Culturally Responsive Perceptions and Practices of Instructors at a Minority-Serving Institution: A Mixed Methods Study

Jeffrey M. Warren, North Carolina Central University
Camille L. Goins, University of North Carolina at Pembroke,
camille.goins@uncp.edu
Leslie A. Locklear, University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Dana L. Unger, University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Tiffany M. Locklear, University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Gerald Neal, University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Claudia Nickolson, University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Gretchen G. Robinson, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Abstract. The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the culturally responsive perceptions and practices of instructors at a public, minority-serving institution located in the southeast quadrant of the United States. Survey data were collected from 34 undergraduate and graduate faculty participants. Findings from a hierarchical regression analysis indicated that race or ethnicity and deficit ideology were predictive of instructor-student relationships and effectively communicating expectations. Additionally, a thematic analysis of participant responses suggested instructors believe students do not value higher education, and academic advisors should take on a more expansive role. Participants minimized the role they play in promoting student success. Based on these findings, the authors suggest that universities develop strategic plans to address inequitable policies and practices. Furthermore, instructors must challenge beliefs that are detrimental to culturally responsive instruction. A discussion of the findings and implications for culturally responsive instruction in higher education, particularly at minority serving institutions, are included.

Keywords: culturally responsive instruction, deficit ideology, instructors, higher education

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), in the past five years the racial and ethnic minority population has grown by 3%, more than 12% of Americans speak Spanish as a primary language, more than 50% of college students are women, and 47% of college students are considered nontraditional. As college students in the twenty-first century become more diverse, universities, microcosms of society, remain places where structures are antiquated and align with a shrinking societal mainstream (Osman et al., 2018). As such, "the right to learn in ways that develop both individual competence and a democratic community has been a myth rather than a reality for many Americans" (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 13). According to Osman et al. (2018):

> The university as a whole: its curriculum, the classroom and its dynamics, the intellectual spaces of knowledge production and sharing, the methodologies—in other words, the pedagogical theories and practices of

the university—including the governance structures of higher education in general, all need to be questioned (p. 394).

Osman et al. (2018) stated, "We are particularly keen to return to the idea that higher education and social justice are inherently intertwined and can be achieved through adopting appropriate pedagogical strategies and stances" (p. 394). When social and educational justice is advanced through culturally relevant pedagogical practices, students are positioned to overcome barriers and succeed. However, faculty and instructors often deliver instruction through a privileged lens and in turn fail to adequately meet the needs of diverse students. As such, this article explores instructors' perceptions of student challenges and recommendations for student support and delivery of culturally responsive instructional practices.

Culturally Responsive Instruction

According to Hammond (2015), culturally responsive instruction is "the process of using familiar cultural information and processes to scaffold learning" (p.156). This instructional approach emphasizes relationships and social awareness and combines affective and cognitive domain functioning to make culture relevant during learning. Culturally responsive instruction connects education and social justice and provides a platform to affect social change. It is the instructor's role to inspire and instill values in all students that lead to equality (Bassey, 2016; Fairclough, 2007; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2002). Culturally responsive instructors use cultural characteristics, experiences, and the perspectives of diverse students in a manner that is meaningful to cultural, experiential, and emotional development.

According to Ladson-Billings (2002), instructors are tasked with helping students "develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them [students] to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequalities" (p. 162). Culturally responsive instructors acknowledge a relationship between social justice and active learning by engaging students emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally as socially responsible citizens. Morality, ethics, and dispositions become intimately linked to the learning process, helping students to recognize and understand differences between cultures and identify strands of similarity that bind them with others.

