

TEACHERS' PERCEIVED MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE WHEN WORKING
WITH STUDENTS OF THE HISPANIC POPULATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my son, Andrew Austin Gies. You and I have sacrificed time together for me to finish this project. Your continued love and support mean the most to me.

I also dedicate this dissertation to myself. My personal journey of self-discovery and growth throughout this process has made me a better person, a better educator, and a better counselor.

ABSTRACT

Williams, Regina Michelle. *Teachers' perceived multicultural competence when working with students of the Hispanic population*. Doctor of Philosophy (Counselor Education), December, 2021, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore teachers' perceptions of their multicultural competence and how their views translate into their interactions with Hispanic students within the classroom. A phenomenological approach was utilized for this study in order to capture the self-perceptions and behaviors of teachers who work with Hispanic students. Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory provides a framework for how teachers learn and model their behaviors after one another. Through social cognitive theory, the researcher has demonstrated that teachers can utilize the multicultural training they have received either at the university level or through professional development to advance their competence to develop positive relationships with the Hispanic student population.

The researcher conducted interviews of 10 teachers within one southeast Texas high school to gain individual perspectives of their experiences of working with Hispanic students. Teachers were chosen from a specific campus based upon the knowledge they could potentially lend to the study (Maxwell, 2013). For instance, the campus which was selected for this study has a significant Hispanic population, and the teachers who work on this campus have had Hispanic students in their classrooms. This campus was in a suburban area of southeast Texas. The school was classified as a high school and was serving approximately 2500 students.

The five major themes from the data analysis were altruism, connection, barriers, universality, and culture. The researcher concluded that multicultural teaching should be

ongoing to foster positive student-teacher relationships with Hispanic students.

Implications include a greater leadership role for school counselors to provide training and mentoring for the school faculty. Further research was also suggested in the areas of teacher perceptions, role of the school counselor, and multicultural education.

KEY WORDS: Diversity, Hispanic, Mentor, Multicultural competence, Multiculturalism, Population change, Assumptions

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Hispanic student population within one southeast Texas school has steadily increased over several years. In the 2014-15 school year, the Hispanic student population made up 57 percent of the total population (Texas Education Agency, 2015). The next year, the Hispanic population increased to 59 percent (Texas Education Agency, 2016). This population increased steadily to 60 percent and then 61 percent in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, respectively (Texas Education Agency, 2017 & 2018). According to the latest data from the Texas Education Agency or TEA (2019), the teacher demographics are 78 percent African American, 20 percent Hispanic, and 39 percent White, whereas the Hispanic student population was reported at 61 percent.

The Hispanic population is rapidly growing in the state of Texas (Texas Demographic Center, 2014), and teachers and school counselors must develop a multicultural awareness to reach students of various ethnicities. Brittany Aronson, a professor at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, noted that using culturally relevant concepts in the classroom "...enhanced student outcomes, motivation and engagement (Aronson, 2020)." In addition, Dr. Endia Lindo (2020) from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, supports multicultural competence of educators by suggesting "...the adoption of an assets-based approach" to the diversity seen in today's classroom. An acceptance of students for what they bring to the classroom experience supports an environment for mutual respect and cultural learning for all (Lindo 2020).

Curriculum standards for pre-service teachers in multicultural teaching has been established through several governing boards. The Council for Accreditation of Educator

Preparation (CAEP) published standards that state, “Candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career ready standards” (CAEP, 2020). The council indicates that “all” is inclusive of students from various backgrounds and ethnicities (CAEP, 2020). The Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2018) mandates through the Texas Education Code (TEC) that educators be jointly prepared by educator preparation programs and the public and private schools in which they work “to accommodate the unique characteristics and needs of different regions of the state as well as the diverse population of potential educators” (TEA, 2018).

Additionally, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) has also published standards requiring multicultural teaching for counselors. Multiculturalism is a prominent part of CACREP accreditation, appearing seven times throughout the standards. Moreover, the standards suggest counselors-in-training take a course in multiculturalism, emphasizing the needs of a diverse society, multicultural theories, and multiple cultural identities. In fact, multiculturalism is currently a part of core course curriculum at the master’s level and the doctoral level, and within the school counseling track, multiculturalism is a significant part of the curriculum. (CACREP, 2016). However, it is worth noting that little has been done in terms of research to examine whether teachers perceived themselves as competent when working with students of Hispanic background.

This research study focused on the self-perceptions of teachers as they utilized the multicultural knowledge gained from their undergraduate work with Hispanic students while in the classroom. This type of study is relevant because previous literature notes that students who have positive relationships with their teachers may have better

attendance rates, improved scores on state testing, and achieve greater success overall (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos 2018, Bergin & Bergin 2009). Sosa and Gomez (2012) suggest a connection between teachers with high self-efficacy and Hispanic students who are perceived as having deficits that prevent academic learning. These teachers who believe in themselves also believe in the ability of Hispanic students to succeed despite the obstacles they face. The authors concluded that Hispanic students develop academic resilience when they are connected to teachers with high self-efficacy (Sosa & Gomez, 2012). As a result, Hispanic students are more likely to complete high school.

The role of the school counselor is vital to students who have additional challenges to overcome (Barrow & Mamlin, 2016). Hispanic students often face such challenges because these students are more marginalized in education due to language barriers, cultural differences, and low socio-economic status (Reyes III & Villarreal, 2016). Reyes and Elias (2011) further suggest that Hispanic youth are more prone to engage in high-risk behaviors such as violence, both victim and culprit, drug use, and having unprotected sex. When compounded, these contextual factors contribute to Hispanic students having a high school dropout rate four times higher than that of White students (Reyes and Elias, 2011). As an advocate and an agent for social justice, the school counselor can be a catalyst to change the pathway for Hispanic students and their futures (Barrow & Mamlin, 2016).

According to the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), the model for a comprehensive counseling program includes responsive services and system supports (ASCA, 2005). Therefore, in addition to student services, the school counselor has additional responsibilities to present psychoeducational training, such as

multiculturalism and sensitivity training with a goal of strengthening the macro support system for the student. The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (2018) provides a framework for school counselors to establish schoolwide programs. The program states, “[The school counselor will] consult with a school staff, parents, and other community members to help them increase the effectiveness of student education and promote student success (Texas Education Agency, 2018).”

As counselors-in-training, the school counselors receive training in multiculturalism as stated in CACREP standards (CACREP, 2016). Because CACREP programs expose counselors to multiculturalism, the school counselor can be a mentor to teachers who struggle to make connections with Hispanic students in their classroom. Teachers’ self-perceptions of their own multicultural competence is at the crux of this study. As teachers-in-training transition to having their own real-world classrooms, what is their perception of how their multicultural training corresponds to meeting Hispanic students’ needs?

Statement of the Problem

Teachers’ perceptions of their own multicultural competence can either strengthen or hinder their success at building positive, supportive relationships with the growing population of Hispanic students within their classroom. Researchers have elucidated the fact that Hispanic students, in particular, have a need to feel connected to the school community, in order for them to improve their attendance and their academic success (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2018, Bergin & Bergin 2009). Multicultural competence that meets real-world needs can give teachers a boost in creating relationships that foster the connectedness that Hispanic students need for success in public education. In fact,

according to Gerardo Moreno and Francisco Gaitan (2013), one of the contributing factors to the Hispanic dropout rate is the lack of positive student-teacher relationships. To that end, research in this area can give school counselors additional information they can use in mentoring and training teachers to establish the foundation of schoolwide acceptance among members of the Hispanic community. Positive teacher-counselor relationships are essential for a successful outcome within the school community (Cholewa, Goodman-Scott, Thomas, et.al, 2016-2017, Auger & Jeffrey, 2017).

Following an extensive search of the available literature, much of the research found was on the perceptions of Hispanic students and how they felt disconnected to the school community. Minimal research was found on the perceptions of classroom teachers to build relationships with students of a Hispanic background within their classrooms. Through this study the researcher hopes to close the gap in the research on how teachers' perceptions of their multicultural competence can influence relationship building with Hispanic students within their classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore teachers' perceptions of their multicultural competence and how their views translate into their interactions with Hispanic students within the classroom. A phenomenological approach was utilized for this study in order to capture the self-perceptions and behaviors of teachers who work with Hispanic students. Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory provides a framework for how teachers learn and model their behaviors after one another. Through social cognitive theory, the researcher has demonstrated that teachers can utilize the multicultural training they have received either at the university level or through

professional development to advance their competence to develop positive relationships with the Hispanic student population. Through this study, the researcher may enhance the literature available to other researchers and educators on how teachers' perceptions of their multicultural competence affect their interactions with Hispanic students.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was to understand the teachers' perceptions of their own multicultural competence and how it translates to the classroom setting when working with their Hispanic students. This study has affirmed the necessity that 1) multicultural training for pre-service teachers is valuable in real-world practice and 2) post-graduate training for educators should be ongoing. This study emphasized that the school counselor's role as mentor is crucial in helping teachers to build their competence with Hispanic students. In addition, the researcher is a school counselor herself, and seeks to broaden her knowledge of how teachers develop relationships with Hispanic students and what impact those relationships have on the students academically. She will also use the data collected to guide her in creating a comprehensive counseling program to best serve the students and faculty of her school.

After an extensive search of the relative literature, the researcher discovered several gaps in the literature available. Gaps noted included: studies which examined school counselors as school leaders who can disseminate information to faculty, school counselors as teachers and mentors within the public education system, impact of school counselors on school culture, impact of school counselors on student achievement. This current research study adds information to the literature in order to better close the gaps previously mentioned. Perhaps most relevant to this current research, is support for the

school counselors as vital to the teaching staff of a public school and significant in training teachers to foster relationships with Hispanic students. School counselors may provide professional development lessons on multiculturalism, school culture within a diverse environment, and facilitating connections with students to improve academic achievement.

Research Questions

To give voice to teachers' thoughts and feelings about multiculturalism and the growing Hispanic student population, this qualitative research study addresses the following overarching question: What are teachers' perceptions of how their multicultural competence influences their ability to build relationships with Hispanic students within the classroom?

The questions for this research will be:

1. Do teachers feel prepared to work in a multicultural and diverse society?
2. How would a teacher improve his or her multicultural competence?
3. How does multicultural competence improve a teacher's ability to create relationships with Hispanic students?

By seeking answers to this question, it will offer me insight into developing a comprehensive counseling plan to meet the needs of teachers and students as the student population grows in greater diversity. Gathering knowledge of how teachers build positive relationships with students of Hispanic origin facilitates broader opportunities for training and professional development of shared practices and methodologies. It also allows school counselors to mentor teachers who may have problems translating what

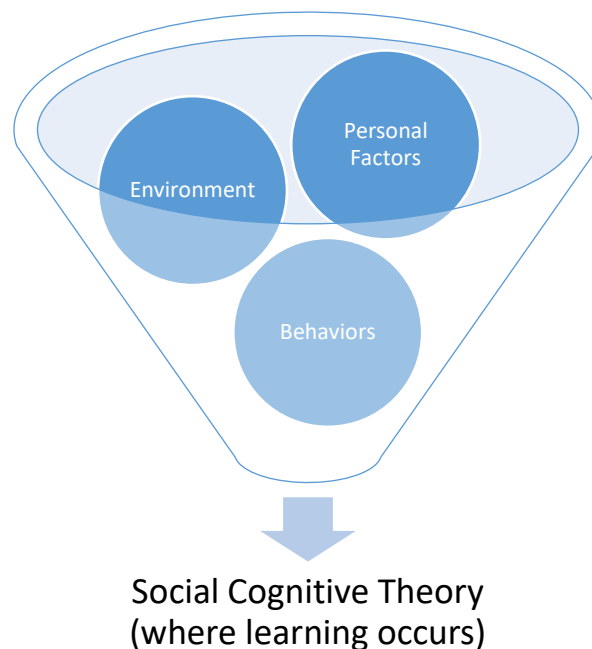
they have learned about multicultural competence or experience in interacting with students from different ethnic groups.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Albert Bandura's social cognitive learning theory. Bandura proposed that learning occurs through dynamic and multi-directional interactions between an individual's personal factors (i.e., knowledge, motivation, and self-efficacy), environment (i.e., home, work, school, and classroom) and behaviors (i.e., teaching strategies and/or methodologies) (Bandura, 2001). The correlation the researcher made between Bandura's social cognitive theory and teachers, is that teachers will take multicultural knowledge learned in college while motivation and self-efficacy occurs directly during real-world teaching experiences (Bandura, 2001).

Figure 1

Social Cognitive Theory

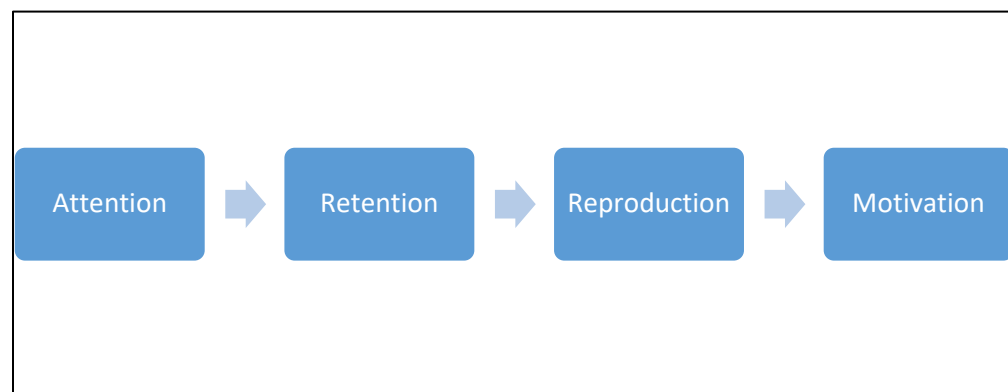


Note. Three components of Social Cognitive Theory.

