents.” Ultimately, to the extent that Puerto Rico was considered too densely populated to make large-scale White settlement viable (as would happen in once-Mexican-majority territories like Arizona and New Mexico), unincorporation and colonial citizenship became the legal wall keeping Puerto Rico out of national governance. As such, the granting of U.S. citizenship 100 years ago had little to do with citizenship rights. Instead, in response to the growing opposition to American colonial rule, its primary aim was to promote loyalty to the U.S., criminalize pro-independence action, and underscore that the island was not a polity but American property. As colonial Gov. Arthur D. Yager put it, the U.S. citizenship of Puerto Ricans simply indicated that “we have determined ... the American flag will never be lowered in Puerto Rico.” Certainly, Congress eventually “allowed” Puerto Ricans to elect their own governor in 1948 and draft a constitution in 1952. But Congress reserved the right to approve the constitution, and the unincorporated territory doctrine remained intact. Sovereignty over the territory still legally resided not in the people of Puerto Rico but in a group of mostly White men sitting 1,500 miles away in Washington, D.C. Often overlooked by legal scholars, the “low” racial status of Puerto Ricans followed them into the Diaspora. As part of Operation Bootstrap, Puerto Rico’s
economic modernization policy of the 1940s, hundreds of thousands were encouraged to migrate to the U.S. through propaganda and measures such as lowering airfare prices so the poor could afford one-way tickets to cities like New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. Yet if settling in any of the 50 states theoretically made Puerto Ricans “first class” citizens who could now vote for president and enjoy full constitutional rights, they continued to be treated as nonWhite. Accordingly, Puerto Ricans experienced many of the same denigrating conditions familiar to African Americans: housing segregation, inferior schools, job discrimination, media vituperation and everyday violence.

Importantly, this entry-level experience proved to be enduring for many: In affluent New York City, where close to a million Puerto Ricans reside, they remain among the poorest residents, with a third living in poverty. All of which is why the crisis in Puerto Rico needs to be part of the national and global anti-racist dialogue. As evidenced by the hurricane’s rising death toll, which will at least reach the hundreds, failure to do so will likely continue to cost lives. It will also make the task of expanding coalitions more difficult and limit the potential to address both old and new challenges like climate change. To prevail against the present and coming storms, people may require not only better building materials but also a greater understanding of how racism takes many shapes and is constantly reassembling.
Appendix G: Lesson 2 Plan

**CRP Learning Cycle Two**
South Carolina World Geography Standard 8: The student will demonstrate an understanding of how human actions modify the physical environment; how physical systems affect human systems; and how resources change in meaning, use, distribution, and importance.

Indicators:

WG-8.1 Evaluate the ways in which technology has expanded the human capability to modify the physical environment both locally and globally.

WG-8.2 Compare how human modification of the physical environment varies from one region to another and may require different human responses.

WG-8.3 Explain the ways in which individuals and societies mitigate the effects of hazards and adapt to them as part of their environment.

Essential Questions:

How will human interaction with the environment change the physical environment locally and potentially globally?

How will different groups in the same region respond to human changes to the physical environment?

How will humans mitigate potential hazards to the environment?

How do humans adapt to environmental changes?

Objectives:

I can identify various geographic, political, social, and environmental factors that may influence the decision to build an oil pipeline.

I can explain natural resource issues and recognize that solutions are complex.

I can assess the impact that a decision will have on the stakeholders within British Columbia.

I can analyze various consequences from a decision about the British Columbia oil pipeline and determine their impact on stakeholders.

Lesson Synopsis:
Students have completed a unit on Canada ending with the Pacific Northwest. During this unit the English teacher and I have collaborated and students have also read *Touching Spirit Bear* by Ben Mikaelson. The book highlights the culture and environment of the region. Students will watch a video clip about the Dakota Access Pipeline. Students are introduced to a new dilemma in British Columbia regarding a new oil pipeline in the region. Students will work in groups as stakeholders in this issue. Students will create a digital presentation that will explain their position in the decision. Students will create a presentation of their choosing to present to the class. Students will work with their group to obtain the information needed for the presentation, but separately create a presentation. Each group member will submit their own individual presentation, but ultimately select the best one to present to the class. The students will present their projects and the overall best project will be selected. Ultimately, students will read an article about the Dakota Access Pipeline and reflect on the reading.

