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Culturally Competent Common Core Practices: A Delphi Study

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Abstract

Research has shown that standards and benchmarks lack guidance for diverse learners with regard to the lesson planning and practice. The Common Core Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, a national state-led crusade, seeks to safeguard rigorous grade level content to prepare all students for college and career readiness. This study identified five *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices* that can provide anchors for informing the instructional process in culturally contextualized ways. The Delphi study showed that the educator's self-awareness fostered the level of cognitive consciousness that facilitates effect interaction with diverse populations.

Keywords: Common Core, cultural competence, instruction, standards, culturally responsive teaching, and pedagogy

Introduction

The Common Core Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, a national state-led crusade, seeks to safeguard rigorous grade level content to prepare all students for college and career readiness (TESOL, 2013). Two associations, the National Governors Association and the Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO): in collaboration with representatives from participating states and a wide range of educators, content experts, researchers, national organizations, and community groups, developed standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. Unfortunately, the Common Core Standards offer almost no guidance for educators of diverse learners. The framework aims to ensure that students gain relevant skills and knowledge critical in real world settings (CCSSO, [1]2012). However, while the nation's public school student population grows more diverse, the teaching force remains European American, monoculture, middle class, female, and rural or suburban (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Sleeter & Grant, 2003; Ukpokodu, 2004) and the standards do not specify any particular curriculum, techniques or strategies to teach diverse populations (Dove & Honigfeld, 2013). Inequities based on race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, language, values, beliefs, degrees of ableness, and sexual orientation continue to exist, (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009), yet standards lack methods, materials, and

instructional interventions to foster academic growth addressing those inequities (Dove & Honigfeld, 2013)**.** It is imperative that educators have the capacity to work effectively with various types of diversity (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gay; 2000; Thompson, 2010), to ensure that all students receive the rigorous and systemic education they need to graduate career and college ready from high schools (CCSSO, 2012).

Research shows culturally responsive instruction positively influenced the school culture as well as student academic achievement and motivation (Howard, 2006; Gay, 2000; Sleeter, 2009; Thompson, 2004). For decades, scholars in the field of education have emphasized effective instruction embodying cultural competent instruction (Amodeo, & Martin, 1982; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2006; Pang, 2011; Sprott, 2009) that reverses the underachievement of diverse populations (Gay, 2010) and transforms the educational setting. Currently studies indicate that culturally competent instruction recognizes and capitalizes on cultural diversity (Gay 2000). According to Gay (2013) it accepts and valuing cultural diversity accommodates different pattern of cultural interaction and builds on students' cultural backgrounds. Several scholars have argued that the educational system is rife with subtle forms of discrimination (Farkas, 2003; Helms, 2002; Thomas, Cardwell, Faison, & Jackson, 2009); yet cultural competent teaching empowers students by employing cultural experiences to learn the required school curriculum (Gary Howard, personal communication, October 6, 2012). The stakes are high for diverse students, who already suffer dismal academic achievement (Banks & Banks, 2004; Cross, 1971; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Gay, 2000; Helms, 2002; Howard, 1999; Powell, 2009; Sprott, 2007). In a review of the Common Core Standards, Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang (2011) noted that the Common Core signified considerable change from previous standards but lacked the social, emotional, physical, and cultural implications to ensure students are college and career ready. This is the gap that *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices* can address in the preparation of lessons. The researcher in this study argues that creating *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices (C4)*, concepts to improve the quality of instruction, moves education towards implementing the Common Core Standards as anchors for optimum results in culturally rich settings (Anderson & Davis, 2012).

The Common Core Standards identified essential grade levels skills (CCSSO, 2012), reflecting a national priority to improve students' college and career readiness. However, educators still face the challenge of recognizing that students from diverse backgrounds bring with them a different set of values, experiences, cultural knowledge, linguistic ability and understanding of the learning process (Thompson, 2010). For students to learn, they must feel fully appreciated as individuals within their own distinctive ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic status, backgrounds, gender, and sexual orientation. At the onset of the Washington States' implementation of the Common Core, a Bias and Sensitivity Review Committee concluded the CCSS lacked culturally sensitive processes essential for the success of diverse learners (Anderson & Davis, 2012). Other experts in the field agree that key considerations of planning, delivery, and assessment as it pertains to student and teacher characteristics, are necessary to negotiate the educational setting (Dray & Wisneski, 2011; Gay, 2013). Employing experts is not a new concept. They have been used as mentors, policy reformers and creators, researchers, curriculum consultants, equity trailblazers, design teams and focal points for educational improvement. But experts are seldom used to the fortitude of future needs for the profession and education industry. The literature is void of studies using nationally recognized leaders in education to as experts for the purpose of determining the future needs for the profession and employing common language in reference to improving education. Authors, university

professors, directors, and individuals committed to education equity and recognized them for their expertize, participated in this Delphi project.

