

FACILITATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR NOVICE TEACHERS IN AN URBAN SCHOOL

By

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By

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In today's era of school reform, struggling schools, serving mostly students of color and from poverty, often hire novice teachers. These teachers encounter numerous challenges, including classroom management, during their first year in these settings. Furthermore, these teachers are predominantly white, middle-class females who may find it difficult to relate to their students from different races, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds. Participating in professional development (PD) centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM) can provide these new teachers the support they need to become more effective working with this population of students.

The purpose of this investigation was to study how I, an Instructional Staff Developer – New Teacher Mentor, could provide four PD sessions centered on CRCM for five novice teachers working in an urban school. As their mentor, I wanted to supplement the support I gave them in their classrooms on a weekly basis by closely examining what they needed to know about CRCM. I studied my facilitation of these sessions and the experiences my teachers had as participants in order to understand better how to help novice teachers develop culturally responsive practices. This study was framed as practitioner research, and the main sources of

data were pre- and post-interviews, my notes in a facilitation journal, and teacher artifacts collected from the PD sessions.

As I analyzed my data three themes emerged that related to CRCM for novice teachers: Novice Teacher Backgrounds, Novice Teacher Classroom Challenges, and Facilitation Lessons Learned. The first two themes are related to and influence the third theme. Novice teachers came to the PD sessions with varying backgrounds, faced challenges in their classrooms which impacted their CRCM understandings, and both of these related to how best to facilitate PD for this group of teachers. As I examined my role as a facilitator, I discovered the intricacies involved when designing and delivering CRCM PD for novice teachers.

This study has implications for those designing and facilitating professional development, school leaders, those leading teacher preparation programs and induction programs, and those studying their own practice through action research.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### **National Context**

In the last few decades, there has been a national trend of “resegregation” of schools based on socio-economic status and race. According to a recent UCLA study, 43% of Latino students and 38% of Blacks attend intensely segregated schools with student populations of less than 10% white students (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegle-Hawley, 2012). Many people think school desegregation was a reality supported by state and federal government accountability after the passage of *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954. However, Darling-Hammond (2010) explained that many schools were never fully desegregated and there continues to be a trend of separate and unequal educational outcomes for many students of differing socioeconomic levels, culture, and race. Research indicates these differential outcomes are the result of disparate social and educational opportunities afforded students from different social classes and racial groups. These inequalities may include: inadequate health care, fewer early learning experiences, fewer financial resources, under-qualified teachers, unchallenging curriculum, and factory-model school designs that foster poor teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2010). This study will focus on the issue of under-qualified teachers in these schools and how to better equip them in effectively meeting the needs of their students as they become more culturally responsive teachers.

One-third to one-half of teachers leave the profession within their first five years when placed in hard-to-staff schools with a high percentage of students from poverty and students of color (Borman & Dowling, 2008). First-year teachers in struggling schools face daunting everyday realities that may increase their need for support. Challenges the teachers face include: disruptive student behavior, lack of classroom management skills, pressure of increased

accountability, feelings of isolation, and a general sense of exhaustion working with students from poverty on a daily basis (Fullan, 2007).

In order to address the staffing needs created when teachers leave high poverty schools, districts often hire a new set of teachers, many of whom are inexperienced working with this population and have inadequate training, both of which can compound the inequitable education provided to these students. Teachers who have had limited experiences with African American children, specifically African American boys, are less able to recognize the importance of trust and relationship building necessary to structure effective learning opportunities for these students. Moreover, they may misunderstand verbal cues, physical movements, and other cultural communication patterns the students exhibit, leading teachers to discipline or reject them from the group (Tutwiler, 2007).

Although there is some research that shows turnover may have a positive effect on the school and student achievement, this will only be the case if exiting teachers are replaced by more effective ones. The exiting teachers may find a better job match for their skill set and comfort level while remaining teachers at the schools have more experience, produce higher learning gains, and are less likely to leave the school (Jackson, 2010). However, in a recent study researchers compared the student achievement scores of 850,000 New York City fourth and fifth grade students over eight years and found that high turnover rates produced lower scores in language arts and math, especially in schools with more low-performing and Black students. These researchers discovered a disruptive mechanism that is created school-wide and among grade-level teams when high teacher turnover is present and this may be a harmful influence on student achievement (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2013).

One possible support available for new teachers working in struggling schools is mentoring. Researchers examined the practice of mentoring new teachers working in low-income, diverse schools, specifically around issues of equity and diversity of students (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005). They defined equity as a state where “the (achievement) gap is eliminated and where achievement of all is raised; it also refers, at times, to measures needed to close the gap. Access to learning opportunities for all means providing differentiated supports for learner.” (p. 845). Researchers argued that while induction programs exist in various forms nationally across school districts, this component of mentoring (i.e. differentiated supports) is often left unaddressed. This missing piece of professional development for new teachers is especially needed due to the fact that they are disproportionately hired in urban school settings where issues of equity arise.

In addition to mentoring, novice teachers in urban schools can benefit from participating in professional development centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM). Bondy, Ross, Galligane, and Hambacher (2007) described how three novice teachers in struggling schools were able to establish a psychologically supportive environment that would ensure the development of their students’ resiliency. Additional research stated that novice teachers continue to discover that their classroom management skills are lacking and suggested that this contributes to the one-third to one-half of beginning teachers in urban schools who leave the profession during their first five years (Borman & Dowling, 2008). This percentage is even higher when we look at first year teachers and some veteran teachers who entered the education profession without the practical experiences and professional development they needed to be successful.

In conclusion, to better prepare these novice teachers for such a demanding job, mentoring and professional development that focuses on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM) is necessary during their induction program with follow-up during their first few months of the school year. Changing a teacher's effectiveness is complex and includes improving the materials, teaching methods, and his/her belief systems (Fullan, 2007). By improving teacher preparation through providing support in a community of practice where teachers can explore CRCM, facilitated by an experienced mentor, these teachers can begin to examine their own beliefs and perceptions of the students they are working with in order to provide them with a more equitable education.

### **State and Local Context**

Mentoring is one form of new teacher support offered in most school districts, and in my local district a form of full-time mentoring has been created to help address the need to support a large number of first year teachers at three targeted elementary schools. The district serves over 100,000 students including about 62% White or Asian and the other 38% are students of color (Hispanic, Black, Multi-racial, or Native American). It is one of the 25 largest school districts in the US including 72 elementary schools. The three schools receiving full-time mentoring support have the highest percentage of teacher turnover when compared to the district average, at least 90% of the students are on free or reduced lunch, and at least 90% are students of color. In addition, these schools have declined academically in the last few school years based on their school grades (D's or F's). Due to the state's identification and intensive involvement with the development, implementation, and monitoring of differentiated accountability (DA) improvement plans for each school, the faculty and staff have experienced increased pressure and are working an extended school day in order to raise student achievement. This restrictive

state intervention along with declining academics and increasing behavior problems has led to high levels of teacher turnover when compared to district averages (Table 1-1 below).

1-1 2011-2012 District teacher turnover

District-wide	9.20%
Targeted school #1	18.87%
Targeted school #2	15.22%
Targeted school #3	17.50%

\*Percentage only includes terminations, not voluntary or involuntary transfers.  
(S. Aborn, personal communication, February 26, 2013)

Due to the high numbers of first year teachers hired at these schools the Professional Development, Teaching and Learning, and Title 1 Departments all collaboratively designed, interviewed, hired, and trained three new full-time mentors to work closely with the schools and their novice teachers. As one of these full-time mentors, I work with multiple first year teachers at one of the three targeted schools and my responsibilities include: participate in initial Action Plan meetings with the teacher and administrator to target two initial areas for improvement, meet with teachers on a weekly basis, consult on instructional and operational effective practices, conduct observations and provide feedback on target areas, assist each teacher in analyzing student work and data to drive instruction, model effective instructional techniques, and gather resources to assist the teacher as needed. Another important responsibility of the mentor is adherence to the data curtain. This refers to the non-evaluative nature of mentoring and the strict maintenance of confidentiality between the mentor and novice teacher (First-Year Teacher Program: Differentiated Instructional Support Manual, 2012).

This level of continuous support mirrors what Fullan (2007) indicated is necessary for successful implementation of change. He described the importance of identifying priority needs as well as the process of clarifying specific goals and behaviors that need to be changed. Both of these characteristics, *need* and *clarity*, are represented in these Action Plan goals. In addition,

this kind of implementation occurs in a job-embedded, natural way throughout the school day and strengthens the potential for success follow-through and sustainability (Fullan, 2007).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of my study was to examine four professional development sessions centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management with five first year teachers at my school. I studied my facilitation of these sessions and the experiences my teachers had as participants in order to understand better how to help novice teachers develop culturally responsive practices. I facilitated these PD sessions in a community of practice and examined my role as the facilitator of this PD experience. My two research questions are:

1. How can I build on my knowledge of what first year teachers working in urban schools need to know about CRCM?
2. How can I best facilitate professional development sessions centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management with first year teachers working in urban schools?

To inform my study, I reviewed the literature related to culturally responsive classroom management, mentoring, professional development, and professional learning communities. This literature review will be presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will outline the methodology used for this study, and Chapters 4 and 5 contain the findings and discussion sections.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of my study was to examine four professional development (PD) sessions centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM) with five first year teachers at my school. I studied my facilitation of these sessions and the experiences my teachers had as participants in order to understand better how to help novice teachers develop culturally responsive practices. I facilitated these PD sessions in a community of practice and examined my role as the facilitator of this PD experience. My two research questions are:

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To inform my study, I reviewed the literature related to mentoring novice teachers, CRCM, and professional development. This review of literature is presented below.

### **Mentoring Novice Teachers**

Fullan (2007) recognizes that teacher recruitment is not the only problem in staffing schools today. The larger problem is teacher retention. There is a “revolving door” where large numbers of teachers leave the profession long before retirement, with some studies finding that as many as 50% of new teachers leave within the first 5 years of their career (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The intention is that by providing them with support they will become more prepared, effective teachers, and ultimately, less likely to leave the profession.

In order to effectively mentor for equity, mentors must be well-versed in culturally responsive pedagogy and have a strong personal belief system. One study found that the following four mentor characteristics were necessary: 1) Pedagogical knowledge needed to mentor for equity, 2) Knowledge of contexts relevant to teaching diverse youth, 3) Knowledge of

learners: What diverse learners bring to class, and 4) Knowledge of self-related to diversity and equity (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005). Another study found that first year teachers working with mentors who had “urban experience” similar to the current teaching context found the mentors more credible and reported the mentors understood the context the novices were teaching in (Gardiner, 2011).

Furthermore, mentoring new teachers in struggling urban schools is most effective if the mentor fosters a commitment to social justice within their new teachers. Examining the micro-politics and issues of power and control present within schools and society along with maintaining a focus on student learning must be balanced with the everyday tensions of survival and success new teachers face (Yendol-Hoppey, Jacobs, & Dana, 2009). Finally, mentors and coaches must negotiate how best to support new teachers at high-poverty, turnaround schools in the challenging transition from internships to classroom teaching. These mentors/coaches should have experience working in such settings and be able to individualize their support to meet teachers’ immediate needs while maintaining a focus on professional development for classroom teachers (Gardiner, 2012).

## **Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Literature**

### **CRCM Defined**

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management involves many aspects of a classroom environment, teacher’s beliefs and behaviors, and students’ backgrounds and culture. It is a part of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) or Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). CRCM lays the foundation of classroom culture necessary for high achievement. It is grounded in relationships, high expectations and the ability to scaffold students toward success. However, the term “classroom management” can also be misleading, as CRCM encompasses much more than just traditional classroom management techniques and strategies. CRCM involves recognizing

our own beliefs and perceptions about our students, our cultural interpretations of some of their behaviors and the ways we show we care for them. Furthermore, Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, and Curran (2004) describe five core components of CRCM as: 1) recognition of one's own ethnocentrism, 2) knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds, 3) understanding of the broader social, economic, and political context, 4) ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies, and 5) commitment to building caring classrooms.

Because teachers predominantly are white, middle-class females, and the demographics of students is becoming increasingly diverse, there is a need for novice and veteran teachers to examine these components of CRCM in order to better reach their students (Brown, 2004). In order to do so, we must question how to best facilitate this learning – how can we help prepare our new teachers to succeed in a classroom where the students come from very different cultural and sometimes economic backgrounds than they do? How can we help sensitize these teachers to their own beliefs and assumptions that may be limiting their interactions and effectiveness with their students?

The following three sections highlight specific characteristics that research has found are embodied by a teacher who uses CRCM. The first section refers to a term – warm demander – that encapsulates the balance teachers need to find between showing students they care and setting high expectations for them while insisting that they meet them. The second section describes the belief system that teachers have when viewing what their students are capable of and how their demographic backgrounds influence their performance in school. Finally, some of the specific classroom management structures that are needed to establish an environment that positively supports learning and culture are described. All three sections are important components of CRCM that I will focus on with my teachers during our PD sessions.

## **The Warm Demander**

Ware (2006) studied two urban African American teachers and determined that warm demanders were teachers who demonstrated strengths as an authority figure and also as caregivers. Although the participants in this study were both veteran African American teachers, in another study researchers examined whether White novice teachers in urban schools could also successfully become warm demanders (Bondy, Ross, Hambacher, & Acosta, 2013). Their findings indicated that one, of the two beginning teachers who participated in their study, was able to demonstrate warm demanding behaviors in her classroom (i.e. maintaining high expectations for students, recognizing disruptions as unacceptable and moving on with the lesson, describing her own stance as caring for her students, explaining it was her job to ensure the students succeeded in school and in life). The other participant approximated some of these warm demander beliefs and practices but struggled to consistently perceive herself as an authority figure, which sometimes interfered with her management and thus kept her from reaching a higher level of warm demanding.

Warm demanding requires the teacher set high expectations for both academics and behavior for his/her students and insist that they meet them. Warm demanders begin by setting up structures and explicit procedures to positively support their students' success. When behavior problems and resistance do arise, they avoid giving a student too many "chances" and follow up their words with actions. They do not engage in power struggles and avoid threatening or demeaning a student (Bondy & Ross, 2008). Although this type of firm and consistent discipline may seem harsh to an uninformed observer, these teacher actions will be considered an act of caring by most students of color and from poverty (Irvine & Fraser, 1998).

Tomlinson (2003) explains the importance of a shift in thinking required for teachers to work with culturally diverse students. She recommends looking at students from an asset-based,

not deficit-based perspective. For example, instead of asking what are my students' problems she asks what are my students' strengths and interests. Too often teachers are under pressure to "cover" the curriculum and forget to focus on each individual child. Bondy et.al (2007) refers to interpersonal relationships with students as the teacher acting as a "warm demander". A culturally responsive teacher is able to set high expectations but also maintains a close, personal connection with each student that exhibits his/her ethos of care.