Educators often speak of ‘best practices,’ and as a 20-year veteran in education, this researcher chose Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory as a structural framework that aligns with how teachers learn from each other and how they teach their students (Horner, Bhattacharyya, and O’Connor, 2008). Through Bandura’s social cognitive theory, a structure emerges to allow for interpretation of findings for this study. The study has examined the teachers’ willingness to learn and their level of engagement which has aligned with Bandura’s basic model of social cognitive theory (see Figure 1) and his four mediational processes. According to Bandura, when humans think about the relationship between their behavior and its consequences, it is referred to as mediational processing (McLeod, 2016). The four levels of mediational processing are (1) attention, (2) retention, (3) reproduction, (4) motivation (Bandura, 1986).

Figure 2

The Four Mediational Processes of Social Cognitive Theory



Note. Stages of human thoughts that link behavior to its consequences.

Attention is the first level of mediational processing. A specific behavior must attract a person’s notice for it to be remembered or imitated. For instance, a teacher may

notice a colleague who always recognizes her students on their birthdays. The second level of mediational processing is retention. This step is important because social observation is not always remembered. Retention depends upon how well a behavior is remembered (McLeod, 2016 and Bandura, 1986). If the teacher mentioned earlier did not pay attention to her colleague's birthday celebrations or remember her doing the behavior, it would not be significant.

Reproduction is the third level of mediational processes. The observer will assess his or her own ability to perform the behavior and the level of risk one must take. If the observer determines the behavior is within his or her abilities and low risk is perceived, then the behavior will likely be imitated, i.e., the teacher will begin to plan how she will recognize her students. The last level of mediational processing is motivation. Motivation is the determination to execute the behavior. The observer continues to assess the risks of the behavior but will move forward with the behavior if the risk is low and motivation is high (McLeod, 2016 and Bandura, 1986). The teacher would likely be motivated to begin recognizing her own students at this stage.

Using Bandura's social cognitive theory allows the researcher to discuss specific learning processes and behaviors that may occur in education (McLeod, 2016).

Observation is an essential tool to acclimate teachers to a new school environment or new system methodologies.

Definition of Terms

The following section provides a definition of terms. These definitions are provided to clarify meaning for each term in a logical manner for usage within my study. Citations are used to reference the literature where terms are found.

Diversity. Diversity is a broad concept that differentiates groups and individuals from each other. In the school setting, appreciation and respect of differences is generally accepted practice. Diversity is found in age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin (Trent, 2020).

Hispanic. A term describing a non-white individual whose heritage derives from a Latino(a) culture, but who lives in the United States of America (Hempel, Dowling, Boardman, & Ellison, 2012). The term “Hispanic” was chosen for the purpose of this study to align the terminology with demographic census data.

Mentor. “A mentor is someone who serves as a guide and a positive influence” (Eckhardt McLain, 2019 p. 40). For the purpose of my study, mentor and mentoring refer to the school counselor as a role model and guide for teachers who may need further training or assistance with understanding multiculturalism.

Multicultural Competence. Multicultural competence is an ability to develop sensitivity to ethnic groups other than your own (Vincent & Torres, 2015). It is a self-perceived skill that may fluctuate based on “race, gender, years of experience, age, and work setting” (Dodson, 2013, p. 19).

Multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a concept that embraces a society with multiple cultures and encourages the peaceful and rightful coexistence of many cultures within a society (Alenuma-Nimoh, 2016). For purposes of this study, multiculturalism is defined as multiple ethnic groups within a school system, accepting and learning from each other’s differences. Each ethnic group can gain equal access to academic achievement through building relationships across ethnicities.

Population Change. A population change is a difference in census data as comparable by race, such as a population change between Whites and Hispanics (Hempel, Dowling, Boardman, & Ellison, 2012).

Assumptions. Assumptions are suggestions or claims that are recognized as universal for purpose of research Lunenburg and Irby, 2008). The assumptions are that participants will understand what multiculturalism is and will answer questions honestly to the best of their ability.

Limitations. Limitations on a research study are factors or situations that a researcher cannot control. These limitations may alter the outcome of the study. The current study was limited to one school in southeast Texas; therefore, the results may or may not be applicable to other schools. Transferability of the results would need to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Teachers volunteered to participate in the study and might speak to one another about how to respond to interview questions or might choose the expected answer based on the research study.

Delimitations. Delimitations in a research study occur as the researcher sets parameters for the study. They may be used to narrow the focus of the study or to focus the researcher in one particular area or field. For this study, one school was chosen to perform the study whereas multiple schools could have been used. Another delimitation was the choice to focus on the Hispanic population instead of all races or different races. Using volunteers for the study via electronic mail was also considered as a delimitation.

Summary

This research study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction to the research. The research project included a background of the study, statement of the

problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, research question, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, definition of terms, and this summary. Chapter II was a review of the literature that included demographics for the school and district where the study was performed as well as for Texas. It also included the historical aspects of the growth of the Hispanic population and their influence on education, law, and Supreme Court cases. The literature review also detailed the Americanization policy in which immigrants were specifically taught the American culture and delved into the Chicano movement. Chapter II highlighted how Cesar Chavez gained significant civil rights for Hispanics in the United States. Chapter II also explains the growth of bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, their effectiveness and accountability. Chapter III includes the methodology of the study. Within the introduction, the research design was discussed. An explanation of how participants were selected, and the questionnaire used for the semi-structured interview was included here. The researcher used convenient sampling within the teacher population at a chosen southeast Texas school. Demographic questions and questions about perceived multicultural competence were included. Data collection and data analysis procedures were explained and have been summarized. Chapter IV is the Results and Data Analysis chapter which covers the findings based on the data collected from the interviews. The researcher coded several themes from the data and presented them here using actual verbiage from the participants to illustrate the findings. The researcher then reexamined the research questions to determine if the data answered the question appropriately and summarized the results. Chapter V is the Summary, Discussion, and Conclusions chapter. The introduction here included a brief overview of what was discussed in Chapter V. The

researcher then summarized the study, re-stating the purpose of the study and the theoretical framework utilized to guide the study. The researcher then discussed the findings of the study, evaluating the results as they compared to studies discussed in my literature review. A discussion of the results in terms of the theoretical framework chosen for the study was also included. The researcher included a discussion about the sampling and questionnaire and how it affected the outcome of the study and explored implications for the study and recommendations for further research. The study was then concluded with an overall summary.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The Hispanic population in the U.S. has grown at a fast pace. In fact, according to the United States Census Bureau (2017), the Hispanic population makes up 17.8 percent of the total population of the United States. Moreover, in Texas, the Hispanic population has been an even greater percentage of the state population, at 39.1 percent (US Census Bureau, 2017). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017) continues to report on this growth trend, noting the benefits of teachers' responsiveness to diversity. Consequently, school counselors, whose role includes teacher training, are increasingly pressed upon to include diversity training which supports the culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse student.

According to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation ("Population Distribution," 2017), known for its charitable work in family healthcare, Texas has an 11 percent non-citizen population, second only to California, which has a 13 percent non-citizen population. These percentages have been particularly significant when compared to the non-citizen population of the United States at seven percent ("Population Distribution," 2017). These numbers have supported the need for diversity training as one part of a larger goal in healthcare (Butler, McCreedy, Schwer, et.al, 2016).

Multiple researchers have indicated that a strong teacher-student relationship is a major component to academic success (Mason, Hajovsky, McCune & Turek, 2017). Subsequently, for diverse populations that are already facing academic challenges, this statement has gained significance. Therefore, the multicultural responsiveness of teachers has been increasingly relevant when considering the high Hispanic student population in

Texas schools. Teachers have received diversity-training in their pre-service programs; however, one way to promote multiculturalism has been to ensure public school teachers continue to apply their knowledge of diverse populations throughout their teaching career. Mitchell (2009) noted, “Changes can happen when teachers choose a culturally responsive teaching pedagogy by demonstrating that they value the cultural differences of their students” (p. 61).

Population Statistics

The 2017 population estimates from the United States Census Bureau listed the Hispanic population at 17.8 percent, compared to Blacks at 13.3 percent and Whites at 76.9 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Moreover, the Hispanic student population in public schools across the United States, which included citizens and undocumented immigrants, is approximately 25 percent (Johnson, 2013). Per the Texas Demographic Center (2014), by 2050 the Hispanic population in Texas could reach a staggering majority at 50 percent of the total Texas population. In fact, data from the Texas Education Agency for the 2016-17 school year indicated that the Hispanic student population was greater than 50 percent in the state of Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2017). Due to protections afforded to parents and eligible students under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a student’s legal citizenship status cannot be made public because the information is deemed as personal identifiable information or PII. (FERPA, 2018). Consequently, for the purposes of this study, students who have been classified as part of the Hispanic ethnicity of the school are included and considered without regard to legal status or citizenship.

Impact on Education in the United States

The steady growth of the Hispanic population has been examined and researched by scholars and statisticians since 1986, when the U.S. Census Bureau issued a report regarding a 3 percent annual growth rate of the Hispanic population:

The total American population has not grown so quickly for a century or more. Even at the height of the most dramatic periods of population growth in American demographic history, the population growth of the United States was only 1.8 percent a year. In the middle series, the Hispanic population growth rate would not decline to that level for 30 years (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1986, p. 10).

Hispanic population growth will continue to affect education in the United States. Researchers have shown that traditional approaches to bridging teachers to students and parents have not been successful with Hispanic families, yet changes have been slow to come. O'Donnell and Kirkner (2014) found that, with Hispanic populations, educating the family system was more successful than the more widely accepted goal of educating just the individual student. Additionally, they noted that forging relationships between Hispanic families and the school system fostered a strong base for trusting relationships, resulting in parents who better supported their children's education at home. These researchers found that a school system's willingness to commit resources, such as access to school buildings after hours, staff to work with families after the school day or in the home, allocation of funds for supportive programming, and intentional dissemination of parenting information were key components to Hispanic student success (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Sandra Osorio (2018), a bilingual teacher, said she "had to allow [the lived experiences of her multicultural students] to be a part of the class curriculum or I

would be ignoring and silencing my students.” In sum, Osorio believed that the academic success of her Hispanic students was dependent on being responsive to diversity.

According to McGrath (2015), community outreach has been key to fostering a positive relationship among Hispanic families. In his study, he highlighted a small school district in Marshalltown, Iowa that gathered resources from multiple businesses and community leaders because the citizens of the town saw the need to support the diverse student population (McGrath, 2015). He noted that through outreach programs that involved the whole family, Hispanic students had a better chance at achieved success. Additionally, he found that having a mentor from the business community directly correlated to academic success. For at least a decade now, the National Education Agency (NEA, 2008) has supported family involvement in public schools, citing outreach programs as essential to decreasing the dropout rate and enhancing academic goals for students of all ages. The NEA stated, “parent involvement affects minority students’ academic achievement across all races (NEA, 2008, p. 1).

Impact on Education in Texas

Public schools in Texas have often become the center of information and resources for Hispanic immigrant families (Gil, 2019). Many students have enrolled in school with little or no supplies, and Hispanic families have relied on the school system to feed their children, provide school supplies, and offer resources for clothing, housing, and medical needs (TEA, 2018). In response, the Texas Education Agency introduced programs such as Communities in School (CIS) to address the multiple needs of students and their families. From its most recent data for the 2015-16 school year, CIS served

93,529 students on 942 campuses across the state of Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Yet, this movement has not been without criticism.

Researchers have voiced concern that massive Hispanic migration may result in a negative shift in the economic climate due to challenges in educating this population. (Fernandez, Howard, & Amastae, 2007). One argument was that it is more expensive to provide an education to Spanish-speaking children than children who speak English. Susan Headden, a senior associate at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching wrote “[that bilingual education] has mushroomed into a \$10 billion-a-year bureaucracy that not only cannot promise that students will learn English but may actually do some children more harm than good. Headden provided an example of an American born student of Puerto Rican descent who was mistakenly placed in a bilingual program due to the student’s heritage and was only exposed to English 45 minutes a day. The boy’s mother requested that he be returned to a regular English-speaking program because he did not understand Spanish. Headden said that most bilingual programs evolved into Spanish-speaking programs because teachers found that teaching students in their native language was easier due to their lack of English language acquisition. (Headden, 1995).” In 2009, Christine Rossell from the Texas Public Policy Foundation also stated, “Bilingual education is more expensive than other programs and is the least educationally effective.” Rossell suggested that mainstreaming or Sheltered Instruction would be less costly, and both programs would be more effective in teaching English to non-English speakers because students have greater exposure to the English language. Rossell also mentioned that students in bilingual education programs are exempt from state testing for the first three years of the program; therefore, a lack of accountability

exists for these students regarding English language acquisition (Rossell, 2009). On the other end of the argument, bilingual programs may be costly, but Texas has had greater diversity than just Spanish speakers and teaching English to non-English speakers benefits the population in its entirety (Hempel, Dowling, Boardman, & Ellison, 2012).

Texas school finance has been a point of contention for decades, and the cost to educate Hispanic children has historically been a small percentage in the school funding budget (Mike Morath, Commissioner of Education, in his Official Capacity; Glenn Hegar, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, in his Official Capacity; The Texas State Board of Education; and the Texas Education Agency, Appellents [sic], v. The Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition, et al.; Calhoun County ISD, et al.; Edgewood ISD, et al.; Fort Bend ISD, et al.; Texas Charter School Association, et al.; and Joyce Coleman, et al., Appellees, 2015). Despite court rulings and naysayers, bilingual education has been an important aspect to Texas public education. Lawmakers have continued to fund the programs and public schools have continued to show a need to educate students in Spanish and English.

Evolution of Multiculturalism Teachings in Education

Teachers have been encouraged to provide culturally relevant pedagogy; subsequently educational organizations have recognized the necessity for cultural competence, and the educational system has begun to respond accordingly (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Certification, 2008). Both teachers and school counselors have been required to have the foundational awareness, knowledge, and skills to serve the needs of all students. Specifically, having been responsive to the manner in which diversity impacts students' well-being and mental health has been imperative.

Teachers, unresponsive to specific student issues such as familial patterns, documentation status, language, academic potential, psychosocial development, and migratory experiences, may have, inadvertently, hindered student success (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2009). Therefore, sustained multicultural training, across the career of the educator, has been necessary, but its usefulness on competency has not necessary been studied.