   As stated, the Common Core Standards provide a consistent and clear understanding of student expectations at each grade so teachers and stakeholders know what supports to enact (CCSSO, 2012). However, educators who lack the skills to navigate a diverse setting (Gay, 2000; Pang, 2011; Sprott, 2007) may be ill prepared (Ukpokodu, 2004; Vavrus, 2003) to develop, deliver and assess culturally competent lessons. Teachers must consistently examine their instructional practices, beliefs, attitudes and values about the abilities and strengths of diverse learners (Dray & Wisneski, 2011; Gay 2000; Howard, 2006) while using funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), assets that students accumulate from his or her life as frames of reference to design and teach culturally competent curriculum. (Banks & Banks, 2004; Sleeter, 2009).

   The current standards do not inform lesson planning therefore, the purpose of this investigation was to design a tool to inform the quality of instruction that infuses cultural knowledge before, during, and after lessons by using experts in the field. In order to empower educators to implement culturally competent lessons across all disciplines, a nationwide database of *Culturally Competent Common Core* plans was considered. The search for lesson plans developed through the lens of culture contained minimal outcomes. The nonexistence of a framework for developing lessons through a culture lens that informs the "breadth and depth" of College and Career Ready graduates was absent. Experts in the field of Multicultural Education were petitioned to resolve this inquiry.

   A secondary and integrated purpose was to identify a cultural competent framework and institute an expert panel most competent to answer issues related to educational equity. To these ends, this study identified *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices* that can provide anchors for informing quality instruction and guiding the lesson planning process in culturally contextualized ways. Creating culturally competent instruction based on the Common Core requires educators to invest their hearts and minds in the teaching efforts of each and every student. Three research questions were formulated in accordance with the research purpose:

1.   To what extent do cultural competencies of teachers influence the development of Common Core Standards lessons?
2.   What teacher practices and actions are imperative for educators to deliver effective Culturally Competent Common Core lessons?
3.   How do Culturally Competent practices inform the assessment of Common Core lessons?

Methodology

   The Delphi process is a research method for investigating and developing agreement on a subject where conclusive information is lacking. It involves refining information from experts in an attempt to achieve consensus or convergence of opinions through a series of structured rounds of reflection (Skulmoksi, Hartman & Krahn, 2007). According to Fischer (1978), the Delphi process is most appropriately used for developing value and panel analysis, (Luo & Wildemuth, 2009) suitable when attempting to solve issues. Delphi studies are considered appropriate for investigating questions that can benefit from subjective input from a group of highly qualified experts (Luo & Wildemuth, 2009).

   In this study, anonymity of Delphi participants facilitated free expression of ideas and opinions without undue social pressure (Rowe & Wright, 1999). Each iteration allowed the

participants to refine their viewpoints in dealing with complex issues (Linstone & Turoff, 1975; Delbecq, Van de Ven & Gustafson, 1975). The researcher provided controlled feedback to inform the participants of other panelist perspectives and to provide panel experts opportunities to clarify or change their views. In the final round, statistical aggregation of panelist responses allowed for quantitative analysis and interpretation of data. The Delphi technique lends itself particularly well to investigative theory building (Alake-Tuenter, Biemans, Tobi & Mulder, 2013), where conclusive information is lacking, interdisciplinary issues exist and often involving a number of new future trends.

Many have used the Delphi research method (Linstone & Turloff, 1975; Rowe & Wright, 1999) but few in the field of education. The Delphi has been used in research to develop, classify, predict, authenticate and to validate in a wide variety of research areas. While a three round Delphi is typical, single and double round Delphi studies have also been completed. The sample size varies in their studies from 4 to 171 "experts" (Skulmoski, Hartman, Krahn, 2007; Tang & Wu, 2010). One swiftly resolves that there is no "typical" Delphi; rather that the method is adapted to suit the conditions and investigation.   The Delphi method has been used to design assessments of teacher' pedagogical content knowledge in mathematics education (Manizade & Mason, 2010). They argue that professionally situated knowledge is lacking in the field of mathematics. Using the a three round Delphi, the researchers provided an in-depth look at the methodology appropriate for the development of an instrument for assessing teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in one area of middle school geometry and measurement. Essentially, teachers must know what they are teaching how to teach it.

Table 1. Stages of the Delphi Study

Stage 1.	Literature research, written permission from the authors of the literature, identifying and confirming experts, and first Delphi Round (i.e. open-ended interviews, written instructions and cultural competencies for teachers, and emails).
Stage 2.	Second Delphi round (i.e. open-ended interviews, written instructions with tasks, emails, online survey).
Stage 3.	Third Delphi round (i.e. open-ended interviews, written investigation regarding advised amendments)

The stages in the process of developing Culturally Competent Common Core Practices

Research Design

The research process of this Delphi study employed the following steps: (a) the anonymity of panelist, (b) the interactions facilitated through the researcher (c) the optimum number of rounds, (d) feedback of the results, and (e) panelists given the opportunity to revise their opinions (Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). During each of the three iterations of data collection, the researcher refined key concepts and dispersed results to the panelists for the next round, combined with feedback. Experts were invited to clarify, explain, or comment on their answers. The researcher made a summary of the results and sent this to the experts with

information about the next round. Through this process, five competencies/practices were identified to characterize the quality of instruction. Each practice was accompanied by three or more tangible teacher actions or behaviors. Table 1 explains the process.

