

Culturally Responsive Job-Embedded Professional Learning: Research Roundup

Learn from the newest research in Culturally Responsive Professional Learning

Job-embedded professional learning throughout educators' careers for culturally relevant pedagogical knowledge and skill acquisition is necessary to support historically marginalized and minoritized students. Transforming culturally responsive practices from knowledge into skill requires time, self-reflection, and examining one's own bias. When studying culturally responsive professional learning, Parkhouse and colleagues (2023) found teachers needed to develop content knowledge in addition to culturally responsive strategies to make connections between curriculum and student lives. Additionally, they found (a) time and space for collaboration during the learning process was necessary so educators can support and challenge each other; (b) professional learning should include opportunities to learn about systemic racism to better understand student experiences; and (c) time was needed to engage in culturally responsive action research. Action research encouraged teachers to implement new practices and reassess their own reactions to student behavior and build relationships. He and Bagwell (2023) found collaboration is an essential component noting it was equally important for facilitators to create space for inclusive discussions and for conflict and debate.

Engaging in job-embedded culturally responsive professional learning influences teacher self-efficacy and is correlated with employing culturally responsive teaching in practice (Comstock et al., 2023). Research indicates adaptive, collaborative, individualized, and job-embedded professional learning can build teacher confidence and overcome systemic barriers to the implementation of culturally responsive practices (Baize, 2023). Specifically, Broemmel and colleagues (2022) capture the need for affirmation through coaching and mentorship in the study's title, "*It took someone telling me that I could do it*". How will this research influence the development of your policies, programs, and practices? To learn more, please check out our detailed bibliography of these studies.

Bibliography

Baize, J. (2023). **When school wasn't "school": Developing culturally responsive practice during the COVID-19 lockdowns.** *Education Sciences*, 13(7), Article 684. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13070684>

This qualitative study examined the experiences of three teachers who sought to implement culturally responsive practices in their K-12 classrooms. Given the focus of culturally responsive pedagogy and the need to construct knowledge through a community of learners in English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms, this study was grounded in critical consciousness theory and sociocultural theory. Participants in this study were three middle and secondary ELA teachers pursuing initial certification at a mid-size urban university. The participants were enrolled in an alternative certification program, had undergraduate degrees in another field, and were employed as teachers without a teaching certificate. The university is situated in the state's largest school district and 53% of the students identify as students of color. Data from this study included semi-structured interviews and artifacts from participants coursework with emphasis on analysis of Heuristic for Thinking about Culturally Responsive Teaching (HiTCRiT) lesson plans where they were to consider "what" they were teaching and for "whom". This study found several obstacles prevented implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy including: (a) Professional Learning Communities which focused on state assessments and standardization; (b) school discipline policies and "cultures of control" which de-centered learning and emphasized controlled environments; (c) narrowed curriculum and curriculum maps. However, when schools closed due to the pandemic, students and teachers became flexible in their approach to schooling. The three participants no longer faced the same obstacles and were able to be culturally responsive and equitable in their lessons. Their lesson plans captured this evolution as they were able to include more student choice and voice. This study has implications for teacher education programs as they continue to bridge the research to practice gap. New teachers may benefit from mediated experiences to implement what they learn especially when working with students of color.

Broemmel, A. D., Rigell, A., & Swafford, K. J. (2022). **"It Took Someone Telling Me That I Could Do It": Teacher perceptions of a yearlong literacy professional development program.** *Elementary School Journal*, 123(2), 228-252. <https://doi.org/10.1086/721920>

This research study used a multiple case study design to understand teachers' experiences with a yearlong, job-embedded professional development program focused on improving teacher's efficacy with literacy instruction for multilingual students. Participants included 11 second and third grade teachers and the school's language arts coordinator. The professional learning was provided by a neighboring university and included regular visits to the classrooms for observations and interactions and weekly individual meetings. Support also included modeling lessons, co-planning, and collaborative reflection. This study resulted in 11 codes: affirming, reflecting, owning, observing, applying, questioning, collaborating, disclaiming, modeling, sharing, and communicating. The participants confirmed existing research on the learning process which states that professional learning occurs in authentic settings, collaboratively, and through affirming processes. Findings from this study suggest that effective professional learning include goal setting, mentoring, and coaching. Additionally, professional learning is

effective when it is adaptive and individualized. Finally, this study emphasizes the need for affirming processes that build on individual strengths of educators which builds their confidence. This study has implications for those who develop and implement professional learning.