In urban schools, novice teachers may work tirelessly to design and plan engaging lessons, however if the students are resistant, due to behavior and management issues, the quality of the lessons is lost. They must first develop a teacher stance that sends their students the message that they care deeply about them but also demand respect and effort (Bondy & Ross, 2008). Teachers, especially novice ones, may wonder how to develop these kinds of relationships with their students. Verbal and non-verbal teacher behaviors may strengthen the connection they make with their students. A pat on the back, a hug, a smile, or asking a question about their daily lives or interests can reinforce this relationship (Bondy & Ross, 2008). The depth of care that warm demanders give and that their students perceive is immense and becomes the foundation of their relationship. This caring reaches beyond the classroom walls and even beyond the school as the teacher is vested in his/her students' future lives (Bondy, et.al, 2013).

### **Asset vs. Deficit Thinking**

Culturally responsive teachers do not blame families or lack of resources for their students' behavior issues. They believe that all children can learn and it is their job to solve the puzzle of teaching them (Ross, Kamman & Coady, 2007). In a recent publication, asset vs. deficit thinking style questions provide clarity about how teachers might understand this dichotomy:

### Deficit Oriented Questions:

- How does family dysfunction affect Black and Latino male student achievement in school?
- What makes young men of color so apathetic and unmotivated at school?
- Why are generations of Black and Latino families trapped in urban ghettos and seemingly inescapable cycles of poverty?

### Asset-Deficit Reframing:

- How do these students maintain academic focus despite chaos in their homes?
- What strategies engage young men of color and make them excited about learning?
- What inspires young men from low-income neighborhoods to see beyond their present condition?  
(Harper, S. & Associates, 2014, p. 8)

Being able to reframe deficit thinking into a more asset based perspective allows teachers to begin to focus on the strengths their students possess, rather than the many obstacles they face. This asset vs. deficit belief system is also related to the “demander” characteristic in the warm demander. Brown (2004) explains that culturally responsive teachers adhere to a “no excuses” policy for effort and performance. Maintaining high expectations, and insisting that students meet them, is another example of asset based thinking. Since the teacher believes that his/her students can do what he/she is asking – regardless of external factors – a student is viewed from an asset perspective as opposed to focusing on all the factors that might be seen as deficits they face. This type of shift in thinking is needed in order for a teacher to effectively manage his/her classroom and help each student reach his/her highest potential.

## **Aspects of Classroom Management**

Culturally responsive teachers use logical consequences and do not embarrass or punish students. They use these consequences to teach children the correct behavior and that their actions result in a certain outcome. They implement logical consequences to help students avoid natural consequences that might be very harmful. When selecting consequences, teachers should pay attention to these characteristics: respectful; responsive to choices and actions, not to character; include both empathy and structure; based on the demands of the situation not the demands of authority; and are manageable (Charney, 2002).

Working with diverse student populations requires teachers to establish rules and set high expectations. It is important to rely on the procedures during tough or confusing classroom problems. The new three R's, in addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic are: 'Reinforcing, 'Reminding, and 'Redirecting. Teachers working with diverse students spend a greater amount of time on these three classroom management strategies (Charney, 2002).

Teachers who use CRCM as a guiding principle when establishing their classroom systems may be doing more than just creating a supportive and orderly environment. Bondy et.al (2007) linked CRCM to student resiliency, as students develop psychological strengths that may bolster their current and future academic successes. Teachers who put respect and interpersonal relationships, both with the teacher and other classmates, as the focus of their classroom are able to create a safe environment that promotes student resiliency.

## **Professional Development**

Effective professional development should include reflection and follow-through, and yet how we provide these opportunities and measure their impact remains unclear to researchers and educators (Desimone, 2009). The ways adults learn best are complex and yet such critical factors in designing and delivering effective professional development (PD). For example, Desimone

(2009) reports that an adequate research base exists to designate five core features as critical components of effective PD: 1) Content focus, 2) Active learning, 3) Coherence, 4) Duration, and 5) Collective participation.

Views on PD have shifted from the model where “experts” deliver the latest instructional strategies to teachers and have moved to a more constructivist approach. Currently, research on best practice in PD suggests that professional development providers should serve as facilitators to help teachers construct their own knowledge about a topic is used to make teacher learning more meaningful. This PD model recognizes that teachers bring prior knowledge and experiences that influence their participation in any PD experience (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001). This prior knowledge and experience relates to Desimone’s (2009) concept of coherence, which considers the consistency between the PD learning and what a teacher already knows and believes. Specifically, when examining how novice teachers develop into expert teachers and life-long learners, staff developers must recognize individual differences among this group of early career teachers. Each new teacher brings with them a unique set of preconceptions about teaching and personal values that influence how they learn as adults and grow as educators (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

### **Situated Professional Development**

Situated learning is that which includes individuals who are actively interacting with others, with relevant materials, and with different representational systems; it involves authentic activities, that mirror and are connected to what teachers do as practitioners (Putnam & Borko, 2000). This kind of job-embedded professional development is strongly tied to the classroom realities that teachers experience.

Job Embedded Professional Development (JEPD) is grounded in everyday teaching practice and enhances teachers’ instruction so that they improve student learning. JEPD is most

effective if it occurs over time and support is provided for ongoing learning (Croft, et.al, 2010). Effective coaching and mentoring fall into the category of JEPD since the PD takes place in real time or shortly before or after instruction and is centered on the actual students and issues the teacher is working with. This kind of PD is also reform based, collaborative, and personal.

### **Learning Communities**

Teachers benefit from support in collaborative, risk-free small groups, or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) which provide the tools to reflect on their own teaching, and then translate their learning back into the classroom in order to improve teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Learning communities can also include a follow-up workshop, where teachers report on how the instructional techniques went in their own classrooms. PLCs can be “discourse communities”, where teachers discuss new strategies and the support they need in order to transform their practice (Putnam & Borko, 2000)

Teachers learn through studying problems or dilemmas in their own classrooms and by having the opportunity to problem solve as a small group in a PLC structure. It is important to recognize both novice and experienced teachers as valuable contributors to the groups’ learning and through collaboration they can all strengthen their teaching practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

PLCs provide teachers a place to respond when they are experiencing difficulties within their classrooms. In today’s era of school reform, it is extremely important to provide teachers with a structured venue to harness their collective intelligence and create momentum for continuous improvement. By focusing on a common topic, sharing a vision/mission, and ensuring equity of voice of all members, PLCs can be very powerful agents for change (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004).

Based on this review of Mentoring, CRCM, and PD literature I developed my professional development plan and my work as the facilitator of a learning community centered on CRCM with my first year teachers, which is outlined in Chapter 3.

### CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study used practitioner inquiry research methodology. One definition of practitioner inquiry (also known as “action research”) is “the systematic, intentional study by teachers of their own classroom practice” (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). As one form of qualitative research, this method of research allows practitioners (not outsiders) to engage in the design, data collection, and analysis of his/her research questions. This process strengthens the knowledge generated through this kind of “job-embedded” research as the findings are more likely to reflect the realities of educational practice (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). In addition, the researcher studies his/her own practices, allowing for self-reflection and development. Practitioner researchers follow a spiral design, where a continuous cycle of planning, acting, reflecting, and acting/planning again leads to answers to their research questions (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2010).

As a full-time mentor and researcher, I am situated within the study, facilitating professional development sessions with teachers I currently work with day to day. While examining the impact that these PD experiences had on my teachers, I was able to inform my own practice as a PD facilitator. This type of reflective practice allowed me to build on my own knowledge of how to best facilitate these types of PD experiences.

Putnam and Borko (2000) describe this type of situated learning as including individuals who are actively interacting with others, relevant materials, and different representational systems. Situated learning involves authentic activities that mirror and are connected to what teachers do as practitioners. In this study, I connected as the researcher and mentor to the real-life learning of my novice teachers, a purposeful thread that was followed throughout the planning, delivery, and analysis phases of my research.

## **Research Questions**

1. How can I build on my knowledge of what first year teachers working in urban schools need to know about CRCM?
2. How can I best facilitate professional development sessions centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management with first year teachers working in urban schools?

## **Participant Selection and School Overview**

For the 2013-2014 school year, I worked as a full-time mentor at one elementary school in my district. This school had 647 students: 90% were Black and 94% were on free or reduced lunch. In addition, due to the recurring issue of high teacher turnover, one support the district provided this year is a full-time teacher mentor. I mentored 11 first year teachers: five 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers (the entire grade level), five 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers, and one 5th grade teacher.

I conducted this study with five of my teachers and who volunteered to participate and signed the informed consent letter approved by the district and the University (Appendix A). The teachers I selected were four 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers and one 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher. The reason I selected this group of participants is because four of them were already working collaboratively as a grade level team and through early interactions with them they seem interested in developing their knowledge and skills in CRCM. I invited the one 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher after session 1 because she also expressed interest in learning more about CRCM. All five participants were first year teachers. Their principal had them read and discuss *The Teacher as Warm Demander* (Bondy & Ross, 2008). They also attended the district's New Teacher Institute and participated in a day of PD addressing building a classroom community and working with diverse students. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants during data collection and any reference to students or their work was deleted to protect confidentiality.

## **Participants**

**Ann:** She was a second grade teacher at an urban elementary school. She was a 23 year old white female who attended a state university and graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education in May of 2013.

**Becky:** She was a second grade teacher at an urban elementary school. She was a 24 year old white female who attended a state university and graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and her Master's degree in Special Education in May of 2013.

**Carol:** She was a second grade teacher at an urban elementary school. She was a 24 year old white female who attended a state university. She graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education in May 2013.

**Denise:** She was a second grade teacher at an urban elementary school. She was also the team leader. She was a 31 year old white female who attended a state university. She graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education in May 2013.

**Eva:** She was a first grade teacher at an urban elementary school. She was a 30 year old white female who attended a state university. She graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education in May 2013.

All five teachers were white females and recent college graduates. They ranged in age from 23-31 years old. These participants were selected through convenience sampling. I began recruiting 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers on the same team to capitalize on existing school structures (grade level meetings and common curriculum). Four of the five novice 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers agreed to participate. One declined because she had just been hired in October and couldn't commit to an additional eight hours of PD outside of the school day. Since I was originally seeking more participants, I invited the one novice 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher to join the group and she agreed to participate. In conclusion, all five teachers were teaching at the same urban school and were

primary grade teachers (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade). This sampling provided rich information as I investigated my research questions.

## **Data Sources**

Data sources included:

1. Review of CRCM and PD literature to inform planning of the PD sessions.
2. Informal notes taken during the four, two-hour long PD sessions. I recorded issues discussed and challenges participants had in enacting the new management strategies they are learning.
3. Semi-structured pre- and post- interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes (conducted in early fall 2013 before participation in the PD and again after the last session) to document the learning participants gained from their experiences; how participants used this knowledge to inform their teaching practice and classroom management/culture; how the mentor/facilitator designed the PD sessions in response to teachers' needs; and what participants thought was beneficial from the experience. Interviews were audio-tape recorded and transcribed (Interview protocols are available in Appendices B and C). Once interviews were transcribed, the audio-tapes were destroyed.
4. My facilitator reflections/journals described the sessions in detail. Reflections were focused on my instructional decision making to plan future sessions based on participant interaction and experiences. I answered these three reflection prompts after each PD session: What went well? What was challenging for me or my participants? What do I need to do next?
5. Artifacts collected during the PD sessions (any written activities done by participants during the session).

## **Citation Codes**

For the purpose of citing data evidence in this dissertation, I used the following coding scheme to refer to each data source and participant:

**INTERVIEWS.** Pre-interviews are coded with the participant's first initial and a "1". Post interviews are coded with the participant's first initial and a "2". For example: Interview A1=Ann pre-interview; Interview B2=Becky post-interview.

**JOURNAL NOTES.** I wrote journal notes after each PD session. Examples of the coding for journal entries include: Journal Entry 1 (for Session 1); Journal Entry 2 (for Session 2).

**TEACHER ARTIFACTS.** Various artifacts were collected based on work teachers did during the PD sessions. Coding is specific to each type of artifact. Examples include: Teacher A, CP artifact = Notes from Ann's Consultancy Protocol artifact; Teacher E 4A's artifact = Notes from Eva's 4A's protocol.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

This study used qualitative research methods. First, I received IRB permission from the university as well as my school district. Next, I contacted the participants and shared information about my study by giving them the informed consent letters in person. Since I worked with each teacher on a daily basis, we then scheduled a time that was convenient for them to conduct the pre-interviews at school. I recorded the pre-interviews and had them transcribed by a professional. After receiving the transcriptions, I listened to the recorded interviews multiple times to ensure the transcriptions provided an accurate picture of what was said in each interview.

The next step in the data collection process was conducting the four PD sessions. During each session I collected artifacts from the teachers that related to the different activities we engaged in. Also, immediately after each session I wrote in my facilitator's journal – what went well, what were any challenges I faced, and next steps for the subsequent sessions. Finally, I conducted post-interviews with each teacher, recorded these, and had them transcribed by a professional. I also reread the transcripts while listening to the interviews multiple times to ensure accuracy.

Once all of the data were collected, I began organizing and analyzing my teacher interviews (pre and post), teacher artifacts, and facilitator journal entries. The data were analyzed using inductive coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). I read through the interview transcripts, journal entries, and artifacts identifying codes that name the gist of the data included (e.g..fighting, frustration, disconnect). I read and took memos on all data sources, as I began to establish initial codes of information. After that, I began coding the data and bringing in my own perspectives and experiences as I classified the information I collected from both my participants and my personal facilitator journal notes. I coded each piece of data into its own Microsoft Word

table and printed these on six different colored papers: five for my teachers and one for my journal notes. Finally, I looked for patterns that emerged from: participants' interviews, PD session notes, PD session artifacts, and most importantly, my journal reflections after each session (Miles, et.al, 2014). I cut each section of coded data according to the pattern it fell under and taped them all on large sheets of bulletin board paper. This allowed me to see the whole picture of a set of data at one time and also assisted in citing where the data came from (e.g..teacher pre- or post-interview, journal entry). I looked back at my original categories and developed these patterns or themes to present in my findings (Creswell, 2013).

Below are both research questions and how the data collected were used to address each:

1. RQ 1 - How can I build on my knowledge of what first year teachers working in urban schools need to know about CRCM? This was addressed by collecting pre and post interview answers from the participants in order to shed light on what first year teachers know or need to know about CRCM. In addition, notes taken during the PD sessions and PD artifacts captured the teachers' needs and impacted my knowledge of their needs. In the initial design phase, I referred to CRCM literature, however, I frequently returned to this literature as I built my knowledge of what my novice teachers need.
2. RQ 2 - How can I best facilitate PD sessions centered on CRCM with four first year teachers working in urban schools? This was addressed by recording my journal notes after each PD session. In order to reflect upon what occurred and plan for future PD sessions, I recorded my thoughts and impressions of my facilitation and presentation of CRCM content. I also returned to literature informing me of effective PD as well as the essential elements of "healthy" PLC's (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008).

## **Timeline**

Below is the research timeline I followed:

1. October 2013 - Obtained informed consent. Proposed research start date. Conducted pre-interviews.
2. October/November 2013 - Conducted 4 PD sessions, after school lasting two hours each. Recorded informal notes during sessions and reflections in facilitator's journal, and collected any artifacts from PD sessions.
3. November 2013 - Conducted post-interviews.