Experts

The panelists were selected using several criteria: professional experience, contributions to the field, publications, and willingness to serve. Panelists represented different expert groups: policymakers, researchers, teacher educators, implementation consultants, and university professors in the field of multicultural education**.** These experts shared an interest in Common Core Standards and a relationship to cultural competencies in education. Experts reflected heterogeneity in knowledge and opinions. Members were considered experts if they had a doctorate degree, minimum of ten years of experience, and contributions to the field of education through publications.

Experts were recruited by personal invitation from the researcher, via phone calls and emails. Using email, the following information was presented to the panel of 14 experts:

"The purpose of this study is to develop a total of five Culturally Competent Common Core Practices for teachers to consider before/planning, during/implementation, and after/assessments instruction through a Delphi process. The methodology includes several rounds of prioritizing and identifying five competencies/practices that are essential for teachers to infuse cultural knowledge. Each practice selected should include three tangible teacher actions or behaviors. Enclosed are three different documents "Essential Elements", "Cultural Competence Standards for Social Workers" and an excerpt from the "Alaska Standards for Responsive Schools". A total of five practices from the three documents should be chosen as your priority. As stated before, each practice selected should include three tangible actions or behaviors teacher can demonstrate.

1. The quality of instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.
2. Offer exemplary lesson plan models to inform instructional planning and practice.
3. Ensure teachers are exposed to a variety of plans to accommodate individual learning styles and cultural knowledge.

In our extensive search for examples, we have not found any online lessons plans that include cultural competencies and your expertise would ensure the most significant practices are identified for this process. Thank you very much for your assistance in this endeavor."

Twenty-five experts were invited; twelve accepted the offer to participate and consented via email or phone. During the data collection of the first round, the researcher reviewed the list of experts and noticed the omission of certain demographic groups, for example, disability and sexual orientation. Following this consideration, four additional experts were approached and two agreed to participate in the study, which totaled 14 expert panelists. In the third round, one expert declined to respond and was replaced with a professional of similar demographic, stabilizing the number of experts.

The process, purpose and design of the research study, as well as the expected number of rounds and the anticipated time commitment were communicated in advance. Each expert solicited several questions about the study and the researcher responded with appropriate information. The rigor of both qualitative (Creswell, 1998) and quantitative (Fowler, 1993) research was communicated to panelists.

Of the 25 experts approached, 15 (56%) responded throughout the duration of the study. Overall, in most Delphi studies participation declines over time (Alake-Tuenter, Biemans, Tobi

& Mulder, 2013) however, in this study participation remained consistent due to the replacement of one expert. The number required constituting a representative pooling of judgments and the information summarizing the capability of the researcher determines the number of respondents. Possible attrition must be considered as well. For the purpose of this study, the researcher chose 15 participants based on the expert criteria.

As the panelists in a project using Delphi methodology are generally chosen based on their expertise and difference in their perspectives (Manizade & Mason, 2010). The experts were selected from the following four categories: (a) Multicultural Education research experts, (b) Multicultural public school experts, (3) Multicultural Education leader experts, and (d) diverse demographics of Multicultural Educators. The sample of experts included the following groups:

1. Fifteen research experts with multiple research publications in Multicultural Education were instituted in this Delphi method. All fifteen of the researchers were actively involved in research projects related to teaching and learning in the field of Multicultural Education. They have knowledge of how to analyze and interpret qualitative or quantitative research. Nine experts have published five or more books on in-service and preservice education. Also, ten of the fifteen researchers are university professors teaching undergraduate and graduate courses All fifteen are actively involved in conducting research on issues related to educational equity.
2. The Multicultural Education experts were university faculty and /or public school educators engaged in developing courses and/or teaching. Fourteen taught preservice and in-service elementary and middle school teachers across the country and ten experts had at least 15 years of teaching experience at different universities. Seven of the experts are national known and has a record of research publication on teaching and learning in the field of Multicultural Education.
3. Six of the fifteen experts are current or previous regional Equity Assistant Center (EAC) directors with more than 20 years of teaching experience at the university and school level. EACs are funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. These experts provide assistance in the areas of Race, Gender, and National Origin equity to public schools promoting equal educational opportunities. The five experts represent 26 states and over 8000 school districts. The international and nationally known experts represent United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and several other countries.
4. Fifteen of the experts are diverse Multicultural Educators with multiple perspectives. Six African Americans and five Whites were represented in the study, followed by two Hispanics, one Asian and one Native American. Diverse geographical locations were considered due to the needs of schooling for 21st century college and career readiness. Disability and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) group, also represented.

Literature Search and Selection Criteria

In order to answer the questions of this study the researcher carried out a literature search on cultural competencies. The researcher studied books, articles in journals and research reports identifying cultural competencies that teacher should possess while processing lessons. A massive number of relevant journals were screened in relationship to topic. Finally, the researcher consulted with two major organizations, *The National Association for Social Workers: Indicators for the Achievement of the NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practices (*National Association of Social Workers, 2007*)* and authors of *Culturally Proficient Leadership: A Personal Journey* (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009*)* to employ their work for the study. The National Association for Social Workers was the only national organization with published

standards related to cultural competencies that speaks to what educators should do in practice. Both organizations have longevity of 10 years or more in the withstanding of cultural competencies. Authors from both organizations provided written consent. The final literature, *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools: Cultural Standards for Students, Educators Schools Curriculum and Communities* (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998*)* was accessed from the *What Works Clearinghouse* established by the U.S. Department of Education. This research aims to overcome the monumental concepts that exist throughout the field of education in relationship to cultural competencies, especially during the design, deliver, implementation of lesson structure and a developing hierarchical structure for cognitive processing in lesson development. This process provides a summary of relevant resources for the study.

