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## Public School Administrators' Perceptions of Teacher Expectations and the Influence on Behavior Infractions and Academic Achievement of Black Students in Mismatch Title I Classrooms

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This dissertation, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

**Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership**



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Abilene Christian University  
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Public School Administrators' Perception of Teacher Expectations and the Influence on  
Behavior Infractions and Academic Achievement of Black  
Students in Mismatch Title I Classrooms

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Kimberly D. Johnson

April 2020

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, Caleb and Jaidyn. Thank you for giving me motivation when I had none. Thank you for helping me to focus, when homework was just not what I wanted to do. Thank you for being my inspiration to keep pushing and finish this final stage of schooling. I pray that I have modeled for you what hard work and perseverance looks like. I hope that my research helps to create a better education for you and your future children. Continue the legacy! I love you both!

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I first acknowledge and thank God for giving me the strength to endure this process. Few know the struggles faced during these 3-4 years, but God has kept me, and for that I give Him all honor and praise.

Next, I acknowledge my husband, Dannie. You are the love of my life and have been so supportive since Day One of this journey. At moments when I thought I should quit, you reminded me of our children, and how far I had already come. In your words “Johnsons never quit.” Thank you for showing me patience when I became frustrated. Thank you for being my wingman at 2 a.m. in the morning as I obsessed over revisions and various aspects of reading and homework. Thank you for offering to help, even when you had no clue what I was doing or talking about. Thank you for fixing dinner and getting the babies in bed without me asking, so I didn’t have to stop working or lose my train of thought. You are amazing, and I thank God for you each and every day.

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family, and the future lives you will touch. I pray that with what you have given me throughout this process, I am able to give a fraction to future researchers and students. And please give Lou a huge hug for me. I will miss our phone conversations and hearing him in the background; hearing the two of you was a bright (and comical) spot in this journey.

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If I have missed anyone, please know it was not intentional. This journey has had so many people that have come in and out of my life and helped me to get to this point. As this season comes to a close, I thank God for every second, minute, and hour of these 3-4 years. God is so good, and I just cannot thank Him enough for helping me get to the end of the tunnel.

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## Abstract

Black students make up the vast majority of the student population in at-risk schools identified as Title I. With large gaps in educational achievement, Black, at-risk students have lower federal and state test scores, higher course failure rates, and lower enrollment in classes such as Advanced Placement when compared to their White counterparts. With this in mind, teacher expectations play a vital role in the success of Title I, Black students. Public school administrators are also integral when it comes to leading the direction of instruction within these teacher-led classrooms. In this qualitative, interpretative phenomenological study, the researcher explored how public-school administrators perceived the influence of teacher expectations on behavior infractions and academic achievement of Black students in mismatch (White teacher, Black students), Title I classrooms. The 6 public school administrators that participated in this research contributed through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews, which contained 19 questions. Once complete, each interview was transcribed and coded to determine reoccurring themes that answered the 3 overarching research questions. Based on the findings, the public-school administrators interviewed believed that culture played an important part in the education of Title I, Black students. Classrooms that are considered mismatch should involve culturally relevant teaching, where the content is made meaningful for students through the connecting of real-world scenarios and stories. Participants also suggested that public school administrators create a vision that models setting high expectations for all students, including Black students identified as at-risk.

*Keywords:* At-risk students/population, Title I campus/school, mismatch classroom(s), Black student(s), White teacher(s), teacher expectations, public school administrator(s)



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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In 2016, Garcia and Chun conducted research that looked at teacher expectations with low-income students and the need for culturally responsive teaching. Within their study, they discussed how due to parents and guardians transitioning from jobs for family or financial reasons, more and more students are finding themselves in low-income environments, attending schools that are challenged to meet their diversified needs (Garcia & Chun, 2016). Many low-income students enroll in urban schools designated as Title I or at-risk. During the 2014-2015 school year, there were over 16 million minority students enrolled at Title I schools, as compared to eight million White students enrolled (Kids Count Data Center, 2018). Title I schools have a student population that represents 40% or more receiving free or reduced lunch. This qualification is based on the family's income that after review, must be below the poverty line. According to the US Census (2019), in the state of Texas, the poverty line for a family of four is \$24,858. The Texas Tribune (2019) reported that 59% of Texas students are identified as economically disadvantaged, meaning their families qualify for free or reduced lunch, and the student is considered at-risk.

Consequently, more Black students are finding themselves labeled as at-risk populations. Because these students come from homes with parents or guardians whose income is below the established poverty line, they are categorizing as at-risk for not graduating. This is where teacher expectations in Title I schools becomes an important factor for student success.

### **Teacher Expectations in Mismatch Classrooms**

At-risk students face more struggles with academics than their more affluent counterparts (Bowman, Comer, & Johns, 2018). According to research conducted by Bowman et al. (2018), Black students have a gap in educational achievement that is considered substantial when

compared to their White counterparts. These gaps/deficiencies are identified through Black students' low-test scores, higher course failure rates, and decreased enrollment in honors level courses (Bowman et al., 2018). The student's inability to connect with the culture of the school environment and the expectations set by their teachers also contributes to their lower achievement (Bowman et al., 2018). How Black low-income students see life and culture in their economically challenged homes and community differed greatly from how life and expectations are for their White, middle-class teacher (Bowman et al., 2018). According to research, on campuses that serve at-risk students, teacher expectations are essential (Bowman et al., 2018; Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016). Teachers must not only know what to teach, but how to reach the students they serve, based on what they believe the student can do (Timmermans, de Boer, & van der Werf, 2016; Timmermans, Kuyper, & van der Werf, 2015).

Chen, Thompson, Kromrey, and Chang (2011) stated that teachers who have high academic and behavioral expectations set the tone for the type of experience students have in the class. They explained that the way teachers behave and interact with students unconsciously express a teacher's expectations for their students (Chen et al., 2011). Teacher expectations are inferences made based on current knowledge of the student and what the teacher believes to be the students' potential level of future success (i.e. ability to complete college, be successful in honors level classes, and graduate high school; Timmermans et al., 2016; Timmermans et al., 2015). These expectations are interpersonal beliefs that impact the characteristics of the teacher and their relationship with students (Timmermans, van der Werf, & Rubie-Davies, 2019). The rigor by which teachers instruct, the quality of the feedback provided, and the accountability placed on students are just three ways that expectations are visible in the classroom (Ford & Moore, 2013). In relation to at-risk situations, the relationship between teachers and students can

impact how students connect in the class environment and how well they understand the course content. Students who do not trust or have a positive relationship with their teachers refuse to learn from or find value in what they are teaching. In turn, these students fail, contributing to an already prevalent gap in achievement (Broussard, Peltier-Glaze, & Smith, 2016).

Teacher expectations for student behavior and academics play a vital role in a student's belief in themselves and their current and future academic achievements (Gershenson et al., 2016; Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018; Irizarry, 2015). However, research shows that in classrooms where students are classified as “non-white” and the teacher is White, a mismatch occurs, and at times, expectations for minority students are lower (Gershenson et al., 2016; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). These low expectations are commonly due to stereotypes or personal biases that teachers may have regarding these students or their cultural backgrounds (Garcia & Chun, 2016; Irizarry, 2015; Ross-Rogers, 2014).

### **The Role of Public-School Administrators**

Public school administrators play a vital role when it comes to leading the direction of instruction within the classrooms on their campus (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018). Their leadership guides teachers and other instructional support staff in understanding what daily instructional expectations exist (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018). Administrators also provide direction regarding interventions and supports for targeted/identified students (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018).

With the changing demands on at-risk staff through evaluative procedures and student achievement measures, more inexperienced White teachers are at the helm of classrooms that are predominately Black (Abdullah, Llanes, & Henry, 2015). Due to their lack of experience and many times lack of self-evaluation in connection with cultural bias, these teachers need support

and are looking to their public-school administrators for resources and guidance on how to address their concerns, and implement expectations (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018).

### **Statement of the Problem**

A teacher's belief or lack thereof in a student is visible through their daily interactions with the student. From providing feedback or input on class assignments that impact student grades, to submitting referrals for misbehavior that could affect a student's discipline record, teacher expectations are vital to students in various ways (Andrews & Gutwein, 2017; Chen et al., 2011). Within mismatch classes, teachers low academic and behavioral expectations for minority students is reflected through their end of course grade averages, and the general teacher commentary or feedback about students and their performance (Bates & Glick, 2013; Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018; Irizarry, 2015). Research conducted by Harber et al. (2012), stated that teachers give more positive yet inauthentic feedback to essays that fail to meet requirements and are written by minority students, as compared to more critical feedback given to their White peers.

Research related to student behavior found that some teachers in mismatch classrooms give negative feedback regarding their interactions with Black male students (Battle, 2017; Bottiani, Bradshaw, & Mendelson, 2017). This negative feedback entails negative perceptions that the teachers have on the type of student that Black males are. These students are perceived as unmotivated, lacking effort, and at times, violent (Battle, 2017; Bottiani et al., 2017). Positive behavioral feedback, (commentary that is constructive and sees the student as a positive contributor to the classroom) in addition to targeted academic feedback, was found to be more frequent towards White students (Irizarry, 2015; Scott, Gage, Hirn, & Han, 2018; Taylor & Brown, 2013).

While research stated the importance of teacher expectations and how it differs in the mismatch classroom (Gershenson et al., 2016; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013), few studies seek to understand how teacher expectations contribute to the gap seen in minority students' behavioral and academic achievement from the vantage point of campus administration. Therefore, the problem that was investigated is the influence that teacher expectations have on the academic and behavioral achievement of Black, Title I students in the mismatch classroom setting, as seen by public school administrators. Cherng and Halpin (2016), as well as Gershenson and Papageorge (2018), found that low expectations and negative feedback from any teacher contributes to Black high school students' low self-concept and academic achievement. Researchers stated that Black students in such negative environments were found to have a diminished belief in their academic abilities, potential to pass a class, doubted their success in honors level and Advanced Placement classes, and questioned whether or not they should attempt college (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018). Weakened expectations and lack of useful feedback add to underachievement seen through students' test scores and class averages (Gershenson et al., 2016; Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological study was to explore how public-school administrators perceived the influence of teacher expectations on behavior infractions and academic achievement of Black students in mismatch, Title I classrooms. At this stage of the research, mismatch classrooms will be generally defined as classrooms where the teacher and student come from different racial/ethnic backgrounds. For this study the focus was Black students with White teachers. Title I schools are defined as public education institutions that



have a student enrollment of 41% or more receiving free or reduced lunch due to their family's low socioeconomic status.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide this study:

- Q1.** How do public school administrators perceive teacher expectations in mismatch classes influence the academic achievement of Black secondary students at Title I schools?
- Q2.** On Title I campuses, what do public school administrators perceive as the factors, if any, influencing the academic achievement and classroom behaviors of Black secondary school students in mismatch classes?
- Q3.** What strategies, if any, do public school administrators suggest to address cultural bias in Title I schools, in order to decrease Black secondary school students' behavioral infractions and increase their academic achievement?

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study may contribute to the improvement of Pre K-12 public education concerning teacher expectations and their importance in mismatch classrooms. Through this study, public school administrators can gain insight into how other administrators view expectations in mismatch classrooms at similar at-risk campuses. These viewpoints will allow school administrators to see the connection between lowered expectations in mismatch classrooms and how they impact students' academic and behavioral successes. Based on this, school leaders can determine the best instructional practices for teachers to utilize culturally responsive methods.

Teachers in mismatch classrooms will benefit from this study as it provides them with insight on the impact of cultural bias and its existence in mismatch classrooms. Teachers will also gain a better understanding that such bias is best addressed through self-reflection.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to public school administrators in Southeast Texas, who currently hold or have held positions on campuses considered to have an at-risk population. Perspectives from administrators will primarily focus on their thoughts on the impact of teacher expectations in classrooms where the teacher is White, and the student is Black.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**At-risk students/population.** Students who are in jeopardy of failing academically or not graduating high school due to adverse factors that could inhibit their academic success (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). These unfavorable factors include but are not limited to parental socio-economic level and employment status, the level at which parent(s)/guardian(s) completed schooling, teen pregnancy, incarceration and homelessness (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

**Black student(s).** Students whose race/ethnicity is classified as Black or African American on official school documents.

**Mismatch classroom(s).** Classroom(s) where the students and teacher come from different racial/ethnic backgrounds, and the student is classified as non-white and the teacher is White (Gershenson et al., 2016; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). For this study, a mismatch classroom entailed students who identify as Black, and their teacher of record is White.

**Public school administrator(s).** Individuals who are certified as administrators in the State of Texas, and currently hold or have held a campus leadership position, to include principal, associate principal, or assistant principal.

**Teacher expectations.** Interpersonal beliefs that a teacher has regarding future performance and behaviors of a student, based on the characteristics of the teacher and student, as well as their perceived relationship (Timmermans et al., 2019). Such beliefs are primarily seen through treatment of students through feedback provided, the interaction had, opportunities presented, and varying enforcement of campus rules (Garcia & Chun, 2016).

**Title I campus/school.** Schools with a student population that represents 40% or more receiving free or reduced lunch. Students enrolled on such campuses come from homes in which parents or guardians make at or below the established poverty line and are therefore seen as at-risk for not graduating or being as successful as their more affluent counterparts, due to societal influences (Texas Education Agency, 2016). For the purpose of this study, Title I campuses evaluated contain a student population of 51% or more receiving free or reduced lunch.

**White teacher(s).** Teachers whose race/ethnicity is classified as White or Caucasian on official school employment documents.

### **Summary and Preview of the Next Chapter**

This chapter discussed teacher expectations and how they differ in mismatch classroom settings where the teacher is White, and the students are Black. Teacher expectations are crucial on campuses that are considered at-risk (Bowman et al., 2018; Gershenson et al., 2016). However, researchers explained that Black students experience lower expectations due to stereotypes and personal biases held by their teacher (Garcia & Chun, 2016; Irizarry, 2015; Ross-Rogers, 2014).

Public school administrators lead the charge as instructional leaders for their respective campuses (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018). Due to teacher inexperience often seen on campuses that serve at-risk students, administrators are needed to help guide teachers in setting expectations in

mismatch classrooms (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018). They must also help teachers address cultural biases that could hinder their success with students (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018).

Chapter 2 is a comprehensive review of cultural bias and how it impacts teacher expectations in the mismatch classroom. The impact that low expectations have on students both academically and behaviorally in mismatch settings will be also be reviewed. The role of the public-school administrator will be further defined, as well as how they contribute to supporting teachers with creating expectations that are suitable for all students.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Setting expectations are vital to any success in the classroom. Teachers must not only know what content to teach but have expectations that push students to master that content. The needs of low-socioeconomic students (SES) are not the same as their more affluent counterparts (Gershenson et al., 2016; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). However, teacher expectations can provide the support and push that such students need.

This literature review utilizes current and landmark studies that center around better understanding both historical and present influences on the mismatch classroom, and the influence that teacher expectations have on Black students' academic and behavioral achievement. The following subtopics are included: (a) Critical Race Theory, (b) Cultural Bias / White Privilege, (c) Characteristics of the Mismatch Classroom, (d) The Power of Teacher Expectations, (e) Teacher Misconceptions Due to Cultural Bias, (f) School Administrators and Mismatch Classrooms, and (g) Culturally Responsive Teaching.

### **Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was introduced by legal scholars Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado after determining that the Critical Legal Studies movement did not correctly address the issue of race within the legal system and its policies (Martinez, 2014). These lawyers believed that treating laws as if they were color-blind created an injustice, failing to tear down the system of inequality which laws sought to address (Martinez, 2014). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) then built on the understanding of the Critical Race Theory (CRT) in order to use it as a tool to understand school inequality. Based on their work, CRT was founded on three beliefs:

1. Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequality in the United States.

2. The United States society is based on property rights.
3. The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequality. (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 48)

Researchers believed that racial inequality is visible through the lack of a racial theory that explains the meaning, changes, and significance of race (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Race theory is perceived as the least developed area in sociological inquiry, making it of low priority in social science (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

In connection with schools, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) referenced the work of Woodson and Du Bois (1916), identifying school structure as a contributor to inequality students see. School structure duplicated the ideals of White middle-class people, and their beliefs on what achievement in the classroom looked like, as well as how students should learn and behave (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Researchers stated that the same school/educational structure that builds up White students, is the same which tears down Black students, making them feel inferior and not a part of the school environment (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Due to this, Black students have decreased motivation for school, ultimately impacting their academic achievement (Horsford, 2010). According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), schools must recognize that Black students should have more access to a curriculum that incorporates more of their culture, as well as instruction that meets their needs and is familiar to them; the content should resemble the student.

### **The Five Tenets of CRT**

When related to schools, Critical Race Theory looks at the implications of race-based policies and procedures such as school assignment plans, special education placements, and

proficiency exams (Horsford, 2010). Through additional work, researchers DeCuir and Dixson (2004) created the five tenets of CRT. They were built on the themes found in education theory and practice yet incorporated the foundational principals of the Critical Race Theory (Horsford, 2010). According to Horsford (2010), the five tenets address:

1. Prominence of racism
2. Whiteness as property
3. Critique of liberalism
4. Interest convergence; and
5. Counterstorytelling.

According to Horsford (2010), educational CRT is based heavily on counterstorytelling and prominence of racism. Based on the mismatch environment and trends seen between Black students and White teachers, the tenets of the prominence of racism and critique of liberalism best support and help to somewhat build understanding on issues seen within Title I, at-risk classrooms and schools.

The prominence of racism evaluates how resources are allocated based on society's ideals of status and privilege (Horsford, 2010). Through this tenet, researchers believed that ignoring how racism connected to the resources that individuals and institutions received prevented transparency on the impact that race had on society and schools (Horsford, 2010). Such disregard for the difference of resources given based on race is evident through prizes and incentives that White students received during the time of desegregation (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), and in some ways, are still prevalent now.

Critique of liberalism examines how policies and practices within schools are intended to be colorblind, and demonstrate fairness to all students (Horsford, 2010). Based on this tenet,

policymakers believe that making general policies and guidelines where all are equal creates an educational environment of inclusivity; however, it does not (Horsford, 2010). The ideals of fairness, equalization, and suitable school expectations all stem from the liberal thoughts and beliefs of White middle- and upper-class politicians, based on their experience in White affluent school environments (Horsford, 2010).