4. December 2013 - February 2014 - Analyzed data, outlined emerging findings (Ch. 4) and discussion (Ch. 5).
5. February - May 2014 - Finalized data analysis and implications for practice. Drafted Ch. 4 and 5.
6. June 2014 - Defended dissertation to University of Florida committee.

### **Researcher Role**

I have been a teacher for 13 years with all of my experience in elementary Title 1 schools. During the last two years of my classroom teaching experience, I became interested in CRCM for a few reasons. First, I took three UF courses that informed me of the research, literature, and application of CRCM when working with students from poverty and diversity. In addition, some students from urban schools in my district began taking a bus to a higher performing school (my previous school while still teaching in the classroom) due to parent choice and NCLB. I conducted two inquiry projects examining how teachers at my school (including myself) were doing at this population shift and how well we were implementing CRCM strategies. I also examined the students' perspectives of now being bused across town and no longer attending their neighborhood schools.

All of these experiences led me to my job as Instructional Staff Developer – New Teacher Mentor in one of these urban schools. In my role I worked with 11 first year teachers and I was involved in: participating in initial Action Plan meetings with the teacher and administrator targeting two initial areas for improvement, meeting with teachers on a weekly basis, consulting on instructional and operational best practices, conducting observations and providing feedback on target areas, assisting the teacher in analyzing student work and data to drive instruction, modeling effective instructional techniques, and gathering resources to assist the teacher as needed. I also adhered to a data curtain where I was unable to communicate directly with evaluative administrators about the progress of my teachers. We set action plan

target goals together then I was released to work directly with my new teachers and invited the administrator to come observe when these targets were met. This data curtain helped maintain confidentiality and build trust between my new teacher(s) and me which supported our work together.

In this study, I added to my responsibilities the role of PD facilitator for a small group of my novice teachers. This new role complemented my intensive weekly interactions with them as their mentor, and built on my own skills as a PD facilitator. In the past, I have served as a PLC facilitator while grade level chair for 4 years. In addition, I strengthened my skills by attending facilitator training with National School Reform Faculty protocols three years ago.

### **Establishing Trustworthiness/Credibility**

I used triangulation among various data sources mentioned above in order to increase the credibility of my findings. When codes were discovered in more than one data source, I included these data in the final analysis stages. I also used peer debriefing in order to further validate that the findings represented an accurate portrayal of our PD experiences. I used one fellow doctoral colleague to debrief my processes and question any over or under-representation of data, along with a general check for validity. Finally, throughout the entire research process, I practiced bracketing, a process in which the researcher compartmentalizes his/her personal experiences and assumptions about a topic while interpreting data (Creswell, 2013). As part of this process I reflected upon how my personal perspectives and views may interfere with the interpretation of participants' data. Although personal bias cannot be eliminated entirely, I stayed cognizant of the effect it can have on my results and worked to set these biases aside during the analysis process (Planko-Clark & Creswell, 2010).

## **Overview of the Professional Development Sessions**

These PD sessions were purposely planned to include follow-up with Try-it activities for the teachers to do in their classrooms with their students throughout the week before our next session together. I also intentionally used protocols to guide conversations and ensure equity of voice among the PLC group members. I specifically chose protocols that I have used as a facilitator in the past and ones that would support teachers in constructing knowledge: Connections, Consultancy, Privilege Walk, 4 A's Protocol, Text Rendering, and Paseo. I used the Connections and Consultancy Protocols throughout all four sessions: Connections to build trust and rapport and help teachers leave behind daily stressors; Consultancy to encourage deep discussion of dilemmas teachers were facing (Appendix .

As I planned these sessions I intentionally spent a large amount of time on readings, video tape clips, and teacher generated discussion. Instead of acting as the trainer presenting my knowledge on CRCM, I deliberately planned these PD sessions from a facilitation standpoint in order to guide, but not teach, my participants about our topic. Below is a synopsis of the four PD sessions. Detailed plans are available in Appendix D.

### **Session 1: Setting the Stage**

Objectives:

1. Set groups working norms.
2. Establish connections and a feeling of community.
3. Begin to uncover who we are related to the students and the school where we teach.
4. Review current classroom management plans.
5. Discussion of what CRCM is compared to general classroom management systems.
6. Try-it – Interview one student during the following school week.

### **Session 2: Making Morning Meetings Stronger and Two Teacher Dilemmas**

Objectives:

1. Reflect on student interviews.
2. Review Morning Meetings and select one element to strengthen.
3. Share 2 teacher dilemmas and give feedback.
4. Try – It – Implement element of Morning Meeting during the following school week.
5. Share and assist with two CRCM classroom dilemmas.

### **Session 3: Revisit Warm Demander and Two Teacher Dilemmas**

Objectives:

1. Reflect and share on Morning Meeting Try-It activity.
2. Read and reflect on viewing culture through various lenses.
3. Generate a list of what being a “warm demander” looks like in regards to teacher behaviors.
4. Select two “warm demander” teacher behaviors to work on as a Try-It for the upcoming school week.
5. Share and assist with two CRCM classroom dilemmas.

### **Session 4: Putting It All Together and Fifth Teacher Dilemma**

Objectives:

1. Reflect and share on Try-It “warm demander” activity.
2. Review teacher evaluation rubric indicators 2.1e and 2.1g.
3. Reflect on how our work together and Try-It activities have demonstrated effectiveness in this area.
4. Select improved teacher and student evidence on the indicators list.
5. Share and assist with 5<sup>th</sup> teacher’s CRCM classroom dilemma

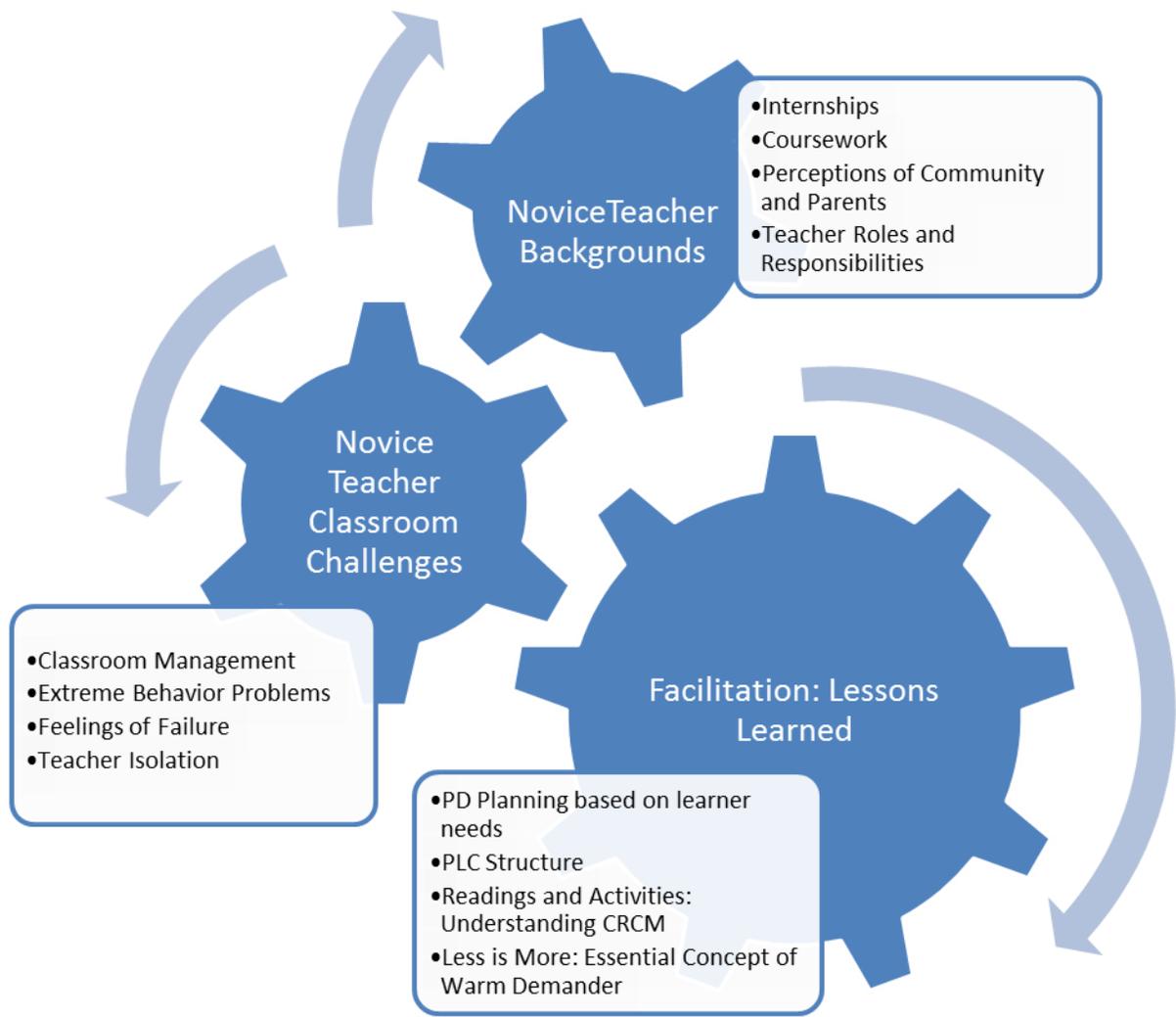
## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

The purpose of my study was to examine four professional development sessions centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management with five first-year teachers at my school. I studied my facilitation of these sessions and the experiences of participants to understand better how to help novice teachers develop culturally responsive practices. I facilitated these PD sessions in a community of practice and examined my role as the facilitator of this PD experience.

After conducting pre-interviews, 4 PD sessions, and post-interviews, I analyzed data in order to answer these two research questions:

1. How can I build on my knowledge of what first year teachers working in urban schools need to know about CRCM?
2. How can I best facilitate professional development sessions centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management with first year teachers working in urban schools?

In this study, the goal was to investigate my facilitation of four CRCM PD sessions in order to help novice teachers during their first semester of teaching in an urban elementary school. Overall, I have evidence that although the teachers learned a great deal from the PD sessions, I was not as successful as I hoped I would be in helping them understand how to be more culturally responsive in their classrooms. In this chapter I will first outline what I learned about novice teachers (my first research question) and then what I learned about PD facilitation related to CRCM and novice teachers (my second research question). In this chapter I will present my findings in three themes: Novice Teacher Backgrounds, Novice Teacher Classroom Challenges, and Facilitation: Lessons Learned. The first two themes are related to and influence the third theme. This relationship is represented in Figure 1.



4-1 Three themes related to CRCM PD with novice teachers

## **Novice Teacher Backgrounds**

As educators we know that individual learning styles, background knowledge, and personal experiences matter when we are planning for instruction and teaching our students. Similarly, individual teachers have unique backgrounds that have shaped the ways they learn as adults and the kind of support they need in becoming more culturally responsive teachers. Therefore, due to the sensitive and complex nature of CRCM, it is important to avoid creating a “one-size-fits-all” PD experience, but to take into account the needs of individual teachers. This was evident in the data as I examined how each of the five teachers was prepared for their career in an urban elementary school setting.

In this first section, I will present findings related to teachers’ backgrounds and explore common themes and differences among these five novice teachers experiences, as related to CRCM, leading up to their first year teaching in an urban school. These areas include: teacher preparation (internships and college coursework); perceptions about community and parents; and perceptions of teachers’ roles and responsibilities.

### **Internships**

Throughout interview data as well as discussions during our PD sessions, the five participants expressed how they were able to connect or disconnect their first year teaching experiences to their experiences during college internships through their college teaching preparation programs. Although four out of five teachers’ interned in Title 1 schools, only one teacher felt her school and cooperating teacher prepared her adequately to teach her first year in her current urban setting.

Both Ann and Eva explained how different their internship experiences were when considering the demographics of their current school. They explained that although they completed at least one internship in college at a Title 1 school, the student make-up was more

diverse and the level of poverty that students were coming from did not seem as extreme as that experienced by their current students. Eva described the difference by referring to her internship students as mostly Latino and poor as compared to her current students who were Black and poorer than her previous students. She struggled with feeling underprepared to work with her students and noted the differences between the racial make-up of the students she taught in her internship and her first class. She stated:

I didn't think it was going to be such a drastic difference...I thought it would be right around there. That's what I thought. I figured the culture would be different from Spanish but I didn't think the make-up would be so drastically different. (Interview E1)

Both teachers described extreme behavior problems and feeling racially and culturally separate from their students as the major barriers they felt they weren't prepared to handle (Interviews A1, A2, E1, E2).

Two other teachers, Becky and Denise, found the demographics of students from their internships to be similar to their current class of students. Becky explained that although her school had a magnet program and was in another district within the state, she taught mostly Black students and all of them were on free or reduced lunch (Interview B1). Additionally, Denise stated that her internships in the community where she now teaches were very similar. Since their internship experiences were in demographically similar settings, Becky and Denise were more able to hit the ground running because they already knew more about how to teach students like the ones in their own classrooms. Yet, they still struggled to maintain a well-managed classroom and deal with challenging behaviors (Interviews B1, D1).

One teacher, Carol, had a year-long internship at a school where approximately 95% of the students were on free and reduced lunch, 60% were Black and 40% were Latino. When

describing how her internship prepared her she explained how she already knew how to provide her students with structure and high expectations:

I didn't have any anxiety about the students or being able to have effective classroom management because I feel like that was one of the things that I learned from my internship teacher. I just knew that I had to be really structured from the very beginning. It's better to start out with a very structured environment...I have high expectations for my students. (Interview C1)

Not only did Carol feel prepared by the population of students she taught in her internship but she also valued her cooperating teacher's classroom structure.

### **Coursework**

In addition to internship experiences, the participants had varying levels of previous college coursework that centered on classroom management and/or working with diverse populations of students. Prior to conducting this study, it was my assumption that all college teacher preparation courses of study included these types of courses. However, after examining this through my pre-interview and post-interview data, it was clear that individual teachers had different experiences and levels of understanding regarding what would be required of them as first year teachers in an urban setting related to behavior management.

Similar to the under-preparation that Ann felt she received from her internship experiences, she did not take any courses that taught her how to work with students from diverse cultures and/or poverty. In regards to this she explained, "I wasn't prepared for this. I knew it was gonna be hard, but, like, I had no idea it was going to be this hard. Especially not in this culture" (Interview A1). This was extremely surprising to me, as the planner and facilitator of our CRCM sessions. In reflection, I should have taken this information into account before planning what my teachers needs were for our PD experiences together. Another teacher, Carol, did not have any specific training on working with diverse populations in college although she did not identify that as being a cause for feeling unprepared for her first year teaching in an urban

school. Throughout interview data and PD sessions, she expressed how prepared she actually did feel from her year-long internship and effective mentoring from her cooperating internship teacher (Interview C1).