Currently, in the field of Multicultural Education a vast number of research models exist (Banks, 2006; Davis, 2000; Howard, 1999; Gay, 2000), however, none provide specific guidance relating to designing, delivering and assessing daily lessons.   The experts in the field agreed to participate in the study due to the overwhelming significance of implementing Common Core with the not-so-common-learner in public school classrooms in mind (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2013). Gay (2012) asserts, "Identifying a research/evidence based model to address deficient orientations toward ethnic, racial and cultural diversity are key concepts in education while implementing Common Core Standards (personal communication, July 27, 2013)." Furthermore, Scotts (2013) states that the literature selection for this study promotes tangible strategies that specify exactly what teachers should know and do (personal communication, July 12, 2012)." Validation from the experts ensured the quality of the literature selection.

The second selection criteria were to identify literature that endorses cultural competencies currently engaged in the field of education. The three documents are engaged by educators throughout the nation and beyond but not specifically to guide lessoning planning. However, educators in the United States and Canada engage the literature for guidance on individual behavior and organization practices. These published frameworks are deemed as proactive tools to address the dramatic increase of diverse populations and the complexities associated with cultural diversity. Next, the researchers' background knowledge emphasizes another layer of expertise in operating the sociocultural experiences of people from different genders, languages, social classes, religions, sexual orientations, in a military context, physical and mental abilities. The literature selection represented the convergence of metacognitive processes and academic advancement from the context of educational equity. The final criteria that solicited the study is a collaborative between the College of Education of a Midwestern University and a Regional Technical Assistant Center to create a database of *Culturally Competent Common Core Lessons* as a result of the research (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998; National Association of Social Workers, 2007; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009).

Data Collection

While researchers have determined that in most cases three rounds are sufficient, (Hsu & Sandford, 2007) the Delphi process is repeated until consensus are reached. This study was comprised of three rounds of data collection during the Summer 2012 through the Fall of 2013 in which group consensus was reached in the three rounds.

The first Delphi round contained the following literature documents: "*Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency* (EE)", an *excerpt from Alaskan Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*" (AS), and "*National Association for Social Workers Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* (NASW)". Open-ended responses describing teacher actions were solicited to collect opinions from professional experts in the field with regard to

cultural competencies to improve instruction of Common Core lessons. The researcher produced the initial version in round one of *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices* from the literature. Each panelist responded according to the protocol in the email. The results from round one were then summarized and fed back to the panel for two round.

In the second round of data collection, an online survey format employed quantitative responses to expedite the mode of interaction and take advantage of the raw data in digital format (Schmidt, 1995). Furthermore, the results from one round were entered in Axio online survey tools. Data were presented in two sections of the survey. For example, in the first section, the panelists prioritized the nine competencies by ranking items from 1, the highest, to 7 the lowest. Part two of the survey requested panelist rate teacher actions from extremely important to unimportant on a four-point Likert scale. Mean scores for each item in the section one of the surveys was used as proxy for ranking data. For each item to be ranked high, the mean needed to be equal to or closest to one. Ranking data was validated through the hierarchical differentiated weighing approach. The second section of the survey, the research maintained the items rated extremely important and very important on the five highest ranked items. The items related to the lowest ranked concepts were eliminated from the data set.

The researcher reported the results of the second round to the panelists via email to begin round three. A summary of the results and written instructions were sent to the panelists with the option to comment on the data. For proposed changes the panelists were asked to change the wording and provide recommended language. Email was used to collect data for the final round with feedback from each panelist to clarify.

The final round of data was analyzed through the lens of grounded theory without a preconceived theoretical framework. The data were coded through a three step coding process (Creswell, 1998). The first of these was open coding, during which data were organized according to general themes. Three themes emerged consistently from data (a) Skills (b) Funds of knowledge and (c) Resources. The second step was axial coding, in which themes were reexamined for patterns and relationship between theme categories to ensure consistency. The N-Vivo 10, qualitative data analysis software was applied to validate the data by conducting queries. For example, two subthemes that emerged from the reconsideration of data supporting the skills of Self-Awareness are (a) Critical reflection and (b) Self-Examination. Relevant data were reexamined in light of other themes and subthemes to ensure consistency of coding. Once themes and subthemes were formulated, the panelists had an opportunity to comment or generate opinions about the identified themes and finalize their views based upon consideration of all panel members' opinions.

Data Analysis

Results of the three Delphi rounds were summarized with quantitative (Fowler, 1993) and qualitative (Creswell, 1998) methods. The frequency distribution was used to count the occurrences of values within the group of cultural competencies. In round two means scores determined the ranking and validated through a hierarchical differentiated weighting approach. Moreover, a list of generated teacher actions was rated from extremely important to unimportant. A qualitative approach was employed in round three to identify themes for cultural competencies.