Based on both tenets, the expectations of White officials are the prominent driving force for expectations in schools (Horsford, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Although policies, rules, and expectations are meant to be unbiased, their foundation is built on the beliefs of one race and does not consider the culture and beliefs of others, particularly, Blacks (Horsford, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

### **Racism Through the Perspective of CRT**

Rector-Aranda (2016) explained that in CRT, racism is perceived as a normal and unconscious act. Racism is defined as perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs that support inequity by accepting differences constructed around race (i.e., White privilege; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Rector-Aranda, 2016; Warren & Hotchkins, 2014). Within the ideals of CRT, racism is embedded into not only one's cultural conscious, but institutions as well, making "its effects seem reasonable and innocuous" (Rector-Aranda, 2016, p. 3). Racism is visible in institutions such as public schools in everyday practices and behaviors that seem invisible but inadvertently support white privilege (Rector-Aranda, 2016; Warren & Hotchkins, 2014). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) explained that if racism were not in public schools, Black students would experience more educational success within the building as compared to outside of it. Researchers stated that poor Black students traditionally perform at lower levels academically (Ladson-Billings &



Tate, 1995). Unfortunately, the poverty conditions of their schools and quality of education is a prime example of institutional racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

### **Critical Race Theory, Schools, and Teachers**

CRT was created to dismantle racist beliefs about institutional practices impacting Black students (Miller & Harris, 2018). Through CRT, theorists sought to show that critical questions about institutional practices should be explored to address inequalities seen within schools (Miller & Harris, 2018). However, when school leaders attempted to desegregate after *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) stated that the segregation of Black students grew.

More Black students became the majority at urban schools throughout the United States as White families moved to the suburbs in what theorists called White Flight (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Schools tried to combat White Flight by offering programs that provided incentives for White students to move back to Black schools. However, these alternatives proved detrimental and furthered ideas of classism and racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). White students were not only offered tangible items to return to urban schools, but the creation of magnet and extended day programs, which helped to encourage their return (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

During the period of White Flight, enrollment on urban campus severely declined. Black schools closed, ultimately creating learning environments that were overcrowded and poorly served Black students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Despite desegregation attempts in which improvements to Black students' educational opportunities were the focus, academic achievement levels continued to decline, while suspensions, expulsions, and dropout rates climbed (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). These increases supported the ideas that CRT

presented; school structure (e.g., policies and governance) further perpetuated racism (Warren & Hotchkins, 2014). These policies ultimately impacted individualized racist ideology commonly seen in White teacher attitudes and beliefs towards Black students (Warren & Hotchkins, 2014).

Warren and Hotchkins (2014) stated that teacher education practices and theories are a part of the ideology of White cultural norms and beliefs. Because of this, White teachers are not prepared for culturally diverse classrooms or school settings (Warren & Hotchkins, 2014). Miller and Harris (2018) stated that in line with CRT, teachers unknowingly promote racial inequality by denying Black students the experiences and perspectives of other Black people. White teachers approach instruction of Black students from a deficit's perspective (Miller & Harris, 2018). This view causes content to be covered at a limited scope and depth (Miller & Harris, 2018). However, CRT promotes the idea that no one should see Black students as "empty vessels" (p. 3), but as individuals who have cultural practices and experiences of their own (Miller & Harris, 2018).

### **Cultural Bias and White Privilege**

Many White teachers who enter predominately Black schools face challenges beginning on the first day of class (Abdullah et al., 2015). This challenge is not necessarily the fault of the student or teacher, but instead, the effect of how the teacher views life in connection to their background. Abdullah et al. (2015) explained that White, preservice teachers tend to enter classrooms mimicking the teaching styles that they observed during their time in school. They also expect the lives of their students to be similar to their upbringing, however, such is not the case (Abdullah et al., 2015). When White, preservice teachers leave their affluent environments, because of their lack of knowledge, they present themselves as culturally insensitive (Abdullah et al., 2015; Peters, Margolin, Fragnoli, & Bloom, 2016). These preservice teachers are often found

to lack respect for their minority students, providing more access to resources for White students, as compared to Black (Abdullah et al., 2015). Black students are often categorized by stereotypes, such as being more athletically inclined instead of having a high academic ability (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013).

White teachers who enter predominantly African American populated classrooms with a preservice teacher attitude are not as successful as they desire (Abdullah et al., 2015). This failure to effectively instruct Black students is not always due to the teacher's own doing. The teacher's home environment, individual biases, and myths limit their success (Abdullah et al., 2015). Peters et al. (2016) and Scott et al. (2018) explained that White teachers who studied in predominately Black environments have adverse perceptions about their Black students. Teachers in mismatch environments feel uncomfortable and unknowledgeable about their students upon entering the classroom for the first time and have preconceived ideas regarding Black students (Scott et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2016). Unfortunately for these teachers, their ineffectiveness resembles a type of professional disadvantage known as a White disadvantage or White Privilege (Abdullah et al., 2015).

Peters et al.'s (2016) second area addresses color-blindness. It continues the discussion of how teachers are not including or are overlooking race in their lesson, further supporting inequalities with students. Puchner and Markowitz's (2015) research, described the account of Ms. James, a teacher observed who told students about a 'Soup Bus' that she volunteered on. In the eyes of Ms. James, she was providing students a real-world connection about giving back, however, as explained by Puchner and Markowitz (2015):

Her story implies that in her brief experience 'in the projects' (code for Black) with them, she decided the children's families were neglectful. She communicated that to the

students by stating or implying the following: poor Black parents do not care about their children; Black children have to raise themselves; poor Black parents do not read to their children; low-social economic Black children need White ‘saviors’ such as herself to survive. Each of these messages is a racist assumption that is part of a large packet of racist assumptions that are dominant in U.S. society. (p. 10)

Ms. James’ use of ‘Racial Script’ shows her lack of knowledge on the racial perception and color-blindness that she is sharing with all students in the classroom. According to Puchner and Markowitz (2015), the racist script is communication that contains accepted, unquestioned background understandings relating to the world and cultures/people within it. Through Ms. James’ story, she presents students with negative ideas about Black children, and how a White woman was able to come to their rescue (Puchner & Markowitz, 2015). Researchers believe that Ms. James’ use of racial script was unintentional, as she later discloses to researchers that she is uncomfortable with race. According to Ms. James, she recognizes that race is an impoverished issue, however, she stays away from it during lessons (Puchner & Markowitz, 2015). Based on the underlined assumptions given throughout the story, Puchner and Markowitz (2015) disagree, stating that race was prevalent in the narrative shared with students and showed an unintended bias towards Black children.

### **At-Risk Factors**

In Millburg’s (2009) study, environmental factors that negatively impact at-risk students’ achievement was examined. The research showed that factors such as low socioeconomics, drug and alcohol usage in the home, teen pregnancy, and coming from a single-parent household impacted the way at-risk students perform. These factors also contributed to a higher probability of the student not graduating from high school on time, if at all (Millburg, 2009).

Black students, particularly Black males, make up the vast majority of the at-risk population in the United States (Taylor & Brown, 2013). Deficiencies in literacy levels, low teacher expectations, cultural differences, and behavioral and societal issues contribute to the gap seen (Taylor & Brown, 2013). On average, Black males perform academically at a level of three years less than their White peers (Lewis, Butler, Bonner, & Joubert, 2010). Herrera, Zhou, and Petscher (2017) supported this finding, stating that data from standardized tests in three US states showed a 10% gap in achievement amongst low socioeconomic students.

According to the student-centered study conducted by Vega, Moore, and Meranda (2015), Black and Hispanic students believed that their low achievement was due to lack of support from school staff, as well as a school environment that did not seem inclusive. Students stated that not only did they feel as if their school was not a safe place to learn, but that the staff was not nurturing to their needs or assisted in creating such as a learning environment (Vega et al., 2015).

### **Attempts to Address the Achievement Gap**

In 1965 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was implemented by President Lyndon Johnson to address inequalities seen amongst Black and White students in K-12 schools. The Clinton administration added to this legislation, creating Goals 2000. This initiative required that schools maintain a 90% graduation rate, districts and states create strategies to decrease high school dropout rates, and the expectation that all students in grades 4, 8, and 12 demonstrate proficiency on mandated exams that cover major subject areas (i.e., math and English/reading; The Council for Exceptional Children, 1994).

Also, under Clinton's leadership, the Educate America Act of 1994 focused on closing the achievement gap but provided the school districts more autonomy in how to do such (Donahue,

1994). Under this initiative, states were provided additional funding in order to assist low-performing schools in closing the gap seen amongst at-risk students (The Council for Exceptional Children, 1994). States were required to create standards that aligned with those communicated in the legislation, as well as develop strategies that at-risk campuses would implement to support the effort of increased student success (The Council for Exceptional Children, 1994).

In 2001, President George W. Bush enacted No Child Left Behind (NCLB), placing harsher expectations on schools to support minority students and close the academic gap seen in test and achievement scores. Through NCLB, parents whose students attended schools that were continuously identified as low-performing were granted the ability to seek out higher-performing campuses to transfer their students (Callier, 2007). NCLB also set strict regulations regarding what adequate progress was for all students in relation to reading and math student growth on state assessments, as well as dictated best practices for teacher effectiveness to achieve such growth (Callier, 2007).

Regardless of the weight that NCLB placed on districts, it was not successful and resulted in the Race to the Top initiative created by the Obama administration. Race to the Top incentivized student success, creating an opportunity for schools who showed an increase in student achievement to earn grant funding to support their initiatives (US Department of Education, 2009). Schools that were identified through Race to the Top were required to conduct systematic progress monitoring, have data-driven instruction, create and implement rigorous standards for teaching and learning, as well as conduct professional development that allowed for collaboration on teacher best practices and allowed for greater teacher accountability (US Department of Education, 2009). Unlike previous legislation, Race to the Top showed an

increase in high school graduation and college enrollment rates amongst Black and low-socioeconomic subgroups (US Department of Education, 2009), however, the achievement gap prevailed.

In 2015, President Obama enacted the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which specifically targeted the achievement gap. Through this legislation, the state regained control over determining what strategies at-risk campuses would need to implement for student improvement, as well as established what adequate yearly progress would entail for their state (Hess, 2017; US Department of Education, 2009). Despite the well-intentioned plans for this legislation, it also failed to decrease the achievement gap seen amongst Black and White students, primarily on at-risk campuses.

In research conducted by Herrera et al. (2017), standardized test scores from 2007-2017 were evaluated to determine academic achievement gaps seen amongst ethnicities. The data surveyed were from three states within the US and focused on students in the third through eighth grades. The study revealed that in all states, student academic performance increased, however, academic growth varied across ethnicities (Herrera et al., 2017). Regardless, researchers report a small decrease in the academic achievement gap, but show that a 10% gap in performance remained between White and Black students (Herrera et al., 2017). When compared to other subgroups, low socioeconomic students had a 13% gap in achievement (Herrera et al., 2017).

### **Characteristics of the Mismatch Classroom**

The student enrollment within public schools is ever-changing due to increased diversity seen in the United States (Great Schools, 2016). As time progresses, students considered minorities (Black, Latino, Asian American, etc.) are becoming the majority in public schools

(Flannery, 2015; Garcia & Chun, 2016; Sparks, 2015). However, in urban/at-risk schools where many at-risk Black students attend (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019), the increased diversity in students does not transcend to the diversity of the teaching staff. Recent data shows that over 80% of teachers in the United States are White, and approximately seven percent are Black (Dwyer, 2017; Sparks, 2015; United States Department of Education, 2016). On at-risk campuses, research shows that around 70% of teachers are White, with that number increasing as the focus on traditional public school grows, as compared to that of charter schools (Geiger, 2018). With all of this in mind, Black students in at-risk schools could inevitably be in classes where White teachers are at the helm.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) introduced the idea of cultural mismatch. According to their earlier work, a mismatch occurs when there is a difference in the values and beliefs of the school versus that of the student's home (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Stephens, Townsend, Markus, and Phillips (2012) contributed to the study of mismatch by agreeing with the ideas of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) but adding that such mismatch affects the relationship between student and teacher. This disconnected relationship ultimately impacts the academic achievement of the learner in the environment.

Later research explained that racial or cultural mismatch in the classroom exists when the student and teacher are of different ethnic backgrounds or ethnicities (Gershenson et al., 2016; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; Sparks, 2015). In mismatch classrooms where the student is Black and the teacher is White, not only do teachers and students have varying backgrounds and ethnicities, but their views and expectations differ due to cultural differences. White teachers in mismatch environments are often found to have implicit bias, which can affect their actions, beliefs, and expectations of Black students (Flannery, 2015). Staats' (2016) defined implicit bias



as an unconscious attitude that impacts a person's actions and decisions due to race or ethnicity. Such bias within mismatch classrooms causes gaps in academic achievement due to negative beliefs in student behavior and academic potential (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). In turn, Black students in mismatch classrooms tend to have lower expectations set by their teacher, in both academics and behaviors.

Gershenson et al. (2016) conducted a study that evaluated tenth-grade teachers' expectations concerning the future success of their students graduating from college and high school. Researchers found that in mismatch classes where the teacher was White and the student was Black, teachers had lower expectations of student completion possibilities when asked about Black students, as compared to any other race (Gershenson et al., 2016). In particular, Black males had the lowest ratings from teachers, receiving large amounts of negative feedback regarding their academic potential (Gershenson et al., 2016). Due to low expectations, students in mismatch classes enroll in general or on-level courses as compared to advanced or honors levels (Anderson, 2014; Sparks, 2015).

The relationship between teacher and student is less supportive within the mismatch classroom (Bottiani et al., 2017). Students' lack of trust in their teacher impacts the achievement gap seen amongst Black students (Howard, 2017). Black students have difficulty with their experiences at school due to lack of trust (Howard, 2017) in those whom they feel do not have their best interest at heart. This lack of trust, along with the teacher's inability to connect by sharing about themselves, creates a wedge in the mismatch classroom.

Failure to build a positive relationship contributes to students feeling less connected to the school and the overall climate/culture (Bottiani et al., 2017). While student-teacher relationships are considered by some as difficult to foster, a teacher's inability or lack of desire

to want to share their experiences and background with their students can make relationship-building even harder (Hughes, 2016). With a lack of connectedness from the Black student, and unintended racial bias from White teachers, low achievement and disciplinary problems are often observed in mismatch classes (Moeny, 2015; Sparks, 2015).

### **Low Academic Expectations Due to Cultural Bias**

Similar to the earlier story of Ms. James, many White teachers in mismatch environments are unaware of their biases and the role it plays in their teaching (Peters et al., 2016; Scott et al., 2018). McGrady and Reynolds (2013) studied how classrooms that contain a teacher and student who are of different ethnicities (mismatch) differ from those of White students. In such mismatch classrooms, the White teacher tends to maintain ideals of White-middle-class academic achievement and instructional delivery (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Unfortunately, this looks different in low SES schools with Black students who suffer from achievement gaps.

Because of the teacher's inability to understand the different instructional needs of at-risk students, Black students have lower grades, both academically and behaviorally (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Scott et al. (2018) supported this idea and explained that while factors related to race (i.e., cultural bias and socioeconomic differences) play a role in student success, teacher perceptions and expectations do as well. Based on their research, Scott et al. (2018) found that many teachers, both Black and White, treated students differently based on race, however, their expectations favored Asian students as high achievers, and Black students as low.

Misconceptions and unknown biases by teachers of different ethnic and socioeconomic groups cause them to assume that due to unfortunate circumstances in a Black, at-risk student's life, minimalized academic expectations are acceptable (Irizarry, 2015). Irizarry (2015) examined the perceptions of White teachers regarding the differences in how they set

expectations for minority students and their White counterparts. The quantitative study examined the level at which teachers set their expectations for each ethnic group concerning reading and how students performed. Results showed that teachers appeared to have lower expectations for minority students during the instructional time due to how the teacher felt the student would achieve in comparison to their White counterparts. While minority students performed at the level set by their teachers, due to low expectations, their performance was lower than that of their White peers (Irizarry, 2015).

The difference in teacher expectations and Black students' academic performance is also evident in the study conducted by Ross-Rogers (2014). According to the researcher, teachers in the study viewed Black students as inferior regarding academic achievement (Ross-Rogers, 2014). This viewpoint caused teachers not to be as challenging concerning rigor and high expectations for the performance of minority students as they were towards their White counterparts (Ross-Rogers, 2014). Here, both Black and White teachers of different SES perceived White students as more intelligent and able to academically achieve, as compared to their Black peers (Ross-Rogers, 2014). This inequity in how students are perceived to be able to perform academically is one of the many contributing factors to the gap seen in scores on standardized tests (Ross-Rogers, 2014). Black students must be pushed to meet set expectations by teachers who care and understand them and their backgrounds, recognizing they too can achieve high expectations set.

### **Behavioral Expectations and Cultural Bias**

Like academic success, teacher expectations impact how students respond and act in their classrooms based on what they require of them. Black students exhibit misbehavior in classes where the teacher upholds socially predominate stereotypes, such as the idea that Black students

are more problematic in class (Bates & Glick, 2013). Due to this, classrooms that display a mismatch between student and teacher, have a higher rate of discipline issues and a lower rate of achievement amongst Black students (Harper, Terry, & Twiggs, 2009; Kettler & Hurst, 2017). Researchers have found that in mismatch environments, the teacher sets low expectations on how Black students should behave in class (Bates & Glick, 2013). Bates and Glick (2013) stated that teachers' perceptions of students and how their personal beliefs are displayed and internalized play a role in the assessment of student behaviors. Perception, however, can vary from teacher to teacher. The context that the teacher and student are in can also contribute.

Cultural mismatch impacts the occurrences of negative behavior issues due to the teacher's misconceptions or lack of knowledge on how behavior is a direct reflection of the student (Kozlowski, 2014; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Unfortunately, this disconnect contributes to the disproportionality often seen between Black students and their White counterparts (Garrett, 2011; Milner, Pabon, Woodson, & McGee, 2013). Bottiani et al. (2017) examined the connection between the discipline gap and disparities reported in the data of Black students. Researchers found that the discipline gap increased over the last four decades, particularly when looking at infractions that were the same (Bottiani et al., 2017). However, Black students received harsher consequences as compared to their White counterparts (Bottiani et al., 2017). The discipline disparities were described as complex, but are believed to have begun in the 1980s and 1990s when many media outlets presented Black youth as predators (Bottiani et al., 2017).

Due to disparities in discipline, Bottiani et al. (2017) stated that Black students are less likely to seek help from their teachers, when believed to be in environments where inequity is present. Unequal treatment from teachers to students affects the students' feeling of belonging or

being a part of the school and its culture (Bottiani et al., 2017). When students feel that they are experiencing different treatment, they are more apt to react in anger and depression, adding to discipline referrals seen (Bottiani et al., 2017).

Researchers showed a consistent overrepresentation of Black students in relation to discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions (Boyd, 2012; Cokley, 2015; US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014). According to the US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2014), 20% of Black males and over 12% of Black females had higher rates of out of school suspension (OSS) as compared to their White counterparts. In the state of Texas, the Texas Education Agency (2017) reported that in the 2015-2016 school year, 10.85% of Black students had at least one incident that resulted in OSS as compared to 2.28% of White students across the state.