Deficit Ideology

According to Gorski (2016), deficit ideology (DI) is the belief that disproportionate outcomes of individuals from underrepresented groups are the result of cultural, intellectual, and moral deficiencies. This ideology identifies the individual as the problem rather than larger systemic issues. DI is a means to pathologize marginalized students and is used to explain their lack of academic achievement (Sleeter & Grant, 2009). According to Gorski (2016), DI explains and justifies inequitable academic outcomes by pointing to potential deficits in a student's home environment, community, or culture. As such, the sociopolitical context of the education system and the impact of racism, bias, and economic injustice that succinctly explain academic outcome inequalities are overlooked. Gay (2018)

stressed the importance of understanding and honoring student's abilities within the classroom in order to create an environment for student growth. The instructor's ability to understand students' differing cultures can play a role in student achievement. However, when instructors adopt a DI, they typically believe there is very little they can do to help students achieve (Sleeter & Grant, 2009). University instructors who hold a deficit worldview may acknowledge macro-level factors (e.g., K-12 schooling, economic struggles, family responsibilities) impacting students but believe these factors are outside of their influence. Culturally responsive instruction is important, but systemic change is required in order for marginalized students to succeed (Gay, 2018). Addressing DI among instructors can be a first step in advancing culturally responsive instruction and affect social change.

Purpose and Rationale

Research exploring instructor beliefs of student challenges and culturally responsive instruction is sparse. Given the continued increases in diversity at colleges and universities, including minority-serving institutions, this area of inquiry is critical to ensure instructors are delivering relevant and effective instruction that meets the needs of all students. The purpose of this study is to better understand instructors' culturally responsive teaching perceptions and practices. This research was guided by the following research questions: Is there a significant difference in the frequency and desired use of culturally responsive instructional practices? Does race/ethnicity and DI predict preparedness, frequency of use, or desired use of culturally responsive instructional practices? Based on our relevant experiences and a review of literature, the following hypotheses were derived:

> Hypothesis #1: A significant difference exists between the frequency and desire to use culturally responsive practices.

> Hypothesis #2: Race/ethnicity and DI are significantly related and predictive of culturally responsive instructional practices.

Additionally, we aimed to better understand instructors' perceptions of student challenges and their recommendations for supporting students.

Method

Research Team

The researchers were members of a special interest group (SIG) through their university's teaching a learning arm of academic affairs. Three members were associate professors, while four were assistant professors; one was a coordinator of a federally funded teacher education program. All researchers held terminal degrees in either education or counseling. In terms of race/ethnicity, three identified as American Indian, four identified as White, and one was African American. A content analysis and other quantitative analyses were completed by two of the researchers. A thematic analysis of the qualitative data was conducted by four different members of the research team.

Design

A convergent mixed-method design was employed to explore culturally responsive practices and perceptions of instructors at a minority-serving institution. Convergent designs provide researchers an opportunity to compare quantitative and qualitative research findings. We concurrently collected all quantitative and qualitative data and independently analyzed them, a routine practice when using a convergence model (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Data analysis for integration occurred after all data were collected. Once all data were analyzed, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were merged in order to broadly interpret the findings and best understand the phenomena. By utilizing this design, we were able to gain a more thorough or comprehensive understanding of faculty perceptions and culturally responsive instruction.

Participants

University instructors ($N = 34$) employed at a minority serving public institution in the southern quadrant of the United States participated in this study. Participants identified their rank as lecturer ($n = 11$, 32.4%), assistant professor ($n = 9$, 26.5%), associate professor ($n = 10$, 29.4%), and full professor ($n = 2$, 5.9%). Two (5.9%) participants indicated *other* for rank. Most participants ($n = 23$, 67.6%) held doctoral degrees while 32.3% ($n = 11$) held master's degrees. Regarding affiliation, 52.9% ($n = 18$) of participants were instructors in an arts and sciences academic unit (e.g., College of Arts and Sciences). Other instructors were affiliated with education ($n = 6$, 17.6%) and health sciences ($n = 5$, 14.7%); two (5.9%) participants indicated *other.* In terms of teaching responsibility, most participants indicated they taught at the undergraduate level ($n = 23$, 67.6%). Four (11.8%) participants reported teaching at the graduate level. Participants' years of experience as a university instructor ranged from 1–33 years ($M = 14.4$, $SD = 9.4$). Twenty-two (64.7%) participants identified as White; the remaining instructors identified as African American ($n = 2$, 5.9%), American Indian ($n = 2$, 5.9%), Asian ($n = 2$, 5.9%), Multi-racial ($n = 1$, 2.9%), and Non-residential ($n = 1$, 2.9%).