Conversely, the percentage of agreement for each competency was used to establish the reliability of each panel member' judgment by comparing it to the other panel members' observations. The percentage of agreement to establish reliability among panel member responses of 62.5% (Hayes & Hatch, 1999); therefore a higher percentage of agreement reflects a

higher level of reliability.

Results

Round one of the study yielded a list of 20 cultural competencies from the three research literature: *Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency* (Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, Terrell, 2006), *Alaskan Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998) and *National Association for Social Workers Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* (National Association for Social Workers, 2007) during the Summer of 2012. In Table one, a frequency distribution shows how often the panelist gave each item a response. The value of each was listed in absolute raw numbers of occurrences and relative to the number of total responses. Tallied responses narrowed the focus and identified key competencies. Results of round one revealed 9 out of 20 cultural competencies were supported by the existing literature. Within each competence, the panel of experts generated three or more actions. A total of 182 teacher actions were generated from the panelists. After seven months of inquiries, in December of 2102, round one was completed.

In round one of the responses, 40% of the panelists agreed that "(EE) valuing diversity" and (EE) institutionalizing cultural knowledge are the most important competencies, while 35% selected (AS) working closely with parents and (NASW) self-awareness as significant cultural competencies. In addition, of all the answers provided by the panelists, 15% to 25% of responses, focused on four concepts; the Local ways of knowing and teaching (NASW), Local environment and community (NASW), Cross Cultural Knowledge (NASW) and Cross-Cultural Skills (NASW) indicated in Table 2. A total of nine cultural competencies were selected for round two of the study.

Table 2. Round One Number of Cultural Competent Common Core Practices

Cultural Competencies from Literature		
Variables	*N* total	Percentage
1. *Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency*		
1.1 EE: Assessing Your Culture	2	10%
1.2 EE: Valuing Diversity	8	40%
1.3 EE: Manage the Dynamics of differences	2	10%
1.4 EE: Adapt to Diversity	2	10%
1.5 EE: Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge	8	40%
2. *Alaskan Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*		
2.1 AS: Local Ways of Knowing and Teaching	3	15%
2.2 AS: Local Environment and Community	6	30%
2.3 AS: Community and Activities	1	5%
2.4 AS: Work Closely Parents	7	35%
2.5 AS: Recognize Full Potential	4	30%
3. *National Association for Social Workers Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*		
3.1NASW: Self-Awareness	7	35%
3.2NASW: Cross-Cultural Knowledge	5	25%
3.3NASW: Cross-Cultural Skills	5	25%
3.4NASW: Service Delivery	0	0%
3.5NASW: Ethics and Values	2	10%

3.6NASW: Empowerment and Advocacy	2	10%
3.7NASW: Diverse Workforce	0	0%
3.8NASW: Professional Education	0	0%
3.9NASW: Language Diversity	2	10%
3.10NASW: Cross-Cultural Leadership	1	5%

Number and percentage of cultural competencies identified by each expert used in the study (N=14)

Research indicates distinct components associated with an educator's ability to effectively construct quality lessons. Some of these components are found in Table 3. The nine identified cultural competences provide credence to integrated pattern of human behavior that beliefs, thoughts, communication, action, customs, and values of any demographic group must be considered to improve instruction.

The panelists indicated that the cultural competencies identified at the end of round one needed actions, reflecting the domains of learning outcomes. For example, one panelist shared, "there should be verbs indicating what teachers do..." while another indicated "teachers should be able to know how to respond by using verbs ...."as shown in Table 3. In general, all of the various competencies in the three literature scholarships describe simple observations. Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall (2000) recommends using "unambiguous action verbs" to emphasis physical skills and practices related to learning outcomes. In fact, the researcher used the Bologna process (Fry et. al, 2000; Kennedy, Hyland, Ryan, 2005) to guide and construct each statement in relationship to the cultural competencies. For example, "Self-Awareness" was modified to "Educators will demonstrate self-awareness." Harden inserts (2002) clarification of outcomes guide educators on what they are expected to learn, assess, and do.

One hundred eighty two qualitative responses or teacher actions were collected from panelists. Each action provided support for the competencies identified during round one. Each practice selected included three tangible actions or behaviors teacher could demonstrate to inform instruction. Some of the panelists submitted more than three teacher actions. Twenty-nine teacher actions were developed for "Educators will demonstrate self-awareness" while "Educators will incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work had the least number of teacher actions, twelve. This denotes that teacher self-awareness is extremely important to construct effective lessons that inform the quality of planning, implementing and assessing instruction for diverse populations. Moreover, "Educators exhibit cross-cultural skills" reflected a similar convergence of agreement from the experts illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Round Two Cultural Competent Common Core Practices and Teacher Actions

Cultural Competencies	Number of Teacher Actions
1. Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency	
1.1 Educators will illustrate valuing diversity.	14
1.2 Educators will institutionalize cultural knowledge and train about differences.	23
2. Alaskan Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools	
2.1 Educators will incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work.	12
2.2 Educators use the local environment and community resources on a regular basis to link what they	

are teaching the everyday lives of students.	22
2.3 Educators will collaborate closely with parent achieve a high level of complementary educational expectations between home and school.	19
2.4 Educators will recognize the full potential of each student and provide he challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential.	13

3. National Association for Social Workers Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice

3.1 Educators will demonstrate self-awareness.	29
3.2 Educators ill exhibit cross-cultural skills.	24
3.3 Educators will demonstrate cross-cultural knowledge.	13

Experts identified cultural competence and number of teacher actions created.