Multicultural initiatives for teachers evolved through progressive social movements from the 20th century similar to the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s, and the Women's Equal Rights movement of the 1960s. Regardless of the push, negative views of multicultural education have been widespread, which has hindered successful implementation. For example, critics call multiculturalism, the education for "others," an education that has been against Western civilization. Moreover, critics have believed these teachings might have divided the United States (Banks, 2008). Conversely, James Banks, a formative figure in the school reform movement, suggested multiculturalism has sought to enrich education by providing greater understanding of diversity within the self and as a society. He was supportive of multicultural teachings, noting that support for this cause prepares students to function within their community culture as well as the majority culture, while enhancing mutual respect (Banks, 2008).

A pivotal organization that facilitated such change for the Hispanic population has been the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). Since the League's inception in 1929, LULAC members have been fighting for civil rights and equality for the Hispanic population. LULAC has often provided legal and financial support to those

who are oppressed or discriminated against by the mainstream population (LULAC, 2019).

In 1973, LULAC established fourteen National Education Centers across the United States and Puerto Rico to provide support for Hispanic students. These centers have supported over 18,000 students each year. The National Education Centers have provided academic counseling, scholarships, leadership training, literacy programs and mentoring for students. Well known college access programs such as Upward Bound and Talent Search have been sponsored by LULAC's National Education Service Centers (LNESEC, 2019).

Court Cases and Establishment of Law in Education

A brief history of United States court cases and establishment of education law regarding students of Hispanic heritage allows the researcher to establish the foundation of the need for multiculturalism in education. Prior to the court rulings and laws mentioned here, school districts were allowed to create their own mandates regarding the education of Hispanic children. Schools were often furtively segregated with inadequate equipment and poorly qualified teachers.

Beginning in the early 20th century, significant court cases brought about new laws to enable Hispanic students to have equal access to education in the United States. The court cases mentioned in this research gained notoriety regionally and then initiated a wave of federal legislation that changed how all students of color were treated in public schools. Educators and lawmakers across the country were forced to examine cultural differences and how their own perceptions could affect student performance.

In 1930, the Texas Court of Appeals heard the first class-action suit led by Mexican Americans that brought about change to educational practices for Hispanic citizens. In *Del Rio (Texas) Independent School District vs. Salvatierra*, Jesus Salvatierra argued along with other parents that the school segregated Hispanic children from White children and denied them benefits that were received by the White children. The court denied their appeal because the superintendent of the district argued that the separation was not based on race but determined out of necessity of special instruction for Hispanic children. He further explained that Hispanic children often started school later after classes had been formed and the large influx of students who could not speak English as well as the White children disrupted the educational process. This court case set a precedent across the United States that Hispanic children could be separated from other children at school for English language instruction (Darder & Torres, 2014).

Roberto Alvarez vs. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove (California) School District (1931) was heard in the Superior Court of California. The complainants argued that school districts did not have the right to separate Hispanic students from any other races or to make them attend separate schools. Due to the divisive political climate of the time, both sides of the issue gained considerable support. The court ruled in favor of the Hispanic community. The court ruled that the school board's decision to separate the Hispanic children was indeed segregation, and California law did not allow for separate schools for different races. The court further ruled that all children were entitled to an education based on equality. The Lemon Grove incident (as it became known) overturned the Texas precedent of segregation; however, school districts across the

United States continued to build separate schools for Hispanic students under the pretense of specialized education (Darder & Torres, 2014).

These cases bore a striking resemblance to *Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896)* and *Brown vs. the Board of Education (1954)*. The *Plessy* court case established separate facilities for Black students under the ruse of “separate but equal,” but it took over 50 years to overturn that ruling with the Supreme Court’s decision in the *Brown* case. Hispanics and African Americans have experienced similar efforts to gain civil rights and equal education in the United States (Contreras, 2004). The African American movement has been much more politicized and documented, due in large part to the vestiges of slavery in the United States, but the Hispanic population made small but significant gains in civil rights court cases (Parikh, 2009). In the 1930s, the common practice for school districts in the southwestern United States where most Mexican immigrants settled, was to establish Mexican schools, segregating Spanish speaking students from their English-speaking peers (Darder & Torres, 2014). Court cases such as *Roberto Alvarez vs. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove (California) School District (1931)* facilitated the end of such segregation. These cases are important to this current study because they provide historical documentation of the mistreatment of Hispanic students and the modern-day need for multicultural competence amongst teachers.

Americanization

The cultural practice of Americanization from the 1900s has impacted Hispanics significantly, especially in education. Americanization has been defined as the instruction of immigrants in English, U.S. history, government, and culture (Americanization, n.d.). Historically, immigrant families came to America and enrolled their children in public

schools where it was expected that children would assimilate into the majority culture. Rene Galindo, a researcher at the University of Colorado in Denver further defined Americanization to include the early concept of nativism. Nativism refers to the preservation of one's culture and casting out foreign cultures, practices, or beliefs (Galindo, 2011). Even though the American culture was created by immigrants, a majority culture was established, and new immigrants were expected to leave their native culture behind (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). School cultures have reflected the communities that they serve, and Americanization has been firmly entrenched in public education since the days of Horace Mann (Falk, 2014). This focus is in contrast to the research of more recent decades which supports using culture to build community.

Ignoring Cultural Differences

In more recent decades, teacher training has emphasized multicultural awareness. Early training consisted of treating every student the same, which meant treating all students "the American way" or the way of the White majority culture (Falk, 2014). This "sameness" became politicized when it was found that school districts were labeling Hispanic children as White to segregate them without being noticed by legal entities. (Johnson, 2013). Multicultural teaching, first introduced by James Banks (2008), has been a concept that American schools have been hesitant to embrace because of varying definitions and concepts of how it should be implemented. James Banks (2008), the founder of multicultural education in the United States, suggested that a transformation must occur in American education to better prepare our students for a greatly diverse U.S. society in the future.

1950s Chicano Movement and the Legitimization of Hispanic Identity/Race

The Chicano movement was a grass-roots movement that started in migrant farming communities in California. Workers wanted fair treatment and fair wages, and a little-known leader arose from the fields named Cesar Chavez. Chavez quickly became popular and gained a tremendous following throughout California, and soon throughout the United States (Murphy, 2009).

Chavez played a key role in the legitimization of the Hispanic ethnic group. For decades, first born American citizens whose parents immigrated to the United States from a Latin American country were counted as Whites or called non-Whites. Chavez helped file a motion against the Department of Commerce to establish an ethnic category for these immigrant families for the U.S. Census Bureau. The general category created was “Hispanic.”

It is noted on the U.S. Embassy (2010) webpage that,

The term Hispanic was coined by the federal government in the 1970's to refer to the people who were born in any of the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas or those who could trace their ancestry to Spain or former Spanish territories.

Since 1973, the “Hispanic” category has been listed on the census, but many families have chosen the “other” box, preferring to identify with their native countries such as Nicaragua, Columbia, or Ecuador (U.S. Census Bureau & Johnson, 2013). New immigrant families are choosing not to assimilate into the American culture. Instead, they are establishing their individual cultures within Latin American communities in the United States (Johnson, 2013). Consequentially, public schools have been introduced to many cultural ethnicities. Due to the rapid influx of immigrant families into the United

States, teacher training has struggled to catch up to the needs of all students (Eckert, 2012).

Establishment of Bilingual and ESL Programs in Schools

Darder and Torres (2013) wrote that the growth of English acquisition programs in public schools has evolved since the early 1920s. Initially, schools would place Spanish speakers among English speakers to immerse them all into a “melting pot” of cultures. Spanish speakers would learn English as the teacher carried on with regular curriculum. School district leaders believed that the immersion policy was detrimental to the White students’ education and began to segregate Spanish-speaking children to target their English language skills (Darder & Torres, 2013). This type of bilingual education was founded out of necessity in areas where immigrant populations were known to settle.

Implementation and Growth

In 1968, the United States Congress passed an amendment to an existing law: Chapter VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (Public Law 89-10 1965). This amendment became known as the Bilingual Education Act, and it provided funds for school districts to establish programs for English-language learners (ELLs) that focused on dual-language instruction. The original law was challenged in lower courts and the US Supreme Court eventually heard *Lau v Nichols* (1974) and decided, “that children who did not understand the language of instruction were being denied equal treatment in the school system (Kim, Hutchison & Winsler, 2015).” With this court ruling many school districts determined that the use of immersion practices was not the most effective way to teach ELL students (Kim, Hutchison & Winsler, 2015).

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), emphasis was placed on English language acquisition and on preparing ELLs to enter total English-instruction classes. This continued the debate brought up by ESEA whether ELL programs should provide instruction in the students' native language as well as in English. During the 1990s and early 2000s, a wave of legislation across the United States focused on English-only instruction for students. These laws eliminated bilingual education and preliminary data demonstrated that the children effected had gaps in their education. School districts were then left with English immersion programs and began to focus on innovative learning approaches to reach ELL students (Kim, Hutchison & Winsler, 2015).

Effectiveness of Programs

To monitor compliance and the effectiveness of ELL programs, the NCLB stipulated school districts that receive federal funding submit a report each year that detailed the ELL program in use, student progress, the total number of students who have accessed the program, and the number of students who had been exited from the program due to proficiency (Mavrogordato, 2012). The Texas Education Agency (TEA), in compliance with the Texas Legislature, has provided annual assessments for each student in a limited English Proficient (LEP) program called the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment Program (TELPAS). This program evaluates LEP students' progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the English language (Texas Education Agency, 2011).

College and Career Readiness Specifically tied to ELL Population

All students in Texas have been required to take the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) tests in grades three through eight or the End of Course (EOC) exams in grades nine through 12 (Texas Education Agency, 2018). School districts receive an annual report each year titled the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) from TEA. Scores are reported individually by student, by grade level, within sub-populations, and overall. The ELL population has been specifically examined and scored on postsecondary readiness. This data has offered an accountability measure for all school districts in Texas to show adequate progress for students enrolled in an ELL program (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

Teacher Effectiveness

Teacher effectiveness has been defined in a multitude of ways. Not only does the term refer to student outcomes and evaluations, but also has been described with three important characteristics of a teacher to “cultivate thinking skills, stimulate interest in the subject, and motivate students to learn (Weimer, 2013).” With the addition of multicultural training, teachers have been expected to create an accepting environment for students of various ethnicities. A teacher has been tasked with the challenge to “minimize the problems related to diversity and to maximize [a student’s] educational opportunities and possibilities (Banks, 2008).”

When teachers lack cultural competence, they focus primarily on deficits that students bring into the classroom (Columbo, 2007). Teacher education programs have embraced the need for exposure to multicultural training and programs to enhance pre-service teachers’ sensitivities towards various cultures and ethnicities (Keengwe, 2010).

The challenge has been for teachers to effectively use their cross-cultural training to build relationships with diverse students. Ruth Gurgel (2015), an assistant professor of music education at Kansas State University in Manhattan, wrote “...culturally competent teachers create more equitable relationships with their students...” while maintaining a focus on the curriculum. While this study focused on music educators, further research into building relationships with diverse students could have demonstrated a correlation between cultural competence and positive relationship building between teachers and students.

Training in multiculturalism is provided as part of coursework for pre-service teachers. It is aligned with curriculum standards established through several governing boards. The Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) published standards that state, “Candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career ready standards” (CAEP, 2020). The council indicates that “all” is inclusive of students from various backgrounds and ethnicities (CAEP, 2020). The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) instituted that topics of cultural diversity be an essential component in the professional development of teacher candidates (NCATE, 2004).

Researchers noted, however, that when teachers move to the real-world classroom, the multicultural teachings did not always translate to practice because of outdated pedagogy (Martin and Dagostino-Kalntz, 2015). Moon (2016) proposes a different approach to multicultural teachings whereas pre-service teachers embrace a worldview in which humans are all part of one universe and are not bound by regional constructs or viewpoints. Moon refers to this approach as cosmopolitanism and suggests

that teachers are more likely to utilize the multicultural knowledge they learned in their pre-service classes when they had their own classrooms (Moon, 2016).

Summary

An examination of the growing Hispanic population in Texas public education has offered evidence of a greater need for multicultural skills among public school teachers. As of 2017, the Hispanic student population in the state of Texas had surpassed 50 percent (Texas Education Agency, 2017). Researchers have stated that the teacher-student relationship has been a catalyst to academic success (Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Gest, Welsh, & Domitrovich, 2005; Wentzel, 1997 as cited in Mason, Hajovsky, McCune & Turek, 2017). The impact of the Hispanic student population has created challenges in education across the United States. Officials in school systems have learned that including the family in the educational process is necessary to ensure success (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014, Osorio, 2018, & McGrath, 2015). The Texas Education Agency has implemented the Communities in Schools (CIS) programs to address this endeavor (TEA, 2018).

The multiculturalism movement was first introduced during the progressive era and experienced a gradual acceptance in the United States and in education (Banks, 2008). LULAC has been monumental in its support of the Hispanic population, providing legal and financial support to families. Several court cases established precedence across the United States regarding Hispanic students receiving a fair and equal education beginning as early as 1930 (Darder & Torres, 2014). Americanization has impacted Hispanic education as well. Students were expected to assimilate into the US culture, leaving their native cultures behind (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). Through the efforts

of James Banks, founder of multicultural education, changes in education have been suggested to produce citizens prepared for a more diverse world (Banks, 2008). Cesar Chavez also worked diligently to legitimize the Hispanic culture, and since 1973, the Hispanic ethnic classification has been listed on the US Census (U.S. Census Bureau & Johnson, 2013).

Bilingual and ESL programs were established in public schools and were legitimized by law with the passing of the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 (Public Law 89-10 1965). Several laws since have improved education for Hispanic students, and the TEA monitors the effectiveness of these programs annually. Additionally, ELL populations in public schools are specifically rated on college readiness to ensure program success in the state of Texas (TEA, 2015).

Teacher effectiveness includes the ability to create thinkers, stimulate interest, and motivate students (Weimer, 2013). For modern day teachers, it has also included multiculturalism to provide equity in education for diverse students (Gurgel, 2015). The researcher has established that cultural competence has been essential to forging teacher-student relationships that, in turn, create academically successful Hispanic students.