Each teacher interprets classroom misbehavior based on their own experiences and background (Siwatu & Polydore, 2010). Unfortunately, this causes misinterpretation of behaviors at times, and in turn, disciplinary action is taken, building a further disconnect between the student, their teacher, and the school (Siwatu & Polydore, 2010). According to Veerman (2015), implicit bias inadvertently contributes to the struggles students have in connecting with teaching styles and classroom management. Students who fail to connect may be seen by teachers as resistant, disobedient, or a discipline issue/concern (Veerman, 2015). This misread between the teacher and student causes the teacher to use classroom management strategies that could exclude this targeted group from positive experiences and privileges in class (Ford, 2014; Watson, Robinson, Hollis, & Tally-Matthews, 2015).

Glass (2013) explained that in mismatch classes, disciplinary interactions between teachers and students produce consequences based on subjective behaviors(s). This disconnect

heightens when the student is unable to understand the requests or commands of their teacher (Glass, 2013). This is a demonstration of disconnect seen in mismatch classes relating to communication. Lack of communication or understanding of such, supports and furthers the gap between Black students and their White peers and teachers (Glass, 2013). Black students in at-risk schools are often seen as not willing to conform to social norms created in White society/education (Abdullah et al., 2015; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Because of this, Black students receive more consequences because their behavior does not align with what their teacher deems as appropriate behavior (Cokley, 2015). Cokley (2015) stated that Black students were less likely to get the benefit of the doubt when it comes to questionable disciplinary infractions as compared to students of other races.

### **Misconceptions Due to Cultural Bias**

**Lack of parent involvement.** Lack of understanding the background, community, and upbringing that surrounds low SES Black students, can affect their success, especially in mismatch classrooms (Matias, 2013). In various studies (Henfield & Washington, 2012; Puchner & Markowitz, 2015), researchers conducted interviews and observations with White teachers in schools of increasing enrollment of low-SES Black students. The studies discussed teacher perceptions regarding lack of parent involvement and the misconception that Black parents do not care as much about education as Whites do.

Puchner and Markowitz (2015) discussed Michelle, a teacher interviewed as part of their study. The researchers stated, “Michelle told Markowitz that she felt the achievement gap between White and African American children was caused by family life in African American families and specifically the fact that African American parents are not as involved as White parents” (Puchner & Markowitz, 2015, p. 12). Teachers also fear disciplining Black students

could cause possible retaliation from parents or students (Henfield & Washington, 2012).

Because of this, behavior that is not acceptable for White students is often overlooked or excused in minority classrooms, hindering the learning process (Henfield & Washington, 2012).

### **Support of Campus Administration**

Low SES schools have students that come from different walks of life. They often struggle academically due to various factors both in and out of school (Taylor & Brown, 2013). One key challenge for school principals, especially on at-risk campuses, is teacher retention. Teachers in urban, low-performing schools, are more likely to leave the campus as compared to teachers who service predominately White, high-performing campuses (Player, Youngs, Perrone, & Grogan, 2017). With the changing demands on at-risk staff through evaluative procedures and student achievement measures, more inexperienced White teachers are at the helm of classrooms that are predominately Black (Abdullah et al., 2015). Due to their lack of experience and many times lack of self-evaluation in connection with cultural bias, inexperienced teachers need support and are looking to their public-school administrators for resources and guidance on how to address their concerns, and implement expectations in order to reach their students (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018). Teachers in mismatch situations do not desire to display bias or any form of underlined racism towards their students (Flannery, 2015), however, unchecked bias is a reality in such classrooms, making it essential for administrators to assist.

Public school administrators play a vital role when it comes to leading the direction of instruction within classrooms (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018), especially on Title I campuses. Such instructional leadership involves campus administration promoting the implementation of strategies that help improve student academic success (Ismail, Don, Husin, & Khalid, 2018). This guidance assists teachers, such as those in at-risk settings, providing them with tools to

assist in closing the achievement gap. Administrators guide teachers and other support staff in understanding what daily instructional expectations exist (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018) for teachers to provide culturally diverse and well-planned lessons. They also provide consideration for interventions or supports needed for targeted/identified students (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018).

Although the principal is responsible for providing instructional leadership, teachers and other stakeholders must be considered in decisions made (Ismail et al., 2018), especially concerning expectations within mismatch classrooms. Principals who engage in shared decision making not only gain trust from stakeholders but provide the opportunity for a stronger school culture with a shared goal and commitment (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017). Teachers who feel that they have instructional support and find their principal as a strong instructional and collaborative leader, remain on the campus (Player et al., 2017), creating a lack of turn over commonly found on at-risk schools.

### **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Culture is defined as thoughts, actions, customs, values, and beliefs that represent an ethnic or social group (Larson et al., 2018). Culturally responsive teaching (CRT<sup>2</sup>) involves the teacher applying knowledge of their culture as well as that of their students into the classroom (Broussard et al., 2016; Larson et al., 2018). Culturally responsive teaching was designed to incorporate students' culture in order to assist them in understanding themselves, how to interact socially, as well as create a way for the school and outside culture to coexist for the students' benefit (Ladson-Billings, 1992). Ladson-Billings (1992) explained that culturally responsive teaching not only evaluates cultural norms, but takes into consideration the experiences of students, and uses them to increase success both academically and socially. Such occurs through



instructional resources such as artifacts and real-world examples that appeal to the student (Broussard et al., 2016; Larson et al., 2018).

Teachers who use culturally responsive teaching have greater success with minority students due to the unique, yet diverse way they deliver instruction (Gay, 2010). Understanding cultures and backgrounds involve the teacher being open towards learning about cultural diversity and how it fits in the classroom (Landa & Stephens, 2017). Such cultural competence is evident when the teacher can take what they know and are teaching, and connect it with the unique needs of all students within their class (Povenmire-Kirk, Bethune, Alverson, & Kahn, 2015).

Culture is central to how students learn and can be a tool to empower them and promote future success (Broussard et al., 2016; Larson et al., 2018). Students in culturally responsive classrooms tend to discover value in the content taught, as well as gain a greater connection with the school as a whole (Gay, 2010; Miller, Mackiewicz, & Correa, 2017). Broussard et al. (2016) explained that culturally responsive teaching is essential. Researchers have found that CRT<sup>2</sup> assists in closing the achievement gap of the Black student on at-risk campuses (Milner, 2010; Ramirez, Jimenez-Silva, Boozer, & Clark, 2016), however, strategies primarily focus on implementation at the secondary level. Understanding how to implement culture into everyday instruction within the mismatch classroom can contribute to Black students' success, as well as provide insight into deficit areas (Broussard et al., 2016).

**History of culturally responsive teaching.** In the 1990s, Ladson-Billings transformed her work on Critical Race Theory and promoted Culturally Responsive Teaching as a form of instruction that includes the identities of students as an essential factor of learning. Through culturally responsive teaching, Ladson-Billings (2014) sought to improve teacher education by

creating educators who would appreciate the experiences their students brought, particularly in at-risk classrooms that served Black students. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), CRT<sup>2</sup> allows students to develop academically and socially through the teachers' willingness to support and cultivate cultural competency within their lessons.

Gay (2010) also contributed to the study of culturally relevant teaching, stating that culture was ever-changing and multidimensional. According to Gay (2010), CRT<sup>2</sup> uses knowledge, experiences, and styles present in cultures to make learning practical and relevant. Teachers who are considered culturally relevant set high expectations for their students and display a level of commitment that empowers students (Gay, 2002). These teachers bridge the gap between home and school by acknowledging student cultural experiences and using them to support the curriculum and student learning (Gay, 2002).

**Themes of culturally relevant teaching.** Like the five tenets of the Critical Race Theory, culturally responsive teaching is also founded on various themes. Engagement serves as the first theme. Researchers explained that students are more positively engaged with instruction when the teaching is relevant to their background and cultural group (Aceves & Orosco, 2014; Rhodes, 2013). This engagement produces a form of intrinsic motivation that promotes a sense of emotional well-being for at-risk students (Rhodes, 2013). Engagement is a product of motivation (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). For engagement to occur, students must be able to relate their knowledge and experiences to the content taught (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Aceves and Orosco (2014) stated that the second theme of CRT<sup>2</sup> addresses teachers understanding of the impact that cultural and racial identity can have on student engagement and mastery. Teachers who utilize culturally responsive teaching take a traditional curriculum and find ways to incorporate the content with the student's identity (Gay, 2013). For example,

allowing students to incorporate familiar artifacts to projects or assignments can help increase understanding of content, through the connection of something relevant.

Self-examination of personal beliefs and biases concerning other cultures serves as theme number three (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). Teachers who exercise CRT<sup>2</sup> strategies must recognize where they are personally in addressing the needs of Black students yet recognize the necessity of culturally relevant teaching to help at-risk students be successful (Siwatu, Chestnut, Alejandro, & Young, 2016).

According to a study conducted by Siwatu et al. (2016), preservice teachers doubted their ability to implement CRT<sup>2</sup> strategies into their classroom, however, they recognized the value that such could add to student experiences and mastery. Based on their findings, Siwatu et al. (2016) stated that once preservice teachers have access to actual students and can personally reflect on cultural differences witnessed in the classroom as well as the impact that CRT<sup>2</sup> has on students, initial feelings of doubt tend to diminish.

High academic and behavioral expectations serve as the fourth theme of CRT<sup>2</sup> (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). Although cultural relevance is key to student success in at-risk environments, communication of clear and specific expectations that are standards-driven allow for challenging learning experiences (Aceves & Orosco, 2014; Jimenez et al., 2015).

For the fifth theme, Aceves and Orosco (2014) explained how the implantation of CRT<sup>2</sup> strategies promote the importance of critical thinking. Using cultural experiences, teachers incorporate challenging skills that educate students on higher order thinking and critical inquiry (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). Rhodes (2013) added to this giving the example of problem-posing. This CRT<sup>2</sup> strategy adds a critical and challenging element to instruction and encourages students to think critically.

Lastly, culturally relevant teaching includes the development of social consciousness and awareness (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). According to Aceves and Orosco (2014), teachers who implement culturally relevant strategies include components of social-justice and sociopolitical inequalities to provide students with the opportunity to identify and address issues in their communities. Students are allowed to have a voice in the classroom, contributing to important decisions such as class rules and policies (Morrison, Robins, & Rose, 2008). The creation of this equitable space allows students the ability to discuss controversial topics and issues in an environment that condones diversity and responsiveness (Morrison et al., 2008). Allowing students to evaluate and construct between their community and the school provides the student with a sense that where they come from is valued by school staff (Morrison et al., 2008).

**The framework of culturally relevant teaching.** Culturally responsive teaching is a student-centered approach to learning (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). According to Walter (2018), CRT allows teachers to understand the perspectives, achievements, and identities of their students in order to acknowledge their diversity and foster a connection between the student, school, and home. These perspectives and experiences serve as resources to assist teachers in diversifying their lessons (Driver & Powell, 2017).

While the five themes of CRT<sup>2</sup> provide a basis for the framework, Garcia and Chun (2016) identified five essential elements of culturally responsive teaching that teachers must incorporate:

1. Developing a culturally diverse knowledge base
2. Designing culturally relevant curricula
3. Demonstrating cultural caring and building a learning community
4. Establishing effective cross-curricular communications

5. Establishing congruity in classroom instruction. (p. 174)

According to Walter (2018), through CRT, students can find learning more engaging, helping to address deficiencies often seen in at-risk populations. In a study conducted by Callaway (2015), teachers who display a strong sense of what culturally relevant teaching is, tend to make decisions that are best for the student. Because of the connection that students make with such teachers and the content, they are more apt to take risks, due to the feeling of safety within the classroom environment (Callaway, 2015).

Research conducted by Chen and Yang (2017) supported the ideas of Callaway (2015), as their study found that student participation in class increases when instruction includes the use of CRT strategies. Not only are students more apt to take risks, but they increase and improve their communication amongst peers and with the teacher (Chen & Yang, 2017).

Aceves and Orosco (2014) identified responsive feedback as another essential component of culturally responsive teaching. According to research conducted, responsive feedback is “critical, ongoing, and immediate feedback regarding students' responses and participation” (Aceves & Orosco, 2014, p. 14). Continuous feedback allows students and teachers to adjust throughout a unit of study, promoting the decreasing of the achievement gap and increased academic success (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). Culturally relevant teachers who practice responsive feedback create instances within their instructional day for all students to respond and communicate equitably (Aceves & Orosco, 2014).

**Culturally relevant teaching/training.** Bradshaw, Feinberg, and Bohan (2016) explored how White teachers who participated in a history grant implemented strategies to make learning more meaningful for Black and Hispanic students. They concluded that teachers who implement strategies to address inequalities within themselves and their students during lessons, reported an

increase in the success of these students in the class. Teachers admitted to feeling more comfortable about discussing race after undergoing cultural training and recognized how implementing various cultural pedagogy was essential to minority student success (Bradshaw et al., 2016).

For culturally responsive teaching to occur, Matias (2013) recommended that teachers evaluate their own “whiteness” (p. 68). According to Wiens (2015), teachers who utilize culturally responsive teaching strategies understand that they must self-reflect and acknowledge how they see school versus that of their students. Teachers must also recognize that a student's understanding of content varies based on experiences he/she has had throughout their short life (Wiens, 2015). Assessing one's whiteness involves teachers analyzing their culture and beliefs critically, better understanding what it means to be White, and how privileges and views of being White are not the same with other races (Matias, 2013). White teachers who are unable to evaluate their personal stance on culture, will not be prepared to deal with the culture and beliefs of others (Matias, 2013). When educators have prejudices or stereotypes within, it is hard for them to embrace culturally responsive teaching, which involves emotion and building relationships with students (Matias, 2013).

***An example of CR teaching: Pluralistic curriculum.*** Pluralistic curriculum is yet another way of incorporating cultural relevance (Losen & Gillespie, 2012). Pluralistic curriculum allows the teacher to go beyond their knowledge and background and incorporate the knowledge of their students in order to achieve engagement from the whole class (Losen & Gillespie, 2012). Through pluralism, each culture is seen and studied independently of others, while intertwined into the curriculum (Fallace, 2012). Such pluralism allows for the utilization of various cultures in order for a connection with the students' backgrounds to occur (Fallace, 2012). By

incorporating multiple home and school cultures, students and staff create a connection that positively impacts instruction and mastery (Bassey, 2016).

According to Milner et al. (2013), how a teacher teaches is a direct reflection of their personal experiences and background. The concern, however, is that when curriculum is not pluralistic or culturally diverse, the teacher's experiences and teaching style may clash with the learning styles and experiences of the students (Losen & Gillespie, 2012).

### **Summary and Preview of the Next Chapter**

Low expectations, biases, and misconceptions from White teachers are hindrances in the achievement of minority students in the mismatch setting (Henfield & Washington, 2012; Puchner & Markowitz, 2015). Cultural biases negatively affect how White teachers in mismatch settings see students of color, ultimately impacting expectations they set (Irizarry, 2015; Larson et al., 2018; Puchner & Markowitz, 2015). Regardless of cultural background, students should feel that their school is a safe and nurturing environment that promotes academic success through high expectations (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016).

Researchers suggested that public school administrators implement trainings that not only inform teachers on the culture of their students, but helps them self-reflect on who they are as a White teacher, and their own biases (Bradshaw et al., 2016; Broussard et al., 2016; Matias, 2013). Culturally responsive training provides teachers with a glimpse at how to best work with minority students, helping them to meet and exceed the same expectations set for their White peers (Bradshaw et al., 2016).

Chapter 3 will explain the research design and methodology for this study. Through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), interviews and analytic memos will support the researcher in analyzing public school administrators' firsthand accounts and thoughts on teacher

expectations and their implementation into mismatch classrooms. Explanation of qualitative samples, instruments, and ethical considerations will also be discussed.



### **Chapter 3: Research Method**

This study was designed to explore public school administrators' viewpoints on mismatch classes in Title I schools, and the influence of teacher expectations on Black students' academic achievement and behavior infractions. This chapter will provide a framework for the qualitative research design and methodology for this study. Included are the following subtopics: (a) Research Design and Method, (b) Participants and Selection Criteria, (c) Methods of Establishing Trustworthiness, (d) Data Collection Procedures, (e) Data Analysis, (f) Ethical Considerations, (g) Assumptions, (h) Limitations, (i) Delimitations, and (j) Summary.

#### **Research Design and Method**

The research methodology used for this study was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This qualitative research tradition proves useful as a form of methodology, allowing me to explore the various experiences of participants, and determine how they impacted their thoughts on the influence that teacher expectations have on Black students academic and behavioral achievements, in mismatch, Title I classes. Patton (2015) stated that qualitative research is used to investigate documents and case studies to gain an understanding of processes. Qualitative research is personal, and researchers connect with it because it resonates with an experience or something closely linked to him/her (Patton, 2015).

Using the phenomenological approach allowed me to focus on experiences that the participants lived through and were familiar with (Mihás, 2019). Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis is an extension of phenomenology, and seeks to examine, in detail, various lived events that create an experience for participants (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Through IPA, participants provided insight on their own terms regarding lived moments within their lives, and how they interpreted them in order for them to make sense (Smith & Osborne, 2015).

Through IPA, I conducted semi-structured interviews and created analytic memos to gain firsthand accounts and thoughts on teacher expectations and their influence in mismatch classrooms. Interviews allowed me to obtain information regarding a given experience, from the viewpoint of the participant (Turner, 2010). Through interviews, I gained insight into how an experience was significant to a participant, and what that significance meant concerning their world (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

### **Phenomenological Research**

Phenomenological research focuses on various lived experiences and ideas of life (Creswell, 2007). Grounded in constructionism, phenomenology is built on the idea that “reality and knowledge are constructed in and out of interactions between individuals and their world” (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018, p. 35). According to Creswell (2007), researchers choose the phenomenological approach after identifying an area of life that is considered a concern yet interests them.

Through phenomenological studies, researchers can better understand a vantage point centering a lived experience in individuals’ lives (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018). Looking at the phenomenon, the researcher identifies essential themes seen and creates a description or interpretation, bringing meaning to the experience (Creswell, 2007). Within the study of the phenomenon, the researcher is challenged to set aside their personal biases and utilize epoche or bracketing, looking at the experience as if it were their first-time learning/seeing it (Creswell, 2007). To achieve this successfully, researchers must identify their connections with the phenomenon and bracket out their views before interviewing or studying others (Creswell, 2007; Flynn & Korcuska, 2018; Giorgi, 2012).