The final round verified and documented the results of the study. Each expert panelist reviewed and confirmed the results from round three with opportunities to clarify or share feedback. Panelists established a hierarchy of responses through ranking demonstrated in Table 4. The mean scores indicate, "Educators will demonstrate self-awareness" (M=1.786), and "Educators will exhibit cross cultural skills. (M=2.214), "Educators will recognize the full potential of each student and provide the challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential (M=4.00), Educators will demonstrate cross cultural knowledge (M= 4.2) Educators will illustrate valuing diversity (M= 4.500), scores were the highest of the nine competencies indicating the panelist strongly agreed with ranking. The researcher analyzed and refined the data maintaining the teachers actions related to the identified five cultural competencies practices. The findings were validated through a hierarchical differentiated weighting approach.

The Delphi study revealed five identified *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices*. Each practice is viewed through the lens of skills, funds of knowledge, and resources necessary to employ actions to foster desired shifts in instruction. The five teacher practices identified in this study are as follows and shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Round Three Ranking Results of Culturally Competent Common Core Practices

Cultural Competencies	Rank	Mean
1-1 Educators will demonstrate self-awareness.	1	1.786
2-1 Educators ill exhibit cross-cultural skills.	2	2.214
3-1 Educators will recognize the full potential of each student and provide he challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential.	3	4.000
4-1 Educators will demonstrate cross-cultural knowledge.	4	4.212
5-1 Educators will illustrate valuing diversity.	5	4.500

panelists ranked each cultural competence in order of priority from   1=highest to 7 = lowest priority

3.1 Educators will demonstrate self-awareness (NASW, 2007). Self- awareness constitutes a profound understanding of one's own culture and interacting effectively with

students in the learning environment, fostering a level of cognitive consciousness (Robins et.al, 2006; Gay, 2010). Gay claimed that acquiring knowledge about one's own and other groups' cultural socializations, and how these are manifested in teaching and learning is essential to illustrate self-mindfulness (personal communication, August 2, 2012). Educators develop an understanding of their own culture values, beliefs, behaviors and habits through the skills of self-examination and critical reflection. Funds of knowledge related to the students' culture and home life in conjunction with the educators' socialization processes are viewed as assets to support the academic growth. Multiple resources are vital to employ self-awareness. C. Sleeter asserted, "I see this as an essential precursor to work a teacher does in the classroom, I'm not sure how well one can work on the other standards without also grappling with who one is (personal communication, July 7, 2013)." Culturally competent colleagues, ongoing journaling, virtual resources, personal and professional development describes provisions for developing one's own cultural lens.

3.2 Educators will exhibit cross-cultural skills (NASW, 2007). Cross-cultural skill embodies methodologies and techniques employed to comprehend and demonstrate the role of culture in the educational environment. Furthermore, new ways of thinking that reflect the integration of cultural differences promotes student engagement. B. Scott implied, "that teacher has to develop and implements high interactive capacity so that engagement across diversity lines is accomplished with seamlessness and ease (personal communication, July 13, 2012)." Educators must demonstrate cross-cultural skills that enable students to transition from one cultural way of behaving to another to fit the demands of different settings, purposes, and interactions, such as communicative code shifting, negotiating different forms of marginality, and modifying relationship styles depending on who the participants are. A discourse or communicative exchange is explicitly connected to the funds of knowledge of the educator and student. The educator accesses information shared on a daily basis from generations of families as means for support of the students to strengthen cultural nuances in the classroom setting (Trumbell & Pacheo, 2005). Local community members, religious organizations, different ethnic groups, educational organizations, magazines, newspapers and service agencies constitutes a repository of resources validated to ensure cross-cultural skills are exhibited by educators.

3.3 Educators will recognize the full potential of each student and provide the challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998). Data revealed that curriculum connection to each student's community validate and honors identity development. The educator presents rigorous culturally relevant curriculum to identify and address gaps for academic growth. Knowledge regarding contextual and situational conditions (i. e. military, ethnic) about the student's history serves as stage for moving beyond the surface levels (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Furthermore, G. Howard explains, "teachers should implement curriculum that assumes and expect the highest level of engagement and thinking from students" in recognizing the full potential of each student (personal communication, July 21, 2013)." Resources are used to support a student's full potential include multiple forms of data collection to monitor progress, family systems viewed as assets, community groups, cultural groups and Internet resources in the classroom setting.