The other three teachers had some college coursework that related to working with culturally diverse students that included reading books like *Teaching with Love and Logic*, by: Jim Fay and David Funk (Eva), *The Dream Keepers* by: Glorinda Ladson-Billings (Denise), and both took a class titled Teaching Diverse Populations (at two different Florida universities). Although she took this course, Denise explained that her internship classroom included mostly White students from a rural setting so she was unable to apply what she was learning (Interview D1, E1).

In conclusion, the five teachers entered their first year teaching as well as my CRCM PD sessions with varying levels of prior knowledge about and experiences with: 1) how to teach in an urban setting, and 2) how to effectively work with diverse cultures. This is evident in my pre-interview data as well as my everyday work with them as their full-time New Teacher Mentor. The implications of these differences will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

### **Perceptions about Community and Parents**

Teachers must examine their perceptions of their students' parents, families, and community in order to become more culturally responsive. Among the first year teachers, their perceptions were widely varied. Four out of the five teachers said they had heard the community where they would be teaching was mostly poor Black families (Interview A1) and "ghetto" (Interview B1). Carol, who was hired later in the summer and did not live in the same district, explained she did a little research on the internet before her interview and knew that typically south county addresses meant more poor and minority families, and could be considered a "rougher" area (Interview C1).

Both Becky and Denise expressed surprise at how much parental involvement they had in their classrooms. Becky discussed the level of care she has seen exhibited by her students' parents or guardians:

They understand that education is key and that they all want what's best for their kids. They want them to be educated. I contact them using the agenda just because it's day to day. I've also had contact through the phone. I've had a few conferences. I have had parents come in and visit. I have an aunt that comes in every single day that pokes her head in. (Interview B1)

Similarly, Denise communicated surprise by the level of parent communication and involvement:

I always heard that families don't care; you will never see the mom, you'll never meet the dad, they are never going to sign the agenda. Just hearing that from people and now being in the school it's completely not the case. All my parents care a great deal. (Interview D1)

Both of these teachers perceived their students' parents and guardians as supportive and involved in their child's education.

Carol did not talk about parental involvement but expressed concern that parents might not be able to help out at home. This perception did not limit her tireless attempts to communicate with them. Although she recognized that her students might be going home to a very different situation than she did growing up, she tried to make up for that by reaching out to parents in a variety of ways. She stated:

They don't have the environment that we grew up with at home where they sit down every night and they have a discussion with their mom or their dad about their day and what they learned and there's no one to make sure that they do their reading every night. (Interview C1)

Carol perceived this as a barrier to parent involvement and therefore set high expectations for parents to communicate daily in the agenda about their child and called if this was not enough. She also reminded parents to sign the agenda nightly if necessary (Interview C1).

In contrast, both Ann and Eva felt less connected to their students' parents, while Eva even expressed levels of fear, confusion, and frustration when dealing with parents. Ann stated

that only about 30% of her parents seemed concerned about their child's education and would blame her as the teacher for any problems their children were having in class (Interview A1).

Eva recognized that she should reach out to the parents but was unsure how and felt intimidated by them. She explained:

Those parents scare me. Jasmine's mom got in my face that one day, and I'm just not used to big black women getting [in my face]. It's just a different way of speaking. I've never been yelled at. I don't like yelling. I shut down with yelling. (Interview E1)

Both of these teachers' experiences and perceptions of their parents captured an example of a culturally responsive issue to address in our in PD sessions. However, during the sessions, we did not focus on parental involvement or behaviors that may disconnect to the teachers' white, middle- upper class way of behaving and understanding what is culturally appropriate or the differing ways that families might express care about their children and their education. When I designed the lesson plans for the PD sessions I focused solely on supporting the teachers in the classroom with their students and did not take into account the support they might need in working with and understanding their parents as well.

Becky, Denise, and Carol recognized the importance of parental involvement and were mostly pleased with the levels of family involvement with their students. Furthermore, they reached out to the parents using a variety of communication methods and recognized that although it might be challenging, this was their responsibility as the teacher. Yet their surprise at the level of parent involvement early on in the school year suggests they still had assumptions about poor, Black families that needed to be addressed. This leads into the next section of findings, where the variation in my participants' perceptions about how they viewed their roles and responsibilities as teachers in an urban school setting became evident.

## **Teacher Roles and Responsibilities**

One pervasive teacher question that emerged from analyzing the data from both interviews and PD sessions was whether teachers' roles should include teaching behavior, morals, and life skills. From my facilitator journal notes, we were able to address this "tug" that teachers feel between covering the curriculum and stopping instruction to deal with social/emotional/behavioral issues (Journal Entry 2).

Three of the teachers, Carol, Denise, and Becky all believed it was part of their job to not just teach academics but also prepare their students for the real world. Carol explained:

I need to give them every opportunity I can so that they can be as privileged as they can be for the future. They definitely have a lot working against them that they have to not only catch up with, but then pass in order to break even. Anything that we can do as teachers to help them see those opportunities would be beneficial. (Interview C2)

Carol also mentioned wanting to bring in more role models, such as her Aunt who is a nurse and her sister who was graduating college to talk to her students about their futures. She noted that when she teaches and practices behaviors with her students like taking turns or listening to each other using eye contact, her students all chime in together, "Life skill!" She explicitly taught them what she wanted them to do or say and why this behavior was important in their future lives. She felt teaching her students how to overcome some of the barriers they may face in life and become productive citizens was an important part of her job (Interview C2).

Similarly, Becky explained that during her Morning Meetings greeting she taught her students the proper way to shake hands with each other. She explained to her students the importance of making a good first impression and if you are silly about your handshake, and use the wrong hand or laugh, people will not take you seriously in life (Interview B2).

Denise thought it was important to share famous Black role models with her students to help them learn how to behave appropriately. By teaching her students about Rosa Parks, Martin

Luther King Jr., and Barack Obama she believed she could inspire her students to strive to be their best and achieve great things like these role models from their own culture have done (Interview D2).

In contrast to these three teachers, Ann expressed frustration that she felt like all she taught was behavior. She was disappointed that she didn't seem able to get past this level of teaching and expected to be able to teach more academics and curriculum during her first year. She struggled with her role as the teacher, stating, "I've never been in charge of anybody in my whole entire life, I just don't feel like – like when people come into my classroom, it's like, 'Oh wait, I'm the teacher.'" She further explained that she never worked in high school or college so this was her first job as an adult. She commented that she still felt like she was sixteen. Her role as teacher was challenging, not only because of the amount of instruction she was doing on how to behave, but also because she lacked the feelings of authority needed in her new position of someone in charge of children (Interview A2).

Eva struggled with trying to connect with her students as a White woman. She wondered how she could overcome the racial barriers that she observed in her students and whether she could make a difference in their perceptions of White people. She expressed this concern:

I can't break six years of parents telling them that white people are horrible, but I can at least, hopefully, make the connection to where I'm not in the pool of "all white people" but I'm Ms. \_\_\_\_, and I'm your teacher, and I care about you. (Interview E2)

At the time of our interviews and PD sessions, Eva was noticing an increase in comments that her first graders were making about her being a white teacher and an overall increase in racial remarks to each other. She was very concerned about this disconnect and was unsure how to address this in her classroom (Interview E2).

### **Summary: Novice Teacher Backgrounds**

These five novice teachers all came from different places as they entered their first year teaching in an urban school. These experiences had already begun to shape their beliefs and perceptions about the students and families they were working with. The three teachers, Becky, Carol, and Denise, who had the most closely connected internship experiences, positive perceptions of parental involvement, and believed they were responsible for teaching their students how to behave, may have been more ready to participate in PD sessions on CRCM when compared to the other two teachers. They were already aware of the challenges that their students faced and took ownership of the work they must do to reach their students using a more culturally responsive approach. The other two teachers, Ann and Eva, were less prepared coming into their job and struggled so greatly with all of the aspects of teaching in an urban setting that they may not have been as prepared to learn how to manage their classrooms in a more culturally responsive way. These teachers' background experiences formed a foundation for their first two months of teaching, but they also faced several challenges in the classroom that impacted their PD experiences with me.

### **Novice Teacher Classroom Challenges**

As I complete my second year as a New Teacher Mentor, I recognized similar challenges first year teachers faced. The teachers in this study were not different. They experienced challenges with: 1) routine classroom management, and 2) extreme behavior problems. These two issues were not surprising for new teachers in any setting, but especially in an urban elementary classroom. The third issue, the teachers' feelings of isolation and failure, was a bit more surprising. In my role as a mentor, I worked hard to encourage my teachers and help them realize they were not alone. Regardless, all three of these classroom challenges were evident in

the data and thus, important for me to consider when planning and facilitating our PD sessions. In this section I will describe these issues and how they relate to facilitation.

### **Classroom Management**

First year teachers often struggle with classroom management and this is evident in the data for this research. Denise expressed that it was challenging for her to find the right amount of structure to keep her classroom running smoothly, and tried setting timers, scheduling centers rotations, and implementing varied strategies to control students talking out and getting out of their seats without permission (Interview D1). Other aspects of classroom management that all teachers discussed were implementing effective procedures/routines, using positive reinforcement, and applying consequences consistently.

First, establishing and consistently maintaining high expectations for following classroom procedures and routines can take a lot of work. As mentioned before, Carol knew from the very beginning of the school year how important these structures were going to be from her internship experiences. During her pre-interview she felt like her water, pencil and bathroom procedures were working well – the students held up a finger symbol and she nodded to let them know they could leave their seats and do what they needed (Interview C1). However, Ann struggled with finding an effective pencil and water procedure despite using a similar routine. She explained how challenging this was:

Pencils, they like to eat them so they never have pencils. I don't know what they do with these pencils. They put one finger up and I'll tell them to go get a pencil. But there are never any pencils back there. I think somebody's hoarding them. Then water, they put up three fingers. I barely ever let them get water because then they'll all want to do it.  
(Interview A1)

Clearly Denise and Ann were struggling with the basics of management: routines, procedures, consistency, etc. It was as if they were still managing their classrooms on a survival level, unable to move from a basic classroom management level to a more culturally responsive one.

Second, all five teachers noted the need to be more positive and how effective positive reinforcement was in shaping their students' behaviors. A few implemented positive reinforcement systems like grab-bag tickets and the Yes/No game to provide tangible reinforcers throughout the day and week (Interview A1, B1). Denise recognized that a token economy using real money was not working in her classroom because the students were taking it too literally and stealing or bragging about their money. She quickly realized that she needed to replace this system with the school-wide leveled clip system – where level one is not following rules and a level five means a student is going above and beyond displaying good behavior (Interview D1). Although these teachers used positive reinforcement in different ways, the degree to which these systems were effective varied and they changed them frequently, trying to find exactly what worked for their group of students (Interview A1, B1, D1).

Finally, applying consequences consistently was a big challenge for four of the five teachers. As mentioned previously, the school-wide behavior plan was the leveled clip chart. Both Becky and Eva struggled with keeping track of what behaviors warranted moving a clip down and what the consequences were if the behavior did not improve. For example, Becky candidly explained how difficult this was for her to manage, “That’s one of the biggest things I want to be consistent about. It’s just they don’t know what’s going on and I don’t either, to be honest” (Interview B1). Eva mentioned that she sometimes forgot to have a student serve a “time out” and then realized it after the day was already over. In addition, Carol, Becky, and Ann struggled with students who got angry and had a difficult time accepting consequences. Carol tried to improve this negative reaction by discussing with her class that just because your clip moves down it does not mean it cannot move right back up later (Interview C1).

## **Extreme Behavior Issues**

As evidenced in interview data and teacher artifacts from our PD sessions, all five teachers struggled with how to de-escalate an aggressive student and/or situation before it became a physical fight. Teachers described situations where students began having a conflict which involved screaming at each other or throwing things at each other and then all of a sudden there was a fight in their classroom. Becky stated that her students had arguments that led to fighting at least twice a week in her classroom and Denise noted that anger management was an issue for many of her students (Interview B1, D1). These teachers felt challenged and underprepared for how to intervene at the right moment so they could successfully talk the student(s) down and prevent a potentially dangerous act of physical aggression from occurring. Ann explained, “I don’t know what to do when they throw a chair. I feel like I need to know how to get the rest of them to stop doing it” (Interview A1). This type of teacher need was difficult for me to address in our PD sessions. For example, at the end of session 2, Ann presented her Consultancy Protocol dilemma: “How can I address name calling which escalates to physical fighting?” (Teacher A, CP artifact). During the final step in the protocol, she described the action steps she wanted to implement based on the groups’ feedback, such as working on building the classroom community and delivering consequences for name calling more consistently. Yet during this time she was still so focused on the extreme behavior issues in her room it was difficult to keep her focused. In my journal reflection I wrote, “At end of protocol it was difficult for her to stay on topic – continued to make comments about barriers and behavior issues vs. what she got from discussion – had to refocus her back to ideas and plan of action” (Journal Entry 2).

As a facilitator, I struggled with which physical aggression “dilemmas” were worth discussing and whether they were an example of how a teacher can intervene in a culturally

responsive way. For example, in my journal I described my own growth as a culturally responsive educator, “I find myself questioning how far along I am in the process. For example, teacher A was discussing how shocked she was by the name calling in her classroom. At first, my reaction was to agree how inappropriate and rude it was. Then I started to think about how it may be more of a form of “ribbing” which was discussed in one of my lit review articles (Ware, 2006) and how this is an acceptable form of banter between Blacks. Then I thought, “So what do we as white middle class female teachers do about it? Should we recognize that in their homes or neighborhoods this type of communication is accepted or even appreciated but then explain it is not ok in schools? Do we encourage “code switching” and discourage what may be a culturally acceptable behavior but leads to escalated physical aggression inside a classroom?” (Journal Entry 3).

I did receive some help with suggestions from Carol during Ann’s protocol. She asked Ann if she was stopping instruction to address the smaller behaviors before they escalated. Ann did not and again, referenced that struggle she had with teaching academics vs. behavior. Then Carol suggested that she teach her students replacement or alternative behaviors to getting angry and acting in a physically aggressive way. She shared how this seemed to help with her students at the very beginning of the year (Teacher C CP artifact). Teaching replacement behaviors was obviously an important and conscious effort that Carol made as a teacher:

These children’s natural instinct is to fight and to bow up and get really defensive and so we’re working on talking through our feelings. I figured out if I can get it when it’s like they are still in the verbal stage and help them talk through it, it’s a lot easier for them to work out their problem more effectively. (Interview C1)

Carol recognized the importance of teaching students how to communicate with each other about their problems vs. using physical aggression and was helpful in sharing this with Ann. This is an

example of CRCM since Carol focused on teaching replacement behaviors instead of just punishing students.

### **Teacher Isolation: Survival and Feelings of Failure**

For both Ann and Eva, this first year was extremely challenging. As their mentor, I expected them to struggle with feelings of failure and isolation. However, the degree to which they were struggling was alarming. Ann literally referred to herself as a “failure” and explained:

The past three weeks have been hell in my class. I go home every day and I just want to cry then I feel so helpless, like I can't get them to do what I want and I just don't know if I'm going to make it. (Interview A1)

Eva explained how she felt “duped” into being hired at such a tough school and that she would never make the mistake again of not doing more research on the demographics before accepting a teaching position (Interview E1). As stated earlier, both of these teachers were less ready to start examining their teaching practices through a lens of “cultural responsiveness” and this influenced the ways they were impacted by our PD sessions.