Once the personal views and experiences of the researcher are identified and bracketed out, Creswell (2007) stated that the researcher must gather data from a group of individuals who live or have lived through the experience. Phenomenological methods of collecting data include semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and documentation collection and review (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018). Once data are collected, Giorgi (2012) explained that researchers must review all the data, ensuring that a full picture is visible. The researcher then analyzes the data, identifying themes seen through common and significant statements and quotes (Creswell, 2007; Giorgi, 2012). Based on their findings, the researcher creates a textual and structural description of the experience, explaining what the participants experienced and its context, providing an overall view of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Giorgi, 2012).

### **Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was developed in 1996 by Jonathan Smith, a professor at Birkbeck and University of London. Smith originally used the approach to analyze a lived experience, in-depth, from the psychological perspective (Smith et al., 2009). As time progresses, the approach has grown, now being used in multiple cognitive disciplines (Smith et al., 2009).

As a form of experiential qualitative research IPA looks at various units or memories that have been lived and come together to create a comprehensive experience that carries a significance or meaning to the individual who lived the events (Smith & Osborne, 2015; Smith et al., 2009). With this in mind, the IPA approach supports the researcher in forming an understanding that is built on making sense of the events determined by the participant to be significant (Smith & Osborne, 2015). Smith et al. (2009) explained that through IPA, researchers

not only get an in-depth sense of how a participant feels about a particular situation, but what sense it makes in their head.

IPA is also influenced by ideography. Through such analysis the researcher examines data in-depth, in order to create a general claim or belief (Smith & Osborne, 2015). Because of this, participants are encouraged to recount as thorough of an account of their experiences as possible (Smith & Osborne, 2015).

### **Population and Sample**

According to Smith et al. (2009), the suggested number of participants for IPA studies range from 4-10. Roberts (2013) stated that smaller sample sizes allow the researcher to go more in-depth with the lived experiences of their participants. With that in mind, six public school administrators served as participants for this study. I invited 27 individuals who met the selection criteria to participate in the study to secure the projected number of participants. An invitation to join in the study was sent, and based on feedback received, participants were selected.

The participants for this study were current and past campus-based administrators from various at-risk, Title I public schools in three major Southeastern Texas districts. These districts were chosen due to the vast number of identified Title I and at-risk campuses that exist. District A serves as the largest for this study with over 100,000 students enrolled. In relation to Title I campuses, this district has well over 15 that service students in grades 6-12. District B is the second largest in this study, also with over 100,000 students enrolled. This district has approximately 15 at-risk or Title I schools that service students in grades 6-12. School district C services over 60,000 students and has approximately five (5) at-risk or Title I sixth – twelfth grade campuses.

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I used the Texas Education Agencies' School Database to finalize a list of Title I schools within the identified three (3), Southeastern Texas school districts. I then utilized the enrollment data from the TEA school report card server to confirm that identified campuses had a student enrollment consisting of 51% or more on free or reduced lunch. Once selection of the campuses was complete, I used the campus' website to identify administrators, making initial contact with them about the study and their potential involvement via email.

Roberts (2013) explained that it is essential that the participants in the study represent a homogeneous group. Having a group that has the same characteristics and/or background allows the researcher to better identify themes connected to their shared experience (Roberts, 2013). Administrators ranged in age, ethnicity, gender, years of service in the field of education, and length of time in their administrative positions.

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

**Interviews.** Open-ended interviewing served as the primary data collection for this study. The interviewing process allows for the sharing of thoughts, experiences, and knowledge between the interviewer and the interviewee (Patton, 2015). Once common themes centering the importance of teacher expectations were identified, 45-60 minute interviews with the chosen stakeholders were conducted to find the effect that they believed teacher expectations has on Black students in mismatch classrooms. The participants engaged in meetings via face-to-face or phone, answering open-ended questions. The interview consisted of 19 preselected questions, and each participant was asked the same set of questions.

The interview followed a semi-structured format, enabling me to ask additional follow-up questions to responses received. Smith and Osborne (2015) explained that semi-structured

interviews allow the researcher and participant to engage in dialogue modifying initial questions based on important themes that evolve from the participant's responses. Considering that I utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), semi-structured interviews proved useful for this research study, as it allowed for insight into what administrators see and their interpretations, thoughts, and beliefs of their experiences when working with students, teachers, and expectations in mismatch learning environments. Interviews can bring issues and concerns to the surface that were not foreseen, possibly leading to additional information that could further support findings throughout the study (Patton, 2015; Smith et al., 2009).

The instrument was validated by an expert in the field of educational leadership to ensure that all interview questions gave the researcher the appropriate responses to answer the research questions. A superintendent from one of the three districts worked with me to review the questions, ensuring they were adequate and met the needs of the study. The questions initially connected with themes identified through the literature review conducted by the researcher. The responses from the interviews were interpreted and coded to generate recurring patterns and themes.

**Voice recording and transcription.** Smith et al. (2009) explained that due to the detailed nature of IPA, recording the interview is essential. Researchers stated that attempting to transcribe as the interview was taking place merely allows for the gist of the responses to be captured, missing important differences that may present themselves through the participant's emotions or general actions (Smith et al., 2009).

For this study, interviews were captured using the Windows PC voice recording application. Once complete, interviews were saved on a password protected computer, and then submitted to TranscribeMe. TranscribeMe is an online transcription service that meets HIPAA

and GDPR security compliance requirements. Interviews were uploaded to my password protected account, and once transcription was complete, I reviewed it for accuracy, in order to prepare for annotation and identification of themes and codes.

**Analytic memos/notetaking.** Reviewing feedback from the interviews through analytic memos/notetaking served as helpful. Memo writing allowed me to engage with the data by seeing trends and gaps (Patton, 2015). Smith et al. (2009) stated that notetaking during the interview allows for the researcher to document nonverbal behavior that a participant displays as they address various questions. Such assists in providing information for formal research documentation and pushes the researcher to develop and analyze their identified themes and ideas (Patton, 2015).

Analytic memos assisted in addressing research questions posed and determined other questions to ask moving forward. Taking textual data transcribed from the recorded narrative data, analyzing it, and then notating thoughts or findings throughout, provided another opportunity to generate common themes.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

The use of the IPA method of analysis helped to ensure that the data were reviewed in-depth and utilized to best support the purpose of the study. This method involved using the idiographic approach, beginning with the examination of particular themes and expounding on that in order to make general claims and categorizations (Smith et al., 2009). Considering the literature that contributed to this study, this method assisted in making initial data collection decisions, as well as provided ideas on directions to move forward. By using coding in conjunction, judgments on common themes seen gave further support to findings.

Initial coding was predetermined based on the analysis of preliminary literature and data. Predetermined codes are those that are set ahead of time, based research and theory, then applied to the data from the researcher (Ivankova, 2015). Utilizing the articles that connected to the research problem and purpose, creation of original coding acted as a guide when analyzing administrator interviews.

Aligning with the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) procedures of Smith et al. (2009), the data analysis process began with me conducting one-on-one semi-structured, audio recorded interviews. Once complete, each interview was submitted to TranscribeMe transcription service. I reviewed the transcription data against the audio recording to ensure accuracy. After the document's validity was confirmed, I read the transcription repeatedly, notating important or interesting ideals heard or seen in the participant's responses (Smith et al., 2009). Once substantial review and notetaking of each transcription was conducted, I used the notes to identify themes that aligned with original ideas had by the researcher, along with those that emerged through participant responses.

Using the extensive collected data from the review of transcripts and notes, emergent coding proved beneficial for new themes identified. Emergent coding encompasses analyzing data from the text and formulating codes from it (Ivankova, 2015). Such coding provided a different set of codes outside of what may be predetermined. Through analysis of data collected from the interviews, new themes and similarities were clustered with initial themes in order to see connections across multiple interviews (Smith et al., 2009). For this, other codes were created to help with pinpointing these similarities and ultimately linking them to determine future recommendations and solutions for public school administrators.



I manually conducted all coding and recoding based on a master table of themes that was created once all data were analyzed (Smith et al., 2009). This table and coding contributed to the formation of inherent meanings regarding experiences (Smith et al., 2009). At this stage of analysis, themes were translated into narrative accounts. I used excerpts from the transcripts to support accounts as results, ensuring that clarity was seen between participant responses and my interpretation of them (Smith et al., 2009).

### **Establishing Trustworthiness**

Connelly (2016) explained that the trustworthiness or rigor of qualitative research “refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study” (p. 1). Trustworthy research contains the procedures of the study, helping the reader to better understand why the study is rigorous. Trustworthiness comes from the researcher being aware of their biases and paying careful attention to that (Patton, 2015).

For this study, trustworthiness was established by creating credibility or confidence in the findings of the study (Connelly, 2016). One way this was done is through frequent debriefing sessions with my dissertation chair. Through these collaborative discussions, I had the ability to discuss prevalent themes seen through participant responses and gain insight into alternative viewpoints from findings (Shenton, 2004). Honest feedback regarding personal biases seen in my study was also discussed, helping to ensure that the purpose of the study remained the primary focus.

Member checking also served to create trust. This method entailed me sending a copy of the transcript and notes taken to each participant for their review (Statistic Solutions, 2019). It also involved me sending a copy of the results to the participants, allowing for them to validate conclusions I arrived at (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Once I finalized the

transcript and bracketed each interview to identify themes, participants were sent a copy to review. Participants were encouraged to submit additional comments, concerns, and questions for me to review and determine how to address within the final data to be used for future analysis.

Use of analytic memos also supported the credibility of the data. As interviewing took place, I documented ideas, emotions, and other information not verbally stated. This commentary supported what Shenton (2004) identified as reflective commentary. Through a review of commentary written, reflection on personal thoughts can be had to ensure that the researcher is objective and is identifying themes and ideas possibly overlooked in the initial interview.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In conducting this research, ethical consideration was taken to ensure that participants were not harmed in any way. Before the study began, I sought approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants received informed consent that “involves informing the subject about his or her rights, the purpose of the study, the procedures to be undergone, and the potential risks and benefits of participation” (Shahnazarian, Hagemann, Aburto, & Rose, 2013, p. 3).

Each consent informed participants that their names, names of their district and campus, as well as their responses would all be confidential. Pseudonyms were used throughout the study to ensure that identifying characteristics were kept confidential, not impacting the participant’s position or employment. The informed consent forms also included information detailing the participant’s ability to withdraw from the study at any time, along with opting out of answering any question in which they felt uncomfortable. All informed consent forms were secured in a locked file drawer, of which I was the only owner of keys to the lock.

I allowed participants access to interview transcripts, ensuring the integrity of the transcription, as well as to support the need for clarity or additional information. TranscribeMe transcription service met various security compliance guidelines and has built in security measures to ensure the confidentiality of each interview submitted. I was the sole person who had access to the transcription account, which was also password protected. Each audio recording was stored on my personal computer, which was also password protected. All audio will be destroyed after one year through deletion and overwriting of each file, in order to prohibit further access to all electronic data. All hard copies of forms and transcriptions will be secured for five years in a locked file drawer and shredded once the hold period is complete.

All information collected for this study can only be accessed by myself. Paperwork and other paper-based documents are kept in a locked filing cabinet, while electronic documentation and data are secured in a password-protected computer system.

### **Assumptions**

It is assumed that all participants in the study answered the interview questions honestly and to the best of their ability. It is also expected that data collected accurately portrayed each administrator's perception regarding teacher expectations in the mismatch classroom and how those expectations influence the academic achievement and behavioral infractions of Black students.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited to public school administrators in the Southeastern region of Texas, who currently hold or have held positions on campuses considered to have an at-risk population. Perspectives from administrators will only focus on their thoughts on the impact of teacher expectations in classrooms where the teacher is White, and the student is Black.

**Delimitations**

This study only included public school administrators who had or are working on campuses identified as at-risk. While neighboring campuses service at-risk populations, this study solely focused on campuses whose student population contained 51% or more students who qualified for free or reduced lunch.

Participants in the study were selected using homogeneous purposive sampling. Through such sampling, the researcher only selected participants that had the same or shared characteristics. Because of the similarities amongst participants, answers could be impacted and appear to some as one sided.

**Summary and Preview of the Next Chapter**

To successfully answer the research questions and meet the purpose of this study, qualitative phenomenology served as the best methodology approach. Conducting open-ended, semi-structured interviews allowed me to gain first-hand data regarding public school administrators' perception of teacher expectations in mismatch classrooms, and how they influence Black students' academic and behavioral achievement. By transcribing and reflecting on interviews, I ensured that the data found was credible and trustworthy, allowing for future researchers to understand how the findings contributed to the future of education.

Chapter 4 will present the findings of the research based on the data collected. Excerpts and themes based on responses received in the interviews will explain data found.

## Chapter 4: Results

For this qualitative Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), I explored the various lived experiences of six, sixth through twelfth-grade public school administrators, who currently or previously worked on Title I campuses. The purpose of this study was to explore how public-school administrators perceived the influence of teacher expectations on behavior infractions and academic achievement of Black students in mismatch, Title I classrooms. With public school administrators being the participants of this study, the desire was to provide other at-risk school leaders with insight on similarities they too may be experiencing, and how other colleagues, see and handle deficiencies between teachers and students in mismatch classes. For this to be achieved, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

- Q1.** How do public school administrators perceive teacher expectations in mismatch classes influence the academic achievement of Black secondary students at Title I schools? Based on coding founded on participant interviews, the following themes emerged: (a) Classroom Relationships, (b) Genuine Relationships, (c) Recognizing and Doing Something About Gaps, and (d) Self-Fulfilling Prophecy.
- Q2.** On Title I campuses, what do public school administrators perceive as the factors, if any, influencing the academic achievement and classroom behaviors of Black secondary school students in mismatch classes? Based on participant responses, the following themes emerged: (a) Campus Culture and Climate, (b) Rules and Procedures, (c) Addressing Cultural Differences, (d) Leadership Modeled Expectations, and (e) Rigor and High-Level Classes.
- Q3.** What strategies, if any, do public school administrators suggest to address cultural bias in Title I schools, in order to decrease Black secondary school students’

behavioral infractions and increase their academic achievement? Based on various responses received from participants, the following themes emerged: (a) Mismatch Classroom Practices that Promote Success, (b) Lesson Relevance, (c) Student Engagement, and (d) Incentives for Positive Behavior.

This chapter will provide the findings of this IPA, qualitative study. Included are the following subtopics: (a) Sample and Population Description, (b) The Interview Protocol, (c) Data Analysis / Prevalent Themes, and (d) Summary and Preview of Next Chapter.

### **Sample and Population Description**

Six public school administrators participated in this study. The smaller sample size provided me the ability to go more in-depth when examining the lived experiences of the administrators (Roberts, 2013). Twenty-seven public-school administrators who currently or previously worked on Title I, at-risk campuses, were invited to participate in the study.

Out of the six participants selected to participate in this study, five were current at-risk, campus-based administrators. One participant was a past administrator who chose to pursue another career after working as a campus leader on a difficult Title I campus. The participants represented three major Southeast Texas districts, that combined, have over 50 at-risk, identified campuses that serve students in grades 6-12.

The participants ranged in ages from the early 30s to the late 50s. They all have worked as leaders in at risk schools for over 53 years collectively, as either assistant principals or campus principals. In regards to gender, three participants were male and three were female, with one participant identified as White, and five identified as Black.

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Years as An At-Risk Public-School Administrator
PSAdmin – 1	F	Black	1
PSAdmin – 2	M	White	5
PSAdmin – 3	F	Black	9
PSAdmin – 4	M	Black	20+
PSAdmin – 5	M	Black	8
PSAdmin – 6	F	Black	8

**Participant Descriptions**

**PSAdmin – 1** was a first-year administrator on her at-risk campus. She had been in education for eight years and served as a team and department chair, as well as a teacher mentor before officially gaining the title of campus administrator. PSAdmin – 1’s entire educational career has been on at-risk campuses, with five of those years being at her current school. During her tenure, she worked on the Campus Improvement Committee, assisting in determining needed changes and possible strategies for students and teachers. PSAdmin – 1 has also served as a lead trainer for new teachers on her campus, providing them with tools and strategies to work with their student population effectively.

As a current administrator, PSAdmin – 1 serves as the leader of the testing and student support teams for her campus. With these responsibilities, PSAdmin – 1 works closely with her colleagues, creating interventions for students with various learning needs/disabilities. PSAdmin – 1’s campus demographics show Hispanic students as the majority, with Blacks following close behind. The teaching staff, however, is over 80% White.

**PSAdmin – 2** has worked on his current at-risk campus for two years, however, he has been an administrator for five years. Before entering campus leadership, PSAdmin – 2 worked as

an intervention teacher, supporting students in danger of dropping out of high school. All of PSAdmin – 2’s career has been on at-risk campuses, where Hispanic students make up most of the student enrollment, and Blacks follow not far behind. On his previous campus, PSAdmin – 2’s leadership and counseling team consisted of all White educators, despite the campus being predominately minority.

As an assistant principal on his current campus, PSAdmin – 2 is 1 out of 2 White educators on his leadership and counseling team; Blacks make up over 90% of administration. With well over 2,000 students, many students at PSAdmin – 2’s school are Hispanic, with Black students coming in second regarding enrollment numbers.

**PSAdmin – 3** worked as an assistant principal for over five years. Throughout her time in education, she solely worked at Title I campuses, where her student body encompassed Hispanics as the majority, and Blacks as the second-highest group enrolled. On average, 80% of the students that PSAdmin – 3 served on her various campuses qualified for free or reduced lunch. Between PSAdmin – 3’s administrative and teaching experience, she worked for three school districts in the Southeastern region.

On her last campus, PSAdmin – 3 served as an assistant principal for three years. After facing difficulties with upper campus leadership and enduring some health-related issues, PSAdmin – 3 chose to leave education and start her own business. PSAdmin – 3 has no desire to return to public schools and attributes it to the struggles faced at her last campus. She believes that while the students were difficult to manage, the adults made the job unbearable.

**PSAdmin – 4** is a veteran assistant principal with over 20 years in the position. He has been on his current campus for over a decade and has served under numerous principals. PSAdmin – 4’s campus is considered at-risk, with much of the population being Hispanic or



Black, and over 75% of the student body approved for free or reduced lunch. PSAdmin – 4’s campus originated as an affluent campus, but due to several natural disasters, the population around the school changed. With the fluctuating of the economy in the early 2000s, families with higher incomes moved further into the suburbs for homes that were outside of the flood plains. This efflux reduced the price of homes around PSAdmin – 4’s school, and the government stepped in, taking ownership of many properties and making them income-based. As an assistant principal, PSAdmin – 4 has overseen all content and elective areas across his campus and assisted with the hiring of all members of the current administration.