Setting the stage-class lesson, lecture, and discussion:
1. Watch video clip of Dakota Access Pipeline pros and cons.
2. Identify the Dakota Access Pipeline on a Map.
3. Analyze the pros and cons of the pipeline considering economic, environmental, and cultural change.
4. Identify the proposed British Columbia Pipeline on a map.

Formative Assessment:
1. Discuss Powtoon, Google Slides, Canva, and Powerpoint.
2. Show an examples of each.
3. Work through an example of one.
4. Discuss expectations: on task behaviors, group readiness, and student understanding.
5. Allow students to return to self-selected groups.
6. Allow students to choose which stakeholder group they would like to be a member of in the British Columbia Pipeline scenario.
7. Divide students into balanced groups.
8. Allow students time to analyze the information. Pass out the Pipeline letter. Make each student look up one potential research site and provide information from the site to share with the group.
9. Allow students time to answer the questions on the Stakeholder sheet.
10. Checkpoint 1: Go over potential answers to the Stakeholder sheet to make sure students are on the right track.
11. Pass out Rubric.
13. Check Point 3: Students independently work to complete their own presentation.
14. Checkpoint 4: Students regroup to determine which Presentation they will use to represent their group in the stakeholder presentation.

15. Checkpoint 5: Students must present their information in a creative way implementing a song, rap, handshake, or symbol into the presentation.
Appendix H: Stakeholders

**Stakeholder Table**

Part 1. Use this table to record the level of influence you think each of the stakeholders has on the decision to build the oil pipeline in British Columbia.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>How will they be affected?</th>
<th>Is the effect positive or negative?</th>
<th>Is the effect part of the intended goal? (yes or no) Is it a side effect?</th>
<th>Does the stakeholder understand the risks? (yes or no)</th>
<th>How important is the interest of the stakeholder?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Nations Coastal Communities (Gitga’at; Haisla)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1- very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial Ecosystem (Great Bear Rainforest)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2- somewhat important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Ecosystem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3- unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife (Kermode, or white spirit, bear, salmon, grey wolf)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and gas company</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine transportation industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial fishermen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Asian consumers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I: Dakota Pipeline Newspaper Article

Excerpt from: *Trump's Pipeline and America's Shame*

By: Bill McKibben (2017)

The construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline will be restarted, a development that fits in perfectly with one of this country’s oldest cultural practices, going back to the days of Plymouth Rock: repressing Native Americans.

Just to rehash the story briefly, this pipeline had originally been set to carry its freight of crude oil under the Missouri River, north of Bismarck. But the predominantly White citizens of that town objected, pointing out that a spill could foul their drinking water. So the pipeline’s parent company, Energy Transfer Partners, remapped the crossing for just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. This piece of blatant environmental racism elicited a remarkable reaction, eventually drawing representatives of more than two hundred Indian nations from around the continent to a great encampment at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri Rivers, near where the pipeline was set to go. They were joined, last summer and into the fall, by clergy groups, veterans groups, environmental groups—including 350.org, the climate-advocacy organization I co-founded—and private citizens, who felt that this was a chance to begin reversing four centuries of literally and figuratively dumping on Native Americans. And the protesters succeeded. Despite the German shepherds and pepper spray let loose by E.T.P.’s security guards, despite the fire hoses and rubber bullets employed by the various paramilitary
police forces that assembled, they kept a nonviolent discipline that eventually persuaded the Obama Administration to agree to further study of the plan.
Appendix J: Lesson 3 Plan

CRP Learning Cycle Three

South Carolina World Geography Standard 6: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Indicators:
WG-6.1 Compare the changing functions, sizes, and spatial patterns of rural and urban regions (e.g., the concentration of shopping services in suburbs).

WG-6.2 Explain how the structure of rural and urban places is impacted by economic, social, political, and environmental transitions, including gains or losses by industries and the outsourcing or offshoring of labor (e.g., the shift from textiles to automobile manufacturing in the American South).

WG-6.3 Explain how globalization has changed the function of cities (e.g., the role of technology that has reduced logistics related to distance).

WG-6.4 Explain the advantages and disadvantages of daily life in rural and urban locations (e.g., transportation systems, zoning, congestion, population density, cultural opportunities, cost of living).

WG-6.6 Summarize the physical and human impacts of emerging urban forms in the world (e.g., the environmental challenges posed by increasing urbanization and sprawl).

Essential Questions:
How do environment and climate impact rural and urban areas?
How has globalization changed the function of cities and rural areas?
How does daily life in rural and urban areas differ?
How does economy drive political and environmental changes?