One positive impact our work together had on not just Ann and Eva, but all five teachers was that the opportunity to talk openly in a trusting PLC setting about their struggles and this helped to alleviate their feelings of isolation. They all commented that it was nice to realize you are not alone and to listen to the group members describe common problems they were all experiencing (Journal Entry1). For Ann and Eva this was especially crucial in fighting these feelings of failure and isolation. Eva, a first grade teacher who joined the group during session 2 explained:

Well, the whole joining your PD made me feel like I'm not alone, because I feel very detached from my team, and no one talks about it. Then I came to the [PD sessions], and, lo and behold, I'm not alone! There are other people having even worse problems and very similar problems. All of us have the same situations and I'm not feeling like I'm inadequate. Because I look at them as very with-it and caring and great teacher demeanors, and if they're having trouble too then maybe I'm not just crazy, and maybe I'm not horrible, maybe I'm not a terrible teacher, because I get very hard on myself. (Interview E2)

For Eva, the realization that she was not the only first year teacher struggling at her school helped alleviate some of the pressure and frustrations she was feeling.

### **Summary: Teacher Classroom Challenges**

All three of these classroom challenges: classroom management, extreme behavior problems, and feelings of isolation/failure influenced how the teachers participated during our PD sessions. Similar to my findings on teacher backgrounds, each teacher had a unique understanding of how to deal with these challenge. As the facilitator I tried to allow them to feel secure in sharing and collaboratively problem solving. In this last section, I reflect on the lessons I learned as a facilitator. I present ways I took these issues into account and recognized the realities my teachers faced every day in their classrooms. To me, this was important for us to do in order for me to meet their needs while also staying focused on our PLC topic – CRCM.

### **Facilitation: Lessons Learned**

As explained in the previous two sections, the experiences of the five teachers with being culturally responsive teachers varied in many areas. I gained valuable insight into each of their backgrounds and the many challenges they were facing in their classrooms. I then used this information to find answers to my second research question: How can I best facilitate professional development sessions centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management with first year teachers working in urban schools? Four themes emerged: 1) PD planning based

on learner needs, 2) PLC structure, 3) Readings and activities: Understanding CRCM, 4) Less is more: Essential concept of warm demander.

### **Professional Development Based on Learner Needs**

Similar to a teacher differentiating instruction based on individual student needs, a PD facilitator, working with adults, should consider the learners' backgrounds and needs when planning their work together. As I began to analyze my pre-interview data, I discovered that my teachers, although all novice and working in an urban school, were in different stages of becoming culturally responsive teachers. In retrospect, I should have analyzed my pre-interview data prior to designing my four PD sessions on the topic of CRCM. My time line for getting my proposal approved by my committee did not allow for this as I had to include PD lesson plans in my proposal before I could start the research. However, I should have done pre-interviews, transcribed these interviews, analyzed the data, and then revisited my PD lesson plans included in my proposal to really examine whether my plans would meet the teachers' individual needs. Similar to a "needs assessment" conducted prior to providing any kind of PD support, in the future, the pre-interview data should be analyzed prior to planning out the PD sessions. Regardless, below are my findings based on post-interview data, journal entries, and PD artifacts.

### **PLC Structure**

I intentionally planned to conduct our four PD sessions in a "community of practice" or "professional learning community" format. Based on research and my own personal experiences when I was a classroom teacher as a participant and facilitator of numerous PLCs, I valued the structures in PLCs that allow for equity of voice and collaboration. These findings relate to the use of protocols in our PD sessions, but due to the amount of data collected, protocols will be in a separate section. All five teachers appreciated the structure of our PD sessions due to the

“equity of voice”, clear focus, and facilitation they experienced when they participated in discussions centered on CRCM.

They all mentioned that they had previous PLC experience but it did not seem effective or what a PLC should actually be like. For example, Denise described PLC experiences from her internship:

It was highly dysfunctional. They were always trying to one up each other or “she said this about me.” So during those PLCs nothing got done. There was no talk of data, there was no talk of performance, there was no talk of how can we teach the kids this. It was simply like a clucking session of teachers. I learned a lot of what not to do. (Interview D1)

Interesting to note, Denise was the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade team leader and was eager to participate in our PLCs so she could gain a better understanding of how to facilitate one for her team. In fact, all five teachers mentioned how interested they were in participating in a “real” PLC during our sessions together (Journal Entry 1).

Two teachers also felt that the use of protocols and my facilitation both provided a structure that promoted equity of voice. Both Becky and Ann mentioned that the protocols gave everyone a chance to talk and take turns. Becky explained, “Sometimes it’s just hard to make yourself listen, or make yourself talk...some people don’t like to talk” (Interview B2). As the facilitator I reflected after session 1 and noticed that Ann and Carol were slightly stand-offish and worked to make sure I included a structure to share so their voices could also be heard (Journal Entry 1, 2). Ann explained that she was an introverted person who liked to listen more than talk. She appreciated the equity of voice she felt through our structure, because she felt more confident sharing with the group knowing everyone had a chance to talk and no one would talk over her (Interview A). Additionally, Ann and Eva specifically mentioned timekeeping as being useful to keep focused and moving forward (Interviews A2, E2). These data show that

although Ann and Eva were the least prepared to examine their own levels of CRCM as first year teachers, structured facilitation made the topic more accessible to them. They felt their voices would be heard in a safe, structured, and respectful community of practice.

Overall, PLC feedback was extremely positive from all teachers as they participated throughout the sessions and in their post interview answers. As the facilitator I worked hard to ensure I used protocols and also reflected after each session and throughout planning to ensure I was meeting their various needs based on their participation levels and classroom issues.

As a certified National School Reform Faculty trainer, I have used numerous protocols in the past to assist my facilitation practices. During our four PD sessions for this research I used six protocols, but used two extensively: Connections and Consultancy Protocol. After analyzing post-interview data, my journal reflections, and artifacts from our sessions, my teachers had a positive response to the use of these protocols. Teacher reaction to each protocol is explained below.

**Connections.** I opened each of the four sessions with the protocol, Connections. The first time we used the protocol, it was a little awkward and was much more conversation-like than is intended (Journal Entry 1). However, by the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> sessions the teachers were more comfortable and appreciated the time at the beginning, before delving into our work, to share the ups and downs of their days and to relieve themselves of the stress of their day (Journal Entries, 2,3,4). Furthermore, the two teachers, Ann and Eva, who were struggling the most with student behavior and classroom management both stated that they thought Connections was a great way to start out so they weren't preoccupied with stress from the day and could share whatever was on their chest (Interviews A2, E2). In addition, Carol expressed she liked starting off our PLC

that way so much that she would like to bring it back to her PLCs at school when they meet as the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade team (Interview C2).

**Consultancy Protocol.** In the past, the experiences I have had using the Consultancy Protocol as a way to facilitate discussions around teacher dilemmas have been highly effective. However, during Sessions 2, 3, and 4 it was a more challenging experience than I anticipated. As I facilitated Session 2, I quickly realized that this protocol was complex and there were a few barriers to using it with a group of five first-year teachers. It might have been helpful to have example of dilemmas that focus on being a culturally responsive teacher to help them craft their own dilemmas. It also might have been useful to show an NSRF video of the protocol modeled by an experienced group of teachers (Journal Entry 2).

In addition to my challenges as the facilitator, after we debriefed how the protocol went during Session 2, the group expressed discomfort in giving advice to the presenting teacher. They felt as first year teachers they didn't have enough grasp on their own students' behaviors and daily classroom dilemmas to really give advice to another struggling teacher (Journal Entry 2). Ann explained, "I didn't like participating because I don't feel like I have any advice for anybody... because my class is just so crazy" (Interview A2). Despite these initial barriers, by the final dilemmas during Session 4, the teachers were more at ease using the protocol and found some major benefits from participating in this work (Journal Entry 4).

Both Becky and Carol liked using the protocol because they felt like it allowed protected time for discussing what they really needed help with in their classrooms. Becky elaborated:

A lot of times you feel like you're in this bubble. Nobody knows what's going on and nobody really has the time to listen or what your dilemma is or offer suggestions, because I'm not the only one dealing with issues. (Interview B2)

Furthermore, Carol appreciated the structure of the protocol because it allowed the presenter uninterrupted time to explain her dilemma and also gave her a chance to step back, listen and reflect as the other participants discussed possible solutions (Interview C2). This type of feedback, centered on giving the teachers “equity of voice” will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Three teachers, Ann, Becky, and Eva, explained how getting to share their dilemmas and receive feedback from the group was eye-opening. They realized they were not alone in many of the struggles they faced as they tried to become more culturally responsive in their own classrooms. Becky related other teachers’ dilemmas to some of the issues she was dealing with:

They’re all different but they’re all the same. A lot of those things, were like, that wasn’t my dilemma but, wow! The issue that Eva brought up, I was like, I need to listen to this because I need help with that too. (Interview B2)

In addition, Eva commented she didn’t “feel so by yourself” (Interview E2) and Ann felt “reassured that it is happening in other classrooms” (Interview A2).

### **Readings and Activities: Understanding CRCM**

Pre-interview data reflected varying levels of understanding what CRCM means. Denise seemed to already have a beginning conceptual understanding of what it means to manage your classroom in a culturally responsive way:

I think that goes with picking your battles when it comes to classroom management in that something like a shove or push can be cultural in the African-American culture. In the White culture it is unheard of; you don’t put your hands on someone and sometimes a nudge isn’t acceptable in our culture. So you had to talk about sociability and you have to accept those little things; pick your battles. As far as teaching, it refers to meeting their specific needs. (Interview D1)

During her pre-interview, Carol communicated that she needed to respond differently to her students’ behaviors because she understood a bit about their cultural backgrounds. Yet, Becky had a more tangible idea of what CRCM meant:

If you're being culturally responsive you're understanding their background and how to reach them based on what's important to them and what interests them and motivates. Using rewards and using reinforcers that they like as a culture and they're interested in to help you in your management. (Interview B1)

Becky also recognized the importance of understanding students' backgrounds and interests but was applying this to the kinds of tangible reinforcers she would provide them with as part of her classroom management system.

As part of my planning, I chose one "definition" of CRCM and posted it on chart paper for us to use as a common understanding amongst the group: What is CRCM? Teachers must: 1) recognize their ethnocentrism and understand the broader sociopolitical context to understand that definitions of appropriate classroom behavior are culturally defined, 2) develop knowledge of their students' cultural backgrounds, 3) use culturally appropriate classroom management strategies ("warm demander"), and 4) build caring classroom communities (Weinstein, et. al., 2004).

In my journal, I noted that although I discussed the meaning of CRCM during session 1, I posted the definition for session 2 and it was useful to refer to as we continued our learning and discussions. I also noted that it would have been useful to differentiate more clearly how CRCM is much more than just classroom management plans. According to my plans, I intended to provide the definition and discuss the differences during session 1 but ran out of time and tried to squeeze it into session 2 (Journal Entry 1,2). In hindsight, this would have been useful to do from the very beginning.

Regardless, the teachers' conceptual knowledge of CRCM grew by engaging in our readings, discussions, and activities. Even Eva, who struggled with extreme behavior problems and racial tensions, was able to give an example of how a teacher might respond to loud voices:

Voice levels are one of the cultural things that we need to take into account, and I've been noticing that. When I say voice levels, I'm like, "stop yelling". Then I catch myself. I'm like, "no talking". They're not actually yelling on purpose, that's just their voice level. It's just their talking seems like yelling to me. (Interview E2)

Denise started to recognize and understand the socio-political nature of school. She built on what she learned in college about how low SES students experience school differently than other groups of students. Furthermore she recognized her own race to be a factor:

I am white myself and from middle-class America. Thinking about the idealistic view of school and then seeing the real view of school and that every single student was different... (Interview D2)

We read an article on race and culture, *Accepting Responsibility for the Learning of all Students: What does it Mean?* (Ross & Coady, 2007), that had quite an impact on my teachers. Ann, Becky, Carol, and Eva thought it was beneficial to read about how a white teacher and a Black teacher handled a boy with behavior problems in their own classrooms (Interview A2, B2, C2, E2). Eva related it back to one of her male students:

The way the Black teacher dealt with it was, "come here and let's..." whatever... talk to them quietly after the fight, and, especially with Tyrone, that works so much better. When I have the time and ability to do it and I can, I can pull him back by doing that. (Interview E2)

However, Eva also challenged an assumption she thought the authors were making – that White teachers could never be as effective as Black teachers when working in urban schools (Teacher E 4A's artifact). As the facilitator, I should have done a better job helping her understand that this was not an assumption the author held, but I was not really sure how to address this reaction and instead moved on. In hindsight, I should have facilitated the discussion further, using the article and the 4 A's protocol, to dig deeper with the group about what assumptions and meaning the author intended. Carol took away a different meaning from the article and explained that it opened her eyes to the impact that a teacher's discipline style has on a students. The two different teachers in the article reacted in different ways to a challenging

student's oppositional behavior and this made her realize she had to pay attention to her tone and the way she talks to individual students. She described a time she tried this out in her own classroom:

For example, I got a student yesterday who did not want to go to Writing Center. I said, "Honey, I really need you to go to Writing Center," and then she said, "Okay," whereas before she hates Writing Center. This is a definite on-going thing. (Interview C2)

In addition, Ann and Becky learned how important it was for White teachers to recognize how their own cultural identities influence their reactions to certain behaviors, like defiance and voice levels (Teacher A 4A's artifact). Becky explained, "Sharing culture is not necessary, but you have to find a way to meet them halfway, I guess," (Interview B2). Finally, Denise realized the race of the teacher does matter because in order for a white teacher to be effective she must build relationships and view her students' behavior issues through the lens of "their normal" not "her normal" (Teacher D 4A's artifact).

One of the most significant findings regarding this article was Eva's reaction in her post interview. Referring to this article, she explained:

I think that it opened up my eyes to the way the kids see you because you are White. You're already at a disadvantage because of stereotypes, the same assumptions that are in the article. Lately, especially, I don't know where it's coming from, some of my students saying, "I hate you because you're White. You're a stupid teacher, and we need more Black teachers, and I don't want a White teacher. (Interview E2)

It was concerning that by participating in our PD sessions Eva perceived more racial tensions in her classroom as she was made more aware of the cultural differences between herself and her students. While the other four teachers took away useful knowledge from studying how our race and culture affects us as teachers, this PD work almost justified Eva's feelings of failure and increased her awareness of racial tension in her classroom that she was not sure how to address.