Comstock, M., Litke, E., Hill, K. L., & Desimone, L. M. (2023). **A culturally responsive disposition: How professional learning and teachers' beliefs about and self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching relate to instruction.** *AERA Open*, 9(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584221140092>

This quantitative study explored teachers' beliefs related to culturally responsive beliefs and self-efficacy and sought to determine how engaging in professional learning related to culturally responsive practices related to culturally responsive teaching. This study included data from two online surveys administered to a sample of secondary teachers (N = 417) in seven urban districts across the country. Participants worked in districts serving student populations of at least 50 percent or more Black or Latinx, multilingual learners, or students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, teachers who participated in this study engaged in culturally responsive and equity-driven professional learning designed to address deficit thinking and implicit bias. Results from this study include (a) culturally responsive self-efficacy and engaging in culturally responsive professional learning are correlated with using culturally responsive teaching practices; (b) beliefs aligned with culturally sustaining practices increased the relationship between self-efficacy and use of culturally responsive teaching practices; and, (c) teacher self-efficacy positively influenced implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices. These results emphasize the need to address teacher beliefs and dispositions as part of culturally relevant professional learning.

He, Y., & Bagwell, D. (2023). **Collaborative learning through online professional development.** *Teacher Educator*, 58(1), 15-28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2022.2051155>

This mixed-methods study examined the extent to which teachers develop their professional capital when engaged in online professional learning. Participants in this study included 31 teachers who took part in a year-long professional learning opportunity that included online modules and application discussions. Qualitative data was collected from surveys designed to determine teachers' perceived readiness to work with multilingual students and their families. Qualitative data was collected from the online application-based discussions. Findings from this study suggest connection in online professional learning allows for teachers to develop their individual capital and their collective social capital; provide improved supports for multilingual students and their families; and expand and increase collaboration. Although collaboration included inclusive discussions, an important finding from this study was the need to foster environments for diverging interactions, critical debates, or tensions. Data revealed teachers required additional supports to design assessments and use assessment data to work with multilingual students across disciplinary areas.

Parkhouse, H., Lyn, R., Severson-Irby, E., Drulis, E., Senechal, J., & Lozada, F. (2023). **Mapping how teachers become culturally responsive.** *Journal of Teacher Education*, 74(4), 383-397.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00224871231168076>

This longitudinal case study explored the process through which teachers become culturally responsive. This two-year study was conducted in partnership with four secondary schools in two suburban districts experiencing shifting demographics. Nineteen teachers across the four schools participated in the two-year professional learning program designed to increase their cultural responsiveness. Researchers found relationships in three domains including knowledge, skills, and orientations which all interacted with each other. All participants ability to self-reflect and self-efficacy grew over time. Additionally, researchers found four zones of development. These zones characterized the teachers' understanding and learning of cultural responsiveness development: consciousness-raising, consciousness- and relationship-building, knowledge- and practice-building, and practice-refining. More specifically, (a) sociopolitical consciousness and an affirming view of their students allowed teachers to integrate their funds of knowledge into the curriculum and (b) consciousness-raising allowed educators to see racism and oppression as systemic leading them to understand their students and build relationships. This study adds to the body of research on culturally responsive professional learning noting that it is a slow process that requires: (a) content knowledge to make connections between state curriculum and student lives; (b) opportunities to learn about systemic racism especially as it relates to schooling; (c) collaboration in its implementation to support and challenge each other; and (d) time to engage in reflection, data gathering, collection of student voice, and implementation of new practices.



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