Procedures

Existent literature was reviewed to better understand teaching practices in higher education. Then a research protocol was developed and submitted to the university's institutional review board (IRB) for review. Once the study was approved, we disseminated an email that contained a Qualtrics survey link that directed potential participants to a research packet. The research packet included informed consent, demographic questionnaire and prompts, and two surveys. The email was distributed to all faculty via the official university faculty listserv. Additionally, the email was distributed to all department chairs with a request to disseminate the study to faculty members in their respective departments. The study remained open and available for three weeks. Out of approximately 400 instructors, 34 participants completed the survey, a response rate of 8.5%.

Data Sources

Demographic Questionnaire

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire developed by the researchers. The questionnaire included items related to race/ethnicity, earned degree, years of instructional experience, academic rank, and unit affiliation.

Faculty Perception Prompts

The faculty perception prompts (FPP), developed by the researchers, are two open-ended questions about perceived student challenges and support strategies. Prompt 1 read, "In a sentence or two, please describe why you think some students on our campus struggle academically or are unsuccessful." Prompt 2 stated, "Describe what you believe is the #1 thing that can be done to support the students who struggle academically on our campus."

Culturally Responsive Teacher Preparedness Scale (CRTPS, Hsiao, 2015)

The CRTPS is an 18-item, self-report measure designed to assess the culturally responsive preparedness of pre-service teachers. Three subscales comprise the CRTPS: curriculum and instruction, relationships and expectation establishment, and group belonging formation. The curriculum and instruction subscale includes eight items designed to measure the quality of multicultural curricula, instructional resources, and the instructional methods used to meet student need. Six items comprise the relationships and expectation establishment subscale which assesses instructor communication and efforts to engage students in academic success. Finally, the group belonging formation subscale uses four items to measure instructional climate. An example of an item on the CRTPS is, "I am able to communicate expectations of success to culturally diverse students." Participants use a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*unprepared*) to 6 (*fully prepared*) to report their level of preparedness for cultural responsiveness. Scores on the CRPTS range from 18 (minimum) to 108 (maximum).

Hsiao (2015) found the CRTPS and its subscales reliable measures of preparedness for culturally responsive instruction. Internal consistency coefficients for the CRTPS and the curriculum and instruction, relationships and expectation establishment, and group belonging formation subscales are .95, .91, .91, and .88 respectively. For this study, internal consistency for the CRTPS was .93, while coefficient alphas for the subscales were .89 (curriculum and instruction), .88 (relationships and expectation establishment), and .83 (group belonging formation).

Culturally Relevant Teaching Survey (CRTS, Rhodes, 2013)

The CRTS is a 34-item, self-report measure of cultural responsiveness in adult learning environments. Participants use a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*) to report their frequency of use and desired use of 17 instructional practices. "I use surveys to find out about my students classroom

preferences," is an example of an item on the CRTS. The frequency use of subscale assesses the degree to which participants utilize culturally responsive teaching practices. The desired use of subscale measures participants' preferences for incorporating culturally responsive practices in the classroom setting. Full scale scores range from 34 to 170, with higher scores representing culturally responsive instruction.

The CRTS has demonstrated convergent validity with the Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale (Spanierman et al., 2011). In two studies reported by Rhodes (2016), both subscales of the CRTS were found reliable; alpha coefficients ranged from .78 to .88. The CRTS was found to have acceptable internal consistency in the current study. Alpha coefficients for the frequency use of and desired use of subscales were .88 and .95 respectively. The full-scale internal coefficient was .95.