Objectives:
I can identify various geographic, political, social, and environmental factors that may influence the decision to build or expand a city.
I can explain the environmental issues and impact.
I can assess the environmental impact to determine what is best for the area.
I can analyze various consequences from a decision about the deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest in order to build a school.

Lesson Synopsis:
Students have completed a unit on South America spending much time learning about the Amazon Rainforest, the Amazon River, and poverty facing the surrounding areas. Students will watch a video clip with children in South America asking for the opportunity to go to school. Many are having to walk miles and miles a day to make it to the nearest school. Students are introduced to a potential solution. A humanitarian group would like to build a new school in on the edge of the rainforest. The organization will use the money earned from cutting down the trees to help facilitate the building of the new school. The problem is that the rainforest is protected and many environmental agencies are trying to stop the new school. Students will work in groups as stakeholders in this issue. Students will create a digital presentation that will explain their position in the decision and present it to the class.

Setting the stage-class lesson, lecture, and discussion:
1. Watch video clip of children wanting to go to school in South America.
2. Identify the new proposed school location on a map.
3. Analyze the pros and cons of the school considering economic, environmental, and cultural change.

Formative Assessment:
2. Show an example of each.
3. Work through an example of one.
4. Ask students to create a letter or presentation to the Minister of Education in Peru.
5. Discuss expectations: on task behaviors, group readiness, and student understanding.
6. Discuss why children living in remote areas of Peru would want or need the opportunity to go to school.
7. Allow students to choose a fictional student that they would like to portray in the scenario.
8. Ask students to individually complete a letter or presentation based on the scenario.
9. Checkpoint 1: Go over requirements for the letter/presentation
11. Check Point 2: Students independently work to complete their own presentation.
12. Checkpoint 3: Students must present their work to the collaborative group.
13. Checkpoint 4: Students choose one presentation/letter to represent group.
14. The presentations/letters from representing each group are presented to the class.
15. The class votes on the most compelling letter/presentation and the group receives the prize.
Appendix K: Amazon School Scenario

My name is Maria and I am the oldest of 4 children. I am 14. I live with my mom and sisters. I learned to read and write from my grandmother. I do not have much time to do school work because I have to help with my sisters, so my mom can work. If we had a school, me and my sisters would have somewhere to go every day and someone that could teach us more than reading and writing. I think I want to be a nurse.

My name is Pedro and I live with my grandparents. I am 12. They are very old and live on the hillside. We farm and I help my grandparents. I do not have many friends. I would love to play soccer. I have a soccer ball and listen to the games on our radio. If I went to school, I know I would be the best player on the team.

My name is Lina and I am 17 years old. I am the baby of my family. My brothers and sisters are married and out of the house. I love to draw and paint, but we do not have much money to buy paints. I think I would be an excellent artist if I had a teacher. My older brothers and sisters struggle to find work. If I could go to school and then go to university I could help my entire family.

My name is Tito. I am 15 years old. I went to elementary school in the city when I lived with my dad. Now I live with my mom and brothers and we live too far from the school. My mom has taught us from the books she has but they are falling apart. I am interested in science and she does not know much about any of that. I get books from my cousins when they come to visit. If I went to school, I could read more stuff and I might be able to go to the university.

My name is Andres. I am a 13 years old and have two brothers and two sisters. I am already almost 6 feet tall. My mom laughs because we come from a short family. I am hungry all the time, we only eat two meals a day because it is hard to feed our huge family. My cousins say they get to eat all they want at their school. School would be a good place for me and help me stay out of trouble.
Appendix L: Brazilian School Newspaper Article

Excerpts from: *Race a Factor in Access to Education in Latin American Diaspora*
By: Autumn Arnett (2015)

A good part of the reason for this is relative to preparation, she says; access to preschool and kindergarten is lower for Brazilians of color, thus putting them at a deficit as they go into primary and secondary school. They are more likely to repeat grades and less likely to complete high school.

The resources allocated to the schools that Brazilians of color attend are lower than those of the Whiter students. Though public tuition is free, many Brazilian students of color are underprepared to take and pass the university entrance exam, which serves as the primary determinant for who does and does not get to attend college, notes Otovo.

A recently implemented affirmative action policy in Brazil is “seeking to address structural problems that are keeping students of color from participation” in the country’s public system of higher education, says Otovo.