**PSAdmin – 5** currently serves as the principal of his second Title I campus. As an administrator with eight years of experience, this is PSAdmin – 5’s first year as principal of his current school. The campus he is currently assigned to ranked below the expected average on last year’s state exams, and PSAdmin – 5 has been tasked with turning the school around. Over 80% of the student population is Hispanic or Black, and at least 90% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The school’s surrounding community is considered a high poverty area, with over 10% of the students also declaring homeless status.

As the campus principal, PSAdmin – 5 oversees all instructional and operational aspects of his campus. He has an administrative and counseling team that consists of 12 individuals who are all tasked to oversee one initiative that will assist in the school’s turn around. Out of all his campuses, PSAdmin – 5 says that he loves his current campus the most, as it provides him with a challenge every day.

**PSAdmin – 6** is in her eighth year as a campus leader, but first as a school principal. All of PSAdmin – 6’s educational experience has been on at-risk campuses, and currently, the school that she leads is Title I. Over 70% of the student enrollment is Hispanic or Black, with 90% of

the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. PSAdmin – 6 has worked in three Southeastern Texas area districts, two of which she served as an assistant principal and department chair.

As a new campus principal, PSAdmin – 6 oversees all aspects of the campus. Due to her campus being Title I, she works to ensure the community is involved, and that students and teachers have what they need for success. She believes that “Money is not an object” when it comes to providing the resources that her campus needs.

### **The Interview Protocol**

All six participants contributed in a confidential, semi-structured interview that contained 19 original questions. Each question connected with one of the three research questions, attempting to shed light on the experiences and thoughts of public-school administrators concerning teacher expectations and Black students. Each interview was conducted one-on-one with me, either in-person or via phone. Once complete, the interview was transcribed using the TranscribeMe Transcription Service. I reviewed each transcription against its recording. Once revisions were made, each participant had the opportunity to review their transcript and make any necessary revisions to ensure clarity of ideas or better grammatical coherence. A sample of the interview protocol, as well as corresponding themes and codes versus the research questions are in Appendix D and Appendix E.

### **Data Analysis and Prevalent Themes**

I used participants’ responses to generate coding that identified recurring themes. The participants provided a wealth of information regarding the various questions, however, not all responses were included in the findings or used to determine recurring themes. Dependent on their personal experiences, each administrator openly shared both positive and negative

occurrences and ideas that connected to the overall purpose of the study. Each of the following topics represents a recurring theme and textual evidence to support the findings.

### **Classroom Relationships**

Each administrator stated that classroom relationships were pivotal to the success of Black students in Title I, mismatch classes. All six participants discussed the importance of teachers being genuine within their student/teacher relationships, and how such can have a positive effect on student success. According to the responses, students can tell the difference between an adult who truly cares about them and their success, versus one who is just there to complete a job. Dependent on how that student and teacher connect, the student could be encouraged to take various academic risks or remain at a level of mediocrity.

### **Genuine Relationships**

PSAdmin - 1

As a teacher, I had students that I knew did not pass STAAR. When I got results back and they passed, I called the parent before they could get the official word from the state. I would let them know that they were successful. I let the kids know that they were successful. I always tell my students. Even if their score just increased by one point, I celebrated that one point, and it made them feel special.

Teachers should motivate Black students by developing a relationship with them. That relationship should be a good, strong academic relationship, letting them know that the teacher cares about their education. They are not teasing them or looking at them in a bad fashion because their reading level is low or embarrassing them or calling them out to read when they know that the student is not able to read that passage. You motivate them by letting them know that they are valued at whatever level they are.

African American kids heavily participate in sports. Go to their basketball games; our kids love it when we are at their sports activities. Our kids love to see that, and that motivates them because they are excited. After all, they know you are going to do something. They know we are going to celebrate if *this* happens. Plan something for them. Show them that you appreciate them.

You will receive student feedback from students throughout the year. They will come and tell you ‘This teacher is picking on me,’ ‘This teacher does not like me,’ ‘This teacher is doing this.’ Alternatively, you will have parents that say, ‘My son or my daughter is coming home, and this is what she or he is saying is going on in the classroom.’

#### PSAdmin - 2

I have a teacher that does a great job in history. She has a comfortable room environment, and she makes it feel like a home. The kids were very comfortable asking questions from Day One. She has a lot of icebreaker stuff every day for the warmups, and she does a lot of small celebrations. She has worked on this all year to make those kids very comfortable with her ‘Yays’ and celebrations; they make the kids laugh. Our kids know when you are fake; they can read it quickly.

There are a few other teachers that you see just the opposite. Some of our teachers put on a fake show, and it comes out very sarcastic. Our Title I kids, especially the ones that have had tough lives, can read it, and I see them more often in my office for discipline. Those teachers get kind of upset with the others because I can move that kid to another class, and they turn around and do fantastic. Nevertheless, they needed real and honest. In order to develop a genuine relationship, you must show that you are human. That will show that even though you may not walk in the same shoes as the students, you

understand and have that broad knowledge and respect for their culture or their upbringing. You also understand how it can relate to whatever curriculum you are teaching.

A lot of my years in education were coaching in athletics. Motivating my students that were Title I was just showing that I genuinely cared and saw a future that was not a cycle but was positive and successful, no matter what you are dreaming of doing and becoming. I am here to help push you along. I am going to be that concrete, consistent person cheering for you.

### PSAdmin - 3

On my most recent campus, there was nothing related to goals for student/teacher relationship; there was no such thing, like that. However, on other campuses for student/teacher relationships, it starts with their initial meeting within the classroom; but then it moves to outside of that classroom. Encouraging teachers to take the initiative and interest in what the students do outside the classroom. That may mean going to various activities; a play that they may be in at the school; choir concerts; football; basketball; sporting games, things like that. These students form a bond and a good relationship and are willing to be productive in class, to follow the rules better, and just conduct themselves in a manner in which is more appropriate when they see the teachers take an active interest in them outside of the classroom or outside of the school building.

As a leader, I talked to my students a lot, and I always asked many questions about their teachers. Not just going off about 'I do not like that teacher;' I try to dig deeper. Why is it that you do not like them? Is it because you are just having a bad day today?

Students will also tell you about how the teacher carries themselves within the classroom versus in front of others. Many students have said, 'When you come into the classroom, my teacher is one way. However, as soon as you leave out, they are totally different.' I try to get to the bottom of it with a conversation, and not just one question, but probing questions. It is almost like we are on a journey, and I am checking in and asking basic questions to see how students feel regarding their teachers.

I have seen in certain classes where there are no behavior problems with individual teachers. Take the same group of students, put them in other teachers' classrooms, and all hell has broken loose, and they are just the worst kids. It is because of the structure and how you are interacting with them. How are you treating them as a person? How are you interacting with them, not just when your supervisor is observing you, but when no one is watching you?

#### PSAdmin - 4

To build a rapport with students, you must go back and try to understand the kids. I do not mean to be a kid but be able to understand that all kids are essential. You must be an excellent listener to the kids. You cannot do everything that every kid wants in your class, but you can be sensitive to the needs of all kids in the class.

It does not matter who a student is born to or what period they were born in; there is greatness in them, and they can achieve anything that anybody else can. You see the ceiling; they will place the ceiling on themselves. You know the world is going to do that; do not allow the world to do that. Students can do anything they want to. You must speak life and greatness to all kids and do not even talk about color. Speak to the class.

For Title I students, a relationship should happen first. Once the relationship happens, you can add all kinds of incentives to that relationship with students. There are always some preconceived ideas because many of our kids are African American or Latino. Someone is going to expect, almost right away, that those kids are going to be the behavioral problems. You must meet the kids where they are. You cannot just assume that everybody has everything in their toolbox that maybe you had, or maybe other kids have. Kids at Title I schools may be lacking some of the necessary ingredients that we think they should have when they walk through the doors.

Students are going to be very clear if they like a teacher. Moreover, I do not want to say that the teacher is easy; I think we all inherently want structure. However, just because you are hugging everybody, that does not mean you love them, respect them, and have high expectations. Kids can tell. Whatever they think; whatever their opinion of the teacher is, kids are going to say that. Even if the teacher is strict, they are still going to say, 'Oh yeah. Miss So and So is great. However, she is tough; but I know she wants the best for us.'

#### PSAdmin – 5

Title I students just want support. Students want to have the idea that they have somebody to go to or somebody to back them up. They want someone holding them accountable and not allow them to 'wing it' on their own. You must show them that they have a support group behind them. Teachers must be open and not judgmental about anything. They must believe there are no stupid questions and that everybody has a voice. They open the floor to any and everybody, but they also demand respect from their students.

One teacher who sticks out to me was very active and very into learning more about her students. She took the time to sit down with each student individually and learn about their families, their backgrounds, and what they were interested in, whether it was sports, chess club, or whatever. She would also take an interest in the other classes that her students attended. She would talk to or build rapport with other teachers that those students had as well as their coaches. She would show up to their events and root them on. It made each student feel more connected with her, and they loved her for it.

PSAdmin - 6

As a teacher, you must be real. I think that our Black students can sniff out the fake. I think Black students know when people care about them, and when people have an interest in them. I think that our Black students know when people are faking it. I think that they know when people are lying or when people just do not care about them, and they are just there for the heck of it. We must motivate students by being genuine. We must motivate them by speaking life into them.

Title I students want praise; they want to know that you value them. They want to know that you like them. They want to be a kid in a sense and get stickers. They want to hear 'good job,' and they want to get the high fives. I think what motivates them is just knowing that they are going to get that positive praise knowing that you value them and that you care about them.

When teachers see academic growth, even if it is just one or two points, they need to praise their students. They need to make a big deal out of it because kids want to know that you saw what they did. Sometimes we always focus on just the negative. It is crucial



that we also focus on the positive and that we let our kids know, ‘Yes! It might have just been one point that you grew, but I am proud of you.’

### **Recognizing and Doing Something about Gaps**

PSAdmin - 1

As a teacher, you can modify and adjust your lessons where you do a small group, and complete an intervention with that group, while other groups go on. *So*, it is a possibility that two lessons could be going on in the classroom. Now, if a teacher cannot do that, it causes you to feel like you are holding all your students back because these five students cannot get it. *So*, the frustration is they have got to get it, but I am just going to go on if they do not. Teachers must be able to modify and adjust their classroom setting for everybody to succeed.

PSAdmin - 2

My expectation is ensuring that we teach or have activities from bell to bell while understanding that classroom behavior and engagement go together. Some have classroom behavior issues because kids do not understand first-time instruction. For these students, you need scaffolding built-in or in-class tutorials.

I talk to the math department regarding helping them find extra time for those kids who are struggling. I am making sure they have not only the vertical scaffolding but also the remedial spiraling built into their lesson plans every day, through their informal or formal assessments. We have to catch up and fill holes with students every day, but at the same time, you are going to have those other four kids that find the class work very easy. For these students, teachers will have to scaffold and maybe throw some significant real-world, higher order thinking into the mix.

The big thing nowadays is either the 1980s Blended Learning, or the PBLs that people talk of. These groupings have kids merge. The higher-level kids find it comfortable working with the kids that happen to struggle at times, by teaching each other.

PSAdmin - 3

I encourage teachers to use small groups with our students. Figure out where the gaps are in the learning and do what they need to do to close those gaps. Give the extra assistance, give the extra practice, extend the assignment, extensions help. Nevertheless, pull small groups and have interventions available for those students. Get various specialists involved to help assist in interventions. It is not a one-person job all the time. It is ok to solicit help from others within the building.

PSAdmin - 4

I think what we have tried to do is to learn who we have and make sure that our kids have equal access to learning. I once read an article about how access is what separates our kids from kids in a more affluent school. It is not less; it is access. Access is affected by socioeconomics. Our students were not pushed to read; they were not pushed to learn at those early ages. Once they get to us, then you will see a definite division there. It is not that they do not have the ability; they just did not have the access. So, you will have different kids in the first two weeks, those that are Johnny on the Spot with answers, and those kids that are very reluctant to answer. You are going to have to raise expectations for every kid in that classroom. You cannot let a student get away because he did not have access. You need to push that kid just as hard as you push the kid that's in the front of the class.

PSAdmin - 6

I expect teachers to give students an equal opportunity to learn. I challenge them every progress report period to identify three kids that need to be pushed, two kids that have been pushed and are doing better, and then that one kid that is excelling.

So, for those three kids that need to be pushed, the teacher must come up with a game plan for that next progress report period. What are you going to do to push that kid? How are you going to get those three kids to be on the same level as the one kid who is excelling in your class? What opportunities are you going to allow those kids to have in order to have the success that that one student has? It is genuinely about teachers understanding whom they have in their class, breaking their lesson down, and truly focusing on ‘Ok; this is what I have to do in order to help them be successful,’ and not letting those kids slip through the cracks.

### **Self-Fulfilling Prophecy**

PSAdmin - 1

I think that the expectations of a teacher can influence a student positively or negatively. Let me give you an example. One of the expectations teachers had last year was that we had to post grades twice a week. A student knew where their grades were, and a parent knew where their grades were. It would help the students to see where they were and what they were doing. If they were passing, if we were failing. It encouraged them to seek tutorials. It showed them those things.

I think expectations for Black students are lower because when I look at AP classes and my K level classes, I have maybe one African American student in those classes, and all the teachers are white teachers. I think that we look at African American students as they are going to school, but they are not going to excel; they are going to grow. Moreover, it

is a difference between growing and excelling. Excelling means you are going to the next level. You are in those K level classes; you are in middle school taking high school credit. Growing means you passed STAAR, and you passed the grade. That is how a lot of our white teachers look at it.

I believe, however, that every teacher on my campus wants to see the students succeed. The expectation is that they grow. Many teachers want the growth to be more than what the students give them, but the expectation is to see the students succeed and see the students grow.

#### PSAdmin - 3

One of our older teachers would lower her expectations because she did not feel that the kids could do the work; so, they did not try. When a teacher has high expectations, and the students have buy-in, rapport occurs. When students see that the teacher has taken the time to build a relationship and pushes them to rise to the occasion, students want to do well for themselves and the teacher.

#### PSAdmin - 4

You are going to get whatever you expect, that is the bottom line; you are going to get it. If you do not expect somebody to be anything, then they are probably going to rise to the level of that expectation. Expect them to do great, and you continue to expect that from Day one, then you have got a higher percentage of your kids that are going to be great. (They will) be the best they possibly can because they know it is going to be satisfying for you as a teacher. You, the teacher, have so much power. You make that kid that's sitting there on the border raise higher even more than they thought they could.

Expectations are like medicine. They can be the absolute one variable in a kid's life that pushes them to greatness, just because you thought they were great. Just because you wanted them to achieve the highest level.

#### PSAdmin – 5

Students take their cues from the teacher. If the teacher feels like their student is going to be successful, then they push that student to be successful, and in turn, that student takes on that profile. I will be successful, and I can do it. I have somebody who is rooting for me and believes in me. However, if a teacher is mediocre or just not giving any kind of effort to a student, you are not going to get that much success from them. That is something that we are improving on in our school, getting teachers to invest in their students. Our Black students want to be pushed and need somebody to push them in order to be successful.

#### PSAdmin - 6

What a teacher expects, is what a student is going to give. If a teacher expects greatness, then the child is going to give greatness. If the teacher expects low results or low participation, then that is what the teacher is going to get. I feel like if students know that you expect greatness, they are going to try and meet that expectation. If you tell them I know that you can do X, Y, and Z, then they are going to push themselves to try and achieve that. However, if you tell a student you cannot do it, they are going to believe that eventually. That is going to push them back and keep them from fulfilling what their destiny truly is.

## **Campus Culture and Climate**

Participants believed that campus culture and climate stemmed from the rules, procedures, expectations, and overall outlook demonstrated by the campus principal. While the need for teachers to consistently implement rules and procedures was found to be a necessity to ensure equal treatment of students, how the campus leadership models various standards for students and teachers can impact the campus.

## **Rules and Procedures**

PSAdmin - 1

We expect teachers to sit down with the student and try to redirect the behavior. If the behavior continues, then we are going to call home to the parents with the teacher on the line to discuss the behavior. I always tell a parent that they are more than welcome to come and sit in the classroom with their student.

Previously on our campus, teachers were required to call home before writing a referral, regardless of race. So that meant if a negative behavior occurred unless it was at a level of total disrespect, it was not a Level One referral; it was just documentation, and you had to call the parent. Furthermore, you had to document that you called the parent. Teachers previously were encouraged to have parent-teacher conferences where the parent comes in, and they sit with the student to discuss what is going on.

Currently, under new leadership, teachers just put students out in the hallway. Our campus is Hispanic and African American, and any class period you see students sitting out in the hallway. You ask them 'Why are you in the hallway?,' 'She put me out.' 'Why did she put you out?' 'Because I was talking.' That is consistent on our campus today, but last school year, it was not. The expectations that were there last year are not there now.

## PSAdmin - 2

One of the best strategies for rules and procedures was from one of my previous campuses, a social contract. They get the students to be involved and have their hands mixed in with those classroom norms. The students must sign the contract, and it is posted in the room. The teacher is there to point out issues, but the students begin pointing and calling each other out when they are stepping away from those norms or choosing not to follow them. That is one of the best strategies to empower our students to not only understand and know the norms but feel invested in building them for themselves. They have that investment feeling, and so now I own what we have. Teachers must also have consistency from day one. You know it did not happen overnight for any teacher, especially with this generation of students. They are very much, 'You are going to have to prove it to me.' The traditional ways seen 20 years ago when we all went to school are gone. We knew we were going to have to respect that teacher just because that is what was expected. That has gone. You had to prove to everything to then in this age of technology.

## PSAdmin - 3

Black males receive the most referrals because some teachers will take time with other students in order to figure out 'the why' or will give that student the benefit of the doubt and time to cool off. The teacher will not write a referral. Whereas with our Black students and Black males, teachers jump to a consequence or jump to push the button to have them removed. They are not jumping to find the root cause of why this is happening. But guess what? When he returns to class tomorrow, it is going to happen again, because you did not try to figure out what exactly the misbehavior stemmed from.

Teachers should be consistent with the rules that they have in the classroom. Number one, get buy-in. Come up with the rules as a class. Have the general overall school rules, and then have the class develop classroom rules. The students have more buy-in in that versus them being told what to do, or what they cannot do.

Furthermore, be consistent. Consistently remind students about set rules. Just asking the students, not necessarily calling them out and telling them what they are doing wrong, but if a student is doing something wrong, pose them a question; what should you be doing? So that they can self-correct. Teachers should have a conversation with a student to help them figure out why they are in trouble. Call home if need be. Lastly, submit an office referral.

Some students feel that they can get away with many things because they receive no consequences. Though the expectation may be for everyone to behave, that is not what is playing out. The students are not receiving consequences according to their actions.