Data Analysis

The goal of the quantitative phase was to explore the predictive relationships of race/ethnicity and DI and culturally responsive instructional practices. In this phase, a content analysis, as outlined by Krippendorff (2013), was conducted as well as other quantitative analyses. Qualitative data were transformed; dummy variables derived from the content analysis of the data collected from Prompt 1 of the FPP were used to determine Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients and conduct a hierarchical regression analysis. These additional analyses were conducted using SPSS. A separate, qualitative phase offered additional insights into instructor perceptions of student challenges and recommended supports. The purpose of the qualitative phase of this study was to identify themes in the participants' responses on the FPP.

Content Analysis of Prompt Responses

Participants' responses to Prompt 1 of the FPP were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is an objective, scientific technique used by researchers to make valid and replicable inferences about texts or other written material (Krippendorff, 2013). As such, the goal of the content analysis conducted in this study was to explore participant perceptions and beliefs within the context of DI.

Coding Frame Development. A coding frame was developed based on the concept of DI as described by Gorski (2016). The definition of DI was operationalized within the context of academic struggles and student success in higher education. Based on the recommendations of Krippendorff (2013), coding instructions were designed to systematically determine whether participant responses to the prompt were rooted in DI. Examples of possible responses and relevant coding were provided to assist in accurately identifying DI. Responses that contained any aspect of deficit thinking was dummy coded with a 1. Comments that did not include deficit thinking were dummy coded with a 0.

Coding Procedures. The coding team tested the established coding frame using three cases (8.8%) from the sample. This practice is consistent with content

analyses conducted by Barrio Minton et al. (2014) and Hays et al. (2016). Coding occurring during the pilot test indicated consistency in the application of the coding frame. As a result, the remainder of the cases were coded independently by the team members. Once all cases were coded, Krippendorff's Alpha was used to determine intercoder reliability. The analysis indicated an alpha level of .80, suggesting a minimally acceptable level of reliability (Krippendorff, 2013). All discrepancies in the coding were discussed by the team until consensus was reached. Once the team agreed on the coding of all responses, the results of the content analysis were used for further investigation.

Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis, as described by Corbin and Strauss (2015), was utilized during analysis of the qualitative data. Data collected from the FPP were placed in Microsoft Word to assist with comparing typed data responses. The coding team reviewed each case independently and then met collectively to discuss emergent themes and coding discrepancies. Each case was read and re-read to identify and code textual and structural descriptors that pertain to instructors' perceptions of student challenges and recommended support strategies. To enhance trustworthiness, the members of the coding team engaged in bracketing and cross-referenced personal notes using a shared Word document. This process allowed the team to reach consensus and agree on a final set of themes and related codes.

Findings

Initial Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted in order to become familiar with the sample including demographic information and the constructs under investigation. Due to small sample sizes of the race/ethnicity subgroups, participant responses for this demographic variable were collapsed into two distinct racial/ethnic categories: White instructors and instructors of color. As such, participants who identified as White remained in the White subgroup. Participants who identified as African American, American Indian, Asian, Multi-racial, and non-residential were placed in the instructors of color subgroup. The aggregation of data by majority and minority categories demonstrated in this study is comparable to Warren and Hale (2020).

In order to determine the likelihood of finding significant effects if they exist, an analysis of power was conducted. With alpha level set at .05 and an effect size of .35, the analysis yielded a power of .84 for a sample of 34 participants. Additionally, tests of collinearity and error were conducted to ensure basic assumptions were met. Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation as well as correlation coefficients are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Alpha Coefficients and Descriptive Statistics for Measures of Cultural Responsiveness

	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
1. C/I	.67**	.56**	.93**	.69**	.45**	.59**	37.44	8.06
2. REE		.84**	.88**	.40*	.25	.34*	25.88	4.24
3. GBF			.79**	.32	.25	.30	22.26	2.19
4. CRTPS				.61**	.40*	.53**	85.59	12.99
5. FOU					.73**	.91**	55.35	12.48
6. DU						.95**	62.06	15.93
7. CRTS							117.41	26.47

Note. *p* < .05 **p* = .01, C/I = Curriculum and Instruction, REE = Relationships and Expectation Establishment, GBF = Group Belonging Formation, CRTPS = Culturally Responsive Teacher Preparedness Scale, FOU = Frequency of Use, DU = Desired Use, CRTS = Culturally Relevant Teaching Survey.