## **Less is More: Essential Concept of Warm Demander**

The final theme related to my facilitation had to do with the concept of depth rather than breadth. Reflecting on the entire experience, I think I should have focused more on the concept of “warm demander” and how to build strong relationships with students from different backgrounds, rather than try to cover too much in the four sessions. Instead of focusing on Morning Meetings on a surface level and trying to tie all of this back to their teacher evaluation in Session 4, I should have analyzed my pre-interview data prior to planning these sessions (Journal Entry 4). If I had done that during my research cycle, I may have realized that they really needed more support in how to become warm demanders as first year teachers. It would have been useful to make it explicitly clear how Morning Meetings can build positive relationships with students and to connect the concept to that of warm demander.

Carol spoke about the importance of building a positive relationship with her students during her interviews. In her pre-interview she recognized how she displayed a caring attitude for her students while still maintaining high expectations for them. After attending our PD sessions she recognized how these teacher characteristics that are examples of how a warm demander manages a classroom:

A lot of these kids don't have a person in their life to set expectations. Not only to set expectations but to set high expectations. Their expectations have always been set very low for them. I try to set high ones, and they normally rise to the occasion. And they know that I think they can meet those expectations. We have that conversation a lot. (Interview C2)

Carol began to understand that warm demanders set high expectations for their students and support them in meeting these expectations in the classroom. However, she had the underlying assumption that her students did not have anyone else in their lives doing this as well. Our PD sessions did not help her correct these assumptions.

In addition to Carol, the other four teachers were also still unclear about what it means to be a warm demander, which is an essential concept in CRCM. After watching videos, reading, and discussing the concept of warm demander, the teachers felt that even though they could recognize warm demander traits in other teachers, they were not quite sure they could be warm demanders in their own classrooms. Ann, Becky, and Carol cited the videos we watched of two teachers demonstrating warm demander attributes as being helpful to understanding more about what warm demanding looks like. Specifically, Ann and Becky noticed that the teachers spoke in a firm voice but did not yell at their students. They both stated they were trying this in their own classrooms and it was effective at calming themselves down but was still not as effective as they would have liked with their students. They still felt the need to yell in order to maintain control (Interview A2, B2).

Both Carol and Denise learned that warm demanders talk in ways that set a caring and culturally responsive tone with their students. Carol described a situation in her classroom when a student did not want to go to the Writing Center. She said, “Honey, I really need you to go to the Writing Center” and the student went. She realized that in the past she probably would have just disciplined this student by delivering a consequence for non-compliance and it would have started a power struggle. However, she noticed that taking this nurturing approach seemed to be more effective (Interview C2). In addition, Denise actually referred to herself as their school mom, thus embodying a beginning effort to enact the idea of the classroom as “family”:

They are very serious about their school family. They call me mom sometimes; sometimes they’re like “Mom”. I don’t mind that because I’m their school mom. We spend every single day together; we are in this together. (Interview D2)

However, Ann and Eva, even after watching the videos and doing the readings, were still uncertain they had what it takes to be a warm demander. They both felt that being a White

woman was a barrier they were unsure they could overcome. Ann explained that she felt that in order to become a warm demander she had to be mean and deliver consequences that made her uncomfortable. She also believed her personality and tone of voice hindered how effective she was as an authority figure (Interview A2). Eva had a similar concern regarding her teacher voice:

I don't know the difference between a short utterance, like, quiet voice or the yelling voice. I can't figure out what that voice is, that will make them snap to. I hear Miss Sara talk, and they like snap to. I've heard you do it. I haven't figured out exactly where that is, because I feel like when I don't yell and I go in the utterance voice they still don't listen to me. So I don't know what it is. There's something missing. (Interview E2)

Although both Ann and Eva felt they could recognize the tone conveyed by the warm demander in others, they still needed a lot of help learning to convey authority. The student interview Try It activity in Session 1 seemed to help four of the participants build relationships with students, an essential aspect of warm demanding. They felt they could have benefited from doing it with more students as they began to realize how important the relationship component of warm-demanding can be (Interview A2, B2, C2, E2). Becky described the experience she had when eating lunch with one of her challenging boys and doing the interview:

It was like a time for him and me to be focused on him. I felt like he realized, "Wow she wants to know these things about me." He felt comfortable telling me about them, which I was surprised. About his dad dying and how he goes to therapy. It made me feel good, because I felt like I have established somewhat of a relationship with him. (Interview B2)

Based on these findings and my journal reflections, I realized I should have spent more time during our PD sessions supporting my teachers as they worked to become warm demanders and strengthen relationships with their students. In my journal I wrote, "I had a general feeling that we had just scratched the surface of CRCM – could have used at least four more sessions.." (Journal Entry 4). Two activities I would have taken out were the Morning Meeting Try-Its and the final activity where they used their learning to provide evidence for two indicators on their appraisal rubric (see Appendix D). I wrote:

Got off track when doing the culminating activity – teachers were only aware, but had never looked at the evaluation rubric indicators. Introducing them in a more in depth way here led to them asking about their final evaluation, which led to discussions of transferring to other schools, etc. Not exactly what I had in mind. (Journal Entry 4)

As the facilitator of PD sessions on CRCM, I should have spent more time providing a deeper understand of the concept of warm demander for my teachers. They needed to understand that warm demanders know their students well enough to be vested in their futures and are able to convey this to students. This deep level of care involved in warm demander was not directly addressed in our PD sessions.

### **Findings Summary**

As a new teacher mentor working in urban schools for the last two years, I was acutely aware of the need for my teachers to be more culturally responsive. Through my coursework at the University of Florida and my professional experiences in my district, this research study was born. Initially, I was confident that providing PD centered on CRCM would support their teaching practices, specifically when working with mostly Black students from poverty. However, planning, delivering, and studying my own practice as the PD facilitator uncovered many interesting findings.

The novice teachers I worked with came from different backgrounds in regards to their college coursework and internship experiences; some more prepared than others to work in an urban school their first year of teaching. Therefore, they also varied in the ways they connected to their students' backgrounds: including culture, race, and socio-economic status. This variation was important for me to recognize as the facilitator of our PD sessions as I tried to make our work together relevant to their everyday experiences in their classrooms. In addition, I needed to recognize the challenges they faced as they learned to teach social skills and not just the

curriculum, deal with extreme behavior problems, and refine their traditional classroom management structures.

All of these factors influenced the ways I facilitated our four PD sessions and the impact studying CRCM had on each participant. Overall the teachers appreciated the structure of our PLCs and the chance to collaborate with one another. They began to recognize how their own culture and background influences the ways they interact with their students. They also began to realize the importance of building relationships with students as one of aspect of becoming warm demanders. Yet, it was clear that we only scratched the surface of some of the essential concepts of CRCM and that this PD topic is a vast and complex one, perhaps even more so when working with novice teachers. In the next chapter I will discuss these findings and possible implications for PD centered on CRCM with novice teachers in the future.

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

As a new teacher mentor, working in a high-needs urban school, I recognized that my new teachers needed professional development in how to be more culturally responsive in their classrooms. I designed this research study in order to learn more about how best to facilitate this PD experience for novice teachers. As their mentor, who worked with them on a daily basis, I already had a level of trust and rapport established with the five participants: four 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers from the same grade level team and one 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher. I conducted four PD sessions that lasted two hours each and took notes in my facilitator journal after each session. I also conducted semi-structured pre- and post-interviews with my teachers in order to collect data and answer the following research questions:

1. How can I build on my knowledge of what first year teachers working in urban schools need to know about CRCM?
2. How can I best facilitate professional development sessions centered on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management with first year teachers working in urban schools?

This study was grounded in action research since I was a practitioner, working with five participants as their mentor on a daily basis. As a researcher, who was also situated in this study, I was able to examine my own practice as a PD facilitator in addition to my role as their mentor. By following a continuous cycle of planning, acting, reflecting and planning/acting again, I was able to systematically design and facilitate PD that addressed the daily realities that my teachers experienced in their classrooms (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009 & Creswell, 2013).

### **Limitations of the Study**

My study is a small glimpse at the PD experiences of five teachers in one urban elementary school in Florida. It is not meant to be representative of all novice teachers in urban schools, but I hope that by providing rich details about their experiences and my facilitation of

their PD sessions, that readers in other contexts will be able to transfer important concepts to their own settings. While this is not a limitation of qualitative studies, it is important to recognize that the scope is small and not representative of all novice urban teachers.

One limitation of this study is that it was conducted within one school semester. The short and intense duration of the professional development may have limited the potential for capturing the growth of these novice teachers as the school year progressed. Regardless of this limitation, this study serves as an important contribution to the existing research on Culturally Responsive Classroom Management and the intricacies of working with novice teachers to improve their practice.

### **Discussion**

As I answered my first research question, I learned what the teachers in my study previously knew about CRCM as well as what they gained from participating in the PD sessions. They began to recognize that race and culture matter when working with their students. As white, middle-class, females they started to examine the incongruities between their own backgrounds and those of their students who were predominantly Black and from poverty. The teachers identified the importance of maintaining discipline in a firm, but caring way and using strong voice levels that exhibited authority as the teacher without yelling. One challenging concept for the teachers to grasp was the importance of building strong relationships with students and their families, especially when teaching in an urban setting. They had a surface understanding of the deep level of care that needs to be given to and experienced by their students.

I learned about myself as a culturally responsive educator as well throughout this research study. During my teaching career in Title 1 schools, I knew I was effective at reaching and teaching students of color and from poverty. While taking doctoral coursework, I learned

that my teaching practices were consistent with CRCM. My journey began and for the last few years I have begun to understand how complex, challenging, and rewarding digging deeper into this topic can be. As a facilitator, my thinking and understanding of warm demander grew as I tried to distinguish between a set of techniques, strategies, and teacher behaviors and the broader, deeper ethos of care that warm demanders embody.

Another important learning occurred after the conclusion of this study, reinforcing the challenges of retaining teachers in high poverty settings. One of the five teachers in my study, Eva, resigned in February 2014. She shared with me, as her mentor that she was dealing with major emotional stress and could not finish the year in that classroom and school setting. The other teachers are returning to the school next year, and Ann and Becky showed tremendous growth in classroom management from December until June 2014. During spring break, they switched half of the students in their classes in order to mix up the dynamics in their classrooms and start like it was the first day of school all over again. This provided them the opportunity to build more caring classroom communities, implement consistent consequences, and set firm routines and procedures. With only four of the five teachers in my study planning to remain in teaching after their first year, my study supports findings from numerous studies on the challenge of retaining novice teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ronfeldt et.al, 2013).

### **Relationship to Prior Research**

My study was grounded in action research as I studied my own practice as a mentor for novice teachers who provided professional development in culturally responsive classroom management. As I reflect on the findings, I noticed connections to literature in professional development, culturally responsive classroom management, and learning communities.

## **Professional Development: Features of High Quality PD**

The four PD sessions were designed carefully and addressed the five features of effective PD that Desimone (2009) describes are essential to promote adult learning. The PD was designed and delivered with sufficient attention to these four components: content-focus; active learning; duration; and collective participation. On the fifth component, coherence, I felt there was room for improvement.

**Content focus.** This characteristic links PD activities that focus on subject matter content and how students learn that content resulting in increased teacher knowledge and skills, improvements in practice, and increased student achievement (Desimone, 2009). Desimone refers to curriculum content areas, such as reading, math, science, or social studies, when she purports the need for content focus as a part of effective PD. In this study, CRCM was the topic of the PD sessions, which is slightly different than how Desimone has characterized content-focus. Although my focus was on CRCM as an overarching set of strategies, we did not focus on one particular subject area. However, the ideas behind CRCM relate to student learning broadly, across and within all subjects. The premise of CRCM is that if students are not taught in ways that are culturally responsive, it puts up barriers to their ability to learn specific subject knowledge. Therefore, I made a conscious decision to focus on CRCM across subjects, not within a particular subject or content area focus.

**Active learning.** Desimone (2009) defines active learning as the opposite of passive learning, (i.e. lecturing), and can include observing another teacher or being observed, followed by interactive discussion. It can also include examining student work and leading discussions. By designing all four PD sessions as PLCs this allowed the participants to be actively involved in constructing their own learning. My PD sessions included active learning for my participants through the use of NSRF protocols paired with my facilitation moves to promote discussion and

equity of voice among the group. Protocols (like the Consultancy/Mindful Reflection Protocol used for discussing student dilemmas) provided a structured format to guide the participants learning and apply it to their everyday teaching.

**Duration.** Desimone (2009) defines duration in terms of both the span of time over which the professional learning is spread and the number of hours spent in the activity. In addition, follow-up is a purposeful reconnecting of the participant with a PD experience after an initial PD activity. After the first PD session, the participants engaged in “try-it” activities and reflected on how they went at the beginning of each follow-up session (sessions 2, 3, and 4). In addition, by having multiple PD session lasting approximately one month, the participants had increased opportunities to implement what they were learning, reflect upon the effectiveness, and adjust accordingly. However, the duration of the PD was also a weakness since the topic of CRCM is complex and the teachers needed more time to further develop CRCM knowledge and skills.

**Collective participation.** According to Desimone (2009) collective participation is happening when educators from a similar context participate together in PD sessions. This collaborative effort creates opportunities for teachers to share learning and strategies and act as “experts” with each other. The greater the degree of collaboration, the more useful for practice the work becomes. These sessions were designed to be collaborative in nature by setting up trust and a purpose for our learning community, using protocols to help facilitate a shared voice between all participants (including the researcher), and providing a supportive environment where it is safe to take risks. In addition, four of the five teachers were on the same grade level team and I worked directly with all five of them as their New Teacher Mentor. Since the

participants were from a similar context (urban school, first year 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers) and had a relationship with me as their mentor, this supported our collective participation.

**Coherence.** The feature that I was not as strong on was the concept of coherence. Coherence includes consistency between the learning and what a teacher already knows and believes, as well as a consistency between what is taught and school, district and state reforms and policies (Desimone, 2009). Greater coherence allows for new knowledge to be built on preexisting knowledge with alignment between learning and organized plans for improvement. Desimone's (2009) concept of coherence that relates to the knowledge and experiences teachers bring with them when they participate in professional development was the area that was the weakest. This was evident in my findings as I discovered unique differences among all five participants' past experiences including: teacher preparation (internships and college coursework); perceptions about community and parents; and perceptions of teachers' roles and responsibilities. For example, only Carol felt that her internship and student teaching with her cooperating teacher fully prepared her to teach her first year in an urban elementary school setting. The other four teachers were underprepared and both Eva and Ann were overwhelmed by the cultural, racial, and behavioral differences between their own personal backgrounds and the students they taught.

As the PD designer and facilitator, I should have taken these background experiences into account more than I did and recognized that a "one size fits all" approach should be avoided when providing professional development experiences (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Additionally, when I wrote after each session in my journal, I was focused mostly on my facilitation moves. However, if I had done more reflecting on what the teachers were learning, I could have adapted my PD plans based on their individual needs. For example, Carol was

possibly more equipped and developmentally ready to examine how culturally responsive she was as a teacher than Eva and Ann were. These two teachers were still struggling with basic survival as new teachers with classroom management and discovering their authority. These findings are similar to the results of the Bondy, et. al (2013) research study where one first year teacher was able to exhibit more qualities of a warm demander than the other teacher in their study. However this is not to suggest that teacher educators should wait until a certain level of classroom management has been achieved before supporting new teachers in becoming more culturally responsive. New teachers need to work on basic classroom management while concurrently learning more about CRCM.