People want to bring in the restorative justice; however, that does not work if some students feel that they can get around the rules just because of who they are, or who their momma is that is going to come in and act crazy. Expectations mean nothing because when students know that they are an exception to the rules.

PSAdmin - 4

I think teachers from Day One must be very clear. I do not think you need to have ten rules; I think you need to have at least three to five rules, and they need to be very clear about those rules and very consistent about how they administer those rules throughout the course. Kids are always paying attention to the treatment of others, so teachers should



be consistent beginning Day One. They cannot wait for that. You do not have to be hard; you just need to be very direct about your rules for them.

As leaders, we used to be very strict with consequences. We would take kids out of class, place them in in-school suspension, obviously conference with students, conference with parents, and that would be the way we would handle disruptive students. We did not want one student to take away from the learning of the whole class.

Now with the restorative processes, we are trying to do a lot of different things with that kid. Conferencing, d-halls, not necessarily taking them out of the academic setting. If they are too disruptive, I do not want them in an academic setting for a little while so that the other kids can learn. However, now we do a whole lot of communication with parents and counselors, trying to find what the kid's needs truly are.

Many of our referrals are for Black males being disruptive. Breaking classroom rules, being disrespectful, will not stop talking, class clown type things. Many of our teachers are white females. A lot of them are little females, so sometimes that disruptive student thinks that he can intimidate or does not have to pay attention to the adult in the classroom. I see a lot more timid adults than in the past. I think white teachers see disrespect from Black kids very quickly. I think it is more intimidation than disrespect in many cases; I am just not sure if it is really disrespect. I think Black teachers do not buy into that as fast, but I know as a Black teacher, I am disappointed as heck when a kid is trying to be disrespectful to me.

PSAdmin - 5

For implementing rules to be successful, the teacher has to see the class, not Black or white. Everybody must be treated the same and get the same response to anything that

happens. For example, if you know somebody is disruptive, students should know that they will get the same consequence. Regardless of whether it is a Black or white student, they all get the same punishment or reaction from the teacher. Teachers must be very consistent in enforcing classroom rules.

I come from the old school. I think you *will* treat everybody with respect. You *will* follow the Golden Rule. When students misbehave, we take some strong actions. If they do not meet school standards, we try to work as close as we can with the student and their parents. We communicate what we expect and how they *will* conduct themselves at school. Your first strike, second strike, third strike kind of deal. I know students have good days and they have bad days. Sometimes they bring to school what happened at home. Nevertheless, every student who walks into this school, whether they are new or not, every year, we start as if they have a 100 on behavior.

On their first incident, we sit the student aside and talk to him to see what is going on. Sometimes that is enough to get the student to change. If not, if it continues, then we need to get their parents involved. We talk to the parents and see if they can talk to the student to get a change. After that is detention and then suspensions. Consequences get elevated. I do not want to give students too many chances, though. I want it to be understood that when you come to school, and you go into a teacher's classroom, you must know how to conduct yourself accordingly. Even if you are having a bad day or a situation is going on, you need to be mindful of how you react to people and how you treat people.

PSAdmin - 6

Teachers must be consistent from Day One. If they are not consistent from Day One, then it does not matter what race the child is, they are not going to be successful. The kid is

not going to listen. Students must buy-in with the rules and procedures. Some teachers make social contracts. They have the main class rules and then allow students to make up a different set of rules in order to take some ownership in the rule creation.

Overall, I think it comes down to consistency, and just allowing the kids to have a say, especially at the high school level. They have got to be able to have a say or buy-in; otherwise, they are just not going to listen, and they are not going to follow through.

They get many rules at home. Many expectations. Many things that they are not allowed to do at home. So, we have got to give them some sense of freedom here, but not too much.

Behavioral wise, we expect our students to come in and follow the rules and procedures that we have in place. Students understand that if they come in the door and they choose to make the wrong choice that there are consequences for that. It is not that we are going to put the student out or we are going to suspend them instantly. We are going to have a conversation with them and try to help them understand where they went wrong and what the expectation is moving forward, so they do not make that mistake again.

### **Addressing Cultural Differences**

PSAdmin - 1

On our campus, there is an expectation that all teachers meet students where they are. Some white teachers have compassion and can meet African American students where they are. I think the struggle with African American students is that our African American males tend to give up. I think a connection is there when they have an African American teacher, as we can relate. It is our culture. We talk like them. They hear us like they hear their moms or their grandmothers. Whereas with someone white teachers, they

do not have that. On our campus, some white teachers can modify their lessons and meet the students where they are. Furthermore, there are some successes with white teachers. I think that our white teachers become more frustrated than African American teachers when they must modify and adjust their lessons. Our African American teachers do it without hesitation. They call home without hesitation. They say you have to stay for tutorials without hesitation. I think our white teachers become more frustrated, and that is why the expectation was set that you have to meet students where they are.

It is easy for even young Black teachers to set high expectations because of the struggle. I think African Americans relate more to the struggle, to what is going on today, to the culture, and we are more determined that no matter what, you are going to get this, you are going to succeed.

We celebrate various cultural histories. We celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month. We had days where we wore Hispanic clothing and had a staff lunch. The students also wore Hispanic clothing. We celebrated the Lunar New Year, where we wore red. We are currently celebrating Black History Month by reading about prominent African American citizens during the morning announcements.

PSAdmin - 2

On our campus, we have several classrooms where the teacher and the students are of a different background. One of the most significant conversations I believe we have is understanding how to develop real relationships with our students, without having to walk in their shoes. Some of our teachers have a hard time understanding that they do not have to walk in their shoes to have empathy and understanding of the background of the students. We try to get them to understand the possible different experiences our students

may have had to walk and grow through, which would change how they develop, either faster or slower, in certain situations.

Again, getting those teachers to understand and have the empathy to be able to build real relationships with those students is the key. It is probably one of the hardest things to get some of them to accept. Nevertheless, that is my biggest conversation when we are talking about how to help our students become successful in those classrooms.

To celebrate culture, leaders should provide students with opportunities to celebrate what they have and what may be historical for them. We have Black History Month and Cinco de Mayo, but those are not the only times that our cultures have had massive breakthroughs within history.

I worked at a school in south Texas, where we started each day with a fun fact about a different minority figure that may have had some kind of invention or event that happened on that day. We celebrated the march that Martin Luther King did by marching from the junior high to the mayor's office.

PSAdmin - 3

I find that some white teachers have a hard time motivating student, and I would say it is more so the older teachers that have a hard time motivating Black students. They have a difficult time understanding where they are coming from or why they are having difficulties with certain things. They sometimes do not understand the baggage that students are coming to school with. So, in order to motivate the Black student, it takes getting in the trenches with them. Understanding where they are coming from.

Understanding their family dynamics. Understanding what baggage they may be bringing, and starting from there to help unpack and unload that baggage. Once Black

students realize that the teacher is genuinely interested in them, genuinely on their side, and is genuinely there to see and help them succeed, that motivates our Black students. On other campuses I have been on, we would pride ourselves on celebrating cultural diversity. We would do things on the announcements or have students come in and recite things from various cultures. We would have days where you could wear cultural garb from whatever culture we are celebrating at the time—having potlucks and things like that. On a couple of campuses, we invited the community to celebrate. Have an evening of it where fashion shows can be put on, as well as cultural dishes brought in from people in the community.

PSAdmin - 4

You know when you look at a guy my age that has grown up through the years and grown up through a rollercoaster of different things that have happened in a school environment, I do not think the kids pay attention to color as much as they did in the last 20 years. I think today, kids are very accepting of everybody. You see different races that date; you see different races of friends of all races together. You do see some separation, but you do see some togetherness. I do not notice any significant problems that the kids have with another race. I do not see any of that happening right now. I think our climate is excellent. There is much respect.

Nevertheless, you must always do things that celebrate every race that you have. You should always be talking about those cultures and constantly reminding everybody that we are all important regardless of our skin. One professor that I heard speak was meticulous in describing that kids are born, and when you put them in the room together at daycare, nothing separates those kids; they do not think about skin color. The kids do

not even pay attention to skin color. They do not. So, you do not have to be Black to understand. However, you must understand some of the Black culture; otherwise, you are not going to reach most of those kids.

Some kids will be all right regardless, but there are going to be some kids that were taught some definite facts at home, and they are going to walk in your door with those definite facts rooted as part of their culture. Furthermore, when you have those kids, you are going to have to be able to meet and understand where they are coming from; and not just put the Caucasian value on that Black kid. Be able to understand his culture, at least have an understanding and apply it to your classroom.

#### PSAdmin - 5

I once experienced a relationship between a white teacher and a Black male student. It was interesting because it was not what you would typically see between a teacher and a student; it was more negative. It was as if she already had her mind made up about the student when discussing issues that she had with him. From his behavior to his grades, it was like her mind was set about how bad the student was, and she never tried to learn more about his situation. It was pretty much like she already had it planned out and a preconceived idea about the student in her head, and because of that, she was not very receptive.

To educate all, we celebrate each culture's holiday. For example, we celebrate Black History, Hispanic Heritage, and Cinco de Mayo. We recognize cultural milestones. Whenever there is a cultural holiday, we recognize it by sharing history on the P.A. system. The students do it.

Overall, I would say that our culture is very diverse because of the kind of school that we are or the kind of neighborhoods that we have. My campus encompasses all people because of the military backgrounds in the area. However, since this is only my second year at this school, we are still working on improving the climate. I am finding that many students like to stick to their race, and sometimes you have groups that bump heads while some groups get along. Our climate is up and down right now, but we are improving on that.

#### PSAdmin - 6

Every day my teachers who are predominantly white work with my students who are Black and Hispanic. Every day they are expected to go into their classroom and impact lives. One teacher that I am coaching is having a difficult time understanding exactly how to work with our underprivileged students. I think her issue is just that she sets low expectations for our kids. I honestly just think she does not know. She is fresh out of college, and she just does not know. So, it is just truly a matter of trying to train her up and get her with the right people so she can understand better.

In relation to recognizing culture, currently, we just recognize significant months like Hispanic Heritage Month and Black History Month. Our students come in, and they make special announcements about different figures within the school. Our English teachers have students write various topics, and they put them in the hallway to discuss the different figures. However, that is really about all that we do.

This year my hope as the principal is to be able to expand and involve our community. I think that having our parents come in and putting on some cultural shows and things of



that nature, will allow our parents to be a part of our celebration and help our students learn even more.

### **Leadership Modeled Expectations**

PSAdmin - 1

The principal sets the culture and climate. With our change in administration, how our climate is just depends on the day. I think sometimes the climate is meaningful, appreciative, all-inclusive. Some days the climate is I do not know. With our change in administration, our culture and the climate of our campus is currently undefined.

One of our expectations, however, is that teachers can develop a relationship with students. I do not think that students should be put out in the hallway for the entire class period. There are times when the teacher will have to say ‘Step out; I will be there in a minute,’ but the expectation is that they redirect the behavior and bring the student in, because quality first time learning is essential, and the student is not getting that learning when they are in the hallway.

It is also expected that teachers get parents involved. There are so many times I talk to parents or sit in meetings with parents, and they say, ‘Well, they did not call me. I did not know this was going on.’ So, the expectation is that the teacher is to develop a relationship with the parents. It is vital that they connect with the parents and that the parent is involved with what is going on in their classroom. It cannot be all negative either. There should be some positive calls going home as well as negative. Every time the teacher is calling a parent, it should not be because of the negative behavior, it should also be because of something positive.

All teachers have the materials that they need; it is just a matter of leaders doing walkthroughs and looking at data. When you look at data, it is going to tell you what is going on in the classroom. It is going to show when your African American students are failing and every other population that is.

#### PSAdmin - 2

The campus I am at now, unfortunately, does not have an actual set global vision of how instruction should look in every classroom. I look back to one of the campuses where I had a fantastic leader that brought in and expected a global step by step vision of how every classroom looked. When a child came into your class, they knew the vision and what the expectations were going to be. Now you had opportunities as a teacher to make it look a little different, but the expectations were the same. So that students have consistency from classroom to classroom. At this campus, I think it is even frustrating for some of our teachers that we do not have that.

Every year teacher appraisers change, and so do the expectations and the view on how it is going to be. So, it is tough here on this campus. I am trying to work with my teachers that have had previous appraisers to kind of build bridges and help them to understand how to get from one year to the other when the expectations may have been different with another leader.

The leader at my previous campus was indeed an open book. We met as a faculty, and it was truly based on a focus for kids. We had the mindset that it is not about us. Our job as a student in high school is done, so let us make it as effortless for each student. He brought in a program talking about social contracts and The Fundamental Five. These were big things he brought in to help build that school-wide vision. He pushed the same

vocabulary, the same view, and the same expectations. Folks that may not have been on board with it, our leadership was willing to say, 'Let me help you find a place that fits your views better.'

We have also involved the community in a lot of our stuff on different campuses. For some reason, my current campus is scared to allow them to come in as much as they should. However, if we get them involved in pep rallies and let them bring their little brothers and sisters and see what we are doing, then you start to build that culture.

PSAdmin - 3

I just believe that leadership affects how teachers see relationships with students. That is something that must be genuinely modeled. On previous campuses, leadership was not looking for photo ops; there was a genuine interest, a genuine love of children, a love for students, a love of education. I think that trickled down to the teachers. And not where it is a game, and we are just trying to get these points to show that we have done this or to check this box off. But a genuine desire to build these relationships outside of the classroom with students.

The culture on my most previous campus was cutthroat; 'Do as I say, not as I do.' Culture and climate are top-down things. It should be modeled. It should be visible. It should be communicated from the top. Staff members should be able to see it being modeled, and then people have the buy-in from the trickle-down effect; everybody falls in line with that. However, that was not the case on my last campus. It was a cutthroat environment, not a pleasant climate for staff or students. You did not feel that that was a place that you could flourish, or that it was a culture where people were built up. It was

more so a culture of tearing people down for one person to stay on top, due to the upper leadership. It starts from the top down. From the top!

For students to do well, I believe we need to hire highly qualified people, not just any random Joe Blow off the street, just to fill a spot. Even though it is said verbally and may even be documented in the campus improvement plan, actions speak, and hiring is a core part of success. However, it is not ok when certain leaders are not allowing teachers to be coached or go to specific professional developments or conventions. Such exclusion is contradictory to wanting to be a thriving campus.

PSAdmin - 4

You must convince teachers that Title I is a label that the federal government put on us. I mean, it is just because of our socioeconomic status that we are 'lower than' or 'less than.' We have got to convince teachers that we are not. Convince teachers that our kids can achieve as much as any other student in any other building; we just have to hold those expectations high for those kids. Leaders must have conversations with teachers and monitor too, random monitoring.

Leaders must help teachers understand that kids are not going to be quiet like I was. They are going to speak up and say something, and that makes people uncomfortable. I try to tell teachers it is not about winning. I mean, you are the adult in the classroom, be the adult. Do not try to banter with the student. If he is disruptive. Say, he is disruptive. Ask him to leave the class. Write the referral. Hit the button. Get him out of the class. Do not banter with him. You lose everything if you do that. That is never going to make for a great situation, because now the kid that is on the bubble, that maybe wants to be disruptive but knows it is wrong, may try you.

I think we need to continue to push all teachers to raise expectations. I am not sure the leadership has done that enough. I think we quickly touch on it. I think we need to make a real point about it. Unfortunately, leaders are inherently in school, like the police. We do not get academic exposure. I think people that get academic exposure do it on whatever downtime that they have. We are not even really included in the educational process. It is said that we are expected to be instructional leaders, but we do not have exposure to instruction as much as we are exposed to board policy, how many tardies a kid has, and doing tardy sweeps. We do after school supervision and make sure the building runs properly, and honestly; I think all those things are essential.

Nevertheless, I think it is vital that we are exposed to the academic side of it too. You say you do that. That is what is written down, but it is not happening.

We are the last ones to get exposed to the instructional side, but we are evaluating teachers, and we are trying to help teachers be better leaders in the classroom, be better able to manage the classroom, be better able to get to that rigor and move up to Blooms Taxonomy, *without* having the exposure as to how we can teach them how to do that. You cannot just have a half of a day conversation or training and think that is all you have to do, and we can go back and make sure that teachers are doing the right thing.

PSAdmin - 5

My goal as principal is to have more activities during school and after school to get the teachers and their students to interact more. It can be something fun in the gym that students and teachers do all together or divided up by different classes at different times. We could also do an event after school like I have seen done at my son's school when he was in elementary. They have a lot of different activities that they schedule out in the

parking lot, and the students and teachers participate in playing different activities. *We* need more activities for them to have a chance to truly interact with each other.

As the principal, I listen to the students; it is simple because they love to talk. If they are not happy with something or someone, trust me, they will be vocal and let you know what their issue is. So, I take note of what they tell me when they are passing in the hallways or when they run me down and tell me about whether a teacher is good or bad. I also plan times just to have the teacher step out for a second. I get the feel of the class without any kind of retribution. Nothing is going to happen; the teacher does not even know what I am saying. I like to go around the school, into classes, and directly talk to students. And trust me, when one starts talking, then everybody else starts.

I also monitor the classroom and participation in the classroom. I look at the lesson plans and the teacher's data to make sure that *all* students are doing well. I want to make sure that everybody is getting the same from the teacher.

#### PSAdmin - 6

To improve student achievement, teachers must be transparent and give frequent feedback. I expect that if a student is doing well, we are telling them not just that they are doing well, but what made it well. If a student is not doing well, then we are telling them what they did not do well, not just 'You scored horribly.'

Teachers expect detailed feedback from me as their principal, and as their principal, I model that whenever I go in their classrooms. I do not just say, 'Great job teaching,' I tell them what specifically they did well or what they need to improve on. I expect the same things for our students to improve. Our teachers must give constant and frequent feedback.

As a first-year principal, I am coming into a culture and climate that's not mine. I am trying to develop it to where we have a culture and climate that is inviting. Where students want to come to school, teachers want to come to work, and parents want to be involved. I am hoping that we are creating a culture where learning is an expectation. I am hoping that we get a climate and culture that genuinely embraces everyone and not just one or two people.

### **Rigor and Higher-Level Classes**

PSAdmin - 1

I believe the student must know that the teacher cares about them and that the teacher does not look down upon them when they do not understand or when they fail. My classroom was structured, but when students felt overwhelmed, I knew to say, 'Ok. Let us go back. Let us recalibrate. Let us modify this.' I think the student is most successful when the teacher can meet the student where they are, encourage them, and bring them to the level that they need to be in order to be successful.

Just like as a teacher, you set goals; I think that the students should set goals. I encourage teachers to have *the students* set goals. What is your goal? Moreover, if that goal is set at the middle of the year, just like as a teacher you do a mid-year review and review your goals to see if you are on track when students come back in January from winter break, they need to review those goals, and they need to look to see if they are on track.