Chapter III outlined the methodology for the research study. This chapter reviewed the purpose of the study and the selection of a qualitative research design. The research methods, the participants of the study, the instrument used, and the data collection process will all be discussed within Chapter III. The researcher further explained the process of analyzing the data to ensure trustworthiness and validity.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The topic of this study is classroom teachers' perceptions about their own multicultural competence and how that competence affects their relationship-building with Hispanic students within their classroom. The purpose of the research study was to examine teachers' perceptions of how their multicultural competence influenced their ability to form relationships with Hispanic students. Chapter III introduces the purpose of the study, the research questions, research design and methodology used to perform the research study. The chapter includes the research design and research questions, the selection of participants including a description of their demographics, the instrumentation used, and data analysis. This chapter concludes with a discussion about trustworthiness and protection of participants in research, positionality statements of the researcher and the advisory committee, and a summary.

As Chapter II consisted of a review of the literature, the researcher used multiple available databases accessed through the Sam Houston State University library to locate scholarly journal articles, published dissertations, government websites, and books to enrich my study. The specific topics the researcher explored were multicultural competence, cultural competence, teachers, education, and Hispanic students. The researcher specifically used Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete, PsycINFO and PsycARTICLES databases to find research material. The researcher also used academic literature published by the Texas Education Agency, including the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and individual school Report Cards from 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016, 2017, and 2018.

The preliminary information gathered demonstrated a need for this study due to limited research available on the multicultural competence of teachers and the lack of research completed on teachers who successfully work with Hispanic students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research study was to examine teachers' perceptions of how their multicultural competence influenced their ability to form relationships with Hispanic students. To gather teachers' perceptions, the researcher conducted a qualitative study. Exploring teachers' thoughts and feelings was an important aspect of fulfilling the purpose of this study because it allows for researchers to better understand teachers' perceptions.

Research Questions

To attend to the purpose of this qualitative study, the researcher was led by one overarching question: What are teachers' perceptions of how their multicultural competence influences their ability to build relationships with Hispanic students within the classroom? The researcher selected this guiding question after thoughtful consideration of how fellow colleagues and other educators had developed pre-conceived biases toward the Hispanic population. The overarching question allows the researcher to gain insight as to how competent teachers are when working with Hispanic students.

Additional questions for this research were:

1. Do teachers feel prepared to work in a multicultural and diverse society?
2. How would a teacher improve his or her multicultural competence?

3. How does multicultural competence improve a teacher's ability to create relationships with Hispanic students?

Qualitative Research Design

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study over a quantitative or mixed method approach to better capture the thoughts and ideas of teachers and to examine their lived experiences as teachers of Hispanic students. A quantitative approach to the research would not have been suitable because the researcher sought a humanistic outcome that expressed individual experiences. Similarly, a mixed-methods design was not chosen because the researcher was seeking a greater understanding of the actual experiences of teachers, and the collection of quantitative data was unnecessary within the parameters of this study (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher chose to conduct a qualitative study using a phenomenological research design. The researcher preferred the phenomenological research design because greater understanding of the thoughts and feelings of teachers regarding their own perceptions of multicultural competence and how they may use that knowledge to help Hispanic students achieve academically was sought. The essence of the phenomenon was better understood by listening to the experiences of the participants, the common experiences of teachers when working with Hispanic students. As for other qualitative approaches, the narrative design would not have been appropriate because the researcher wanted to gain several different perspectives, not just one. The researcher could not use grounded theory because the research is not narrowed to a process or action, rather the study aimed to gain broad perspectives on teacher-student relationship building.

Ethnography would not be appropriate because the researcher was not focusing on one intact cultural group, and the case study design was too narrow for the research focus.

According to Creswell (2013), a phenomenological design is the best research method for this study because the researcher was providing a voice to the teachers involved in the study to deepen the understanding of the relationship-building process of teacher and student. In addition to obtaining a greater understanding of the perception of teachers' experiences, the researcher wanted to examine what impact these experiences have had on the research participants (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher chose the phenomenological research design because an examination of "...the lived experiences..." (Creswell, 2014) of teachers who work with Hispanic students was the purpose of this study.

Selection of Participants

Before the selection of participants began for this study, an application with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Sam Houston State University (SHSU) was completed and submitted. Once the researcher received IRB approval, random purposive sampling was used for the selection of participants. This method was chosen because the researcher could select the setting and the type of people that could provide relevant information for the study. The researcher conducted interviews of 10 teachers within one southeast Texas high school to gain individual perspectives of their experiences of working with Hispanic students. Teachers were chosen from a specific campus based upon the knowledge they could potentially lend to the study (Maxwell, 2013). For instance, the campus which was selected for this study has a significant Hispanic population, and the teachers who work on this campus have had Hispanic students in

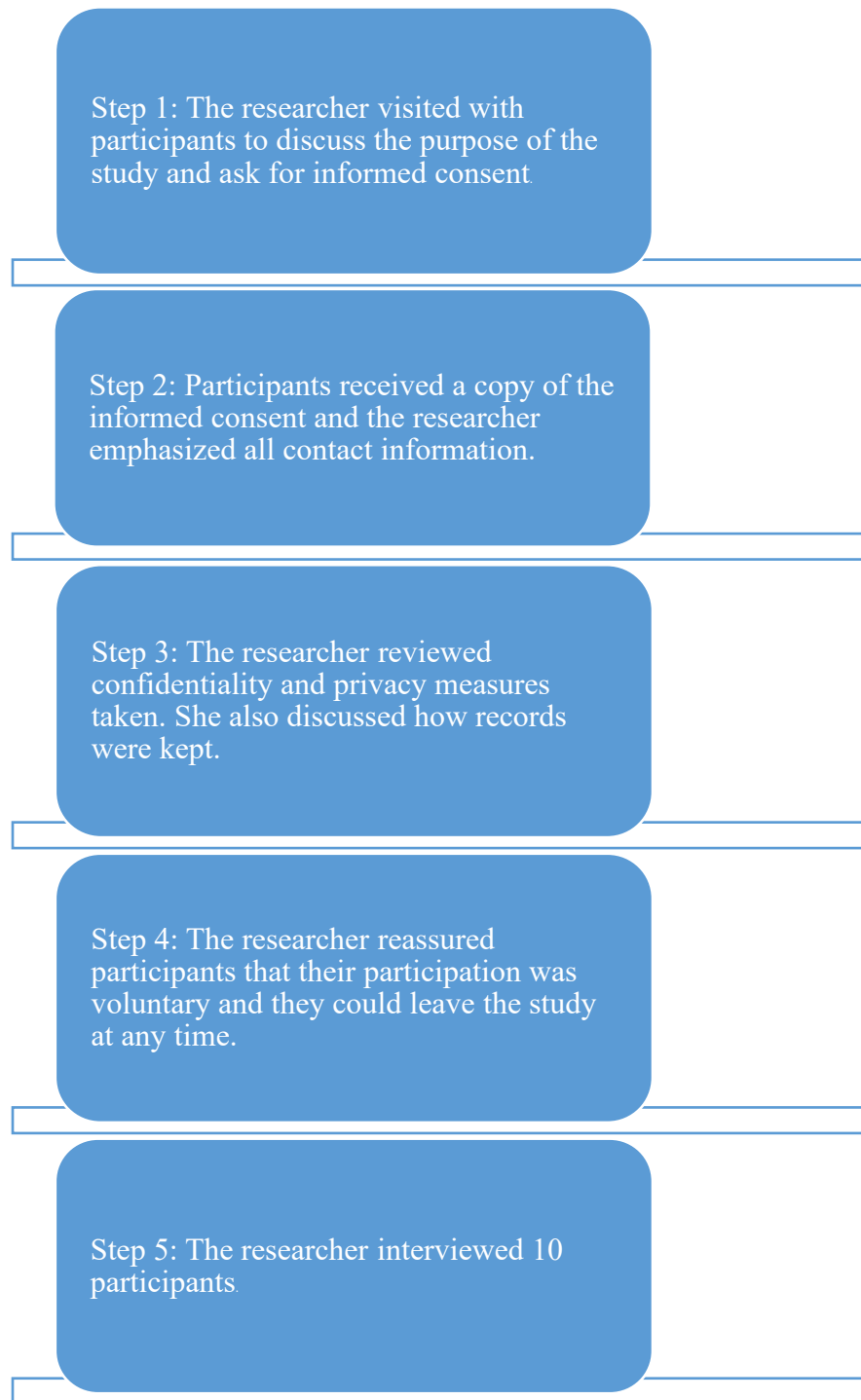
their classrooms. This campus was in a suburban area of southeast Texas. The school was classified as a high school and was serving approximately 2500 students.

Demographics was an essential component in this study, and random purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants from a campus with a high percentage of non-Hispanic teachers. The researcher chose participants from a suburban high school in southeast Texas where the Hispanic student population has grown significantly over the past five years (Texas Education Agency, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Ten participants were selected for the study from a pool of 133 teachers on campus.

The participants all had a minimum of a bachelor's degree and a standard Texas Educator Certificate. They were hired for the purpose of teaching high school students. The researcher included males and females within the teacher population who have taught a minimum of one year within the public school system. The researcher predicted that the participants would be of various ethnicities and would interview a range of experienced teachers to identify if more novice teachers had higher perceived multicultural competence than seasoned teachers due to exposure to multiculturalism teachings in their undergraduate programs. All of the participants had Hispanic students in their classes and have experienced social interactions with these students, such as greeting them upon entering the classroom and checking for understanding during academic learning.

The researcher visited with the participants to discuss the purpose of the study and asked for informed consent (see Appendix A) prior to beginning the interviews. Participants received a copy of the informed consent for their reference, and the researcher emphasized contact information for the researcher, the dissertation director,

and the Institutional Review Board at Sam Houston State University. The researcher reviewed confidentiality and privacy measures taken and discussed how records would be maintained and protected. The researcher also ensured that participants knew that their willingness to participate in the study was completely voluntary, and they were able to leave the study at any time. The number of participants fell within the recommended range of participants of five to twenty-five to achieve saturation of data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher interviewed enough participants until identical themes arose from the transcriptions of the data collected and established that saturation had occurred (Creswell, 2014).

Figure 3*Steps Taken to Ensure Participation of Participants*

Instrumentation

For a phenomenological study, interviews have been an essential component of gathering data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher met individually with each of the 10 participants and used a semi-structured interview to collect data. Initially, the researcher asked each participant to select a pseudonym to use throughout the study to ensure their anonymity. Secondly, the researcher asked the participants to answer demographic questions and then followed up with eight open-ended questions about the teachers lived experiences when working with Hispanic students. This latter set of questions helped to facilitate deeper meaning for the participants about their experiences and allowed the researcher to ask appropriate follow-up questions to expand on their answers. Although questions were prepared in advance, flexibility of wording and the order of questions asked were determined during the interview and dependent upon the participant. The opportunity for follow-up questions was available according to how participants responded to the initial questions (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes.

The setting for the interviews was an online platform called Zoom where confidentiality and privacy were established by allowing the participant to choose his or her own setting. Holding interviews online became a necessity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, Sam Houston State University's Institutional Review Board required this researcher to continue collecting data online to comply with social distancing due to the pandemic. Having online meetings eliminated the power differential that could have impacted the participants' responses compared to holding the interviews in the researcher's office as the school counselor. Each participant was asked to post a "Do Not

Disturb” sign on the door where he or she participated in the Zoom meeting to reduce distractions, as did the researcher. The researcher conducted the Zoom meetings at the participants’ convenience to further avoid disruptions. Interviews were recorded on a secure laptop that has been password-protected, encrypted, and locked in the researcher’s office. Memo-writing was utilized during the collection of data (a note-taking technique that allows for reflection, analysis, and organization) to account for the researcher’s personal thoughts, assumptions, and processes as occurred during data collection (Maxwell, 2013). The memo-writing notes were also kept locked in the researcher’s office.

Participant Questionnaire

The semi-structured questionnaire consisted of seven demographic questions (see Appendix B) and eight questions about the phenomena of building relationships with Hispanic students (see Appendix C). The researcher began by asking each participant to answer the demographic questions, and then began the interview using broad, open-ended questions, generally referred to as grand tour questions. The researcher also asked follow-up questions to clarify answers that were given or to deepen the narrative of each participant. The following grand tour questions were used to guide the interviews:

1. *What led you to want to work with children?* Initially, I asked each participant what led him or her to want to work with children. According to Kass and Miller (2018), most students choose a teaching career for extrinsic motivations, such as salary, work schedule, and possibility for upward mobility or intrinsic motivations like the ability to be lifelong learners, a love of children or an academic challenge (Kass & Miller, 2018).

2. *Describe how you have built relationships with your students.* Secondly, I asked participants to describe how they have built relationships with all their students and then asked follow-up questions focused on their Hispanic students. Current literature has highlighted the need for self-awareness of bias and beliefs of other cultures as an initial step in building multicultural competence (Colombo, 2007, Keengwe, 2010). I asked participants to provide a narrative for building relationships with Hispanic students to gain an understanding of their unique path towards cultural competence.
3. *What challenges have you faced working with the Hispanic population?* Participants were asked to describe any challenges they had faced when working with the Hispanic population. My intent to asking this question was to determine if challenges have changed from answers I have already found in the literature, such as the language barrier and a lack of motivation. (Colombo, 2007; Darder & Torres, 2014).
4. *What tools have you used when teaching Hispanic children?* Limited research was discovered on specific teaching tools that have been found useful for Hispanic students. One study was completed at the university level that found that the use of online learning proved successful for undergraduate Hispanic students as compared to face-to-face learning with a professor (Johnson & Galy, 2013). This study could be useful in identifying tools or strategies that are successful with Hispanic students in high school.
5. *Describe how you interact with Hispanic children compared to children of other ethnicities?* The researcher asked participants how they have interacted with

Hispanic students compared to children of other ethnicities. This question alluded to the level of multicultural competence the participants had achieved and whether they perceived themselves as culturally competent as they attempted to treat students equally in the classroom (Banks, 2008; Gurgel, 2015).