“Part of the reason why this is a really interesting time to be thinking about the preparatory of high school education to college is because a lot of things are changing, in that literally thousands of students from the public [K-12] school system and students of color have been able to move into universities that were previously almost exclusively middle- and upper-class White Brazilian students.”

Despite the success of the policy—more than half of the public universities in Brazil have exceeded their admissions quotas for students of color since its 2012 implementation—it is still a very “politically challenging type of policy, because there’s a lot at stake on both sides,” Otovo says.

“The policy requires Brazilians to really think about the racial distinctions and the way people are categorized. There are certainly many who support this opening up and support structural ways to [correct] structural racism, but of course there are others that have been very vocal in their opposition.”
Appendix M: Survey 1

1. Do you like school?
2. What is your favorite subject (math, science, English, social studies)?
3. Do you play video game?
4. Do you have a smartphone?
5. Who (at home) asks you about your school work?
6. Do you like working in groups or alone?
7. What is your hobby?
8. Do you live with your brothers and sisters?
Appendix N: Survey 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays and writing</td>
<td>Group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeches</td>
<td>Collaboration-groups or pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debates (full group or '4 corners')</td>
<td>Activities with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentations</td>
<td>You cooperate well and jump at the chance to work with other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You listen well to people talking/lecturing, or to the radio</td>
<td>Group discussions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logical/ Mathematical</th>
<th>Spatial/ visual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Think in images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puzzles</td>
<td>You like photographs, maps, videos, anything you can watch and look at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>If someone is talking, you like having images to go along with it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphs</td>
<td>You like Powerpoints/ Prezis and they help you remember concepts and examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are drawn to looking at things in a logical, rational way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrapersonal</th>
<th>Naturalist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Outdoors, ecology, nature, animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solo time</td>
<td>You like being outside or learning in a natural environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual worksheets</td>
<td>Having animals around calms you down or makes you happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-directed learning</td>
<td>Being by a window helps you focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You like being working on your own, being independent and &quot;doing your own thing&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please answer the following questions based on this scale: 1 = Least, 5 = Most

a) How would you rate your level of understanding in the course right now? 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

b) How would you rate your level of interest in Social Studies? 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5
Appendix O: Student Survey 3

Psychological Sense of School Membership (Goodenow, 1993)

Circle the answer for each statement that is most true for you.

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I feel like a part of my school.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) People at my school notice when I am good at something.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) It is hard for people like me to be accepted at my school.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Other students in my school take my opinions seriously.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Most teachers at my school are interested in me.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Sometimes I feel as if I don’t belong in my school.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) There is at least one teacher or adult I can talk to in my school if I have a problem.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) People at my school are friendly to me.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Teachers here are not interested in people like me.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) I am included in lots of activities at my school.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) I am treated with as much respect as other students in my school.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) I feel very different from most other students at my school.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) I can really be myself at my school.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Teachers at my school respect me.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) People at my school know that I can do good work.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) I wish I were in a different school.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) I feel proud to belong to my school.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) Other students at my school like me the way that I am.</td>
<td>Not at all true</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix P: Pilot Study Interview

Thank you for your willingness to help me with my research. I am going to ask you several questions about the lesson that we finished last class. I would like you to give me as much feedback as possible. Tell me anything you think because there are no right or wrong answers. I will audio record this interview just to make sure that I have each of your responses written correctly. Student Feedback:

Name: 

Student Interview Questions

1. How did you like the Hurricane Harvey assignment?
2. Do you think it was relevant to your life?
3. Do you think you understand the objectives of the lesson better by working with your classmates?
4. Did you like working with your classmates?
5. Did you like working with your Chromebook?
6. Did you like creating a digital document?
7. Did you understand what was needed on the digital document?
8. Was the rubric easy to understand?
9. What grade do you feel you deserve and why?
10. Based on the collaborative assignment expectations what grade do you feel each participant should receive and why?
11. Did you find this assignment more engaging than other assignments or tests? Why?
Appendix Q: Student Interview 1

_____________ thank you for your willingness to help me with my research. I am going to ask you several questions about the lesson that we finished last class. I would like you to give me as much feedback as possible. Tell me anything you think because there are no right or wrong answers. I will audio record this interview just to make sure that I have each of your responses written correctly. Student Feedback:

Name: ______________

Student Interview Questions

1. How did you like the Hurricane Maria assignment?
2. Do you think it was relevant to your life?
3. Do you think you understand the objectives of the lesson better by working with your classmates?
4. Did you like working with your classmates?
5. Did you like working with your Chromebook?
6. Did you like creating a digital document?
7. Did you understand what was needed on the digital document?
8. Was the rubric easy to understand?
9. What grade do you feel you deserve and why?
10. Based on the collaborative assignment expectations what grade do you feel each participant should receive and why?
11. Did you find this assignment more engaging than other assignments or tests? Why?
12. Did you learn something from the reading activity? What?
13. What did you learn from your reflections on the reading?
14. Does learning about the past help the future? Why?
Appendix R: Student Interview 2

_____________ thank you for your willingness to help me with my research. I am going to ask you several questions about the lesson that we finished last class. I would like you to give me as much feedback as possible. Tell me anything you think because there are no right or wrong answers. I will audio record this interview just to make sure that I have each of your responses written correctly. Student Feedback:

1. How did you like the Pipeline assignment?
2. Do you think it was relevant to your life?
3. Do you think you understand the objectives of the lesson better by working with your classmates?
4. Did you like working with your classmates?
5. Did you like working with your Chromebook?
6. Did you like creating a presentation on your Chromebook?
7. Did you understand what was needed on your presentation?
8. Was the rubric easy to understand?
9. What grade do you feel you deserve and why?
10. Based on the collaborative assignment expectations what grade do you feel each participant should receive and why?
11. Did you find this assignment more engaging than other assignments or tests? Why?
12. Did you find yourself more motivated to complete this lesson than other types of test? Why?
Appendix S: Student Interview 3

_____________ thank you for your willingness to help me with my research. I am going to ask you several questions about the lesson that we finished last class. I would like you to give me as much feedback as possible. Tell me anything you think because there are no right or wrong answers. I will audio record this interview just to make sure that I have each of your responses written correctly. Student Feedback:

1. How did you like the Amazon School assignment?
2. Do you think it was relevant to your life?
3. Do you think you understand the objectives of the lesson better by working with your classmates?
4. Did you like working with your classmates?
5. Did you like working with your Chromebook?
6. Did you like creating a presentation on your Chromebook?
7. Did you understand what was needed on your presentation?
8. Was the rubric easy to understand?
9. What grade do you feel you deserve and why?
10. Based on the collaborative assignment expectations what grade do you feel each participant should receive and why?
11. Did you find this assignment more engaging than other assignments or tests? Why?
12. Did you find yourself more motivated to complete this lesson than other types of test? Why?
### Appendix T: Culturally Relevant Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Emerging 1</th>
<th>Developing 2</th>
<th>Proficient 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson does not or rarely communicates higher standards, objectives, or essential questions.</td>
<td>Lesson communicates the use of only one or two of the following: high standards, objectives, or essential questions.</td>
<td>Lesson implements and communicates a variety of high standards, objectives, and essential questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples and Rubrics</td>
<td>Lesson does not show students rubric or samples of finished projects prior to lesson.</td>
<td>Lesson only shows one; sample of work or sample or rubric.</td>
<td>Give students the opportunity to view examples of completed work and rubrics prior to lesson so students have a visual to aid in understanding the high expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration, Coteaching, and Competition</td>
<td>Lesson does not communicate or rarely communicates opportunities for collaboration, coteaching, and competition.</td>
<td>Lesson communicates the use of one or two of the following: collaboration, coteaching, and competition.</td>
<td>Lesson implements and communicates the use of two or more of the following: collaboration, coteaching, and competition opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating cultural care and awareness</td>
<td>Lesson does not provide opportunity for cultural care and awareness.</td>
<td>Lesson provides some opportunity for cultural care or cultural awareness, but not both.</td>
<td>Lesson provides opportunity for both cultural awareness and care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting culture and learning</td>
<td>Lesson does not use real-life situations, culturally diverse or global situations.</td>
<td>Lesson uses real-life, global or culturally diverse situations but situations are not relevant to students.</td>
<td>Lesson displays real-life, global, and culturally diverse and relevant situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Expectations</td>
<td>Lesson does not or rarely communicates high expectations, during group work regarding on task behavior, group readiness, and student understanding.</td>
<td>Lesson communicates the use of only one or two of the following high expectations: on task behavior, group readiness, and student understanding.</td>
<td>Lesson implements and communicates a variety of high expectations for on task behavior, group readiness, and student understanding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>