Now you say, how will a student know they are on track? That is where a teacher must know how to teach a student to track their data. Each one of my students had a data folder. As a teacher, I tracked data, and they tracked *their* data. I taught them how to use that data folder so they could see their increases or decreases. I would sit down and have

individual conversations with students. ‘What is going on?’ ‘We dropped. So, what can we do?’ ‘What did you not understand?’ On my tracking sheet, we looked at the TEKS, and we looked at the TEKS that they were struggling with. We set up an intervention plan for them.

I encourage teachers to do that same process, but the student must know what they are working for. When the students take ownership of their learning, and they see where they are meeting their goals, or the line is dropping with their goal and they have taken ownership that is when you see ‘Ok, I will come to tutorials. Can you call my mom; I need to stay for tutorials.’ When they take ownership, then it is important to them, and I encourage teachers to do that.

#### PSAdmin - 2

You will hear many people say, ‘Well, I do not see color.’ Well, that is malarkey to me. You must see a student for who they are because they bring something unique to the table, but that does not mean I have to have different expectations.

Black students can achieve as much as that white or Asian student that has been pushed all their life. You just got to find the correct motivation for them. I had an athlete that struggled in his core classes, but he would excel with some hands-on stuff. So as his coach, I talked to his teachers about hands-on opportunities. You must find that key for each student no matter what race or gender.

#### PSAdmin - 3

I noticed that with one white teacher who interacts with non-white students when I go into her classroom and listen to or observe her lessons, I have to coach her on understanding that just because the students are not white, or she feels that they are not



learning or capable of learning at a specific capacity, she is not to water down the material; water down the TEKS. And it is not in a way where she is trying to close gaps or meet them where they are in order to close those gaps to build them up. It is seriously teaching down to them because she feels as though they are not capable of learning at the pace or learning the content, she should be presenting in the manner in which she should be presenting it.

So, what I have told her is that number one, she really should know her students learning style at this juncture in the school year. If she does not, she needs to then take a step back and do an evaluation to better understand her students learning style and present the material in such a manner. She is not to water down or dumb down to the objective that she needs to cover, because when she is lowering her bar that is all they are students going to shoot for. I need her to understand that she needs to raise the bar so that they can shoot high and fall where they may. Students now days want to be interested in the material presented and be interested in whatever objective they are supposed to be learning. If someone is dumbing it down, or not presenting it in a way they like, or that grasps their interest, they sometimes will not perform to their capabilities.

So that is something I coach her up on so that she can stop doing that because her scores are reflecting what the students are capable of. When we look at the data as to how they performed the year before or with other teachers, they are performing at or above versus how their data reports for her class.

I wanted my whole life to do away with on-level and K level classes. Teachers are teaching on the same level, so make everybody K level. Many of our kids *are* K level, they just do not want the rigor, and nobody has pushed them towards the rigor.

Affluent campuses seem to have more rigor because they have got more kids that are in K level, AP, or dual credit classes at a time. However, Title I students do have the same capabilities. You have got to push kids and make them understand that this is the best for you. If you want to go to the top and be successful and be looked at like everybody else, and break the stereotypical wall down, then you are going to have to take those classes that get you to those higher places. Unfortunately, I think teachers are just happy to get a kid to pass in a Title I school.

PSAdmin – 5

I set the bar high on my campus. I want my school, my students, and my staff all to be successful. We will not accept ‘I cannot,’ ‘I will not,’ or ‘I am not able to.’ All the negatives go out the door. We are a school of positivity, and we push each other that way. We have got to push the students to be more successful, but in the same light, we must push our staff as well. Our teachers, our assistant principals, our counselors, everybody gets pushed to do the best they can.

PSAdmin - 6

We expect that every single student is going to be successful. We expect that the same success that is seen at the affluent school down the street, that our kids can meet that same level of success. We expect that our teachers are not going to lower that expectation, but they are going to hold our students high. They are going to teach

rigorous lessons that are going to challenge the student and expose them to real-world connections that are truly going to help the students to learn better.

I think teacher expectations influence students because it helps them to decide how great they are going to be. Are you going to be great and have teacher expectations that challenge and help a student to get to the next level academically, or are you going to push a student down and cause them to be mediocre?

We have honors and AP level classes, and when teachers push their kids and expect that level of work from them, the kids are successful in those types of classes. However, when a teacher teaches them to a lower standard or is like ‘Oh, this is my on-level class; they just need the bare minimum,’ that is what the kids are going to hear. So, teachers’ expectations truly influence the degree of academics that the kids master.

### **Mismatch Classroom Practices That Promote Success**

All administrators agreed that for a Title I student to master the content, the way the teacher presents the material must be relevant to their current situation. Participants stated that students must be able to see the connection between different things in their culture, community, everyday lives and situations in order to fully comprehend what is being taught. Teachers are then to provide incentives that motivate students to continue their success and overall growth. While the incentives can vary, participants believed that recognizing the good deeds of a student was essential and could contribute to an even greater relationship between the teacher and student.

### **Lesson Relevance**

PSAdmin - 1

Integrating technology helps create connections with students. Talking about different things that are interesting or that students are interested in like popular movies, current music that they listen to. Being there when they have activities. Just being there for them to talk to. All that helps with making learning relevant.

We have a Hispanic male teacher that's on our campus in a mismatch classroom; he has an inclusion class that is mostly African American. There was a writing exercise that they had to do, and the students did not want to write or could not write, so he created a game. The game was sentence starters, and the title of the game was Say Something. With Say Something, he used the sentence starters to help students develop a paragraph, as well as help them think about the topics that they were writing about. So even when they said just one word, it was like you were brainstorming; but they did not realize they were brainstorming. You know, when you say to brainstorm, they are like 'I do not know what to brainstorm about,' but he used the game Say Something, where they just talked about different things, and then he helped them take those words and develop those words to create a writing.

#### PSAdmin - 2

A kid like me is going to bridge stats or something regarding athletics in order to manipulate an assignment towards sports, which they connect with. Other kids may want some reading time or the ability to get on a computer and work on coding; some of our kids go nuts over that. From the beginning, you have to know your kids and what kind of work is within your curriculum.

We do not want to lose sight of the end goal with our scope and sequence. However, at the end of every day, lessons should be interesting, fun, and relative to our kids.

PSAdmin - 3

Everyone knows that there has been a significant loss recently of Kobe Bryant and his daughter. That is something that our young people, especially our African American students, can relate to. They have wanted to grow up to be like Kobe. They want to emulate him. They wear his number on their jerseys for school.

Recently in an English classroom, instead of presenting the lesson, the teacher decided to put a twist on it in order to have the students write. Students had to write about their feelings towards Kobe and what they were feeling personally. They had to include what he has done in the world and how that inspired them to want to do better for themselves and their community. This affected some students because the teacher took the time out to have the students put their feelings on paper and have those discussions in the classroom. In the students' minds, it was like 'Ok. She is not just here to get this paycheck. She is not just here to cram all this English rhetoric stuff down our throats. She is genuine, and she genuinely cares about us, how we feel, how we are taking this death, and how it is affecting us.' They appreciated her.

PSAdmin - 4

I think teachers need to make their lessons meaningful. I know we have a curriculum; I know we have scope and sequence, but many times some of those background pieces may be missing from certain kids in the classroom. So, we must make it meaningful; and to make meaning, you are going to have to make it relevant. You are going to have to be able to tie it to something that kids are interested in, something kids are knowledgeable about. Thus, it goes back to relationships again. You will not be able to make something relevant if you do not have a relationship with the kids in your class.

## PSAdmin - 5

I encourage teachers to create lessons that relate to the students and their culture.

Whether it be music or an event that happened in history, just something that will make what the student may see as hard, connect to something that is a part of their heritage or culture. This way, it can be a little easier for them to understand. However, this means that the teachers would need to know about each student's culture and what they would be into or familiar with.

They must relate with their student and use relatable facts; try to put themselves in the student's shoes, pushing them, and never letting up. Students truly respect and respond to a firm hand instead of those who just let them do what they want to do.

## PSAdmin - 6

Teachers that are doing well with their students are those who try and connect some kind of way with the kids. It can be through music, a real-world event, journals, anything where a teacher uses a topic and expounds upon it. I really think the teacher takes an interest and tries to understand their students.

For example, there was an English teacher who was teaching poetry. Poetry is one of our most difficult units for our students, data-wise, and our students struggle with it. So, this teacher, to help students understand that they deal with poetry every day, played popular songs that the kids listened to. The songs were on the Top 10 of the radio stations, and she placed the students in groups and had them look at the lyrics of the words. They then had to go through and analyze it in order to help them understand what the artist was saying. She was able to take that and tie it back to the poetry that they were learning. It

was unique because it opened the kids' eyes. The teacher was down to Earth. She tried to rap a couple of lines; she would play the songs, and you know, just be human.

### **Student Engagement**

PSAdmin - 3

The more that a student is engaged in the classroom content that decreases the likelihood of misbehavior. Therefore, teachers really need to get to know their students by building those relationships, determining their learning styles, and seeing how to present material that will capture their interest in a precise manner, in order to increase engagement and decrease misbehavior.

Teachers must also understand that they are teaching all students. They need to select all students when they are calling on them. They need to ensure that the lessons are engaging and meeting various learning styles of the students, so they have the desire to participate. They must make sure they are not singling out students for one reason or another, and not solely calling on Becky because we know Becky always has the right answer. It is ok to call on Sally and give her that wait time. Teachers can also go back to the basics, such as pulling Popsicle sticks with names on them to ensure that they are giving all students an equal opportunity.

PSAdmin - 5

Teachers should be moving around the classroom to help keep students engaged. I want to see them getting active and being even animated at some point in order to keep the students' attention. If they are walking around in monotone, they are not going to get a good reaction or keep the students engaged. I want to see them more open. They should be walking around, using the SMARTboard, and have various displays and visuals to

keep students interested. Through my experiences, I have learned is that if you get students to participate as you are teaching the class, the behavior will be on point. If you leave them to their own devices, students will display more bad behavior during that time. You have to be interactive. Walk around the class and get the students involved.

PSAdmin - 6

Student engagement is really about the students being active participants. In order for them to be active participants, the lesson must be relevant. I need teachers to make sure that the lesson is relevant. I need to make sure that the lesson is at the student's level, and then once we get it at that level, we are challenging them and pushing them to go even further.

Regarding classroom behavior, it connects with classroom management and student engagement. If the students are engaged, then you are not going to have behavior issues. However, if the students are not engaged, then the kids are not going to be sitting down, and they are not going to listen to anything that you have to say.

### **Incentives for Positive Behavior**

PSAdmin - 1

One of the things that we are doing on our campus is student appreciation week, where we are doing things to show students that they are appreciated. Each week we do a Student of the Week for every grade level. Teachers look at star students, submit something positive about that student, and it is read in the morning announcements on Friday. We also have what is called PBIS bucks. Students with positive behavior in the hallways that are walking in the hallway, the teachers can give them a buck. We have a PBIS store so they can turn those bucks in and get certain items.



Teachers celebrate students in the classroom. I have seen teachers give students high fives. I have seen teachers talk about how proud they are of them. Some positive phone calls go home to let parents know that the student has done well and how proud they are. And our kids ask for phone calls. For example, I am not in the classroom, but I do lunch duty. So, on Friday, I had to make a negative phone call home regarding misbehavior in lunch that had happened all week. Today the student was on task. I mean truly on task. So in-between classes, during the transition to seventh period, I am on hall duty, and the student stopped and said, 'I have been good all day today. You can go to all my teachers. Would you please call my mom and tell her that I have been good today so that she will not be mad at me again?' The students will say, 'Can you make a positive phone call for me.'

When I was in the classroom, and I saw my kids making academic growth, I celebrated them. I talked about their accomplishments; we celebrated their grades. I gave my kids candy. I mean, I had a class that loved Skittles, so we could have a Skittles party, and everybody would get Skittles; the kids would be excited about Skittles.

#### PSAdmin - 2

There is a first year that I was concerned about when she first got here because she was abrasive. She was a late hire, so she was coming in after a long-term sub into a geometry class. Historically, kids struggle with geometry in high school, but when she came in, the kids finally got on board. You would see kids that I have seen in my office for referrals, always being celebrated for the small growths. She wants to celebrate the small growths! She will come around with a kid that she knows is comfortable with the big celebration and the big high five. It is very individualized. The kids that are very shy in her class and

do not want to talk out, she has the whiteboards. They will hold up their answer, and she will come around and give what we have here as PBIS bucks; she will slide it on the table with a sticky note. So very purposeful.

I genuinely believe that you celebrate academic growth no matter how small it is because each kid is going to have some exponential growth as well as fractional growths; it just depends on what piece of that curriculum they are in. You want to celebrate them. Make sure that you are touching that kid either by high fiving or giving a ticket out of the door. The big one that I am telling our teachers about is how our kids do not get positive phone calls home very often. Once the kid hears they got a phone call from school and it was positive, that kid is going to come back tomorrow and fight twice as hard.

#### PSAdmin - 3

Some teachers do recognition within the class, while some give a treat when they are pleased with the actions of a student. Sometimes it could be a note, a sticky, a phone call home; many ways. The teacher must take into consideration that everybody does not like public praise; that could be a detriment to the teacher. She could think she is doing something right by praising them in public when that is something that makes a student more self-conscious.

If it is a struggling student or a student that the teacher has been working with for quite some time to master a specific objective, call home. Students like it, and parents like it as well. Especially if it is a subject matter in which their student struggles. So, phone calls home is a positive thing for students and parents, as well as an e-mail. You know verbal praise if that is something that the student appreciates.

Our students love to work and receive food or treats. They will do just about anything for that. Students love to eat in class. That is something that is a no, no. That is a rule that every school has; you are not to eat in the classroom. So, when teachers allow eating snacks, candy, what have you, as a form of a reward system, that is something that students get buy-in for.

PSAdmin - 4

I think the smiles, the high fives, the congratulations, and words of positive motivation serve as incentives for positive behavior. I think that is the fundamental way. Some teachers go a little further than that, and they give other incentives. But basically, just being very positive with kids. Acknowledging that that was a good answer, acknowledging that that was a good paper.

I think we make a big deal out of punishing kids; I think we need to make a REAL big deal out of academic growth. As much as we want to write a kid up when he has done something wrong and disrupts the class, I think that if a kid has real academic growth, it does not hurt to disrupt the class. I think it needs to be celebrated with the same amount of intensity, if not more (than discipline). You need to show kids what is more important.

PSAdmin - 5

To reward or show that students are doing well, some teachers have charts, and it is almost like a competition. I know it is kind of elementary, but it works. With this oversized chart, students work up to a specific prize, such as an end of the school year pizza party or get together that the students and teacher decide on together. However, every day there must be something that the teachers do. Whether it is giving students stars or high fives or allowing some light music to be played. If students are doing well, it

is ok to do things to show that the teacher is paying attention and recognizes their success in the class.

I also suggest for teachers to call home and let the parents know how their student is doing. Give them useful feedback so the student can get that praise at home. We have to remember that without our parents or the home aspect, none of this would work. At one high school, I was at they had a silver, gold, and platinum card that they issued out to all the students. Each level gave students certain privileges. Some were able to go across the street for lunch, while others were able to leave class a little early.

PSAdmin - 6

My campus is about to start a PBIS initiative (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports), where our students will be able to earn bucks for good behavior that they display. When they display honesty, they will be able to get something. When they go above and beyond in the classroom and assist the teacher, they will be able to earn a buck or two. When they are walking in the hallway, and they have their I.D. on, they will be able to receive a buck or two. So, we are going to use that to try and motivate them. Then we will have candy, drinks, chips and things like that which our students love. They love food. Thus, that is something that motivates them. We are also going to look at making special lunches where they can purchase the ability to go outside and eat their lunch.

There is a lot of different things that we want to do, specifically with those bucks, to try and get kids to know that we are happy with their choices.

### **Summary and Preview of Next Chapter**

Chapter 4 reviewed the themes and correlating responses that provided findings for this study. Through these findings, I hoped to provide Pre K-12 administrators and teachers with a better understanding of improvements needed regarding teacher expectations and their importance in mismatch classrooms. Based on the prevalent themes discovered through coding, I found that public school administrators have similar thoughts and experiences when examining classroom relationships, campus climate, and culture, as well as practices that could promote success.

Chapter 5 will summarize the findings for each subtopic, as well as give recommendations for administrators and future researchers. As the conclusion of this study, Chapter 5 will answer the research questions presented, and discuss how the purpose of the study was met but could still be extended through future studies.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

Public school administrators motivate and support both teachers and students in order to have a culture that is inclusive and provides success for all students (Karakose, 2008). Through the creation of various culturally based procedures, policies, and expectations, public school administrators help create a culturally responsive environment that impacts how teachers see students of different backgrounds, as well as how they instruct them (Johnson, 2014).

The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological study was to explore how public-school administrators perceive the influence of teacher expectations on behavior infractions and academic achievement of Black students in mismatch, Title I classrooms. For research purposes, classes considered to be mismatched had a White teacher with Black students. All classes referenced were from schools that had been identified as Title I or meet the at-risk requirements.

This final chapter provides closing interpretations of key findings and recommendations for future research. Literary connections to the data will be discussed, based on sources provided in the literature review and overall theoretical framework. Subtopics for this chapter are: (a) Study Overview, (b) Summary of Findings, (c) Interpretation of Public-School Administrators Responses, (d) Conclusion, (e) Implications for Change, and (f) Recommendations for Future Research.

### **Study Overview**

This qualitative study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology to explore the viewpoints of public-school administrators' perspectives on teacher expectations in conjunction with Black student academic and behavioral success. IPA provided me with insight on how participants lived experiences made meaning to them in connection with the topics of the research.

## **Study Procedures**

Data for this study were derived from interviews conducted with six public school administrators. The interviews followed the semi-structured protocol. Each participant individually shared how through their current or most recent experiences on a Title I campus, they perceived the relationship between Black students and White teachers. Their verbal data were recorded and then transcribed using the transcription service TranscribeMe. I reviewed each transcription to ensure the validity of the study. In order to ensure that the responses were coherent, grammatical interpretation and placement was used as described by Smith et al. (2009). Due to such analysis, I took detailed notes and fully engaged with each participant, hoping to understand their various experiences and perceptions better. The findings were coded to identify reoccurring themes that provided answers to the three overarching research questions.

## **Participants**

Each public-school administrator served in one of three major Southeastern Texas school districts either as an assistant principal or campus principal. All interviewed spent their entire educational career on at-risk, Title I campuses, both as teachers and administrators. With one to 20+ years as an administrator, each participant served on a secondary (6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade) campus, where Hispanic students represented the most significant percentage of enrollment, and Blacks came close behind. All campuses had a minimum of 51% of their students identified as economically disadvantaged.