6. *Since being a teacher, what have you learned about the Hispanic culture? Would you be interested in a mentorship or training offered by a school counselor about multiculturalism?* Being a learner of cultures has been an important aspect of multiculturalism. Asking participants what they have learned about the Hispanic culture allowed for confirmation of continuous learning (Banks, 2008).
7. *What are the similarities and differences between your culture and the Hispanic culture? How do you reconcile those two cultures?* Participants were asked if they have identified differences from their own culture compared to the Hispanic culture and how they have reconciled between the two. The participants' self-awareness of their own culture helped to increase their cultural competence and allowed them to appreciate unique aspects of other cultures (Banks, 2008). A culturally competent teacher could connect with students from the Hispanic culture by offering respect for their culture and treating all students with fairness (Keengwe, 2010.)
8. *Tell me about your exposure to the Hispanic culture.* The researcher asked participants to discuss their exposure to the Hispanic culture. This question highlighted a teacher's willingness to go beyond the classroom to interact with the Hispanic culture within the community. Exposure to other cultures has been a significant component to multiculturalism (Banks, 2008; Keengwe, 2010).

Data Analysis

The phenomenological research design provided a specific structure that the researcher followed as a framework for data analysis and the explanation of findings (Creswell, 2013). The researcher followed the Stevick (1971)-Colaizzi (1973)-Keen (1975) Method of Data Analysis which is a modified version of Moustakas' method of data analysis. (Moustakas, 1994). Beginning with the researcher's detailed account of her own experiences working with Hispanic students, the researcher analyzed the transcript to establish a basis for the phenomenon. Seven steps were involved in this process. The researcher examined each statement for its importance in describing the phenomenon.

1. The researcher recorded all relevant statements.
2. The researcher created a list of each non-repeating statements. This list assisted the researcher to find meaning units within the description.
3. The researcher grouped the statements and begin to derive themes.
4. The researcher synthesized the meaning units and themes into a description of the textures of the experience.
5. The researcher reflected on her own textural description and constructed a description of the structures of my experience.
6. The researcher constructed a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of her experience.

(Moustakas, 1994)

Upon gaining a detailed analysis of her own experience, the researcher then repeated the data analysis process as listed above with each transcription from the

interviews with the participants. This data analysis process allowed the researcher to compare her experiences to others and enrich the essence of the phenomenon itself.

Trustworthiness

The use of validation strategies provides credibility to the research and integrity to protect against biases that may have been discovered (Maxwell, 2013). The researcher incorporated peer review by having four professional counselors review my interview questionnaire for clarity and possible bias. None of them had any connection to my study, and therefore gave open and honest opinions on the revision of my questionnaire. Their assistance helped me to write questions that would allow for more enriching narratives from the participants.

The researcher employed a peer colleague to verify the coding and to facilitate the analysis of the transcriptions and the emergence of themes, while also validating the data. The researcher predicted they would develop similar themes from the transcribed data. An intercoder agreement was developed to ensure that the researcher and colleague used the same language as themes emerged from the data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher also used a member checking strategy for participants to review the findings from the data by scheduling a follow-up interview with them and provided the participants with the opportunity to offer comments to the discovery (Creswell, 2014). The researcher used triangulation as well by citing various educational and theoretical resources that corroborated the research findings. By using U.S. Census data as well as school population data, this information helped bring credibility to the research (Creswell, 2013). The researcher used rich, thick data to describe the analysis by using the participants' words rather than notes collected during the coding process. The memo-

writing that the researcher completed throughout the data collection provides personal and timely anecdotes about the researcher's discoveries and struggles. These two strategies allow for trustworthiness of the data (Creswell, 2013).

Positionality

To limit researcher bias, my history within the field of education should be mentioned. I have worked in public education for 20 years, 10 years as a teacher and the last 10 years as a certified school counselor. As a teacher, I had Hispanic students in my classroom, and I often learned from them what it would take to build a relationship with them. It was patience, acceptance, listening to what was important to them, and creating value to what they added to the classroom experience. As a school counselor, I have had the opportunity to see different perspectives: that of a teacher not knowing how to connect with a student because they are culturally different and of the Hispanic students who say they felt disconnected from the school because their teachers did not understand them. My approach to this research study aspires to develop a connection between these two perspectives. I will bracket my experiences to describe other people's encounters in an un-biased approach (Creswell, 2013). I hold weekly "bracketing interviews" (Tufford & Newman, 2010) with an outside colleague to discuss my thoughts and feelings regarding my research. These interviews began with my initial ideas of research topics and have continued throughout my writing. This process helps to identify any potential bias in the research or writing and provides the researcher with an alternate perspective on research findings (Tufford & Newman, 2010). The researcher used memo writing as a bracketing procedure also as I conduct interviews with the participants. Memo writing allows me to process my thoughts and feelings as they occur, and then permits me to

reflect on my reactions to gain deeper insight into the data or to engage with my participant in a manner that stimulates a deeper perspective of the topic (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

The members of my dissertation committee each wrote their own position statement to validate their connection to the research topic and to ensure that trustworthiness remains at a high standard of professionalism. Dr. Richard Henriksen, Dr. Yvonne Garza-Chaves, and Dr. Green are all faculty members within the department of Counselor Education at Sam Houston State University.

Dr. Richard Henriksen Jr. is my dissertation advisor and has been a counselor educator for the past 20 years. He is not a certified teacher nor a school counselor, but he has worked in schools for more than 20 years with students in discipline alternative education programs. He is focused on multicultural issues and has worked with students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Dr. Yvonne Garza-Chaves: I acknowledge that I am invested in the topic being studied. I am faculty who serves on this dissertation and will have input into its production. I am aware that my inner community of neural traits contain a repetition of experiences from being a 50-year-old Hispanic female with various school encounters. Therefore, I understand that I am part of the world being studied. Prior to this study, I will consider my views about the topic in a process of reflexivity and list ideas about the topic as a way to bracket my views. I believe Hispanic students experience a number of micro-aggressions within the school culture. I believe that because of their age they do not have a fully developed brain to experience self-regulation and integration of

experience. Therefore, micro-aggressions leave a strong negative imprint in implicit memory, resulting in a perceived lack of safety in the world.

Dr. Dee-Anna Green, a committee member, just completed her 2nd year of teaching at the university level. Previously, her experience in public schools consisted of 3 years of teaching and also includes being a school counselor at both the elementary and secondary levels. In her roles as a teacher and school counselor, she worked with a diverse population of students including Hispanic students. She is a Hispanic female who is interested and invested in research that affects the Hispanic community along with other diverse populations including the current study. She plans to continue to research and advocate for students who are from diverse populations in order to contribute to the field of research as well as influence best practices. In order to bracket her background and experiences, she talks to and works closely with colleagues as well as actively participates in self-evaluation practices.

I believe schoolteachers are overworked and underpaid, leaving them little to offer in terms of offering a nurturing environment, with enough consistency, to strengthen synapses of experience with minority students. To add to this stress, I believe most teachers work from a place of passive knowledge about cultural issues rather than from a place of active responsiveness.

Summary

The researcher opened this chapter with the purpose for the research and clearly stated the research question. The researcher explained the reasoning for choosing to conduct a qualitative study and how it has given a voice to teachers and students alike. The researcher used a phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences

of the studied population. The researcher also explained that she will be bracketing her experiences in education to ensure that the research remains as un-biased as possible. The participants were chosen through random purposive sampling from a suburban middle school in southeast Texas. The researcher selected 10 of the 43 teachers at the school to participate in the study. The researcher interviewed them using a semi-structured questionnaire to allow for follow-up questions and flexibility during the interview.

The researcher discussed the data analysis process created by Clark Moustakas (1994) and further validated by Creswell (2013). The researcher described several validation techniques that she used to lend credibility and trustworthiness to the research, such as member checking, triangulation, peer review, and note-taking. The researcher also indicated that the data would have increased reliability due to the safe and secure technology used, and that it will be locked in the researcher's private office. The results of the findings are presented in the next chapter, Chapter IV: Presentation and Analysis of Data. The researcher included a brief biography of each participant and a description of themes that arose from the data.

CHAPTER IV

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Chapter IV provides a presentation and analysis of the data for this research study. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe teachers' perceptions of their multicultural competence and how their views translate into their interactions with Hispanic students within the classroom.

Data were collected by interviewing 10 random participants who shared their experiences of teaching Hispanic students. Participants answered seven demographic questions and eight open-ended questions. The target population were teachers with at least one year of experience in one southeast Texas high school with a large population of Hispanic students.

Through the methodology of Albert Bandura's social cognitive learning theory, the data has been analyzed to explore how teachers have taken the multicultural training they have received either at the university level or through professional development and advanced their competence to create positive relationships with the Hispanic student population. Bandura's research on self-efficacy also solidifies this researcher's mentoring points. Self-efficacy is one's belief in the ability to perform a given task well (Bandura, 1995). When teachers see or witness successful interactions with students, they in-turn gain confidence in producing the same results or better (Kelleher 2016).

A qualitative method of study was chosen for this topic because it was essential to collect the learned experiences of teachers who work with Hispanic students. Hearing their voices gave life not only to my dissertation but to the multicultural movement that engulfs America today. The data collected provides justification for continued

professional development in multiculturalism for teachers who currently work in today's diverse schools. The overarching research question is: What are teachers' perceptions of how their multicultural competence influences their ability to build relationships with Hispanic students within the classroom? The researcher expected to answer this question as well as the following supporting questions: (1) Do teachers feel prepared to work in a diverse society? (2) How would a teacher improve his or her multicultural competence? And (3) How does multicultural competence improve a teacher's ability to create relationships with Hispanic students?

This chapter includes a description of the analysis completed for the current study and a discussion on how the methodology of social learning theory supports the data collected. The first part of the analysis includes the demographic data of the participants. The second part addresses the results of the interview questions and the findings determined. Thirdly, a summary of themes is discussed. Each theme will be discussed individually, and a conclusion is then provided.

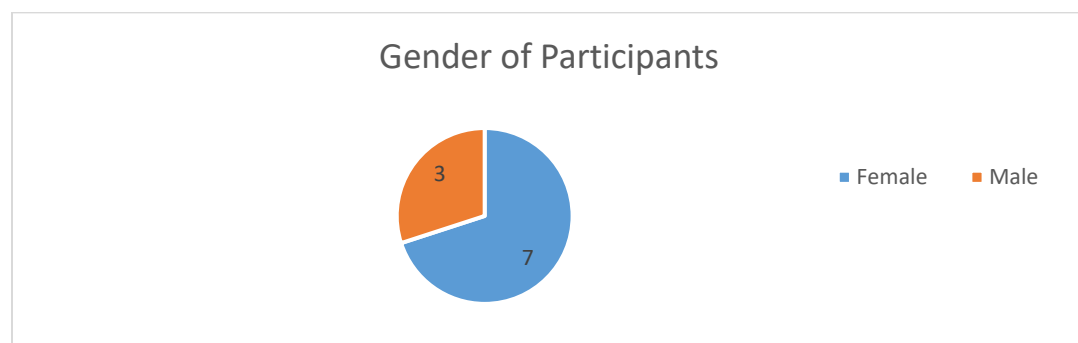
Description of Participants

Eligible participants for this study were selected from a pool of teachers within one southeast Texas high school. Participants were required to at least have one year of teaching experience and teach within a core subject area such as English, math, science, or social studies. Participants were solicited for the study via electronic mail through a secure server and could volunteer to participate anonymously. The first 10 teachers that volunteered for the study were selected to be interviewed. 70 percent of my participants were female, and 30 percent were male. 59 percent of my participants were White teachers, 19 percent were African American teachers. Hispanic teachers made up 12

percent of my participants, whereas 10 percent were Filipino. Figure 4 indicates the stated gender of my participants and Figure 5 addresses the participants' ethnicities.

Figure 4

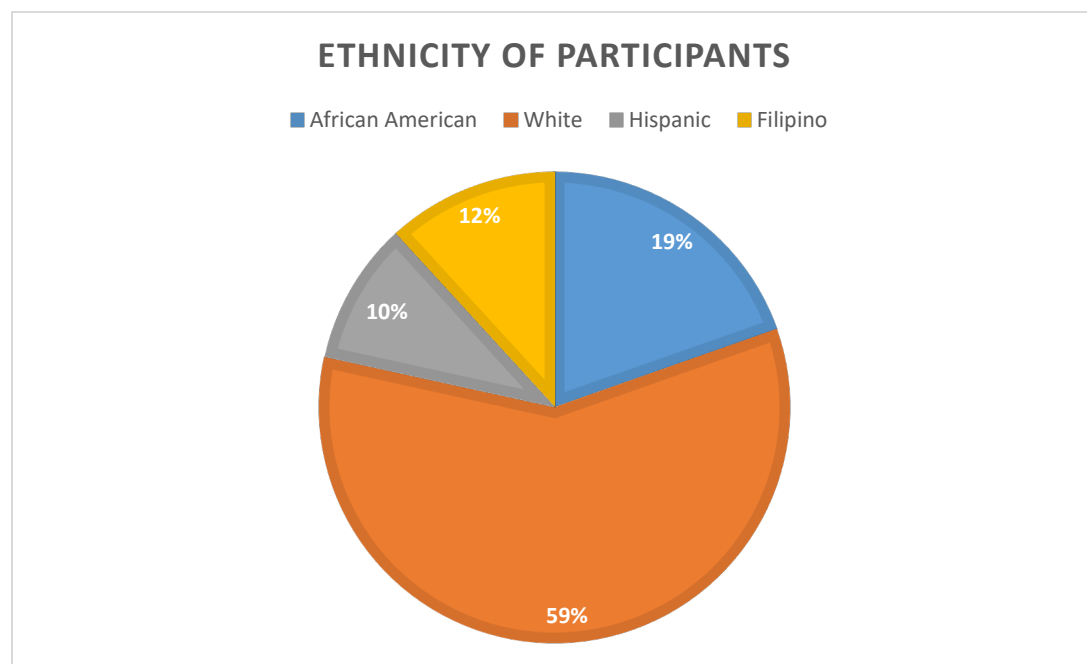
Gender of Participants



Note. Seven females and three females participated in this study.

Figure 5

Ethnicity of Participants



Note. This figure illustrates the ethnic breakdown of participants.