Main Analysis

A paired sample t-test was used to compare the frequency of use of culturally responsive instructional practices to the desired use of culturally responsive instructional practices. There was a significant difference between the frequency of (*M* = 55.35, *SD* = 12.48) and desire to (*M* = 62.06, *SD* = 15.93) deliver culturally responsive instructional practices; *t*(33) = -3.59, *p* = .001.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated to evaluate the relationships between race/ethnicity (dummy coded; race/ethnicity majority as comparison) and DI (dummy coded; DI as comparison) and several criterion variables: curriculum and instruction, relationships and expectation establishment, group belonging formation, and the frequency use of and desired use of culturally responsive instructional practices. Relationships and expectation establishment was negatively and significantly related to both race (r = -.35, p < .05) and DI (r = -.43, p < .05). The other criterion variables were not significantly related to either race or DI and therefore were not included in additional analyses.

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to explore the degree to which race and DI predict relationships and expectation establishment (see Table 2). In the first step of the analysis, the demographic variable race/ethnicity was entered, as suggested by Cohen et al. (2003). In the second step, DI was entered while the predictor variable in step 1 was held constant.

Table 2

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Relationship and Expectation Establishment

Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	Δ R^2
Step 1				.12	.12
Race/Ethnicity	-3.02	1.45	-.35*		
Constant	27.83	1.17			
Step 2				.23	.12
Race/Ethnicity	-2.07	1.44	-.24		
Deficit Ideology	-3.06	1.42	-.36*		
Constant	29.49	1.38			

Note. *p < .05.

Step 1 of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated a significant relationship between race/ethnicity and relationship and expectation establishment, $F(1, 32)$ = 4.32, p < .05., R^2 = .12. Race/ethnicity accounts for 12% of the variance explained in relationship and expectation establishment. A combination of race/ethnicity and DI in step 2 was significant related with relationship and expectation establishment, $F(1, 31)$ = 4.72, p = .05, R^2 = .23 (adjusted R^2 = .17). DI increased the variance explained in relationship and expectation establishment by 12%.

Thematic Analysis

Two central themes emerged during this investigation, which sought to understand instructor perceptions of student challenges and recommended support strategies. The themes emphasize responsibility and were identified as (a) instructor responsibility and (b) delegated responsibility.

Instructor Responsibility

Participants discussed their perceptions related to their role and responsibility as instructors, including their work as academic advisors. Two subthemes further articulated (a) academic advising and (b) university support.

    Academic Advising. The ways in which instructors thought academic advising would best serve students varied. Instructors called for "one-on-one meetings" that would include "meeting with advisees, checking on their progress and midterm grades, and actively engaging with students to address their struggles." Other participants recommended instructors should "build trust and rapport" during the advising process. Participants also suggested that advising should focus on the whole student, not merely academics. For example, some participants suggested advising could include social-emotional development to help students address "the root of their particular problem." Still some participants advocated for "trained professional advisors" to provide student support.

University Support. Participants described ways the university could foster instructor responsibility. Participants suggested the university could train advisors to actively engage with students and provide professional development on "creative" teaching approaches. Other participants recommended the development of resources to help instructors work with the whole student and encouraged the university to emphasize the value of instructor-student relationships.

Delegated Responsibility

University instructors also discussed delegated responsibilities described as tasks or behaviors deemed the responsibility of others. Two subthemes included (a) the lack of academic preparedness and (b) the perception of student motivation.

Academic Preparation. Most instructors suggested the lack of academic preparedness led students to struggle in college. One participant shared, "They (students) have not received adequate education prior to entering university studies." Other participants suggested students are "too needy" and are not sufficiently skilled in writing, studying, communication, and time management. Additionally, participants suggested that students are the "victims of accountability testing" when explaining their lack of preparation for college level academic work. One participant suggested ineffective instructors/instruction contributes to academic struggles.