The participants also had varying beliefs and perceptions about the parents, community, and their responsibilities as the teacher. Tomlinson (2003) suggests that effective teachers in urban schools view their students and families from an asset based perspective vs. a deficit based perspective. Carol, Becky, and Denise expressed strengths in their students reading levels and were surprised by the high level of parental involvement in some of their families. They reached out to their students' families and communicated with them frequently. Although Carol, Becky and Denise were further along the path toward asset-based perspectives, they were still struggling with deficit perspectives. To express "surprise" that parents are involved comes from a deficit perspective and suggests they came into the PD holding low expectations for parents. However, Ann and Eva viewed their students and families from a more deficit-oriented perspective; acknowledging they were not very involved and even intimidated them when they tried to communicate in person. Both of these teachers found the cultural and behavioral differences of not just their students, but also the parents as challenges as first-year teachers in an urban school. The initial session allowed the participants to examine their own beliefs and

perceptions and follow-up sessions promoted how CRCM can strengthen their efforts at improved student achievement – which is a school, district, and state goal for our students.

### **Culturally Responsive Classroom Management**

As their mentor, PD designer, and facilitator, I supported the teachers as they began to recognize their own ethnocentrism and how this interacts with the backgrounds and cultures of their students. The concept that there can be incongruence between the predominantly white, middle-class female teacher and their diverse students is a large part of the CRCM definition I used with my participants (Weinstein, et.al, 2004). This type of reflection is a preliminary step needed to dig more deeply into how to become more culturally responsive as teachers. All of my participants were able to recognize that they needed to be more sensitive to their own personal experiences and backgrounds that influence how they interact with their students.

In addition, the participants began to recognize how crucial positive relationships with their students are when trying to be more culturally responsive teachers, specifically when becoming warm demanders (Bondy, et.al, 2007). In my literature review, I included warm demander as one of the concepts under the larger heading of CRCM. A teacher who adopts the warm demander stance sets high expectations for his/her students, establishes authority as the leader of the classroom, and genuinely expresses care for students. This stance builds a strong teacher/student relationship which sets the stage for effective teaching in an urban classroom (Bondy, et.al, 2013, Bondy & Ross, 2008, Ware, 2006).

As one of the Try-It activities each teacher interviewed one student during lunch. This provided a chance to sit one-on-one with a student who normally might not receive special attention. All of the teachers appreciated this as an opportunity to build a relationship with a student. They recognized that although it was difficult to find time in their hectic day of teaching to really get to know their students that this was something they needed to work on in the future.

Despite some movement toward building relationships with students, my teachers still had a ways to go with other aspects of warm demanding. After conducting this research, it was clear that we needed to dig more deeply into what warm demanding actually encapsulates during these and future PD sessions. Based on my findings and the literature, new teachers need more help in adopting a warm demanding stance during their first year. Although the teachers began to understand what kind of a teacher a warm demander is, we really only touched on this concept a few times. Teachers who are warm demanders have a deep understanding of care. The students must recognize that their teacher cares for them, and even when the teacher must be firm and consistent, the students perceive this as a display of how much their teacher cares for them. The warm demander also works to build relationships with all of their students and families and is highly vested in the future of their students (Bondy, et.al, 2013).

In addition, an area of warm demanding that we did not address directly is the need to teach students alternative behaviors to problem behaviors, including social skills (Bondy et.al, 2007). It would have been helpful to examine each teacher's perceptions of her roles and responsibilities during our PD sessions. Although three teachers mentioned they thought they needed to teach life skills and stop instruction to teach alternative behaviors in their classrooms, this was not an aspect of warm demander that I had planned to discuss directly in our PLC sessions.

### **Learning Communities**

It was clear that the individual learners in my study benefited from examining culturally responsive practices within a learning community. Similar to the findings of Bondy et.al (2013) the participants in this study were at different places on their path to becoming warm demanders. Carol was the only teacher out of the five participants who already managed her classroom in a culturally responsive way and maintained high expectations for her students. The other four

teachers were just beginning to understand not only what it meant to be a warm demander but also how to exemplify this stance as new teachers. Therefore, it was beneficial for these participants to learn about CRCM in a PLC format, where they could construct meaning collaboratively and share experiences in a trusting small group setting. In addition, by examining dilemmas from their own classrooms, novice teachers were provided an authentic, job-embedded form of PD (Croft, et.al, 2010). It lasted four weeks and was directly tied to the students they work with on a daily basis.

Professional learning communities or communities of practice provide teachers a small group setting that allows them to collaboratively study their own practice or a specific topic (Cochran-Lytle & Smith, 1999). In this study, the participants valued this type of learning and recognized the benefits from the PLC setting. They felt that they were supported in a trusting small group and began to realize they were not alone with the challenges they were facing. They appreciated the equity of voice that this facilitated PD session allowed and were respectful of each other as they shared ideas and dug deeper into the concept of CRCM. Although sometimes they felt less equipped than an experienced teacher to give each other advice when studying dilemmas using the Consultancy Protocol, they began to see that they could collaboratively solve problems and support each other in difficulties they were having in their own classrooms. This kind of PLC work supports the concept that collective knowledge is needed for teachers to move forward in school reform efforts (Dufour, et.al, 2004).

Lastly, the PLC format embodied five of the elements found in effective PLCs (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). These elements included: shared vision and purpose as we focused on improving our knowledge of CRCM; a strong focus on student learning by using Try-It activities to keep new ideas grounded in practice; facilitation that promoted reflective dialogue among

participants; a de-privatization of practice as novice teachers shared their similar experiences and challenges by presenting classroom dilemmas they were facing; and a high level of collaboration among participants supported by a skilled facilitator.

### **Implications of Research**

Although this study was framed as action research as I studied my own practice, there are potential implications beyond my own practice. Findings from my study may be helpful to those designing and facilitating professional development, school leaders, those leading teacher preparation programs and induction programs, and those studying their own practice through action research.

### **Implications for Design and Facilitation of Professional Development**

Prior research about PD suggests that facilitators should consider the background experiences of teachers when planning and delivering PD sessions (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001). This is specifically important when designing PD centered on CRCM with novice teachers. First, this topic is a sensitive and complex one that requires reflection and personal insight. Secondly, novice teachers are unique in two ways: 1) they have had varying experiences in college and internships that may have prepared them differently to address this topic, and 2) they may be so overwhelmed by classroom challenges their first year that this topic is out of reach for them. PD facilitators should carefully study and respond to these varying needs of teachers when planning and delivering PD centered on CRCM for a group of new teachers.

### **Implications for School Leaders**

As part of the Turnaround process for struggling schools in the state of Florida, principals may choose to retain current teachers at their schools or recruit outside teachers who are highly qualified to bring positive change in regards to student achievement. It may be useful for principals to explore the backgrounds of potential new hires in regards to their level of

understanding of CRCM from their experiences both in their internships and teacher preparation programs. As shown in the findings of this study, only one teacher out of five participants felt prepared to teach in an urban setting. The other four teachers, especially Ann and Eva felt underprepared and like failures while trying to reach their students. This might have been avoided if principals interviewed their potential hires by asking them how well they have been prepared to teach in a school with a high percentage of Black students from poverty. It may be inevitable that principals will still have to hire teachers who are under-prepared for an urban school setting. At this point, principals should recognize the need for CRCM-focused PD prior to the start of the school year in order to support the entire staff in becoming more effective with students of color and from poverty.

### **Implications for Teacher Preparation Programs**

Similarly, university and college teacher preparation programs should include student teaching or other field experiences in urban schools as well as content in coursework that centers on culturally responsive teaching. Since many first year teachers begin their careers at high-needs and hard-to-staff schools, teacher preparation programs should recognize this phenomenon. My research findings support the need to connect pre-service experiences with the many challenges that first year teachers will face in an urban school.

### **Implications for Induction Programs**

Designing PD experiences in PLC formats supports the kind of work novice teachers need to do in order to become more culturally responsive teachers. Based on prior research and this study, novice teachers benefited from a risk-free small group format with a skilled facilitator. Unfortunately, large school districts do not always recognize this as an important aspect of PD design and wind up creating large “training” sessions that are impersonal and generic. In order to provide novice teachers with valuable PD centered on CRCM, PD designers and facilitators

should take into account how they can best personalize the content and format of their PD sessions based on individual teacher needs.

### **Implications for Researchers**

Finally, the results of this investigation suggest that researchers who utilize an action research methodology should be flexible in their design and timeline in order to do what is best for participants in their study. Although action research is the systematic study of one's practice that requires intentional planning up front, this initial road map may need to be altered if new information arises. For example, in this study I proceeded with my original PD plans, even though I began to recognize that my participants were coming to me with very different backgrounds and previous student teaching experiences. I did this because it was tied to my dissertation which required a tight timeline. However, future researchers should recognize the need to cycle back to their original plans and leave room for adjustments.

### **Study Significance**

Nationally, public schools have become “re-segregated” not only by race but also along economic lines (Darling-Hammond, 2010). This has led to high teacher turnover in the most struggling, hard-to-staff schools (Borman & Dowling, 2008). It has virtually become an informal part of the induction program – new teachers are hired and must survive in the most challenging school environments in the district their first few years. As a new teacher mentor working in schools in my district serving a high percentage of students of color and from poverty, I was acutely aware of the need to support novice teachers in becoming more culturally responsive. I designed and conducted this research study in order to better understand the needs new teachers have related to CRCM and how I could best facilitate PD to help them understand their own backgrounds and their students' experiences: culturally, racially, and economically.

This research study provides insight into how new teachers develop as culturally responsive teachers and how to best facilitate professional development opportunities for them - novice teachers working in challenging environments in urban schools and as educators with unique backgrounds. New teachers need this kind of support if we expect them to not only forge ahead in their careers and remain in the profession, but most importantly, if they are to provide an equitable, high quality education for all students they teach.

## APPENDIX A INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Pinellas County Teacher:

Supporting new teachers working in schools with high percentages of minority students from low socio-economic backgrounds is a goal for our school district. As your New Teacher Mentor, I have the opportunity to assist you in many ways. In addition to my current job roles, I will be offering a professional development opportunity to all new teachers at your school this fall and studying my own facilitation of that PD opportunity as part of my dissertation. The purpose of this letter is to secure your consent for participation in this professional development opportunity and the collection of materials that will help me understand the effectiveness of my facilitation as part of my dissertation.

As part of this professional development activity, we will meet in a community of practice 4 times after school and further our understanding of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM). I will facilitate these group meetings and provide training on CRCM that will complement and extend the classroom management training you received during the New Teacher Institute. I believe this opportunity will provide you with specific classroom management strategies that are especially effective when working with your students. In addition, I will be studying my own practices as a professional development provider and mentor during this process.

In this study, the following types of documentation may be collected:

- Meeting Notes and documents - These will include informal notes taken during the two-hour long professional development sessions. In order to capture the work we do together, I will take notes on what we discuss and the learning we engage in.
- Interviews – It may also be helpful to include your perspectives and experiences through interviews. Should you agree to participate in an interview, we would protect your confidentiality to the full extent required by the IRB.

The activities suggested above are strictly voluntary. You will not be compensated for your participation in this study. Non-participation or denied consent to collect any of the evidence listed above will not affect your participation in the New Teacher Mentor Program in any way. In addition, you may request at any time that your data not be included for this study. Your identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms, and your confidentiality will be protected to the full extent provided by law. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. Furthermore, I do not perceive that there are any risks for your participation in the study. In fact, teachers generally enjoy the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and experiences within a community of practice.

Please sign and return to me this copy of the letter. A second copy is for your records. If you have any questions about the study or the procedures for data collection, please contact me (727)465-6806, [staufferki@pcsb.org](mailto:staufferki@pcsb.org) or my advisor at UF, Dr. Alyson Adams, [adamsa@coe.ufl.edu](mailto:adamsa@coe.ufl.edu). If you have any questions about the rights of research participants, you can

contact the University of Florida Institutional Review Board Office, P. O. Box 112250,  
University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611.

Sincerely,

Kim Stauffer, Instructional Staff Developer – New Teacher Mentor  
Doctoral Candidate, University of Florida School of Teaching and Learning

I have read the procedure described above for the study of professional development centered on  
Culturally Responsive Classroom Management. I agree to participate and I have received a copy  
of this description.

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Signature of participant

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Date

APPENDIX B  
PRE-INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This **pre-interview** was be semi-structured and lasted approximately 45 minutes long. I conducted this interview before our work together in our professional development sessions. I began with these questions, but in the natural course of responding, some of the prompts may have changed or some questions might have been skipped if they were been answered by the participant already.

1. Explain your background in education and what led you to teaching. How did you get here?
  - (Prompt for certification route.)
  - (Prompt for internship experiences – demographics of previous schools.)
2. What are your expectations for teaching your first year at a school where most students come from poverty and are students of color?
  - (Prompt for positive expectations and possible fears they may have.)
3. Describe any training/coursework you have taken that might support you when working with these students.
  - (Prompt for classroom management, diversity, etc. training.)
4. What do you know already about the community where your school is located?
  - Is this similar or different from the community where you grew up or attended elementary school?
5. What strengths or assets do you expect your students will bring into your classroom?
6. What challenges do you expect they will bring?
7. What expectations do you have about their families and their commitment to education?
8. Are you familiar with the term “Culturally responsive classroom management”?  
What does it mean to you?
9. Please talk to me about how you have set up your classroom.
  - Have you done things to establish a community of learners? Explain.
  - Do you have routines and rules in place to maintain a safe and engaging learning environment? Explain.
  - In your opinion, are these things working so far? Why or why not? Explain.
10. What do you still need to learn about how to teach the students in your classroom this year?
  - How do you think your PD with me will help you do that?
  - What can I do to best help you this year?

11. Have you ever been in a Learning Community before?

- Do you have any expectations for what we will do and how we will work together in one?
- Do you have any expectations for my role as the facilitator in our community?

## APPENDIX C POST-INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This **post-interview** will be semi-structured and will last approximately 45 minutes long. I will conduct this interview after our work together in our professional development sessions. I will begin with these questions, but in the natural course of responding, some of the prompts may change or some questions might be skipped if they've been answered by the participant already.

1. What literature have we read that made an impact on you?
2. What activities/discussions have we engaged in that made an impact on you? Explain.
3. Please discuss the experience you had participating in the following activities:
  - Privilege Walk
  - Warm Demander readings
  - Morning Meetings
  - Facilitated discussions about classroom dilemmas
  - Try-its and reflections
4. After the start of the school year, what were some of your experiences working with your students and their families?
  - (Prompt for responses related to CRCM experiences.)
5. Did our community of practice help facilitate your learning? Why or why not?
  - What particular aspects of our learning community helped you the most?
  - What aspects were least helpful?
6. Have you had an additional PD that has been useful in establishing your classroom culture/management? Please describe.
  - If yes, how have those PD experiences been similar and/or different than ours?
7. Have you been able to apply your learning about CRCM in your classroom?
  - If yes, please explain which ones you have tried and which ones you have not.
  - If no or “not much” prompt for any barriers they have prevented them for trying out CRCM strategies.
  - What strategies would you like to try out in the future?
8. Do you have any evidence that what you learned made a difference for children or their families? Please give me an example.
9. What do you still want to work on as a teacher to develop your skills even further?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about our work together?