As Figure 4 illustrates, I had more females (seven) participate in the study than males (three). There were two African American participants, six White participants, one Hispanic participant, and one Filipino participant. For highest degree earned, one participant had earned a Doctor of Divinity degree, five had a master's degree in education or within their teaching field, and four participants had earned a bachelor's degree. When asked which language the participants spoke fluently, all replied with English, one responded with English and Spanish.

Two participants in the study fell within the age range of 20-30, 1 was between the age of 31-40, three were between the ages of 41-50, and four participants were 51 or older. Eight of the participants had been teaching five or more years and two had 1-4 years of experience.

Participant Biographies

The first 10 participants who volunteered for the study were selected to participate. Each one answered demographic questions prior to the specific topic questions asked during the interviews. Three males and seven females were a part of the study. Participants were asked to select a pseudonym prior to the beginning of the interview; therefore, names mentioned in the biographies below and within the results are not true to the participant. The researcher chose to use pseudonyms to protect the participants confidentiality. Data saturation was reached sufficiently within the 10 interviews. A brief biography of each participant has been provided below.

Participant #1. Sherry identified as an African American woman within the age range of 41-50. She earned a master's degree in educational leadership and

Administration and has worked in education as a teacher for 19 years. She spoke English fluently, but also was familiar with conversational Spanish. She has taught grades eight through 12 but preferred to teach 12th graders.

Participant #2. Barbara described her ethnicity as White and identified as female. She was in the age range of 31-40 and spoke English fluently. She earned a master's degree in English and was working on her doctorate degree. She was a veteran teacher of 14 years and taught each grade level from sixth grade through college sophomores. She was teaching 11th and 12th graders during the time of the interview.

Participant #3. Tom identified as a Caucasian male and was in the age range of 51 or older. Tom earned his master's degree in Educational Leadership and Administration and was working on his doctorate degree. He only spoke English and was a veteran teacher of seven years. He had taught 7th and 8th grade but was teaching 10th grade at the time of the interview.

Participant #4. Rachel identified as a White female in the age range of 41-50. She spoke English fluently and had some knowledge of conversational Spanish. She was a veteran teacher of 18 years. She earned her master's degree in counseling. She taught ninth through 12th grades, but preferred 10th graders.

Participant #5. Daria identified as a Hispanic female in the age range of 20-30. She spoke English and Spanish fluently. She earned her bachelor's degree in English and had two years of teaching experience. She was teaching 10th graders at the time of the interview.

Participant #6. Anita identified as an African American female. She was in the age range of 51 or older. She spoke English fluently. She earned her bachelor's degree in

science and was a veteran teacher of 24 years. She had taught 10th through 12th graders, but preferred 11th graders.

Participant #7. David described himself as a White male. He was in the age range of 51 or older. He was fluent in English only. He earned a master's degree in Educational Leadership and Administration and was a veteran teacher of 12 years. He had taught eighth through 11th grades but was teaching 11th grade at the time of the interview.

Participant #8. Lori described herself as a White female. She was in the age range of 20-30. She was fluent in English only. She earned her bachelor's degree in biology and had two years of teaching experience. She taught ninth grade repeaters which she found particularly challenging.

Participant #9. Susan identified as a White female. She was in the age range of 41-50 and spoke English fluently. She earned her bachelor's degree in English with an English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement. She was a 23-year veteran of teaching and enjoyed teaching ninth through 12th grades. At the time of the interview, she was teaching ninth graders.

Participant #10. Darin identified as a Filipino male. He was in the age range of 51 or older. He spoke only English fluently. He earned his Master of Science in Forensic Science and was a veteran teacher of seven years. He had taught 10th through 12th grades and was teaching all three levels at the time of the interview.

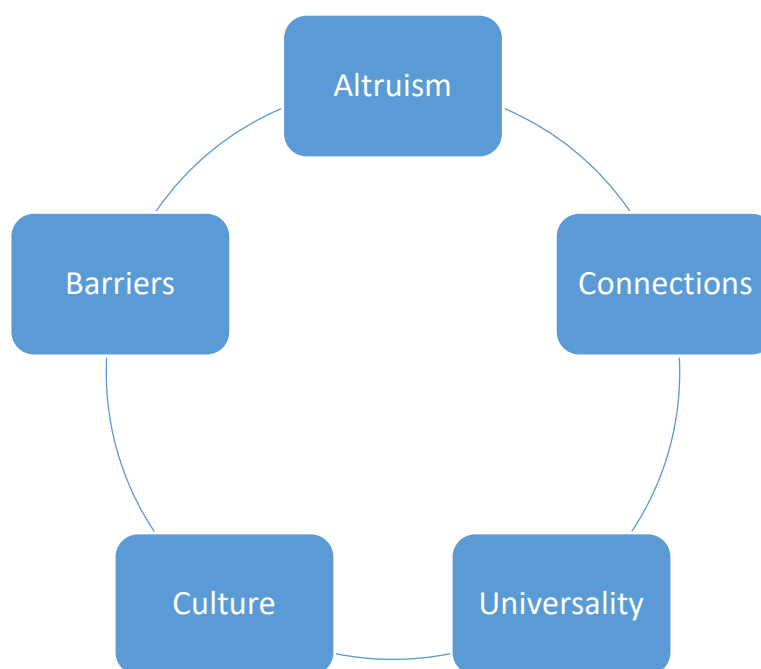
Data Collection and Analysis

Each participant was interviewed via Zoom technology to maintain social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were recorded and saved on a password-protected laptop and locked in an office to ensure privacy for the participants.

Participants were asked to select a pseudonym to code their data to safeguard anonymity and all data collected has been coded using the first initial and last name of the pseudonym selected. Interviews were transcribed individually and then verified by each participant for accurate wording and phrasing. I then coded all interviews together while a peer researcher coded the same data in a separate location. We then discussed findings and derived 18 different codes from the data. From those codes, five themes emerged: Altruism, Connections, Barriers, Universality, and Culture.

Figure 6

Five Themes from the Data



Note. Five major themes emerged from the data.

Themes

Altruism

Altruism is defined as unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others. Among the participants in this study, altruism appeared in the data from nine of the 10 participants. When asked what led them to want to work with children, most said they wanted to give back to their community or wanted to help others. Barbara's answer to the question was significant, *I wanted to be in a place to help families stay together*. Tom also shared, *"I didn't have the best teachers growing up and I wanted to give back to these kids. I wanted to be a good role model."* David also continued this theme. He said, *"I wanted to make a difference in kids' lives. I had great teachers and coaches in my life, and I want to give back."*

Connections

Connections is the second theme that appeared in the data. When the researcher asked the participants to describe how they build relationships with Hispanic students, from eight out of 10 participants, the answer was to create connections. Rachel said, *"I learned early to find common interests or to ask questions and be curious about them."* Susan also said, *"Sometimes I take notes about the kids at the first of the year to help me remember what they like or what activities they are involved in. It really helps me to get to know them and build a connection with them as early as possible."*

Barriers

Barriers appeared throughout the data. Language and culture barriers were mentioned most often which generally kept the participants from connecting with

students and their families. Having barriers also created negative feelings for the teachers. Sherry stated, *“I think one of the challenges that I had, I had early on in my teaching career, because I started teaching so young, um you had that thing, that clash of the cultural dynamic on both sides of the spectrum.”*

Sherry explained that she had to learn about the Hispanic culture, but she also had to teach her Hispanic students about her African American culture. Each was unaware of the other’s culture, and it had created a barrier to building a relationship in the classroom.

Rachel elaborated on the language barriers faced in the classroom. Nine out of 10 of the participants discussed language as an issue they faced in the classroom.

The main challenge is the language barrier. I speak a little Spanish but not enough. Many of my students are first generation and their parents don’t speak English. I’ve relied heavily on translators at our school and the Google translate software. Other challenges have to do with the Hispanic culture and their value on higher education. The parents want their children to have a good education in America, but the students are unmotivated and don’t see its value.

Even Daria, who spoke fluent Spanish, mentioned that sharing a common language with her students could be a problem because her students viewed her as a friend instead of their teacher. She expressed her frustration by saying, *“I just don’t know what to do! They [Spanish-speaking students] just want to hang out in my room and do nothing.”*

Universality

Universality was the next theme that appeared in the data. It refers to the question, “Describe how you interact with Hispanic children compared to children of other ethnicities?” Six out of 10 participants replied that they treated all the students the same.

Susan replied, *“I think I interact with all students the same. But each student is unique, and I like to address students individually, so they know that I respect them and care about their education.”* Tom had similar sentiments. He said, *“I try not to show one group more attention but to show attention to everybody.”*

Culture

Culture is a prominent theme from the data. Answers from the participants were positive and negative in nature. When Barbara was asked about what she has learned about the Hispanic culture, her response is rooted in the reality of today.

I think I’ve learned a lot about how different family structure is, especially for those first-generation kids. The amount of responsibility they have is really mindboggling to me. Like even with this pandemic, with my kids, so many of them had to start working. You know, because mom and dad’s English is not very good or mom and dad got laid off so then they needed to pick it up because they could speak English, so I think they have to grow up a lot faster, a whole lot faster than my kids for sure.

When asked to reconcile her culture with the Hispanic culture, Anita said, “My culture is friendly and loving of others. They don’t seem to want to be part of the school. David responded by saying, “My Caucasian kids respect me, and the Hispanics are just angry. They don’t seem to want to work with me to have a better class experience.”

Altruism, connections, barriers, universality, and culture are the five themes that emerged from the data collected. All are connected to each teacher's individual experiences. Answers varied based on years of experience, age, interactions with students, and attitude. Chapter V is the Summary, Discussions, and Conclusions chapter. I will discuss the implications of my research and summarize the dissertation in its entirety.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Discussions, and Conclusions

In this study, the researcher set out to analyze teacher's perceived multicultural competence and how it affected building relationships with students of the Hispanic population. The results of the study were discussed in the preceding chapter, which included a data breakdown for each question asked in the interviews and pertinent quotations from the participants. Chapter V consists of a summary of the study, a discussion of the research findings, implications of the research to education and society, recommendations for further research, and a conclusion. The findings of this study are viewed through the lens of the phenomenological framework. The last three sections call for closing additional gaps in the literature and suggest future research that broadens the knowledge of educators and school counselors, specifically, to approach multicultural education as an interconnection to greater facilitation of the needs of a diverse student population.

Summary of the Study

The problem that initiated this research study was teachers perceived multicultural competence could affect their ability to build positive relationships with Hispanic students within their classrooms. Several prior researchers indicated that school-connectedness improved attendance and academic success for Hispanic students (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2018, Bergin & Bergin, 2009). An additional problem that arose was how school counselors can mentor and influence increased multicultural competence amongst a school staff given that school counselors receive additional training on the subject matter beyond that of the pre-service teacher training.

A contributing factor to the Hispanic drop-out rate at the high school level is the lack of positive teacher-student relationships (Moreno and Gaitan, 2013). The catalyst to increase multicultural competence in teachers and to decrease the dropout rate among Hispanics is the school counselor. These two problems helped to narrow the purpose of my study.

The purpose of my research study was to describe teachers' perceptions of their multicultural competence and to gain an understanding of how their views correlated into interactions with Hispanic students within their classrooms. Obtaining a baseline for each participant's multicultural views was essential in determining the plausibility of building positive relationships with their Hispanic students, but also the possible need for further training and professional development that could be provided by the school counselor in the future. The data was acquired by conducting 10 one-on-one interviews with participants of the study. The interviews were conducted over a virtual platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The participants were all teachers at a southeast Texas high school with at least one year of experience. Teachers were asked what led them to work with children, to describe how they have built relationships with Hispanic children, what challenges they have faced when working with Hispanic children, and what tools have they used when teaching Hispanic children. The participants were also asked to describe how they interacted with Hispanic children compared to children of other ethnicities, what have they learned about the Hispanic culture since becoming a teacher, what are the similarities and differences between their own culture and the Hispanic culture, and how do they reconcile those two cultures. Five major themes were derived from the data:

altruism, connection, barriers, universality, and culture. Each of them was analyzed through Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory and the common factors that emerged is that teachers want to learn about their students and students want a connection with their teachers.

Another purpose for my research was to publicize the need for additional research in how school counselors can make an impact in the public school system. School counselors should be viewed as leaders and mentors to the school staff in matters of social and emotional learning, which includes multicultural education. Follow-up questions led to affirmations for the need to receive additional multicultural training once a teacher is hired to work in a school district.

The Theoretical Framework

This research study was designed within a phenomenological framework in order to gain an understanding of the common experiences of teachers within a specific high school. All teachers within the school worked with a large majority of Hispanic students due to the school demographics. Although all participants worked within the same setting, the participants had varying answers to many questions. For example, the participants' lack of knowledge of the Spanish language was a significant barrier to building relationships with students. Tom said, *"Language barrier, that's a challenge that all teachers face."* Susan also said, *"Of course, the language barrier is a tough one. I wish I knew more Spanish, but we are told to encourage them to learn English. So, I'm in a catch 22 with communication sometimes."*

By analyzing the data through social cognitive theory, a need arises for a stronger mentorship program to facilitate modeling of behaviors and continued learning for

teachers. When teachers were asked about tools used to help Hispanic students learn, some participants struggled to answer the question. Anita said, *“I use the ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher to make sure we are compliant. She sometimes gets the students to work.”* David’s answer was even more vague: *“There are very few tools at my disposal. I just let the students help each other.”* These teachers would benefit from a school counselor who could mentor them through the process of learning what tools are available to them to help Hispanic students succeed.

Research Questions

This study centered around an overarching research question. What are teachers’ perceptions of how their multicultural competence influences their ability to build relationships with Hispanic students within the classroom? The answer to this question came from the data analysis. By not asking the specific research question to the participants, the interview questions asked provided more enriching data and more insight into each participants’ thoughts and beliefs. Overall, teachers who had five or more years of experience had greater knowledge about how to cultivate relationships and how to teach students of the Hispanic population. This finding may elucidate that years on the job may increase a teacher’s multicultural competence in order to build relationships with Hispanic students. Younger teachers were still struggling to make connections; they were more focused on classroom management and curriculum. This finding may suggest this group could benefit from additional on the job training.