## **Research Questions and Corresponding Themes**

The following research questions guided this study. The corresponding reoccurring themes that help to answer each question are also included:

- Q1.** How do public school administrators perceive teacher expectations in mismatch classes influence the academic achievement of Black secondary students at Title I schools? Based on coding founded on participant interviews, the following themes emerged: (a) Classroom Relationships, (b) Genuine Relationships, (c) Recognizing and Doing Something About Gaps, and (d) Self-Fulfilling Prophecy.
- Q2.** On Title I campuses, what do public school administrators perceive as the factors, if any, influencing the academic achievement and classroom behaviors of Black secondary school students in mismatch classes? Based on participant responses, the following themes emerged: (a) Campus Culture and Climate, (b) Rules and Procedures, (c) Addressing Cultural Differences, (d) Leadership Modeled Expectations, and (e) Rigor and High-Level Classes.
- Q3.** What strategies, if any, do public school administrators suggest to address cultural bias in Title I schools, in order to decrease Black secondary school students' behavioral infractions and increase their academic achievement? Based on various responses received from participants, the following themes emerged: (a) Mismatch Classroom Practices that Promote Success, (b) Lesson Relevance, (c) Student Engagement, and (d) Incentives for Positive Behavior.

### **Summary of Findings**

**Cultural relevance/Critical Race Theory.** Despite various reoccurring themes presented, cultural relevance, which stemmed from the critical race theory, emerged as the overarching theory. Based on the findings, all administrators believed that culture played a part in the education of Title I, Black students. Concerning culturally relevant teaching, leaders believed that making lessons culturally relevant helped to make the content meaningful and able



to be mastered. Research by Milner (2010) and Ramirez et al. (2016) supported this belief. According to their research, culturally relevant teaching supports the push to close the achievement gap of Black students.

Participants also discussed how incorporating culture into not only classrooms, but school activities and climate supported students' ability to feel more at ease and connected to the campus. Research conducted by Ladson-Billings (1992) coincided with this, as the overall purpose of culturally responsive/relevant teaching is to utilize cultural norms in order to help students make a connection with not only the content but the culture and climate of the overall educational process. Campus administrators shared that such incorporation of cultural standards should be taught to teachers in more than a half-day session for them to truly understand the necessity of culturally relevant teaching. According to Joyce and Calhoun (2016), teachers need additional support in order to take new concepts, such as culture, and truly understand how to implement it within the curriculum.

This final chapter explains the perspectives of public-school administrators in relation to how teacher expectations and teaching can impact a Black, Title I student. The findings from this research will provide support to secondary level administrators concerning ways that professional development can support better incorporation of culture into the classroom and overall school climate. Using the data as a guide, campus leaders could use the study to identify possible areas of growth needed for the teachers on their staff, as well as the campus leadership team. By reviewing the study, administrators can identify ways to support the closing of the achievement gap or Black, Title I students.

## **Interpretation of Public-School Administrators Responses**

Public school administrators who participated in the study shared their viewpoints on teacher relationships in connection with Black students' success. Based on their responses, reoccurring themes emerged, providing answers to the three research questions for this study. Themes discussed throughout this section are: (a) Genuine Relationships, (b) Recognizing and Doing Something About Gaps, (c) Self-Fulfilling Prophecy, (d) Rules and Procedures, (e) Addressing Cultural Differences, (f) Leadership Modeled Expectations, (g) Rigor and High-Level Classes, (h) Lesson Relevance, (i) Student Engagement, and (j) Incentives for Positive Behavior.

**Genuine relationships.** All participants expressed that Title I students, especially those who come from tough backgrounds and have seen a lot, are looking for individuals that are honest to connect with. From giving them tangible rewards to celebrating small gains, each administrator discussed how students must feel a sense of real value from the teacher, for a connection to occur.

All participants discussed teachers going the extra mile and seeing students outside of the classroom as another way to show support and care for them. According to the responses, students look forward to the teacher's presence and the celebration that commences whenever the event is over, win or lose. Students will work for these teachers, as they do not want to disappoint them. However, when a connection does not exist, teachers are found to struggle with student behavior, and in turn, have students removed from class, missing quality first-time instruction. Students can tell those who are genuinely there for them versus those who are pretending for the sake of the job.

Hill (2016) discussed the importance of campus administrators creating opportunities for teachers to learn more about their students, as well as how to teach and manage them in the classroom. In-services are seen as ineffective in relation to teacher learning opportunities (Mathur, Estes, & Johns, 2012). Teachers have preconceived ideas regarding the school training process, and often see the various courses of little use for application in their classrooms (Mathur et al., 2012). Teachers must have targeted professional development that allows them to implement strategies learned, and also continuously reflect on not only how their students receive the strategy, but how they view their students in connection to the strategy (Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison, & Belway, 2015).

**Recognizing and doing something about gaps.** Small grouping was a frequently suggested intervention for addressing academic gaps. Participants explained that through selective grouping, teachers could modify and adjust their lessons to meet the needs of their students. Such differentiation can cause more than one lesson occurring at a time, allowing for remediation for those with gaps in background knowledge, and further progression for those who are ahead.

Scaffolding, spiraling, and blended learning are also ways that administrators felt could address academic deficiencies. Each can still involve the structuring of groups; however, they focus more on students with gaps and keeping them engaged, offering a means to get extra assistance, extended time on an assignment, or more clarity on a concept taught.

**Self-fulfilling prophesy.** According to participants, how a teacher perceives a student impacts how they treat them. When a teacher sets low expectations or considers a student's abilities as low, they traditionally display or communicate that to the student through various actions. Administrators believed that when such is consistently communicated, students begin to

internalize those beliefs, acting on them as if they are real. Teachers will get whatever they expect; it is all dependent on the level at which they set their expectations. If a teacher sets them low, then a student will only achieve at a low status. If a teacher sets expectations high, then a student will attempt to rise.

One administrator expressed that a difference in expectation for Black students versus white is evident in the number of Black students enrolled in honors-level classes. With no more than one or two Black students enrolled in AP level classes on their particular campus, the participant felt that White teachers who serve as teacher of record for such upper-level classes, set lower expectations for Black students, preventing them from desiring to enroll in the class, let alone, stay in it once they are enrolled.

**Rules and procedures.** Several participants expressed the need to create Social Contracts to include all students in developing classroom rules and procedures. By allowing students to participate in such things as classroom rules and policies, teachers are creating an environment that is equitable and open for students to have a voice (Morrison et al., 2008). According to administrators interviewed, students tend to hold each other more accountable for the rules when they have a vested interest in what they are, helping to cut down on classroom disruptions.

Teachers should also use cultural responsiveness when dealing with classroom behavior concerns. In order to do such, teachers must consider the background and experiences of their students, while also recognizing their own biases that contribute to how negative behavior is interpreted (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015; Schwartz, 2014). Participants shared that teachers tend to place students in the hallway or send them to the principal's office even when the infraction is considered minor and should be addressed by the teacher in class.

Black males are the highest percentage of students placed out of class for minor infractions. Such occurs due to behaviors seen as disrespectful or a disruption; however, once viewed by administrators, it is seen as possible intimidation on the side of the teacher. Districts should create standard policies that hold all students to the same expectations (Steinberg & Lacoé, 2017). These standard expectations allow administrators to know exactly how a problem is to be solved, regardless of the student's race or ethnicity. By having a uniform way in which administrators must address behavioral infractions, chances of inequitable application of consequences decrease along with subjectivity that can come with unknown biases (Steinberg & Lacoé, 2017).

**Addressing cultural differences.** All participants discussed how on their campuses, various cultural activities helped to celebrate the various ethnicities present. From announcements over the intercom to programs with members of the community, each campus did something to recognize the past, present, and future of the significant cultures on their campus. Morrison et al. (2008) expressed that opening the campus to the community allows students to see the connection and value that the school places on the area and people where they are from.

Although such recognition occurs campus-wide, teachers in mismatch classrooms struggle with addressing the needs of Black students, at times, becoming frustrated and unable to motivate the student to do anything. Irizarry and Williams (2013) discussed how unintended personal bias could cause the efforts of teachers to come across as not genuine or ineffective. Their unconscious bias impacts expectations set for Black students, behavioral interventions provided, as well as rigor at which lessons are taught to challenge the minds of each student (Irizzary & Williams, 2013). Administrators' responses confirmed this finding by providing

examples of teachers on their campuses that were having difficulties connecting with Black students in their mismatched class. Some sighted low expectations and failure to make honest connections with Black students, as the reason for troubles seen between the identified white teacher and the Black student.

**Leadership modeled expectations.** DuFour and Mattos (2013) discussed how campus leadership plays a significant role in the academic success of students. Many participants discussed how their higher leadership negatively impacted the culture or climate of their campus. When campuses are seen as unfavorable by staff that negativity trickles down to the classroom. Assistant principals who were found to dislike the principal on their Title I campus cited that they were used as police and disciplinarians, as compared to instructional support for teachers. The administrators also explained that failure to have a shared vision or global idea of how success looks and feels on campus leaves teachers and students guessing on what the expectations are.

Campus leaders help to create environments that are inviting to all students, as well as create ways to involve teachers and the community in everyday policies and procedures (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Johnson, 2014). When this does not occur, appraising teachers and holding them accountable becomes a challenge. Participants expressed that higher-level administrators must be open to building relationships with all stakeholders for change to occur for Black students. Principals must be advocates for all students (Theoharis, 2007). Administrators believed they must hire quality teachers and provide them with strategies to implement with students in mismatch classrooms, frequently checking on them to ensure their success and the success of the students.

**Rigor and high-level classes.** One participant expressed concern in the rigor difference seen between on-level and advanced classes. When the rigor is the same, the leader questions why there is a need to label students advanced or on-level. However, other administrators felt that higher rigor levels were seen on more affluent campuses, but they too have fewer Blacks enrolled in upper-level classes. Participants stated that as administrators, they expected their teachers to hold all students, regardless of ethnicity, to a high standard. Morrison et al. (2008) suggested that teachers introduce students to social justice topics that relate to them. Through this exposure, teachers can challenge students to think critically on topics that are frequently debated on, as well as provide hands-on opportunities for them to work in and give back to their communities (Morrison et al., 2008).

Participants expressed that although Black students are often given lower expectations in mismatched classrooms, they can achieve more. However, due to lack of teacher encouragement to enter classes such as Advanced Placement or dual credit, Black students are not commonly seen in these college-level classes.

**Lesson relevance.** Cultural knowledge is essential when teachers desire to be effective and reach all students regardless of their ethnicity or race (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Study participants expressed that for students to master content presented, the teacher must understand them and their needs. Teachers must attempt to incorporate strategies and real-world concepts that the students enjoy, at times helping to create a bridge where an achievement gap may be present. A few administrators site the death of a major basketball player as one way that they have seen teachers connect with Black students. Having them complete a writing task on their feelings and giving them a chance to discuss them, allowed for students to

get a sense that the teacher cared for them, and it was not solely about their academic success, but their emotional wellbeing as well.

**Student engagement.** Participants believed that for students to be engaged, the teacher needed to know the students sitting before them and attempt to address their learning styles to ensure success. Lessons should be engaging, and teachers should be walking around assisting students and keeping them on task. Campus administrators expressed that the use of various technological tools and different instructional strategies help to promote student engagement and decrease chances of misbehavior. When students invest in the class and the assignment in front of them, they are less likely to be disrespectful or do something that would take away from the learning environment. However, teachers must remain consistent with their expectations, and work with all students for all to be successful. Wong, Wong, Rogers, and Brooks (2012) stated that for lessons to be conducted successfully, teachers must act consistently. Students should be given clear expectations in order to understand what is expected (Wong et al., 2012).

**Incentives for positive behavior.** From pizza parties to simple high fives, participants stated that teachers received good responses from students when they utilized various incentives. Several administrators discussed how Title I students on their campus enjoy eating, and any activity that has food as a reward will most likely be completed. Teachers are known to give students candy, chips, and drinks to express their content or appreciation with their academic success or appropriate behavioral response. Several campuses utilize the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system to encourage continuous rewarding of student accomplishments. Through ‘bucks,’ students can purchase various treats for good behavior or demonstration of a character trait determined by the teacher.



Smiles, words of praise, and phone calls home are other ways that teachers reward students. Campus leaders expressed that students enjoy getting praise when they get home, due to an adult from the campus, calling the parent and giving them positive feedback. One participant discussed how a student asked them to make a positive phone call home so that their parent would know that they were meeting expectations. The participant called for the student and expressed how happy he was that such was done, as he was going to get an electronic game back.

### **Conclusion**

All public-school administrators expressed that Black students in mismatched classes *do* encounter lower expectations than their more affluent counterparts. However, Black students are believed to be able to meet the same expectations that any other student has, but in some instances, different means must be taken. Participants all agreed that teachers must establish genuine relationships with their Black students that display true care and concern for both their academic and physical wellbeing. Once a relationship is established, teachers must be visible in and out of the classroom, as well as remain consistent, allowing students to know what to expect from them day in and day out. Students must feel as if they have a voice in order to buy into classroom expectations. Administrators also believed that teachers must provide opportunities for students to connect with their culture and society, creating opportunities for the content to be mastered due to its relatability.

Although teachers are at the helm of each classroom, participants agreed that campus leadership sets the tone for the climate and culture throughout the building. When the principal is not effective in setting a climate that is inclusive or inviting, teachers internalize that and, in turn, transfer that energy to students. Public school administrators must work to establish a global

vision that allows for expectations that are equal for all students and models for teachers a way to implement various processes within their classroom to ensure the success of all students. From encouraging students to pursue higher-level academic classes to inviting parents and community members into the school, leaders and teachers must embrace cultural diversity for students to excel in school and the real world.

### **Implications for Change**

As a result of the literature, theoretical framework, and study findings, I suggest the following implications for public school administrators:

1. Teachers and public-school administrators should undergo targeted cultural relevance training. The training should be ongoing, and teachers should be tasked with assignments that allow them to reflect on personal biases as well as their incorporation of cultural strategies. Administrators should participate in this training to ensure that they are aware of the needed changes that will be implemented in each classroom. Periodic check-ins with teachers to ensure that they are meeting expectations, and the seeking of feedback from students should occur to ensure that classes are aligned, and the needs of all students are met.
2. Teachers should incorporate culturally relevant material and real-world scenarios into the everyday curriculum. Teachers should be allowed the opportunity to discuss lesson plans collaboratively, and with the assistance of colleagues and school administration, determine ways to ensure that the student's ethnicity or background is visible in what they are learning. Administrators should review lesson plans, and targeted feedback regarding cultural inclusion should be given to teachers regularly before the lesson plan is to be implemented.

3. Public school administrators should schedule regular meetings to discuss the vision and mission of their campus. All stakeholders should be involved in the creation of the vision and mission to ensure buy-in. Regular assessment should be conducted to determine if stakeholders feel as if the overall goal is being met, especially as it relates to the inclusion of all students, regardless of race. Survey results should be reviewed in the administrative meetings, and an ongoing plan of action should be developed and updated as deemed necessary, for the betterment of the campus.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Below are considerations for future research that can assist in creating culturally inclusive secondary schools, and provide additional support to public school administrators:

1. It is recommended that future studies focus solely on campus principals and how they see teacher expectations in mismatched classes. Their view on the impact that expectations have on student success should be examined, along with strategies that their campus uses to ensure inclusivity.
2. Future researchers are also encouraged to do a comparative study on campuses with a clear vision and positive culture versus those who do not have an established vision or a climate that is seen as positive. Researchers can utilize district created campus climate surveys to identify such campuses.
3. In conclusion, it is recommended that future researchers examine professional development opportunities that specifically target ongoing cultural relevance training. The training should be specific to addressing the needs of teachers and students in mismatch environments and examine how extended reflection impacts teacher expectations and student success.

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## Appendix A: Abilene Christian University IRB Approval

**ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**  
*Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World*

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
 320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103  
 325-674-2885



December 12, 2019

Kimberly Johnson  
 Department of Education  
 Abilene Christian University

Dear Kim,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Public School Administrators' Perceptions of Teacher Expectations and the Influence on Behavior Infractions and Academic Achievement of Black Students in Mismatch Title I Classrooms",

was approved by expedited review (Category 7 ) on 12/12/2019 (IRB # 19-153 ). Upon completion of this study, please submit the Inactivation Request Form within 30 days of study completion.

If you wish to make any changes to this study, including but not limited to changes in study personnel, number of participants recruited, changes to the consent form or process, and/or changes in overall methodology, please complete the Study Amendment Request Form.

If any problems develop with the study, including any unanticipated events that may change the risk profile of your study or if there were any unapproved changes in your protocol, please inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the IRB promptly using the Unanticipated Events/Noncompliance Form.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

*Megan Roth*

Megan Roth, Ph.D.  
 Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

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**Public School Administrators' Perceptions of Teacher Expectations and the Influence on Behavior  
Infractions and Academic Achievement of Black Students in Mismatch Title I Classrooms**

**Interview Protocol**

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Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_ Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: *Kimberly Johnson*

Session 1 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Started: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Ended: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please describe a recent interaction you have had with teachers who teach students in mismatch classrooms.
  
2. In your professional opinion, what works to motivate students in Title I schools?
  
3. What strategies have you found that teachers use to ensure they are consistent in enforcing the classroom rules and procedures, regardless of race?
  
4. What goals does your school outline to support student and teacher relationships in mismatch classrooms?
  
5. What are your expectations for your teachers in regard to student engagement and classroom behavior?
  
6. Discuss how your teachers show students when they are pleased with their actions.


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7. What strategies or incentives do you suggest to teachers when students exhibit academic growth?

8. How do you celebrate cultural diversity in your school?

9. How do you encourage teachers to improve students' achievement?

**Session 1 Notes:**



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Session 2 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Started: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Ended: \_\_\_\_\_


1. How do teachers motivate Black students?
  
2. How have teachers in mismatch classrooms built a rapport with their students?
  
3. Can you share a recent example that would demonstrate the building of rapport in a mismatch classroom?
  
4. Describe your school culture and climate.
  
5. Discuss the relationship between teacher expectation and self-fulfilling prophecy.
  
6. How do you assess your students' satisfaction with their teachers?
  
7. What are the academic expectations and behavioral expectations at your school?
  
8. How does teacher expectations influence students?
  
9. How do you ensure that your teachers give all students an equal opportunity to learn?



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10. What policy do you have in place for those students who misbehave or disrupt instruction?

Session 2 Notes:



## Appendix C: Research Questions, Corresponding Themes and Codes