3.4 Educators will demonstrate cross-cultural knowledge (NASW, 2007). Teacher constructs and accesses the history, culture, interest, backgrounds of students, families and

community while scaffolding to student's strength. G. Thompson affirms, "that teachers intentionally and purposely attend professional development workshops and conferences that are designed to help them increase their efficacy with diverse student populations (personal communication, July 25, 2013)". Following that further, C. Sleeter recommended, "that the teacher spends time researching content knowledge related to the curriculum, produced by and about at least one historically marginalized group, to integrate into the curriculum (personal communication, July 7, 2013)". As needed, the teacher seeks guidance from knowledgeable adults from that group regarding what to read." Furthermore, applying the concept funds of the knowledge as a heuristic device offer educators a logical opportunity to engage instruction and lesson planning with family systems and teacher socialization (Herrera, 2010). Results revealed the application of diverse role models, cultural groups, online resources, the local community, articles, and online resource maximizes the supports cross-cultural knowledge to shift instruction in the classroom.

3.5 Educators will illustrate valuing diversity (Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2006) Valuing diversity is defined as embracing differences as contributing to the value of the environment (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). Educators demonstrate the capacity of inclusiveness to formal and informal decision making as cultural brokers. Appreciation and respect engage students in classroom lessons. Verbal and nonverbal cues illuminate the school environment with "authentic voices" and multiple diverse perspectives to effectively navigate demands of the setting. S. Skelton declares,

> Teachers must present and honor (verbally and in actions) multiple perspectives by presenting "stories" and "authentic voices" of different people. Example when teaching about the westward expansion giving equal time to teaching it from not only the Euro-American perspective, but also from the American Indian point of view, the African America point view, the Latino, female as well as male point of view etc. Use real stories for authentic voices from journals and diaries from people representing various groups rather use a white person's or a male's interpretation of the voice or stories of people of color or women. Another example is to give equal time and space to study important historical events of different groups other. For example teaching about the role of the Mendez v. Westminster court case, in the desegregation of schools, as well as Brown vs. board of education or the significance of the Stonewall Riots for the LGBTQ community. (personal communication, July 25, 2013).

Teachers' capacity to value, respect, appreciate and honor student differences directly relates to meeting the need of diverse learners (Author, 2009). In the same way, funds of knowledge in relation to student diversity promotes cultural pluralism in the classroom and are used to differentiate between the experience student bring to the setting and teacher interpretations (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, (1992). Resources to ensure high quality instruction establish multicultural public officials, families, role models, books, and virtual source as vehicles to enhance relevance, rigor and desired outcomes of the curriculum. Table 5 illustrates the five *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices* through the lens of skills, funds of knowledge and a repository or resources.

Table 5. Culturally Competent Common Core Practices

1. Educators will demonstrate self-awareness. (NASW, 2007)

1.1   Skills
    1.1.1 Self-examination experiences, stereotypes, bias, prejudices, assumptions, and judgment
    1.1.2 Critical reflection –analyzing, monitoring, and examining personal beliefs, attitudes, and instructional behaviors
1.2   Funds of Knowledge
    1.2.1 Access educator experiences, background, values, interest and beliefs.
    1.2.2 Access student experiences, background, interest, values, and beliefs.
1.3 Resource
    1.3.1 Colleagues with an equity lens
    1.3.2 One's own culture
    1.3.3 Cultural socialization
    1.3.4 Ongoing journaling of feelings and thought
    1.3.5 Virtual Resources
2.   Educators will exhibit cultural skills. (NASW, 2007)
2.1 Skills
    2.1.1 Learn and demonstrate competencies that reflect an understanding of the role of culture in learning and teaching.
    2.1.2 Expand new ways of thinking and behaving that reproduce a respect   to infuse student identity into teaching practice.
    2.1.3 Increased engagement through student interest, learning styles and brain pedagogy,
    2.1.4 Use authentic assessment
    2.1.5 Develop routines and procedures are equitable
2.2   Funds Of Knowledge
    2.2.1 Access educator experiences, background, values, interest and beliefs.
    2.2.2 Access student experiences, background, interest, values and beliefs.
2.3   Resources
    2.3.1 Local Community and parents
    2.3.2 Cultural groups (Churches, religious organizations)
    2.3.3 Technology, Internet sources (Smithsonian)
3.   Educators will recognize the full potential of each student and provide the challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential. (Alaskan Native Knowledge Network, 1998)
3.1 Skills
    3.1.1 Connect student communities to curriculum
    3.1.2 Scaffold to students' strength
    3.1.3 Use multiple measures to monitor or assess student growth
3.2 Funds of Knowledge
    3.2.1 Access educator experiences, background, values, interest, and beliefs.
    3.2.2 Access student experiences, background, interest, values and beliefs.
3-3 Resources
    3.3.1 Local Community/ Ethnic/Cultural Groups
    3.3.2 Family assets
    3.3.3 Ethnic History
    3.3.4 Internet resources
4.   Educators will demonstrate cross-cultural knowledge. (NASW, 2007)
4.1 Skills