As mentioned before, the researcher gained insight into developing a comprehensive counseling plan to meet the needs of teachers and students as the student population has grown in greater diversity. Specifically, the researcher noted the need for

further training, exposure to culture, and knowledge of teaching tools was apparent. The role of the school counselor should be expanded to provide mentorship to teachers who struggle with multicultural competence. Further research is needed in the area of school counselor roles in schools, school counselors as leaders, and as mentors to school faculty.

Methodology

A phenomenological research design was chosen for this study in order to understand the common experiences of teachers who work with Hispanic students. Teachers were solicited by electronic mail within one southeast Texas school. 10 participants were selected who met the criteria detailed in chapter three of this study. Participants were asked 14 questions with the first six being demographic questions and the last eight being open-ended questions about their experiences while working with Hispanic students. Follow-up questions were asked for clarification and for rich descriptions of the teacher experiences. I met with each participant virtually through an online platform and reviewed the Informed Consent. Teachers could ask questions about my research and their participation prior to giving their consent and before the interview began. Once the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed and peer reviewed. Transcriptions were also sent to each participant for member-checking to increase the validity of the data. Data analysis began using the Stevick (1971)-Colaizzi (1973)-Keen (1975) Method of Data Analysis which is a modified version of Moustakas' method of data analysis. (Moustakas, 1994). I followed the seven-step process and derived five major themes.

Findings

The five major themes from the data analysis were altruism, connection, barriers, universality, and culture. Each theme was reviewed using Bandura's social cognitive theory for probability of the phenomenon occurring and with the belief that a leader or mentor could model or teach improved behavior. The researcher then compared the themes to her own experiences and determined the same themes from her experience.

Altruism. Altruism is defined as unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others. Among the participants in this study, altruism appeared in the data from nine of the 10 participants. When asked what led them to want to work with children, most said they wanted to give back to their community or wanted to help others. Barbara's answer to the question was significant, *"I wanted to be in a place to help families stay together."* Tom also shared, *"I didn't have the best teachers growing up and I wanted to give back to these kids. I wanted to be a good role model."* David also continued this theme. He said, *"I wanted to make a difference in kids' lives. I had great teachers and coaches in my life, and I want to give back."* According to the research of O'Donnell and Kirkner (2014), it is significant to have a school system, teachers included, that want to give back to the Hispanic community. It is essential for them to have the ability to foster relationships for Hispanic students to be successful (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). This ability to foster relationships and give back to the Hispanic community translates to the altruism theme that arose from the data.

Connections. Connections is the second theme that appeared in the data. When the researcher asked the participants to describe how they build relationships with Hispanic students, eight out of 10 participants, the answer was to create connections.

Rachel said, *“I learned early to find common interests or to ask questions and be curious about them.”* Susan also said, *“Sometimes I take notes about the kids at the first of the year to help me remember what they like or what activities they are involved in. It really helps me to get to know them and build a connection with them as early as possible.”* The need for connections with the local school system has been researched both federally and by the state of Texas. The NEA (2008) and the TEA (2018) both have provided schools with funding and a framework to provide support to minority families.

Barriers. Barriers appeared throughout the data. Language and culture barriers were mentioned most often which mostly kept the participants from connecting with students and their families. Having barriers also created negative feelings for the teachers. Sherry stated, *“I think one of the challenges that I had, I had early on in my teaching career, because I started teaching so young, um you had that thing, that clash of the cultural dynamic on both sides of the spectrum.”* Sherry explained that she had to learn about the Hispanic culture, but she also had to teach her Hispanic students about her African American culture. Each was unaware of the other’s culture, and it had created a barrier to building a relationship in the classroom. Sherry spoke of a cultural barrier that may cause a dissonance between teachers and students. Her experience indicated the need for multiculturalism teachings within the school system. One research study explained that a lack of responsiveness by teachers in this type of situation, can lead to a decrease in students’ academic success (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2009).

Rachel elaborated on the barriers faced in the classroom.

The main challenge is the language barrier. I speak a little Spanish but not enough. Many of my students are first generation and their parents don’t speak English.

I've relied heavily on translators at our school and the Google translate software. Other challenges have to do with the Hispanic culture and their value on higher education. The parents want their children to have a good education in America, but the students are unmotivated and don't see its value.

The language barrier in the classroom develops when inexperienced teachers are not aware of resources, they can use in the classroom to facilitate communication. With modern technology, a language barrier can be easily resolved with translation programs. School systems also employ ESL teachers and bilingual staff members to ease these situations when a large population of non-English speaking students exists.

Universality. Universality is the next theme that appeared in the data. It refers to the question, "Describe how you interact with Hispanic children compared to children of other ethnicities?" Six out of 10 participants replied that they treated all the students the same. Susan replied, *"I think I interact with all students the same. But each student is unique, and I like to address students individually, so they know that I respect them and care about their education."* Tom had similar sentiments. He said, *"I try not to show one group more attention but to show attention to everybody."* The universality theme emerges from outdated pedagogy of treating all students "the American way" or the way of the White majority culture (Falk, 2014). James Banks (2008), the founder of multicultural education called for change in America's schools, including pre-service teacher programs. Schools have been gradually changing, but mandates are in place in pre-service teacher and counselor programs (NCATE, 2008, CACREP, 2016, TEA, 2018).

Culture. Culture is a prominent theme from the data. Answers from the participants were positive and negative in nature. When Barbara was asked about what she has learned about the culture, her response is rooted in the reality of today:

I think I've learned a lot about how different family structure is, especially for those first-generation kids. The amount of responsibility they have is really mindboggling to me. Like even with this pandemic, with my kids, so many of them had to start working. You know, because mom and dad's English is not very good or mom and dad got laid off so then they needed to pick it up because they could speak English, so I think they have to grow up a lot faster, a whole lot faster than my kids for sure.

Some teachers found it more difficult to reconcile their culture with that of their Hispanic students. When asked to reconcile her culture with the Hispanic culture, Anita said, "My culture is friendly and loving of others. They don't seem to want to be part of the school. David responded by saying, "My Caucasian kids respect me, and the Hispanics are just angry. They don't seem to want to work with me to have a better class experience. As culture emerged as a theme, participants were divided as to whether it had positive or negative effects in the classroom. The writings of James Banks (2008) shared the same sentiments. Although Banks argues that multicultural teachings enrich education by seeking to understand diversity, he has had widespread criticism for his work. If further research were done, findings may show that it would benefit educators as they continue to work with Hispanic students and the ongoing multicultural movement.

Overall, the participants demonstrated a desire to help their Hispanic students be successful. However, many factors created different thought processes for each teacher.

Some claimed their upbringing, some their closeness to retirement, and with some just their attitude affected how they treated students whether they were Hispanic or not.

Implications of the Research

This study encompasses far-reaching implications. With Hispanic immigration continually increasing, research about Hispanic student learning and how they relate to their teachers is relevant and valuable to teachers and school counselors. By focusing on improved relationships between Hispanic students and their teachers, society may improve socially and politically.

Education

Multicultural education is an essential part of teacher training at the university level and as professional development once in the workforce. Teachers and school counselors have a responsibility to improve their multicultural competence for the benefit of their students. The results of this study show that there is still work to be done in the areas of teachers' perceptions, multicultural competence, and the role of the school counselor as mentor and leader. This is not an easy path to go down because our educators are aging. Fewer young people who are trained in multiculturalism are entering the field of education, and fewer more choose to stay beyond six years. However, school counselors must take up the challenge to facilitate training and mentoring programs to improve the multicultural competence of the school faculty due to high stakes accountability and for improved academic success not only for Hispanic students, but for all minority students. The researcher suggests that teachers attend additional multicultural training to improve their competence which, in turn, will foster positive teacher-student relationships.

Society

Schools are often said to be microcosms of society. If educators can increase their multicultural competence to improve relations with students of various ethnicities, it can be an example to the outside world. Citizens of today are protesting for fairness and equality. The results of this study indicate a need for teachers to have greater multicultural competence to foster positive relationships with students from various cultures. Hispanic students who have positive connections in school are more likely to graduate from high school and be contributing members of society (Moreno & Gaitan, 2013).

Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher has noted several gaps in the research. In the area of teachers: research should be done on teacher-student relationships as it correlates to academic success for Hispanic students. The current research could also be broadened to include more schools and additional varying sub-groups than just Hispanics. The researcher also suggests further research into teacher ethnicity making a difference in perceived multicultural competence, and this could be a study with a wider group of participants.

In the area of school counselor: a valuable study may be to examine the school counselor as a leader and as a mentor as it applies to teachers' perceptions of multicultural competence. Moreover, what type of training or mentoring is most helpful to the teacher. The researcher would also encourage a study on the effectiveness of pre-service teacher multicultural trainings compared to actual experiences of a classroom teacher, in order to narrow down what is most helpful in the real-world classroom.

Thirdly, in the area of future research, the researcher would foster additional research on Multicultural Education. Specifically, a comparative study on the microcultures in the United States regarding their placement and status in America's macroculture for the reason that as a current school counselor, examining James Banks' philosophy on education, I realized that I did not always agree with him. He makes a strong argument for students' needing role models from their own race, but this teacher says you don't have to be the same ethnicity to build a relationship with a student. You simply must have positive unconditional regard and an open mind to learn.

Conclusion

Does multicultural competence have a role in positive student-teacher relationships? This research study proves that it most likely does. A teacher's perceived ability to interact with students of the Hispanic population is a deciding factor in whether or not that student will be an academic success. Increased multicultural competence allows teachers to have positive self-efficacy in building relationships with students of the Hispanic population. Those relationships then have positive correlations to improved attendance and increased academic success. The study findings also indicated that some teachers have not embraced multiculturalism. The role of the school counselor can be broadened to include mentoring for those teachers who are willing to accept change in how educators teach our students.

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APPENDIX A

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO BE PART OF A RESEARCH STUDY

1. KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCHER AND THIS STUDY

Study title: Teachers' Perceived Multicultural Competence when Working with Students of the Hispanic Population

Principal Investigator: Regina M. Williams, M.Ed., LPC, CSC, Sam Houston State University

Dissertation Advisor: Richard Henriksen, Ph. D, LPC-S, NCC

You are invited to take part in a research study. This form contains information that will help you decide whether to join the study.

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You do not have to participate, and you can stop at any time. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in the research project.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This study will examine teachers' thoughts and ideas about their own cultural competence when working with students of the Hispanic population. The researcher will explore relationship-building between teachers and students and how it may positively influence academic success. The study will also identify ways in which the school counselor can mentor or influence teachers' multicultural competence.

3. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Classroom Teachers (male and female)

Minimum Bachelor's degree

Minimum one year of experience

Work at Davis HS

Teach in core subject area: English, math, science, and social studies

I chose to exclude CTE, LOTE, Athletics, physical education, and special education teachers to safely maintain the confidentiality of students with unique needs. I also chose to exclude first year teachers to minimize any feelings of stress or obligation they may feel.

4. INFORMATION ABOUT STUDY PARTICIPATION

4.1 What will happen to me in this study?

- Participants will be asked to choose a pseudonym to be used throughout the study to protect their privacy and confidentiality.
- Participants will be asked to complete a demographic survey and an interview online via Zoom or Skype.
- The survey is brief, asking questions about gender, age range, and years of teaching experience. The interview will consist of thoughts and ideas about multicultural competence, trainings, and interactions with students of the Hispanic population.
- The survey and interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes.
- Interviews will be audio-recorded on a password-protected device. The audio file will be encrypted and saved on a password-protected laptop and

will be locked in my office when not in use. The audio files will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

- I will use selective random sampling for this study, which means I am only taking volunteers from Davis High School who meet the criteria and want to participate. I will take up to 10 participants.
- Participants will be asked to verify a transcription of their interview at the conclusion of all interviews.

4.2 How much of my time will be needed to take part in this study?

Participants will be asked to participate in a survey and interview lasting 45-60 minutes. Once all interviews are complete and analysis has begun, I will ask each participant to take 15-20 minutes to verify the transcription of their interview.

5. INFORMATION ABOUT STUDY RISKS AND BENEFITS

5.1.1 What risks will I face by taking part in the study? What will researchers do to protect me against these risks?

Minimal risks are associated with this study. Psychological and informational risks may occur. A psychological risk may occur due to an emotional response during the interview. The researcher will ensure that the participant is safe and can freely speak his or her responses without being subject to any negative consequences. An informational risk may occur if the audio recording is not properly encrypted or is not saved properly. The researcher will take every precaution necessary to follow appropriate procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

5.2 How could I benefit if I take part in this study? How could others benefit?

You may not receive any personal benefits from being in this study. However, others may benefit from the knowledge gained from this study.

6. ENDING THE STUDY

You are free to leave the study at any time. If you leave the study before it is finished, there will be no penalty to you. If you decide to leave the study before it is finished, please tell one of the persons listed in Section 9. "Contact Information." If you choose to tell the researcher why you are leaving the study, your reasons may be kept as part of the study record. The researcher will keep the information collected about you for the research unless you ask to delete it from the records. If the researcher has already used your information in a research analysis it will not be possible to remove your information.

7. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

7.1 Will I be paid or given anything for taking part in this study?

You will not be compensated for participation in this study.

8. PROTECTING AND SHARING RESEARCH INFORMATION

8.1 How will the researcher protect my information?

You will be asked to choose a pseudonym that all files will be labeled. The audio recordings will be encrypted and saved on a password-protected laptop. The laptop will be locked in my office when not in use. I will follow-up with participants to verify transcripts of the interviews, and then the documentation linking the true identify with the pseudonym will be destroyed. Upon the conclusion of the study, the audio files will be destroyed.

8.2 Who will have access to my research records?

There are reasons why information about you may be used or seen by the researcher or others during or after this study. Examples include:

- University, government officials, study sponsors or funders, auditors, and/or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may need the information to make sure that the study is done in a safe and proper manner.

8.3 What will happen to the information collected in this study?

I will keep the information I collect about you during the research. Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be stored securely and separately from the research information I collected from you. Once transcriptions are verified by each participant, information linking your name to your pseudonym will be destroyed.