Student Motivation. While academic preparedness was a concern for participants, they also noted other factors that impeded student success. Many participants believed students lack motivation, grit, emotional intelligence, and interest. For example, one participant commented, "Apathy, I don't think they have a clear grasp of what their education can do for them and are thus apathetic about attending class and meeting deadlines." Other participants suggested students "do not place a high value on education." Participants believed that "poor family values" and "too many personal problems" were roots of the problem. A few participants acknowledged that many students are faced with "the juggling of multiple responsibilities (parenting, jobs, etc.)." However, one participant stated, "They [students] need to put academics first."

Discussion

Intentional analyses were conducted to answer the research questions and evaluate hypotheses related to culturally responsive instructional practices, DI, and instructor perceptions of student challenges and recommended support strategies. The first hypothesis that suggested a significant difference exists between the frequency and desire to use culturally responsive practices was supported. The mean score was significantly higher for desired use as compared to frequency of use of culturally responsive instructional practices. Instructors may genuinely have a vested interest in refining the manner in which instruction is delivered to meet the needs of culturally diverse students. However, they may not possess the requisite knowledge and skills to strengthen their instructional practices.

The second hypothesis, race/ethnicity and DI are significantly related and predictive of culturally responsive practices, was partially supported. Race/ethnicity and DI did not predict desired use or frequency of use of culturally responsive practices. However, race/ethnicity and DI were related to and predictive of participants' responses on the relationship and expectation establishment subscale of the CRTPS. White instructors and those with a DI were more likely to have lower scores of relationship and expectation establishment than instructors of color. Gorski (2016) noted that DI is a view held by many in the educational system. According to Civitillo et al. (2018), instructor beliefs can marginalize students while they attempt to deliver culturally responsive instruction. DI may inhibit the ability of instructors to form relationships and effectively communicate expectations to students. DI may stem from biases held by White faculty that prohibit them from understanding and connecting with minoritized students. Various responses to the faulty perception prompts indicate a lack of understanding of minoritized students' sense of community and perceptions of time and responsibilities. Participants considered students were "too needy" and displayed "apathy." They were also concerned about a lack of responsibility and worried that expectations of behavior founded in White, Western culture were at odds with a diverse student body. Past research indicates that teachers with limited experiences and understanding of inequality will find it difficult to understand students with different experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Additionally, some instructors may not possess the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and skills to effectively connect with marginalized students. Tinto (2017) suggested that instructors can foster self-confidence and a sense of belonging among students. However, this seems most achievable when White instructors are able to navigate and neutralize their privileged position.

In terms of participants' perceptions, a divergent interplay between accepting and declining instructional responsibility for challenges students experience was prevalent. Participants were eager to support students yet not willing to fully do so within the context of instruction. According to Hammond (2015), "one of the goals of education is not simply to fill students with facts and information but to help them learn how to learn" (p. 12). Similarly, many participants advocated for their role to extend beyond instruction and span academic support and guidance. While the role of academic advising in student success was highlighted, the relationships instructors form with students in the classroom often are more meaningful (Tinto, 2017).

When reviewing the quantitative and qualitative aspects of this work, it appears as if university instructors are in a quagmire. Participants indicated in the quantitative responses they would like to deliver more culturally responsive instruction, yet countered that desire in qualitative responses that delegated the responsibility elsewhere and had bold threads of DI. Additionally, qualitative results suggested participants have difficulty relating to and communicating expectations with students, perhaps due to their privileged positions and DI that were found in the quantitative responses. These conclusions were supported by findings that suggested participants believe students are incompetent and don't value education. Instructors appear to lack flexibility and the willingness to meet student needs and

therefore place responsibility elsewhere. These findings suggest grave instructional barriers exist that translate into educational and social injustices, keeping those in privileged positions in power.