      4.1.1 Develop and infuse cultural knowledge to embed instruction
      4.1.2 Scaffold instructions to students' strength
      4.1.3 Recognize all students and families as assets
      4.1.4 Willingness to modify instruction to embed diverse perspectives and brain compatible pedagogy
4.2 Funds of Knowledge
      4.2.1 Access educator experiences, background, values, interest -and beliefs.
      4.2.2 Access student experiences, background, interest, values and beliefs.
4.3 Resources
      4.3.1 Local Community/Cultural groups
      4.3.2 Role Model/Families
      4.3.3 Colleagues
      4.3.4 Online resources, books, articles

5. Educators will illustrate valuing diversity. (Lindsey & Terrell, 2007**)**
5.1 Skills
      5.1.1 Demonstrate appreciation and respect for students and families
      5.1.2 Utilize stories and authentic voices of different cultural groups
      5.1.3 Appreciate and honor multiple perspectives
5.2 Funds of Knowledge
      5.2.1 Access educator experiences, background, values, interest and beliefs.
      5.2.2 Access student experiences, background, interest, values and beliefs.
5.3 Resources
      5.3.1 Local Community/Ethnic/Cultural groups
      5.3.2 Role Model/Families
      5.3.3 Public Officials
      5.3.4 Online resources, books, articles

Culturally Competent Common Core Practices and Teacher Categories

Discussion

The *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices* for educators developed in this study consist of five practices and three teacher action categories. Pang emphasizes, "the identified categories are strong." The teacher action categories: skills, funds of knowledge and repository of resources emerged as tangible behaviors that promote the quality of instruction, informs instructional planning and practice and accommodates individual learning styles through the concept of culture. Ali and Murphy (2013) posit the importance of validating the value of culturally competent skills while instructing students of color. Hence, researchers employed funds of knowledge as the foundational support of carefully planned instruction to facilitate the actualization of culturally competent teaching (Perez, Holmes, Miller, Fanning & Fanning, 2012). While there is no way an educator can anticipate all student differences, routinely incorporating a variety of resources, explanations and other engagement opportunities to reinforce instruction establishing pedagogical connections to the content (Gay, 2013).

In relation to the five cultural competencies, educators must institute practical applications to working effectively with all students. By using "cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of references and performance styles, culturally competent educators are better equipped to meet needs of diverse learners (Gay 2013; Perez, Holmes, Miller, Fanning & Fanning, 2012). *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices* provides a blueprint for teachers to scaffold instruction and explicitly capitalize on students' biographies to development content

learning however, the literature is limited in reference to design, delivery and assessment of subject matter. Further studies suggest that implementing culturally competent instruction is challenging and resistant at all levels of education (Gay, 2013; Hoover, 2005; Short 2002; Thompson, 2010). However, little empirical research has been done to support these conclusions.

With regard to the *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices*, teacher preparation programs content selection and curriculum for prospective teachers must be intentional. If universities and colleges are to succeed in producing quality teachers in today's complex classrooms, culturally competent educators are of growing importance. A critical observation is the influx of diverse populations in public schools, the practices ensures positive outcomes for developing lessons across academic disciplines.

In the current teacher preparation programs conducting research employ preservice educators to generate and capitalize on growth opportunities. This research framework could lead toward the continued process that informs the quality of lessons and the impact on school culture in a pluralistic society with emphasize on rigorous high quality education and positive outcomes for all students. Davis asserts, "this is good stuff to use with staff" implying the significant influence for instruction in the classroom (personal communication, July 12, 2013). With such an understanding, educators can confront the challenges of closing the achievement gap for all students.

The study focused on knowledge and skills, not disposition or attitudes of the educator. This conveys the message the *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices* are tangible objective outcomes. On the contrary, the interpersonal relationships of educators (Gay, 2000) is appealing cumulative consideration. Thus, it should be examined how Culturally Competent Common Core Practices can be extended to include caring interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, a comparative study of multiple academic areas such as math, language arts or science would provide insight of the impact of culture.

Conclusion

Culturally Competent Common Core Practices, the research framework developed in this study can be useful for assisting teachers to engage in self-awareness, cultural skills, recognition of each students' potential, cross cultural knowledge and valuing diversity. The researcher and experts suppose this framework can play in a the national debate about cultural competencies among teacher educators by clarifying tangible practices and actions to demonstrate cross cultural understanding while designing, delivering and assessing lessons (Banks, 2010; Gay, 2010; Howard, 1999, Sleeter, 2011). This scholarship model informs those limitations and ensures that teachers maintain a strong sense of autonomy when making instructional decisions while infusing cultural knowledge necessary to negotiate the educational environment. The benchmarks remain relevant processes implemented by states and national standards offer a number of improvements for college, career readiness, global learning and digital age advancement. However, what Common Core Standards (CCSSO, 2012) lacks are specific guidelines for success quality instruction with relationship to the cultural nuances that dictate every decision in the educational setting. Cultural processes are the heart (Gay, 2010) of education, and the Common Core Standards do not address the necessary interpersonal relationships characterized by patience, persistence, facilitation, validation and empowerment of students (Gay, 2000). Learning is contingent upon the cultural inclusion and validation in the classroom and educational setting. *Culturally Competent Common Core Practices* will guide the implementation of those processes through an equity lens and provide a heuristic device for educators to cultivate the educational environment.

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