The results of this study could be published in an article or presentation but will not include any information that would let others know who you are.

8.4 Will my information be used for future research or shared with others?

I may use or share your research information for future research studies. If I share your information with other researchers it will be de-identified, which means that it will not contain your name or other information that can directly identify you. This research may be similar to this study or completely different. I will not ask for your additional informed consent for these studies.

9. CONTACT INFORMATION

Who can I contact about this study?

Please contact the researcher listed below to:

- Obtain more information about the study
- Ask a question about the study procedures

- Report an illness, injury, or other problem (you may also need to tell your regular doctors)
- Leave the study before it is finished
- Express a concern about the study

Principal Investigator: Regina Michelle Williams

Email: rmg005@shsu.edu or rmwilliams3@aldineisd.org

Phone: (281) 610-7299

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Richard Henriksen

Email: rch008@shsu.edu

Phone: (936) 294-1209

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant in this study, or to report research-related problems, you may call the Institutional Review Board at SHSU for information, at (936) 294-4875, or irb@shsu.edu.

10. YOUR CONSENT

Consent/Assent to Participate in the Research Study

By choosing “Agree” below, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you agree to participate. I will give you a copy of this document for your records and I will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact me or my advisor using the information in Section 9 provided above.

I understand what the study is about, and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study. By typing your name below, it becomes your electronic signature.

Click or tap here to enter text.Click or tap to enter a date.

NameDate

☐ Consent/Agree

☒ Assent/Disagree

APPENDIX BDemographic Questions

1. ____ Male ____ Female
2. How would you describe your ethnicity?
3. What is your highest degree?
4. What languages do you speak and write fluently?
5. What grades do you teach?
6. What is your age?
____ 20—30
____ 31—40
____ 41—50
____ 51 or older
7. How many years have you been teaching?
____ 1-4
____ 5 or more years

APPENDIX C

Interview questions

8. What led you to want to work with children?
9. Describe how you have built relationships with Hispanic children.
10. What challenges have you faced working with the Hispanic population?
11. What tools have you used when teaching Hispanic children?
12. Describe how you interact with Hispanic children compared to children of other ethnicities?
13. Since being a teacher, what have you learned about the Hispanic culture?
14. Have you identified differences with your culture versus the Hispanic culture?
 - A. How do you reconcile those two cultures?
 - B. Tell me about your exposure to the Hispanic culture.

APPENDIX D

IRB-2020-74 - Initial: Protocol Decision-Post 2018 Rule-COVID-19

orsp@irb.shsu.edu <orsp@irb.shsu.edu>

Tue 5/26/2020 1:05 PM

To: Henriksen JR, Richard <RCH008@SHSU.EDU>; Williams, Regina
<rmg005@SHSU.EDU>

Cc: Miles, Sharla <sharla_miles@shsu.edu>; Young, Chase <cxy010@SHSU.EDU>

Date: May 26, 2020 1:05 PM CDT

TO: Regina Williams Richard Henriksen

FROM: SHSU IRB

PROJECT TITLE: Teachers' Perceived Multicultural Competence when Working with
Students of the Hispanic Population

PROTOCOL #: IRB-2020-74

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial

ACTION: Approved

DECISION DATE: May 26, 2020

ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK-IN DATE: May 26, 2021

EXPEDITED REVIEW CATEGORY: 6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or
image recordings made for research purposes.

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited
to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication,
cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey,
interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or
quality assurance methodologies.

**SPECIAL IRB UPDATE REGARDING THE COVID-19 CRISIS: Although this
study is approved, please note that face-to-face human subject research must be
paused until the CDC and SHSU has determined that the current COVID-19 crisis
has passed. This pause is effective immediately. Approved online human subject
research may continue. If you have an approved face-to-face study and deem it
feasible to move the study to online data collection, please submit a Modification
through Cayuse. Indicate in the Modification that the change is being implemented
as a COVID-19 safety precaution to help the IRB prioritize the submission. The IRB
will continue reviewing applications unless we are advised to do otherwise.**

Greetings,

The above-referenced submission has been reviewed by the IRB and it has been
Approved. Because this study received expedited review and the IRB determined that a
renewal submission is not needed, this decision does not necessarily expire; however, you
will be receiving an email notification on the anniversary of this study approval, which
will be on May 26, 2021 (NOTE: please review the reminder information below
regarding Study Administrative Check-In). This study approval is based on an
appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized.
All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

**Since Cayuse IRB does not currently possess the ability to provide a "stamp of
approval" on any recruitment or consent documentation, it is the strong
recommendation of this office to please include the following approval language in**

the footer of those recruitment and consent documents: IRB-2020-74/May 26, 2020/May 26, 2021.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant.

Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Modifications: Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please submit a Modification Submission through [Cayuse IRB](#) for this procedure.

Incidents: All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please submit an Incident Submission through [Cayuse IRB](#) for this procedure. All Department of Health and Human Services and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Study Administrative Check-In: Based on the risks, this project does not require renewal. Rather, you are required to administratively check in with the IRB on an annual basis. May 26, 2021 is the anniversary of the review of your protocol. The following are the conditions of the IRB approval for IRB-2020-74 Teachers' Perceived Multicultural Competence when Working with Students of the Hispanic Population.

1. When this project is finished or terminated, a Closure submission is required.
2. Changes to the approved protocol require prior board approval (NOTE: see the directive above related to Modifications).
3. Human subjects training is required to be kept current at citiprogram.org by renewing training every 5 years.
4. If incidents (i.e., adverse events) or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSO) (e.g., data collected unintentionally without obtaining informed consent) have occurred during this approval period, you are required to submit a Incident to report the adverse event or UPIRSO to the IRB.

Please note that all research records should be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project. If you have any questions, please contact the Sharla Miles at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Chase Young, Ph.D.

Chair, IRB

Hannah R. Gerber, Ph.D.

Co-Chair, IRB

VITA

Regina Michelle Williams, MEd, LPC, CSC, PhD Candidate

EDUCATION

- **Sam Houston State University—Expected Graduation, December 2021**
- Ph.D. in Counselor Education (CACREP Accredited Program)
- Dissertation: (In progress) Teachers’ perceived Multicultural competence when working with Students of the Hispanic population.
- **Sam Houston State University 2010**
- Master of Education (CACREP Accredited Program)
- School Counseling
- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) course credits
- **Texas Tech University 2001**
- Secondary Education
- **Angelo State University 1995**
 - Government
 - Spanish

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Teaching

Teaching Assistant—Spring 2018. Sam Houston State University (SHSU)

- COUN 5011—*Introduction to the Counseling Profession and Ethical Practice*.
(Instructor: Henderson) Important aspects of school counseling.

Teaching Assistant—Summer 2017. Sam Houston State University (SHSU)

- COUN 5385—*Pre-Practicum: Techniques of Counseling*. (Instructor: Ainsworth)
Lead 50 percent of lessons during the class and wrote new curriculum.

Teaching Assistant—Summer 2016. Sam Houston State University (SHSU)

- COUN 5011 – *Introduction to the Counseling Profession and Ethical Practice*.
(Instructor: Serres) Introduction to Counseling topics with an emphasis on ethics.
- COUN 7336—*College Teaching* (Instructor: Garza Chaves) Methods, Theories,
and Experiential Teaching.

Guest Speaker

- COUN 3321—*Introduction to the Helping Relationship* (Instructor: Timm)
Member of panel to speak about teaching and counseling experience.

Classroom Teacher-2007-2011. Dekaney High School, Spring Independent School District, Houston, Tx. Served as Instructional Team Leader for 10th and 11th grades.

Classroom Teacher-2001-2007. Dueitt Middle School, Spring Independent School District, Spring, Tx. Served as Instructional Team Leader for 7th grade and Teachers as Counselors (TAC) facilitator.

CLINICAL/COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

- August 2021 to present—Klein Cain High School, Klein ISD, Klein, TX.
 - Lead Counselor—supervise team of counselors
 - Initiate and manage Texas Comprehensive School Counseling Program
- January 2019 to present—Counseling Creations, Individual and group counseling in clinical setting.

- July 2020-July 2021—Montevallo High School, Shelby County Schools, Columbiana, AL.
 - Lead Counselor
 - Individual and group counseling with teenagers for academic, social/emotional, and college/career needs.
 - Performed transcript audits.
 - Managed crisis situations for suicidal ideation, death by suicide, illegal drug ingestion, child abuse, and student pregnancy.
 - Initiated new technology procedures for greater efficiency within the counseling department.
 - Creation and delivery of guidance lessons appropriate for grades 9-12.
 - Served as building test coordinator for local and national high stakes testing

Aug. 2017-July 2020—Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. Senior High School, Aldine Independent School District, Houston, TX.

- Individual and group counseling with teenagers for academic, social/emotional, and college/career needs.
- Assisted with master schedule, analysis and audit of staff utilization.
- Performed transcript audits.
- Maintained data for at-risk students and Career and Technology Education (CTE) for the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).
- Managed crisis situations for suicidal ideation, death by suicide, illegal drug ingestion, child abuse, and student pregnancy.

- Initiated new technology procedures for greater efficiency within the counseling department.
- Maintained campus website and published monthly counseling newsletter.

Aug. 2011-Jun. 2017—Magnolia Sixth Grade Campus, Magnolia Independent School District, Magnolia, TX.

- Created and maintained the campus master schedule.
- Individual and group counseling for adolescents.
- Psychoeducational presentations to faculty and students. Topics included child abuse, suicide prevention, self-harm, counseling and confidentiality, and teaching students with ADHD.
- Administrative duties.
- Wrote district policy for suicide crisis procedures and drug prevention program.
- Wrote program curriculum for New Teacher Mentor Program.
- Initiated Pilot Parent Program to discuss relevant topics for pre-teens and adolescents: ADHD, Social Media, Suicidal Ideation, and Anxiety.

Spring 2016-Counseling Supervisor to master's level student during supervised practicum experience.

Summer 2015—Small Group Facilitator, Department of Counselor Education, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Tx.

Group facilitator for Masters' level graduate students, as partial requirement of Advanced Counseling Practicum and Techniques (COUN 7337). Supervised by Dr. Rick Bruhn.

Summer 2015-Counselor in Advanced Counseling Practicum and Techniques (COUN 7337). Supervised by Dr. Rick Bruhn.

SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE ENDEAVORS

Research in Progress

Dissertation: Teachers' perceived Multicultural competence when working with Students of the Hispanic population.

Grants and Contracts

Sam Houston State University

- 2017 Graduate Bearkat Grant \$1000
- 2016 Graduate Bearkat Grant \$1500

Local District

2015 Magnolia ISD Education Foundation Grant \$500. Submitted Not Awarded.

- 2010 National Endowment for the Arts Grant

Professional Presentations

Conferences

Williams, R. & Carrier, A. (2018). Stop, walk, talk bullying prevention program: Putting it into action! Colorado State Counseling Association. Keystone, CO.

Carrier, A. & **Williams, R.** (2018). Trauma-informed expressive arts therapy with children: Responding to painful emotional experiences. Colorado State Counseling Association. Keystone, CO.

Watts, R.E., Marks, D., Smith, J, & **Gies, R.** (2015). Changes in attitudes, changes in latitudes: A review of the new (2014) ACA code of ethics. Texas Counseling Association, Corpus Christi, Tx.

Presentations

Williams, R. (2019). Professionalism, Ethics, and Social Media. Aldine ISD, Houston, TX.

Williams, R. (2018). Suicidal Ideation in Teens—Best Practices. Aldine ISD, Houston, TX.

Williams, R. (2017). Social media and cyberbullying. Hot Topics Parent Series. Magnolia ISD, Magnolia, TX.

Williams, R. (2017). Self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Hot Topics Parent Series. Magnolia ISD, Magnolia, TX.

Williams, R. (2017). Battling complacency—tips to improve your child’s growth mindset and motivation. Hot Topics Parent Series. Magnolia ISD, Magnolia, TX.

Williams, R. (2017). Anxiety and depression in middle school. Hot Topics Parent Series. Magnolia ISD, Magnolia, TX.

Williams, R. (2017). ADHD—building coping skills. Hot Topics Parent Series. Magnolia ISD, Magnolia, TX.

Williams, R. (2017). Who am I? Self-esteem, identity, and body image. Hot Topics Parent Series. Magnolia ISD, Magnolia, TX.

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT AND SERVICE

Professional Affiliations and Memberships

2020—current Alabama School Counseling Association

2010—current Chi Sigma Iota-Counseling Honor Society

2010—current Texas Counseling Association (TCA)

Texas School Counseling Association (TSCA)

Texas Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors (TACES)

Committee Membership

Member, School Safety Committee, Montevallo High School, Shelby County, AL, 2020

Member, Advocacy Committee, Texas Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors (TACES), 2016-2020.

Member, Advisory Council, Department of Counselor Education, Sam Houston State University, 2015-2019.

Member, Leadership Team, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. Senior High School, Aldine Independent School District, Houston, TX, 2017-2020

Member, Campus Improvement Committee, Magnolia Sixth Grade Campus, Magnolia Independent School District, Magnolia, TX, 2011-2017

Member, Campus Leadership Committee, Magnolia Sixth Grade Campus, Magnolia Independent School District, Magnolia, TX, 2015-2017

Honors and Awards

United States Navy

- 2018 Educator Encounter Program

Sam Houston State University

- 2018 Special Scholarship, \$500
- 2017 Special Scholarship, \$417

Honor Society

- Chi Sigma Iota, National Counseling Honor Society

Credentials

2020 LPC Endorsement Applied for (AL)

2016 • Licensed Professional Counselor (TX) #76164

Alabama State Department of Education

- 2019—School Counselor Certification (Grades E-12)
- 2019—Teacher Certification, English/Language Arts, Social Sciences, Political Science (Grades 6-12)

Texas State Board of Examiners

- 2010 to present—School Counselor Standard Certificate (Grades EC-12)
- 2005 to present—Classroom Teacher Standard Certificate, English, Language Arts & Reading (Grades 8-12)
- 2001 to present—Classroom Teacher Standard Certificate, Government (Grades 6-12), and Social Studies Composite (Grades 6-12).