Limitations

This study presents valuable findings; however, there are a few limitations. First, the sample may not represent all MSIs; therefore, the findings may be difficult to generalize. Only 34 participants took part in this study, yet this sample size is sufficient to detect a medium effect. Additionally, the CRTPS was designed for use with pre-service teachers, not university instructors, and, therefore, may impede the validity of the findings. Finally, participants self-reported, which may have led participants to provide socially desirable responses.

Implications

The findings of this study offer insight into the perceptions and culturally responsive practices of university instructors. Several implications for supporting the diverse needs of students emerge for universities and instructors when considering these findings.

Foundationally, these findings demonstrate a critical need for institutions of higher education to embrace culturally responsive instruction. Colleges and universities are encouraged to conduct an institutional analysis of policy and practices of all academic units and identify misalignments with culturally responsive practice. Furthermore, an evaluation of current instructional practices is required to develop a targeted and intentional, strategic plan focused on realizing culturally responsive pedagogy in all college classrooms.

Ongoing professional development is central to a strategic plan emphasizing culturally responsive instruction. Professional development should aim to effect changes in instructors' knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to culturally responsive instruction. For example, a shift to deliberate culturally responsive instruction requires a change in instructor mindset that can only occur through intentional, individual reflection. It is imperative instructors vanquish perspectives akin to DI and begin to view all students as possessing assets that can be molded and developed within classroom instruction. Instructors are encouraged to develop professional relationships with students and seek to understand their strengths and needs. Assessing faculty instructional needs and dispositions to address DI is needed prior to providing pedagogical strategies.

Professional development opportunities should allow for extensive course and syllabi revisioning as instructors work through the complexities of reshaping their classroom environments to meet the needs of all students. Hammond (2015) stated, "The culturally-responsive teacher tries to create an environment that communicates care, support, and belonging in ways that students recognize" (p. 20). Instructors also are encouraged to actively involve students in course development and revisions. Changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills that

advance culturally responsive learning environments will impact curricula, faculty engagement, and advising and have endless influence on student development and societal change.

Furthermore, professional development centered on utilizing the transparency equity framework (Winkelmes, 2015) as a teaching practice could potentially enhance the success of a diverse student population. The Transparency Project focuses on a set of teaching practices that assist faculty with framing intentional dialogue with students about their learning processes including the purpose and design of assignments and class agendas, the unfolding of class discussions, the testing and development of students' understanding, and the involvement of students in applying an established grading criterion (Winkelmes, 2015).

Academic advisors are valuable contributors to the success of students. The findings of this study suggest that expanded roles of academic advisors may better meet the needs of students. As such, it is important for universities to consider the duties, responsibilities, caseloads, and training of advisors within the context of other student services (Ricks & Warren, 2020). Universities are encouraged to develop and implement structured advising programs that encourage frequent one-on-one meetings; cultivate student-advisor relationships; foster supportive, student-centered dialogue; and emphasize the cultural assets and identity of students. Finally, advisors should have prerequisite knowledge to assess for social-emotional concerns and make appropriate referrals to student services offices as necessary.

Future Research

While this study offers insight into instructors' perceptions and pedagogical practices, as noted research on culturally responsive instruction in higher education is sparse. A replication of this study using a larger sample size will allow for additional analysis and insight in instructional practices and the role race, relationships, expectations, and DI play in college classrooms. Additionally, researchers are encouraged to explore the role DI plays in hindering the development of culturally responsive learning environments at MSIs. Non-MSIs should consider the findings of this study and their implications for faculty development and student success on their campuses. A longitudinal study that examines the impact of culturally responsive teaching on student success, retention, and graduation rates is recommended. Finally, future research should include student perceptions of culturally responsive instruction in college and their beliefs of academic support needs.

Conclusion

Promoting student success is a shared responsibility and involves students, instructors, advisors, and myriad others on a university campus. This study explored the perceptions and practices of instructors at an MSI and highlighted the nuanced approaches to instruction that often present as barriers to student achievement. It is important that universities establish supportive measures to

address instructor knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are detrimental to culturally responsive instruction and hinder student growth and development.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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