APPENDIX D  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

**Session 1: Setting the Stage**

Objectives:

1. Set groups working norms.
2. Establish connections and a feeling of community.
3. Begin to uncover who we are related to the students and the school where we teach.
4. Review current classroom management plans.
5. Discussion of what CRCM is compared to general classroom management systems.
6. Try-it – Interview one student during the following school week.

Materials Needed:

- Chart Paper with Norms
- Copies of Connections Protocol
- Copies of Abridged Paseo Protocol
- Markers and construction paper for Paseo
- Colored Paper to write memoirs on
- Chart Paper with CRCM description
- One copy of Privilege Walk
- Copies of *If She Only Knew Me* by Jeff Gray
- Index Cards for dilemmas
- Classroom management plan graphic organizer
- Index Cards for Try It

Activities and times:

1. Start each session with Connections. Share the protocol and spend time “relieving” ourselves of the excitement of our school day (10 min.).
2. Set working norms. I will already have some to use as guidelines if they are unfamiliar with this task. (10 min.).
3. Discuss what a Learning Community is and how it can be a beneficial forum to collaborate and learn from each other. (5 min.).
4. Share a little about ourselves using the Abridged Paseo protocol. (10 min to do and share).
5. Discuss how a major part of CRCM is viewing yourself (upbringing, religious beliefs, SES, race, gender, etc.) and how that may be similar or different to the students you teach. (5 min.)
6. Do the activity – Privilege Walk. I will read each circumstance on the Privilege Walk activity sheet and the teachers will move forward and backwards accordingly. Afterwards, each participant will do a written reflection on an index card (which I will collect) debriefing the activity. Share reflections. (20 min).
7. Read *If She Only Knew Me*, by Jeff Gray. Cry☺...(10 min.)
8. Break. During the break I will have each person write a dilemma they are having that relates to CRCM in their classrooms. (collect). (10 min.)
9. Discuss current classroom management plans. Have them list these components:
  - a. Individual Positive Reinforcement System(s)

- b. Individual Consequences System(s)
  - c. Group Contingency Reinforcement System(s)
  - d. Any other classroom management aspects you would like to share.
  - e. What's working? What's not? (30 min) (collect these).
10. Explain that although these classroom management plans are a good place to start setting high expectations and structures, CRCM is much more than that. Recognizing our own beliefs and perceptions about our students, our cultural interpretations of some of their behaviors and the ways we show we care for them are the larger pieces we will be focused on in our work together. Show Dr. Vanessa Siddle-Walker's video clip – min. 51:15-53:50. This clip discusses how important caring about Black students is and how we must focus on how best to teach Black children and not just “teaching”.
  11. For the last 15 min or less if activities take longer than expected, I will explain our future work and answer any questions they have in regards to my research.
  12. Conclude the session with a Try It. Ask each teacher to have lunch with and interview one of their challenging students during the upcoming school week. We will partner up and write 3 interview questions that would pertain to the students the teachers have in mind. Then we will put the list together and choose 5 total questions that they will ask their student during the upcoming school week. I will explain that at the beginning of Session 2 they will reflect on how the interview went and what they learned about that student. Each teacher will write down the name of the student they will interview and the questions they want to ask (10 min).
  13. I will collect these materials, copy them, and return them to each teacher in person before our next session: Privilege Walk reflections, dilemma cards, classroom management plans, try it interview questions.

## **Session 2: Making Morning Meetings Stronger/2 Teacher Dilemmas**

### Objectives:

1. Reflect on student interviews.
2. Review Morning Meetings and select one element to strengthen.
3. Share 2 teacher dilemmas and give feedback.
4. Try – It – Implement element of Morning Meeting during the following school week.
5. Share and assist with two CRCM classroom dilemmas.

### Materials:

- Chart Paper with Norms
- Copies of Connections Protocol
- Try-It Reflection Forms
- Copies of “Like Being at the Breakfast Table” article
- Copies of Text Rendering Experience Protocol
- Copies of TRE graphic organizer
- Copies of Morning Meeting Books
- Copies of Abridged Consultancy/Mindful Reflection Protocol
- Timer
- Index Card for Try-Its and Next Steps

Activities and times:

1. Start each session with teachers filling out their Try-It Reflection Forms. During Connections each teacher has 2 minutes to share their reflection and share any other pertinent information from the day. This consistent introduction will allow us time to share and “relieve” ourselves of the excitement of our school day (15 min.).
2. Review working norms on chart paper.
3. Read “Like Being at the Breakfast Table”: The Power of Classroom Morning Meeting. Use the Text Rendering Experience Protocol and graphic organizer (collect) (25 min).
4. Using our Morning Meeting books, plan for one new element to introduce/strengthen in each classroom that week. Write down on the Try-It index card which element/activity they will do for the upcoming school week (collect) (25 min.).
5. Explain that each session we will begin to collaboratively support each other with the CRCM dilemmas we wrote down on our index cards during session 1. First, we will clarify if these are still dilemmas. Choose two teachers to present. Review the Abridged Consultancy/Mindful Reflection Protocol. Do two rounds of dilemmas shared using the protocol. Debrief (45 min).
6. Wrap up with reminder of doing the Morning Meeting Try-It and for the 2 teachers whose dilemmas we discussed, have them write on an index card – Next Steps (collect) (5 min.).
7. I will collect these materials, copy them, and return them to each teacher in person before our next session: Try-It Reflection forms, graphic organizer, Try-It index card, Next Steps.

**Session 3: Revisit Warm Demander/2 Teacher Dilemmas**

Objectives:

1. Reflect and share on Morning Meeting Try-It activity.
2. Read and reflect on viewing culture through various lenses.
3. Generate a list of what being a “warm demander” looks like in regards to teacher behaviors.
4. Select two “warm demander” teacher behaviors to work on as a Try-It for the upcoming school week.
5. Share and assist with two CRCM classroom dilemmas.

Materials:

- Chart Paper with Norms
- Copies of Connections Protocol
- Try-It Reflection Forms
- Copies of pp. 39-40 of Accepting Responsibility article
- Copies of article they read during pre-planning The Warm Demander
- Video clips of Dr. Siddle-Walker
- Copies of Four A’s Text Protocol
- Copies of Four A’s graphic organizer
- Chart Paper for list of “warm demander” behaviors
- Index Cards for Try-It and Next Steps

#### Activities/Materials:

1. Start each session with teachers filling out their Try-It Reflection Forms. During Connections each teacher has 2 minutes to share their reflection and share any other pertinent information from the day. This consistent introduction will allow us time to share and “relieve” ourselves of the excitement of our school day (15 min.).
2. Read p. 39-40 of Accepting Responsibility for the Learning of All Students – The section on Understanding Culture through the Lens of Race, Class, and Student Behavior. Use the Four A’s Text Protocol and graphic organizer (collect) (20 min).
3. Watch and discuss video clip of Dr. Vanessa Siddle-Walker – min. 13:40-18:41 This clip highlights what Black teachers do that shows they care about their students. Also, clip 25:20-26:54 – about teachers going into communities. Finally, clip 41:27-42:25 about the care ethic and individual children’s needs/differences (15 min).
4. As a group, discuss and list specific teacher behaviors that “warm demanders” display This list is based on prior article read during pre-planning, The Warm Demander, and the Accepting Responsibility article. Select two personally challenging teacher behaviors to work on during the upcoming school week. Write these two behaviors on Try-It index cards, along with specific students that might benefit from these strategies (collect) (15 min).
5. Two more teachers present CRCM dilemmas. Review the Abridged Consultancy/Mindful Reflection Protocol. Do two rounds of dilemmas shared using the protocol. Debrief (45 min).
6. Wrap up with reminder of doing the Warm Demander Try-It and for the 2 teachers whose dilemmas we discussed, have them write on an index card – Next Steps (collect) (5 min.).
7. I will collect these materials, copy them, and return them to each teacher in person before our next session: Try-It Reflection forms, graphic organizer, Try-It index card, Next Steps.

#### **Session 4: Putting It All Together/Fifth Dilemma**

##### Objectives:

1. Reflect and share on Try-It “warm demander” activity.
2. Review teacher evaluation rubric indicators 2.1e and 2.1g.
3. Reflect on how our work together and Try-It activities have demonstrated effectiveness in this area.
4. Select improved teacher and student evidence on the indicators list.
5. Share and assist with 5<sup>th</sup> teacher’s CRCM classroom dilemma.

##### Materials:

- Chart Paper with Norms
- Copies of Connections Protocol
- Try-It Reflection Forms
- Rubric Indicators sheet
- Index Card for Next Steps

Activities and times:

1. Start each session with Connections. Share the protocol and spend time “relieving” ourselves of the excitement of our school day (10 min.).
2. Review working norms on chart paper.
3. Fill out “warm demander” Try-It Reflection forms. Each teacher has two minutes to share (collect) (10 min.).
4. Discuss our work together and how it relates to effective teaching. Share the **Two Rubric Indicators Form**: 2.1g How do I demonstrate an understanding of students’ interests and background? & 1.2g How do I provide opportunities for students to talk about themselves? Reflect and note on the form how our work together addresses some of the teacher and student evidence listed in order to be effective/highly effective in these two areas. Discuss ways to highlight these activities with administrator who will evaluate each teacher. Discuss and write ways to continue teacher and student evidence not addressed at this point in the year or from our PD work together (collect) (60 min).
5. Fifth and final teacher presents CRCM dilemmas. Review the Abridged Consultancy/Mindful Reflection Protocol. Do two rounds of dilemmas shared using the protocol. Debrief (25 min).
6. Fifth teacher fills out Next Steps index card (collect).
7. Each teacher does an exit slip reflecting on the entire 4 sessions: What was the most powerful thing they learned and what learning structure best facilitated their learning?
8. I will collect these materials, copy them, and return them to each teacher in person: Try-It Reflection forms, Two Rubric Indicators Form, Next Steps index card, Exit slip

\*The following protocols have been created to use with one or many of the PD sessions.

APPENDIX E  
PROTOCOLS AND FORMS USED IN LESSON PLANS

**Abridged Paseo Protocol**

1. Each participant draws a web of 6 circles. One in the middle and 5 on the outside.
2. Write name in the center circle.
3. Each additional circle should contain a word or phrase that captures some element of his/her identity.
4. These are terms or descriptors that have most helped shape who the person is and how s/he interacts in the world.
5. Each person takes one minute to share and describe their webs.

**Abridged Consultancy/Mindful Reflection Protocol**

(adapted from Dray & Wineski, 2011).

1. Describe what you and the student said or did. How did the student react to your actions or comments? How does the student make you feel? What are your worries or fears? Now frame the dilemma - What is the dilemma? Present it in question form. (5 min)
2. Clarifying and probing questions. These questions should help the presenter examine the dilemma from both teacher and student perspectives. (5 min)  
Example questions could include:
  - Have you noticed any patterns in yours or the students' behavior?
  - What are your expectations for the situation? How is the student not meeting your expectations?
  - What external or personal factors could be influencing the student's behavior?
  - Have you discussed the behavior with the family? What are their perceptions?
3. Presenter pulls back, takes notes while group discusses. Group discussion can focus on how the presenter could change the environment, their actions, and/or expectations for the student. (5 min)
4. Presenter discusses significant comments, ideas generated, suggestions made. (3 min)
5. Debrief and plan for next steps. (2 min)

\*4A's and Text Rendering Experience protocols can be found on the NSRF website:

[http://www.nsrffharmony.org/protocol/a\\_z.html](http://www.nsrffharmony.org/protocol/a_z.html)

### Classroom Management Plan Reflection

Please list the following components of your current management plan and briefly reflect on how it is working:

<b>Management Component</b>	<b>What's working? What's not?</b>
Individual Positive Reinforcement System(s)	
Individual Consequences System(s)	
Group Contingency Reinforcement System(s)	
Any other classroom management aspects you would like to share.	

### Try-It Reflection Form

What did you try?	How did it go?

APPENDIX F  
TEACHER APPRAISAL RUBRIC INDICATORS FORM

**Two Rubric Indicators Form**

(taken from my school district's Teacher Evaluation Indicators Flip Chart, 2013)

**2.1g How do I demonstrate an understanding of students' interests and background?**

- Gather and use students' interests and background to engage in respectful interactions
- Monitor the impact on student outcomes

**Teacher Evidence:** *Evidenced by one or more of the following ...*

- Teacher has side discussions with students about events in their lives
- Teacher has discussions with students about topics in which they are interested
- Teacher builds student interests into lessons or makes connections during the lesson
- *\*ESE: Teacher encourages students to share personal interests and helps make connections to the content*
- *\*ESE: Students will react by utilizing their individual response modes (verbal, nonverbal, picture exchange, sign or devices) when teacher demonstrates understanding of their interests and background*
- *\*ESE: Teacher obtains information from students caregivers i.e. daily notes, communication logs, student profiles, parent conference) regarding their interests and events in their lives to personalize the learning*

**Student Evidence:**

- When asked, students (*\*ESE: who have the ability or language to*) describe the teacher as someone who knows them and/or is interested in them
- Students respond when teacher demonstrates understanding of their interests and background
- When asked, students say they feel accepted
- *\*ESE: Student is able to accept teacher interactions related to their personal interests*

*\*ESE: The student has visual connections from personal life to aide in making connections*

**1.2g Provide opportunities for students to talk about themselves**

- Provide students with opportunities to relate what is being addressed in class to their personal interests
- Monitor the effectiveness of the element on student learning

**Teacher Evidence:**

- Teacher is aware of student interests and makes connections between these interests and class content
  - Teacher structures activities that ask students to make connections between the content and their personal interests (*\*ESE: with support and guidance as needed*)
  - When students are explaining how content relates to their personal interests, the teacher appears encouraging and interested
- Teacher monitors the extent to which these activities enhance student engagement

**Student Evidence:**

- Students (*\*ESE: who have the ability or language to*) engage in activities that require them to make connections between their personal interests and the content
- When asked, students (*\*ESE: who have the ability or language to*) explain how making connections between content and their personal interests engages them and helps them better understand the content
- *\*ESE: When given choices, students will indicate a personal preference related to the content*

Teacher Evidence Met	Student Evidence Met	Future Goals

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kimberly's major was Curriculum and Instruction. Prior to enrolling in the doctoral program, she focused on educational psychology and special education and received a Master of Science degree in Education in May of 2002.

She has been teaching for 14 years, with all of her experience in Title 1 elementary schools in three different districts. For the last two years, she has worked in a high-needs urban school as an Instructional Staff Developer: New Teacher Mentor. She is interested in issues of equity and social justice for underprivileged students as well as supporting pre-service and novice teachers.